In the last chapter we have seen that man’s social life provides a unique scope for him to foster his chances of improving his state of living. He gets rid of possible stagnation or even extinction had he been left to nature only with mere animal responses. As he grows in experience through interactions in the family as also in the larger circle of the society, much of his social individuality is shaped. His behaviour pattern, his cultural development and his immediate needs of nourishment of biological existence sharing the faith, feeling and conviction of the elders and his fellow mates are some of the main elements that primarily contribute to shape his individuality in his child-hood, in his youth and in the later man that he is. But that does not limit his growth to achieving a life that is best for him so far his worldly existence is concerned. Because there is no reason to think that the process of growth that constantly works to take an individual to better and better a state abruptly stops at the social horizon, that his socially complete being exhausts his endeavor. Wright rightly observes: “It is the fundamental error of all theories .....to neglect the fact that men and women are individuals, that society and community exist for the development of individual personality.....”\textsuperscript{1} Infact his rationality does not stop working at any stage of his social achievements. In however minute proportion it might occur, from the very beginning he begins to apply his thought, choice, likes and dislikes and his conviction to accept, reject, mould or sublimate the
elements that he gathers from these interactions. This is a process which besides socialization, takes him beyond his social being to a more comprehensive state of self which overviews life as an ever manifesting process of something larger than this social identity. Ginsberg writes. “All values are values for persons…” 2 and it is this value judgement that takes man beyond apparently accomplished ‘best’ with the help of society. His social protection was necessary because he found that he could not by himself bring about the best of the situation where he could flourish.

The role of the society also changes with the change of time and need. From a community worship of the aboriginals to protect life from evils (some imagine, like evil sprits; some real, like volcanic eruption, earthquake etc.) to a collective farming, to a collective movement against any injustice or exploitation of today’s world preventing the best possible of a development individual, the basic drive behind an individual to come together to work for a collective goal is to bring about the best condition for each of them. But, the collective good cannot be ultimately at the cost of individual good. If there is a collectivity dishonouring the good of individuals, history says, such collectivity perishes in the long run.3

In the development of self, therefore this factor over and above socialization is equally important; and it is: The intellectual exercises that organize the growth process to take him beyond this social identity.
In fact, the latter provides a more comprehensive view of his life involving besides the former, the purpose and goal of the process.

It may be seen from the history of man’s progress from its earliest days to date that it has been a history of his constant endeavour to improve upon the very state in which he is required to surmount all odds that come in the way. It is not just grabbing a tool that he could for the battle. When such tools proved inadequate he devised it, planned it, and shaped it to get the best possible result. This need brought his intelligence factor to play the most important role that was necessary for the purpose of organizing all available resources to make the ‘best’ for him.

To quote Radhakrishnan, “The Human mind seeks order and revolts against uncertainty, irrationality, and chaos. It attempts to bring some order into the chaotic facts and experiences. Man is not merely a tool maker; he is also a pattern-maker”. In this connection we may refer an another point from M. K. Gandhi about it: He (Gandhi), going miles ahead of a savage man sharpening a stone as a tool to kill an enemy and secure his existence in his wild world, may think that ‘non-violence’ or ‘love’ is a better tool than a killer stone to win over the said enemy. And thus he devises a completely different pattern of securing his ‘self’ against more animal instinct of self-preservation.
Radhakrishnan also writes in another place “It is essential, therefore, to regard the human individual not as a mere animated instrument, but as some one who is a co-creator with the Divine, who is assisting the purpose of the universe, trying to lead it from one state to another.” 6

This is how philosophers were led to thinking of a process of human transition from crude animal life to human life primarily as a social being and then as a higher intellectual being of searching for the more purposeful living.

Man desires to establish an inter-personal relation with the others overcoming the limits of place, time and physicality. He wants to establish his identity as a human being. The universal life force of humanism that resides in the depths of human heart creates a balanced bonding the immediate earthly desires and demands with a possible all pervading one because a man feels that his life is successful if he can awaken within himself the feelings of humanism.

This again comes from the feeling of inadequacy of his short live immediate successes. The call of this universal life force can make a man sacrifice or give up everything. This will be in turn successful if a man’s heart in full of love. And to cultivate such love one has to expand his out looks and views to realize the universal man in him as will as in others. “sarvabhuteshu Atmanam pashyati”- which means one should see one’s soul in others and the souls of others in oneself.
This has been best explained in the chapter ‘Man’s Nature’ of ‘Religion of Man’ by R. N. Tagore. There he says that from the time when man becomes conscious about his self he has felt a mysterious integrated power residing in every human being. This consciousness of unity works beyond society. In case of inter-personal relation in the society, this inherent power of unity does not work to fulfilling any particular purpose. It is not the combined power of the many, either. This power of unity is a way of manifestation of the ultimate truth of one’s own self and spirituality. This all pervading power of unity has certain qualities which demand the submission of the ‘ego’ of man. This supreme truth helps man to cross the limit of individualism and follow the path by which he can achieve ultimate and ultimate freedom in life.\(^7\)

In this connection it would be worth while to refer to Bradley’s view\(^8\) about man’s social self and his self-realization. F. H. Bradley holds that each person has a place and function\(^9\) in the human society in accordance with his talents. He has a definite station in society, and should perform his duties appropriate to it. By performing his duties appropriate to his station in the society he can achieve self-realization. He can attain happiness by fulfilling his proper function in an organized community. Society is a moral organization based on common good for all. And according to Bradley, self realization of an individual is nothing but working for this common good which is also the highest good for him because, the highest personal good is in harmony with the highest social or common good.
By self-realization Bradley means the realization of the infinite self. It consists in the complete transformation of the sentient nature of man by his reason through his ever increasing identification with family, community, nation and humanity. So according to Bradley self-realization is not possible apart from society. A person rises above his narrow individuality, when he throws himself heart and soul into social service. The more he loses himself in objective interest or social good, the more he realizes his ideal self.

Thus for Bradley, man’s socialization process reaching the state of the union of self-good with the common or social good is the highest that man can strive for.

But keeping in mind that man’s life is an endless process of progress towards more and realizing a fuller and better state aiming at ‘completeness in itself’, his view can be said to have explained the process only partially. If in the process of man’s development as a human being this social part of the process as stated by Bradley is very important, the part of the progress going beyond it is no less, if not more, important. Because as we have seen, at every step of his life man exhibits the play of reason and intelligence which seeks to find, above worldly ends, the fullest accomplishment of the purpose and goal of his life. Obviously this search cannot end with achieving ‘social goodness’ only, for that is limited to just the good functioning of the society under some particular conditions. And such a social good is bound to change with the change of conditions. For example Plato’s Utopia, Hobbes’s Leviathan, Nietzsche’s desirable.
Influence by the thought that every elevation of Man is due to aristocratic society. About Nietzsche’s view of the desirable Russell observes – “He holds that the happiness of common people is no part of the good per se. All that is good or bad is itself exists only in the superior few. What happens to the rests is of no accounts.”  

There are other theories too that tell us about a ‘common good’ of man under different condition of differently acclaimed social or moral goals.

Let us refer to some of the concept to ‘social good’ or ‘good of mankind’ that were different from each other because of the social perspective that perceived at the back of formulating such concept.

For Rousseau, inequality among men forced upon by the privileged section of the society was the greatest evil. He believed that “Man is naturally good and... by institutions only is he made bad”. (Discourse on Inequality – 1754). He however did not object to natural inequality such as of age, health, intelligence etc. but what disturbed him most in the French society of his style was inequality that was perpetrated by social conventions of his period. So he spoke for democracy and even denied the divine rights of kings and the catholic Protestant orthodoxy. And we learn even arrest warrant was issued against him by the French Government. 

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So Rousseau thought of the savage, who according to him is the repository of all necessary wisdom. His savage, unlike that of the anthropologists, “was a good husband and kind father; he was destitute of greed and had a religion of natural kindness”. Highest social good for him was therefore the restoration of the ‘natural man’ in the society. In his historic landmark book, ‘the social contract’ (1762), he wrote – “Each of us puts his person and all his power in common under the supreme direction of the general will, and in our corporate capacity we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole”. And about this ‘general will’ he writes, “There is often much difference between the will of all and the general will; the latter considers only the common interest; the former looks to private interest and is only a sum of particular wills....”. And about this concept of ‘general will’ Russell observes, “To say that the general will is always right is only to say that, seems it represents what is common among the self interests of the various citizens, it must represent the largest collective satisfaction of self interest possible to the community”.12

Coming down to Karl Marx we find that real social good could be evolved only by a win by the wage-earner class against the capitalist class who aimed at only to ensure the welfare of the rich. Marx wanted a drastic change of the social order. According to Russell, “his (Marx’s) economics, changing only the motive force. Classical economists, consciously or unconsciously aimed at the welfare of the capitalist as opposed both to the land owner and to the wage-earner; Marx, on the contrary set to work to represent the interest of the wage-earner.” 13
Against Hegel’s spiritualistic programme of human development through a logical dialectic, which was the order of philosophical thinking of his time, Marx believed that it could hardly help a common man to reach the best form of the world that could be realized only through class struggle.¹⁴

And if we look at M. K. Gandhi’s ‘Sarvodaya’, we find that the concept of the highest good of mankind rests not on class-enmity or elimination of one class by the other, but on participation of all in the process he is not in favour of inciting labour against capital. Unlike Marxism he does not believe the class struggle is the key and the basic principle of social development. In his opinion it is love and mutual trust and not struggle that ensure the real development of the society.

He introduces the doctrine of Trustee-ship of the rich who according to him are after all human beings having the same element of essential goodness that man necessarily possesses. He further believes that if the rich are won over by love and not hatred, they would be inspired to share their wealth for the good of the society, particularly of the poor.

Thus it is apparent that Gandhi’s doctrine of trustee-ship is based on a sense of morality and love. This refers to the concept of Sarvodaya which etymologically means “the betterment of all” (Sarvoudaya). This is not material pleasure of individuals which breeds
further greed. It on the other hand is based on ‘love’ and originates from faith in the well-being of mankind through sacrifice. And this is the state which we can strive for.\textsuperscript{15}

Thus we find that the concept of ‘social good’ or ‘good of mankind’ has undergone changes with the change of time and perspective. It can be therefore be naturally asked, can there be any unconditional good for the individual? This is what we are particularly trying to drive at in the following chapters. We shall see that the highest state of man’s realization of the ‘best’ is not a common good, nor a some sum total ‘good’s of all’, but a unity of all good, all interest in one.
References

1. F.J. Wright, Elements of Sociology. P. 96


6. S. Radhakrishnan, The Creative Life P. 70

7. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Religion of Man. P.128

8. F.H. Bradley, Ethical Studies P.64

9. Ibid. P.163


11. Ibid. P.690

12. Ibid. P. 698

13. Ibid. P.783


15. Mahatam Gandhi, Harijan Patrika (02-01-1937). (From “The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi” Vol. LXV)