CHAPTER-V.

An Alternative Image of the Human

In the preceding chapters of my thesis I have discussed the concepts of violence and conflict vis a vis those of non-violence and peace, with reference to Gandhi, Galtung and Krishnamurti. Also, I have discussed the practical importance of Gandhian, Krishnamurtian and Galtung’s concept of non-violence. On the basis of critiquing the contemporary socio-cultural perspectives that breed violence and individual human psyche in general that fosters the seed of violence due to contradiction between the psyche and virtuosity that we normally speak for and uphold in common parlance, we can envision an alternative human image that corroborates the philosophical anthropological premises of all these three thinkers.

In Gandhi’s philosophy, we have seen that violence owes mostly to the ‘brute force’ in man and in oblivion of the divine or ‘soul force’ within him. For him, it is possible to rouse the soul force within man to transcend violence. Thus Gandhi’s philosophy has a basic reference to a human essence which is overpowered by the brute force within men himself. But, as he would argue, a permanent victory of the brute force is not possible because with this force alone, history as history of human would have been logically contradictory. History as human history and evolution of man as man is possible only when man is essentially distinguished from animal or brute. Gandhi owed his faith in the ‘perfectibility’ of human kind to traditional Indian philosophies of self that is transcendent of all exteriorities including violence. Imperfection in man is a fact, but “the Gandhian doctrine of human perfectibility”, as Iyer holds, “is the
preparedness for error in our endeavors and the readiness to take large risks, checked only by a continuous exercise of self-analysis and the willingness to make amends for mistakes made through mere good intentions or weakness of will."

Thus, with a firm faith in the infinite perfection of the transcendental self, Gandhi thought of the mundane human self as capable of a self-search through errors, mistakes and a continuous overcoming of the mistakes committed due to finite, imperfect aspects of human nature. Its possibility, for Gandhi, lies in the very ontology of human self or nature which reveals itself in a tension between the ‘brute force’ and ‘soul force’.

The alternative image of man that is portrayed in Gandhian philosophy is thus holistic. It is on the one hand based upon traditional Indian philosophical view of oneness of the ultimate reality i.e. Brahma who is both nirguna in the sense of being a cosmic spirit beyond all qualities, indivisible, undisturbed by any change or violence in the mundane sphere, and on the other hand upon a personal conception of it, i.e. Saguna in the sense of being with all personal attributes, addressed as personal God. Brahman cannot be hurt because in His nirguna dimension Brahma is beyond violence. In His saguna dimension Brahma is also a reservoir of all human qualities in their heightened states. Therefore He is also the personal God and love or non-violence as such. One can argue for Gandhi that if God is love as such, the ‘divine spark’ or ‘soul force’ in man has to make him non-violent in his inner core. With this ‘soul force’ and faith in love man can have an intuition of the infinite love of the infinite Being i.e. God. As Bhiku Parekh observes, “Gandhi agreed too that the existence of the cosmic spirit was incapable of rational demonstration, but disagreed about its implications. By itself reason could not prove the existence of anything, not even chairs and tables. And therefore if it were to be the sole criterion of existence, we would have to deny the existence of the world itself. Furthermore, Gandhi
could not see why only what satisfied reason should be deemed fit to exist. He rejected the view that it was man’s highest faculty. Gandhi went further and rejected the very idea of any human faculty being the highest. The human mind was an essentially plural, federal and non-hierarchical structure of autonomous and interacting faculties, each with its own distinctive mode of operation and way of knowing the world. All knowledge was a product of their co-operative effort, each making its unique contribution and correcting and being corrected by the others. It (Reason) was obviously one of man’s important faculties and should be assigned its due place in life, but it could not be made the sovereign arbiter of all the other. Reason laid down the minimum, not the maximum, and specified what men may not believe, not what they must believe.”

As reason cautions us not to be blind in faith and makes us seek justification of any faith, faith illuminates us in addressing the Being beyond reason, the Being that is love as such and teaches us the value of non-injury or ahimsa in human life. Reason can comprehend neither this Being which is Brahman in His Saguna and personal dimension because He is the Being for faith and an addressee nor Being which is Brahman as nirguna and therefore formless. Thus, with the aid of reason one can argue for the limitation of reason. Gandhi’s alternative image of men thus consists in self manifestation in the world by a consciously built-up proximal relationship with Being through faith. This proximity, till the final union with Being or God, generates the value of non-violence and makes us realize the truth of it. Satya or Truth which for Gandhi is the eternal and immutable is therefore identical with this Being. In our living in this world with this proximal term with God, Truth is manifest in different facets. Truth thus becomes the supreme value for human life, in ethics, politics and religion. This value speaks of the raison d’etre of all existence. Truth is Absolute; it is derived from Sat in Gandhi’s philosophy. In Iyer’s words, “Satya, as Gandhi stressed on several occasions, is derived from Sat, which
means being. *Sat* also means abiding, actual, right, wise, self-existent essence, as anything really is, as anything ought to be.\(^3\) Adherence to *Sat* is *Satyagraha* which means adherence to and eagerness for wisdom, righteous-ness, non-injury, love and that which is abiding. Non-injury or non-violence is the essence of *Satyagraha* because *Satya* is equal to Brahman who is love per se. Truth in its Absolute form is not manifest in mundane life. But adherence to it brings about Truth in our lives in various relative forms. Gandhi said, “… …the pursuit of Truth is true *Bhakti* (devotion).”\(^4\) Bhakti or devotion to Truth can be talked about when truth is more a matter of faith than a goal of reason in isolationistic sense. The alternative image of man, for Gandhi, is a man of faith fully committed to Truth in its absolute sense in his quest, enquiry, choices and actions so that truths in their relative dimension become continuously perfected and sharpened to be in more and more proximal terms with the Absolute Truth. Gandhi’s philosophy is more a philosophical anthropology that combines the traditional Indian philosophy of self and reality with his new pragmatics for spiritual, moral, socio-cultural and political change and development. The quest for Truth is not only for individual psychic elevation but also for a ceaseless process of perfection in every domain of humanity including politics. The quest for Truth is not only for individual psychic elevation but also for a ceaseless process of perfection in every domain of humanity including politics. The quest for truth leads one to self-realization and a complete *swaraj* or freedom. Gandhi derived his ethico-political stand on freedom or national freedom from his this philosophical anthropology. *Swaraj*, for Gandhi, means freedom of every one from any yoke whatsoever. Contextualized in India’s struggle for freedom, it meant freedom of Indians from the English yoke and national freedom. But, *Swaraj*, like Truth, has an ultimate meaning, that is, self-realization of each and every human being and freedom or self-determination for every community, every nation, every country.
Gandhi said, “My patriotism does not teach me that I am to allow people to be crushed under the hell of Indian princes just as much as that of the English.”

Gandhi’s concept of man based upon a relational perspective of Being or *Brahman*, love or non-violence, Truth and *Swaraj* is extended from the individual’s world to the social and political spheres by envisaging alternative ideals for perfection at collective level. But it is to be noted that like Krishnamurti, his primary emphasis was on the individual. Hence the meaning *swaraj* explicated with reference to collective freedom alone in society and politics is rather a narrow meaning of it. He said, “Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automation and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man. Just as man will not grow horns or a tail so he will not exist as man if he has no mind of his own. In reality even those who donot believe in the liberty of the individual believe in their own.”

*Swaraj* is a dynamic concept in the sense that it needs continuous practice of self-purification which ultimately moves beyond the individual confinement and sets the individual in relation with society. It does not mean sheer independence; it functions primarily as a regulative principle—a principle that regulates human thought and action. It is a reference point but not identical with Kantian type of pure practical reason. It is very much within the bounds of sense but expands these bounds further and further for an ultimate dissolution of all bounds in Vedantic sense. Kant’s projection of *pure* reason generating *pure* moral choice leaves morality ungrounded in existential sense; a total disconnection of morality from traditional insights and culturally informed domains of people is possible in Kant’s moral philosophy. But it is not so possible in Gandhi’s case because heart always reaches out of itself to larger human contexts. For its basic responsiveness, it always tends to open up a dialogue with human history,
cultural memory and everything in the world. The alternative man is also a critique, traditional but not traditionalist; his promise is to build an alternative society and polity beyond modernity that fragments the human self and the world with reason or rationality as its sole reference point.

Johan Galtung’s philosophy of peace is a consolidation of the individual moral, philosophical anthropological and social scientific perspectives of human performance or self-presentation. Conflict, Violence and Peace form a triad in human life. Galtung concentrates more on conflict which is an integral component of human nature and society. As long as human being self-consciously treats it as something positive in the sense of having potentiality to be contributive to life through transformation of itself, conflict does not lead to violence. When conflict is negative in the sense of being stubbornly unchangeable it can only be transformed into violence. Conflict, for Galtung, consists in incompatibility of interest-goals between two parties. Each of the parties here is a significant ‘other’. Conflict has three aspects according to Galtung, Viz. (a) behavioral (b) attitudinal and (c) contradictory. There is no limit to contradiction so far as contentment in life is concerned, because, contentment is contentment of humans who are capable of happiness (Sukha) as well as suffering (Dukha). Contradiction is manifest in one’s behaviour and attitude. The nature of a conflict depends on the contradiction that normally gets manifested in one’s behavior accompanied by conflict energy. Conflict is also an energy which may be positive or negative. As Galtung says, “....the quality of conflict energy enters as a major factor, making a distinction between positive energy, P, used to restore and enhance the wholeness of life(love, non-violent, associate action) and negative energy ,N, used to separate and destroy life (hatred, violent, dissociative action).” According to Galtung, both types of conflict energy can feed on themselves. Love-non-violence can increase, so can hatred—violence. Galtung says, “When the energy is free, the actors carrying this
energy may be like ionized atoms searching for a conflict formation to lock into. Given the abundance of contradictions, he who will find, unloading positive or negative conflict energy, or both. If this energy is positive, there is no problem except the scarcity of supply relative to demand. But freely floating negative energy, hatred and violent (e.g. military) capacity in search of a conflict formation is detrimental; it not only reproduces and increases itself, but also generates new contradictions. Since energy does not die, conflict energy will remain. The alternative human as non-violent and peace-loving human can surely emerge if and only if the negative conflict energy is built down and the positive is built up. The enhancement of positive conflict energy i.e. love-non-violence will transform the conflict from one shape to another, may not necessarily to any higher level. Galtung admits that it is “more easily said than done: build down the negative and build up the positive conflict energy, and then use positive rather than negative energy.” But this is perhaps the only solution. Conflict resolution ignoring the possible backlash or resurgence of the negative energy in anew form is not solution. In fact conflict as conflict energy cannot be annihilated/terminated or resolved, it can only be transformed. The ethics that can be assigned to individual actors and social group agencies is to underplay the negative and underscore the positive conflict energy. Neither direct violence nor indirect violence can be countered in its own terms.

Corresponding to three types of violence resulting from negative conflict energy, there are three categories of peace. Galtung describes them in the following way:

1. “Direct positive peace”: It consists of verbal and physical kindness, good to the body, mind and spirit of self and other, addressed to all basic needs, survival, well – being, freedom and identity. “Love is the epitome of this: a union of bodies, minds and spirits.”

2. “Structural Positive peace”: This ‘substitutes freedom for repression and equity for exploitation, and then reinforces this with dialogue instead of
penetration, *integration* instead of segmentation, *solidarity* instead of fragmentation, and *participation* instead of marginalization.’

3. “Cultural positive peace”: This ‘substitute’s legitimation of peace for legitimation of violence; in religion, law and ideology; in language; in art and science; in schools, universities and media; building a positive peace culture.’ ‘In the inner space of the self, this means to open for several human inclinations and capabilities, not repressing’.

Understanding of the self in its inner space and dialogical approach to the other towards formation of a non-violent state –of –affairs in human world are integrally connected .Peace is a combination of love- non-violent positive energy. According to Galtung, the negative and discouraging proposition ‘non-violence does not work’ is rather uninformed, given the amazing successes in the second half of this century. These successes include Gandhiji’s *swaraj* campaign for India’s independence from 1920, the liberation of arrested Jews in Berlin in February,1943, Martin Luther King Jr’s campaign in the US south from 1956, the anti –Viet Nam war movement, inside and outside Viet Nam , the ‘peoples power’ movement in Philippines in1986, The Children’s power movement in South Africa from 1976,1986, etc. Hence, for Galtung, non-violence and peace is real in the face of the reality of conflict (negative) and violence. Their parallel reality contributes a value of human life and also the natural world infinitely underplaying the negative conflict energy and violence hatred combination. Perfectibility in human nature that Gandhi speaks of is a basic component of Galtung’s philosophy of peace and its programmatic social translation for building an alternative image of the human in violence –ridden socio- political and cultural contexts.

J.Krishnamurti’s philosophy is fundamentally for an alternative human perspective bereft of violence, egotism and greed for power and domination over others,-the perspective of peace and non-violence. But his position is radical
compared to Gandhi and Galtung for the reason that he rejects even the notion of ‘countering violence’ because countering is a form of re-acting and reactions too carries the seed of violence. Krishnamurti speaks of a parallelism according to which the discovery of the face of violence in one’s own self is the starting-point for its transcendence towards an alternative psyche and an alternative form of life. This alternative psyche and form of life is not in reaction to an erstwhile concocted self and life which is more concept-bound i.e. bound by concepts handed down to the individual from various external sources and nurtured by a kind of education that has no link with the real self of man. The discovery of the face of violence, and its allied vices like cruelty, greed for power, envy etc helps us only for reaching out to an alternative that is transcendent of them but not for countering them with their weapons. In explicating his idea of freedom, Krishnamurti rejects the idea of freedom from and this rejection is consistent with his thesis: “If you say you are free from something, it is a reaction which will then become another reaction which will bring about another conformity, another form of domination. In this way you can have a chain of reactions and accept each reaction as freedom. But it is not freedom; it is merely a continuity of a modified past which the mind clings to. ……reaction sets up its own pattern and you get caught in that pattern. You think it is something new. It is not; it is the old in a different mould. Any social or political revolt will inevitably revert to the good old bourgeois mentality.” A non-violent and peaceful life both at individual and collective levels is possible when one takes recourse to an alternative mode of existence after discovering one’s true nature. Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, and therefore the beginning of transformation or regeneration. To understand oneself there must be the intention to understand. There should not be any condemnation or justification in understanding, because if we begin to condemn we shall not understand his movement. As Krishnamurti stated-“To understand that process there must be
the intention to know ‘what is’, to follow every thought, feeling and action; and to understand ‘what is’ is extremely difficult, because ‘what is’ is never still, never static, it is always in movement. The ‘what is’ is what you are, not what you would like to be; it is not the ideal, because the ideal is fictitious, but it is actually what you are doing, thinking and feeling from moment to moment. ‘What is’ is the actual, and to understand the actual requires awareness, a very alert, swift mind. But if we begin to condemn ‘what is’, if we begin to blame or resist it, then we shall not understand its movement. If I want to understand somebody, I can not condemn him: I must observe, study him. I must love the very thing I am studying. If you want to understand a child, you must love and not condemn him. You must play with him, watch his movements, his idiosyncrasies, his ways of behavior; but if you merely condemn, resist or blame him, there is no comprehension of the child. Similarly, to understand ‘what is’, one must observe what one thinks, feels and does from moment to moment. That is the actual. Any other action, any ideal or ideological action, is not the actual; it is merely a wish, a fictitious desire to be something other than ‘what is’.

To understand ‘What is” requires a state of mind in which there is no identification or condemnation, which means a mind that is alert and yet passive. We are in that state when we really desire to understand something; when the intensity of interest is there, that state of mind comes into being. When one is interested in understanding ‘what is’, the actual state of the mind, one does not need to force, discipline, or control it; on the contrary, there is passive alertness, watchfulness. This state of awareness comes when there is interest, the intention to understand.”

To understand oneself it is not necessary to accumulate knowledge or to gather experience. Experience can only tell us the method of solution of past problems and crisis, but as the societal problem is not static, mere experience can not tell
us how to solve the problem. It is the matter of one’s understanding that how I can medicate the problem. And for that understanding inner or psychological revolution is needed. And for inner or psychological revolution in oneself one must understand the thoughts and feelings in relationship.

Krishnamurti thinks that any partial revolution either in social, economic and political can not reform society, because societal crisis is in the human consciousness and is focused in every human being. Krishnamurti stated, “It is realized by many of the people that some fundamental changes in the constitution of human organization called society is essential if we are not postpone facing the crisis squarely any more. But, so far we have any attempted to change the outer structure, viz. the social and political order only. But outer structure is merely an expression of the structure of human consciousness and until and unless there is a fundamental change in the constitution of consciousness, we shall breed the same problem only in different forms.”

This dynamic crisis of the world can be solved through a dynamic approach. Any method or formula can never comprehend such dynamic problem. Method or formula creates more confusion and misery in the society.

The crisis of the society has been created by us, we are responsible for this. Because the individual problem is world problem. Krishnamurti stated, “we are responsible for this appalling misery and confusion, not another, but you and I. Because you are thoughtless, unaware, wrapped up in your those values that are immediately gratifying, you have created this immense, engulfing disaster. War is a spectacular and bloody expression of our daily life, our life of competition, ill will, social; and national division, and so on. You are responsible for this chaos, not any particular group, not any individuals, but you; you are the mass, you are the world. Your problem is the world’s problem.”

Right thinking comes through self knowledge, which is revolutionary and creative. Creative thinking which comes through self- knowledge is the salvation
of all our miseries and confusion of the society. Right thinking and right thought are different because right thinking is the understanding of relationship, it is dynamic, where as right thought is static, one can learn about right thought from his master or from books, or following any pattern, right thought cannot solve the problem of crisis of society because the problem is dynamic, no static concept can solve the dynamic problem. Societal problem is newer and newer in everyday life. It arises through everyday activities, thinking, and feeling. So, right thought can never be able to solve such kind of problem. But right thinking can solve the problem as it is related to daily activities. But the very pertinent question related to this problem arises that how one is to change radically his relationship? How a man can alter his image of his mind?

To change one’s image of mind, one has to understand desire and pleasure, as all our inward values and judgments are based on desire and pleasure. And for transformation of society inward revolution is necessary.

The active principle of life is pleasure. So, one has to understand the meaning and nature of pleasure and also to know how it arises. One has to examine actually to find out how to deal with pleasure, its right place, its wrong place, its worthiness etc. And relatedly, to examine pleasure one must go into desire. As Krishnamurti stated- “To understand pleasure, we must go into desire. We must find out what desire is, how it comes, what gives it a duration and whether desire can ever end. We have to understand how it comes into being, how it has continuity, and whether it can ever come to an end---- as it should .Unless we really understand this, this pretending to be without desire, has no meaning; it destroys your mind, twists your mind, warps your being. And to understand whatever there is to understand, you need a very healthy, sane, clear mind, not a distorted mind, not a mind that is twisted, controlled, shaped, beaten out of its clarity”\(^{15}\)
Conflict in society, according to Krishnamurti, arises due to the division in relationship, and the division comes through observation, e.g. when we become a fan or supporter of some one, we have an image of that person, it may be the case that we heard the song of this singer (in case of singer) and we have accumulated knowledge about the reputation and fame of the singer. So, we have an image of the singer and this image comes through observation and knowledge. And this image brings a division. For example if I have an image of the singer and another image of other singer, this image creates division between these two singers in my mind, and accordingly these images create conflict and jealousy. But when there is freedom from knowledge in relationship, division ceases and so as soon as conflict also ceases.

But the question is how can mind will be free from image and division? What will be the alternative image of the human mind to establish a conflict-less society or to understand relationship? Krishnamurti’s answer to this question is, it is possible only when one can learn how to observe. He stated, “……. That is only possible when you can learn how to observe, how to observe yourself and another. It is far more important to observe yourself and not the other, because what you are, the other is; you are the world and the world is you, the two are not separate………. And to observe this the mind must be free to look, free from distortion of opinions, conclusions; then the mind is fresh to look, to learn.”

With Gandhi, philosophy is action-oriented. Action –reaction –critiquing form one unitary whole and finally gets founded upon an ultimate value perspective of non-violence. The ultimate goal of human life i.e. liberation in its traditional Indian philosophical sense is not totally dropped from this perspective because the very meaning of non-violence in its axiological sense is derived from the notion of infinite, love of the infinite i.e. God or Brahman. The vindication of
non-violence and portraying an alternative image of the human thus owes to tradition to a large extent in Gandhi’s case.

Galtung’s view of man follows from two interlinked sources, viz. the source of violence itself and then counter-thesis of violence. The source of violence means a proper understanding of the nature of violence itself in its various dimensions through a schematized or taxonomic presentation. The counter-thesis of violence means peace initiative and peace design in and through social scientific understanding of peace and non-violence vis-à-vis conflict and violence. The source of conflict and violence, for Galtung, lies in individual psyche as well as in social structuring of human vices available in sedimented version over a long history. The alternative image of the human can be extracted from this alternative peace programme in society.

J.Krishnamurti, as we have pointed out, speaks of a parallelism if we have to think of any peace programme in the line of Krishnamurti, it can be chalked out only on the basis of a self-realization without encountering and reacting to what we understand and conceptualize as vices and not acceptable. When consciousness is awakened to what is real and not merely conceptual, our thinking, acting, choosing and our living as such become creative. The values of non-violence and peace become vibrant in living and not merely recorded and documented in books, theories and speeches.

The alternative image of the human is perhaps a parameter, a yardstick for all these three thinkers for a radical and creative change of life in a qualitative sense. We live in a time when we should think of extracting the best of each of their philosophies.
NOTES AND REFERENCES:
4. Young India, July, 1931.
8. Ibid PP.52-53.
11. FFK, PP 89-90.