CHAPTER —II

Concept of Non-violence: Gandhi and Krishnamurti.

The word ‘Ahimsa’ literally means non-injury, or more narrowly non-killing, and more widely harmlessness, renunciation of the will to kill and intention to hurt any living thing, abstention from hostile thought, word and act. Almost all the systems of Indian Philosophy accepted it as one of the cardinal virtues.

The Jainas, the most rigorous practitioners of ‘ahimsa’ have classified himsa or violence into two broad heads viz, arambhaja and anarambhaja, i.e. unavoidably and intentional violence. The arambhaja himsa includes unavoidable violence committed in the exercise of one’s profession, violence committed in defense of person and property, and in the performance of domestic duties. In Hindu epics, ahimsa could be practiced with success only by a saint who has renounced all worldly pursuits. In Buddhism; ahimsa is in essential to every monk. The concept of ahimsa (non-violence) is also found in Vedas, Upanishads. The popular preaching of Vedas goes ---‘Ma himssyat sarva bhutane’ (do not kill any living being). In the Vedic literature the term ‘Ahimsa’ is used as a noun, meaning non-injury. In Veda, Indra chant hymns in such a manner that it may not do any harm. In the Chandagya Upanishad meditation, charity, right dealing, non-injury to life and truthfulness are the right forms of conduct.

Non-violence is thus traditionally considered to be a virtue which covers every spheres of life, i.e. physical, mental and emotional. Absistence from killing and injury is the physical side or aspect. Mentally it gives a spirit to think well-wishing even for evil-doers. Non-violence builds the foundation of ethics and morality.
Both Gandhi and Krishnamurti proceed towards the concept of non-violence within a value perspective and as a principal moral regulative force in human life from their respective philosophical anthropological positions. For Gandhi exteriorities of human life referring to expressions of unfulfilled desires, selfishness, stimulus-response etc and aspects of human life in isolation do not constitute what human nature really is. Freud and Freudians, for example, explicate the concept of man and develop a philosophical anthropology on the basis of analysis of unconscious urges and impulses. Thinkers like Hobbes seek to determine human nature in terms of a social drive of self-centeredness. According to some thinkers and sociologists, it is the social condition and social condition alone that is constitutive of human nature. Rationalists try to explicate human nature in terms of the primacy of rationality manifest in human thought and action. Existentialists mostly speak of individual uniqueness or characteristics of each separate individual and impossibility of a universal human nature though some of the important existentialist thinkers speak of an inner core of human existence. In contrast with these thinkers Gandhi holds that such partial and superficial dimensions of human existence do not point to the basic truth about man. The basic truth about man does not and logically cannot consist in the ‘brute force’ because that is shared by sub-human or non-human animals too. But the ‘soul force’ or ‘divine spark’ is the unique characteristic of humans and the essential and distinguishing mark of humans. Man has the ability to respond to the call of this spirit in him and can rise above the domain of the brute, that is, the domain of violence. This awakening to the spirit or soul force is the highest realization of human perfectibility in terms of its being equivalent to God-realization or the unity of individual self with the divine in Advaita sense. This awakening is entry to the domain of non-violence. Gandhi went for a social translation of this spiritual realization the possibility of which is always and universally within each individual human being as ‘perfectibility’. The social
translation consists in practicing non-violence in the individual, personal space as well as in the public or collective space. Rising above brute force, for Gandhi, means victory of spirit over matter, friendship and love over envy, jealousy and isolation, non-violence over violence. As a further theoretical outcome of this philosophical anthropology, Gandhi viewed human history in a special sense. As Raghvan Iyer puts it, "Human history is, for Gandhi, neither a unilinear trend of progress nor a static picture of eternal recurrence, but, rather, a spiral-like movement that is determined by the power of spirit over matter within the limits of the course plotted out by Karma, the compensatory law of ethical causation".  

Like Gandhi, J. Krishnamurti’s concept of non-violence is grounded upon a definite view of human nature, but unlike Gandhi, this theory or view of human nature does not carry any glorification of human essence. On the contrary, it starts with focusing on the negative, hypocritical and injurious aspects of human nature. Also his philosophical anthropology rejects any allegiance to tradition, nation or traditional philosophical system because for him, it is the allegiance of this kind that develops the contradiction between the conceptual self and real self of human individual,—the contradiction that perpetually conceals itself and the conceptual self dominates the world. But it is evident that Krishnamurti too, though not explicitly, nurtures the idea of positive potentiality or perfectibility of human nature. Otherwise individual self would never be able to rise above the negative dimension of its nature. But to go beyond this perpetuation of the conceptual self in terms of dominating others, seeking respectability, continuously rejecting or setting aside what some one really is and glorifying itself referring to tradition and lineage one must start with taking cognizance of all the negative elements of one’s mind i.e. one must choiselessly encounter one’s own real self. Hence for Krishnamurti, human nature has all these negative dimensions and at the same time has the perfectibility as potentiality to understand itself through a process of
self-perception and self-analysis. Through this self-realization man can free himself; it is not *freedom from something or some state of affairs* as reaction to that something or state of affairs but freedom as such and as a state of mind, freedom in terms of a psychological mutation. Only after achieving this freedom one may proceed towards social change. From Krishnamurti’s standpoint the negative aspects of human nature and the competence of human being to go beyond these negative dimensions constitute what man is. Surpassing the negative dimensions man discovers his true, untainted nature and only then he earns the right to talk about non-violence.

**Gandhi:**

Though the concept is not a new one and it has a long tradition from Vedic-Upanishadic period Gandhi’s name is commonly identified with the concept of ahimsa or non-violence. It has been noted that Gandhi will be remembered as one of the very few who have set the stamp of an idea in an epoch and that idea is non-violence. Gandhi’s views of politics and especially of social and individual ethics are firmly based upon human nature and human perfectibility. He started with a very definite conviction about what man is in his essential nature and what he becomes through a false view of himself, what he should be and can become, and his place in a law governed cosmos.

In his autobiography, Gandhi asserted that the brute by nature knows no self-restraint, and man is man because he is capable of, and only in so far as he exercises, self-restraint. According to Gandhi, non-violence is the law of human species as violence is the law of the brute. The moment man is awakened to the spirit within himself he cannot remain violent. The essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can raise himself above passions, selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute
nature and not to the immortal spirit of man., but the latter remains confined to the world of violence.

Gandhi introduces ahimsa to counteract with violence not merely to resist but also to practice the positive approaches of life. Gandhi holds-“I accept the interpretation of ahimsa viz, that it is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil doer. But it doesn’t mean helping the evil doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence on the contrary love, the active state of ahimsa requires. You to reset the wrong-doer by dissociating yourself from him even though it may offend him or injure him physically.”

One more reason for Gandhi’s preference of non-violence is that he sees a violent society is unwilling to acknowledge the essential dignity and worth of each of its members and finds the violent life at war with itself. In such a society and for such people fear and suspicion are wide spread, and speech is used not to uncover commonalities but to intimidate and terrify. When this occurs he sees individuals stuck at the age of the ‘brute’ unwilling to develop morally. Gandhi holds that such people are fighting against an imagined enemy without and neglecting the real enemy within.

Gandhi sees the initial use of violence in infecting a wide range of people. Increasingly, it becomes an ordinary tool to settle conflicts and demands compliance. Familiarity with violence eventually invites its use against anyone who stands in the way. Gandhi expects that when violence becomes institutionalized it will be readily directed at farmer friends and allies. In this situation of institutionalization of violence, violence can crept anytime and anywhere. He holds that once the custom of effecting reforms by force gets established, the people tend to become dull and lifeless.
Every human being is blessed with unique and unconquerable spirit of excellence of higher vision of life as ordained by God within the great force of non-violence. Though the concept of non-violence literally means absence of violence or negation of violence, in Gandhi’s philosophy it acquires a positive nuance pointing to its features which can be practiced in one’s life and the life of the collectivity. The main and highest source of its positive meanings lies in its equation with truth and truth being further an equivalence of God. The logic of truth-God equation is preceded by the meaning of love embedded in the concept of non-violence which, for Ramchandra Gandhi, is essentially ‘non-injury’ as the right translation of Ahimsa. He writes, “In Mahatma Gandhi’s translation, ‘ahimsa’ is ‘non-violence’, the progressive minimisation of coercion in the conduct of human affairs, the foreswearance of animal slaughter and cruelty to animals as far as is possible in the struggle for honourable survival—at least this, the whole exercise of restraint requiring to be set in a context of deepening and growing love of all creatures and their common creator, God.”

Love has the element of sensibility and it is experiential in character. It can never be through injury or violence. If truth-God equivalence has a special meaning in terms of truth being the nature of ultimate reality and having an ultimate status as God has, truth as God can be realized only through love, love for all. Truth cannot be, never will be, and reached except through non-violence.

According to Gandhi, non-violence is the greatest and most active force in the world. He defined non-violence as—“Avoiding injury to any creature into thought, word and deed”. It is a positive force, when positively put it means love in the largest sense that means love for all without discrimination of good doers and evil doers. Non-violence does not mean meek submission to the will of the doer. Rather, it inspires man to stand against the will of the tyrant. It not only enables us to conquer the opponent but also unites with all our fellowmen.
The futility of violence as a means of universal and ultimate victory is the root cause of Gandhi’s preference for non-violence. Gandhi repeatedly tells us that violence is the force and weapon of the brutes, while non-violence enriches the humane tradition. It is soul-force. It call forth justice not in law enforced, but in law realized from the care of the heart. Gandhi holds that Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When any one refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to his conscience, he uses soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to him. He does not like it. If by using violence he forces the Government to repeat the law, he is employing what may be termed body-force. If he does not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, he uses soul-force. It involves sacrifice of self. Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of other. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes. Men have before now done many things which are subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right. A particular thing is wrong because he thinks so but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgment. It is therefore meet that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong, and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. This is the key to the use of soul-force. Gandhi uses the soul-force to eliminate body-force or any other force that only welcomes chaos and stands in the way of inner harmony and self-realization. Gandhi wanted to make every living being aware of the worth of living i.e.God. He points towards this positive aspect of non-violence as a great humanistic force. He accepted the interpretation of ahimsa as it is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil doer. He holds, “In its positive form Ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of Ahimsa, I must love my
enemy....................This active Ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness.  

Gandhi holds that the way to achieve a wider love is to pay attention to the 'means'. Gandhi says that means and end are convertible terms in his philosophy of life. For him, means are after all everything. As the means so the end. Non-violence is the way or means to attain truth or end. Hence he stated that both the terms (means and end) are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to separate them. Both 'Satya' and 'Ahimsa' are inherent in nature and in man and underlying the constant working of a cosmic law and constituting the only basis of human aspiration and action in the midst of society.

Gandhi found that truth led him to non-violence or ahimsa, but there is no difference between them, and they are like the two sides of the same coin as the universe is governed by the law of truth and love. He holds that if we have truth in us, it is bound to have its effect, and truth is love, but without love there cannot be truth (Speech Sept. 1929).

Ahimsa is the manifest part of truth. Men cannot reach up to the unmanifest and transcendental ground of absolute truth but they can perceive its manifestation through love. In his letter from prison to inmates of Satyagrahashram, he stated—'They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say which the obverse is, and which is the reverse? Nevertheless ahimsa is the means; Truth is the end. Means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. When once we have grasped this point, final victory is beyond the question'...

Truth or Satya is the end and it is identical with God. Ahimsa as a means involves the human agency in a personal commitment to truth which is conceptually impersonal. Personal commitment consists in love. The concept of God too, for
Gandhi, is explicable as being infinitely loving as well as infinitely powerful. Hence, Truth-God equation and love being the essence of non-injury or non-violence lead us to a very important synthesis of personal and impersonal, Samkaras impersonal Brahman and Vaishnva or Christian view of God. From this viewpoint non-violence or ahimsa is unquestionably superior to violence and injury.

The power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent. A protagonist of violence invariably seeks the help of a shield, a rifle, a sword etc. While a votary of nonviolence is sufficiently equipped to face any problem with his intrinsic and inner power i.e. love, tolerance, service, non-in infliction etc. Violence is needed for the protection of one’s humour. The end of violence is surest defeat, but the ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory. Gandhi emphasizes spiritual values of non-violence because it is more or less coordinates with the daily activities of life. When non-violence acts and reacts upon the mind of an individual in the midst of ordinary day to day activities and experience, it paves an altogether newer dimension to look within and look at the world disinterestedly. The aim of path of non-violence which is in fact the path of love is the merger of the individual self into the universal self or God. The search for truth is in vain unless it is founded on ahimsa. After all experiments Gandhi found that a perfect vision of truth can follow a complete realization of ahimsa.

Gandhi interpreted ‘Truth’ as ‘Moksha’ and ahimsa as exercise in Tapas, which gives a new meaning to traditional values. Moksha for him, signified the vision of Absolute truth, to be attained by means of Tapas or self suffering. Gandhi’s all striving was moksha or self-realization. In the last part of his autobiography Gandhi holds—“My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. And if every page of these chapters does not proclaim to the reader that the only means for the realization Truth is ahimsa, I shall dream all my labour in writing these chapters to have been in vain”.

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Based upon the logic of means-end synthesis, Gandhi conceptualized the progress and development of human societies as a journey of human kind through the path of ahimsa. Violence means halt in this progress. As Bhiku Parekh observes, “For Gandhi humanity was indivisible, and no man could degrade or brutalise other without also degrading or brutalizing himself,...”

This concept of indivisible unity of mankind, according to Parekh, is based on three principles of the Indian doctrine of Advaita: “the principle of the unity of man was not a mere rhetoric, a pious sentiment or a moral postulate but the deepest truth about human existence. It conveyed the profound insights that men necessarily rose and fell together, that no man could ever benefit at the expense of another and that his relation to himself and to others, his internal and external world formed part of a single pattern. At a different level the principle of the unity of life made the same point that in harming other living beings man harmed himself as well. Violence to them coarsened his sensitivity, rendered him insensitive to their well-being, and could not but affects his relations with his fellow-men. At a yet higher level the principle of the unity of creation made the point that in violating the rhythm and harmony of the cosmos, man damaged the basic condition of his existence and sooner or later paid a heavy price”.

Democratic format of human life and existence thus gathers a special meaning in the context of Gandhi’s philosophy of non-violence.

Gandhi holds, “True democracy can never come through violent means as the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make the individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated ahimsa.”

For Gandhi, Satya was an absolute reality that we could only partially grasp. The many sidedness of truth that we experience is nothing but a consequence of such relative knowledge. Overcoming these limitations of our ‘relative knowledge’ for
a more comprehensive grasp of the absolute truth cannot be made possible by violence (himsa). Only ahimsa or non-violence could make the quest for such truth viable. He wanted to see India with truth and non-violence as his only clues. Gandhi operationalised this quest in his strategy of Satyagraha as a truth-force. Satyagraha is universally applicable as every one can practice it, every one can respond to it and it can be applicable to every spheres of life. Violence is the negation of this spiritual force. And this force can be cultivated by those who will entirely shun violence. Satyagraha excludes the use of violence in any shape or form, whether in thought, speech or deed.

As the truth is universally applicable and anyone can practice it, non-violence is also a power which can be wielded equally by all children young men or women. A votary of ahimsa cannot subscribe to the utilitarian formula. He will strive for the greatest good of all and die for the attempt to realize the ideal. He will therefore be willing to die, so that the others may live, as ahimsa means (positively) the largest love, the greatest charity. The art of dying in and through and for non-violence shows mankind has a greater power than violence or himsa. Gandhi always tried to avert the strategy of himsa because it helps in growing fear in society, and this fear psychosis is a big obstacle for shaping a better society. This fear eats up the inner growth of humanism. Gandhi holds-“Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence. Violence does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering the means of combating the course of fear………………The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity of sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear………………He who has not overcome all fear cannot practice ahimsa to perfection”

According to Gandhi, non-cooperation and civil disobedience are not separate from Satyagraha. Satyagraha is the light which reveals the truth. So, non-
cooperation and civil disobedience are also related to ahimsa. As a humanist, Gandhi teaches us how to remain pure in thought and action through non-cooperation. Gandhi holds—“Non-violence is the most vital and integral part of non-cooperation. We may fail in everything else and still continue our battle if we remain non-violent. But we capitulate miserably if we fail in adhering to non-violence. Let it be remembered that violence is the keystone of the Government edifice. Since violence is the sheet-anchor and its final refuge, it has rendered itself almost immune from violence on our side by having prepared itself to frustrate all violent effort by the people. We therefore co-operate with the Government in the most active manner when we resort to violence. Any violence on our part must be taken of our stupidity, ignorance and impotent range. To exercise restraint under the gravest provocation is the truest mark of soldier ship. The veriest tyro in the art of war knows that he must avoid the ambushes of his adversary. And every provocation is a dangerous ambush into which we must resolutely refuse to walk”.

Gandhi emphasizes spiritual value of non-violence because there is some consonance of it co-ordinate with the daily activities of life. When non-violence acts and reacts upon the mind of an individual from the standpoint of ordinary day to day activities and experiences, it paves an altogether newer dimension of life to look within and look disinterestedly. Gandhi believed that the aim of the path of non-violence which is in fact the path of love is the merger of the individual self into the universal self or God.

The humanistic value of non-violence lies in the education that it imparts to all humans about the truth of oneness through love and the equivalence between truth realization and God-realization. From this point of view, which is more of an advaitian kind, Gandhi believed in the possibility of inter-religiosity and all religious truth being in essential agreement with indivisibility of reality and the
concept of one Truth, that is God. From this philosophical perspective, being cannot partitioned. But the fact of politics cannot go with it. Hence Gandhi regretted: -“As a man of non-violence I cannot forcibly resist the proposed partition, if the Muslims of India really insist upon it. But, I never can be willing party to the vivisection. I would employ every non-violent means to prevent it. For it means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to love together as one nation. Partition means a patent untruth. My whole soul rebels against the idea that humanism and Islam represent two antagonistic cultures and doctrine is for me a denial of God. For I believe with my whole soul that the God of the Quran is also the God of the Gita, and that we are all, no matter by what name designated, children of the same God, I must revel against the idea that Muslims or Indians who were Hindus the other day changed their nationality on adopting Islam as their religion.”

Gandhi’s non-violence is non-violence of being towards other beings. Therefore its positive connotations are more important than its negative one in terms of sheer abstention from violence. As a positive concept, ‘passive resistance’, for example, does not simply speak for passivity or non-action. It is a moral action in which the value of non-violence is translated as practicable to set as example for everyone. Universalizability of non-violence as moral concept thus refers to truth. God-love equation, and unlike Kant, not to pure, abstract universal reason. From Gandhi’s viewpoint, as adequate conception of moral life is impossible without setting a real context in public space. Pure reason alone cannot bring about a moral life and its universality too depends almost solely on the moral sense where reason has a role but only in a supportive way. Similarly, truth also, for Gandhi, is truth of being than the truth of statements. As truth of being, the primary function of truth is to conquer self-deception. As Mrinal Miri points out, “The minimal central idea of Gandhian conception of truth is that of the conquest of self-
Once the veil of self-deception is removed, one is in touch with the truth of one's being. For human beings, however, self-deception is almost inescapable. God is the only being who is necessarily free from all self-deception; the truth of God's being is never hidden from him. God necessarily lives in truth and not in self-deception; it is in this sense that God and the life of truth are, as it were, one and the same; and hence Gandhi's occasional equation of God with Truth and vice versa.  

Quest for truth and conquest of self-deception are indicative of and tantamount to search for a virtual form of life and a sadhana to translate this virtuality into actuality. The trio of truth-God- Ahimsa, therefore, is essentially directional; it is directed to all beings of the world; it is also self-directed as a feed back in terms of conquering self-deception to be at home with truth. In phenomenological term, it involves as intentionality of self-consciousness. J Krishnamurti also speaks of non-violence and conquest of self-deception. There is proximity between Gandhian perspective and that of Krishnamurti. But there is also essential difference between them in terms of their philosophical anthropological positions and acceptance vis-a-vis rejection of tradition.

Krishnamurti.

Jiddu Krishnamurti lived through the most tumultuous part of a century that saw the two world wars, the splitting of atom, the breakdown of the ideologies, the savage destruction of the earth, and the degeneration of every aspect of human life. It was a century that could also claim phenomenal progress in various technological fields. So, on the one hand he experienced various technological and scientific advancements in this world and on the other hand, stagnation of human mind. Though by the grace of scientific innovation we are now in an
advance society, psychologically the individual has not changed at all. Living in this advance society we are still living in a violent society. The outward changes which are brought about by wars and revolutions have failed to change the basic nature of man and therefore of society. There has been outward progress from the bullock cart to the jet plane, but psychologically the individual has not changed at all, and the structures of society throughout the world have been created by individuals. The outward social change is the result of inward change of individuals. So, the present violent society is created by individual and each of us is solely responsible for this. Krishnamurti says that human being is basically violent, but gradually he can transform his life into a non-violent being, but for doing this the individual has to change his mind, he has to purify his mind. But purification of mind does not mean to adopting a religious method or to uttering hymns. He says that to go into the problem of violence, one must be completely vulnerable, open to it. We would be able to go beyond violence, if we know how to look at violence not only outwardly in society i.e. the wars, the riots, the rational antagonism and class conflicts—but also in ourselves i.e. inwardly.

Krishnamurti holds that it is more important to understand violence as a fact, not as an idea, as a fact which exits in me, not in others. And one should expose himself to himself not to other self as because the others may not be interested. And once he understands that he is a violent man, he can escape gradually from the state of violence. But for this understanding he has to feel that he is responsible for all violent activities. And this feeling can bring tremendous vitality and passion to him. But if he blames his surrounding factor for his being violent he can never go beyond violence.

Generally, we think that violence in man comes from two sources, one from the time of birth i.e. innateness and other from the social and cultural heritage. But one has to go beyond these two factors i.e. he has to understand that for
whatever be the cause of his violence, it is a fact that he is violent and he has to accept this fact. This sense of understanding will give him a sense of becoming non-violent. Erich Fromm distinguished between defect at social level or socially patterned defect and neurosis at individual level. But Krishnamurti puts priority on a kind of self-diagnosis of the individual by dismissing all sets of ideas transmitted to the individual from external sources. Like Sartre he would take ‘lie’ and ‘bad faith’ not to others or society but one’s own self due to anguish. Claimining oneself to be non-violent does not wipe off one’s violence within oneself. This is to dishonour one’s freedom of understanding one’s own violent nature and avoid one’s responsibility to reverse one’s nature.

Violence is not merely killing; it is also violence when we use a sharp word. It is attitudinal in this sense. Moreover being attitudinal, violence cannot be justified or unjustified. A violent action can be justified from same angle and unjustified from another angle. Anger, for example, causes injury or violence. If someone defends his anger with reference to the cause of anger that when his close one is attacked by some person he is justified to be angry and violent on his close one’s opponent or enemy. Also it is his responsibility to protect his close one. Now the same enemy may be a close one of some one else who too may have the same type of justification for his own violence. Such type of violence is based on projection of one’s own self, wishes and desires in others. In the same way and on the same logic, a country develops its defense mechanism against other countries and individual human beings subscribe this logic by identifying themselves in terms of their nationalism. So is the case with inter-religious, inter-caste and inter-ethnic conflict and violence. Krishnamurti holds that It is violent when one identifies himself/herself to be an Indian, a Pakistani or an European or Identifies himself as a Hindu or Muslim or Christian, because the moment he identifies himself in this way he is isolating himself from the rest of mankind. His identity should be as human being. A man
who is seeking to understand violence does not belong to any country, religion, or any system, he is concerned with the total understanding of mankind. For understanding violence, we have to understand that it is just for conditioning that we are Indians or Pakistanis as we are the inhabitants of India or Pakistan or as I took birth in a Hindu family I am a Hindu. Fragmentation or isolation of this kind means preparedness for a conflictual relationship in which one dominates over the other.

According to Krishnamurti, the relationship which is based on power and domination inevitably invites conflict. There is no such thing as living in isolation. No country, no people, no individual can live in isolation; yet because people are seeking power in so many different ways, it automatically breeds isolation. Nationalism is a curse because through this very nationalistic, patriotic spirit, a wall of isolation is created. So, nationalism, which is a process of isolation, and an outcome of the search for power, cannot bring about peace in the world. Hence, nationalistic identity is also a type of violent identity. On this point there is some similarity between Krishnamurti and Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore too developed a critique of nationalism for its competitive nature and professionalism which isolates one nation and its individual members from the rest of World. He said, “The cult of the nation is the professionalism of the people. This cult is becoming their greatest danger, because it is bringing them enormous success, making them impatient of the claim of higher ideals. The greater the amount of success, the stronger are the conflicts of interest and jealousy and hatred which are aroused in men’s minds.....With the growth of nationalism, men has become the greatest menace to man”  16.

Rabindranath Tagore’s emphasis on individual dimension of human existence rather than the institutional aspect of it brings him closer to Krishnamurti’s philosophy. In the context of his critique of nation and nationalism he said, “I do not put my faith in any new institution, but in individuals all over the world who
think clearly, feel nobly, and act rightly..."17 Despite certain differences, Gandhi too would reject this cult of professionalism and national conflict. But the essential difference between Gandhi, Tagore and Krishnamurti is that Krishnamurti radicalized the concept of human consciousness and consciously rejected even a slightest reference to tradition or cultural history of humans vis-a-vis the history of their institutionalized being. For him, even a tiniest clue from the world of facts outside the individual mind would tend to create an institutionalized version of human mind. Social and cultural psychology, for him, is not the starting-point for unveiling the true nature of man and for beginning an alternative peaceful and non-violent mode of social existence. For social psyche to have an ethical dimension, it needs to be founded a transformed individual psyche.

To go beyond violence we have to forget the justified-ness or condemnation of violence because violence is violence. An uninterfered perception of the violent mind is not preceded by any judgement on violence or any promise to be loving and non-violent. In fact violence-non-violence binarism does not allow a violent agent to have this self-perception. Krishnamurti said, “To investigate the fact of your own anger you must pass no judgment on it, for the moment you conceive of its opposite you condemn it and therefore you cannot see it as it is. When you say you dislike or hate someone that is a fact, although it sounds terrible. If you look at it, go into it completely, it ceases, but if you say, ‘I must not hate; I must love in my heart’, then you are living in a hypocritical world with double standards. To live completely fully, in the moment is to live with ‘what is’, the actual, without any sense of condemnation or justification-then you understand it so totally that you are finished with it. When you see clearly the problem is solved.”18

According to Krishnamurti, to use the opposite concept of violence in order to get rid of violence is meaningless. The concept like non-violence which is
opposite of violence is just an ideal and that ideal cannot give us the sense of non-violence. All most in all great Epics and in sacred books of all religions there are innumerable sayings of saints and religious persons, but still we are adopting violence, we are fighting for getting more and more power, money etc. We are time and again chanting the hymns of such Epics but we disobey the principle of non-violence. If only by the ideal or concept we were able to go beyond violence, the priests, saints and rishis must obviously be non-violent. But the most sacred book like Bhagavad-Gita inspires a person to participate in war, because Lord Krishna inspires Arjuna to do so for it is his Swadharma or Varnadharma.

Krishnamurti believes that the world problem is individual problem, the individual is the universe and whenever we are able to realize that I am the focal centre of expression, the world's problem are solved. Fragmentation of individual is not possible, because individual is the molecule of society and society is a part of world. The individual is involved in the universe, the individual is not merely a part of universe, but a form of in which is focused the whole of universe. Hence, individual existence is also essentially relational. This relation poses a challenge to him because we hardly understand this relation and each other in relation. Relationship is a challenge to the individual man in every day life.

If we do not know how to meet with other people we will create the conditions which will breed war or violence. The world problem is our problem. We are not different from the world; hence we can save the world, which is ourselves, only by understanding the relationship of our daily life. As the world is ourselves so without any revolutionary or radical change in the world order is impossible without transformation of the individual. The revolution in social order without the individual transformation will lead only to further conflict and disaster. For society is the relationship of you and me and another. Without revolution in this relationship, all effort to bring peace is only a reformation, however
revolutionary, and replacement of one system with another system, which is retrogression.

Relationship based on mutual need is not true relationship and it brings only conflict. However we are interdependent on each other; we are using each other for a purpose, for an end. But, with an end in view relationship is not relationship in the meaning. One person may use another and vice-versa, but in this usage, we loose contact. A society based primarily on mutual usage is a society with violence at its very foundation.

Krishnamurti holds that in the process of understanding of oneself, not in isolation but in relationship, one will find that there is a deep, lasting transformation in which the usage of another as a means for one's own psychological gratification has come to an end. What is more important to establish a non-violent society is not how to act, what pattern to follow, or which ideology is the best, but the understanding of one's relationship with another. And this is the psychological revolution through which we can expect a non-violent society. This revolution is not the revolution based on idea or pattern. Any thought that produces a pattern of action will only lead to further ignorance and confusion. This fundamental revolution is the only creative factor in bringing about transformation in ourselves and in society.

According to Krishnamurti, ideas and thoughts are outcome of the past. Every knowledge whether it is scientific or theoretical is nothing but the outcome of the past. Even the idea prejudice or superstition all are the outcome of the past and the memory is residues of experience and it is the response of thought. To understand any challenge that comes in our social, political or in any part of life, we have to understand the total process of self, i.e., structure of ourselves. As the world is the projection of individual and the individual problem extends into a world problem, to understand the problem of violence in society and the world
problem as such, one has to understand the problem individually, in terms of a perception of one’s own self. This perception further reveals that most of the problems are in the relational sphere constituted by ourselves. It is not pure relationship but relationship with the desire to propitiate our ego and demands that is the source of problems and all violent and injurious activities in the world, one’s behavioral pattern is also determined by this false type of relationship and self-gratification. Unless one takes a critical cognizance of one’s behavioral pattern, that will lead to conflict and violence. A moral correction of it is possible only on the basis of a right and open perceptions of one’s own self.

For understanding the problem e.g. problem of violence in society we need not follow any leader or any boss as people of this kind hypnotize other people with their sweet utterances for their own gain and for dominating and superseding others. A boss or leader is not able to convince others to become non-violent because through his sweet deliberations people can be hypnotized for a particular moment, they may be able to understand the problem for that moment but when they face a situation which compels him to adopt violent method he will automatically forget the utterances of that boss or leader. On the contrary if one can understand the problem whole heartedly and experientially he will think twice for adopting violent method.

Self knowledge and understanding of the dynamics of relationship go together. With a projection of the conceptual self or ‘me’ in others, we create notions like ‘insider’, ‘outsider’, ‘foreigner’ etc. Violence finds its home here. Once the relationship is free along with self-knowledge or freedom of self from the conceptual self, true relationship is possible. Non-violence in the truest sense finds its home here. Relationship is the mirror in which one can see himself as he is. The very perception of what he is, in the moment of action in relationship
brings freedom. Self knowledge is the beginning of wisdom and without that self knowledge one cannot go far.

From the study of Gandhian and Krishnamurtian concept of non-violence it has come to our mind that there are some common points on which both the thinkers would agree. Like Krishnamurti, Gandhi also stressed on inward purification and self knowledge. Gandhi also recognized that man is a conditioned being and, as such, subject to the determination of the physical world. He recognizes the brute in man but believes that man can attain perfection if he desires so. Gandhi insists that since man is a part of the Divine, he can know his true nature and become truly man even as a lion brought up in the company of sheep does.¹⁹

The ultimate end in man’s life, for Gandhi is realizing the Absolute. And only through self knowledge, and inward purification this can be possible rather than outward form.²⁰ Both the thinkers holds that self purification should be the practical aim of non violence.

But one major point of difference lies in between two thinkers is that Krishnamurti never like to use the opposite word of violence to get rid of violence. He holds, “we can get rid of the fact, the actual but we cannot. We have had ideals without number, all the sacred books are full of them, yet we are still violent—so why not deal with violence itself and forget the word altogether?”²¹

On the contrary Gandhi used the concept of non violence to get rid of violence. His message to the nation was to follow the path of non-violence. Non-violence is the means for attaining the Truth or God. He inspires the Indian people to adopt these methods for gaining India’s freedom. Unlike Gandhi, Krishnamurti stressed on individual reformation rather than global transformation. As he said, the world problem is individual problem as the individual is the molecule of society and society is a unit of world. So, the moment one is able to transform
himself, rectify himself, he is also able to understand the evils of society and the world problem is solved. Krishnamurti said, that as one is not the caretaker of other, so one has no right to guide other to become non-violent. One has to rectify himself.

For krishnamurti, it is the first hand experience of ‘what we are’ which can be the basis of transforming ourselves from a violent, jealous state of mind to a free, non-violent, caring and loving state of mind. Non-violence can be brought about societal level from this beginning. To be able to do this, one needs to understand the extension of one’s conceptual and ego-specific self to social and cultural spaces through the projection of this self in others. Whenever we find this projection as not satisfying, we become aggressive to others. Hence, Krishnamurti, like the dialogical philosophers of Europe and with some resemblance of Buddhism, prepares a value perspective for building true human relationship. Like Kant, he also would prescribe that another should never be treated as a means. Like Martin Buber he also would agree that true human relationship lies in the space between I and Thou and not in I and It. But unlike Kant he would not treat pure practical reason as the sole and final reference point for determining what is moral and ethical. He speaks of a more primordial dimension of human existence the realization of which can lead all of us to a non-antagonistic, non-violent and awakened state. Non-violence as a moral philosophical concept is not a derivative; it is not derived from any existing or old philosophical system. Non-violence for Krishnamurti emerges as an actual, real state of affair in mind and in society from an actual and experiential encounter with one’s own violence in one’s own mind. Systems, philosophical, political or social- have their own targets that are not free of violence. Krishnamurti says, “Idealism is an escape from what is, and materialism is another way of denying the measureless depths of the present. Both the idealist and the materialist have their own ways of avoiding the complex problem of
suffering; both are consumed by their own cravings, ambitions and conflicts, and their ways of life are not conducive to tranquility. They are both responsible for the confusion and misery of the world.\textsuperscript{22}

One has to be careful in understanding Krishnamurti’s position. It is neither subscribing nor disowning any system or the past teachings of society, politics, history, shastras, because, disowning also is a reaction. Disowning as a reaction promises to build a system different from existing system. But this difference is no difference as it carries the age-old habit of mind to fall in the trap of action-reaction-suffering-violence complex network. The new beginning has two important concepts, viz. (i) Understanding the pit falls of this traditionally headed down notion of non-violence based upon subscription to same system and/or reaction to a system or pattern; (ii) facing one’s own mind inwardly to grow fully in one’s freedom internally and externally without violence. The value perspective that Krishnamurti prepares is based upon a special type of ‘observing’; “we have to observe, obviously, not only our lives but also is going on around us— the conflict, violence, the extra ordinary sense of despair, sorrow, meaningless existence. To escape from that we resort to all kinds of fanciful, sectarian beliefs. .....To observe, not as an Englishman, an American, a Hindu, Buddhist, Catholic, Protestant, Communist, socialist or what you will, but to observe without these conditioning attitudes, to observe without traditional acceptance, to observe without the ‘me’ interfering with the observation.”\textsuperscript{23}

The possibility of non-violence in existential an experiential sense lies in the capability of human subject for turning away from violence. Krishnamurti does not believe in the proposition “..... If you say ‘well, I am sorry, violence can never end’, then you and I have no means of communication, you have blocked yourself.....”\textsuperscript{24}. On this point perhaps there is a similarity between
Gandhi and Krishnamurti in projecting the enormous ‘perfectibility’ of human mind to be non-violent.

But ‘perfectibility’ for Krishnamurti would not be founded upon any reverence for tradition or say cultural heritage of any nation. Nor should it be related to any such system. Any fringe of any system in the practice, non-violence based upon self-perception will mar the sanctity or true religiosity of it, - religiosity that does not owe to any system or tradition but to the particular alternative state of mind. For Krishnamurti, the entire process of searching for non-violence as an integral part of human existence is experiential, and not conceptual or rational analytical. Hence similarity between Gandhi and Krishnamurti will not go very far. In fact the position of Krishnamurti in contemporary Indian philosophical tradition is rather unique. This relates to his views on consciousness, freedom and religion.

Let us summarize them for reaching the philosophical justification of the fundamental dissimilarity between Gandhi and Krishnamurti, and for that matter, dissimilarity between any contemporary thinker and Krishnamurti.

**Consciousness**

In the history of philosophy the concept of consciousness has been explicated in various ways. Such explications are from different metaphysical and ontological stances like materialism, idealism, behaviorism and so on. But such standpoints maintain a dichotomous perspective; sometimes it is a dichotomy of mind and body or thought and existence, sometimes it is an epistemological dichotomy of subject and object. So far as Krishnamurti is concerned, such dichotomies cannot reach us to the right awareness of consciousness. For Krishnamurti, consciousness is not based on any dichotomy or division. It is a whole. To qualify it is to fall in the trap of its fragments and lose sight of the whole field of consciousness. To think of it as a substance of Cartesian kind is also not correct. Descartes held that the essential qualification of consciousness is ‘thought’ and it is to be considered as a ‘thinking substance’ as distinguished from ‘material
substance' the essential qualification of which is 'extension'. But this is an idea of consciousness and not the real consciousness, which is a whole. Unlike Descartes, Krishnamurti holds that consciousness is not thought. Thought is transmitted through traditions, institutions and all sorts of fragmented and unlived sources. In the same vein he rejects the idea of sub-conscious as a concoction of a fragmented and dichotomous approach of ours towards describing what consciousness is. He says, "Is there such a thing as the sub-conscious at all? We use the word very freely. We have accepted that there is such a thing and all the phrases and jargon of the analysts and psychologists have seeped into the language; but is there such a thing?" This reminds us of Sartre's critique notion of the unconscious as indicative of break and spilt in consciousness that is impossible in existential sense. Hence, for Sartre, 'bad faith' which consists in fleeing from freedom and taking refuge in an enclosed and transferred identity of one's own self lacking authenticity cannot be explained and justified with reference to a divided portion of the consciousness called 'the unconscious'. Bad faith is a moral degeneration of the individual. According to Sartre, consciousness is freedom as such; it is no-thing. To assign a thing-like character to it is to betray its nature. For Krishnamurti, consciousness becomes thing-like when it is identified with specific thoughts; it is then equated with I-concept or 'me'. Krishnamurti holds that consciousness is creativity as such through an act of negation of thought and creation of new ideas from its original being.

However, the philosophies of Sartre and Krishnamurti cannot go together further. Sartre would not support the idea of suspending thought altogether and seek the solution of all problems in silence. On the contrary, Sartre would speak for generation of newer thoughts in course of man's search for his own identity. But Krishnamurti argues for the equation of consciousness and freedom on the basis of a total suspension of thought including its process of generation and
regeneration. He says, "the 'me' must entirely cease if there is to be peace in the world."²⁶ For him thought constructs this 'me' and we tend to make a false identification of it as 'consciousness'. He proposes dissolution of thought and unobstructed silence can reach us the true nature of consciousness and bring peace in the world. This suspension or dissolution does not require to follow a step-by-step analytical method; in his words, "you will understand that the only way to look at yourself is totally, immediately, without time."²⁷ The unfragmented total field of consciousness can be discovered only in this way and in the domain of silence beyond the noise of thought.

**Freedom.**

Krishnamurti’s idea of freedom is explicable as ‘freedom from the known’, - the known that is a past, from our conceptions of our selves and the world based upon that knowledge, from the chain of cause and effect, from time and measurement. It cannot be conceptualized or defined. It is absolute freedom. He said, "My only concern is to set man absolutely, unconditionally free"²⁸. To try to develop a theory of freedom is to make it conditional.

"There is no freedom within the network of cause-effect"²⁹, Krishnamurti commented. The cause-effect network, the chain of karma, the association of fear and sorrow with religion, cast, creed, or with anything for that matter, should be done away with to do understand the nature of freedom that Krishnamurti speaks of. Only man can break this nexus of causality because human mind, unlike animals, is not permanently framed, and interestingly, it has a self-capacity. Because of this self-capacity, he need not be a slave to tradition. To be loyal to tradition is to lose freedom as tradition always dictates what one should be and thus gives priority to a constructed self, the ‘me’, but not the real, concrete and existential self. The constructed self is a fragmented self; it is not real. Therefore the freedom it speaks of is also not real. It is an illusion, a past, a
long history and tradition. Once this nature of the so-called ‘self’ is realized and it is dissolved, there is a psychological mutation, and that is freedom.

To have real freedom in life, to live from moment to moment one has to be choicelessly aware of the nature of an illusory self that one nurtures and fosters so dearly in one’s mind and thought. Knowledge leads to selection and choice. If we are free from the burden of selection and choice, then the nature of that awareness will be choiceless awareness. We have to be aware of, mindful and watchful about our own minds without any interference. This is a freedom from freedom, not to fall back on bondage, but to throw away even the last vestige of bondage i.e. ‘the desire for freedom’. Truth alone liberates, and not our desire to be free. According to Krishnamurti, the very desire and effort to be free is a hindrance to freedom. In order to achieve freedom we have to begin with it.

‘Truth is the state of search’, Krishnamurti said. This search cannot be made possible without being completely psychologically free. Truth is manifest only in this state of freedom.

According to Krishnamurti, man should not make effort to become free, because, ‘effort is the very denial of understanding’. He said, “it is only quiet mind, the simple mind, the mind that is still, that is not overtaxed by its own effort,-- only such a mind shall understand, shall see truth.” Moreover, as Krishnamurti’s freedom is not a theory it has nothing to do with effort. It simply happens. It is not a theory; it is a phenomenon. One has to be in that phenomenon.

Freedom of Krishnamurti’s kind cannot be realized so long as fear in any form prevails in our mind. Fear always limits mind. A fearful mind cannot function wholly and properly; it takes a limited view of things. A mind that is always afraid of god or fate, for example, cannot be free. One has to have alertness of mind so that fear cannot creep into its purview.

Reality comprises facts of the world. Facts include anything mental and external, except any theoretical interruption. When any individual interpretation in the
form of evaluation or so takes place a fact becomes a fiction. Krishnamurti’s reality is a free man’s domain. Only a man who is psychologically free or uninterrupted by any theory or thought can comprehend reality. Krishnamurti, like Buddha, does not give any metaphysical account of reality because that would require conceptualization and categorization. Conceptualization and categorization always solidify the experiential and the existential. Krishnamurti’s freedom, unlike Advaitin’s moksa, cannot be reached through any concept-formation, conceptualization, categorization and distinction.

Freedom, for Krishnamurti, is essentially inward and experiential. The ethics of life follows from that internal space. He says, “To have inward solitude and space is very important because it implies freedom to be, to go, to function, to fly. After all, goodness can only flower in space just as virtue can flower only when there is freedom. We may have political freedom but inwardly we are not free and therefore there is no space. No virtue, no quality that is worthwhile, can function or grow without this vast space within oneself”.

Krishnamurti speaks of silence too in this connection and for him both are necessary because “it is only then the mind is alone, uninfluenced, untrained, not held by infinite varieties of experience, that it can come upon something totally new.” Experientiality that Krishnamurti talks about in the context of freedom is pure and simple; it does not have varieties, which would involve distinction, and selection and therefore conceptualization. In fact purposeful good action can come out of inward freedom that is within the internal space. Such a freedom consists in a negation of facticity; it is not a spoken fact. Interestingly, from such negative characterization of freedom positive ideas like virtue and goodness follow in the philosophy of J.Krishnamurti and thereby the idea of freedom too becomes a positive idea. Briefly speaking, freedom is explicable negatively in terms of freedom from fear, desire, aspirations etc that bring about fragmentations and conceptualizations and thereby a loss of experientiality. But
it explicable also in positive terms likes creativity, goodness and virtue. We may conclude by saying that these two aspects are integrally related in the context of Krishnamurti’s philosophy.

This concept of freedom is further related to what Krishnamurti understands by consciousness. Consciousness for Krishnamurti is non-dichotomous and a unitary whole that needs to be grasped not as an object of speculation or as it has been conceptualized by various traditions and cultures but in terms of existential realization of its acts in the present. The very realization that the conceptualized ‘me’ is not my real self is the gateway to freedom and wisdom. Technically speaking, Krishnamurti’s concept of freedom is not really a ‘concept’ in an abstract sense; it is based upon a phenomenological type of suspension of all presuppositions, not for the sake of any conceptual or mathematical grasp of a truth but for revealing human life in its real and existential from shrouded under many conceptual constructions over the ages and teachings from external sources. Hence, J Krishnamurti’s concept of freedom is more a prescription grounded upon realization.

**Religion**

Krishnamurti does not subscribe to any institutionalized or canonized religion, as that would be based upon categorization and concept formation and therefore fragmentation. Categorization of human self and understanding of it through concepts, for J. Krishnamurti, is not real understanding. Therefore it cannot yield true religiosity. True religiosity, as distinguished from religion in institution sense consists in alertness, attention to the world of reality, which is not the imagined reality, hypocrisies of one’s own self and rejection of all externally supplied ideas of what one’s self is. Krishnamurti says, “The religious mind is something entirely different from the mind that believes in religion. You cannot be religious and yet be a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, a Buddhist. A religious mind does not seek at all, it cannot experiment with truth. Truth is not something
dictated by your pleasure or pain, or by your conditioning as a Hindu or whatever religion you belong to. The religious mind is a state of mind in which there is no fear and therefore no belief whatsoever but only ‘what is’ – *what actually is*.” Every religious system has many presuppositions about self, world, God, death, life after death, liberation etc. But such presupposition do not produce any knowledge or true awareness of what one really is here and now and what the world is in reality. Thus every religion as a system of belief is based on ignorance and dictates human beings to live in ignorance.

For Krishnamurti religious mind is a state of silence, which is not produced by thought or concepts but is the outcome of awareness. Awareness is meditation and in meditation there is the absence of meditator. Meditation, for Krishnamurti, does not mean concentration on one’s self. Nor does it mean control of mind. It means an alert mind, an understanding of the structure of thinking and the origin of all thoughts. With this kind of understanding there will be no interference of thought with one’s mind. This mind is the meditative mind or consciousness,- free from all concepts and the individual inclinations and desires.

In a nutshell Krishnamurti’s concept of religiosity as a state of awareness and distinguished from religion in institutional sense is founded upon a suspension of all past habits of mind, all externalities and all presuppositions. In this sense there is a similarity between phenomenological method and the method that Krishnamurti prescribes. In this sense his concept of religion is basically a phenomenology of religion and more particularly existential phenomenology of religion because he is not in favour of concentration of mathematical kind that pure phenomenology takes recourse to. Concentration is different from meditation and concentration narrows down the reality to a small segment. Therefore it is meditation in Krishnamurti’s sense and not concentration that is conducive to religiosity. In his words, “Meditation is not concentration. It is one
of the favorite gambits of some teachers of meditation to insist on their pupils learning concentration- that is, fixing the mind on one thought and driving out all other thoughts. This is a most stupid, ugly thing, which any schoolboy can do because he is forced to." Meditation leads to true religiousity that does not demand any experience but generates experience of silence, experience that let us know what we really are.

Krishnamurti’s philosophy of religion is thus a new philosophy of religion that highlights experientiality in his own sense. Though there are similarities between Krishnamurti and some other contemporary Indian philosophers like Tagore and Gandhi there exists essential differences too. Hence to develop a critique of Krishnamurti it is always better to read him in his way.

Krishnamurti’s concept of non-violence is thus explicable on the basis of the essential ability of man go beyond the impositions of externalities upon human mind. It is prescriptive in the sense that true relationship and communication is possible only in a state of non-violence or non-injury. A continuous alertness and awakened stage of intelligence is of utmost value as the methodological components for understanding the operations of the ego-specific consciousness, which is false consciousness and the violence related to this in corrupting human relationship and communication. To say ‘No’ to this ability is escapism.
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