Chapter - III

HUMANISM AND NON VIOLENCE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF GANDHI
Humanism and Non Violence in the Philosophy of Gandhi

Gandhi and Non-Violence

In his trial speech made at Ahmadabad Sessions Court in March, 1922, Gandhi put forward his philosophy with great eloquence, when he stated non-violence to be the 'first article of (his) faith' and the 'last article of (his) creed'. Non-violence had always been the founding principle of Gandhian spirituality, and his bedrock of this political philosophy. Gandhi's distrust of violence as a mode to assume political power and as a tool of revolution was ingrained in his world-view from the very early days of his political career. It is impossible to look at Gandhi's political activism in isolation. Springing deeply from his belief in truth, Gandhi's political goals were ultimately specific correlatives of higher commitments to humanity and world peace. Nonviolence preaches world peace and brotherhood, whereas political movements naturally revel in polemics of difference and antagonism. Gandhi's greatness lies in bringing together these two apparently combative and incongruous ideas and putting them on a common platform, where they do not subtract, but support each other. Gandhi's significance in the world political scenario is two-fold. First, he retrieved non-violence is powerful political tool, and secondly, he was the one of the chief promulgators of the theory that political goal is ultimately a manifestation of a higher spiritual and humanitarian goal, culminating in world peace. For Gandhi, the means were as important as the end, and there could be only one means - that of non-violence.¹
The Origins of Gandhi’s Non-Violence Philosophy:

Gandhi’s secularism and openness to all kinds of theological and philosophical schools is well known. It was through an assimilation of various concepts and philosophical tenets that Gandhi arrived at his own understanding of non-violence. Jainism and Buddhism were the most important influences that lay behind the foundation of Gandhi’s non-violence theory. Both Jainism and Buddhism preached non-violence as the basic principle of existence. All other thoughts and actions propagated by these two religious schools were based on this base of non-violence. Gandhi was deeply influenced by his readings of these scriptures. The Acaranga Sutra of the Jains stated all life to be dear and precious, and Gandhi believed in it earnestly. The Bhagavad-Gita was another important influence, with its stress on non-attachment and selfless action. Christianity, along with its message of love and compassion, extended even to one’s enemies, was another important influence on Gandhi’s life. Bringing together all these theological schools, Gandhi was in search for a meaningful life, a life based on truth and honesty, a life that would boast of a moral courage to stand for the right and for justice, even at its own cost. It was this outlook that Gandhi employed as a tool to guide India’s freedom struggle, which eventually succeeded to unite the length and breadth of the country like never before.
One of the greatest criticisms against non-violence was that it was demeaning and cowardly, forwarded particularly by freedom fighters like Savarkar. However, Gandhi believed just the opposite. He emphasized that the moral courage needed to uphold non-violence as a tool of protest was much greater than the one needed to strike back in a violent way. All through his life, he pleaded the Indians to exhibit the moral strength to refrain from resorting to violence, even at the face of all provocation. His disillusionment that followed the Chauri Chaura incident that led to his calling off the non-cooperation movement when at its zenith was an example of his lifelong and earnest commitment to the cause of non-violence.

**The Legacy of Non-Violence:**

Non-violence played a very important role in defining the course of Indian national movement, from the 1920s to the final achievement of the freedom. It formed the basis of the methods of Satyagraha that became closely associated with the Gandhian whirlwind in Indian politics. Gandhi understood economic profit to be the guiding force of the imperialist project and attacked the British government at where it hurt most, which was financial gain. Picketing, non-cooperation and organised resistance to British modes of oppression were the main modes of the non-violent political movements in India. It shaped the course of the Civil Disobedience Movement as well. Even at a later time, during the Quit India movement, Gandhi’s theory of non-violence held strong in the face of the new and radical waves in the world of Indian politics like communism.
and armed revolution. Even at the dawn of independence, as Nehru was getting ready to eloquently unleash his 'tryst with destiny', Gandhi was busy on the troubled roads of Bengal, preaching non-violence to mad rioters. It was probably pre-ordained that he had to lay down his life for holding on to his ideals.

Gandhi was truly a martyr for the cause of non-violence, who not only preached but practiced what he preached. His life was a glorious example of his thoughts, and thousands of Indians from all walks of life, from cities and villages alike, took encouragement and force from his simple life and unshaken faith in the innate goodness of the human soul. He wielded the weapon of love and understanding, and succeeded to upturn even the strongest of the martial nations with it. Gandhi has left the world richer with a renewed faith in the dictates of non-violence.

**Gandhian Humanism:**

If humanism is man’s real identifying as man, Gandhian humanism is more than that. He goes deeper into the problems of human consciousness and probes into the inner sensibilities of mankind. There is neither any theory nor there any dogmas to uphold humanism as something novel or new in him but where he departs from others in evolving a new concept of humanism is: it is Love and Truth for which man is and eternally thrives for the fusion of man and the All Beautiful. “Gandhian Humanism: Inroads to Inner Awakening” and “Objectives and Strategies of Gandhian Humanism” are pointers to the essence of Gandhian Humanism.
That religion is nothing but to synchronize diverse faiths and religious beliefs towards the welfare of mankind is discussed in “religion and Humanism: Gandhian Guidelines”. What makes Gandhi rather a revolutionary is that the socio-cultural aspects of humanism find a new language in his service towards humanity – a fact discussed in “Socio-cultural Aspects of Gandhian Humanism”.

The Gandhian aesthetics of Sarvodaya is undoubtedly a new dimension in the discovery of human consciousness. It is a concept that embraces humanity for global awareness and global welfare. “Sarvodaya and Gandhian Humanism” is an introspective analysis to this end in view.

**Non-Violence and Gandhian Humanism:**

The greatest worth of man is that he has the incomparable and extraordinary power to exceed himself. He has a puny body, no doubt, but he has a mighty heart within the puny body – the heart that excels and exceeds, lightens and is lighted. He has a vision – a vision of beholding – and when he is absorbed in that vision, he is christened with the warmth of the inner spirit.

A humanist par excellence, Gandhi finds the source-point of humanism in non-violence, which, according to him, bears a long tradition. It is nothing new because the spirit of non-violence is dormant in every human being. This necessitates apart to be ignited, a method to be practiced in perfect harmony and poignancy. Moreover, as non-violence is rooted in ancient culture and
tradition, it merely awaits a move anew for better awakening of humanistic awareness. Gandhi elucidates the truth from a new angle of vision and foretells on the salvation of a battered world through non-violence:

A ‘soul force’ as Tolstoy terms non-violence, it is a sort of resistance that has its roots within. It calls forth justice not in law enforced, but in law realized from the care of the heart. Gandhi emphasizes on imposition of the principles of non-violence by shutting the inner will of the mind – the will of doing good to mankind.

Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refused to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If by using violence I force the Government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body-force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty of its breach, I use 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 were subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim that he is absolutely in the right or that 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.²

Hitherto the word 'revolution' has been connected with violence and as such been condemned by established authority. But the movement of non-cooperation, if it may be considered a revolution, is not an armed revolt; it is an evolutionary revolution, it is a bloodless revolution. The movement is a revolution of thought, of spirit. Non-cooperation is a process of purification, and, as such, it constitutes a revolution in one’s ideas. Its suppression, therefore, would amount to cooperation by coercion. Orders to kill the movement will be orders to destroy, or interfere with, the introduction of the spinning wheel, to prohibit the campaign of temperance, and an incitement, therefore, to violence. For attempt to compel people by indirect methods to wear foreign clothes, to patronize drink-shops would certainly exasperate them. But our success will be assured when we stand even the exasperation and incitement. We must not retort. Inaction on our part will kill Government madness. The violence flourishes on response either by submission to the will of the violator, or by counter-violence. My strong advice to every worker is to segregate this evil Government by street non-cooperation, not even to talk or speak about it, but having recognized the evil, to cease to pay homage to it by cooperation.³
I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should, in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonor.⁴

As a close associate of Gandhi for a long time, G. Ramachandran, who spent 1926 with Gandhi in the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati, adds:

Gandhi was once talking to some of us in the Sevagram Ashram and, as far as I remember, these were his words: You might, follow the Ten Commandments of the Bible. You might even, follow the 101 commandments of Gandhi--, put on khadi, touch no liquor, serve the untouchable, etc. etc. - but if the challenge of a moral action came to you and you evaded it, then all the other disciplines to which you gave allegiance are wiped out altogether and you have committed moral and spiritual suicide.' The first imperative of Gandhi was to act - here, now, in the living present - against injustice and evil. In doing so, his inevitable corollary was that action to be truly effective must be non-violent. So when he said, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I' would advise violence', he was expressing his passionate conviction that there must be action, not words, not thought, in the face of a contingency. As Prof. Hersch said, this was his way of clearing non-violence from the odium that it is inaction, cowardice and running away.
The fundamental issue confronting us is, can we have humanism without non-violence? Gandhi’s answer was crystal clear. He had no doubt whatsoever in his mind that we would never achieve true humanism except through non-violence. We have had instances of freedom being achieved through violence. It is not as though freedom has never been achieved through violence. But whether humanism has been achieved anywhere in the world through violence is a question we must face without equivocation.

We have had two world wars and we may well be on the threshold of a third world war. It is idle to imagine that, having stockpiled weapons of incalculable destructive power and with the super powers all the time jostling against each other for the dominance of the world, these weapons would never be used. Can anyone tell me why untold wealth and technique and effort are put into the production of these weapons and then they sit down together to find out how best not to use them? If this is not senile idiocy, I do not know what it is. It is in the face of this absurd situation that Gandhi’s challenge comes.

A practical way of escaping annihilation of mankind, non-violence as Gandhi teaches us, shows how to face any eventuality of life.

People imagine that non-violence is very difficult and costly to the person who gives allegiance to it. But is violence cheap? Is defense through armaments cheap? Will not millions perish? Has it not been calculated that within 24 hours of a nuclear war, 150 millions of people on either side, men, women and children, would die? Is it a
cheap price to pay? ‘Instead of paying that price of mutually destroying each other, Gandhi said, Let us face death without flinching’. Let me conclude by saying that in the economy of God’s wisdom, non-violence is more practical, more effective and perhaps the only way of escaping the total annihilation that confronts us today.

Looking upon the world as a mysterious platform for assessment of human sensibilities; ‘Gandhi motivates the whole of mankind towards files principle of- non-violence get because he hates destruction, disintegration, violence or hatred but because he badly wants to make every living being aware of the worth’ of living. That every human being is blessed with the unique and unconquerable spirit of excellence of higher vision of life as ordained by God within is the great force that non-violence initiates in mankind. Gandhi points towards this positive aspect of non-violence as a great humanistic force. When non-violence is directed towards this positive aspect of humanism love takes a major role to embrace and to do good even to the wrongdoer. But, then, non-violence might often go beyond mere resistance and take ‘the form of action, if necessary as he clarifies through his own interpretation of ahimsa.

If one accept the interpretation of ahimsa namely; 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 does not 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.
The inherent humanistic force of non-violence that works in Gandhi's mind is that it is 'the mightiest weapon' of destruction of evil forces only to bring harmony and unity in mankind as he elucidates more characteristically.

It (non-violence) is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. Destruction is not the law of the humans. Man lives freely by his readiness to die, if need be, at the hands of his brother, never by killing him. Every murder or other injury, no matter for what cause committed or inflicted on another is a crime against humanity.

It has been found that life persists in the midst of destruction and therefore there must be a higher law than that of destruction. Only under that law would a well-ordered society be intelligible and life worth living. And if that is the law of life, we have to work it out in daily life. Whenever there are jars, wherever you are confronted with an opponent conquer him with love - in this crude manner I have worked it out in my-life. That does not mean that all my difficulties are solved only I have found that this law of love has answers as the law of destruction has never done.

It is not that I am incapable of anger, for instance, but I succeed on almost all occasions to keep my feelings under control. Whatever may be the result, there is always in me conscious struggle for following the law of non-violence deliberately and ceaselessly. Such a struggle leaves one stronger for it. The more I work at this law, the more I feel the delight in life, the delight in the
scheme of the universe. It gives me a peace and a meaning of the mysteries of nature that I have no power to describe.

The art of dying as non-violence teaches mankind has a greater power than violence which grows out of fear. Gandhi averts the strategy of violence because it breeds fear and always tries to be emancipated from fear that escalates anyhow. He prefers to be non-violent in approach because to be non-violent is to be free from, the inhibition of fear that eats up the inner growth of humanism. A sense of disinterested attitude towards action and consequences there from allows the non-violent crusader to serve humanity as best as possible. Gandhi elucidates the point as follows:

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 cares not if he should lose his land, his wealth, his life. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practice ahimsa to perfection.

As Gandhi gives little importance to external fear that tempts one to take recourse to violence, he does not think that violence can win over internal fear-the fear of being accountable to God for one’s wrong doing. He, therefore,
emphasizes on non-violence that brings forth protection of the self for the cause of humanism:

The votary of ahimsa has only one fear that is of God. He who seeks refuge in God ought to have a glimpse of the Atman that transcends the body; and the moment one has a glimpse of the Imperishable Atman one sheds the love of the perishable body. Training in non-violence is thus diametrically opposed to training in violence. Violence is needed for the protection of things external; non-violence is needed for the protection of the Atman, for the protection of one's honour.

How to be aware of the Atman that heralds the glory of mankind? Gandhi's answer is that everyone must win over all vicissitudes and disbeliefs with regard to non-violence which is not meant for the limited few but for the whole of mankind. While dispelling the doubt that non-violence as a promoter of humanism is meant only for the few, Gandhi categorically states.

I claim that even now though the social structure is not based on a conscious acceptance of non-violence, the entire world over mankind lives and men retain their possessions on the sufferance of one another. If they had not done so only the few and the most ferocious would have been survived. But such is not the case. Families are bound together by ties of love, and so are groups in the so-called civilised society called nations. Only they do not recognise the supremacy of the law of non-violence. It follows, therefore, that
they have not investigated its vast possibilities. Hitherto out of sheer inertia, shall I say, we have taken it for granted that complete non-violence is possible only for the few" who take the vow of non-possession and the allied abstinences. Whilst it is true that the votaries alone can carry on research work and declare from time to time the new possibilities of the great eternal law governing man, if It is a law, it must hold good for all'.

Gandhi also explains the failure of non-violence with a well-drawn simile and concludes with extraordinary' humility that in introducing and translating non-violence he is merely a seeker of humanism:

The many failures we see are not of the law but of the followers, many of whom do not even know that they are under that law. When a mother dies for her child she unknowingly obeys the law. I have been pleading for the past fifty years for a conscious acceptance of the law and its zealous practice even in the face of failures. Fifty years' work has shown marvelous results and strengthened my faith. I do claim that by constant practice we shall come to a state of things when lawful possession will command universal and voluntary respect. No doubt such possession will not be tainted. It will not be in insolent demonstration of the inequalities that surround us everywhere. Nor need for problem of unjust and unlawful possession appeal the votary of non-violence. He has at his disposal the non-violent weapon of Satyagraha and non-cooperation which hitherto has been found to be a complete substitute of violence whenever it has been applied honesty in sufficient measure. I have never claimed to present the complete
science of non-violence. It does not lend itself to such treatment. So far as I know, no single physical science does, not even the very exact science of mathematics. I am a seeker.

In his experience on non-violence, Gandhi sticks to truth only to win over violence through sympathy and patience. The force that the promoter of non-violence receives out of these two humane qualities is one of self-suffering. Therefore, it is a gradual process of transformation that a non-violent person applied his inherent qualities of patience and sympathy to eliminate the errors and evils of violence. Gandhi's own findings are:

In the application of Satyagraha, I discovered in the earliest stages that pursuit of truth did not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent but he must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy. For, what appears to be Truth to the one may appear to be error to another and patience means sew-suffering. So the doctrine came to mean vindication of Truth, not by application of suffering on the opponent, but on the one's self.  

The finest quality of the heart as Gandhi considers, non-violence acts deep into the heart till all imperfections and impurities are not erased out. It is, therefore, an unending process of mankind to enrich humanism. It caters to all the serene qualities of the head and the heart to be synchronized for the great union with the all beautiful. In fact, it is a continual process of looking within and looking at failures and perfection as well. It encounters all experiences in a
broadened 'vision of awareness for the good eternal. Even when Gandhi thinks of non-violence in terms of the oppressor or the ruler blinded by violence he is aware of the great truth of humanism that man is to be rescued from all inconsistencies and pitfalls. In his corrections of the *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, an 86-page booklet published by the then British Government during his fast, he observes on, non-violence from this standpoint of humanism:

Its (non-violence's) spread in all walks of life has been my mission from early youth. This covers a period of very nearly sixty years. It was adopted at my instance as a policy by the Congress in 1920. In its very nature it was not meant to be paraded before the world, but it was accepted as a means indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj. Congressmen saw at an early date that its mere adoption on paper had no value. It was of use only in so far as it was put into practice individually and collectively: It was of no more-use as a badge that a rifle; hands of a person who did not know how to use it effectively on due occasion. Therefore, if non-violence has raised the congress prestige and popularity since its adoption, it has done so in exact proportion to its use, even as the power which the rifle gives to its possessor is in exact proportion to its effective use. The comparison cannot be carried very far. Thus while violence is directed towards the injury, including the destruction, of aggressor, and is successful only when it is stronger than that of the opponent, the non-violent action can be taken in respect of an opponent, however powerfully organized for violence. Violence *per se* of the weak has never been known to succeed against
the stronger in violence. Success of non-violent action of the very weak is a daily occurrence. I make bold to say that I have applied to the present struggle the principles of non-violence as enunciated here. Nothing could be further from my thought than injury to the person or property of those who are manning and regulating the machinery of British imperialism as it operates in India. My non-violence draws a fundamental distinction- between the man and his machine. I would destroy a harmful machine; without compassion never the man.

The great humanistic principle that Gandhi teaches through non-violence is to love everyone and to love also those who-hate us.

This is undoubtedly a very difficult task to perform but one’s earnest endeavor to stick to non-violence gradually leads one to eliminate the hatred of the hater through love. It is the only strategy to uphold Truth which stands for God. When Gandhi speaks of Satyagraha, he has a firm conviction that it will triumph overall hindrances. As he is a great humanist, he expresses his faith in Satyagraha which he sincerely believes as a spirit within, lying dormant in humanity:

Non-cooperation and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called Satyagraha- It is my Kalpadruma - my Jam-i-Jam - the universal provide Gandhi says.
Satyagraha never fails and that one perfect Satyagrahi is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect Satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For Satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in every one of us. Like Swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know perfect Satyagrahi is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect Satyagrahis. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For Satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in every one of us. Like Swaraj it is our birthright. Let us know it.

(M. K. Gandhi: Young India, December 26, 1924)

Looking upon non-violence as the most positive aspect of humanism, Gandhi considers it to be an endless preparation within' for perfection. It is an awareness of the eternal values of mankind. Born to suffer in order to purify himself, every man has a responsibility, as Gandhi firmly believes, towards himself and towards mankind as a whole. For this, the person who believes in non-violence banks heavily on modesty for justice denied to him. He is well aware of the fact that love that plays a very significant role in his strategy of non-violence wins in the long run.

Gandhi explains the above-mentioned inherent role of love in non-violent non-co-operation in terms of humanity. Thus sharing others' opinions and making a conjoint endeavour to arrive at Truth through non-violence allows a wider avenue of humanistic advancement as Gandhi warns.
The golden rule of conduct... is mutual toleration, seeing that we ill never all think alike arid we shall see Truth in fragment and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. Whilst,’ therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct” imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everybody's freedom of conscience.

In his humanistic approach to non-violence, Gandhi always derides autocracy. He thinks that freedom of individual opinion is actually making a good ground for implementing non-violence. The individual dislikes imposition of any principle however sound it may offer and Gandhi is well aware of this psychological principle or human behavior. He therefore, humbly submits about himself as an ardent humanist:

I have never been able to subscribe to the charge of obstinacy or autocracy. On the contrary, I pride myself on my yielding nature in non-vital matters. I detest autocracy. Valuing my freedom and independence, I equally cherish them for others. I have no desire to carry a single soul with me if I cannot appeal to his or her reason. My unconventionality I carry to the point of rejecting the divinity of the oldest shastras, if they cannot convince my reason. But I have found by experience that, if I wish to live in society and still retain my independence, I must limit to the points of utter independences to matters of first rate importance. In all others which do not involve a departure from one's personal religion or moral code, one must yield to the majority."
While explaining the pre-requisite for Civil Disobedience Gandhi also expounds the same principle of tolerance as a mark for non-violent humanism. Here, again, he elucidates his point of tolerance with a smile: 

We must tolerate many laws of the State, even when they are inconvenient. A son may not approve of some orders of the father and yet he obeys them. It is only when they are unworthy of tolerance and immoral that he disobeys them. The father will at once understand such respectful disobedience. In the same way it is only when a people have proved their active loyalty by obeying the many laws of the state that they acquire the right of Civil Disobedience.

As a practical humanist, Gandhi banks upon non-violence because it best teaches us how to remain pure in thought and action through non-cooperation. Violence, on the other hand, manifests our utter stupidity and inaction, ignorance and rage. A restrained approach to oddities in life brings forth positive approach too humanism and such an approach cannot but embrace constraints through non-violence. And so whatever provocation appears to be uncontrollable is judiciously bowed down by means of non-cooperation. As Gandhi characteristically remarks, Non violence is the most vital and integral part of non-cooperation.

A forerunner of humanism as Gandhi is, he categorically asserts that with self-reliance and self-discipline as components 'of non-violence, a Satyagrahi
creates an incomparable source of strength and ability within himself to encounter any eventuality. He requires more than mere discipline at times because at times he takes the role of a leader from that of a lone soldier of non-violence. A greater depth of vision for humanism within him demands more than being disciplined. He is not only the torch bearer of humanism but also the saviour, the emancipator and the angel of humanistic vision. Gandhi's own elucidation is:

   Discipline has a place in non-violent strategy, but much more is required. In a Satyagraha army everybody is a soldier and as a servant. But at a pinch every Satyagrahi soldier has also to be his own general and leader. Mere discipline cannot make for leadership, the latter calls for faith and vision.  

   An echo of Rabindranath Tagore's great message of humanism amra savai raja (We are all kings) is distinctly heard in the extinction of personality as revealed above. Complete self-restraint by means of an earnest approach to non-violence is the best answer to any kind of repression or coercion received from anywhere and this has become a historical fact in case of Gandhian march for emancipation of humanism. As a humanist, he observes:

   In analysing the role of a Satyagrahi, Gandhi also gives a great deal of emphasis on self-suffering and self-sacrifice because he thinks that but for these, a Satyagrahi ceases to be a Satyagrahi. Moreover, none can expect that a whole generation cannot be christened in non-violent non-co-operation outright. A few
devoted soldiers of humanism forarmed with the weapons of non-violence stir up the movement for emancipation of humanity. Hence, discipline in non-violence. As he observes,

He who has not the capacity of suffering cannot non-co-operate. He who has not learnt to sacrifice his property and even his family when necessary can never cooperate. It is possible that a prince enraged by non-cooperation will inflict all manner of punishment. There lies the test of love, patience and strength. He who is not ready to undergo the fiery ordeal cannot be a non-co-operate. The whole people cannot be considered fit or ready for non-cooperation when only an individual or two have mastered these three lessons. A large number of the people must be thus prepared before they can non-cooperate. The result of hasty non-cooperation can only lead to harm. Some patriotic young men who do not understand the limitations noted by me grow impatient. Previous preparation is needed for non-cooperation as it is for all important things. A man cannot become a non-cooperator by merely wishing to be one. Discipline is obligatory.¹²

A truth-force as non-violence is. It cannot under any circumstances be subdued for eternity; a force inherent as it is. It will in the long run prize mankind with the victory of humanism, as Gandhi prophetically voices.
‘A truth-force as non-violence is. It cannot under any circumstances be subdued for eternity; a force inherent as it is. It will in the long run prize mankind with the victory of humanism. As Gandhi prophetically voices’

My claim is that in the pursuit of that search lies the discovery of Satyagraha. It is not, however, claimed that all the laws of Satyagraha have been laid down or found. This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha. It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

To be a follower of Gandhian non-violence is also to be a follower of the great message: "If any man will take away thy coat, let him have thy clock also". In fact, this great message of humanism of the Sermon on the Mount always serves as a guideline for Gandhi’s doctrine of non-violence. As he characteristically explains,

To take what is required may be profitable; to have more given to you is highly likely to be a burden. To overload a stomach is to court slow death....when you give more to a robber than he needs, you spring a surprise on him, and you give him a shock although not agreeable. He has not been used to it. Historical instances are on record to show that such non-violent conduct has produced a wholesome effect upon evil-doers. These acts cannot be done mechanically; they must come out of conviction and love or pity for the other man. Nor need
you work out all the apparent implications of my answer. If you do, you will come across blind alleys. Suffice it to say that in the verse quoted by you Jesus put in a picturesque and telling manner the great doctrine of non-violent non-cooperation. Your non-cooperation with your opponent is violent when you give a blow for a blow, and is ineffective in the long run. Your non-cooperation is non-violent when you give your opponent all in the place of just what he needs. You have disarmed him once for all by your apparent co-operation, which in effect is complete non-co-operation. 

Non-violence that stands for conscious suffering for the awakening of true humanism has its added advantage. It is never static but always dynamic in the sense that it has a positive goal towards the march of humanism. Gandhi, therefore, advocates non-violence to understand and feel the inner strength of negotiating all evil forces that destroy humanism. In fact, his religion is the religion of humanism - the religion of the victory of man that transcends everywhere. As he says, Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering.

It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under the law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.
And so I am not pleading for India to practice non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realisation of her strength. We seem to need it, because we seem to think that we are but a lump of flesh. I want to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world.... If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India’s acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting.  

The lesson of Gandhian non-violence is one of natural humanism. It is the lesson that teaches mankind of oneness, the great truth of inseparable identity and also of the fact that all men and women are ‘children of the same God’. One cannot, in this connection, but recall his poignant words against the proposed partition of India:

Humanism in the Gandhian and true concept cannot compromise with narrowness. It cannot "make room for individual or narrow self-interest. It must allow wider contemplation for mankind. The history of an advanced and civilised world is the history of refined humanism. Gandhi advocates for that type of refined humanism which never allows narrowness to creep in the mind of mankind and destroy all good sense and sensibilities for the common cause of
peace and prosperity. Co-ordination and consolidation of national and global culture, harmonization of the inner spirit and enquiry of man and an endless pursuit for the all-round welfare of humanity - all these await, in Gandhian concept of humanism, a re-thinking in right earnest right now for our furtherance of cosmopolitan and global outlook. Gandhi’s own humanistic outlook is a true source of humanism for the posterity:

I cannot think in terms of narrow Hinduism or narrow Islam. I am wholly uninterested in a patchwork solution. India is a big country, a big nation composed of different cultures, which are tending to blend with one another, each complementing the rest. If I must wait for the completion of the process, I must wait. It may not be completed in my day. I shall love to die in the faith that it must come in the fullness of time. I should be happy to think that I had done nothing to hamper the process. And subject to this condition, I would do anything to bring about harmony. My life is made-up of compromises, but they have been compromises that have brought me nearer the goal.

Explaining further on the power of non-violence, Gandhi predicts that the future of non-violence also determines the future of humanism. The potency of non-violence depends on how individuals dedicate themselves for the cause of humanism by means of adopting non-violence in every walk of life. If all individuals are greatly conscious of the role of non-violence for the progress of mankind, even a Nero cannot but revive the silent and dormant spirit of humanism within him. As Gandhi observes, explaining further on the power of
non-violence, Gandhi predicts that the future of non-violence also determines the future of humanism. The potency of non-violence depends on how individuals dedicate themselves for the cause of humanism by means of adopting non-violence in every walk of life.

I believe that a State can be administered on a non-violent basis if the...being such a State. I am conducting my experience in that faith. Therefore, that India attained independence through pure non-violence. India could retain it too by the same means. A non-violent man of society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person of society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession but non-cooperate with the aggressor. Thus, supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State will let him in but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannon. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his I soldiery. Practically speaking there will probably be no greater loss in men than if forcible resistance is offered;
there will be no expenditure in armaments and fortification. The non-violent training received by the people will add inconceivably to their moral height.\textsuperscript{15}

What would be the lot of people practiced in non-violent resistance before gun-point? Would it be an act of mere chivalry or moral victory? As a sentinel of humanism, Gandhi believes that bravery, in the true sense of the term, lies in dying and not in killing. It also lies in upholding and maintaining the spirit of love rather than that of hatred. As non-violence knows no defeat, man thrives and voices the spirit of humanism from time-to-time. The true men and women followers of non-violence proclaim the eternal joy of life in love rather than in hate:

Such men and women will have shown personal bravery of a type far superior to that shown in armed warfare. In each case the bravery consists in dying, not in killing. Lastly, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violent resistance. That such a thing has not happened before is no answer to my speculation. I have drawn no impossible picture. History is replete with instances of individual non-violence of the type I have mentioned. There is no warrant for saying or thinking that a group of men and women cannot by sufficient training act non-violently as a group or nation. Indeed the sum total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on. From which fact I infer that it is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e., hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilised men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence. It gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that love is the supreme and

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only law of life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith. Even the mixed non-violence of India has supported it. But if it is not enough to convince an unbeliever, it is enough to incline a friendly critic to view it with favour.

As a foreseer of humanism, Gandhi believes that the future of humanity depends on eliminating hatred against the down-trodden and the deprived, the weak and the mute millions who never bother for force or the wistful outcome of force. The dignity of human beings is to be nursed not with violence of hatred but with mutual love and sympathy. From his own rich experience of harmonization of a global society in the frame-work of non-violence, he observes:

The accumulated experience of the past thirty years, the first eight of which were in South Africa, fills me with the greatest hope that in the adoption of non-violence lies the future of India and the world. It is the most harmless and yet equally effective way of dealing with the political and economic wrongs of the down-trodden position of humanity. I have known from early youth that non-violence is not a cloistered virtue to be practised by the individual for the peace and final salvation, but it is a rule of conduct for society if it is to live consistently with human dignity and make progress towards the attainment of peace for which it has been yearning for age's past.¹⁶

Ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of ahimsa is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by living, by hatred, by
wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by our holding on to what the world needs. But the world needs even what we eat day by day. In the place where we stand there is millions of micro organisms to whom the place belongs and who is hurt by our presence there. What should we do then? Should we commit suicide? Even that is no solution, if we believe, as we do, that so long as the spirit is attached to the flesh, destruction of the body it weaves for itself another. The body will cease to be only when we give up all attachment to it. This freedom from all attachment is the realisation of God as truth. Such realisation cannot be attained in a hurry. The body does not belong to us. When it lasts, we must use it as a trust handed over to our charge. Treating in this way, the things of the flesh, we may one day expect to become free from the burden of the body. Realising the limitations of the flesh, we must strive day by day towards the ideal with what strength we have in us. 17

The emancipation of humanism in each individual through non-violence awaits release from all sensualities and striving for Truth. Indeed, truth and non-violence are so intertwined that in course of operation they lose separate identities and act as complementary to each other towards fullness of humanism. This fullness of humanism is the end-point of *ahimsa* that serves as a means of that end-point. Gandhi, therefore, visualizes *ahimsa* as a means, and Truth the final victory of humanism as he concludes.

That the education of *Satyagraha* is the education of perfection, the education that excels humanism is the most remarkable contribution for which
Gandhi will ever remain illustrious in the history of human advancement. What he essentially emphasizes is to inspire emancipation of the greater self in everyone from his little self-an emancipation that calls forth awakening and exercise of the soul-force. This necessitates a prolonged training in disinterested service towards mankind. Such training will enable everyone to be perfect and pure, although it admits the fact that perfection or purity of an individual is an unending process. But the education of non-violence even exceeds and excels the best education received from anywhere. This is the education that prepares everyone to be equipped with the weapons of love, truth and self-suffering for the cause of humanism. Gandhi delineates this fact very adroitly:

All Satyagrahis do not understand, the full value of the force, nor have we men who always from conviction refrain from violence. The use of this force requires the adoption of poverty, in the sense that we must be indifferent whether we have the wherewithal to feed or clothe ourselves. During the past struggle all Satyagrahis, if any at all, were not prepared to go that length. So again were only Satyagrahis so-called. They came without any conviction, often with mixed motives, less often with impure motives. Some even, whilst engaged in the struggle, would gladly have resorted to violence but for most vigilant supervision. Thus, it was that the struggle became prolonged; for the exercise of the purest soul-force, in its perfect form, brings about instantaneous relief. For this exercise, prolonged training of the individual soul is an absolute necessity,
'so that a perfect *Satyagrahi* has to be almost, if not entirely, a perfect man. We cannot all suddenly become such men, but if my proposition is correct - as I know it to be correct - the greater the spirit of Satyagraha in us, the better men will we become.  

For evolution of better humanism, Gandhi, therefore, wants to incorporate the education of *Satyagraha* - the education of perfect living - in the education of the child, keeping in view the dedicated personalities to humanism:

If the past struggle has produced even a few Indians who would dedicate themselves to the task of becoming *Satyagrahis* as nearly perfect as possible, they would not only have served themselves in the truest sense of the term, they would also have served humanity at large. Thus viewed, *Satyagraha* is the noblest and best education. It should come, not after the ordinary education in letters, of children, but it should precede it. It will not be denied, that a child, before it begins to write its alphabet and to gain worldly knowledge, should know what the soul is, what truth is, what love is, what powers are latent in the soul. It should be an essential part of real education that a child should learn, that in the struggle of life, it can easily conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by self-suffering.

Suffering unto death as sponsored by Gandhian *Satyagraha* is the last weapon of revival of true humanism and victor of Truth. As an element of *Satyagraha* fasting take a very important role for awakening of good sense and
sensibilities. If symbolizes complete physical detachment and deep devotion to the cause of humanism. After a 21 day observance of fast for the cause of the Harijan in May 1933, Gandhi writes:

Earlier, Gandhi explains why he should go on fasting as a humanistic endeavour to explore Truth through *ahimsa*:

Suffering even unto death and, therefore, even through a perpetual fast is the last weapon of a Satyagrahi. That is the last duty which it is open to him to perform. Therefore, fast is part of my being as, I hold, it has been, to a large or small extent, of very seeker of truth. I am making an experiment in *ahimsa* on a scale perhaps unknown in history. That I may be wholly wrong is quite possible, but quite irrelevant to the present purpose. So long as I am not conscious of the error, but, on the contrary, am sure, as, far as it is humanly possible to be, of being in the right, I must go on with my pursuit to the furthest end. And in this manner, but in no other, a fast or a series of fasts are always a possibility in my life I have undergone many before now since childhood. There should be no alarm felt if they are undertaken for public causes. Nor must anyone exploit them in anticipation. When they come, they will produce their own effect and result, whether anybody wills or no 19

The lesson of non-violence learnt through the Gandhian concept of humanism is that lesson of the inner soul that marks one's excellence as a human being. And that excellence is the excellence attained in truth, self-negation and
humility. When, as Gandhi believes, one wins over one's physical bare necessities, the dawn of humanism awakens in the midst of non-violence as he elucidates.

It is a fundamental principle of *Satyagraha* that the tyrant whom the Satyagrahi seeks to resist has power over his body and natural possessions but he can have no power over the soul. The soul can remain unconquered and unconquerable even when the body is imprisoned. The whole science of *Satyagraha* was born from knowledge of this fundamental truth. Nature's creatures do not "Worry or fret about tomorrow but simply wait on tomorrow for the daily sustenance. Only man is in his over weaning pride and egotism imagines himself to be the Lord and master of the earth, and goes on piling up for himself goods that perish. Nature frees away everyday by its rude shocks to wean him from his pride but he refuses to shed it. Satyagraha is a specific for bringing home to one the lesson of humanity.

As an optimist, Gandhi believes in the endless possibilities of man in extending the horizons of humanism through non-violence. He also believes that on the threshold of a new era of consciousness, man will herald his own glory along with the glory of humanism. He will, through exercise of non-violence, eliminate this selfish attitudes and attractions for the little self and extend the doors and windows of awareness towards the march of humanism. The clement of love, an essential component of non-violence and, for that end in view; humanism accelerates this march to build up the world a new. In the whirlwind of aggression and hatred loomed large on humanity, the Orphic voice of Gandhi necessitates a worthy re-hearing:
I am an optimist. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it—overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might over sweep the world.\textsuperscript{20}

\textbf{NON-VIOLENCE AND TRUTH}

“Non-Violence and Truth (\textit{Satya}) are inseparable and presupposes one another. There is no God higher than truth.” (From True Patriotism: Some Sayings of Mahatma Gandhi, 1939, ed. by. S. Hobhouse). \textsuperscript{21}

“We may read the Gita or the Ramayana or Hind Swaraj”, Gandhi said. “But what we have to learn from them is desire for the welfare of others. “Gandhi also strove to raise the status of untouchables, the caste whom everybody avoided. He gave them the name \textit{harijan}, or “children of God”, and founded the weekly paper Harijan, which was published in English and Hindi. In an attempt to persuade the orthodox Hindus to wipe out the “blight of unsociability”, Gandhi understood fast in the summer of 1933 for these weeks. In order to promote village self-sufficiency, Gandhi popularized hand spinning and made know khadi, hand-spun cloth, the “livery of freedom”. However, Gandhi’s rejection of the Industrial Revolution wasn’t supported by some his most close friends, among them Jawaharlal Nehru.

Gandhi’s last months were shadowed by communal strife between Hindu and Muslim. When he walked barefoot through the scorched villages in East Bengal,
locals strewed shattered glass on his path. Gandhi pleaded for amicable settlement between India and Pakistan, but on January 30, 1948, he was assassinated in Delhi on his way to an evening prayer. A young Hindu Brahmin, named Nathuram Godse, viewed Gandhi’s acceptance of partition as a betrayal of the Hindu population, and fired three shots point-blank. Gandhi had not allowed police to search people near him. Godse believed that the prayer and the purity of the mind were signs of superstitions and without the “father of the nation” India would free to follow the course founded on reason.
Notes & References

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