



# INDIAN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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## MANU AND THE DHARMASHASTRA

### MANU :

### **The Exponent of *Dharmashastra***

#### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In ancient Indian tradition, we come across at least three great personages called Manu, namely Manu of the Deluge, Manu Vaivasvata and Manu, the Law-giver. Of these, the first two are mythological characters. The legend of Manu of the Deluge is described in *Shatapatha Brahmana*. He was the person who survived the Great Deluge and then became the founder of the present race of human beings. Manu Vaivasvata is alluded to be the first king of human beings who founded the institution of kingship. As stated in Kautilya's *Arthashastra* :

People suffering from anarchy, as illustrated by the proverbial tendency of a large fish swallowing a small one (*maatsyanyayabhibhutah prajah*) first elected Manu, the Vivasvata, to be the King.

Now Manu, the Law-giver, the author of famous *Manusmriti* or the Code of Manu, also figures in mythology as one of the seven great sages created by Brahma (the Creator of the Universe). But since *Manusmriti*, as a literary work, is the product of human effort, we may regard its author, Manu, the Law-giver, as a historical character. There is no definite evidence or consensus among scholars about the date of Manu. According to Hopkins (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I), Manu lived and produced his work around the beginning of or even before the Christian era while other authors of *smritis*, namely Vishnu lived in the third, Yajnavalkya in the fourth and Narada in the fifth century A.D. However, in view of the age-old sanctity of the contents of *Manusmriti*, it would be reasonable to regard it as a work of quite ancient origin. Moreover, of all the *smritis* (the Codes of Hindu law), *Manusmriti* is regarded to be the most important and authoritative. It is supposed to embody the essence of *Vedas* (the most ancient and sacred scriptures of Hindus), and any *smriti* text opposed to *Manusmriti* was not approved.

## II

## FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Manu is regarded the chief exponent of *Dharmashastra* tradition which regulates all aspects of social life including polity. In fact, the whole edifice of traditional Hindu society was erected on the code of law enunciated by Manu himself. Initially it was based on a sound logic, but in the subsequent ages Manu's system was reduced to a dogma. It was even exploited by some sections to serve their vested interests and to perpetuate social injustice. Many social reformers and intellectuals of modern times sought to reinterpret Manu's dictates in the light of their underlying logic so as to make them compatible with the needs of social progress and the goal of social justice.

At the outset, Manu (in his celebrated *Manusmriti*) argues that the whole range of creation represents an interrelated pattern, drawing its source from the unconditional Absolute *Brahman* (i.e. God as the creator of the universe). Social organization, to be perfect, must follow the pattern of the cosmos. Manu identifies four basic functions of social organization which are best performed by those inherently capable of performing the specific function. Accordingly, society is divided into four *Varnas* (roughly corresponding to four castes) : (a) *Brahmans* who take care of intellectual and spiritual aspects of social life; (b) *Kshatriyas* who specialize in fighting and who are fit to rule (c) *Kaishyas* who have a special aptitude for business and industry and who are fit to wield the power of wealth; and finally, (d) *Shudras* who are fit to perform manual work and provide necessary services to society. Of these, *Brahmans* enjoyed the highest social status; *Kshatriyas* and *Kaishyas* were placed in successively lower positions; and *Shudras* were relegated to the lowest social status.

It is doubtful whether Manu treated this fourfold, hierarchical division of society as divinely ordained, and whether social status of each individual in the subsequent generations was to be determined strictly by birth with no scope for social mobility !

Incidentally, Manu also identifies three *Gunas*, i.e. basic properties found in the nature of things, including human nature. This threefold classification of *Gunas* represents the descending order of virtue from social point of view. Of these, *Satva* refers to the highest level virtue which is based in goodness; it makes a person kind, calm, alert and thoughtful. Then *Rajas* represents middle level virtue; it is based in passion and leads a person to the path of greed, ambition, restlessness and anger. Finally, *Tamas* corresponds to lowest level virtue; it is based in darkness or dullness; it leads a person towards idleness, ignorance and delusion. This threefold division of *Gunas* widely occurs in all classical Indian literature and philosophy. It is important to note that the *Guna* of each person depends on his or her inherent quality; it is not related to his or her social status in the caste system. It is quite possible to find a high-caste person with a low level of virtue, and vice versa. It implies that the reputation for being virtuous is to be attained by persistent effort; it is not determined by birth.

The concept of *Karma* in *Manusmriti* is closely followed by the concept of *Ashrama*. *Ashrama* refers to the division of a person's life devoted to a particular pursuit of life. Manu recognizes four *Ashramas*: (a) *Brahmacharya* refers to the first part of twenty-five years of a person's life, devoted to education and training and building up of character which necessitate a good deal of self-restraint and control of the senses; (b) *Grihastha* refers to next twenty-five years of a person's life which involve the acceptance of marriage and family obligations; (c) *Kanaprastha* refers to the third spell of twenty-five years of a person's life — the period of detachment from worldly pursuits; and finally, (d) *Sannyasa* refers to the period of last twenty-five years of a person's life — the period of renunciation and pursuit of spiritual emancipation.

It transpires from the aforesaid arrangement that only one-fourth of a person's life was devoted to physical labour contributing to social production. It is a matter of investigation whether the rule of four *Ashramas* uniformly applied to all castes and both sexes. If so, it did not involve a serious violation of the principle of equality. However, if a sizeable section of women and lower castes (*Vaisyas* and *Shudras*) were excluded from its purview, it would imply that the burden of physical labour in society was unevenly distributed which involved blatant violation of the principle of equality.

It may be conceded that Manu's model of social organization was based on a sound logic befitting the early stage of civilization. Those who forgot that logic, chose to follow his model blindly and reduced his teachings to a dogma. The result was social stagnation which involved injustice to certain sections of society. That is why the oppressed sections of present-day society ridicule the followers of Manu as irrational puritans, devoid of the sense of humanity.

## III

## JURISPRUDENCE AND THE SCIENCE OF POLITY

## SOURCES OF LAW

Manu is regarded the most prominent among ancient law-givers of India. In this capacity he made significant contribution to the field of jurisprudence.

**Jurisprudence**

Jurisprudence refers to the science of law that inquires into the philosophical and scientific basis of law and justice. It deals with the origin, nature and various forms of law. It seeks to ascertain the principles on which legal rules should be based. In modern times, jurisprudence relies on comparative method, historical method as well as philosophical method in order to ensure that legal reasoning is founded on philosophical reasoning.

Manu identified four sources of law that prevailed in his times: (a) *Shruti* which largely comprised of four *Vedas*; they dealt with the immanent and

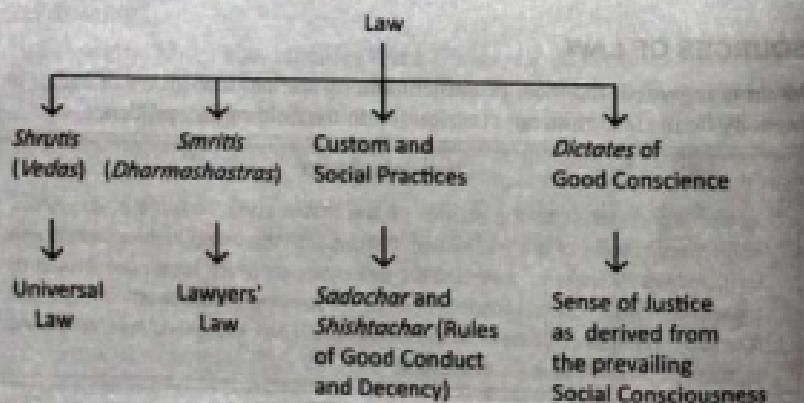
eternal laws of the universe and provided the universal elements of all law; (b) *Smritis*; they were the principal source of lawyers' laws; they are coterminous with *Dharmashastras*, that is the treatises on *Dharma*; (c) Custom and approved usage which represent the conventional wisdom and the social experience of the community (it mainly consists of *Sadachar*, i.e. the rules of good conduct, and *Shishtachar*, i.e. the rules of decency); and finally, (d) Dictates of good conscience which comprise an ever-evolving source of law corresponding to the development of social consciousness. Recognition of this (fourth) source of law warrants that Manu's own teachings should not be reduced to a dogma.

Manu also conceded that law was subject to variation with the changes in time and space. It implies that while universal elements of law were inexorable, its temporal and local elements were largely flexible. Besides, *Manusmriti* provides elaborate judicial procedure which also refers to various types of cases which must be decided in a court-of-law. Manu carefully distinguished between civil and criminal laws. Some of his instructions seem to anticipate the modern principles of natural justice.

### Natural Justice

Natural justice refers to a set of those principles of justice which belong to the unwritten part of law. These principles are invoked when the judges act according to their own 'sense of justice'. A comprehensive list of these principles cannot be given, but those most widely recognized in modern times are as follows : no man shall be the judge in his own cause; both sides shall be heard; the judge shall give full consideration to the case and exclude all irrelevant considerations from his mind while reaching a decision; like cases shall be decided alike; not only shall justice be done but it shall be seen to be done; and finally, judgement shall include not only the bare decision, but the reasons which lead to it.

### Sources of Law As Identified by Manu



The King should examine daily the suits of litigants ... and discover the internal disposition of men by external signs : he should discover the right path by inference as a hunter discovers the lair of a wounded deer by drops of blood; he should pay full attention to the witnesses, to the time and place and to such other factors.

*Manusmriti*

## SCIENCE OF POLITY

As regards the science of polity, Manu is known to be an early exponent of the Divine Origin of Kingship theory. However, Manu's view in this behalf should not be confused with the Western theory of divine right of the king as enunciated in early modern times. The Western view regards human monarch as an agent of God and as a source of law itself, as if 'King can do no wrong'. On the contrary, Manu proclaimed that human monarch was created by God in order to save the universe from all-pervading terror of anarchy. King's person was comprised of the unique qualities of all major divinities: the might of *Indra* (the Lord of Heaven), the radiance of Sun, the wrath of *Karma* (the Lord of Death), the treasures of *Kuber* (the Lord of Riches), and the pleasantness of Moon. In any case, King was at best only a representative of God who was subject to the supremacy of *Dharma*, like any other human being.

*Dharma* refers to a complex concept, sometimes inadequately translated as 'religion'. In essence, the idea of *Dharma* is close to the standard of righteousness. Etymologically, *Dharma* means something that upholds and sustains everything — individual, society as well as the cosmic order. As Rabindranath Tagore (*Crisis in Civilization*, 1941) observed: "The specific meaning of *Dharma* is that principle which holds us firm together and leads us to our best welfare... *Dharma* for man is the best expression of his true self. He may reject *Dharma* and may choose to be an animal or a machine and thereby may not injure himself, may even gain strength and wealth from an external and material point of view; yet this will be worse than death for him as a man."

In the absence of a precise English equivalent, the term *Dharma* is variously translated as 'virtue', 'justice' or 'law'. In this sense, it refers to a superior law which governs all elements of the universe as well as human society. Manu's concept of *Dharma* is derived from *Vedas* which declare: "God produced the transcendent body of law, since law is the King of Kings, far more powerful and enduring than they; nothing can be mightier than law by whose aid, as by that of the highest monarch, even the weak may prevail over the strong."

It is further important to note that of the three *Gunas* (i.e. the basic properties of the nature of things), representing the three levels of virtue, Manu's concept of King as the representative of God belongs only to *Satva*, that is the highest level virtue based in goodness. A King could attain his exalted status only by fulfilling the duties imposed on him by *Dharma*. The primary duty of

the King is the protection of his subjects. This is evident from *Manusmriti's* account of the creation of the King. It reads: "When God saw this world in a state of anarchy where people were running in different directions out of fear, He created the King for everybody's protection." *Manusmriti* envisages the King as the wielder of '*Danda*' which literally means a rod — an instrument of chastisement; a symbol of state power. The role of *Danda* was so important that in the later literature the science of polity itself was described as *Dandaniti*, that is the art of applying the state power. Although Manu wanted the King to act strongly, yet he wanted him to "behave like a father towards all men" and please all.

According to *Manusmriti*, a King was entitled to receive one-sixth of the wealth of his subjects toward taxes, as a fee for providing solid protection to their person and property. If the King fulfilled this duty efficiently, he was also entitled to earn one-sixth of the divine reward of their good deeds. If he failed to perform this duty, he was condemned to endure one-sixth of the divine wrath that resulted from the bad deed of his subject. In a nutshell, the extraordinary power of the King was directly dependent on the condition of fulfilling his extraordinary duties.

**Q. Evaluate Manu's contribution to Indian political thought as the founder of *Dharmashastra* tradition.**

## Mahabharata : The Link Between Dharmashastra and Arthashastra

### INTRODUCTION

In ancient Indian political thought, *Mahabharata* comprises a link between *Dharmashastra* and *Arthashastra* traditions. In fact *Mahabharata* is a famous epic composed by Vedavyasa, one of the illustrious sages of ancient India. It narrates the story of a long-drawn conflict, followed by a disastrous war between Kauravas and Pandavas over dynastic succession. Almost all the kingdoms of those days participated in this war which resulted in a tremendous loss of wealth as well as manpower on both sides. The Pandavas came out to be victorious in this war, which is remembered as a glowing example of victory of virtue over vice.

Besides the main narrative, *Mahabharata* contains many episodes, dialogues and discourses which embody morals concerning various aspects of human life. A sizeable section of these discourses deals with norms of politics and art of government which are regarded to be the unique contribution of *Mahabharata* to ancient Indian political thought. In view of the encyclopedic character of *Mahabharata*, it is said that there is no aspect of knowledge which is not to be found here, and whatever is not found here, would not be found anywhere else.

It is important to note that the term *Rajadharma* occurs most frequently in *Mahabharata* to refer to the science of politics. There is a large section on *Rajadharma* within the *Shantiparvam* (an important section of this great epic). *Rajadharma* literally means the code of royal duties which also implies the art of good governance. It largely prescribes what a king or a ruler should do under normal conditions. It is supplemented by *Aupadidharma* (also elaborated in this epic) which prescribes what a ruler should do under abnormal conditions. Another important term which frequently occurs in *Mahabharata* to refer to the science of politics is *Dandaniti*. It implies the science of chastisement—use of power to

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## Kautilya : The Exponent of Arthashastra

In the happiness of the people lies the ruler's happiness. Their welfare is his welfare. The ruler shall not consider what pleases and benefits him personally, but what is pleasing and beneficial to the people.

Kautilya (*Arthashastra*)

Kings rule over willing subjects but tyrants rule over unwilling subjects; the king pursues honour, the tyrant pleasure.

Aristotle (*Politics*)

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### GENESIS OF ARTHASHASTRA

Kautilya was an ancient Indian philosopher, the celebrated author of *Arthashastra* (the science of polity). Historians have demonstrated that 'Kautilya' was the pen-name of Chanakya, the illustrious Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya in the fourth century B.C. Chanakya also wrote several treatises on ethics and statecraft in his own name. All these works, taken together, mark a departure from the earlier Indian tradition which was characterized by the supremacy of religion in all spheres of life. Kautilya proceeded to declare the independent status of polity and to highlight its importance in social life. The situation was somewhat similar to sixteenth-century Europe when the supremacy of religion in all spheres of life was challenged by the concept of state sovereignty.

### Sovereignty

Sovereignty refers to the supreme legal authority which is an essential element of the State. It is by virtue of this authority that a State can make binding laws, command obedience to its orders, and punish those who fail to obey its orders. Only a sovereign State can enter into treaty with other States and conduct war against enemy States.

Kautilya is regarded the chief exponent of *Arthashastra*. In order to understand the nature of *Arthashastra*, it is necessary at the outset to introduce the concept of four *Purusharthas* (the principal objects of human life) as identified in the tradition of Indian philosophy. These are: *Dharma* (धर्म); *Artha* (अर्थ); *Kama* (काम); and *Moksha* (मोक्ष). *Dharma* refers to the virtue derived from the performance of one's duty as prescribed by the sacred law. In social life, it is largely promoted by the institution of religion. *Artha* refers to the virtue derived from the acquisition of wealth and material prosperity. In social life, it is promoted by the institution of polity. Then *Kama* refers to the virtue derived from the gratification of desires and sensual enjoyments. In social life, it is promoted by the institutions of art and culture. Finally, *Moksha* refers to the virtue derived from the final liberation or emancipation of the soul. It is largely attained through the practice of penance.

### Four Types of Purusharthas As Identified In Indian Philosophy

| Purushartha<br>(Principal Object of Human Life) |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Inherent Virtue                                 | Dharma<br>(धर्म)  | Artha<br>(अर्थ)                               | Kama<br>(काम)                                   | Moksha<br>(मोक्ष)                            |
| Derived from                                    | Performance of one's Duty as Prescribed by the Sacred Law | Acquisition of Wealth and Material Prosperity | Gratification of Desires and Sensual Enjoyments | Final Liberation or Emancipation of the Soul |
| Promoted by                                     | Religion  | Polity  | Art and Culture                                 | Penance                                      |

Historically, the age preceding Kautilya was characterized by the primacy of *Dharma*, which was regulated by *Dharmashastra*, that is the set of duties as prescribed by the sacred law. In that age, the pursuit of other principal objects of human life, namely *Artha*, *Kama*, and *Moksha*, was regarded as incidental to the pursuit of *Dharma*. Similarly, the discourse on other principal objects of human life was included in the discourse on *Dharma*. Advent of *Arthashastra* also implied that the pursuit of *Artha* could be treated as an end-in-itself rather than as

an instrument of the pursuit of *Dharma* or any other type of *Purushartha*.

So, before Kautilya the knowledge concerning the science of polity was lying scattered across several works. Moreover, this knowledge did not enjoy an independent status as it was subservient to the knowledge of *Dharma*. Kautilya was the first who sought to consolidate this knowledge and present it in the form of *Arthashastra* for the guidance of princes and statesmen. Thus the opening sentence of *Arthashastra*, after salutation to the divine teachers of polity, reads:

This *Arthashastra* is made as a compendium of almost all the *Arthashastras*, which, in view of acquisition and maintenance of the earth, have been composed by ancient teachers.

Towards the end of the work, Kautilya repeats this statement in a slightly different way:

This *Arthashastra* or Science of Polity has been made as a compendium of all those *Arthashastras* which, as a guidance to kings in acquiring and maintaining the earth, have been written by ancient teachers.

Kautilya was of course one of the most original thinkers of ancient India. He withheld his claim to originality probably for two reasons: (a) It was symptomatic of his modesty; and (b) He wished to make his work authoritative by invoking the names of ancient authorities. Nevertheless by introducing a new, consolidated *Arthashastra* as authoritative as *Dharmashastra*, he sought to raise the status *Artha* (material prosperity) — the second object of human life to the equivalent of *Dharma* (religious duty) — the first object of human life. While the earlier references to the science of polity largely dwelled on the duties of kings, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* was meant for the guidance of kings who desired to acquire and maintain the earth. In fact, it was the first manual on statecraft and the art of administration.

## NATURE OF DANDANITI

Another equivalent of the science of polity prevalent in ancient India was *Dandaniti* which denotes the art of using force to control the errant elements in society. *Danda*, i.e. the rod as a symbol of force or state power is mentioned in the old texts like *Manusmriti*, the work of Ushnas and *Mahabharata*, but Kautilya has given elaborate exposition of *Dandaniti*. Kautilya made a clear distinction between religion and politics and nowhere does he evaluate political problems in terms of religious precepts. While recognizing the vital importance of religion in social life, he was bold enough to assert that *Dandaniti* should form the basis of *Purushartha* (the effort to achieve the principal objects of human life). He stressed the value of human endeavour in securing the best in his life. He contended that history was no longer the result of the vengeance or jealousy of superhuman powers but the expression of human ingenuity. He asserted that things should not be allowed to be governed by chance.

Kautilya identified four purposes of *Dandaniti*: (a) Acquisition of the unacquired; (b) Preservation of the acquired; (c) Augmentation of the preserved; and (d) Fair distribution of the augmented. Only a strong and disciplined prince

could fully achieve these purposes. Politically Kautilya was the supporter of a strong monarchy and stable imperialist state. His state was to be paternal in character and benevolent in spirit. The main function of the state was to foster the material and spiritual progress. It was to regulate all branches of human life. It was to maintain the respective privileges of all and to protect them from the tyranny of more powerful sections. Kautilya regarded monarchy as the best human institution and also as the custodian of the national resources and public rights.

In exalting polity as the supreme social institution, Kautilya went to the extent of claiming that of the four *Purusharthas* (principal objects of human life), *Artha* (material prosperity which was fostered by the state) was the most important. He assigned the duty of maintenance of *Dharma* (religious order) to king himself. *Kama* (sensual enjoyments) could be attained only under a congenial atmosphere to be maintained by the state. And finally, *Moksha* (final liberation of soul) could be achieved only when the first three objects have been accomplished. Thus, achievement of all the four principal objects of human life was dependent on the proper functioning of the state. In a nutshell, *Kautilya sought to replace the primacy of religion prevailing in his times by advancing the claim of state sovereignty.*

## II

### ORIGIN AND FUNCTIONS OF THE STATE

Kautilya sees the state as a product of practical necessity. In his view, before the emergence of the authority of the king, the world was afflicted by anarchy. This state of affairs is characterized by the *Maastrya Nyaya*, i.e. the law of fishes which concedes the prerogative of each fish to swallow a smaller fish, hence each fish is in the danger of being swallowed by a larger fish. In the context of human beings, it meant that the strong was free to oppress the weak, hence everyone was afraid of the stronger one. There was no sense of security for anyone. The people oppressed by these conditions nominated Vaivasvat Manu, the son of Sun God, as their king. They decided and pledged that they would pay one-sixth of their food-grains and one-tenth of other goods including gold as tax to the king because king alone could provide for safety and prosperity of the people. Hence, king enjoyed the status of superior gods.

It is a sin to show disrespect to the king, which is visited by the divine wrath. On the other hand, the king is duty-bound to make full effort to provide for the safety of his subjects, because they pay his 'share', i.e. the tax on the condition of fulfilment of his duty.

Thus, Kautilya's political thought is centred around the idea of 'kingship' which was widely prevalent in ancient India. In other words, his prescriptions are particularly suitable for monarchy, and not for any other form of government like aristocracy or democracy. As regards functions of the state, Kautilya

particularly advises the king to ensure the safety of women and property of his subjects. Broadly speaking, a king should protect his subjects from eight types of natural calamities: fire, flood, epidemic, famine, rats, snakes, tigers and evil spirits.

Kautilya suggests the ways to catch hold of criminals with the help of spies. He also prescribes different punishments for different types of crimes. In short, king's function of defence may be divided into three parts:

- (a) Defence from external enemies and assailants;
- (b) Maintenance of law and order within the state; and
- (c) Protection of the subjects from natural calamities.

Kautilya advises the king to abstain from arrogance. He should not give up righteousness while enjoying worldly pleasures. Proper education as well as self-control is the keynote of good administration. Kautilya has sought to make the state machinery an instrument of material, cultural and spiritual well-being of the people. The state shall be responsible not only for the maintenance of *Dharma*, i.e. the prescribed duties of all human beings, but also for maintaining the sanctity of relations between husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, teacher and taught, etc. Kautilya holds the state responsible for giving due assistance to the destitutes, pregnant women, newly born children, orphans and the aged people. Thus he has created a vast network of social security.

Kautilya has made elaborate provisions for the regulation of dissolution of marriages, desertion, remarriage, protection of the dignity and chastity of women, relation between lover and beloved and rules governing the profession of prostitutes. The responsibility of regulation and control of the means of entertainment like theatres and gambling dens also devolves on the state. Kautilya has ruled that the state itself should set up liquor shops at a reasonable distance within the city and town, camp and fort, etc. or issue licence to the traders to open such shops. Public buildings should be suitably decorated and equipped with the means of rest and recreation for the people. Kautilya has also laid down elaborate rules for the slaughter of animals and sale of meat.

Kautilya favours state control of all trade and occupations. He requires all physicians to report all cases of serious illness to government. If a physician fails to report such a case, and the patient dies, the physician shall be liable to punishment. Similarly, *Arthashastra* lays down elaborate rules governing the occupations of goldsmiths, weavers and washermen. Kautilya has also determined the rates of tax, profit and interest. He wants the state to fix pillars beside the highways to indicate distance of different destinations.

### III

## SEVEN-ORGANS THEORY OF THE STATE

Kautilya has described the structure of the state in his *saptanga* or 'seven-organs' theory of the state. It was not an original contribution of Kautilya, as

*Manusmiriti* and some other earlier works contain references to this theory. According to this theory, the state is comprised of seven elements. These elements are so closely connected with each other as if they are different organs of a single body; they are called 'organs' of the state. The organs of a body like eyes, ears, hands, legs, etc. are not capable of independent existence, and the body too would become crippled or dead if these organs are removed. Similarly, the organs of the state cannot exist outside the state, and if any of these organs is destroyed, the state would become crippled or dead. In order to give a touch of reality to this metaphor, Kautilya has drawn parallels between the organs of the state and the corresponding organs of human body. Accordingly,

- (1) *Swami* (the King himself) is equivalent to head in the body;
- (2) *Amatya* (the Minister) represents eyes of the state;
- (3) *Suhrid* (the Friend or Ally) represents ears of the state;
- (4) *Kosha* (the Treasure) is the mouth of the state;
- (5) *Sena* (the Army) represents the brain of the state;
- (6) *Durga* (the Fort) represents the arms of the state; and finally,
- (7) *Pura* or *Janapada* (the Territory and the Population) represents legs of the state.

Thus, the 'seven-organs' theory of the state not only depicts the organic form of the state, but also describes appropriate functions of each organ of the state. Moreover, it also enumerates the essential elements of the state. In other words, a state can exist and function properly only if it comprehends the King, the Minister, the Ally, the Treasure, the Army, the Fort and the Territory plus Population. In modern times, all these elements are not deemed to be necessary for the existence of a state. Of these, only the first (*i.e.* the King or the Sovereign) and the last elements (*i.e.* the Territory plus Population) are considered to be indispensable. Some elements included in this scheme of things constitute the general category of 'Government'. Thus, modern Western political theory identifies four elements of the state: Population, Territory, Government and Sovereignty. Other elements enumerated by Kautilya cannot be regarded as the basic condition for the existence of the state. Minister is only one part of the Government. Ally may be acquired by proper conduct of foreign affairs. Treasure, Army and Fort constitute Finance and Defence Departments of the Government. They cannot be treated as independent elements of the state. In a nutshell, the 'seven-organs' theory of the state represents a combination of the 'elements of the state' and 'organic theory of the state' as prevalent in modern times.

### Organic Theory of the State

Organic theory of the state embodies a metaphorical expression where the State is compared to an organism or a living body, and individuals are regarded its organs. Accordingly, an individual separated from the State loses his essence and identity like an organ severed from the body.

## IV

## DIPLOMACY AND STATECRAFT

Kautilya's analysis of diplomacy and statecraft comprises his unique contribution to political theory. He argues that enhancement and expansion of power is the prime goal of the state. Hence the conduct of relations with other states calls for the use of special insight and skill. This is precisely the arena of diplomacy and statecraft.

In Kautilya's political thought, diplomacy and statecraft have been built on the geographical and economic foundations of the state. There was ample scope for building large states on the vast plains of India, yet in the absence of advanced means of transport and communication in ancient India, no central government could extend its control to far off territories. That is why this country was divided into small states, and each state was tempted to annex the neighbouring states. Very strong kings aimed at the expansion of their kingdom while the less strong ones sought to maintain their independence by paying tribute to the stronger kings. They not only remained autonomous in their internal administration but also received tributes from their vassals.

Kautilya has enumerated four *Upayas*, i.e. devices or expedients, deemed to be most reliable devices of diplomacy and statecraft:

- (a) *Sama* or Conciliation: This policy should be adopted in dealing with a stronger king because it would be impossible to defeat him in the battlefield;
- (b) *Dana* or Concession or Gift: This policy would also be suitable for dealing with a stronger king in order to appease him;
- (c) *Danda* or the Use of Force : This policy should be adopted for dealing with a weaker king to extract concessions from him by terrorizing him or defeating him in the battlefield; and
- (d) *Bheda* or Sowing the Seeds of Dissension in one's enemy's camp (also called the policy of 'divide and rule') : This policy should be adopted for dealing with several equally strong kings with a view to inducing them to destroy each other's strength.

Commenting on the efficacy of these devices, Shukracharya, another illustrious commentator on these issues, asserted : It is only by a device that even iron can be melted and, though water extinguishes fire, it is possible by the use of suitable devices to evaporate water itself. Kautilya regarded the success of every endeavour as dependent upon the judicious application of all these four devices.

It is worth-noting that all these methods of diplomacy and statecraft do not conform to the rules of ordinary morality. Kautilya went to the extent of considering secret counsel and fraud as the legitimate methods of statecraft. This would give the impression as if Kautilya placed politics above ethics. That is why Kautilya is sometimes compared with early modern European thinker, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527), who sought to create a wall of separation

between politics and ethics. It is, however, important to assert that Kautilya and other ancient Indian thinkers recommended the use of unethical methods only under abnormal conditions. They insisted on following the righteous course under normal conditions.

It is again significant that Machiavelli taught the Prince to adopt two qualities of animals. i.e. bravery of lion and cunning of fox, for the successful conduct of public affairs. Kautilya, on the other hand, advised the Prince to learn twenty qualities from different animals, as described in Chanakya's *Rajanitishasra*. Accordingly, the Prince should learn from the lion to undertake a task well-prepared whether it is a big one or small. From the crane he should learn to control his senses and aptness of time and place to accomplish all tasks. From the cock he should learn four things: getting up in time, fighting, division of responsibility among allies and enjoyment of one's prey after attacking it oneself. From the crow he should learn five things : sex in secrecy, secret action, catch in time, unruffled behaviour and distrust of everyone. Then from the dog he should learn six qualities: desire for much, satisfaction with a little, deep slumber, quick awakening, devotion to master and bravery. Finally, he should learn three things from the donkey : to carry the burden even though tired, not to mind heat and cold and to trudge ever satisfied. The prince who practices these twenty virtues conquers all enemies and himself remains unconquerable.

Hence, in contrast to Machiavelli, Kautilya's vision of diplomacy and statecraft not only concedes due importance of ethics, it is far wider in its scope as well as richer in the identification of techniques.

- Q.1.** In what sense Kautilya is regarded the exponent of Arthashastra tradition of Indian political thought? Discuss fully.
2. Write a short essay on Kautilya's account of the origin and functions of the state.
3. Bring out the significance of Kautilya's 'seven-organs' theory of the state.
4. Give a critical account of Kautilya's views on diplomacy and statecraft.

## IV

## DIPLOMACY AND STATECRAFT

Kautilya's analysis of diplomacy and statecraft comprises his unique contribution to political theory. He argues that enhancement and expansion of power is the primary goal of the state. Hence the conduct of relations with other states calls for the use of special insight and skill. This is precisely the arena of diplomacy and statecraft.

In Kautilya's political thought, diplomacy and statecraft have been built on the geographical and economic foundations of the state. There was ample scope for building large states on the vast plains of India, yet in the absence of advanced means of transport and communication in ancient India, no central government could extend its control to far off territories. That is why this country was divided into small states, and each state was tempted to annex its neighbouring states. Very strong kings aimed at the expansion of their kingdom while the less strong ones sought to maintain their independence by paying tribute to the stronger kings. They not only remained autonomous in their internal administration but also received tributes from their vassals.

Kautilya has enumerated four *Upayas*, i.e. devices or expedients, deemed to be most reliable devices of diplomacy and statecraft:

- (a) *Sama* or Conciliation: This policy should be adopted in dealing with a stronger king because it would be impossible to defeat him in the battlefield;
- (b) *Dana* or Concession or Gift: This policy would also be suitable for dealing with a stronger king in order to appease him;
- (c) *Danda* or the Use of Force : This policy should be adopted for dealing with a weaker king to extract concessions from him by terrorizing him or defeating him in the battlefield; and
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## Advent of the Buddhist Tradition

### INTRODUCTION

Buddhist tradition owes its origin to the teachings of Gautama Buddha (563-483 B.C.), a great philosopher and social reformer of ancient India. While *Dharmashastra* and *Arthashastra* traditions were embedded in Hindu philosophy, Buddhist tradition marks a clear departure from Hindu mode of thought.

Buddha (originally Prince Siddhartha) was born into a Vedic Kshatriya family who grew up in an environment of luxury and opulence. He discovered at the early age that sensual pleasures and wealth did not provide genuine and enduring satisfaction to the human being. He abandoned worldly life to devote himself to meditation and eventually gained *Enlightenment*, where upon he came to be known as *Buddha* (the Enlightened one). After his awakening, he regarded himself as a physician rather than a philosopher.

Whereas traditional philosophers indulged in intellectual disputation for its own sake, Buddha discouraged it as a fruitless exercise which distracts the individual from true awakening. Buddha also repudiated the conventional Hindu belief that Brahmins were the genuine children of Brahma (the Creator of the Universe), born of his mouth. Then Buddha denied to link individual's status with his position in the hierarchy of the caste system. He asserted that men should be judged by their deeds with reference to the standard of righteousness, and not by their birth in a particular class. Buddha declared that all those who became his followers and observed *Dhamma* (the virtuous path prescribed by Buddha) would be treated as equal without discrimination of caste, gender, race or region. Buddha argued that as all rivers — great and small — lose their distinct identities on joining the ocean, so all castes and classes acquire identical status on joining his *Sangha* (Buddhist organization).

## II

## ETHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF BUDDHISM

Buddhism initially flourished as an Eastern religion in the fifth century B.C. Its basic tenets are enshrined in 'four noble truths'. These are : (a) All existence is afflicted with suffering; (b) Desire, appetite or craving is the source of suffering that binds all beings to the cycle of birth and rebirth; (c) Through the elimination of craving, suffering can be brought to an end; and (d) In worldly life, men should follow the 'eightfold path' which is the key to their redemption from suffering.

The 'eightfold path' shows the way to renounce one's cravings. It implies eight noble principles : (i) Right thinking; (ii) Right intention; (iii) Right speech; (iv) Right conduct; (v) Right livelihood; (vi) Right effort; (vii) Right mindfulness or control of thought; and (viii) Right concentration.

Buddha advised his followers to refrain from extremes and always follow the 'middle path' to mitigate their suffering.

In contrast to Hindu mode of thought, Buddhism does not recognize any supernatural deity. It holds that by following the 'eightfold path', one will eventually attain *Enlightenment* or *Nirvana*, that is the state of liberation of the soul from the passions and frustrations of ordinary living.

Buddhism holds that individual's self is linked with the lives of all other creatures and to his or her past and future incarnations. This interconnectedness of the universe is often invoked to assert a strong sense of social solidarity and individual's moral obligation towards others.

## III

## POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

### **ORIGIN OF THE STATE**

Buddhist account of the origin of the state or kingship is closely linked with its account of the evolution of the universe. According to *Digha Nikaya*, an important Buddhist scripture, with the appearance of high-quality rice and its consumption, men acquire physical strength. This results in the rise of passions among men and women who tend to build households and store rice. This tendency gives rise to scarcity situation whereupon men decide to divide and demarcate their rice fields. Now certain greedy being, while guarding his own rice-plot, steals another's plot and makes use of it. Thereupon others arrest and censure him for this act. They make him promise not to do it again. But he resorts to lying and repeats the act when he is struck by others. Thus four evils come into existence: (a) Theft; (b) Censure; (c) Lying; and (d) Violence. Thereupon people gather together to deliberate on the ways to control these evils. They decide to select a person who should be wrathful when indignation is justified; who should censure the

person that must be censured; and who should banish the one who deserves to be banished. The people also agree to give a portion of their rice to the person whom they regard competent to perform these functions; the person so chosen accepts their offer keeping in view their common interest. In this way the 'sovereign' comes into existence. In Buddhist literature, the 'sovereign' is described by three standing phrases: (a) *Mahajamasammata* (one who is chosen by the multitude); (b) *Khattiya* (Sanskrit : *Kshatriya*) (one who is lord of the fields); and (c) *Raja* (one who gratifies the others in accordance with *Dhamma*).

It follows that the Buddhist account of the origin of the state is substantially similar to Western theory of the social contract.

### Social Contract

Social contract refers to an agreement among men whereby they relinquish the hypothetical 'state of nature' and enter into civil society in order to provide for their effective protection from anti-social elements. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704), English philosophers, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78), French philosopher, are regarded the chief exponents of the theory of the social contract. They have given different accounts of the state of nature, the terms of the contract, and the nature of sovereignty which comes into existence in consequence of the social contract.

Buddhist view of the origin of the state stands in sharp contrast to the Hindu theory of the *Mootsy Nyaya* which held that the king was created to control an unbearable state of affairs. According to *Manusmriti*, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* and *Mahabharata*, when there is no ruler to wield the power of punishment on earth, the strong would devour the weak like fishes in water: the stronger fish preying upon the feebler. Broadly speaking, Hindu theory of government was based on a belief in the innate depravity of man. On the contrary, *Buddhism saw the struggle for existence before the formation of the state as a manifestation of man's ignorance rather than his innate depravity*. It held that man was ever ready to live in peace and amity with his fellow beings, to cooperate with them, and even to sacrifice himself for the sake of his fellow beings provided he was properly guided. Buddha argued that man could be controlled more effectively by self-understanding and inward discipline rather than by the discipline imposed from above by an external authority.

### RULES OF GOOD CONDUCT

Indeed, Buddhist scriptures set out certain norms of conduct for rulers as well as for subjects. In order to contain the 'four evils' which necessitated the formation of the state, Buddhism prescribes a set of five ethical principles, described as *Panchsheel* which must be followed by the individual to have a better life — full of happiness and free from worries. These include: (a) Non-violence (refraining from taking life of others); (b) Non-theft (refraining from taking what is not given to him); (c) Non-indulgence (refraining from sensual misconduct); (d) Adherence to *Truth* (refraining from lying); and (e) Non-addiction (refraining from intoxicants).

It is sometimes alleged that the *Arthashastra*'s focus on the statecraft tends to subordinate ethics to politics whereas Buddhist tradition does not compromise the primacy of ethics over politics. As U.N. Ghoshal (*A History of Political Ideas*; 1966) has rightly argued: "For while the *Arthashastra* teachers were inspired by their avowed end of ensuring the security and prosperity of the state to condone, if not to justify, breaches of morality in its interest, Buddhism with its stern and unbending code of ethics stood for the unqualified supremacy of the moral law over governmental affairs."

## MODEL OF POLITICAL GOVERNANCE

Buddhist model of political governance was largely derived from the rules and procedures prescribed for the management of the monastic community (the *Sangha*). This mode of governance implied the brotherhood of monks that was established on democratic principles. The day-to-day affairs of the *Sangha* were governed by a liberal culture of equalitarian interpersonal relations. There was no formal hierarchy or dynastic favouritism in the monastic order. The monastic code of conduct stipulates that the individual life of a monk is immersed in a community of persons ideally seeking liberation from greed, hatred, delusion, folly, conceit and ignorance. They were required to live in a state of communal harmony, with communal property and a bare minimum of one's private material possessions. This form of monastic governance contained many features of statecraft found in the self-governing confederacies and republics rather than the large monarchical kingdoms of the North, such as Koshala and Magadha. While monarchical kingdoms exemplified the Brahmanic notions of a divinely ordained system of a superior class of rulers, the self-governing confederacies largely conformed to the logic of humanistic foundations of Buddhist ethics.

It is important to note that in ancient India, the society was largely self-regulated as it was governed by long-standing custom. The state played a very limited role of dispensing justice and providing for certain public works. By the time of Buddha, many customs involving discrimination against various sections of society (particularly against women and lower castes) had become a source of perpetuating injustice in society. It was therefore imperative to empower the state to effect social change through law. Buddhism paved the way for this course of action—arming the state with the power of law-making for the welfare of the masses.

## CONCLUSION

Advent of the Buddhist tradition of social and political thought in ancient India marked a departure from the then prevailing rigidity of custom and social stagnation. Before Buddha, law was treated as something divinely ordained; the King was regarded to be the guardian of law, not empowered to change it; man was expected to live for the observance of that law. *It was Buddha who introduced the concept of 'legislation' in ancient India which implied that law could be made or modified for the welfare of man.*

In modern times, Buddhism has been invoked for reaffirming faith in many human values. *Indeed Buddha initiated a silent revolution in the religious sphere*

to fight against social injustice, particularly in the spheres of caste discrimination and gender discrimination. His teachings are quite relevant in the present-day world afflicted with various forms of social injustice. As B.R. Ambedkar (1891-1956), modern Indian social philosopher, significantly observed: "I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination which no other religion does. Buddhism teaches *Prajna* (understanding) as against superstition and supernaturalism, *Karuna* (love and compassion) and *Samata* (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life." Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964), modern Indian statesman-philosopher, was particularly enamoured by Buddha's teachings. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), father of the nation, sought to revive Buddha's message of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) as a weapon to fight against injustice. As a devout Hindu, Gandhi declared: "Buddha never rejected Hinduism, but he broadened its base. He gave it a new life and new interpretation." It is high time to integrate Buddhist ethics with the general framework of modern ethics.

### Human Values

Human values refer to a set of moral principles and beliefs whose upholders pay due regard to human life, human personality, human feelings and human dignity while dealing with others. In this pursuit, considerations of material profit and loss are relegated to the background.

### Broad Streams of Ancient Indian Political Thought : Comparative Study

| The Issue                       | Dharmashastra Tradition                    | Arthashastra Tradition   | Buddhist Tradition   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Religious Base                  | Hinduism                                   | Hinduism   | Buddhism   |
| Primary Concern                 | Pursuit of Dharma (Spiritual emancipation) | Pursuit of Artha (Worldly prosperity) with due regard to the authority of Dharma | Ethical Principles   |
| View on the Origin of the State | Divine Origin                              | Practical Necessity  | Social Contract  |
| Status of the Sovereign         | Representative of God                      | Appointed to provide protection and secure welfare of the people                 | Chosen by the people for their protection and maintenance of law and order |

- Q. "Advent of the Buddhist tradition marks a departure from Dharmashastra as well as Arthashastra traditions of Indian political thought." Elaborate and comment.

# Modern Indian Political Thought

In the history of Indian political thought, landmarks in the ancient thought are closely followed by those in the modern thought. The intervening period — the medieval period — is hardly marked by any significant development in the realm of political thought. Broadly speaking, we may identify two major streams of medieval Indian political thought: (a) Some leading works of Hindu thinkers which mark continuity with the ancient mode of thought. They largely contain interpretation of and commentary on the tenets of the ancient tradition of political thought. Of these, Kamandak's *Nitisar*, Somadeva Suri's *Nitiavakyamrita*, Chandeshwar's *Rajniti Ratnakar*, and Shukra's *Nitisar* may be considered to be most important; and (b) Contribution of some illustrious thinkers of the Islamic tradition containing some brilliant ideas on kingship and governance, largely for the guidance of their contemporary rulers of medieval India. Of these, the works of Ziauddin Barani (1283-1359), political thinker of Delhi Sultanate, particularly during the reign of Alauddin Khalji, and Sheikh Abul Fazl (1551-1602), the trusted courtier, historian and a friend of Akbar, the greatest of Mughal rulers, are particularly important.

The beginning of modern Indian political thought coincides with the advent of the Indian Renaissance in early nineteenth century. It refers to a sort of awakening among Indian intellectuals and other enlightened sections, and their concern about the widespread ignorance and apathy then prevailing in the Indian society. They were largely inspired by the rediscovery of India's glorious past and the will to revive its glory. They sought to identify the sources of Indian consciousness, and undertook the task of leading the Indian society from the prevailing darkness to light. The impact of the West provided the occasion for the national awakening while the sentiment of admiration of the legacy of Indian culture provided the cause of this awakening.

Exponents of the Indian Renaissance realized that Hindu society had been degenerated due to the rigidity of the caste system. Earlier reformers like Gautama Buddha (fifth century B.C.) and Sikh Gurus (fifteenth to eighteenth centuries) had set up equalitarian society outside Hinduism. Conversion of some Hindus to Islam or Christianity also found remedy of social inequality outside Hinduism.

Swami Dayanand (1824-83) was a unique reformer who sought to reform Hindu society from within. He exhorted the Hindus to rebuild

their society without rigidity of the caste system. Some other thinkers also severely attacked the caste system, but their efforts in this direction hardly match Dayanand's mission. Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), a great critic of the caste system, largely focused on reform of the Hindu faith and eradication of evil social practices. Then Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902), another opponent of the caste system, focused his attention on service to humanity—another laudable objective. Swami Dayanand, on the other hand, paid equal attention to reform of the Hindu faith, eradication of evil social practices, service to humanity as well as the structural reform of Hindu society by relaxing rigidity of the caste system.

The study of modern Indian political thought may be undertaken in terms of its various streams although these may not be treated as thoroughly distinct modes of thought. The major streams of this thought may be identified as: the Liberal stream; the Idealist stream; the Humanist thought; the Islamic thought; the Socialist stream; the Feminist stream; and the Critics of the Caste System. Finally, the political thought of two most important thinkers of modern India, Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) is so vast that it cannot be placed under any particular stream. So these thinkers will have to be discussed independently.

more market. The resulting political system was to be based on a balance between individual rights and collective welfare. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market. The state was to be limited in its power to regulate individual self-realisation through the market.

## The Liberal Stream

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Adherents of the liberal stream of modern Indian political thought were chiefly inspired by the tenets of British liberalism. This view stood for a social order that would afford maximum opportunities for the individual to develop his potentialities. It believed that the expansion of individual's freedom and his sense of self-determination would be conducive to social progress in India.

#### Liberalism

Liberalism refers to a principle of politics which regards 'liberty' or 'freedom' of individual as the first and foremost goal of public policy. Liberty, in this sense, implies 'liberation' from the restraints largely imposed by a tradition-bound society or by an authoritarian state. This principle was evolved in the West in late-seventeenth century in order to liquidate the feudal privileges of the landowning class and to create favourable conditions for the new entrepreneurial class to enable them to contribute to social progress.

Main tenets of liberalism include : (a) Man is a rational creature with immense potential to contribute to social progress as well as his own good; (b) The state is an artificial device meant to protect natural rights of its citizens; (c) The state should strive to secure the common good which represents the point of reconciliation between the diverse interests of different individuals and groups; (d) Individuals are entitled to civil liberties like freedom of thought and expression, freedom of association and movement, equality before the law, etc.; any restriction on individual freedom should be meant to secure similar and equal freedom to others; (e) No individual can accept any obligation without his own consent, and without consideration of mutual benefit. The state should ensure the enforcement of all contracts unless a contract is concluded under pressure or compromises dignity of any individual; in that case the state should strive to promote the public interest.

Universal Federation.

Pal believed that the formation of the Universal Federation would represent the culmination of the spiritual tradition of India, since India is divinely ordained to provide spiritual leadership to the world. Pal argued that the universalism professed by the Europeans was confined to the organization of the white races; it did not show faith in human dignity. On the contrary, on attaining *Swaraj*, India would form a federal nation of Hindus, Muslims and Anglo-Indians where each community would enjoy equal freedom. While the crude democracies of Europe and America were morally corrupting men by encouraging their competition for materialistic gains, Indian *Swaraj* would secure their equality on the basis of the divine origin, the divine nature, and the divine destiny of each person. The Western tradition insists on the maximum satisfaction of human wants which is the source of all conflict. But the Indian tradition shows the way to minimize material wants and exercise self-discipline which promotes the sense of universal brotherhood.

In consonance with the greatness of the Indian tradition, Pal sought to reinforce self-respect, self-confidence and self-assertion among Indians, and to motivate them to participate in the struggle for freedom. However, his plan to convert national freedom into the universal fraternity is not very clear.

## VI

### SRI AUROBINDO

#### INTRODUCTION

Sri Aurobindo, originally known as Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950), is regarded as the prophet of Indian nationalism. He is particularly famous for his contribution to the spiritual thought; his contribution to modern Indian political thought is largely based on his spiritual ideas. His career in active politics was, of course, very brief. He spent the early years of his life in England and returned to India in 1893 at the age of twenty one, and retired from politics in 1910 at the early age of thirty eight when he left for Pondicherry (now Puducherry) and devoted the rest of his life to spiritual and yogic exercises. In his educational career, he had so little contact with the Indian culture that he had to learn even his mother-tongue — Bangla at Baroda after his return from England. Yet he developed so intense love for India's culture and spiritual heritage that he raised it to the crowning glory in his social and political thought. In the words of Jawaharlal Nehru :

It is extraordinary that a person who had spent fourteen years of his life, from the age of 7 to 21, cut off from India and steeped in the European classics and the England of his day, should have become, in later years, the brilliant champion of Indian nationalism based on the philosophic and spiritual background of Indian thought.

It is important to note that Sri Aurobindo lived till the end of 1950, witnessing India's independence, but he never emerged from his retirement after 1910 to join the struggle for independence or to play an active role in the public life of

independent India. During his retirement he, of course, produced several volumes in his usual brilliant style, chiefly dealing with philosophic and religious subjects.

During his brief career in active politics, Aurobindo played an important role in the political awakening of India through his fiery articles and editorials in the English daily *Bande Mataram* during the years 1906-08 which shook not only Bengal but the entire India. Through these articles and editorials "Sri Aurobindo not only preached with unflinching candour the ideal of complete independence for India, one and undivided, but formulated in clear logical terms a complete programme of political action including in its embrace both violence and non-violence, for realizing the ideal" (Haridas Mukherjee and Uma Mukherjee, *Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics*, 1964, Preface).

Systematic exposition of Sri Aurobindo's political ideas can be found in his writings on the Indian culture and spiritualism. Of these, the following are particularly important : *Essays on the Gita*; *The Ideals of the Karmayogi*; *Ideals and Progress*; *The Renaissance in India*; *The Foundations of Indian Culture*; *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance*; *The Ideal of Human Unity*; and *A system of National Education*.

## NATIONALISM AS A RELIGION

All great movements of life in India have begun with a new spiritual thought and usually a new religious activity.

Sri Aurobindo (*The Renaissance in India*; 1951 ed.)

Sri Aurobindo was an ardent nationalist. In his view, nationalism was not only a mission, a goal of life, but an end to be pursued as vigorously as the religion. According to Haridas and Uma Mukherjee, "With him Nationalism was not a mere political slogan nor a mere intellectual idea but his first passion and religion." In one of his speeches in 1908, Aurobindo announced:

Nationalism is not a mere political programme ;  
 Nationalism is a religion that has come from God ;  
 Nationalism is a creed which you shall have  
 to live..... If you are going to be a nationalist,  
 if you are going to assent to this religion of  
 Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit.  
 You must remember that you are the instruments of God.

Thus Aurobindo not only awakened his countrymen to their sacred duty at that juncture, but also imparted a new moral tone to the national movement, ultimately preparing the mind of the country for the forthcoming social revolution. According to Karan Singh: "For him (Sri Aurobindo), India was no mere geographical entity, no mere physical and material land mass, no mere intellectual concept, but a Goddess incarnate, a mighty mother who for centuries has cradled and nourished her children and who, at that time, was groaning under the yoke of a foreigner oppressor — her pride shattered, her glory ground to dust" (*Prophet of Indian Nationalism — A Study of Political Thoughts of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh 1893-1910*;

1967). Thus India as a nation was eulogized by Sri Aurobindo as the Mother, but a mother in chains, and the primary duty of her sons was to win freedom for the Mother, to strive by every possible means to liberate her from her shackles.

The demand of *Swaraj* was, for Sri Aurobindo, a natural corollary of the ideal of nationalism. He believed that every nation on earth had a peculiar bent of its own, its individuality which could not be maintained, far less fostered, under the domination of a foreign power representing a different temperament and a different genius. The temper of Anglo-Saxon culture was an antithesis of that of the Indian culture. The Anglo-Saxon people were wedded to materialism because they paid greatest importance to the immediate, practical and material gains while India's chief characteristic was her spiritualism. Sri Aurobindo predicted that if India continued to remain a province of British Empire, sharing its institutions and governed by its policy, her fate would be no better than that of the ancient Greece with Roman domination: "Sri Aurobindo argued..... that a foreign rule, however benevolent, could never willingly foster the centres of strength in the life of the subject nation in whose relation it always stands not as a 'parasite' but as an 'octopus'..... It is only by throwing off the foreign octopus from its body-politic that a subject people could ever hope to grow as a separate entity and realize its destiny" (*ibid*).

### Materialism

Materialism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'matter' as the essence of the universe, and treats 'consciousness' as mere reflection of the prevailing condition of the matter.

In ethics, materialism stands for an attitude which regards material or economic gain and sensuous pleasure as the highest value and relegates all other values to the background. It is the opposite of spiritualism.

### Spiritualism

Spiritualism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'spirit' or 'soul' as the essence of the universe, and treats 'matter' as the transitory form through which 'soul' expresses itself in the course of its evolution to the goal of perfection.

In ethics, spiritualism stands for an attitude which regards only moral values as worth pursuing and relegates economic gain and sensuous pleasure to the background. In other words, it accords priority to moral values over material values. It is the opposite of materialism.

Sri Aurobindo was convinced that imitation of Europe was not at all conducive to India's regeneration. In his view, the test of the vitality of the nationalist movement was its non-importive, non-imitative and non-artificial character. He argued: "For a nation which is not attempting to imprint its personality on such a movement is moving towards self-sterilization and death." He, therefore, exhorted the Indian people to uphold the *Sanatan Dharma* which was the essence of their national personality. The *Sanatan Dharma* and the Indian nationalism were, therefore, co-terminous. In his own words: "I say no longer that nationalism is

a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the *Sanatan Dharma* which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the *Sanatan Dharma*, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the *Sanatan Dharma* declines, then the nation declines and if the *Sanatan Dharma* were capable of perishing, with the *Sanatan Dharma* it would perish. The *Sanatan Dharma*, that is nationalism" (*ibid*).

Aurobindo's concept of nationalism as religion opened wider horizons for the national movement. He felt that the task before us was not mechanical but moral, not political but spiritual. The aim of the nationalist movement was not confined to an alteration of the form of government—from a colonial rule to self-government—but it embraced a comprehensive programme of nation-building. Politics was a part of this programme, but only a part: "We should devote ourselves not to politics alone, nor to theology or philosophy or literature or science by themselves, but to all of these—to our *Dharma*: it is a spiritual revolution that we foresee and the material is only its shadow and reflex" (*ibid*). The realization of the spirituality of India could alone make the nation free and great. The European ideal of 'mechanical' freedom, on the other hand, concentrated on outer social and political perfection, which was only half perfection; that, too the lower half. The formula of European politics was, therefore, insufficient. Aurobindo, therefore, insisted that India's salvation did not lie in the enlargement of Legislative Councils, introduction of elective principle, colonial self-government, or the like. His ideal of nationalism itself could not accommodate the Moderates' objective of Dominion Status for India.

Aurobindo aimed at seizure of political power as a prelude to India's national regeneration. Once freedom from the foreign yoke was achieved, all other steps in the direction of national regeneration—moral uplift; industrial and social development and educational reconstruction—would be undertaken successfully. In fact, Aurobindo's concept of *Swaraj* was something more than political freedom; "*Swaraj* as a sort of European ideal, political liberty for the sake of political self-assertion, will not awaken India. *Swaraj* as the fulfilment of the ancient life of India under modern conditions, the return of the *Satya-yuga* of national greatness, the resumption by her of her great role of teacher and guide, self-liberation of the people for the final fulfilment of the Vedantic ideal in politics, this is the true *Swaraj* for India. She cannot do it without taking the management of her own life into her own hands. She must live her own life and not the life of a part or subordinate in a foreign Empire" (*ibid*). Accordingly, Aurobindo envisaged two-fold task for the realization of nationalism in India : (a) Winning *Swaraj* for India so as to clean her social and political life from the pollution of European origin; and (b) Return to 'our old national individuality', so that India could play her great role in the redemption of the whole world.

National regeneration of India was, for Aurobindo, not the final goal; it was a stepping stone to universal regeneration. The great role that India was to play at this juncture was described by Aurobindo in a brilliant editorial of *Bande Mataram*, dated 28-03-1908, entitled 'Spirituality and Nationalism': "A great light is drawing on the East, a light whose first heralding glimpses are already seen on the horizon. The perfect expression of Hindu spirituality was the signal for the

resurgence of the East. Mankind has long been experimenting with various kinds of thought, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of perfection to be gained by material means, impossible millenniums and humanitarian hopes. Nowhere has society or politics helped it to escape from the necessity of sorrow, poverty, strife, dissatisfaction from which it strives for an outlet; for whoever is trying to find one by material means, must inevitably fail. The East alone has some knowledge of truth, the East alone can teach the West, the East alone can save mankind."

## THE TECHNIQUE OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

The Moderate leaders of the Congress were pursuing the narrow ideal of colonial self-government or Dominion status within the British Empire. Aurobindo repudiated their stand and joined Bipin Chandra Pal in demanding inalienable status of *Purna Swaraj* or complete sovereignty for the country. Like Bipin Chandra Pal, again, Aurobindo rejected the petitioning policy of the Congress and built up a comprehensive scheme of political action, known as the *Passive* or *Defensive Resistance*. The doctrine of organized Passive Resistance was first articulated by Bipin Chandra Pal, but it was left to Aurobindo to develop it into a system through his editorials in *Bande Mataram*. Later Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) further developed it into the doctrine of *Satyagraha*, and its practice won for him an immortal place in the Indian politics.

The doctrine of Passive Resistance, as conceived by Pal and Aurobindo, was based on certain well-defined principles. Its first principle was to immobilize the colonial administration by an organized refusal to do anything which would help British commerce in India's exploitation, or British officialdom in India's administration, until the conditions were changed as demanded by the people. This was also related to *Swadeshi Movement* — the term coined by the stalwarts of Bengal politics, like Surendra Nath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Aurobindo himself. This involved a larger programme of 'Boycott'. Originally devised as an economic weapon to hit the British rulers at their most vital points, the concept of Boycott was extended to include four-fold non-cooperation with the alien government : (a) the economic boycott; (b) the educational boycott; (c) the judicial boycott; and (d) the boycott of executive administration. The idea of 'social boycott' was subsequently added in the programme. However, this all-round boycott was judiciously kept within the bounds of law unless defiance of law became imperative for the nationalists.

Aurobindo's programme of Passive Resistance eventually embraced the cult of revolution also so as to pave a sure way to independence. As Haridas and Uma Mukherjee have observed: "The political thought of Sri Aurobindo covered in its sweep not only the doctrine of passive resistance but also the cult of revolution. The twin methods of non-violence and violence, constitutionalism and revolution which marked India's arduous journey toward *Swaraj*, were first formulated by him in clear and unmistakable terms. Sri Aurobindo was as much a passive resister as a revolutionary. The question of violence and non-violence did not trouble him so much as it did many others in the subsequent phases of India's Freedom Movement" (*Sri Aurobindo and the New Thought in Indian Politics*; 1964). Instead

of relying solely on the principle of non-violence (*Ahimsa*), Aurobindo believed that varying doses of violence were not only stimulating but indispensable for bringing the legal or constitutional agitation well within the range of realization. He was convinced that the peaceful means could succeed only when coercive means were also available at hand. Success of the constitutional agitation as a form of diplomacy did not depend on the force of logic but on the presence of an effective force behind it; the show of this force alone could 'convert our prayers into demands'.

## NATION AND THE STATE

As a prophet of nationalism, Aurobindo recognized nation as the real instrument of human progress. The Western idea of State did not appeal to his mind. The State was, in his view, at best, an instrument of achieving mechanical freedom which did not represent the true freedom.

According to Aurobindo, the idea of State in the modern times supports itself on two motives: one appeals to the external interest of race, the other to its highest moral tendencies. It demands that individual egoism shall be sacrificed for the collective interest; it claims that man shall live not for himself but for the whole, the group, the community. It asserts that the hope of well-being and progress of humanity lies in the efficiency and organization of the State. However, the two ideas on which the State bases its claims are largely ill-founded. In the words of Aurobindo himself: "Theoretically, it is the subordination of the individual to the good of all that is demanded; practically it is his subordination to a collective egoism — political, military, economic, which seeks to satisfy certain collective aims and ambitions shaped and imposed on the great mass of the individuals by a smaller or larger number of ruling persons who are supposed in some way to represent the community." Whatever the mode of imposition of their aims and ideals, there is no guarantee at all that this ruling class or the government represents the best mind of the nation or its noblest aims or its highest instincts. As a result, the selfish, incompetent and timid politicians manage to win power and use it for the fulfilment of their ignoble designs though they continue to pay lip-service to the lofty ideals of society.

Aurobindo further observes that even if the governing instruments were better constituted and of higher mental and moral character, still the State would not be what it pretends to be. In fact, it is the energy of the individual which is really effective agent of collective progress. The State, instead of coming to the aid of the individual in utilization of this energy, restrains its manifestation. With the enormous increase of organized State power, free individual effort will either be eliminated altogether or it will be dwarfed and cowed into helplessness.

According to Aurobindo, the organized State of today neither represents best mind of the nation nor even the sum of the communal energies: "It is collective egoism much inferior to the best of which the community is capable." Whereas the individual possesses a soul and makes up for the deficiencies of the soul by a system of morality and an ethical sense, the State is an entity which, with the greatest amount of power, is hardly hampered by internal scruples or external

checks. It has no soul or only a rudimentary one. Its slight intellectual and ethical sense is eclipsed by its immense military, political and economic force. Hence it is scarcely qualified to serve as an instrument of social progress.

Aurobindo is equally critical of the so-called Welfare State. In his own words: "The State now feels the necessity of justifying its existence by organizing the general economic and material well-being of the community and even of the individuals. This attempt of the State to grow into an intellectual and moral being is one of the most interesting phenomenon of the modern civilization. But the claim of the State to absorb all free individual activities, a claim which it increasingly makes as it grows more clearly conscious of its new ideals and possibilities, is, to say the least of it, premature and, if satisfied, will surely end in a check to human progress, a comfortably organized stagnancy such as overtook the Graeco-Roman world after the establishment of the Roman Empire."

The demand of self-sacrifice from the individual for the sake of the good of the community and the need of a growing solidarity with his fellows is not disputed by Aurobindo. What he suggests is that the State is not qualified to make such a demand. He says: "The State is a convenience, and rather clumsy convenience, for our common development; it ought never to be made an end-in-itself." Man must develop himself individually as well as collectively as a member of the community. The State-governed action is not capable of developing the individual perfectly or serving the common ends of the community. The State is, of course, capable of providing conveniences and removing obstacles in the way of cooperative action of the individuals. But such possibility was not recognized by the English individualism while Teutonic idea of collectivism exploited this as an excuse for establishing a rigid control by the State. Thus Aurobindo concludes: "*When the State attempts to take up control of the cooperative action of the community, it condemns itself to create a monstrous machinery which will end by crushing out the freedom, initiative and serious growth of human being.*"

In short, Aurobindo is convinced that moral and spiritual energy, not physical force, is the key to social progress. Individual being endowed with this energy is essentially capable of such progress; and nation representing collective soul, manifested in the free cooperative action of the individuals, is also an effective instrument of progress. On the other hand, the State being largely based on physical force alone, is simply incapable to serve as instrument of organic growth, because "the State is not an organism, it is a machinery, and it works like a machine, without tact, taste, delicacy or intuition." It is, therefore, quite improbable that a healthy unity of mankind can be brought about by the State machinery, whether the men are organized into a federation of States or into a single World-State. In order to achieve a real unity of mankind, it is imperative to subordinate the mechanical means to our true development "through a moralized and even spiritualized humanity united in its inner soul and not only in its outward life and body."

### DIMENSIONS OF MORAL FREEDOM

According to Aurobindo, the chief characteristic of human being is 'the upward urge to the divine', which is the essence of his existence. Its fulfilment

postulates freedom for man. All men must enjoy freedom to ensure their spiritual self-fulfilment. Freedom is a divine virtue informing all human beings. True consciousness of freedom, therefore, leads to extension of the principle of freedom to the entire mankind. Man's love for freedom inspires him to concede similar freedom for his fellows.

Freedom therefore, postulates discipline. Since men live in anthropogeographical units, known as nations, which determine norms of their life, they exercise their freedom within the framework of those norms. In other words, nation is the source of discipline as well as freedom. *Nationhood is, therefore, the primary condition for exercise of individual's freedom.* But a nation can bestow freedom upon its members only when the nation itself is free. *The principle of freedom, therefore, also postulates that no nation should deny freedom to any other nation.*

According to Aurobindo, like individual, each nation also possesses a personality. Hence freedom of each nation is a necessary concomitant of freedom of the individual. Since nation is the embodiment of freedom, enslavement of one nation by another is a contradiction in terms. When a colonial power proceeds to deprive one nation of its geographical possessions, the personality of the enslaved nation remains intact which continues to inspire its members to win back its freedom. Hence India's attempt to win back *Swaraj* from the colonial rulers was the part of the Indians' pursuit of freedom.

It is significant that in Aurobindo's system of thought, freedom of the individual is not meant to secure exclusively his own emancipation; it is valuable because of its contribution to national development. In other words, denial of freedom to the individual is a loss to the nation. And denial of freedom to a nation is, in turn, a loss to the humanity. As Aurobindo wrote in the *Bande Mataram* dated 29-04-1907: "Individual liberty is necessary to national development, because if the individual is unduly hampered, the richness of national life suffers and is impoverished. If the individual is given free room to realize himself, to perfect, specialize and enrich his particular powers and attain the full height of his manhood, the variety and rapidity of national progress is immensely increased. In so far as he is fettered and denied scope, the development of the nation is cramped and retarded."

Once the principle of individual freedom is accepted, similar freedom for different classes in the society must be conceded as a natural corollary thereof. Accordingly, Aurobindo adds : "Just as individual liberty is necessary for the richness and variety of national development, so self-government is necessary for its completeness and the full deployment of national strength. If certain classes are dominant and others depressed, the result is that the potential strength of the depressed classes is so much valuable force lost to the sum of national strength."

Individual freedom could, of course, flourish in a suitable social setting. Hence social freedom is a necessary condition of individual freedom. But social freedom, in turn, depends upon political freedom. Thus Aurobindo wrote in *Bande Mataram* dated 18-02-1908 : "Without political freedom, the soul of man is crippled. Only a few mighty spirits can rise above their surroundings but the ordinary man is a

slave of his surroundings and if those be mean, servile and degraded, he himself will be mean, servile and degraded. Social freedom can only be born where soul of man is large, free and generous, not enslaved to petty aims and thoughts. If political freedom is absent, the community has no great ends to follow and the individual is confined in a narrow circuit in which the superiority of caste, wealth or class is the only ambition which he can cherish. If political freedom opens to him a wider horizon, he forgets the lesser ambitions."

Since moral freedom is incomplete without political freedom, *Aurobindo treated Swaraj as the noblest goal for the colonial people*. And since each nation must be free so as to play its destined role in human evolution, Aurobindo demanded national *Swaraj* not only for self-fulfilment of the people of India, but for its potentiality of service to mankind. Thus, *he envisaged an independent India not only to secure progress of the Indian people, but to work for the promotion of human unity which was the goal of all progress*. The Indian struggle for freedom was, in Aurobindo's view, a tribute to spiritual evolution of humanity itself, since an independent India was to assume the role of torch-bearer of *Dharma* in the humanity's march towards its ultimate goal.

### **CONCEPT OF HUMAN UNITY, NATIONALIZED AND SPIRITUALIZED SOCIETY**

The Ideal of human unity in Aurobindo's thought emanates from his intense spiritualism or idealism. Thus he viewed the entire universe as a manifestation of the spirit or the 'idea'. In one of his speeches, Aurobindo observed: "According to our philosophy, it is the *idea* which expresses itself in matter. This is true also in the life of Humanity; it is true in politics, in the progress and life of a nation. It is the *idea* which shapes material institutions."

Thus material world, including human world, being an expression of the 'idea', owes its origin to the Divine Being and it proceeds in an evolutionary direction for ultimate realization of the 'idea'. Aurobindo envisages three stages in the process of spiritual evolution :

(a) In the first stage, a part of the Supreme, Unconditioned and Absolute Reality plunged into the grossest and densest matter and the material world was created; this was followed by the appearance of life in primitive forms, and subsequently mind first appeared among living creatures.

(b) The intermediate stage was marked by the advent of human race when intellect began to assume the dominant role; the present age was identified with this stage when the mankind was poised for next leap forward in the evolutionary process; and

(c) The final step in this direction would consist of the evolution of 'Mind' to 'Supermind', when this creation will revert to the source of its origin.

Aurobindo has outlined an elaborate procedure of *Yoga* – the technique of rising to the Supra-mental plane whereby a man could actively contribute towards a hastening of the evolutionary process. In short, in Aurobindo's system of thought, *Yoga* is not designed to secure emancipation of the individual alone; it is meant to

equip the individual to serve the entire mankind. In this context Karan Singh has significantly observed: "Sri Aurobindo.....is emphatic that his *Yoga* is not merely directed towards individual salvation but is for humanity as a whole. Whereas traditional religions offered the devotee individual liberation from the bondage of material existence and a rise into the luminous spiritual sphere, Sri Aurobindo insisted that the ascent was only one aspect of the whole spiritual adventure. Having ascended, the *Yogi* must again come down so that he can help the mass of humanity and indeed all matter in whatsoever form, to rise.....He sought not mere individual liberation, not liberation for the entire human race, not even liberation for all living beings, but nothing less than a complete transformation of material consciousness itself, the creation of 'a new heaven and new earth'."

Aurobindo's theory of divine origin of human mind is closely linked with his concept of human unity. Since 'idea' is the essence of the entire humanity, each member of human race is not only equal of the other, equally sharing its freedom, but a bond of organic unity also exists between all the human beings since they are the part and parcel of the same organism. Realization of this unity gives rise to the feeling of love—love of each human being for the other—to supplement their instinctive pursuit of freedom. Thus 'love' and 'freedom' are the real variables of the culture of man, which transcends all forms of civilization developed by man. Although mankind is sub-divided into innumerable territorial units, with their varying life-styles, yet the culture underlying the different civilizations is essentially one and the same everywhere. Civilization is only an artifice built around the culture of man which is essentially uniform. Self-realization directs the man to transcend the bounds of civilization and transform himself in accordance with the culture of man.

But since man can attain self-realization only within a social setting provided by his nation, national self-realization is an indispensable stage in the process of self-realization by the humanity. Although it is the culture of man which informs all forms of civilization on the earth, yet each nation defines this culture according to its own genius and thus contributes to the progress of mankind in its own way. Thus national self-realization involves man's identification with his nation as a peculiar manifestation of the culture of man. This, in turn, leads to supra-national stage, which corresponds to supra-mental stage in the all-prevading process of human evolution.

National self-realization by the Indians involved recognition of the characteristic feature of the Indian civilization and its role in the advancement of the culture of man. Aurobindo was convinced that the Indian civilization was superior to the Western civilization since the former was better equipped to lead the humanity to its ultimate goal. He pointed out that Indian civilization was informed by spirituality — emanating from religiosity — while the Western civilization was based on materialism emanating from the cult of rationalism. India's excellence at religiosity made her the guardian, exemplar and missionary of universal welfare while the West's insistence on rationalism promoted individualism, treating each individual as a self-driven system and accepting competitive selfishness as the basis of human relations. The Indian civilization conceived of the nation as an

organism while the Western civilization conceived it as a mechanism. The Indian concept of the nation as an organism drew every individual into its fold directing him to observe the true law and norm of his nature and the nature of his kind. Although all nations of the world had a right to exist independently and to evolve their civilizations according to their own genius, yet only such nation was qualified to assume their leadership which could show them the way to spiritual evolution of the humanity. Aurobindo was convinced that India was quite capable to assume this responsibility.

In a nutshell, Aurobindo's doctrine of human unity does not envisage merger of all nations into one; on the contrary, it expects different nations of the world contributing to the progress of mankind from a materialistic to a spiritualized society. That is why he wanted India to play the role of guide and torch-bearer of universal human progress.

According to Aurobindo, the Law of Evolution did not demand casting of the entire humanity into a single uniform mould. On the contrary, division of humanity into various nations reflected multi-faceted genius of the Divine Being. If each nation tries to attain excellence according to its own genius, this would eventually lead to emergence of human unity reflecting manifold virtues of the Divine Being. Thus a 'nationalized' society, that is the society divided into co-existing independent nations making their own contribution towards the spiritual evolution of mankind – each according to its own genius – is the immediate goal of reorganization of mankind. Since this nationalized society will be striving for attaining spiritual excellence, under the supreme guidance of a nation capable of leading the mankind in the direction of spiritual evolution, it will take the form of a 'spiritualized society'. It will be a society of complex oneness in which the national units of today will be converted into the units of a world society. While they will continue to function as units of culture, they would learn to look beyond their physical boundaries and serve as stepping stones for the realization of the vision of the unity of mankind.

In his vision of spiritualized society, Aurobindo contemplated autonomous national units, each pledged to upholding the culture of man in its own way. They would no longer be sovereign, but tied together in a constitutional form of 'a federation of nationalities'. Each nation would find its due place under the scheme of human unity; each civilization would be respected as a peculiar manifestation of the culture of man. This scheme of human unity would usher in the final unity wherein one uniform civilization would represent the culture of man as such.

### **EVALUATION**

Aurobindo's chief contribution to Indian national movement and modern Indian political thought consists in his exaltation of India into a great nation, capable of assuming leadership of the world in its progress towards realization of 'culture of man'. While so-called Liberal or Moderate thinkers of his day were eulogizing the British colonial rule as a blessing destined to transform India into a modern nation, Aurobindo repudiated their stand and sought to exhort Indians to realizing the glory of their own civilization and fighting for freedom from the foreign yoke.

instead of treating their colonial rulers as their liberators. The liberal reformists like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade and Gopal Krishna Gokhale called upon the Indian people to abandon their traditionalist religious culture and cast it afresh in the Western rationalistic mould. This involved accepting the leadership of the Western civilization in India's effort at social and national reconstruction. On the contrary, Aurobindo elevated India's religious tradition to the position of Supreme guiding force, not only for the promotion of Indian nationalism but also for making India fit to assume leadership of the Western world.

But his glorification of Indian civilization by virtue of her religious legacy is not well-founded. Though he tried to define religion in wider terms holding high hopes for the entire mankind, yet his repeated references to *Vedantic* philosophy and *Sanatan Dharma* show that he acceded to the superiority of Hindu religion. It is difficult to make out how the multi-religious people of India could be inspired to national self-realization by accepting superiority of one religion, even if it could be held as the best of all religions! P.S. Muhar has a point when he says: "Aurobindo... is the best exponent in India of the spiritual conception of nationalism. But for that very reason he has attempted to give Indian nationalism a very definite Hindu imprint. And the catholicity of his *Sanatan Dharma* would not make it more palatable to the Muslims. For the moment you begin to emphasize the cultural bases of Indian nationalism, you come to the parting of the ways: the pluralism of cultures, inevitably, comes in conflict with the monism of nationalism" (*Studies in Political Science*, ed. by J.S. Bains; 1961).

It is, however, significant that Aurobindo was also keen to enlist the support of Muslims and other minorities for the great cause of nationalism. Thus when the disruptive tendencies in Indian politics were widespread, Aurobindo wrote in *Bande Mataram* dated 22-12-1907: "Nationalism depends for its success on the awakening and organizing of the whole strength of the nation. It is therefore vitally important for nationalism that the politically backward classes should be awakened and brought into the current of political life; the great mass of orthodox Hinduism which was hardly ever touched by the old Congress movement, the great slumbering mass of Islam which has remained politically inert throughout the last century, the shopkeepers, the artisan class, the immense body of illiterate and ignorant peasantry, the submerged classes, even the wild tribes and races still outside the pale of Hindu civilization, Nationalism can afford to neglect and omit none." But the question is: whether these minorities – when awakened – would be prepared to accept the tutelage of Hindu religion? Aurobindo's high hopes on this count were far removed from the ground reality Indian polities.

Aurobindo, no doubt, deserves credit for boosting the morale of the Indians during the days of their subjugation, by exalting their own legacy instead of glorifying the Western values. But his rejection of materialism and even rationalism for the sake of spiritualism and religiosity does not seem to lay firm foundations for the modernization of India. A combination of reason and faith would, of course, be necessary for a balanced development of the Indian people, but mere spiritualism without scientific and technological advancement and material welfare could hardly

be accepted as a model for nation-building in India during the post-independence period. It is difficult to appreciate how the problem of poverty-stricken masses of India could be solved by administering the doses of spiritualism.

### Rationalism

Rationalism refers to a philosophical theory that defines the nature of knowledge and the test of its validity. Its main tenets may be described as follows: (a) The universe consists of a fixed order; it is governed by certain inexorable laws; (b) Knowledge about the real nature of all things and the laws governing the universe can be obtained only through Reason; (c) Knowledge obtained through Reason is superior to that obtained through sense-experience (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch); (d) All natural phenomena can be explained : there can be only one authentic explanation of any phenomenon, hence its alternative explanations cannot be recognized; and finally, (e) All the authentic explanations of various phenomena of the universe are interlinked and constitute a single system.

Rationalism holds that individual is endowed by nature with the faculty of Reason which is the source of all reliable knowledge. It therefore concedes that facts as well as values can be discovered and verified by the application of the right reason.

However, inspite of these drawbacks, Aurobindo's political ideas did play progressive and modernizing role in the Indian politics. The sources of his thought were, no doubt, traditional and even archaic and, therefore, he was basically a revivalist. But his appeal to religion and spiritualism was designed to serve a purpose which was never served before. He wanted to unite the people of India who were otherwise divided and segregated. He was the one to take up the cause of national education for national regeneration instead of State education which was devoid of any moral foundations. His insistence on freedom of the individual, and freedom of the nation as its corollary, prompted struggle of the masses against oppression; this function was seldom performed by the religious teachings in the past. He stood for challenge to authority and protest against injustice through cooperation of the masses. His rejection of colonialism and insistence on reorganization of mankind on the basis of equal respect for all nations paved the way for emancipation of mankind from the prevalent regime of oppression all over the world. In this way, the traditional content of Aurobindo's thought was pressed into service of creating a moral force for the modernization of India.

### VII

#### VEER SAVARKAR

#### INTRODUCTION

Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (1883-1966), popularly called Veer Savarkar (Savarkar the Brave), is known to be an ardent nationalist, revolutionary and a noted freedom fighter of India. More narrowly, he is regarded the inspirational force behind the resurgence of militant Hinduism in India.

In early decades of the twentieth century, Savarkar was educated in England. During his stay in England, he came into contact with the Indian revolutionists like Madame Cama, Lala Har Dayal and Madan Lal Dhingra, while he himself was also engaged in revolutionary activities. In 1910, he was arrested and brought to India as a 'dangerous state prisoner'. But he escaped the steamer to a French vessel which claimed French jurisdiction. Savarkar sought the protection of the French law, as a political prisoner, from the British police. The case was referred to Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague which decided against Savarkar. Finally, he was sentenced for fifty-five years by the British authorities. He was kept as a prisoner in the Andamans for fourteen years and in Ratnagiri for the next fourteen years, but he was set free in 1937. On his release, he first joined Democratic Swaraj Party led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and later the Hindu Mahasabha. Since then he remained the guiding spirit of the Hindu Mahasabha. He tried to infuse his own revolutionary fervour and his heroic will into this organization.

Savarkar was a powerful writer and orator. His most important works include : *The Indian War of Independence; History of the Sikhs; The life of Mazzini; Hindu Pad-Padshahi; Hindutva; Hindu Rashtra Darshan; and An Echo from Andamans*. Savarkar is particularly famous for developing his concepts of *Hindutva* and *Hindu Rashtra*.

## CONCEPT OF HINDUTVA

Savarkar's concept of *Hindutva* was more comprehensive than the familiar idea of Hinduism. He pointed out that Hinduism was simply related to the religious system of the Hindus, their theology and dogma. *Hindutva*, on the other hand, implied not only the religious tenets of the Hindus, but also comprehended the cultural, social, political and linguistic aspects of their life. In his seminal work *Hindutva* (1923), Savarkar asserted :

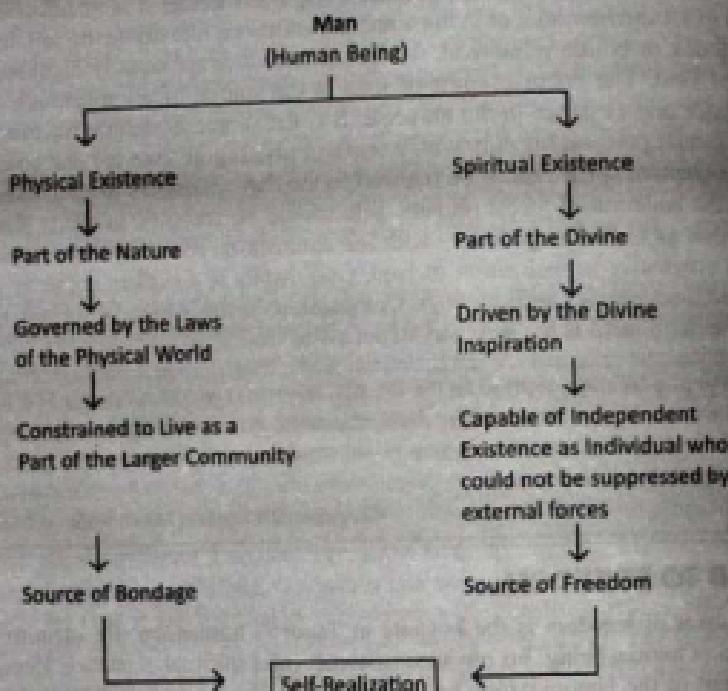
Let Hinduism concern itself with the salvation of life after death, the concept of God, and the Universe... But so far as the materialistic and secular aspect is concerned, the Hindus are a nation bound by a common culture, a common history, a common language, a common country, and a common religion.

Savarkar believed in the cultural and organic solidarity of Hindus as a nation. He defined Hindu in a wider sense of the term:

A Hindu means a person who regards this land of *Bharatavarsha*, from the Indus to the seas, as his Fatherland (*Pitribhumi*) as well as his Holyland (*Punyabhumi*), that is the cradle land of his religion.

For Savarkar, *Hindutva* implied not only the spiritual or the religious experience of Hindus, but the essentials of their whole way of life, hopes and aspirations. It embraced all the manifestations of thought and activity of the entire Hindu race. The character of *Hindutva* has been shaped by prophets and poets, lawyers and law-givers, heroes and historians for forty centuries, if not more. Savarkar gave a clarion call for Hindu resurrection as he believed in the cultural superiority of Hindus.

### Tagore on the Road to Freedom



*[Body is not a cage of the Soul; it is a medium of attaining self-realization by invoking the divine inspiration which is a part of human existence.]*

Tagore had a firm faith in the potential of Man to overcome all obstructions in his way to emancipation. This was beautifully expressed by him in the following words:

As I look around, I see the crumbling ruins of a proud civilization strewn like a vast heap of futility. And yet I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man... A day will come when unvanquished Man will retrace his path of conquest, despite all barriers, to win back his lost human heritage

*(Crisis in Civilization).*

### SYNTHETIC UNIVERSALISM

Tagore's idea of humanism was also enshrined in his principle of 'synthetic universalism'. This principle seeks to extend the reach of human personality beyond national frontiers, towards universal dimension. Tagore argued that when people evolve their political organization into different nations, rivalry between

these nations tends to obstruct their mental and moral development. Each nation resorts to regimentation of thought of its people with a view to consolidating its power and glory. This situation proves to be fetters on human freedom. In order to obviate this destructive tendency and to achieve constructive ends, each individual should strive to develop his or her talents by rising above narrow nationalism and entering into creative relationship with the whole humanity. For this, he or she should get in touch with world literature, art, religions, philosophy, social symbols and etiquette and thereby feel at one with all human beings.

**When a man does not realize his kinship with the world, he lives in a prison-house whose walls are alien to him.**

Rabindranath Tagore (*Sôdhanô*)

**Man's abiding happiness is not in getting anything but in giving himself up to what is greater than himself, to ideas which are larger than his individual life, the idea of the country, of humanity, of God.**

Rabindranath Tagore (*Sôdhanô*)

During the evolution of the Nation, the moral culture of brotherhood was limited by geographical boundaries because at that time those boundaries were true. Now they have become imaginary lines of tradition divested of the qualities of real obstacles. So the time has come when man's moral nature must deal with this great fact with all seriousness or perish.

Rabindranath Tagore (*Nationalism*)

## IV

**M.N. ROY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

M.N. Roy (1887-1954) was a great Indian philosopher and revolutionary of early twentieth century. His original name was Narendra Nath Bhattacharya. He assumed the new name, Manabendra Nath Roy (M.N. Roy) in 1916 during his sojourn in San Francisco, California where he developed friendship with several American radicals. He met Lenin in Moscow in 1920, and eventually became a communist leader of international ranking. However, in 1929 he was expelled from the Communist International, and returned to India in 1930 where he was sentenced to six years imprisonment in Kanpur Communist Conspiracy Case.

During his prison years, Roy undertook a re-examination and reformulation of the philosophy of Marxism. He came to identify a very close relationship between philosophy and science. Roy maintained that a philosophical revolution must precede a social revolution. Roy's most notable contribution consists in his theory of scientific humanism. Roy's most important works include: *India in Transition*

(1922); *Materialism : An Outline of the History of Scientific Thought* (1940); *The Problem of Freedom* (1945); *New Humanism : A Manifesto* (1947); *Science and Philosophy* (1947); *Beyond Communism* (1947); and *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (1948).

The function of science is to describe and that of philosophy is to explain. Therefore, philosophy is called the science of science.

M.N. Roy

## GENESIS OF SCIENTIFIC HUMANISM

The term 'scientific humanism' may be used in various contexts. Broadly speaking, it refers to the belief that science can and should be used to enhance human well-being and dignity. In this sense, it owes its origin to the Enlightenment.

In European history, Enlightenment refers to a general intellectual movement of eighteenth-century France, Germany and Great Britain. It was a period when people's religious and political life was set free from obscure and orthodox beliefs and new light was shed on the conduct of human affairs. This led to the growth of a new outlook, informed by reason and the power of scientific research and discovery. Old superstitions were discarded, old fears were dispelled, and a new faith in the knowledge obtained by scientific method was developed. This movement was inspired by the exponents of scientific method, including Francis Bacon (1561-1626), John Locke (1632-1704), Issac Newton (1642-1727) and David Hume (1711-76) in England, by G.E. Lessing (1729-81) in Germany, and by Voltaire (1694-1778), Denis Diderot (1713-84), Jean Le Rond d' Alembert (1717-83) and other contributors to the French Encyclopaedia in France.

The idea that science would produce useful knowledge for the betterment of mankind was as old as science itself, yet the close connection between science and human progress was fully established during the period of Enlightenment. It was now realized that mankind could use the scientific method to establish a rational world in which the dream of human fulfilment would be materialized. In late eighteenth century, the optimism of the times was summed up by Marquis de Condorcet (1743-94) in terms of political freedom. Looking back upon the victories of the scientific revolution, Condorcet predicted a future in which further scientific progress would render both tyrants and slaves obsolete.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scientific humanism found a new source of support from the exponents of social science, particularly in Great Britain. Graham Wallas (1858-1932), British social scientist, attacked both 'intellectualism' and 'anti-intellectualism' as inimical to humanity. Intellectualism embodied a tendency to exaggerate the importance of reason in politics. It was professed by the exponents of capitalism who maintained that the competitive forces that resulted from rational individuals pursuing their own selfish ends were directed by an 'invisible hand' towards an equitable distribution of wealth. In practice, this meant the unrestricted operation of a free market and the concentration of wealth in fewer hands. In such a situation, reason was all important, with no space for feelings, emotions or compassion for the poor who were the victims of this system.

### Capitalism

Capitalism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production, where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are owned by private entrepreneurs, a large number of workers are employed on wages at the market rate, and economic activity is primarily devoted to private profit. Here workers are free to work anywhere according to their skills and capacities as well as market demand.

Anti-intellectualism, on the other hand, was promoted by the 'philosophers of habit' who were unaware of the new science of psychology, and who held positions of authority in society, e.g. mothers, fathers, teachers, preachers, military generals, captains of industry, and so on. They unwittingly exploited the ignorance and fear of the masses by perpetuating and reinforcing habitual modes of thinking that supported the evils of capitalism and denigrated human dignity. Wallas warned that habitual thoughts slowly eat away the moral fabric of a democratic society. For example, those used to thinking of women in terms of home and hearth perpetuated the myth that women are by nature unsuited for any kind of political participation, including the right to vote. Similarly, some philosophers of habit held that the poverty of people was the outcome of their indolence. Such beliefs must be set aside for achieving the goals of socialism.

Wallas sought to rely on science, particularly the social science, in order to dispel all false beliefs about human nature and social system. He advocated amassing of statistical data to bring the errors of people's habitual half-conscious assumptions to light. This would also explode the myths of racial, ethnic and sexual superiority. People would then come to the conclusion that the only economic system logically compatible with democracy was socialism.

### CONCEPT OF RADICAL HUMANISM

M.N. Roy sought to develop the idea of *Scientific Humanism* into what he called *Radical Humanism*, although he also described it as *New Humanism* as well as *Scientific Humanism*. Roy's concept of new humanism or radical humanism was outlined in a number of his works, particularly in *The Problem of Freedom* (1945); *New Humanism : A Manifesto* (1947); *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (1948). The keynote of Roy's radical humanism is an urge for human freedom which implied the realization of his creative faculties. Ignorance is the biggest obstacle in the way to human freedom. Scientific knowledge alone can help to restore this freedom.

In his essay on 'New Humanism' in *Reason, Romanticism and Revolution* (1948), Roy observed that scientific knowledge liberates man from the time-honoured prejudices about the essence of his being and the purpose of his life. Man is essentially a rational being. His nature is not to believe, but to question, to inquire and to know. When he gropes in the darkness of ignorance, he remains a helpless victim of superstitions and the fear of extra-terrestrial powers. He holds a blind faith in forces beyond his comprehension and control until knowledge

illuminates his path. When the light of truth makes his innate rationality more manifest, he can discard old hypotheses based on ignorance.

New humanism, according to Roy, proclaims the sovereignty of man on the authority of modern science, which has dispelled all mystery about the essence of man. It maintains that a rational and moral society is possible because man is by nature a rational being. His rational nature prompts him to be moral, not under any compulsion, but voluntarily. In other words, the source of morality is embedded in human nature itself.

Roy comes to the conclusion that for creating a new world of liberty and social justice, revolution must go beyond an economic reorganization of society. As the urge for freedom is the motive force of life, the purpose of all rational human endeavour must be to strive for removal of social conditions which restrict the unfolding of the potentialities of man. New humanism focuses on the basic fact of history that man is the maker of his world. As a thinking being he can play this role only as an individual, not as a cog in the machine of social organization.

### **Social Justice**

Social Justice refers to the policy which seeks to prevent concentration of valuable resources of the community (wealth, prestige and power) in the hands of the chosen few, and to create a social order which will enable the deprived and underprivileged sections to gain a respectable share thereof by virtue of their ability, effort and need.

Roy points out that the brain, as an instrument of thought, is owned individually. It cannot be possessed collectively. Revolutions are heralded by iconoclastic ideas conceived by gifted individuals. A group of such gifted individuals, determined to restore the individual in his position of primacy and dignity, can show the way to tide over the contemporary crisis of modern civilization.

Roy holds that education is indispensable to achieving the goal of new humanism or radical humanism. It makes the individual conscious of his potentialities, helps him to think rationally and promotes his critical faculties. Educated electorate of 'sufficiently high general cultural level' is the precondition of a successful democracy so that people can think for themselves and not be swayed by demagogic appeals to base emotions. Roy maintains that education of the citizen will be conducive to common progress and prosperity without encroaching on the freedom of the individual. As he has stated:

New Humanism advocates a social reconstruction of the world as a commonwealth and fraternity of free men, by the cooperative endeavour of spiritually emancipated moral men.

Under this system, boundaries of national states will gradually disappear under the impact of a new Renaissance. In short, new humanism or radical humanism as enunciated by M.N. Roy projects a vision of emancipated world community where human awakening and human dignity will reign supreme.

## ATTACK ON MARXISM

Roy's commitment to radical humanism not only led to his departure from Marxism but also to an attack on Marxism. Marxism was based on the theory of economic determinism. It means that the economic structure of society, that is the mode of production comprises the base or foundation of social structure while legal and political institutions, religion, morals and other forms of social consciousness constitute its superstructure. Marxists believe that any change in the base results in corresponding changes in the superstructure. Roy asserted that the theory of economic determinism blasts the foundation of human freedom. In Marxist theory, mode of production included forces of production as well as relations of production. Forces of production included means of production as well as labour power. Roy pointed out that the means of production were themselves a creation of human mind. How could they determine the forms of human consciousness? Roy maintained that revolutionary changes are created by the force of ideas which constitute the human will, and not only by changes in the means of production.

Man, the creator of machines, is greater than the means of production... The human brain, itself a kind of 'means of production', is more powerful than the most powerful machine.

M.N. Roy

Then, Marxism regards socialism as the ideology of the *proletariat* (the class of manual workers). Roy does not accept this position. He holds that intellectual and cultural backwardness of the *proletariat* does not permit them to have a long-distance view. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95), the founders of this philosophy, themselves came from the middle class. Lenin (1870-1924) realized that *proletariat* itself could not serve as a revolutionary force. So he assigned the task of leading the revolution to 'vanguard of the *proletariat*' which represented the intellectual *elite*. However, this *elite* established its own dictatorship and eulogized it as '*dictatorship of the proletariat*'. Roy asserted that the dictatorship created a system of political domination, cultural regimentation and economic enslavement. Moreover, any form of dictatorship tends to perpetuate itself.

Marxism held that the state will 'wither away' after the emergence of a classless society. Roy asserts that the state represents the political organization of society. It cannot cease to exist after the abolition of class distinctions. As long as communists stay in power in the name of '*dictatorship of the proletariat*', they will not allow the state to 'wither away'. Individual freedom will remain crushed under their feet.

Men have been either slaves of gods or the servants of kings or at best devotees of some religion. But man must be man for himself, if he wants to work for his own salvation.

M.N. Roy

- Q. 1.** What are the basic tenets of humanism? Analyse the spiritual foundations of Vivekanand's humanist thought.

**2.** "Tagore's vision of the road to freedom is the essence of his humanism." Elucidate and comment.

**3.** "M.N. Roy's concept of Radical Humanism marks a clear departure from Marxism." Critically examine this statement.

## Exponents of the Islamic Thought

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Many foreign people who established their rule in India before the arrival of the British colonialists, had largely settled here; they had made this country their homeland. Hindus and Muslims were living here together peacefully, and they were becoming a part of the composite culture of India. It is also true that the Indians who had embraced Islam—particularly during the Muslim rule—largely came from the poor and uneducated sections. They gained some social standing during the Muslim rule, but their economic condition had not substantially improved. Trade and industry, higher education and official positions continued to be dominated by the high-caste Hindus. Hence some measure of discontent among the Muslims was quite natural. The British tried to exploit this discontent in order to strengthen their imperial rule in India. They induced the Muslims to believe that Hindu community was responsible for their plight. This led to the rise of Muslim communalism. Its reaction appeared in the form of Hindu communalism. Confrontation between the two further intensified the Muslim communalism. This culminated in the partition of India between India and Pakistan on her independence in 1947.

#### Communalism

Communalism refers to the tendency found in some parts of Indian politics and society which impels the members of one religious community to evoke favourable attitude toward their own community, and hostile attitude toward another community. This tendency has been particularly prominent between Hindu and Muslim communities (although at times other religious communities are also involved). This is sometimes manifested in mandir-masjid dispute, that is the dispute between militant Hindu and Muslim groups whether a particular place belongs to a Hindu temple or a Muslim mosque. Worst form of communalism is manifested in communal violence and riots, involving indiscriminate killing of many innocent people.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many social reformers, intellectual and political leaders came forth from the Muslim community who sought to give a new direction to Islamic thought, and showed them the way to progress. Incidentally some communal elements also appeared in this process. The chief exponents of Islamic thought of modern India include : Sir Syed Ahmad Khan; Muhammad Iqbal; and Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

## II

**SYED AHMAD KHAN****INTRODUCTION**

Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-98) was a distinguished Muslim thinker and social reformer of modern India who sought to infuse new consciousness into the Muslim community, and for this purpose he exhorted them to adopt modern education, culture and mode of thought. In fact, he started a unique movement in the sphere of religion, culture, society and polity which served as a source of enlightenment for the Indian Muslims. He became a pioneer of modernization of a traditional society. He was inspired by the idea that England and other Western countries owed their wealth and power to their enlightenment and learning in arts and sciences. Hence the Muslim community should also rely on modern Western education for its advancement.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF SCIENTIFIC THINKING**

Syed Ahmad was so deeply influenced by modern scientific thinking that he sought to reconcile the tenets of Islam with the scientific knowledge. He observed that of all revolutionary changes those in one's ideas, especially religious ideas, were most astounding. He argued that religious beliefs were not impervious to change. If religion did not keep pace with the changing times, it would become inert. So Syed Ahmad strongly opposed the orthodox character and narrow outlook of the religion. He tried to reinterpret the Holy *Koran* and its teachings and repudiate those interpretations thereof which were not in consonance with scientific and rational knowledge. He argued that the word of God as enshrined in the scripture could not go against the work of God, namely Nature and Reason. On this ground he opposed all types of irrational social practices, such as slavery, the wearing of veil by women, polygamy and instant divorce among Muslims on flimsy grounds.

Syed Ahmad tried to convince his Muslim co-religionists that they could achieve progress only by adopting modern, Western and scientific knowledge in their religious and social life. In order to promote this view, he took many concrete steps. He established the Scientific Society in 1864 at Aligarh, in collaboration with Hindu and European enthusiasts, particularly for translating Western classics into Indian languages with a view to inculcating scientific temperament among the Muslims. In 1870 he started publication of a journal *Tekzibul Akhlaq* which was imbued with the message of tolerance, broadmindedness and acceptance of the 'other'. The journal aimed at awakening the Indian Muslims out of their

slumber so that they could take active part in public life.

In 1877, Syed Ahmad Khan founded the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, which was patterned after Oxford and Cambridge Universities that he had visited on a trip to England. His objective was to build a college in tune with the British system of education, without compromising the Islamic values. Syed Ahmad started working on developing the Anglo-Oriental College into a full-fledged university, in collaboration with his son, Syed Mahmood, who had graduated from the Cambridge. By 1920 (that is 22 years after Syed Ahmad's death), this College was transformed into Aligarh Muslim University. Syed Ahmad Khan is honoured as the founder of this University. Today Aligarh Muslim University is a prominent Central University which is widely known for its high academic standards and as an excellent centre of modern education for all Indians without discrimination. This University is dedicated to the ideals of true education and national unity expounded by Syed Ahmad Khan.

## DISTINCTION BETWEEN SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL DOMAINS

Syed Ahmad exhorted his Muslim co-religionists to draw a distinction between the spiritual and temporal domains of human life. Religion dealt with the spiritual and moral life of man. Polity, on the other hand, was concerned with mundane matters which could be shared by people of different religions. Hence, the followers of different religions could live and work together in the political sphere of life. Sir Syed asserted that Muslims were enjoined by God and the Prophet to live as law-abiding persons in a land which protected their right to life and freedom of religion. In this way, Syed Ahmed khan taught religious tolerance and promoted Hindu-Muslim unity.

It is the first and foremost duty of all the well-wishers of the country to strive for the welfare of all people irrespective of their caste or religion...

To be a Hindu or a Muslim is a matter of belief and is purely personal affair, which has nothing to do with his external affairs or social relationships...

India is the motherland of both of us... The waters of the Holy Ganges and the Yamuna we both drink. It is the products of Indian soil that we eat and subsist on. We share in life and in death. Our long settlement in India has changed our blood characteristics and has made us one. Our complexions have become very much alike. Our faces have so changed that they bear resemblance to one another. The Muslims have adopted hundreds of Hindu rites and customs and the Hindus have taken to innumerable habits and manners of Muslims...

Syed Admad Khan (1883)  
Lecture at Patna

As a votary of Westernization, Syed Ahmad was not in favour of immediate winding up of the British rule. It is said that during the Indian Mutiny of 1857 he had taken the side of the British. But immediately thereafter, he brought out a pamphlet *The Causes of the Indian Revolt* (1858) in which he brilliantly and fearlessly exposed the weaknesses and errors of the British administration that

were responsible for the widespread dissatisfaction and countrywide explosion. He deplored the absence of an effective communication between the rulers and the ruled. He wanted the British government to take initiative in winning of friendship and affection of its subjects. He lamented that the government was ignorant of the desires and aspirations of the people. This booklet was widely read by the British officials, and it had considerable influence on British policy in the subsequent period.

As an admirer of Western education and the scientific temper inculcated by that education, Syed Ahmad Khan did not want to antagonize the British. That is why he advised the Indian Muslims to distance themselves from the political movement. Syed Ahmad was basically non-communal; however in the last phase of his life, he was somewhat inclined toward communalism and separatism, with a view to safeguarding the interests of the Indian Muslims.

### **Scientific Temper**

Scientific temper refers to an inclination to rely on scientific method for discovering truth and acting on the truth so discovered. It does not subscribe to miracles, magic or sorcery. It draws conclusions only from scientific evidence and reason, and rules out any role of abstract forces or supernatural causes, movements of heavenly bodies, acts of ghosts or evil spirits, etc. in regulating human life, as science and superstition do not go together.

### III

## **MUHAMMAD IQBAL**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Saikh Muhammad Iqbal (1873-1938) is widely known as a great poet of Urdu and Persian, religious philosopher and modern Indian thinker. Iqbal received his higher education at Cambridge and Munich. In 1907, he obtained his Ph.D Degree from Munich. As a thinker, Iqbal sought to analyse many Western concepts of philosophy and politics from Islamic point of view, and thereby developed a new system of thought. This system of thought is very interesting and important in spite of its many inconsistencies and paradoxes.

### **STATUS OF RELIGION IN POLITICS**

Initial thought of Iqbal is marked by the liberal attitude toward politics. It has little room for religious bias. Iqbal's *Tirana-e-Hind* (Song of India) is the outstanding example of this attitude. It begins with a bold statement: '*Sare jahan se achkha, hindostan hamara*' (Our India is the best country in the whole world). In this song Hindu-Muslim unity was effectively articulated. It also includes another immortal statement: '*Mazhab nahn sikhata, aapna mein hair rakhna*' (Religion does not teach us mutual animosity). But unfortunately, in a later phase of his career, Iqbal conceded primacy of religion in politics, and promoted the idea of a separate state for Indian Muslims.

It is only by rising to a fresh vision of his origin and future, his whence and whither, that Man will eventually triumph over a society motivated by an inhuman competition and a civilization which has lost its spiritual unity by its inner conflict of religious and political values.

Muhammad Iqbal:  
*The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1930)

Iqbal's *Tarana-e-Hind* was composed when *Khilafat* movement in India was at its zenith. This movement arose in India in the wake of Muslim fears for the integrity of Islam. These fears were aroused by Italian (1911) and Balkan (1912-13) attacks on Turkey, and Turkish defeats in World War I (1914-18). Sultan of Turkey, as Caliph, was the religious head of the worldwide Muslim community. Indian Muslims were trying to urge the British rulers to save the dignity of the Caliph as he was the spiritual head of the Muslims all over the world. Indian Hindus were also supporting the *Khalifat* movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). However, by 1921 when Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Turkish Leader, abolished the Caliphate itself, then Indian Muslims turned to seek emotional integrity with the Muslims of the world in search of Islamic revival, and they became averse to Hindus. As a leader of this new movement, Iqbal now argued that government should be based on religion, because religion was a great force. He held that a secular state was incapable of solving the social, economic and political problems of any community. Thus Iqbal sought to develop a typical concept of political power based on theocracy.

### Theocracy

Theocracy refers to a form of government in which all important political and administrative offices are held by the religious hierarchy. Literally theocracy means 'rule of God', that is a regime which is run according to the will and commandments of God. Since in the real world, religious organization and authority claim to interpret the commands of God, theocracy is marked by the subordination of political authority to religious authority.

In medieval Europe, the principle of theocracy was invoked to establish the supremacy of Church over the State. Since theocracy tends to mix political positions with religious positions, it runs against the principle of secularism.

Iqbal's stay in Europe for three years had convinced him that in Western capitalist society, people had lost their peace of mind due to their aversion to religion. So he not only denounced the materialist civilization of the West but also condemned Machiavelli (1469-1527) as the 'Messenger of Satan' because he had preached separation between religion and politics. Iqbal now wanted religion to shape all phases of life. He looked for religious solution of all problems of the world. He criticized Godlessness of Nietzsche (1844-1900). Iqbal expressed his faith in the sovereignty of God and recommended total governance of all aspects of life by the law of *Shariat*. However, he also acknowledged validity of the Liberal

schools of Muslim jurisprudence which sought to interpret the 'foundational legal principles' in the light of the changed situation of the day.

## REPUDIATION OF NATIONALISM

Iqbal's passion for Hindu-Muslim unity was now left far behind. He became a champion of Islamic aspiration to evolve a Muslim confraternity, and declared himself to be a Pan-Islamist. He also denounced the territorial and racialist concept of nationalism and became the heralder of Islamic Universalism and Islamic Renaissance. In order to realize the supremacy of Islam, Iqbal argued that Islamic community was not a nation, but 'a league of nations'. He asserted that most important objective of Islam was to demolish all the artificial and pernicious distinctions of caste, creed, colour and economic status, and pave the way of human emancipation. Islam vehemently opposed the idea of racial superiority which was the greatest obstacle in the way of international unity and cooperation.

In the Indian context, Iqbal opposed the ideology of nationalism on two grounds:

- (a) If the goal of all-India nationalism could be realized, it would result in the domination of Hindus over Muslims because of the overwhelming numerical majority of Hindus; and
- (b) The concept of nationalism would promote narrow patriotic feelings among the Muslims of different countries, and loosen the bonds of Islamic fraternity.

Iqbal lamented that Muslims were forgetting their universal character under the illusion of false nationalism.

As a heralder of Islamic Renaissance, Iqbal now composed a new *Tarana* (song):

*Chin-o-Arab hamara  
Hindostan hamara,  
Muslim hain ham watan hai,  
sara jahan hamara*

(China, Arabia and India are ours. We are Muslims; the whole world is our homeland).

This was the complete reversal of his earlier stand as manifested in his *Tarana-e-Hind*:

*Hindi hain ham watan hai,  
Hindostan hamara.*

(We are Indians, and India is our homeland).

Unfortunately, this attitude of Iqbal eventually gave rise to the demand of Pakistan, and its formation in consequence of the partition of India on her independence (1947).

## **CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM**

### **Capitalism**

Capitalism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production, where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are owned by private entrepreneurs, a large number of workers are employed on wages at the market rate, and economic activity is primarily devoted to private profit. Here workers are free to work anywhere according to their skills and capacities as well as market demand.

Iqbal also came out as a critic of capitalism. His criticism of capitalism was based on the Koranic principle: "He made the Earth for his creatures." Accordingly, God is the true owner of all wealth; man can hold any property only as a trustee of God. Hence any monopolistic claim to any part of earth by a capitalist or a landlord was tantamount to unjust interference with the divine law. Iqbal was strongly opposed to all forms of exploitation of man. He supported the claims of peasants and workers, and even predicted a revolution against the inequities of capitalism. He even gave a clarion call of revolt against capitalism.

Go and awaken the poor and the dispossessed of my Universe  
And shake the walls of the rich men's palaces to their foundations.

Demolish the old relics wherever you find them.  
Is there a field which yields no livelihood to the peasant?  
Go and burn to the ground every grain of wheat in it!

Muhammad Iqbal

In fact Iqbal's criticism of capitalism was mainly based on humanitarian ground. He never became a votary of socialism. He had no sound grounding in the economics and sociology of socialism. He believed in the primacy of spiritualism over materialism, and disliked even socialism for its materialistic bias. He also criticized the atheistic doctrine of Karl Marx—the doyen of socialism. Iqbal never suggested any economic alternative of capitalism.

### **Socialism**

Socialism refers to an economic system of the modern age, largely based on industrial production where means of social production (land, buildings, mines, forests, machinery and capital), distribution and exchange are placed under social ownership and control and economic activity is primarily devoted to the fulfilment of social needs.

## III

**BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR****INTRODUCTION**

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar) (1891-1956), popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was one of the most talented modern Indian political thinkers. He is remembered as an ardent champion of the oppressed classes and the chief architect of the Indian Constitution (1950). He was a great educationist, parliamentarian and statesman. He was born in the Mahar caste of Maharashtra, which was treated as 'untouchable' among Hindus, and had to face untold humiliation in his school days because of his traditional inferior status. However, by dint of his extraordinary talent and strong will, he obtained Ph.D. degree from Columbia University in New York and D.Sc. degree from London School of Economics. He spent a lifetime fighting against the caste prejudices and injustices to which the untouchables were widely subjected during those days. He was convinced that the untouchables themselves could do something to eradicate the curse of untouchability from the Indian society.

**Untouchability**

Untouchability refers to a widespread practice of orthodox Hindu society under which certain outcaste Hindus were treated as untouchable by the caste Hindus; their touch was believed to pollute the caste Hindus; they were refused entry into temples, and were not allowed to use common wells, ponds, inns and other common services.

Ambedkar proceeded to organize the untouchables by means of their own newspapers (particularly 'Mook Nayak', 'Bahishkrit Bharat' and 'Janata'), social and cultural forums and conferences. He incessantly fought for their due representation in legislatures and government services, and for promoting their education. He was deeply impressed by the revolutionary thinking of Mahatma Buddha, Mahatma Phule (1827-90) and American philosopher, John Dewey (1859-1952). Ambedkar founded many organizations to mobilize the Indian *Dalits*, i.e. the depressed and oppressed millions of India in their struggle for justice, dignity and freedom. Of these, the 'Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha' (Society for the Amelioration of the Outcastes), 'Independent Labour party' and 'All-India Scheduled Castes Federation' are particularly important. Ambedkar fought for *Dalits'* entry into Hindu temples which was denied to them because of their condemned status as 'untouchables'. He also participated in Round Table Conferences with the British rulers in order to protect the interests of the oppressed classes. Ambedkar wrote many books in order to project his point of view. Of these, *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), *Who Were Shudras?* (1946), *The Untouchables* (1948) and *Buddha and His Dhamma* (1957) are particularly notable. Dr. Ambedkar was posthumously awarded the *Bharat Ratna*, highest civil honour in 1990.

### Scheduled Castes

Under Hindu caste system, scheduled castes refer to the people who were engaged in unclean occupations and treated as outcaste. They were the victims of the practice of untouchability. Government of India had published official lists or schedules of such castes in order to draw programmes of their welfare and to provide for special protection to them. That is why they are called the Scheduled Castes.

## FAITH IN DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONAL METHOD

Democracy is not merely a form of Government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen.

B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. Ambedkar was a strong votary of democracy and constitutional method. He wanted to establish true democracy in India which was conceived as political democracy combined with social and economic democracy. He defined democracy as a way of life based on liberty, equality, fraternity, justice and human dignity. He realized that introduction of democracy in India in its conventional form would not be compatible with social justice. So he did not want to place the untouchables under majority rule without any constitutional guarantee for the protection of their rights. The untouchables constituted a typical minority which suffered the worst possible social malaise. They could benefit from the freedom of the country only if their rights (*i.e.* the rights of the Scheduled Castes) were embodied in the Constitution of free India.

Dr. Ambedkar did not favour the adoption of British type executive in India because the majority in British Parliament was a political majority but the majority in India was a communal majority. In his *States and Minorities : What Are Their Rights and How to Secure Them in The Constitution of India* (1947), Ambedkar outlined his theory of democratic organization based on the concept of checks and balances. Accordingly the executive in India was required to fulfil the following conditions:

- (a) It should prevent the majority from forming a government without giving an opportunity to the minorities to have a say in the matter;
- (b) It should prevent the inclusion of those members of minorities, who lack confidence of the minorities themselves, in the executive represented by the majority party;
- (c) It should prevent the majority from having such executive control over administration which could pave the way for the tyranny of majority; and finally,
- (d) It should provide for a stable executive necessary for good and efficient administration.

In consonance with his faith in democracy, Ambedkar defined the aim of the

State as follows:

- (a) to maintain the right of every citizen to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness and to free speech and free exercise of religion;
- (b) to remove social, political and economic inequality by providing better opportunities to the submerged classes; and
- (c) to make it possible for every citizen to enjoy freedom from want and freedom from fear.

In consonance with his commitment to social justice, Ambedkar stood for a State which guaranteed protection against persecution of one community by another besides protecting against internal disturbances, violences and disorder in any part of its territory.

Dr. Ambedkar sought to strengthen democracy in India by adherence to the constitutional method. The weapons of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and *satyagraha* adopted during India's struggle for independence had to be abandoned after the attainment of freedom and the establishment of a democratic order. Ambedkar asserted that if democracy were to be maintained in the country, three things must be done:

- (a) We must hold fast to the constitutional method of achieving our social and economic objectives unless the departure from this method became absolutely essential and inevitable;
- (b) We must not lay our liberty at the feet of great men for *no man could be grateful at the cost of his honour; no woman could be grateful at the cost of her chastity; and no nation could be grateful at the cost of its independence*; and finally,
- (c) We must convert our political democracy into social democracy, i.e. a way of life which recognized liberty, equality and fraternity as its basic principles.

Dr. Ambedkar lamented that democracy in this country was in tatters not because the bulk of our voters were illiterate but because the leadership had no faith in the rule of law or the democratic procedure. The political executive, the bureaucracy, the Parliament and the State legislatures had scant regard for the law in whose name they existed and functioned.

During the course of constitution-making Ambedkar threw his weight on the side of the unitary principle in the interest of the unity and integrity of the nation. In the face of a lot of sentimental, revivalist talk of the glories of the *Panchayati Raj*, he retorted: "These village republics have been the ruination of India. What is the village but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism? I am glad that the draft constitution has discarded the village and adopted the individual as the unit."

**Self-respect is a most vital factor in life. Without it man is a mere cipher.**

**B.R. Ambedkar**

## ROAD TO SOCIAL JUSTICE

Unless you change your social order you can achieve little by way of progress.

B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar diagnosed the root cause of social injustice in India in the widespread practice of untouchability in Hindu society. This was the product of age-old caste system which was designed to protect the interests of high castes at the expense of the lowest caste. While Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) also dedicated his life to the eradication of untouchability in India, Ambedkar differed from him in regard to the method of achieving this objective. Gandhi coined the word '*Harijans*' (Children of God) to describe the 'untouchables' in order to underline the value of their service to humanity and to develop a soft corner for them in the high castes. However, Ambedkar insisted on calling them 'Untouchables', 'the Depressed Classes' (*Dalits*) or 'the Scheduled Castes' to focus on their inherited social plight. He maintained that soothing names and soft palliatives will hardly serve any purpose: "They forgot that whitewashing does not save a dilapidated house. You must pull it down and build anew."

Political tyranny is nothing compared to social tyranny... A reformer who defies society, is much more courageous man than a politician who defies Government.

B.R. Ambedkar

Dr. Ambedkar dubbed the practice of untouchability a kind of slavery with no responsibility for feeding the slaves. While Gandhiji wanted a peaceful and gradual abolition of untouchability through precept and example, Dr. Ambedkar advocated the more radical solution through the annihilation of caste itself as an institution. In his powerful style of reasoning he asserted:

The root of untouchability is the caste system; the root of the caste system is religion attached to 'varna' and 'ashrama' and the root of 'varnashrama' is Brahminical religion; and the root of Brahminical religion is authoritarianism or political power.

(*Annihilation of Caste*, 1936)

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Varnashrama</b> | : A combination of the provisions concerning Varna and Ashrama under Hindu religion.   |
| <b>Varna</b>       | : Division of Hindu society into four castes : <i>Brahmans</i> (the priests), <i>Kshatriyas</i> (the soldiers), <i>Vaishyas</i> (the traders) and <i>Shudras</i> (the manual workers).   |
| <b>Ashrama</b>     | : Division of human life into four phases : <i>Brahmacharya</i> (celibacy and devotion to studies), <i>Grihastha</i> (maintaining a household), <i>Vanprastha</i> (living in forests after abandoning the household) and <i>Samnyasa</i> (renunciation of worldly life and living the life of an ascetic). |

### Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism refers to a political outlook or attitude that requires everybody or everything to conform to an established order enshrined in customary practices or a set of beliefs. It subordinates all concerned to a person or a group which is regarded as the guardian of that order.

Like all radicals, Ambedkar refused to accept piecemeal process of social reform. He maintained:

It is necessary to make a distinction between social reform in the sense of the reforms of the Hindu family and social reform in the sense of the reorganization and reconstruction of the Hindu society. The former has relation to widow remarriage, child marriage, etc. while the latter relates to the abolition of caste (*ibid*).

Analysing the impact of caste system on Hindu society, Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that caste does not result in economic efficiency; caste cannot and has not improved the race. On the contrary, the caste system has completely disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. Worse still, the effect of caste on the ethos of the Hindus was simply deplorable. It made them caste-bound. It killed public spirit and charity. Commenting on the disastrous consequences of the caste system on the Hindu society, Ambedkar pointed out:

A Hindu's public is his caste. His responsibility is only to his caste. His loyalty is restricted only to his caste. Virtue has become caste-ridden and morality has become caste-bound. There is no sympathy to the deserving; there is no appreciation of the meritorious; there is no charity to the needy (*ibid*).

If India was to become a modern nation, there was no way to accomplish this task except through the annihilation of caste. Thus Ambedkar observed:

You cannot build anything on the foundations of caste. You cannot build up a nation, you cannot build up a morality. Anything that you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole (*ibid*).

In order to bring about a radical change in Hindu social order and to abolish the caste system, Ambedkar recommended inter-caste dining, inter-caste marriage, a scientific and a rational attitude towards religion. He wanted to replace the formal religion by the true religion, to replace the 'Religion of Rules' by the 'Religion of Principles'.

Dr. Ambedkar exhorted the untouchables to make sincere efforts for their own amelioration and also wanted the Government to play a positive role in this process. In short, he recommended five important steps in this direction :

- (a) The untouchables should dissociate themselves from the traditional bonds of untouchables status. They should refuse to do traditional untouchable work, such as dragging of dead cattle out of the village, and also stop drinking bad liquor and eating beef which was the symbol of their untouchable status;

- (b) The untouchables should try to restore their self-respect and pride. They should become educated and professionally qualified. They should shed their inferiority complex; migrate to larger towns and cities where professional status instead of inborn status is largely respected, take up modern professions and transform themselves to fit into the modern civilization;
- (c) The untouchables should be represented at all levels of Government by their own representatives. Ambedkar was convinced that the leadership of the untouchables should emerge from the untouchables themselves;
- (d) The Government should take responsibility for the welfare of all its people, creating special rights for those to whom society had denied education and occupational opportunities. The untouchables should have recourse to legal channels for the protection of their rights; and finally,
- (e) All forms of caste must be abolished. The functions of the Brahmins as priests on various ceremonies should be performed by trained persons from any caste, under State supervision. This would amount not only to the abolition of traditional discrimination between high and low castes but make the caste system itself redundant. Functions of each member of society will then be redefined on a rational basis, corresponding to each individual's qualifications and training.

In a nutshell, Dr. Ambedkar sought to establish social justice by replacing the caste system by a rational and functional social organization.

It is mischievously propagated by Hindu scriptures that by serving the upper classes the Shudras achieve salvation. Untouchability is another appellation of slavery. No race can be raised by destroying its self-respect. So if you want to uplift the Untouchables, you must treat them in the social order as free citizens, free to carve out their destiny.

B.R. Ambedkar

Untouchability shuts all doors of opportunities for betterment in life for Untouchables. It does not offer an Untouchable any opportunity to move freely in society; it compels him to live in dungeons and seclusion; it prevents him from educating himself and following a profession of his choice.

B.R. Ambedkar

Untouchability has ruined the Untouchables, the Hindus and ultimately the nation as well. If the depressed classes gained their self-respect and freedom, they would contribute not only to their own progress and prosperity but by their industry, intellect and courage would contribute also to the strength and prosperity of the nation.

B.R. Ambedkar

Lost rights are never regained by appeals to the conscience of the usurpers, but by relentless struggle... Goats are used for sacrificial offerings and not lions.

B.R. Ambedkar

## A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

Dr. Ambedkar was right that the untouchables should try to develop their leadership from among themselves instead of relying on other castes for their emancipation. But somehow this suggestion has been interpreted to mean that they should disown all social reformers and their well-wishers who come from other castes. Can they ignore the role played by Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1824-83) and Swami Vivekanand (1863-1902) for their emancipation? Some Dalit leaders are even inclined to ridicule the role played by Mahatma Gandhi in seeking their emancipation. Such people even despise the works of art and literature which deal with their problems, which try to arouse social consciousness about these problems, and which inspire others to work for their emancipation unless such works are produced by Dalits themselves! This attitude is indicative of a very narrow outlook which is not based on reason.

Coming to the role of Mahatma Gandhi in the eradication of Untouchability and the emancipation of untouchables, no sane person will doubt or dispute Gandhi's sincerity in this matter although some of his methods might be questioned. Gandhi stood for the removal of Untouchability on moral and humanist grounds. He made some very pertinent points on this issue.

In the first place, Gandhi argued that Untouchability is not sanctioned by Hindu religion. It crept into Hindu thought at the time of moral downfall of Hinduism. Gandhi strongly repudiated the stand of those orthodox Hindus who held that the practice of Untouchability conformed to the dictates of their religion.

Secondly, Gandhi argued that those who performed dirty jobs became dirty only bodily for the time being, like any other human being who becomes dirty in his day-to-day activities. The so-called untouchables, like other human beings, also become normal when they have cleaned themselves and their clothes. There is no rational ground for considering them to be permanently dirty or untouchable, not to speak of treating their descendants also untouchable!

Finally, there is no justification for considering any social groups as higher or lower on the basis of the functions performed by them which are equally essential for the maintenance of society. Respect of a person in society should correspond to the value of the function performed by him in the service of society. If at all we wish to accord differential treatment to those responsible for our sanitary services, then we should treat them with more respect and a sense of gratitude. We show greater respect to our mothers because they performed sanitary services for us during our infancy. We are grateful to nurses and doctors who take care of us during our illness when we are dirty; they have to touch dirty things in order to cure us. Then why not show similar respect and gratitude to those who perform sanitary services for us throughout our life.

Gandhi's moral arguments and prescriptions in this behalf are quite convincing. However, some of Gandhi's beliefs might stand in the way of emancipation of the untouchables in actual practice. Ambedkar was right that the roots of Untouchability lie in the caste system of Hindu society; so eradication of Untouchability can be secured by the abolition of caste system itself. The curse of caste system is so

all-prevading that even the untouchables consider some castes or sub-castes as untouchable among themselves. Gandhi hoped to evolve a classless society within the caste system by preaching the gospel of 'dignity of labour'. Gandhi was not prepared to abandon the rule of *Karma* because in his view, it was the very foundation of Hinduism. Gandhi even expressed his approval to the continuance of caste system. As he wrote:

Historically speaking, caste may be regarded as man's experiment for social adjustment in the laboratory of Indian society. If we can prove it to be a success, it can be offered to the world as a leaven and as the best remedy against heartless competition and social disintegration born of avarice and greed.

(*Young India* : 1921).

### Dignity of Labour

Dignity of labour refers to the view that a person engaged in labour—particularly physical labour—is endowed with a special dignity which should be recognized by society. It means that society should pay due respect to those who contribute to its sustenance and progress by undertaking labour instead of sitting idle and enjoying the fruit of others' labour.

However, Gandhi contended that the caste should not be allowed to become a source of harbouring inequalities in society. As he observed in *Young India* (1931):

I have frequently said that I do not believe in caste in the modern sense... Nor do I believe in inequalities between human beings. We are all absolutely equal. But equality is of soul and not bodies. Hence it is a mental state... Assumption of superiority by any person over any other is a sin against God and man. Thus caste, in so far as it connotes distinctions in status, is an evil.

Gandhi believed that the original provision of *Karma*, that is the occupation-wise division of society into four parts under Hinduism was quite beneficial. It was distorted into modern caste system involving certain unreasonable restrictions. So Gandhi continued:

I do, however, believe in *Karma* which is based on hereditary occupations... When Hindus were seized with inertia, abuse of *Karma* resulted in innumerable castes, with unnecessary and harmful restrictions as to inter-marriage and inter-dining. The law of *Karma* has nothing to do with these restrictions. People of different *Karmas* may inter-marry and inter-dine. These restrictions may be necessary in the interest of chastity and hygiene. But a *Brahmana* who marries a *Shudra* girl, or vice versa, commits no offence against the law of *Karma*.

Gandhi argued that the removal of Untouchability does not require the destruction of caste system itself. On the contrary, the removal of Untouchability would purify the caste system itself. So he wrote in *Harjan* (1933):

It is wrong to destroy caste because of the outcaste, as it would destroy a body because of an ugly growth in it or of a crop because of the weeds.

Untouchability is the product... not of the caste system, but of the distinction of high and low that crept into Hinduism and is corroding it... The moment Untouchability goes, the caste system itself will be purified.

This view was diametrically opposite to that held by Ambedkar and Periar (1879-1973), the undisputed leader of the untouchables in South India. They argued that Untouchability was the product of the caste system and that it could not be eradicated until the caste system itself was destroyed. So they severely criticized Gandhi's stand on this issue. It is true that the caste system cannot be abolished with a stroke of pen. Caste has become a fetish with all Hindus. It has even engulfed Indian Muslims, Sikhs and Christians who are otherwise egalitarian societies. In today's scenario, many of those who belong to Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Classes are so obsessed with caste that they tend to show that their caste is superior to some other castes!

*My social philosophy may be said to be enshrined in three words: liberty, equality and fraternity. My philosophy has roots in religion and not in political science. I have derived them from the teachings of my Master The Buddha...*

*I prefer Buddhism because it gives three principles in combination, which no other religion does. Buddhism teaches 'Prajna' (understanding) as against superstition and supernaturalism, 'Koruna' (love and compassion) and 'Samata' (equality). This is what man wants for a good and happy life.*

B.R. Ambedkar

Rigidity of the caste system could be diluted to some extent by increased industrialization and urbanization and diversification of professions. Ambedkar was aware of this, and he exhorted the untouchables to take advantage of the developments on this front. But Gandhi was dead against industrialization, urbanization and diversification of professions. So he relied only on moral weapon for the eradication of Untouchability. But in practice this weapon does not prove to be very efficient. Gandhi wanted to set up autonomous village republics throughout India. Both Nehru (1889-1964) and Ambedkar realized that village was a den of narrow-minded people and that no real progress could be made in an intellectually and culturally backward environment of villages. Ambedkar particularly advised the untouchables to migrate to larger towns and cities, and to take up modern professions, which will determine their new status on rational basis, and not on the accident of birth.

Caste system in India could be abolished only under Buddhism which established its separate identity from Hinduism. That is why Ambedkar inspired his followers to adopt Buddhism in order to get rid of the stigma of Untouchability.

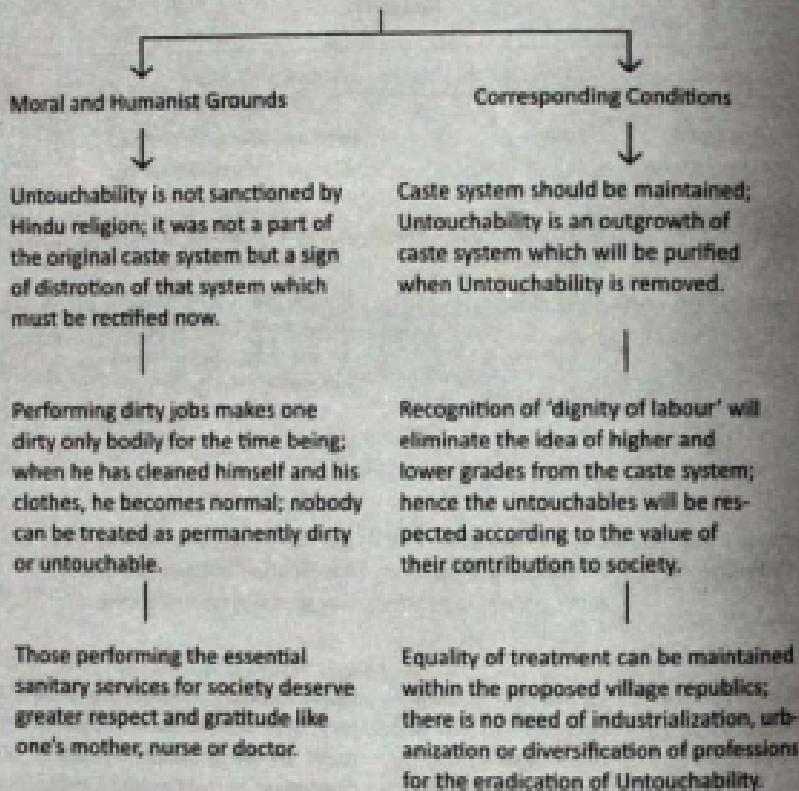
Finally, as the time has shown, the liberation of one-fifth of Indian population from dirty jobs is becoming possible, although slowly, by the development and introduction of new technology in the field of sanitary services. And Gandhi was in principle against new technology! That is why his prescriptions are sometimes not found to be worth accepting. The solution lies in accepting Gandhi's moral arguments with Ambedkar's pragmatic approach to the problem of Untouchability.

**Gandhi and Ambedkar On Emancipation  
of the Untouchables : Comparative Perspective  
[Part I]**

| The Issue  | Gandhi's View   | Ambedkar's View  |
|--|---|--|
| Description of the Untouchables                    | Harijans (Men of God)   | Untouchables; Depressed Classes; Scheduled Castes  |
| Attitude toward Religion                           | Fountain of Morality;<br>Must be followed faithfully  | A device to perform certain social functions like solemnization of marriages, performance of funeral rites, etc. Procedure for these functions can be redefined on logical basis; Religion of Rules should be replaced by Religion of Principles   |
| Attitude toward Caste System                       | It is an integral part of Hinduism; it should be retained but its rigidity should be removed                  | It is the source of social injustice; Annihilation of Caste is the only way to restore social justice  |
| Attitude toward Modern Civilization                | Industrialization and Urbanization lead to moral decline; these should be stopped forthwith                   | Modernization is a liberating force; the Untouchables should make full use of the opportunities opened up by the Modern Civilization; They should shift to towns and cities, get modern education and take up modern professions   |
| Programme for the Emancipation of the Untouchables | Gradual Social Reform; Persuade Hindu society to accept dignity of labour, and to fraternize the Untouchables | Untouchables to shed inferiority complex, challenge irrational beliefs, avail themselves of the Government-sponsored welfare programmes, take advantage of reservations, transform themselves through modern education and taking up modern professions, rely on legal channels for protection of their rights |

### [Part II]

#### Gandhi's Approach To Removal of Untouchability



#### Ambedkar's Point of Criticism

- Untouchability is closely linked with caste system. It is not possible to remove Untouchability as long as caste system is kept intact.
- Villages are the den of narrow-mindedness. The untouchables can achieve new status only by migrating to towns and cities, acquiring education and adopting new professions. Gandhi's aversion to industrialization, urbanization and diversification of professions will hardly help in the eradication of Untouchability.
- Dirty jobs can be reduced and replaced by adopting new technology whereas Gandhi was against the use of technology.
- Moral weapon as preached by Gandhi would hardly prove practicable in the world of ground reality.

## IV

## PERIYAR: E.V. RAMASWAMI NAICKER

## INTRODUCTION

'Periyar' is regarded to be an illustrious leader of South India in the realm of Indian politics. His original name was E.V. Ramaswami Naicker (1879-1973). The first Self-Respect Conference held near Madras (now Chennai) in 1929 under his leadership resolved to drop the description of caste from the names of its supporters. So the word 'Naicker' was dropped from his name, and he became E.V. Ramaswami (EVR). He was given the title 'Periyar' by his admirers and followers. In Tamil, 'Periyar' means the 'Great Father', the 'Great Sage' or 'Greatly Honourable'. It shows that he was held in high esteem in Tamil region and was recognized as a great leader in Indian politics.

Periyar was born in Coimbatore in Naidu family which was treated as a low caste among Hindus. So he had the first-hand experience of the agony caused by social discrimination, and he challenged it in due course by dint of his extraordinary talent. He made a scathing attack on the caste system, idolatry and Hindu mythology which were held responsible for the perpetuation of social discrimination in India. He organized those Hindus of South India who had been suffering untold social discrimination for long. He exhorted them to stand firmly against social injustice. He sought to revive their past glory and gave them a new identity as the 'Dravidian' race.

Periyar vehemently opposed social discrimination in his public life. He joined the Indian National Congress in 1920 as he was fascinated by its programme for the abolition of untouchability and emancipation of the masses. He participated whole-heartedly in Non-cooperation Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) and promoted the use of khadi. The same year he was elected President of the Madras Presidency Congress Committee.

Inspired by the Gandhian technique of *Satyagraha* for fighting against social injustice, Periyar resorted to Vaikom *Satyagraha* for fighting against social evils within the Indian social system. Vaikom was a place in the princely state of Travancore. Persons of low social status were not allowed to use the road near a temple in Vaikom. To protest against this social discrimination, the Congress members in Travancore launched a *Satyagraha* with Gandhi's permission. They were immediately arrested by the Travancore State. Leadership of this campaign was then taken over by EVR who made provocative statements against Hindu gods and Brahmins. EVR was also imprisoned but later released.

[*Satyagraha* = a method of protest against injustice; a form of non-violent resistance. This method of political struggle was introduced by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) in 1907 during his sojourn in South Africa.]

## Mahatma Gandhi

I

### INTRODUCTION

I believe that Gandhi's views were the most enlightened of all the political men in our time.

Albert Einstein

M.K. Gandhi (Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) (1869-1948) – popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi – was a great Indian leader, thinker and social reformer. The title 'Mahatma' (the Great Soul) was conferred on him by another great Indian intellectual, Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941). Gandhi is held in high esteem by a very large section of Indians and others. He is also addressed as '*Bapu*' (the Father) and *Rashtrapita* (Father of the Nation).

Gandhi was trained as a lawyer in England. He went to South Africa in 1893 in connection with a legal case where he stayed for twenty-one years (1893-1914). His visit to South Africa proved to be a turning point in his life. During his stay in South Africa he was extremely perturbed by the widespread racial discrimination against the vast majority of the coloured people by the white people. He launched several campaigns against this inhuman practice and developed his well-known method of *Satyagraha* or non-violent resistance in order to secure justice for the ordinary and oppressed people. He became well-known in India and other countries of the world for his vigorous struggle against injustice. Nelson Mandela (1918-2013), prominent statesman of South Africa, expressed the significance of Gandhi's sojourn in South Africa in these words: "Gandhi came to South Africa as a lawyer and returned as the *Mahatma* (the Great Soul)."

On his return to India in 1914, Gandhi was widely known for his political ideas and he played important role in India's struggle for freedom. As Bhikhu Parekh has significantly observed :

He evolved a new language of political discourse, and apparently archaic but historically evocative set of symbols, and a simple and austere life as a way of identifying himself with his poorest countrymen, and mobilized them under the leadership of the radically transformed Congress Party.

(*The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Political Thought*,  
edited by David Miller ; 1987)

Gandhi launched several protest movements against the British rulers in India and demanded full freedom for the Indian nation from the foreign yoke. Some of such prominent movements include : the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1920; the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930; and the Quit India Movement in 1942. India achieved freedom in 1947 which coincided with widespread Hindu-Muslim riots and the partition of India into India and Pakistan. Gandhi, as an ardent champion of communal unity, made a Herculean effort to restore communal harmony but he was assassinated by a fanatic Hindu in January 1948.

Gandhi was an activist as well as a social and moral philosopher. His struggle was informed by certain noble principles which were enunciated in his several writings and speeches. He did not write any treatise on his philosophy. His thought is scattered in a large number of his notes, tracts and pamphlets, articles and booklets, letters, speeches and editorials as well as in his *Autobiography (My Experiments With Truth* ; 1929). However, his booklet *Hind Swaraj* (1910) is gradually gaining recognition as a classic. He even denied the existence of 'Gandhism'. But as the time rolled on, it revealed the immense possibilities of application of Gandhian principles to various social, economic and political situations, and their relevance is steadily increasing. It proved that Gandhian way of thinking has not only its distinct identity, but it embodies a full-fledged worldview. That is precisely the basis of Gandhism.

### Worldview

Worldview refers to a particular system of thought which explains the present status of world society, tries to find solution to its problems, and determines the way to shape its future.

Gandhism is concerned with a large number of issues. However, its two key issues may be identified as the interface between: (a) Ends and Means; and (b) Truth and Non-violence. Other important tenets of Gandhian thought include the concepts of *Swaraj*, *Satyagraha*, *Sarvodaya* and the doctrine of Trusteeship. Further lessons from Gandhi's teachings may be derived from these basic principles.



### MAIN TENETS OF GANDHIAN THOUGHT

#### ENDS AND MEANS

The precise issue of debate on ends and means may be framed as follows : "If we

have chosen a right end, is it imperative to adopt right means for its achievement?" In other words, if the right end can be achieved more quickly and more efficiently by adopting dubious means (*i.e.* wrong means), can we approve of it? This question has remained a matter of perennial debate in the realm of moral philosophy. While ancient Indian sages have insisted that right means should be chosen for pursuing right ends, some writers on politics have conceded that choosing a right end is really important; choice of means should be guided by their efficiency, and not solely by moral consideration.

According to *Mahabharata*, ancient Indian epic, in the case of an emergency (*e.g.* when a King's friends have deserted him, his enemies have multiplied, his military and financial resources have been exhausted), the King may resort to compulsory acquisition of the property of his subjects. This dubious method is justified on the ground that it is intended to serve a right cause, namely protection of the State. Similarly, Kautilya, ancient Indian political thinker, recommended several methods like conciliation, concession, coercion, divide and rule (*sāma, dīra, danda, bheda*) for strengthening the State power which was a right cause. In early modern Europe, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) maintained that a prince may adopt dubious means like making false promises and creating fear in the mind of the people to keep them united for the preservation of the State (a right cause). He argued that a State is established by force and maintained by fraud. Machiavelli sought to build a wall of separation between politics and ethics. He asserted that if a prince adopted unethical means in order to secure political stability, the people would forgive him after seeing the results of his action.

In most of these examples, the use of dubious means has been recommended to achieve a noble end under abnormal conditions. However, Mahatma Gandhi does not approve of the use of unjust means under any circumstances whatsoever. Gandhi believed in purity of means as well as ends. He argued that only right means should be adopted for the pursuit of right ends. He strongly refuted the idea that 'end justifies the means' or that 'if a noble end is achieved by adopting ignoble means, their use would be excused'. As Gandhi himself observed:

They say 'means are after all means'. I would say 'means are after all everything'. As the means so the end... Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception

*(Selections from Gandhi by Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948)*

Gandhi was convinced that *if we take care of our means, end will take care of itself*. Means and ends may be compared to the seed and the tree respectively. The nature of tree is determined by the nature of seed. Only the right type of seed will grow into the right type of tree. As you sow, so shall you reap. *He that soweth vice shall not reap virtue*. Again, means and end may be compared to the action (*karma*) and its consequence (*phala*). Man has full control over his action, and not over its consequences. That is the famous teaching of *Bhagwad-Gita*—Hindu sacred book.

Means and ends are the two sides of the same coin. They cannot be separated. Immoral means cannot be used to achieve moral ends. If used, they will vitiate the

end itself. Wrong way can never lead to a right destination. The authority founded on fear and coercion cannot inspire love and respect among people. Gandhi adopted the path of *Satyagraha* (reliance on the force of truth) for achieving the goal of *Swaraj* (independence from the foreign rule) because this path was as sacred as its destination. *Satyagraha* involved the practice of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) which embodied the right course of action. So Gandhi declared : "For me, *Ahimsa* comes before *Swaraj*."

Even if the end is right, if the means are wrong, that will vitiate the end or divert it into a wrong direction. Means and ends are thus intimately and inextricably connected and cannot be separated.... The great leader of my country, Mahatma Gandhi, under whose inspiration and sheltering care I grew up, always laid stress on moral values and warned us never to subordinate means to ends.

Jawaharlal Nehru (1949)

Gandhian principle of close connection between ends and means is further reflected in his theory of *relation between politics and ethics*. As a moral philosopher, Gandhi treated ethics as the guiding star of all human behaviour, including politics. Gandhi's ethics was based on moral teachings of all religions, although he paid special attention to the time-honoured Hindu religion (*Sanatana Dharma*). He expressed his firm faith in the *spiritualization of politics*. This meant that if politics was to be a blessing, and not a curse to mankind, it should be informed by the highest ethical and spiritual principles. In other words, politics should be guided by high moral standards, and not by expediency.

### Politics

Politics refers to an activity concerned with handling public issues by attaining public power through enlisting support of the people and assuming their leadership.

### Ethics

Ethics refers to a branch of study concerned with the principles of good conduct. It inquires into moral beliefs and rules about right and wrong. This term is used as a synonym of moral philosophy as well as for a set of principles of good conduct concerning a particular profession, such as 'medical ethics'.

For Gandhi, the terms 'spiritual', 'religious' and 'moral or ethical' conveyed the same idea. They taught man to abstain from vice and follow the path of virtue. In Gandhi's view, the essence of all religions was identical. God of Hindus was not different from God of Muslims or God of Christians. All religions taught piety and charity toward fellow-beings. No religion was superior or inferior to any other religion. Religious tolerance was the keynote of social harmony. Gandhi's notion of religion was aptly expressed in his own words :

By religion I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker

(*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*,  
compiled by R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao ; 1945).

For Gandhi, adherence to religion was the part of his pursuit of truth. This very pursuit induced him to participate in politics. He believed that politics bereft of religion was nothing short of a death trap which kills the soul. So Gandhi wrote in his *Autobiography*:

...my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means.

Gandhi never took the term 'religion' in a narrow sense. In his view, teachings of all religions urged on man to follow the path of self-restraint and compassion toward fellow-beings, extending to all humanity. They coincide with the universal principles of morality.

To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions...We notice that the mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants, and still remains unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become. Our ancestors, therefore, set a limit to our indulgences.

Mahatma Gandhi : *Mind Swaroop* (1910)

Gandhi admitted that he had learnt the principle of *spiritualization of politics* from another great Indian leader, Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915) whom he regarded as his 'political guru'. This principle implied a combination of high moral character with the practice of politics – a difficult combination indeed! According to this view, politics should not be treated as a source of material gain but as an instrument of moral uplift; not as a source of 'power over' others, but as a source of 'power to' create congenial conditions for the masses and to elevate moral character of the elites.

**Masses** = The ordinary people in society who are found in large numbers. They are neither very talented, nor highly educated, nor highly placed.

**Elites** = The chosen few in society who are considered to be the best of their kind. They are very talented, highly educated and highly placed. They provide leadership to the masses and constitute the most powerful lot.

In short, politics and ethics were inseparable in Gandhian system of thought. He was hailed as a saint who had entered politics. But he defined his own position differently :

Men say that I am a saint losing myself in politics. The fact is that I am a politician trying my hardest to be a saint (Quoted in Louis Fischer, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi* ; 1950).

## TRUTH AND NON-VIOLENCE

Devotion to truth is the essence of Gandhism. But how to discover truth? It is as difficult as finding God Himself. In Gandhi's view, God and truth are inseparable. Devotion to God can be carried out through devotion to His creation, particularly through the service to the down-trodden. As Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* (1939) :

I recognize no God except the God that is to be found in the heart of the dumb millions. They do not recognize His presence; I do. And I worship the God that is Truth or Truth which is God, through service of these millions.

Non-violence is also part of the pursuit of truth. Non-violence or non-injury (*Ahimsa*) literally means : abstention from violence in one's behaviour toward other living beings. This represents only the negative side of non-violence. On positive side, it implies love of all. We should extend our love not only to those who love us, but also to those who hate us. In Gandhi's own words:

It is non-violence only when we love those that hate us. I know how difficult it is to follow this grand law of love. But are not all great and good things difficult to do? Love of the hater is the most difficult of all. But by the grace of God even this most difficult thing becomes easy to accomplish if we want to do it

(*Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948).

In Gandhi's view, even the intention to harm somebody or wishing him ill is a form of violence which should be eschewed. Hatred or malice to anyone is also violence. Acquiring material things beyond one's immediate need is also a form of violence because thereby we deprive others of their share. Even the acts of spreading atmospheric pollution and damaging public health amount to violence. Thus *the principle of non-violence embraces all rules of good citizenship and human decency*.

When it comes to confrontation with injustice, non-violence does not imply showing weakness. Non-violence is not the resort of the weak; it is the power of the strong—of course, his moral power. This power comes from the firm adherence to truth. When one fights for a just cause, and shows firm faith in truth, it results in the 'change of heart' of the mighty opponent and makes him bend. In short, *non-violence is the art of gaining victory over physical force by spiritual force*. Non-violence is the method of self-purification. Practitioner of non-violence gains ample moral power to defeat the forces of untruth.

Gandhi's technique of struggle against the mighty British Empire was throughout based on the principle of non-violence (*Ahimsa*). His method of civil disobedience and *Satyagraha* (reliance on the force of truth) were strongly based on non-violence. His doctrines of trusteeship and the vision of a classless society are also the manifestation of his adherence to truth and non-violence.

*Ahimsa is the highest ideal. It is meant for the brave, never for the cowardly.*  
Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhian principle of non-violence is the key to his philosophy of coexistence. In common parlance, coexistence denotes an attitude of tolerance towards each

other. It does not mean absence of differences of opinion, but being ready to live peacefully in spite of our differences. Gandhi asserted that differences of opinion should never mean hostility. He particularly commended the principle of mutual toleration. As he observed :

The golden rule of conduct...is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and 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

(*Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose ; 1948).

Ideally, coexistence implies that our existence should in no way come in the way of others. That is precisely the spirit behind non-violence. As Gandhi tried to elucidate :

Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives (*ibid*).

Non-violence is not a matter of outward behaviour only. If our heart is not pure and our mind is not devoted to non-violence, we cannot follow the principle in the real sense of the term. Non-violence gives us courage to fight against social injustice wherever we find it. Gandhi believed that no man could be actively non-violent unless he would rise against social injustice no matter where it occurred. Non-violence should not only be the part of our behaviour but the part of our character. As Gandhi asserted :

Non-violence to be a potent force must begin with the mind. Non-violence of the mere body without the cooperation of the mind is non-violence of the weak or the cowardly, and has therefore no potency. If we bear malice and hatred in our bosoms and pretend not to retaliate, it must recoil upon us and lead to our destruction. For abstention from mere bodily violence not to be injurious, it is at least necessary not to entertain hatred if we cannot generate active love (*ibid*).

If a man has no power or no courage to retaliate, and still pretends to be non-violent, it would be a fake non-violence. Genuine non-violence implies deliberate abstension from retaliation. As Gandhi pointed out:

Non-violence presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious, deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. But vengeance is any day superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission. Forgiveness is higher still. Vengeance too is weakness. The desire for vengeance comes out of fear of harm, imaginary or real. A man who fears no one on earth would consider it troublesome even to summon up anger against one who is vainly trying to injure him (*ibid*).

In Gandhi's view, non-violence and cowardice go ill together. A person who carries arms for his defence does so out of fear, if not out of cowardice. True non-

violence is impossible without having unadulterated fearlessness. There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. Non-violence taught a person to be brave, and not to escape from his duty. Gandhi made it quite clear :

It was manly enough to defend one's property, honour or religion at the point of the sword. It was manlier and nobler to defend them without seeking to injure the wrong-doer. But it was unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable to forsake the post of duty and, in order to save one's skin, to leave property, honour or religion to the mercy of the wrong-doer. I could see my way of delivering *Ahimsa* to those who knew how to die, not to those who were afraid of death (*ibid*).

Gandhian principle of non-violence did not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, he would prefer violence to cowardice. Preaching non-violence to a coward was like asking a blind man to enjoy beautiful scenes. There was no difficulty in demonstrating the superiority of non-violence to those who were trained in the school of violence. On the other hand, non-violence could not be taught to a person who fears to die and has no power of resistance.

Finally, as a principle of coexistence, non-violence necessitates abstention from exploitation in any form. How can a person who respects others, who dares even to love his enemy, think of exploiting others to serve his self-interest? Gandhian principle of non-violence exhorts us not only to live peacefully with other human beings, but also with the nature. Non-violence toward the nature is consistent with the Gandhian principle of minimization of our physical wants. When we abstain from damaging the nature, this will enable the nature to satisfy minimum needs of larger human population and thereby further strengthen the spirit of coexistence.

In our day of space vehicles and guided ballistic missiles, the choice is either non-violence or non-existence.

Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-68)

### III

#### GANDHI'S CONCEPT OF SWARAJ

#### NATURE OF THE STATE

Gandhi was a champion of non-violence or *Ahimsa* which deprecates all types of coercion. He believed that the state was a manifestation of power and law which were based on coercion. State is inclined to impose its own will on individuals with the help of an elaborate machinery of police force, law-courts, prisons and military power. It suppresses an individual's individuality as it tries to cast all individuals into a uniform mould. It destroys his sense of self-reliance and stunts his personality. It deprives him of his freedom and obstructs the progress of human society.

Gandhi observed that modern state was more powerful than ancient and medieval

states as it was more organized and more centralized. Power of the state was concentrated in the hands of the few who did not hesitate to misuse it. In Gandhi's view, individual is endowed with soul, but the state is a soulless machine. State's acts are devoid of human sensitivity. State goes by rules and regulations. Those who enforce these rules do not feel any moral responsibility.

Indeed Gandhi condemned political power on moral ground, and not on historical or economic grounds. He was convinced that if non-violence or *Ahimsa* could be adopted as a universal principle of human behaviour, political power as well as the state would become redundant. The result would be an 'enlightened anarchy'. So Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (1931) :

To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation becomes necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a State everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal State, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is best which governs the least.

**Henry David Thoreau (1817-62)** : American writer who questions materialism and the prevailing trend toward the exploitation of nature. He has been hailed as a pioneer ecologist. He also showed the way to civil disobedience as he upheld the right of the individual to refuse to pay taxes when his conscience dictates. His technique of passive resistance was adopted by Mahatma Gandhi.

### Enlightened Anarchy

Enlightened anarchy refers to a form of society which functions without the coercive power of the state, because individuals have full control over themselves. They are so sensitive to the needs and feelings of everyone that they tend to adjust with each other spontaneously and without friction.

In this respect Gandhi was a follower of Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Russian writer, who was a pacific anarchist. Tolstoy was inspired by his faith in Christianity; Gandhi found the basis of this philosophy through his faith in the time-honoured Hindu religion (*Sanatana Dharma*), although he taught equal respect for all religions. Both Tolstoy and Gandhi accorded precedence to spiritual bliss over material satisfaction. Both attacked private property as it enabled the few to lead a luxurious life by exploiting the labour of large numbers. Gandhi did not agree with other anarchists like P.J. Proudhon (1809-65), Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76) and Peter Kropotkin (1842-1921) who regarded religion as a hindrance to human development.

[Pacific anarchist = one who advocates abolition of the state in a peaceful manner]

## LIMITS OF POLITICAL OBLIGATION

Gandhi recognized severe limits of political obligation, as his principle of 'civil disobedience' indicates. *Civil disobedience* implies deliberately disobeying an unjust authority and breaking an unjust law. The duty of civil disobedience to an unjust law is the counterpart of the duty of civil obedience to a just law. Civil disobedience may be resorted to as a protest against an unjust policy of government or in order to draw attention of the government to a demand for political reform.

### Political Obligation

Political obligation refers to the set of conditions which determine as to how far, when and why an individual is obliged to obey the law and commands of political authority. This may be accompanied by such duties as the payment of taxes, participation in voting, jury service and military duty, etc. which are considered to be necessary for the maintenance of political institutions.

The term 'civil disobedience' was originally coined by an American writer—Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) who published an essay in 1848 to explain why he had refused to pay taxes to the State for several years for which he had to undergo imprisonment. Thoreau argued that people must register their protest against any injustice perpetrated by their own government. Harold J. Laski (1893-1950) has cited the case of 'conscientious objectors' to military service during the period of the First World War (1914-18), who had to undergo punishment for refusing to render military service as they believed in peaceful solution of all human disputes.

Mahatma Gandhi sought to combine the principle of civil disobedience with his principle of non-violent struggle and *Satyagraha* (the principle of reliance on the force of truth) during India's struggle for independence. Gandhi set a practical example of civil disobedience when he led the march to the seashore in 1930 to defy the ban on making salt by the Indians. This ban was imposed by British colonial rulers which was thought to be unjust by Gandhi and his followers. Gandhi firmly believed that civil disobedience was based on a profound respect for law in general; only unjust law should be broken—that too when all methods of persuasion and petition for withdrawal of such law had been tried and had failed. The act of civil disobedience should be performed non-violently and in full public view; and penalties entailed by this act should be accepted willingly.

Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Young India* ; 1920)

It is again important that the true object of civil obedience is 'change of heart' of the authorities concerned. This should be resorted to only against a tyrannical regime, foreign ruler or unjust government. If a government generally maintains the citizens' rights and can be influenced through democratic means, resort to civil disobedience will not be necessary. Finally, civil disobedience should not be resorted

to for pressing the demands of any particular section against the general or public interest.

### NATURE OF SWARAJ

Gandhi's concept of *Swaraj* manifests his firm commitment to moral individualism. The term '*Swaraj*' literally means 'self-rule', 'self-government', self-determination' or 'independence'. This term became popular during India's struggle for independence. Gandhi sought to expand its meaning and scope.

#### Moral Individualism

Moral individualism refers to a philosophical principle which regards individual as an end-in-itself, endowed with 'dignity'. Accordingly no human being can be treated as a means to serve an end which lies beyond his conscious existence; no worldly thing can be treated as more valuable than a human being; and no human being can accept an obligation except at his own free will.

Gandhi argued that *Swaraj* did not simply mean political independence from the foreign rule; it also implied the idea of cultural and moral independence. If a country is politically independent but culturally dependent on others for choosing its course of action, it would be devoid of *Swaraj*. *Swaraj* does not close the doors of learning from others, but it requires confidence in one's own potential and decisions. Gandhi thought of *Swaraj* as a system in which all people will have a natural affinity with their country and they will readily collaborate in the task of nation-building.

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave.

Mahatma Gandhi

*Swaraj* or self-government rules out people's dependence on government. This applies even to their own government. Thus, Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (1925):

Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. *Swaraj* government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life.

Gandhi's concept of *Swaraj* also exemplifies his vision of a true democracy. Under this system, people will not merely have the right to elect their representatives, but they will become capable of checking any abuse of authority. As Gandhi wrote in *Young India* (1925):

Real *Swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused.

In other words, *Swaraj* is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

For Gandhi, the idea of *Swaraj* was not confined to the political goal of securing independence from foreign yoke. It also implied moral regeneration of the individual himself—the process of ‘self-control’, ‘self-discipline’ and ‘self-purification’ which must continue even after the independence. As Gandhi himself observed:

I am not interested in freeing India merely from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever. I have no desire to exchange ‘king log for king stork’. Hence for me the movement of *Swaraj* is a movement of self-purification

(*Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose; 1948).

Gandhi sought to demonstrate that individual self-government, i.e. self-control or self-mastery, was as important as political self-government itself. Thus he wrote in his *Autobiography (My Experiments With Truth)* (1929):

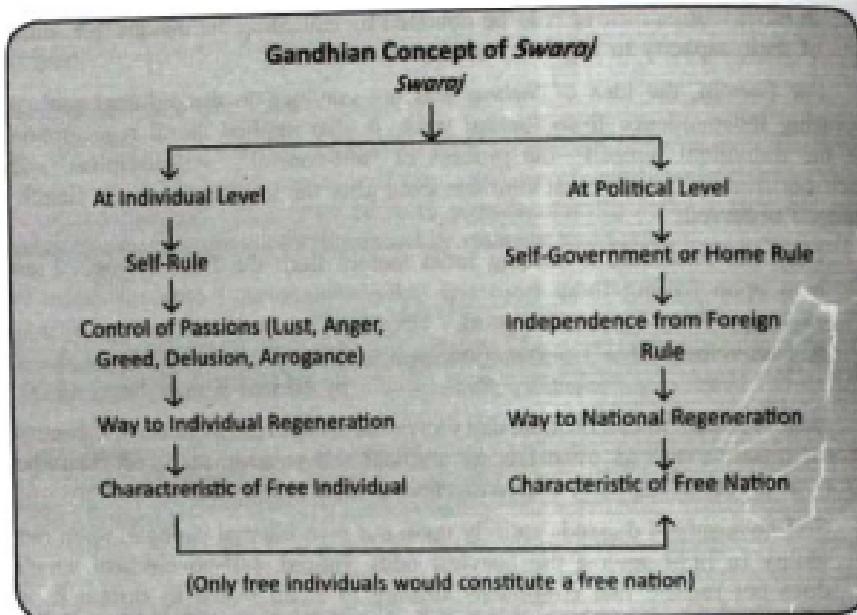
Self-government depends entirely upon our own internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it, is not worth the name. I have therefore endeavoured to show both in word and deed that political self-government—that is self-government for a large number of men and women—is no better than individual self-government, and therefore, it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule.

As a votary of purity of means as well as ends, Gandhi tried to assert that we must rely on non-violence or *Ahimsa* for the attainment of political self-government as well as individual self-government.

**Servitude is of two kinds: slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs.**

Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi elaborately dwells on the principle of non-violence or *Ahimsa* as the way to transform individual character and also as the guiding principle of political struggle. He demonstrates the superiority of non-violence over violence ‘at least in the majority of the cases’. He asserts that the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms. The principle of non-violence (*Ahimsa*) is founded on soul-force (*atmanah*) while violence was founded on body-force (*sharirbal*). The qualities of soul-force are akin to love-force (*premabal*), compassion-force (*dayababal*), the force acquired by self-suffering (*tapobabal*) and moral force (*nitibabal*). All these forces become operative when mind is able to control itself and overcome the passions. An individual endowed with these forces would be naturally inclined to adopt the technique of non-violent resistance (*Satyagraha*) as his method of political struggle.

**IV****CONCEPT OF SATYAGRAHA**

Satyagraha refers to the Gandhian technique of fighting against injustice. This non-violent technique of protest was introduced by Gandhi during his sojourn in South Africa (1893-1914) in the course of fighting against injustice perpetrated by the then Government of South Africa on the resident Indians and other non-white people. In *Hind Swaraj* (1910), Gandhi defined *Satyagraha* as "a method of securing rights by personal suffering : it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul force. It involves sacrifice of self." In short, Gandhi conceived *Satyagraha* as the method of using 'soul force' against 'brute force' through 'self-suffering' that would secure 'change of heart' of the opponent who would then be forced to depart from the path of injustice.

After his return to India (1914) when Gandhi assumed leadership of Indian national movement, he applied the technique of *Satyagraha* for fighting against injustice on many fronts. Bhikhu Parekh (*Gandhi*; 1997) has identified the following three areas in which Gandhi tried to use 'soul-force' or 'truth-force' (that is *Satyagraha*) against various forms of brute force : (a) Racial discrimination in South Africa; (b) British rule in India; and (c) Ugly social practices prevailing in Indian society (such as untouchability, communal prejudices and hatred, etc.). From a close study of the history of nations, Gandhi was convinced that fighting evil with evil would multiply evil. In other words, fighting violence with violence would

multiply violence. Fire cannot be extinguished with fire; it can be extinguished only with water. So violence can be effectively contained with non-violence; and the brute force of evil can be contained only by an effective use of soul-force or truth-force. Hence *Satyagraha* would prove an effective instrument of fighting against injustice in any form. Joan Bondurant (*Conquest of Violence : The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* ; 1965) has significantly observed that Gandhi says 'yes' to fighting but an emphatic 'no' to violence.

The term '*Satyagraha*' was formed by joining two Sanskrit words '*Satya*' (the truth) and '*Agraha*' (insistence on or adherence to). So literally '*Satyagraha*' means insistence on truth or adherence to truth. This principle could be applied at individual as well as political level. At individual level, it would lead to moral uplift of the individual which would be synonymous with the first sense of *Swaraj* (that is the self-rule gained through the control of passions like lust, anger, greed, delusion and arrogance, etc.). But in the context of Gandhian philosophy, meaning of *Satyagraha* is restricted to the use of this principle at political level, with a wider scope of its application. In other words, *Satyagraha* may be used not only to attain *Swaraj* in the second sense of the term (that is the national independence or independence from foreign rule), but for fighting against any form of injustice whether it is perpetrated by a tyrannical ruler or by tyrannical social practices.

Gandhi thought that while fighting for a just cause, *Satyagrahi* (one who resorts to *Satyagraha*) believes that self-suffering is superior to making others suffer; self-sacrifice is better than others' sacrifice. This would have a psychological effect on the wrong-doer and make him realize his fault. He would then be inclined to enter into a dialogue with the *Satyagrahi* in order to arrive at an amicable solution. Joan Bondurant (*Conquest of Violence : The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* ; 1965) distinguished Gandhi's *Satyagraha* with its opposite, *Duragraha*. *Duragraha* implies stubborn resistance to the opponent's policy or actions prejudged to be *ipso facto* wrong. The *Duragrahi* (one who resorts to *Duragraha*) regards truth, justice, righteousness to be his monopoly and does not allow the possibility that his opponent could also be right. The opponent is regarded an embodiment of evil; he is blackmailed and humiliated. He is not even allowed to explain his viewpoint. *Duragrahi* forgets the distinction between the wrong and the wrong-doer, and tries to destroy his opponent physically in order to destroy his misdeed. The opponent is forced to accept defeat and concede to the demands of the *Duragrahi*. On the contrary, *Satyagrahi* enables his opponent to put forward his point of view. The opponent is allowed to prove himself to be right. *Satyagraha* takes the form of a fight between the equals who are given a fair chance to understand each other's view and to discover the truth which would be readily accepted by both the parties. Once they reach agreement, enemy ceases to be an enemy. He becomes a friend and a co-worker in the pursuit of truth. *Satyagrahi* believes in the principles : "Let and let live."

*Satyagraha* implies a para-legal method of registering a peaceful protest against the laws, the customs and the practices which one finds contrary to his conscience. Like Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), Gandhi believed in arousing the conscience of the evil-doer; so he endorsed this motto : "Hate the sin, and not the sinner."

*Satyagrahi* believes in entering into a dialogue with his opponent for arriving at the mutually acceptable solution. It also has a salutary effect on the onlookers who learn to appreciate the merits and demerits of the respective claims of the conflicting parties. They also contribute to creating the climate of peaceful resolution of the conflict.

I have ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For *Satyagraha* and its offshoots, non-cooperation and civil resistance are nothing but new names for the law of suffering... 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 pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Young India*; 1920)

Since *Satyagraha* is one of the most powerful methods of direct action, a *Satyagrahi* exhausts all other means before he resorts to *Satyagraha*. He will, therefore, constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody who wants to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to *Satyagraha*. But when he has found the impelling call of the inner voice within him and launches out upon *Satyagraha* he has burnt his boats and there is no receding.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Young India*; 1927)

The merit of Gandhian method of *Satyagraha* lies in introducing a new method of conflict-resolution which was found worth trying in many parts of the world. We may not accept it as the sole method of fighting against injustice, as Gandhi claimed, but it undoubtedly offers an important alternative to the hitherto known methods. It showed the way to oppressed people to pool their moral strength for fighting against a mighty opponent. The American civil rights movement of 1950s and 1960s under the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-68) was particularly inspired by the Gandhian technique of *Satyagraha*. This movement sought to win equal rights for the black Americans who were left with no other weapon to fight against injustice and discrimination. Martin Luther King Jr. found that Gandhi's gospel of love showed the way of applying the teachings of Christ in the sphere of political struggle. As he put it : "Christ furnished the spirit and motivation (for non-violent resistance), while Gandhi furnished the method."

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

Mahatma Gandhi

Seven Deadly Sins : Wealth without work; Pleasure without conscience; Knowledge without character; Commerce without morality; Science without humanity; Worship without sacrifice; Politics without principles.

Mahatma Gandhi

## V

## CONCEPT OF SARVODAYA

## MEANING OF SARVODAYA

*Sarvodaya* refers to the goal of social reconstruction in Gandhian thought. The term '*Sarvodaya*' may be rendered as 'uplift of all', 'rise of all' or 'awakening of all'. All the meanings of this term closely correspond to each other. In a society where only the few are endowed with knowledge, power, prestige and wealth, and a very large numbers are languishing, *Sarvodaya* wants them to rise above. But since it believes in uplift of all, it does not envisage a conflict between the high and the low, between the rich and the poor. As a votary of purity of means as well as end, Gandhi was convinced that violent means cannot be used to achieve a non-violent end.

The idea behind *Sarvodaya* was inspired by John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* (1860). Gandhi came across this work in the midst of his passive resistance movement against the racist regime of South Africa. This contained a message of uplift of the last man or the most neglected lot. Gandhi was so impressed by this work that he published its summary in his Gujarati articles under the title of *Sarvodaya*. Ruskin's teachings are very close to Gandhian philosophy. Ruskin rejected the cult of machinery and consumerism as well as the idea of economic man and mercantile economy. Instead, he advocated simple technology, manual labour, communal enterprise and measurement of value in terms of quality of life. Gandhi relied on these teachings to sharpen his own thinking on various issues of social reform.

The ideal of *Sarvodaya* is concerned with 'welfare of all', yet it implies special concern with the welfare of the down-trodden or 'the most disadvantaged'. This principle should be followed in individual action as well as in making public decisions. This is evident from Gandhi's famous talisman:

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test :

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to *Swaraj* for hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

Literally, *Sarvodaya* aims at the good of one and all, of the high and the low, of the strong and the weak, of the brilliant as well as the dull. A question is sometimes raised that concern with uplift of the low, the weak and the dull is understandable, but why shall we show equal concern with the uplift of the high, the strong and the brilliant? This point was adequately clarified by Vinoba Bhave (1895-1982), an outstanding Gandhian, in *Harijan* (1948). Vinoba maintained that in this unhappy world of ours everyone needs to be uplifted, because everyone of us is fallen. The rich are fallen long since, and the poor have never risen at all. The result is that both

need to be uplifted. The rich are fallen morally and spiritually; their wealth rests upon exploitation of others, and therefore upon untruth and violence. By voluntarily surrendering their superfluous wealth they will rise spiritually. In this way *Sarvodaya* is intended to uplift the poor materially and to uplift the rich spiritually. In this sense, philosophy of *Sarvodaya* is different from other ideologies which largely focus on material welfare, and that too of a specified section of population like 'greatest happiness of the greatest number', 'emancipation of the working class', etc.

### **SARVODAYA AND UTILITARIANISM**

Gandhian concept of *Sarvodaya* rejects the utilitarian doctrine of the 'greatest good of the greatest number' in favour of the 'greatest good all'. As Gandhi asserted :

I do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. It means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of 51 per cent the interest of 49 per cent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine and has done harm to humanity. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all, and this can only be achieved by uttermost self-sacrifice (Cited in *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*; 1953).

The theory of utilitarianism, as founded by English philosopher, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), was based on the calculation of pleasure and pain to be derived from contending policy proposals. It defined 'good' or 'happiness' as the balance of pleasure over pain. Any proposal that would ensure the greatest good or the greatest happiness of the greatest number in this sense would be given preference over all other proposals. Here the calculation of 'good' was confined to the consideration of physical pleasure and pain; there was no scope of moral or spiritual consideration in this context. John Stuart Mill (1806-73), outstanding English utilitarian, sought to point out qualitative differences between different types of pleasures. Mill maintained that man does not run after physical pleasures only, but the development of his moral, intellectual and artistic faculties is also necessary. The pleasure enjoyed by man's higher faculties is always superior to the mere sensuous pleasure.

In any case, utilitarian philosophy could not rise above the concept of material welfare of human beings. It did not enter the sphere of spiritual welfare of those who are materially well off. On the other hand, the principle of *Sarvodaya* seeks to secure the spiritual as well as material welfare of humanity.

### **SARVODAYA AND SOCIALISM**

Socialism stands for an ideology which seeks to replace capitalism by placing the major means of production under social ownership and control. Its chief goal is to secure emancipation of the working classes from capitalist exploitation. It is primarily concerned with material welfare of people. Of the two major varieties of socialism, Marxism seeks to achieve its goal through class struggle, i.e., the struggle of the working class against the capitalist class, resulting in violent, revolutionary overthrow of capitalist system. The second variety, viz. democratic socialism seeks to achieve its goal by mobilizing public opinion in its favour, winning electoral majority and then implementing socialist policy through democratic means.

*Sarvodaya* is different from socialism in many respects. In the first place, *Sarvodaya* is not concerned merely with material welfare; it embraces spiritual welfare as well. Secondly, it does not seek to replace capitalism forthwith by placing all major means of production under social ownership and control. It neither supports a violent revolution nor democratic propaganda to achieve its goal. Instead, it relies on moral transformation by seeking 'change of heart' of the existing land-owners and capitalists so that they would treat themselves as trustees of the property bestowed upon them by the Creator of the Universe, and use it for the service of humanity.

In the third place, *Sarvodaya* does not subscribe to the theory of class conflict. It shows the goal where interests of all classes would converge, and seeks 'class cooperation' towards the achievement of that goal. Its natural corollary is that it does not profess emancipation of the working class only. It *insists on spiritual emancipation of the rich and material emancipation of the poor in order to restore moral balance in society*. Finally, whereas socialism seeks to maximize production by making labour compulsory for everyone and stepping up technological development, *Sarvodaya* offers a different prescription. *Sarvodaya* prescribes '*bread labour*' for everyone to overcome the problem of scarcity. *Bread labour* implies that everybody will have to do physical labour toward production for society, at least to compensate for the bread that he consumes. In this context, '*bread*' is symbolic of the articles of physical consumption. Adoption of this principle will not only increase social production but also establish '*dignity of labour*'. As regards the development of technology, *Sarvodaya* recommends the use of simple technology so as to create work for the teeming millions. Instead of '*mass production*' by the machines, *Sarvodaya* wants '*production by the masses*'.

Ultimate goal of socialism is expressed in the formula: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.' *Sarvodaya* seeks to modify this rule. It does recommend universalization of labour. But it professes minimization of needs so that everybody's needs could be easily satisfied. Socialism does not seek to curb the levels of consumption, in the hope that abundance of goods and services can be created in society. On the contrary, *Sarvodaya* holds that human desires can never be finally satisfied; control of one's desires and the spirit of contentment are the only solution to the problem of satisfaction of human needs.

## SARVODAYA AND DEMOCRACY

In common parlance, democracy in practice means the rule of majority. On the other hand, the spirit of *Sarvodaya* tends to pay equal importance to everyone in society. This calls for redefining the essence of democracy. Writing in *Young India* (1932) Gandhi observed :

The rule of majority has a narrow application, *i.e.*, one should yield to majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions are. Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.

Gandhi insisted that a democratic state should act strictly according to public

opinion. This is essential for maintaining democratic discipline. Democracy disciplined and enlightened is the finest thing in the world. On the contrary, if a democracy is prejudiced, ignorant and superstitious, it will land itself in chaos and will be on its way to self-destruction. A decadent democracy would tend to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. Individual freedom, which is the crux of democracy, can be maintained only through unadulterated non-violence. Tolerance is the key to democratic discipline. As Gandhi wrote earlier in *Young India* (1921) :

If we want to cultivate true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.

Apart from considering the procedural aspect of democracy, Gandhi also dwelled on the substantive aspect of democracy in consonance with his philosophy of *Sarvodaya*. Here again he highlights the importance of non-violence. As he wrote in *Harjan* (1940):

My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows anything but patronizing regard for the weak.

This also distinguishes *Sarvodaya* from the welfare state. Broadly speaking, welfare state signifies a democratic state which creates the network of common social services as well as special relief for the poor by taxation of the rich. It is characterized by what Gandhi has termed 'patronizing regard for the weak'. *Sarvodaya*, on the other hand, recognizes equal dignity of the poor as well as the rich. Instead of heavy taxation of the rich against their wishes, *Sarvodaya* seeks to persuade them to offer their surplus wealth willingly and voluntarily for the service of humanity.

### CONCLUSION

Commitment to the common good is the essence of Gandhian philosophy. Gandhi saw India's independence as an opportunity 'to wipe every tear from every eye'. He wished to transform the destiny of India at a critical juncture through moral regeneration. It was a time when India was groaning under an oppressive foreign rule, abject poverty, vast social and economic inequalities. Further it was also in the grip of communal tension and hatred. Gandhi preached the gospel of spiritualism, *Ahimsa* (non-violence), renunciation (non-possession), dignity of labour and moral courage, etc. for the uplift of man as well as society. His doctrine of trusteeship, his vision of a classless society and his concept of *Sarvodaya* (uplift of all) hold the key to his idea of the common good.

Every individual must have fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by his neighbours, but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from his talents. He is part of the nation or say, the social structure surrounding him. Therefore he can use his talents not for self but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives.

Mahatma Gandhi

## VI

**DOCTRINE OF TRUSTEESHIP**

Broadly speaking, Gandhi believed in simple living at the level of production as well as consumption. He gave primacy to simple technology over heavy industries. Simple technology had the capacity of mass employment, whereas advanced technology would create vast unemployment, particularly in a country like India, and would promote consumerism with all its ill effects. Gandhi preferred 'production by the masses' to 'mass production' by heavy machinery. However, he realized that it was not feasible to switch over to the new system abruptly.

Wider use of simple technology could be kept in mind in the course of future expansion. The existing system of production may be allowed to continue with necessary changes in the attitude of the owners of means of production. For the transformation of their attitude Gandhi enunciated his doctrine of trusteeship.

Gandhian doctrine of trusteeship is addressed to the conscience of the rich and resourceful members of society, particularly landlords and capitalists. It urges them not to consider themselves as the sole proprietors of their possessions, but only 'trustees' of a gift bestowed upon them by God for the service of humanity. This view is in consonance with the basic philosophy of Gandhi. His principle of non-possession (*aparigraha*) implies that worldly possessions make you morally deprave. Hence one should not take more than his immediate needs. To maintain one's moral strength, material things should be used with a spirit of renunciation.

Gandhian principle of non-stealing (*asteya*) implies that amassing of wealth, or even the possession of more than one's immediate needs amounts to theft because it is meant to fulfil others' needs. Any attempt to satisfy one's greed means theft. It reminds us of nineteenth-century French philosopher, P.J. Proudhon's famous dictum : "Property is theft."

However, Gandhi does not favour overthrowing the existing economic system. This system has become oppressive because of the moral decline. If the organizers of agriculture and industry could be persuaded to act as public servants, they will win wide public respect instead of the existing hatred. The feeling of class conflict will be replaced by the sentiment of class cooperation. Gandhi wants 'change of heart' of the rich and resourceful persons to enable the society to have full benefit of their talents and efforts without suffering injustice caused by the exploitation of the poor by the rich. As Gandhi wrote in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (1934) :

What is needed is not the extinction of landlords and capitalists, but a transformation of the existing relationship between them and the masses into something healthier and purer.

Gandhi realized that this was by no means an easy task. As he himself conceded in *The Modern Review* (1935) :

You may say that trusteeship is a legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act up to it, then life on earth would be governed far

more by love than it is at present. Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method.

Moral regeneration at any stage is really difficult. We need a constant inspiration from a Gautam Buddha, Jesus Christ, or Mahatma Gandhi to follow this path. Every step in this direction will give us more enlightenment, peace of mind and genuine happiness.

Critics point out that the vision of 'change of heart' of the rich is a fascinating idea, but it is hardly realizable in actual practice!

## VII

### VISION OF A CLASSLESS SOCIETY

Gandhi's faith in human equality made him a strong votary of classless society. He realized that the division of labour among different individuals was inevitable. However, class division of society was not directly related to division of labour. It was the product of a condition in which one type of labour, i.e. physical labour was regarded as inferior to another type of labour, i.e. mental labour or mere leisure. Gandhi sought to create a sense of equality among people by making 'bread labour' compulsory for all.

The gospel of 'bread labour' expected everybody to do physical labour toward production, at least to compensate for the bread that he consumes. Bread is symbolic of various items of one's physical consumption. When everybody does physical labour, apart from the performance of other functions suited to his aptitude and qualifications, nobody will look down upon physical labour. This will create a sense of 'dignity of labour' throughout society. This in turn will promote a sense of equality among people transcending the prevailing division of labour. This would even create a sense of equality between the rich and the poor. As Gandhi wrote in *Harijan* (1935) :

If all laboured for their bread and no more, then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all. Then there would be no cry of overpopulation, no disease and no misery as we see around. Such labour will be the highest form of sacrifice. Men will do many other things either through their bodies or through their minds, but all this will be labour of love for the common good. There will be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable...

If we did so, our wants would be minimized, our food would be simple. We should then eat to live, not live to eat. Let anyone who doubts the accuracy of this proposition try to sweat for his bread, he will derive the greatest relish from the productions of his labour, improve his health, and discover that many things he took were superfluities.

The entire idea behind bread labour really means the recognition of the necessity of some physical exertion even for mental workers, so that they may be performing some productive function in a spirit of service to the community.

Mahatma Gandhi

In short, the principle of bread labour is designed to promote three things: (a) simple living among all citizens; (b) dignity of labour; and (c) a sense of equality transcending the prevailing division of labour. Originally caste symbolized the division of labour which strayed on to division of society into high and low ranks. The principle of bread labour would serve to obliterate this ranking. This would even create equality between the rich and the poor. As Gandhi wrote in *From Yeravda Mandir* (1945) :

There is a worldwide conflict between capital and labour, and the poor envy the rich. If all worked for their bread, distinctions of rank would be obliterated; the rich would still be there, but they would deem themselves only trustees of their property, and would use it mainly in the public interest.

Gandhi also stood against discrimination among human beings on the grounds of gender and faith. In other words, he championed equality between men and women as also between the adherents of different religions. In short, he wished to create a classless society by transforming the attitude of people toward the sources of discrimination in society. He insisted on moral regeneration of society for which adherence to truth and non-violence was indispensable. Gandhian principle of equality of all religions was expressed in the following statement :

Temples or mosques or churches...I make no distinction between these different abodes of God. They are what faith has made them. They are an answer to man's craving somehow to reach the Unseen

(*The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, compiled by R.K. Prabhu and U.R. Rao; 1945).

Gandhi strongly defended equality between man and women. As he wrote:

My opinion is that, just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problems must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help...But somehow or other man has dominated woman from ages past, and so woman has developed an inferiority complex...But the seers among men have recognized her equal status

(*Selections from Gandhi* by Nirmal Kumar Bose : 1948).

Above all, Gandhian principle of *Ahimsa* (non-violence) is also conducive to the creation of a classless society. When a person avows not to harm anybody, not to cause injury to anybody and not to hurt anybody's feeling, what else is left for the realization of a classless society? Thus the vision of a classless society runs throughout Gandhian thought and philosophy.

## VIII

**GANDHIAN VISION OF IDEAL SOCIAL ORDER**

India is less in need of steel weapons; it has fought with divine weapons; it can still do so. Other nations have been votaries of brute force...India can win all by soul force.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*; 1933)

Gandhi variously described his ideal social order as *Swaraj* (self-government), *Poorna Swaraj* (complete self-government), *Ramrajya* (replica of the Kingdom of Lord Rama), or simply as India of the future. Obviously his vision of an ideal social order was concerned with the future of India, welfare of its people, and preparing them for the service of humanity. He did not produce a full picture of this social order at one place, but it can be constructed by gathering his views scattered in many of his writings.

Gandhian vision does not envisage an 'ideal state' because he was in principle against the institution of the State. In his view, the State symbolized the power of coercion in society and this would hinder the moral development of the individual. That is why he sought to build the image of a 'social order' and not of 'the State'. Bhikhu Parekh has aptly described this social order as an "enlightened anarchy" under which socially responsible and morally disciplined men and women never harmed one another and did not need any kind of polity" (*Gandhi's Political Philosophy*; 1989). This was the ideal form of things; it would not be fully realized in practice. We should constantly endeavour to achieve this goal, and develop such institutions which approximate this image as nearly as possible. So in practice, "Gandhi opted for 'ordered anarchy' under which citizens enjoyed maximum freedom consistent with the minimum necessary order" (*ibid.*).

The guiding principles of Gandhian social order may be described as follows:

- (a) It should be based on *Ahimsa*, that is the attitude of non-violence between the mutual dealings of individuals as well as between individuals and the administrators of this social order;
- (b) It should recognize the dignity of individual and have full faith in his or her moral potential; it should help him or her to recover and develop his or her moral and social powers which have been surrendered to the State at present;
- (c) It should dismantle the existing system of centralization of powers in the State, and create strong and vibrant local communities to ensure decentralization of powers; and finally,
- (d) It should facilitate the regeneration of Indian society and culture by reviving its moral and spiritual traditions.

It is important to note that Gandhi was against the 'centralization of powers' but not against the provision of a central authority. He realized that unity of India had

suffered for want of a central authority in the past which should be strong enough to keep it united. It also lacked a spirit of nationalism transcending the narrow ethnic, religious, linguistic, regional and other forms of separate identities. So he envisaged the existence of a central government in his scheme of the future social order, that would cultivate a sense of nationhood among the small, cultured and well-organized self-governing village communities. The affairs of these communities were to be managed by *Panchayats* (village councils) consisting of five persons to be elected annually. Each *Panchayat* would have legislative, executive and judicial powers, but it would largely rely on its moral authority and the pressure of public opinion in order to maintain harmony and order in society. Gandhi earnestly hoped that the institution of *Panchayat* would instill the spirit of cooperation among people and function as a nursery of civic virtues.

Gandhi, in an interview granted in 1946 (as recorded in *Gandhi : Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, edited by Anthony Parel ; 1997), expressed his political vision as 'The Pyramid vs. The Oceanic Circle'. He held that in independent India, the rulers would depend on the will of the people; the former would behave as servants of the people, ready to act on their will. Independence must begin at the bottom. While every village republic will be the nucleus of administration, and self-dependent in all respects including its defence, the whole social organization will be founded on the principle of autonomy of the individual, adherence to truth and non-violence. As Gandhi observed :

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

In this scheme of things, the outermost circumference will not wield extraordinary power over the inner circle, but will give strength to the successive inner circles, and also derive its strength from those circles. All religious communities of India will remain united and feel perfectly safe under this arrangement. So Gandhi asserted:

In this picture every religion has its full and equal place. We are all leaves of a majestic tree whose trunk cannot be shaken off its roots which are deep down in the bowels of the earth. The mightiest wind cannot move it.

In this unique organization there is no place for big machines which displace human labour and lead to concentration of power in a few hands. It will allow only such machines which are particularly helpful for the individual users, such as Singer Sewing Machine.

The expanding circles around the village community, as envisaged by Gandhi, were defined in some of his other writings. Bhikhu Parekh (*Gandhi's Political Philosophy* ; 1989) has tried to complete this picture from other relevant sources as under :

The villages were grouped into *talukas*, the latter into districts, these into provinces, and so on, each governed by representatives elected by its constituent units. Each tier of government enjoyed considerable autonomy and a strong sense of community, both sustained and limited the one above it and dealt with matters of common interest to its constituent communities. Each province was free to draw up its own constitution to suit local requirements and in conformity with that of the country as a whole... The central government wielded enough authority to hold them all together, but not enough to dominate them.

[*Taluka* = a small regional unit made up of several villages]

Each tier of this social order was to function as a community of its constituent units. Hence the polity as a whole behaved not as a collection of isolated units, but a unit of unities, and a community of communities. Such a polity would not need a vast bureaucracy as most of the decision-making was to be decentralized. Gandhi thought that even crime would be minimal in this society where no one starved and everyone knew each other personally. So there would be no need of police. If any crime occurred, it would be controlled by the moral pressure of local public opinion. If necessary, the members of the society would volunteer to do policing by rotation. Moreover,

Gandhi thought that such a polity did not require an army and could rely on 'non-violent soldiers' trained in the method of *Satyagraha*. There was no danger of civil war, and no foreign country was likely to invade a polity whose fiercely independent-minded citizens would resist it to the death (*ibid.*).

Gandhi believed that the structure proposed by him would conform to the principle of democracy. In order to distinguish its underlying principle, he variously described his system as *Swaraj* or true democracy. He had expressed his view about the true nature of democracy at many places. Thus he wrote in *Young India* (1925):

By *Swaraj* I mean the government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having registered their names as voters.

The real test of *Swaraj* was the power of the ordinary people to control those in authority in the case of any abuse of authority. So Gandhi wrote further :

Real *Swaraj* will not come by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, *Swaraj* is to be obtained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

Gandhi's *Swaraj* ruled out domination of elites over the masses. As he wrote in *Young India* (1931) :

The *Swaraj* of my...dream recognized no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be monopoly of the lettered persons nor yet of moneyed men. *Swaraj* is to be for all, including the farmer, but emphatically including the maimed, the

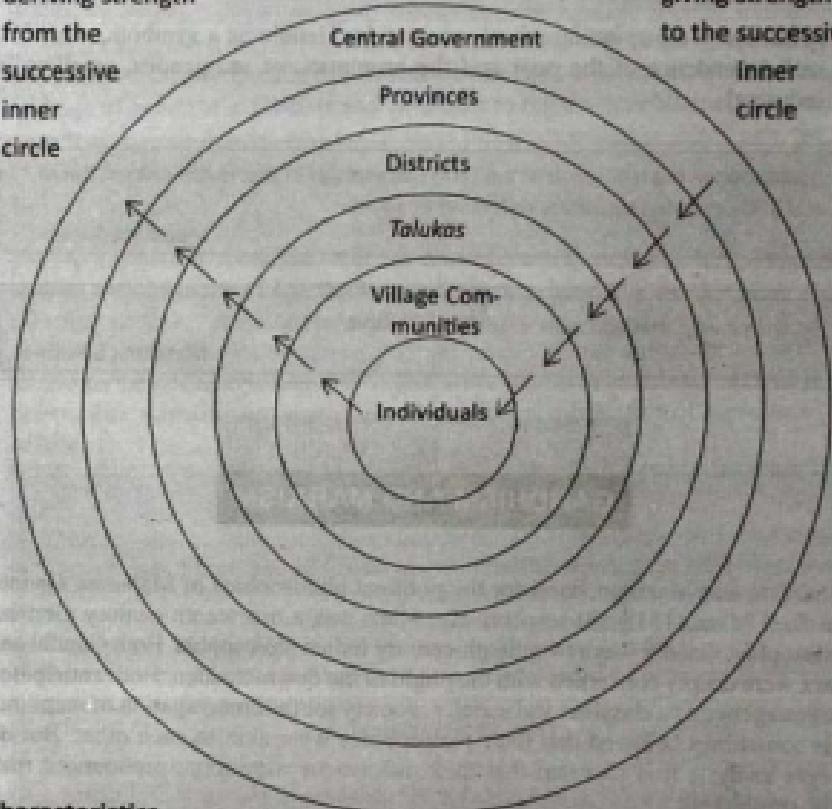
blind, the starving toiling millions.

### Outline of Gandhian Ideal Social Order

**(Community of Communities)**

Each outer circle  
deriving strength  
from the  
successive  
inner  
circle

Each outer circle  
giving strength  
to the successive  
inner  
circle



#### **Characteristics**

- Each tier of government to enjoy considerable autonomy and show a strong sense of community
- Central Government would be strong enough to hold all tiers of government together
- Each province would be free to draw up its own Constitution to suit local requirements
- No outer circle would wield extraordinary power over any inner circle

Again, in *Harijan* (1940), Gandhi used the term 'democracy' to reiterate the conditions of *Swaraj*:

My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest...India is trying to evolve true democracy, i.e. without violence. Our weapons are those of *Satyagraha* expressed through the *Charkha*, the village industries, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition, and non-violent organization of labour...These mean mass effort and mass education.

[*Charkha* = the spinning wheel, adopted by Gandhi as a symbolic means of self-dependence of the poor and the promotion of indigenous, small-scale industry]

Civilization in the real sense of the term consists not in the multiplication, but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants.

Mahatma Gandhi

Be the change that you wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

## IX

### GANDHISM AND MARXISM

Gandhism and Marxism stand for the political philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Karl Marx (1818-83) respectively. Marx was a nineteenth-century German philosopher; Gandhi was a twentieth-century Indian philosopher. Both Gandhi and Marx were deeply concerned with the plight of the down-trodden. Both anticipated the emergence of a classless and stateless society for the emancipation of mankind. It is sometimes believed that their philosophies were akin to each other. But on deeper analysis it is revealed that their differences were more pronounced than their similarities.

For Marx, classes represented the division of society into *haves* and *have-nots*, i.e. the owners and non-owners of private property (particularly the means of social production). Marx hoped to achieve the goal of classless society through a violent revolution in which capitalists would be overthrown and labour would become compulsory for every able-bodied person. For Gandhi, class distinction arose from a mental outlook which regarded one type of work (e.g. physical labour) as inferior to another type (e.g. mental labour). Gandhi commended 'dignity of labour' (particularly physical labour) as the key to a classless society. He prescribed 'bread labour' for everybody which implied 'the recognition of the necessity of some physical exertion even for mental workers, so that they may be performing some productive function in a spirit of service to the community'.

### Bread Labour

Bread labour refers to one of the Gandhian principles of good conduct. It requires every member of society to do physical labour toward production, at least to compensate for the bread that he consumes. Bread is symbolic of various items of one's physical consumption. It is believed that when everybody does physical labour, apart from his normal duties, nobody will look down upon physical labour.

This practice will be conducive to the recognition of 'dignity of labour'.

Marx suggested social ownership of means of social production for the creation of a classless society. Gandhi enunciated the principle of 'trusteeship' which required 'change of heart' of capitalists and landlords to regard their business and industry as a 'trust' of the people, and not as their private possession. Marx saw the State as an instrument of the dominant class, and hoped that in a classless society, State and political power would become redundant; hence a 'stateless' society would come into existence. Marx wanted full development of technology and forces of production so that everybody's needs could be satisfied. On the contrary, Gandhi wanted replacement of huge machinery by human labour to provide for jobs to the teeming millions, limiting one's needs to the minimum, and elevation of human character. Under these conditions external force to regulate their behaviour would no longer be necessary; hence a 'stateless' society would become a reality. Marx believed in 'scientific socialism'; Gandhi professed the mission of *Sarvodaya* (uplift of all).

### Trusteeship

The doctrine of trusteeship was enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) which urges on the rich and resourceful members of society, particularly landlords and industrialists, not to consider themselves as the sole proprietors of their possessions, but only as 'trustees' of the gift bestowed upon them by God for the service of humanity.

### Scientific Socialism

Scientific socialism refers to a theory of socialism based on the scientific laws derived from historical analysis. Marx (1818-83) and Engels (1820-95) are the chief exponents of this theory. They held that various stages of historical development are the manifestations of contradictions in material conditions which necessarily lead human society to the goal of socialism. In this process, victory of the working class over the capitalist class is inevitable. Whereas utopian socialism regards socialism as a moral choice, scientific socialism considers it a historical necessity.

Marx was a materialist; Gandhi was a spiritualist. Marx deprecated religion and dubbed religion 'the opium of the people'; Gandhi saw religion as a moralizing force and wanted to give it due place in society. Marx regarded 'class conflict' as the instrument of social transformation; Gandhi preached 'class cooperation'. Marx saw the State as an agency of 'class domination'; Gandhi thought of the State as a soulless machine which led to coercion of individuals. Marx exhorted the working

classes to overthrow capitalism, and hoped that after fullest development of forces of production under socialism, 'the State will wither away'. Gandhi hoped that when non-violence is adopted as a universal principle, society would become self-regulating and the State would become redundant. Marx's vision of the future envisages a self-regulated society ruled by the principle : "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need"; Gandhi's vision of the future envisages a social order in which self-disciplined individuals having minimum needs, would be performing their duties with a strong sense of moral responsibility towards social needs.

### **Materialism**

Materialism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'matter' as the essence of the universe, and treats 'consciousness' as the mere reflection of the prevailing condition of the matter.

In ethics, materialism stands for an attitude which regards material or economic gain and sensuous pleasure as the highest value and relegates all other values to the background. It is the opposite of spiritualism.

### **Spiritualism**

Spiritualism refers to a philosophical doctrine which regards 'spirit' or 'soul' as the essence of the universe, and treats 'matter' as the transitory forms through which 'soul' expresses itself in the course of its evolution to the goal of perfection.

In ethics, spiritualism stands for an attitude which regards only moral values as worth pursuing and relegates economic gain and sensuous pleasure to the background. In other words, it accords priority to moral values over material values. It is the opposite of materialism.

Socialism and communism of the West are based on certain conceptions which are fundamentally different from ours. One such conception is their belief in the essential selfishness of human nature. I do not subscribe to it for I know that the essential difference between man and the brute is that the former can respond to the call of the spirit in him, can rise superior to the passions that he owns in common with the brute and, therefore, superior to selfishness and violence, which belong to the brute nature and not to the immortal spirit of man.

...Our socialism or communism should, therefore, be based on non-violence and on harmonious cooperation of labour and capital, landlord and tenant.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Amrita Bazar Patrika* ; 1934)

Real socialism has been handed down to us by our ancestors who taught : "All land belongs to Gopal; where then is the boundary line ? Man is the maker of that line and he can, therefore, unmake it." Gopal literally means shepherd; it also means God. In modern language it means the State, i.e. the People.

Mahatma Gandhi (*Harijan* ; 1937)

**Comparative Study of Marxian and Gandhian views**

| <i>The Issue</i>                     | <i>Marxian View</i>   | <i>Gandhian View</i>  |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Philosophical basis                  | Materialism; Scientific Socialism   | Spiritualism; Sarvodaya   |
| Attitude toward Religion             | Negative; an ideological instrument for the protection of private property  | Positive; religion as such is a moralizing force, hence equal respect for all religions   |
| Attitude toward Technology           | Positive; necessary for full development of the forces of production  | Negative; use of heavy machines stunts moral growth and creates vast unemployment   |
| Basis of Classes                     | Division of society into owners and non-owners of means of social production  | Mental outlook based on contempt for physical labour.   |
| Recommended Relation between Classes | Class Conflict  | Class Cooperation   |
| Way to Achieve Classless Society     | Overthrow of capitalism; Social ownership of means of social production; Compulsory labour and full development of the forces of production | Doctrine of trusteeship: moral persuasion of capitalists to regard themselves as 'trustees' of public property; restore 'dignity of labour'; universal 'bread labour' requiring everybody to do physical labour |
| Nature of the State                  | An instrument of class domination involving oppression and exploitation of the dependent class  | An instrument of coercion of individuals; a soulless machine for enforcing rules and regulations without human sensitivity or a sense of moral responsibility   |
| Way to Achieve Stateless Society     | After full development of the forces of production in a classless society, the state will 'wither away'                                     | When everybody follows the principle of non-violence ( <i>Ahimsa</i> ) and becomes self-disciplined and self-regulated, the state will become redundant   |
| Image of the Future Society          | A self-regulated society ruled by the principle : 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his need'                       | A self-regulated society comprising of self-disciplined individuals having minimum needs with a sense of moral responsibility toward social needs   |

- Q. 1.** Elucidate the Gandhian perspective on ends and means. Bring out its implication with regard to the relation between politics and ethics.
- 2.** "The principle of non-violence embraces all rules of good citizenship and human decency." Elaborate. Bring out significance of *Ahimsa* in the Gandhian method of *Satyagraha*.
- 3.** "In Gandhian mode of thought *Swaraj* and *Sarvodaya* must be understood as complementary principles." Critically examine this statement.
- 4.** Account for the points of convergence and divergence between Gandhism and Marxism.

to be ruled by religious orthodoxy and superstition. He believed that the world had to be reconstructed along the lines of modernity. The Indian National Congress, which was founded in 1885, was instrumental in the struggle for independence. It was a broad-based organisation that addressed issues of social justice, civil rights and women's empowerment. Other movements like 'peasant unrest' and 'self-reliance' also contributed to the establishment of a 'new India'. Nehru's political career began in 1916 when he joined the Indian National Congress. From 1920 to 1947, he was a member of the Indian National Congress Working Committee. In 1947, he became the first Prime Minister of India.

## Jawaharlal Nehru

### I

#### INTRODUCTION

Nehru... was a Marxist who rejected regimentation, a socialist who was wholly committed to civil liberties, a radical with a preference for non-violence, and a world citizen who combined his international obligations with a total involvement in India, saw the necessity of self-reliance even in a shrinking world and stressed the need to adapt every ideology to the Indian condition.

S. Gopal: *The Mind of Jawaharlal Nehru* (1980)

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) was a freedom fighter and seasoned statesman of modern India. In the last phase of Indian national movement, his leadership ranked next only to Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). In 1947 when India became independent, Nehru became its first Prime Minister and retained this position till his death in 1964. Apart from his outstanding role in national and international affairs, Nehru displayed his extraordinary talent as a writer.

Nehru made a mark as a historian and political commentator. He did not produce a treatise to give a comprehensive account of his worldview. Nehru's political philosophy may be gleaned from his reflections on Indian and world history and the views expressed by him in dealing with Indian and world politics. Nehru's *Autobiography* (1936), *Glimpses of World History* (1939), *Discovery of India* (1946) and his innumerable articles, letters and speeches may be treated as the source of his political thought.

### II

#### NEHRU'S VISION OF SCIENCE

Nehru commended science and scientific temper for social reconstruction