

**Gandhi Jayanti Seminar on
Embracing the Other**

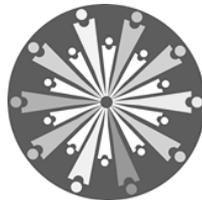
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Gandhi Jayanti Seminar on Embracing the Other

Editors

**Fr. Dr. Victor Edwin
Bilal Acikgoz
Nurdin Kaparov**

Organized by



**Indialogue Foundation
Delhi**

Excel
INDIA PUBLISHERS

EXCEL INDIA PUBLISHERS
NEW DELHI

First Impression: 2014

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Gandhi Jayanti Seminar on 'Embracing the Other'

ISBN: 978-93-83842-88-9

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Published by

EXCEL INDIA PUBLISHERS



91 A, Ground Floor
Pratik Market, Munirka, New Delhi-110067
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E-mail: publishing@grouppexcelindia.com
Web: www.grouppexcelindia.com

Typeset by

Excel Publishing Services, New Delhi-110067
E-mail: prepress@grouppexcelindia.com

Printed by

Excel Printing Universe, New Delhi-110067
E-mail: printing@grouppexcelindia.com

Organizer's Note

Dear Seminar Participants and Distinguished Guests,

As the President of the Indialogue Foundation, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all seminar participants. We are delighted and honoured to organize the National Gandhi Jayanti Seminar "**Embracing the Other**" on the occasion of the International Day of Non-Violence, 2nd October 2014, New Delhi.

We live in a conflict-ridden world. Social evils such as racism, fanaticism, favoritism and terrorism are wide spreading. In this violence soaked world, it is important for us to hold on to the teachings of Gandhiji. His teachings on peace and non-violence are relevant to the present day world.

Therefore, we the members of a number of civil society organizations in New Delhi come together to hold Gandhi Jayanti Seminar to commemorate International Day of Non-Violence. 41 scholars and peace activists contributed with their papers on this year's theme "**Embracing the Other**" in a short time. We aim to bring together students of peace to share on pressing issues of the world and to discuss the philosophies on "**Embracing the Other**".

I would like to express my special thanks to Prof. M.M. Verma, President, Interfaith Foundation India, Fr. Tom Kunnunkal S.J., President, Islamic Studies Association and Mr. Dhruva Prasad Lamichhane, National Representative, Global Peace Foundation, India for supporting us in organizing this wonderful National Gandhi Jayanti Seminar.

Specially, I would like to express my gratitude for incredible effort of Dr. Fr. Victor Edwin S.J., Lecturer (Christian-Muslim Relations), Vidyajoti College of Theology, Member, Islamic Studies Association for editing the Book of Proceedings, Mr. Nurdin Kaparov, Director Delhi Office, Indialogue Foundation and Mr. Abdulvahid Azizov, Secretary of Gandhi Jayanti Seminar, for their ardent exertion in organizing National Gandhi Jayanti Seminar "**Embracing the Other**".

I am wishing the best to all participants in the path of promoting peace and hoping to meet you again in our future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Mr. Bilal Acikgoz
President
E-mail: president@indialogue.in
Website: www.indialogue.in

About Indialogue Foundation

Indialogue Foundation is an action-oriented international organization for education, peace and development. It was founded in 2005 in New Delhi, by the imagination and fortune of a group of Turkish and Indian people inspired by sensible and spiritual thoughts of the eminent scholars and spiritual leaders of the world, to promote and to encourage international, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Through its initiatives Indialogue envisions to eliminate illiteracy, poverty and polarization which are prime causes of all social problems. Indialogue Foundation contributes to information exchange and networking on current issues and peace building initiatives through its programs, projects and proactive studies, as well as meetings and conferences. Indialogue Foundation with its four offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kolkata has organized several notable activities.

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Gandhi's Pluralistic Perspective on the Notion of 'the Other'



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Abstract—In this paper, I shall discuss Gandhi's pluralist and anti-essentialist position on the notion of 'the other'. As a matter of fact, Gandhi's philosophical thinking owes much to Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and so on besides the enlightenment rationality of the 18th & early 19th century Europe. The Anekāntavāda of Jainism, Mahākaruṇā of Buddhism, Love as one the infused virtues of Christianity and the two Rg Vedic exhortations; namely, i) Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti; and, ii) Āno bhadrah kritavo yantu visvatāh have given the profound insight to advocate pluralistic perspective on 'the Other'. Though the Absolute Reality is one but wise people call it differently. It admits of alternative approaches in terms of thought constructions and linguistic expressions. This is the basis of the emergence of 'the other'. It is proposed that let the noble thoughts come to us from 'the other(s)'. In addition, I'll bring out the discourse on purushārtha. This has been the fundamental act of philosophizing in India. It is pluralistic in its expression and can be used to resolve the apparent antinomies between self and the other, values and virtues etc. on the one hand; and, Indian and Ionian, East and West, Oriental and Occidental, etc. on the other. The ideas of European enlightenment like freedom/independence, autonomy, sovereignty, property, maturity/adulthood, public and private, tolerance, scientific rationality, secularism, end in itself, critique of religion, humanism, democracy, Nation/State, universality of moral actions, humanity as an end, etc. have also helped Gandhi to substantiate his position on 'the Other'. Though these ideas evolved and developed in Europe, yet they proliferated beyond Europe to 'other' continents and subcontinents including India. Gandhi appreciated these ideas and like a genius, he interpreted them into indigenous concepts and principles such as Truth, Simplicity, Faith, Brahmacharya, Purushārtha, Satyāgraha, Swarāj, Sarvodaya, karma, compassion, trusteeship, vegetarianism/fruitarianism and above all non-violence with the aim of attaining swarāj-victory over one's passions, lusts, greed, etc. and independence and sovereignty of the country. Out of these concepts, I'll take into account non-violence, tolerance, autonomy and dignity to develop Gandhi's pluralistic perspective on the 'other'.

Keywords: Anekāntavāda, Mahākaruṇā, Purushārtha, Non-violence, Tolerance, Autonomy and Dignity.

Notion of 'the Other': Initially the notion of the 'other' refers to Jewish religion as God's *chosen people*. According to the *Talmud (Avodah Zarah 2b)*, God offered the *Torah* to all the nations of the earth, and the Jews were the only ones who accepted it. The story goes on to say that the Jews were offered the *Torah* last, and accepted it only because God held a mountain over their heads! (In Ex. 19:17, the words generally translated as "at the foot of the mountain" literally mean "underneath the mountain"!) Another traditional story suggests that God chose the Jewish nation because they were the lowliest of nations and their success would be attributed to God's might rather than their own ability. Clearly, these are not the ideas of a people who think they are better than other nation. Judaism maintains that the righteous of all nations have a place in the world to come. This has been the majority rule since the days of the *Talmud*. Judaism generally recognizes that Christians and Moslems worship the same God that we do and those who follow the tenets of their religions can be considered righteous in the eyes of God.

The philosophic notion of 'the other' emerged in the process of the emergence and development of 'identity' which meant 'the same'. 'Identity' has various dimensions out of which culture is one of it. Culture is the one people inherit. They have either consciously adopted or uncritically accepted the culture or reflectively revised it in rare cases. Hence human beings are culturally embedded in the sense that they grow up and live within a culturally structured world and organize their lives and social relations in terms of a culturally derived system of meaning and significance. Culture¹ could be understood in the operative terms like affinity and diversity. Culture gives rise to affinity and thereby 'identity' in the spheres of language, history, geography, people, art, architecture, etc. By virtue of identity, culture creates diversity with other cultures, or 'the others'.

Culture has cognitive, connotive and normative aspects. The cognitive aspect consists of the world view, the apparent plurality with internal coherence and identity; and reflects a continuing conversation between its different traditions and strands of thought. Connotive means acting in certain ways within the culture, a way of life with meaning and significance. Normative means judging or evaluating in terms of being good, equal, just, harmonious, dignified, etc. with the view of apprehending the crisis. The cultural lineage of such concepts like identity, equality, goodness, justice, dignity, harmony, etc. got re-evaluated in terms of (personal) identity, individual right, equality, autonomy, etc. in liberalism on the one hand; and collective identity, community right, social goods, etc. in communitarianism on the other. Since there are plurality of cultures representing different versions of good life, values and convictions, it involves that plurality is the most operative term in the discourse on multiculturalism, liberalism and communitarianism. On identity, for instance, Locke holds that personal identity is a matter of *psychological continuity*. When he first tackled personal identity, he himself defined person as a 'forensic term'; we have to be able to re-identify persons in order to hold them responsible for their past actions and commitments.² Hume has apprehensions to it.³ And much of Kant's

¹Kroeber, A.L., & Klyde Kluchohn. (1952). *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, Cambridge Mass. Peabody Museum of American Archaeology. In 1952, A.L. Kroeber and Klyde Kluchohn have given 164 definitions of cultural aspects of human beings comprising of the content and the intent of culture, the universalistic character of culture, the hierarchical status of culture and the pluralistic features of culture.

²Locke, John. (1975). *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. (ed.) P. Nidditch. Oxford: Clarendon Press (original work, 2nd ed., first published 1694).

epistemology and paralogisms, which led him to his ideas about the mind and personal identity, is a response to Hume as much as to any other philosopher.⁴

Locke further came out in support of citizenship as a cementing force which creates a uniform identity from the diversity. But multiculturalism supports collective identity as a sort of differentiated citizenship which believes in different set of rights for different ethnic groups. People should be accepted as citizens with their distinct cultural identity. The purpose of citizenship is not to strengthen national sentiment but to recognize cultural diversity. Likewise multiculturalism criticizes the liberalist notion of autonomous individual by emphasizing group rights and so on.

'The other' and 'the otherness' refers to that which is alien and divergent from that which is given, such as a norm, identity, or the self. The constitutive other often denotes a different, incomprehensible self outside of one's own. The concept that the self requires 'the other' to define itself is an old one and has been expressed by many writers. Hegel was among the first to introduce the idea of the other as constituent in self-consciousness.

PLURALITY ON 'THE OTHER': JAIN ANEKANTAVADA AND KARUNA IN BUDDHISM

The Vedic exhortation of *Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti* has been the fundamental act of philosophizing/ ethicizing in India. The Reality admits of alternative approaches in terms of thought constructions and linguistic expressions. It is pluralistic in its expression. Pluralism has been expressed in many ways in the later development of Indian philosophical systems; such as in the *Vedanta* philosophy, we go from one to many; in Vallabha *Vedanta*, we go from many to one; in Sankhya and Nyaya-Vaisesika systems, we go from many to many and in Buddhism, we go from nothing, i.e. *svabhava shunya* to many. This has got its reflection in the initial characteristics of Indian society which is diverse, liberal, democratic and pluralistic in regulating and restructuring the morals, ethos and values. The pluralistic nature of Indian society is manifested in various ethnic

³Hume, D. (1978). *Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford: Clarendon Press (original work 1739); partly reprinted in Perry 1975. He apparently held the view that a past or future being *could* not be you unless he or she were then qualitatively just like you are now. That would be a highly contentious metaphysical claim. It amounts to denying that anyone can survive any change whatever: even blinking your eyes would be fatal, resulting in your ceasing to exist and being replaced with someone else. It would mean that you did not exist even a moment ago. There would be no point in asking the persistence question if this were the case.

⁴Kant, Immanuel. (1973). *Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. N.K. Smith. London, The MacMillan Press Ltd, p. 327. Kant held a functionalist view of the mind almost 200 years before functionalism was officially articulated in the 1960s by Hilary Putnam and others. For Kant, mind is complex set of abilities (functions, constitutive activity) crucial for knowledge-generating activity in spatio-temporal processing of, and in the application of concepts to sensory inputs. Cognition requires concepts as well as percepts. These functions are forms of what Kant called synthesis (and the unity in consciousness required for synthesis). In the synthetic unity of apperception, according to Kant, I am conscious of myself not as I appear to myself, not as I am in myself, but only that I think, not that I am. The 'I think' must be, Kant insists, capable of accompanying all my presentations. But the 'I think' always remains unknown and unknowable by means of the categories because it cannot as such be given in representation. If we try to apply the categories to the 'I think', such categories as 'substance', 'existence', 'person', etc., we come across a series of paralogisms.

identities, community structures, linguistic identities, different nationalities, languages and so on. In search of our local identities, we have to go into the details of our tradition. Indian tradition could be divided into two kinds; namely, the *Brāhminical* tradition and the *Shramana* tradition. The former is the textual, the written, the intellectual tradition or the *Shātriya paramparā* consisting of the *Dharma Sastras, Purusarthas, Asramas* etc. And the latter is the folk tradition, the tradition of the people or the *Lokaparamparā*. Fortunately we have had both the traditions as equally strong. However, it is the folk tradition, which has a stronger social basis. It consists of three pillars-family, community and the economy. Around these activities there developed idioms, symbols, proverbs, riddles and *sutras*. This was the corpus of knowledge.

In Jainism, in the context of *anaekāntvāda*, an individual's judgement about a thing or event need not only be valid for anyone other than the subject himself, but is also conditioned by its relationship to a point of *space* and time, and by its mode and substance. There are seven possibilities (*Saptabhaṅgī naya*) to describe an object X of the phenomenal world subject to the factors of space, time, mode, substance, etc. The seven predications must be consistent with the facts of objective reality and be based on the principles of affirmation and negation. Also, *since the third, fifth, sixth and seventh, predications involve the concept of simultaneity and nonsimultaneity* (which accounts for the object being conditioned by time), we have changed the meanings of the connectives 'and' and 'or'.⁵ In Jainism, there is pluralism to accept 'the other'.

In Buddhism, the other is appreciated with a sense of compassion. The compassion or *karunā* is understood to mean active sympathy or a willingness to bear the pain of others. In practice, *prajñā* gives rise to *karunā*, and *karunā* gives rise to *prajñā*. Truly, you can't have one without the other. They are a means to realizing enlightenment, and they are also enlightenment manifested. The Buddha taught that to realize enlightenment, a person must develop two qualities: wisdom and compassion. Wisdom and compassion are sometimes compared to two wings that work together to enable flying, or two eyes that work together to see deeply. In Buddhism, the ideal of practice is to selflessly act to alleviate suffering wherever it appears. You may argue it is impossible to eliminate suffering, and maybe it is, yet we're to respond anyway. What does being nice to others have to do with enlightenment? For one thing, it helps us realize that "individual me" and "individual you" are mistaken ideas. And as long as we're stuck in the idea of "what's in it for me?" we are not yet *wise*. It is through compassion that we become thoroughly grounded in the conventional truth and thus prepared to receive the ultimate truth. Compassion brings great warmth and kindness to both perspectives. It helps us to be flexible in our interpretation of the truth, and teaches us to give and receive help in practicing the precepts.

VIOLENCE AS DEHUMANIZING THE 'OTHER'

Before we discuss non-violence, let us try to understand what is violence? Violence could be of many kinds- individual and social, physical and psychological, structural and behavioral, economic and political, cultural and civilisational, etc. There are several variables, some explicit and others not so explicit, that qualify violence and consequently what constitutes violence becomes a matter of considerable debate and a consensual definition is more difficult to arrive at. *Oxford English*

⁵Radhakrishnan, S. 1977, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. pp. 298-308.

Dictionary offers a more restrictive definition that it is the “exercise of physical force so as to inflict injury on or damage to persons or property.” If violence, as another edition *Oxford English Dictionary* says, is “behaviour involving physical force intended to hurt, damage, or kill”, then, how about psychological violence such as verbal assault or “tongue-lashing” that has unmistakable effects on the victims. *Webster's English Dictionary* has seven distinct meanings of violence. Basically, it refers to “roughness in action”, a “physical force used so as to injure or damage.” Another meaning is “unjust use of force or power.” Yet, in another sense violence refers to “distortion of meaning”. But in every respect, violence is an act of dehumanizing the ‘other’.

Again, if violence is real, its cause must equally be real. For instance, social injustice involves a form of violence? Structural violence as distinguished from behavioral violence is an important category that has received increasing attention in recent years. Gender violence and the atrocities against the *dalits* and weaker sections of our society are examples of structural violence. Tim Jacoby stresses not only the key role of structured violence, but he also calls attention to some other nuances of violence. He writes: “Violence may thus be psychological as well as physical, it may be contained within rewards and not simply punishments, and it may be present even though someone is not hurt and there is no subject-to-object relationship. It may also emerge from non-violent intentions, be latent as well as manifest and include many of the results of the international system's normal operation. Exerted at the level of the structure and not simply the individual behaviour of aggression and warfare, violence may be regarded as present whenever damage is done to a person's potential.”⁶ It is in this context that I propose non-violence and tolerance for recognizing the ‘other’.

NON-VIOLENCE AS A PRINCIPLE FOR RECOGNIZING THE ‘OTHER’

Its sources can be traced back into Jainism, Buddhism, enlightenment rationality (with reference to ‘tolerance’) and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (with reference to Non-violent resistance). Gandhi was fully aware of all these sources. But he was the first to apply it in political field on a huge scale.⁷ Gandhi also came under some political fire for his criticism of those who attempted to achieve independence through more violent means. He understood the problems very clearly that Soviet model of revolution cannot be applied in India. His refusal to protest against the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Udham Singh and Rajguru were sources of condemnation among some parties. Gandhi explains his philosophy and way of life in his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*⁸. He was quoted as saying, (since these quotes are self explanatory, I'll put them as they are without further analysis):

“When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall—think of it, always.”

⁶Jacoby, T., (2008), *Understanding Conflict and Violence: Theoretical and Interdisciplinary Approaches*, London, Routledge, p. 49.

⁷http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/mahatma_Gandhi, retrieved on 2008.03.27.

⁸Gandhi, M.K. *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth* (available at wikisource) (1929) ISBN 0-8070-5909-9, *Gandhi, Rajmohan (1990). Patel: A Life. Navajivan Publishing House.* ISBN 81-7229-138-8.

"What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans, and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty and democracy?"

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

"There are many causes that I am prepared to die for but no causes that I am prepared to kill for."⁹

In applying these principles, Gandhi did not balk from taking them to their most logical extremes in envisioning a world where even government, police and armies were nonviolent. The quotations below are from the book "For Pacifists."

The science of war leads one to dictatorship, pure and simple. The science of non-violence alone can lead one to pure democracy...Power based on love is thousand times more effective and permanent than power derived from fear of punishment... It is a blasphemy to say non-violence can be practiced only by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals...The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence...A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy

I have conceded that even in a non-violent state a police force may be necessary...Police ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. The people will instinctively render them every help and through mutual cooperation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances...Violent quarrels between labor and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a non-violent state because the influence of the non-violent majority will be great as to respect the principle elements in society. Similarly, there will be no room for communal disturbances....

A non-violent army acts unlike armed men, as well in times of peace as in times of disturbances. Theirs will be the duty of bringing warring communities together, carrying peace propaganda, engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in touch with every single person in their parish or division. Such an army should be ready to cope with any emergency, and in order to still the frenzy of mobs should risk their lives in numbers sufficient for that purpose. ...*Satyagraha* (truth-force) brigades can be organized in every village and every block of buildings in the cities. [If the non-violent society is attacked from without] there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession, but non-cooperate with the aggressor...prefer death to submission. The second way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been trained in the non-violent way...The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery...A nation or group which has made non-violence its final policy cannot be subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb...The level of non-violence in that nation, if that even happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect."¹⁰

"*Satyagraha*" literally means holding to truth. In practice, it is nonviolent action to resolve social as well as individual conflicts. It may take a number of forms such as noncooperation, civil

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

disobedience and fasting, depending upon the nature of the conflict situation. Gandhi has not prescribed a set theory to go by, and he has repeatedly emphasized that his techniques are essentially experimental in character repeatedly emphasized that his techniques are essentially experimental in character. The basic assumption underlying *satyagraha* is that it is possible to generate extensive social action by nonviolent means and that this action helps to transform the adversary nonviolently when the cause is just. The social action engendered by nonviolent techniques is far superior to the action involving violent means, because in the latter case the solution is attended with terrifying consequences that are often beyond the control of the acting agent. Gandhi does not, however, explicitly state how nonviolent action brings this miraculous transformation he opponent, but the actual operation of *satyagraha*, whatever maybe its mysterious force, would seem to involve delicate and humane modes of communication. However, Gandhi was aware that this level of nonviolence required incredible faith and courage, which he realized not everyone possessed. He therefore advised that everyone need not keep to nonviolence, especially if it were used as a cover for cowardice. Non-violence is not only morally superior to violence but that it is also functionally more effective as a force and instrument of social action for embracing the 'other'. I'll summarize with Gandhi's assertion that "violence cannot remain unaffected before non-violence."¹¹

TOLERANCE AS ANOTHER PRINCIPLE FOR RECOGNIZING THE 'OTHER'

(derived etymologically from Latin *tolero* meaning 'to suffer') is the practice of suffering by imposing certain restraints. This suffering is caused by the competition in the same social space. There may be reason for approving/disapproving certain practices. If P is reasonable, ~P is unreasonable. This could be puzzling and the puzzle is that I have reason to value X, which does not mean that others will have the same good reason to value X. It is this process that gives rise to disagreement which in turn prepares ground for tolerance. In other words, if disagreement is reasonable, it will give rise to tolerance. There are paradigm cases of tolerance in Jainism, Buddhism and even in Sikhism in India and in the philosophy of European Enlightenment.

AUTONOMY AND DIGNITY AS THE PRINCIPLES FOR RECOGNIZING THE 'OTHER'

In the December 1784 publication of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (Berlin Monthly), edited by Friedrich Gedike and Johann Erich Biester, replied to the question posed a year earlier by the Reverend Johann Friedrich Zöllner, who was also an official in the Russian government. Zöllner's question was addressed to a broad intellectual public, in reply to Biester's essay entitled: "Proposal, not to engage the clergy any longer when marriages are conducted" (April 1783) and a number of leading intellectuals replied with essays, of which Kant's is the most famous and has had the most impact. Kant's opening paragraph of the essay is a much-cited definition of a lack of Enlightenment as people's inability to think for themselves due not to their lack of intellect, but lack of courage.

¹¹Gandhi, M.K., (2001) *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Second Revised Edition, New Delhi, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, Vol.97, p. 192.

It was Kant, one of its earliest prophets, who asked that question and answered it in his article in December 1784, entitled "Answer to the Question: What is the Enlightenment"?

Kant's answer is: "Enlightenment is the coming out of man from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the incapacity to serve one's own understanding without direction (*Leitung*) from another. This immaturity is self-imposed; Reason itself languishes, not because it lacks understanding; what it lacks is resolution and courage; it is unwilling to serve itself (*Sapere Aude ! Hebe Mut*). Take courage to serve your own understanding! This is therefore the Motto (*Walspruch*) of the Enlightenment."¹² It is in this rather general framework of the Enlightenment rationality that the concept of tolerance has evolved and it gets its elaborations in the categorical imperatives. Until enlightenment, the integrating intellectual principle was the belief in God. It was in theology that all human problems in experience were integrated. Now the enlightenment threw out that integrating principle - the religion as the matrix of thought process. In that place enlightenment put the human reason which could integrate everything. This was the basic change which European enlightenment brought. I myself do not subscribe to that theology as integrating element. But once you subscribe to enlightenment reason, you find that the integrating principle does not fully work. So you divide 'experience' into three compartments - science, ethics and art. In the new enlightenment thinking, technically it is human reason that reconciles the three. But that integration is very flimsy. It does not have adequate foundation. Immanuel Kant particularly was the one who was trying to distinguish between three kinds of reason-pure reason, practical reason and the judgement. In the one, you know the things (phenomena); in the other, you know how to act; in the third, you have to discern what is good. By making this separation, he held on the 'idea of reason' which was already divided in three compartments. European enlightenment has this problem that 'reason' as such is not able to fulfill the task of integrating everything. But the enlightenment was able to assert on the 'autonomy' and 'adulthood' (maturity). According to the evolutionary ideology, which was going through that time, humanity has been developing into three phases; one is the religious stage, the second stage is metaphysics. These two stages are the stages of 'immaturity' of humanity. Humanity becomes 'mature' when its knowledge becomes 'scientific' which is the third stage. Science is the mature form of human dealing with reality. Both religion and metaphysics belong to the 'childhood' of humanity. Maturity means repudiating religion and metaphysics.

Kant is the first philosopher who has tried to give a definition of *how* a moral action *ought* to be in conformity with the Enlightenment rationality. These are the *Principles* of human actions such as 'universality', 'end in itself' and 'kingdom of ends.'¹³ These principles could be prescribed to any study of morality anywhere in which human dignity and autonomy is manifested. There have been certain attempts to define moral issues in terms of the constitution of nationality, ethnic, cultural and religious identities, etc. But if we wish to define morality in the most general sense of the terms inclusive of all specificities, Kant's categorical imperative is the only principle that could be taken into account. Kant has tried to give a definition of *how* a moral action *ought* to

¹²Kant, *Was ist Aufklärung: Thesen und Definitionen*, Reclam, Stuttgart, 1986, p. 9. (Translations mine).

¹³Paton, H.J. *The Moral Law: Kant's Groundwork of Metaphysics of Morals*, London, Hutchinson University Library, 1969, p.67. Also please see Singh, R.P., *Dialectic of Reason*, New Delhi, Intellectual Publishing House, 1995.

be *what* a moral action ought to be. These are the *Principles* of human actions which could be regarded as global such as 'universality', 'end in itself' and 'kingdom of ends.' These principles could be prescribed to humanity as a whole in terms maxims of the categorical imperative. These maxims, however, cannot be practiced, exemplified or illustrated by any action. These are simply formal principles without any content and specification. In contrast to Kantian principles, Gandhi's principles have practical possibilities.

Morals and conceptions of good are said to be relative to cultures, even large cultural identities have now disintegrated into smaller ones- cultural pluralism. Moral theories still oscillate between Utilitarianism in so far as public policy, decisions of the emerging democracies are concerned, and Kantianism, in so far as individual moral life and principles are concerned. Both of these alternatives, however appealing, are now seen to have a moral dilemma between personal and the public morality that cannot be resolved. More attractive today are Aristotelian *Ethics* expanded to include many present-day virtues and a communitarian ethics, which goes back to a sort of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit* as the basis of one's moral conceptions. It is here that the above moral dilemma can be resolved because both of these allow for pluralism and reject grand narratives. Pluralism and tolerance are the ethos of globalization. On the one hand, there are the pluralities of Nation- States, of world-religions, of large cultural, ethnic, linguistic groups, with numerous internal differences; on the other hand, there is an overwhelming sense of One World i.e. the world coming together through technology. The idea of a global village, as an ideal, is widely valued.

For Indian minds, puzzled about the notion of 'other', I will humbly recommend a change of perspective. Let us leave the moral issues raised by Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and even Marx, get out of the enlightenment frame of mind and go to the *Upanishads*¹⁴. There is no other way of detoxifying ourselves from the fumes of enlightenment rationality because the western way is not the only way of thinking and experiencing, let us as Indians emerge ourselves in our own rich Indian heritage, especially before its breaking up into Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu- for example, the Samkhya-Yoga heritage common to all three traditions-the great philosophical perspective that undergrads all *Upanisadic, Vedic, Buddhist, or Jaina* thought and experience. Keep your painfully acquired critical rationality from Kant and Hegel, but do get not tyrannized by it. Stay critical, but do not reject out of hand what seems strange at first. Expose yourself without hesitation to a system of thought and experience, which has endured for millennia and awarded us with freedom, autonomy, dignity and sovereignty. It is in this context that I have attempted to place Gandhi's non-violence and tolerance as the principle of embracing the 'other' with regard for pluralistic value systems without violation of human rights, without marginalizing local identities, or the local other.

¹⁴Robert E. Hume, (2002) *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, London, Oxford University Press, p. 297.

Embracing the Other in Gandhi's Teachings



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Abstracts—*‘Embracing the other’ is one of the greatest challenges for every human being, particularly so in the present century that is marked by divisiveness in the name of religion, economic disparity, ideology, class, caste and gender. It is a fact we human beings we are genetically wired to ‘the other’ where ‘the other’ is the opposite of ‘the same’. Where there is an ‘I’, there is a ‘you’ and where there is an ‘I’ and a ‘You’ there is a conflict. The ‘I’ is always in conflict with the ‘You’ as no two human beings are alike. How do we chart a new path that resolves this clash between ‘I’ and ‘You’ or between ‘We’ and ‘the other’-in short how to embrace ‘the other’. The article draws upon Gandhiji’s sayings to show that through mutual trust, love and faith in humanity, and through genuine dialogue it is possible to accept, respect and embrace others and cultivate humanity.*

Keywords: *“Other”, “I-Thou Relationship”, “freedom and Responsibility”, “vasudeva Kutumbhakam”*

INTRODUCTION

What do we mean by 'the other'? 'The other' is a utility word that can be used as an adjective, as a noun, as a pronoun and as an adverb. As an adjective it means "something different from that or those implied or specified." It refers to something being not of the same kind or having a different quality. When used as a noun it refers to a different person or a different thing or to the remaining ones left after the departure of several other members – For example "after she left, the others resumed their discussion".

As a pronoun it means "a different or an additional person For example, "we will get someone or other to replace him". Finally as an adverb, it means "in another way"– For example, "the great tennis player performed other than perfectly".

The core meaning of 'the other' running through all these usages is "*not the same one or ones already mentioned or implied*". All through life at different times, in different situations, we engage with the other both internally and externally. When the self struggles with conflicting ideas, the engagement with the other becomes a part of the self. On other occasions, when the self is challenged externally with regard to ideas, ideologies, perspectives and decisions, the other is seen as apart from the self-as being different from or alien to the self. Thus the other is either a part of the self or is apart from the self.

This means that as human beings we are genetically wired to 'the other' where 'the other' is the opposite of 'the same'. Where there is an 'I', there is a 'you' and where there is an 'I' and a 'You' there is a conflict. The 'I' is always in conflict with the 'You' as no two human beings are alike. When the 'I' gets extended to form groups that band together on different lines such as class, caste, religion, nation, ideology etc, the 'You' is present as the opposing 'other' resulting in conflicts among people with their allegiance to different faiths and beliefs. All major conflicts arise out of the clash with 'the other' and *'embracing the other' is one of the greatest challenges for every human being.*

Conflicts in contemporary times span a wide range of issues. Conflict ensues from a state of opposition between persons, ideas or interests. Given the fact that there is no single view or interest that is common among diverse people belonging to different nations, cultures, religions and gender, conflict cannot be wished away. Since we have been gifted with the faculty to think and articulate our individual views, opinions and interests, it is not an exaggeration to say that we are genetically tied to the other and thence to conflict.

The concept of the other assumes urgency in the 21st century in the context of the unprecedented violence and unrest affecting different parts of the globe and severely impacting civil societies and humanity at large. The turn of the New Millennium saw a group of suicide bombers bang up the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York and snuff out three thousand innocent lives besides inflicting a disastrous fall-out on American economy and the global markets. It brought to the fore the fatal animosity between two groups-one founded on religious fundamentalism and the other founded on material civilization. Benjamin Barber refers to this as "Jihad Vs McWorld". India had also witnessed suicide killing ten years earlier when the nation's ex-Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a female suicide bomber. The 7/7 bombings in London in 2005, four years after 9/11, and the 26/11 attack on the iconic Taj hotel in Mumbai

in 2008 were a repeat of suicide-cum-terrorist bombing that had gained mindless acceptance among uninitiated minds as the only means to assert one's faith or ideology or doctrine against the 'others' who did not subscribe to it. In the present century this method of killing oneself in the process of killing hundreds of anonymous victims (who have no personal or collective animosity against the suicide bomber) has become a heinous and reprehensible tool in the hands of naïve, artless and unsuspecting minds, brainwashed to believe in killing and dying for a specious cause. India has in recent years seen the rise of Naxalite-Maoist insurgency killing hundreds of people annually. There are many parts of the globe today such as Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, Gaza, Ukraine etc., that experience violence, bloodshed and barbaric savagery-seemingly a throwback to the primitive ages and to the unleashing of primitive passions to settle scores with the opposing groups. The only difference in today's encounter is the striking use of fatally superior weapons often labeled as WMD or weapons of mass destruction. This is what Sartre meant when he said: "hell is other people". Sartre said this in the context of three conclusions he had arrived at:

- Human beings are inextricably linked together.
- Human existence is intertwined with other people.
- When one cannot relate to the others, existence becomes hell.

Can we allow our existence to be hell? Can there be a halt to inhuman barbarity that we see all around? Can innocent minds be restrained from acts of violence and inhumanity against 'the other' on account of fallacious reasoning, unsound arguments and delusory dogmas? Can the future generation be educated to explode the myth of fraudulent and erroneous beliefs so that humanity is spared the blushes of primitivism? The only answer to halt this pernicious spread of hatred and violence and to resolve the conflicts that arise out of a clash of with 'the other' on religious, social and political issues is to cultivate a catholic, liberal and all inclusive views and beliefs nurtured by tolerance and broad-mindedness, empathy and magnanimity-in short to *cultivate humanity*.

How do we chart a new path that resolves this clash between 'I' and 'You' or between 'We' and 'the other'-in short how to embrace 'the other'. It is axiomatic to affirm the fact that there is no new value on earth to be discovered. Value is nothing but the meaning we give to life. Human has to create the values that make him/her. Everyone has to make his/her choice and willing to accept responsibility for the way that choice will impact others. This is exercise both of *freedom and responsibility*. To live means to be involved in a situation in which one must make a choice ethically, responsibly and without arbitrariness. Sartre says: "In choosing ethics, he makes himself" and explains:

"The only way of creating a human community is to accept the human condition-that we exist, that we must work, that we are mortal, that we are involved, that we must choose, and that in choosing we invent ourselves and take full responsibility."

These words knit well, but when one tries to follow them, they fall apart. It is here that we have to take lessons from the lives of great men and women who have proved that it is possible to make a choice without shirking responsibility-a choice that helps us to embrace others. Gandhiji

was a living example who by his words and actions made his choice that was an ambrosial mixture of courage with conviction, religion with reason, strength with forgiveness, tolerance with firmness, openness with rootedness and above all love with compassion. Gandhi led nationwide campaigns for easing poverty, expanding women's rights, building religious and ethnic amity, ending untouchability and above all for achieving *Swaraj* or self-rule. In this process he eschewed violence and hatred.

In the peaceful struggle he led— *not against the British, but against the British rule*,-he said: "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent. Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding." He believed in the *Swaraj* and said "All compromise is based on give and take, but there can be no give and take on fundamentals. Any compromise on mere fundamentals is surrender." The fundamentals that he believed in were morality and non-violence. This gave him enormous moral strength which he said was far superior to the strength derived from physical capacity. His strength came from his indomitable will-the will to achieve one's legitimate goal through ethical means. He said "Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will." The will to achieve self rule or *Swaraj* was his noblest and highest form of selfishness for freeing his countrymen from an alien rule. His values are the products of his will to moral power that made him a man out of the welter of men.

Gandhi derived his sustenance from his faith in humanity. "You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty." This is the message that we in the 21st century should understand and follow. A few insane terrorists cannot make the whole of humanity evil. It is wrong to castigate a whole religion or community for the sins of a few radicals who employ terror as a political and religious weapon. The uniqueness of Gandhiji lay in his ability to marshal the goodness of humanity and make it a potent force to counter a small minority of terrorists. He said: "I claim that human mind or human society is not divided into watertight compartments called social, political and religious. All act and react upon one another." Gandhi's message is not just one of tolerance towards others who are different from us but one of accepting and respecting the others as well as their ideas and ideologies.

Gandhiji stood like a colossus who had the capacity to give and receive strength and whose words and action strongly influenced the freedom movement. He had no hatred even for the few misguided groups that took to violence. He said: The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong." He never wanted anyone or any group or any nation to remake the world in the way they believed in, because the beauty and splendour of the world lie in its pluralism. The greatness of human beings, he said, did not lie in reshaping the world as according to their perception, but in their ability to remake themselves according to the demands of the world. The best way to accept 'the other' even if the other is different in all respects is through love and empathy. He spoke about the power of love. " Power based on love," he said, "is a thousand times more effective and permanent then the one derived from fear of punishment." He believed in the "I and the "You" for the two are the two sides of the same coin. Coming 2000 years after Jesus, Gandhi admired Christianity and its teachings whose cardinal principle is "love thy neighbor". Embracing the Other is possible if we learn to accept fellow humanity. In *Hitopadesha*, it is said:

"Ayam Nijah paro veti gananaa laghuchetasaam udaaracharitaam tu vasudeva kutumbakam" (The thought that one person is related to me and another is not is that of the narrow minded. For the broadminded, however, the whole world is one family) This concept of Vasudeva Kutumbakam is what Gandhiji affirmed all through his life and this, he felt could be possible if we accept, respect and love our fellow beings.

I will be false to myself and to you all if I do not say what my young nephew and niece told me when I was attempting to write this paper. They are young in their late teens reaching adulthood in the next couple of years. They were skeptical about the power of love in the present world where individualism, materialism, selfishness, fundamentalism, greed and violence dominate, where obedience to authority overrules obedience to one's instinctive responses, where violence cannot be countered by non violence, where all relationships between I and you are impersonal relationships that hinge upon mutual benefits that accrue from it and where 'embracing the other' is more a slogan than a reality. Though initially devastated, I understood the validity of their doubt and explained to them that I-thou relationship should be based on mutual trust and love. Marriage is an exemplary bond between two individuals. Through marriage one enters into relationship with otherness, experiencing its response. "Real marriage leads to vital acknowledgement of many faced otherness-even in the contradiction and the conflict with it." (Martin Buber) In a similar way I and others who I meet in different situations are also interwoven and this is the basic structure of the body politic. In accepting otherness, I-thou relationship gets mutual trust. One of the best ways of generating trust is through dialogue. It is in the dialogue that we can open ourselves to the otherness of the persons we meet and interact at different phases of our lives. In place of the present day dialogues with AK47 rifles, we have to enter into genuine dialogue with the other or others in which each one of us, the participants keep in mind the presence of the other or others and turn to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relationship between them and us. This means seeing the other as not oneself, but as someone different but nevertheless communicating with him. This also means confirming and acknowledging the other even while differing from him. It is this acknowledgement of the other as an authentic human being, that develops trust and love.

I ended my dialogue with the two youngpersons with a quotation from Soren Kierkegaard, the 19th century Danish philosopher who wrote in his Works of Love:

"There are a you and an I, and there is no mine and yours! For without a you and an I, there is no love, and with mine and yours there is no love but "mine" and "yours" (these possessive pronouns) are, of course, formed from a "you" and an "I" and as a consequence seem obliged to be present wherever there are a you and an I. This is indeed the case everywhere, but not in love, which is a revolution from the ground up. The more profound the revolution, the more completely the distinction "mine and yours" disappears, and the more perfect is the love."

Gandhi's message is his own life that nurtured and preserved the bond of love and trust among all fellow beings. In the wake of increased consciousness of the human potential for destructiveness, Gandhi has charted a new path towards global community. His life is his message and the message he has left as his legacy is to embrace the other to cultivate humanity.

Global Peace Values & Peace Education for Peace Building: Gandhian's Thought



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Abstract—*The world has been transformed into a global village. Globalization is having a major impact not only on the business world but also on the whole humanity. Global recession, Global warming, climate change, poverty, conflict and violence are challenges that have dominated the first decade of the 21st century.*

At the beginning of the 21st century, our planet is in severe danger. The escalation of terrorism, culminating in the September Eleven attacks on the World Trade Centre New York, USA and Washington, and of counter-terrorism in many parts of the world, are interdependent links in a chain of growing globalization of violence and of violent globalization.

Human values are eroding at a very fast rate resulting in a decline in the quality of life of the people. The Gandhian strategy is the combination of truth, Love, non- violence, selfless service and cooperation. At the dawn of the new millennium, what is required most is 'Peace values & Education for conflict resolution & Peace building' in present age of globalization. Gandhi said that "There is no god higher than truth." According to Gandhi's thoughts, non- violence is ultimate solution of every kind of problem in the world.

The paper on "Global Peace Values & Peace Education for Peace Building: Gandhian's thought" is based on Philosophy & teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.

The main objectives of the Paper are to explore: How Peace Education can best contribute to peace building for global civil society? What are the Values, Skills & attitudes are required for Peace Education for developing global culture of Peace & dialogue for Sustainable future?

Keywords: *"Peace Education, Global Peace Values, Gandhian Thought, Peace-building*

INTRODUCTION

The world has been transformed into a global village. Globalization is having a major impact not only on the business world but also on the whole humanity. Global recession, Global warming, climate change, poverty, conflict and violence are challenges that have dominated the first decade of the 21st century.

We have built a society, which is violent & explosive. We are living in extremely explosive times where the context of human life is changing every moment. Our society is crumbling; the wave of destruction is constantly taking over the way of life. The ecological crisis, population increase with increasing poverty, hunger & violence, economically unbalanced world, arm race & expenditure on armament are facing man to think & face the realities of destruction of humanity.

This Oct. 2 marks the 145th anniversary of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's birth. And although the Mahatma (Great Soul), is acknowledged worldwide as one of the outstanding moral and political thinkers of our time, his approach to economics has been viewed largely in the somewhat limited context of his objections to machinery, advocacy of village industries and boycott of foreign goods. However, closer inspection of his writings reveals not only that his ideas on economics are a part of his world-view and a work in progress subject to change, but also that there is much for present-day education system, economic system & social welfare for the humanity in 21st century.

The main objectives of the Paper on "Global Peace Values & Peace Education for Peace Building: Gandhian's thought" are two folds:

1. Creating social awareness for peace building & promoting Global Culture of Peace & dialogue through Peace Education;
2. Developing a Peaceful & Harmonious society by cultivating universal Global Peace values: Respect. Cooperation & 'Embracing the other' for world peace & human unity.

My presentation is divided into three parts:

- Part-I: Introduction–Global Challenges in 21st Century & Philosophy of Education.
- Part-II: Culture of violence & Culture of Peace; Global Peace values for Social Transformation & global transformation in 21st Century.
- Part-III: Peace Education & Gandhian's Thought; 'Shanti Chakra'-Eight Global Values for Peace & Harmony.

CULTURE OF VIOLENCE

The world has witnessed dramatic changes in the Twentieth Century. Humanity is facing a terrible challenge of its own existence. The present world is faced with many urgent problems–such as political, economic, social and cultural problems. The whole human life is in a state of turmoil because modern civilization is based on violence. Our modern society is driven by a culture of violence while the whole of human life is in a state of turmoil.

We are living in a violent consciousness because our modern civilization is based on violence. There are constant repetitions of wars; the ceaseless conflict between classes, between peoples; the awful economic and social inequality; the gap between the rich and poor, and between the developed and developing countries.

ACCORDING TO HINDU PHILOSOPHY

Violence in thoughts creates violence in action. Hindu's strongly believe in karma's philosophy and reincarnation. They full well know that any thought, feeling or action sent out from them to another will return to them through yet another in equal or amplified velocity.. To do harm to others is to do harm to oneself. You are he whom you intend to kill. You are he whom you intend to dominate. We corrupt ourselves as soon as we intend to corrupt others. We kill ourselves as soon as we intend to kill others. Therefore, according to Indian philosophy *Ahimsa is higher consciousness i.e. Peace Consciousness and Himsa means Violence, hurtfulness, is lower consciousness i.e. violent consciousness.*

Mahatma Gandhi was against any form of violence, exploitation and injustice. According to him, evils must be opposed at any cost. But he insisted that the weapons must be non violent and moral ones.

The present day cycle is known as **cycle of violence** where violence, war and poverty are cumulatively growing and the social order is known as '**violent social order**'

One of the major challenges is that of stopping the vicious circle of armed and structural violence. Another is that of diminishing the greatest injustices in the world by giving priority to the basic needs of the poorest and weakest, today almost one billion. A third major one is to further develop peaceful and non-violent means of change.

Peace is not a static end-state; it is a dynamically on-going process, as Mahatma Gandhi said, "*There is no way to peace, peace is the way.*"

To meet these challenges of 21st century & to save the humanity from further destruction we have to change our attitude from '*Culture of violence*' to '*Culture of Peace*'; through Peace Values & Peace Education for saving the humanity & Earth planet

CULTURE OF PEACE & PEACE VALUES?

The world is looking for a Non-Violent Global Sustainable Society and people in the world wants Freedom from Hunger & Poverty, freedom from Crimes & Violence, Freedom from diseases and freedom from wars conflicts. The world of tomorrow cannot be tamed by the 'Culture of violence' but can be tamed only through the 'Culture of Peace i.e. peace consciousness. Current world conditions necessitate the urgency for 'Culture of Peace and Peace values for social transformation & global transformation..

As we are living in culture of violence & hatred has created division of humanity, tremendous injustices and inequities thrive in our society, and it is important for us to constantly question what is and what can be. We must awaken ourselves and address the problems of our time, to develop strategies for the elimination of obstacles to a fuller humanity, for liberation.

For the realization of a culture of peace, global Peace values are required for creating a Global nonviolent Society.

Peace Consciousness is the pure consciousness in which spirit predominates & matter is playing a secondary part, the result will be joy, peace, & harmony. In Eastern civilization focus is on the change the behavior of individual (self), the goal was to change the state of consciousness of the individual.

THE CALL FOR VALUES

The call for values is currently echoing throughout every land, as educators, parents and more and more children are increasingly concerned about and affected by violence, growing social problems, the lack of respect for each other and the world around them, and the lack of social cohesion. World leaders struggle with a myriad of problems. Educators are, therefore, once again being asked to address problems, which have arisen within their societies.

As UNESCO's Commission, headed by Jacques Delors, reports in Learning: The Treasure Within, "In confronting the many challenges that the future holds in store, humankind sees in education an indispensable asset in its attempt to attain the ideals of peace, freedom and social justice. The Commission does not see education as a miracle cure or a magic formula opening the door to a world in which all ideals will be attained, but as one of the principal means available to foster a deeper and more harmonious form of human development and thereby to reduce poverty, exclusion, ignorance, oppression and war."

LIVING VALUES

An Educational Program (LVEP) is a values education program. It offers a variety of experiential values activities and practical methodologies to teachers and facilitators to enable children and young adults to explore and develop 12 key universal values: Cooperation, Freedom, Happiness, Honesty, Humility, Love, Peace, Respect, Responsibility, Simplicity, Tolerance, and Unity.

As we move into the 21st century, the search for ways to improve the quality of education is global. One area of focus has been that of values, attitudes, and behavior and how to develop these aspects of character in a positive and productive way:

- How do we empower individuals to choose their own set of values?
- What kind of specialized training is necessary for educators to integrate values into existing programs?
- How can values-based education prepare students for lifelong learning in their communities?

*'Shanti Chakra'-A Peace Journey
'From Culture of violence to Culture of Peace.'*

PEACE AND HARMONY

The use of popular English word peace can be found in words like Pax [Vulgate], Eirene [Greek] and Shalom [Hebrew]. Besides wishing harmony [a word derived from harmonia of Greek to denote a state of accord, concord, friendliness and unity] in day-to-day human practices at individual and social levels, the urge for a situation free from conflicts and struggles is desired here. Generally, a situation free from tension, struggle, dispute or conflict, particularly in socio-economic spheres, is considered the state of peace in this context.

Peace is not just the absence of war. Peace is a way of life.

Peace, People, and Planet all are interconnected and interdependent. Peace is a balance, a state of mind in which we feel good about our lives, our Families, our friends, our communities, our future, and ourselves.

Peace is about people-how we handle problems and how we get along with others? Peace is about community -- about working together, encouraging each other, helping each other to live better, more fulfilling lives. Peace is about the planet--how to save & protect the planet?

Peace is a journey of transformation from Culture of violence to Culture of Peace through Peace Education.

What is 'Shanti Chakra'-(Wheel of Peace)?

The '*Chakra*' is the Sanskrit word for "Wheel". The '*Chakra* (Wheel)' is the symbol of Life and "*Shanti Chakra* is Wheel of Peace.

'Shanti Chakra'-Eight Global Values for Peace & Harmony

The "Chakra (Wheel)" is the Symbol of Life. The "Spokes of the wheel" symbolizes the "Pathways to Peace". There are eight spokes of the Wheel of Peace, which represents.

Eight Global Values for Peace & Harmony:

1. Tolerance
2. Forgiveness
3. Cooperation & Respect
4. Love & Compassion
5. Purity
6. Truth & Intuition
7. Peace
8. Unity

PEACE EDUCATION & GANDHIAN'S THOUGHT

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

*"By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man-body, mind and spirit.
Literacy is not the end of education or even the beginning."*

—Said M.K. Gandhi [Harijan: July 31, 1937]

Gandhiji regarded education as the light of life and the very source from which was created an awareness of oneness. Gandhi believed that the universality of religion can best be realized through the universalization of education, and that such universalization was the spring board for national integration

PEACE EDUCATION

'Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men [and women] that the defenses of peace must be constructed.'

—Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution

'Peace Education is a living, dynamic organism, and as much as life itself is education, education must be living. This necessitates the transformation of anesthetized and oppressive classrooms into dynamic, participatory spaces of sharing and creating knowledge.'

What are the Goals of Peace Education?

In her book "Comprehensive Peace Education: Educating for Global Responsibility," Betty Reardon states that the overarching purpose of Peace Education is to "promote the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transform the present human condition by changing the social structures and the patterns of thought that have created it."

In essence, the goal of peace education can be seen as the development of certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes in learners and teachers.

Knowledge and exploration of: Human Rights, Environment, Structural Violence, Justice, Power, Freedom, Participation, and Human Welfare

Skills in: nonviolence, the ability to negotiate, compromise, assess personal feelings and the feelings of others, conflict resolution, listening, and communication. Attitudes or Values relating to: Empathy, Respect for Self, Others, and the Environment, Caring and Awareness, and Tolerance.

Education as Peace Building

In the 21st century, people everywhere talk about money and material value. That is also important. Material wealth provides physical comfort. Mental comfort is possible only by faith, he said. "A disturbed mind is very bad for health, while a healthy mind and health body go together. Material wealth alone will not bring happiness," the spiritual leader H.H. Dalai Lama said.

Peace education includes the cultivation of peace building skills (e.g. dialogue, mediation, artistic endeavors). Peace educators, then, teach the values of respect, understanding, and nonviolence, present skills for analyzing international conflict, educate for alternative security. There are three levels of Peace building for developing global society:

1. Peace building at individual level.
2. Peace building at community level for developing peaceful communities.
3. Peace building for developing global society.

The individual level relates to person-centered awareness of the self (i.e. body, mind, emotions, and spirit), whereas the community level refers to interpersonal relations (i.e. trust, openness, and interdependence), and the global level concerns cultural and environmental consciousness (Montessori 1949).

—Montessori, M. 1949. *Education and peace*. Oxford, England: CLIO, 1995

EDUCATION AS SERVICE TO HUMANITY

Mahatma Gandhi believes that the “True education lies in serving others, oblige them without the least feeling of one-uppishness. The more mature you grow, the more you will realise this. A great deal of religious obligations on us are fulfilled when we nurse the sick”. Letter to Ramdas Gandhi (The Making of the Mahatma, p. 97).

Children must be inspired to contribute to the betterment of the world. By taking care of the environment or the needy, for example, children gain additional confidence and motivation that a classroom setting alone cannot provide. Eventually, through such an education a man becomes a fruitful and productive.

Thus, peace education as a practice and philosophy refers to matching complementary elements between education and society, where the social purposes (i.e. why teach), content (i.e. what to teach), and pedagogy (i.e. how to teach) of the educative process are conducive to fostering peace.

CHOOSING NON VIOLENCE IN THE 21st CENTURY

The Twentieth Century has been recorded as the most violent in the history of humankind, conflict will always be with us, and in the Twenty First Century we must break the pattern, and learn the skills required to solve conflict nonviolently.

India has great heritage. There is harmony among different religious traditions. India is a land where people of different religious faiths can live peacefully and harmoniously here. India's tradition is very relevant in today's world," he said.

For thousands of years, India carried the message of 'Ahimsa' which was relevant even today, he said, adding, "we should ourselves create inner peace by practicing love and compassion in daily life."

AHIMSA-THE CULTURE OF NON-VIOLENCE: RELEVANCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

GANDHIAN'S NON-VIOLENCE AS RELIGIOUS FORCE

Gandhi devoted himself wholeheartedly to nonviolence as the indivisible part of Truth, which he identifies and adores as God. He followed the principle of Nonviolence as a great religious force because it enables everyone to unfold the invaluable divinity in him as best a way as possible.

As per Mahatma Gandhi, Non-violence is characterized as *Truth Force*, which he also characterizes as *Soul-force*. It is this force, which, as he strongly believes and advocates, bring about endless revolution both within and outside humanity.

DEVELOPING NONVIOLENT SOCIETY

We need to examine the idea of moving away from violence and toward the practice of nonviolence and give serious consideration to the practicality of achieving a nonviolent society.

All around the world people are being asked to reflect on the most important of all human values: compassion, universal responsibility, tolerance and understanding. The time has come to look into our soul for profound change in our attitude & consciousness for developing nonviolent society. We should look underneath these qualities and notice the role of the individual in social transformation, the relationship between the human mind and human action, and the urgency in a world of threat and fear to move toward a higher achievement. Developing a nonviolent mind, is not only possible, but becomes an essential ingredient in moving urgently toward the achievement of peace on a worldwide scale. Several understandings will support these ideas: first, it is important to notice that violence doesn't seep through the air conditioning system; it begins in the mind of people. It can be seen in each one of us in our thought, speech and physical action.

GLOBAL PEACE & ONENESS OF HUMANITY

The basis for Global Peace is self-transformation and self-transformation leads to world transformation. When we convince the people and the nations of the world to make peace on earth our priority and shared goal, we will create a culture of peace, and living peacefully will become the most natural way to live. The following are the five Principle creating Global Peace & Oneness of Humanity.

- Principle of Purity.
- Principle of Understanding.
- Principle of Forgiveness.
- Principle of Tolerance.
- Principle of Love.

PEACE MODEL FOR SELF TRANSFORMATION & DEVELOPING GLOBAL NONVIOLENT SOCIETY

P-BE PURE & TRUTHFUL IN MIND

Purity in Thoughts, Communications & Actions for peace & harmony. According to Gandhian thought, nothing was more sacred than truth and non- violence. Originally he believed that God is Truth. Later he changed this a little and maintained that Truth is God.

E-Education for Peace & Harmony: To save the humanity & Earth planet.

A-Action for Peace building: Take Actions⁴ Peace & harmony: Without action you aren't going anywhere. You have to take action and translate that knowledge (Wisdom) into results and building peaceful society.

C-Be the Change: Self-transformation leads to world transformation

As Mahatma Gandhi once said: "We must be the change we wish to see, and not the darkness that we wish to leave behind".

Change your thoughts & Change the world: If you change your thoughts you can change your world. And so the world around you will change.

E-'Embracing the other' for Peaceful coexistence & Human unity.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The name of Mahatma Gandhi transcends the bounds of race, religion and nation- states, and has emerged as the prophetic voice of the 21st century. He is remembered for his passionate adherence to the practice of non-violence and his supreme humanism. After the great Buddha and Jesus he once again demonstrated that non-violence could also be effective instruments of social change.

I can do no better than to quote the immortal tribute of India's first prime minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, at the time of Gandhi's passing, "The light has gone out of our lives".

VALUES & ETHICS FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Gandhiji advocates Values & Ethics for Sustainable Future& described the seven social sins for the society:

*"Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience;
Knowledge without character, Business without Ethics;
Science without Humanity, Religion without Sacrifice and
Politics without Principles are deadly Sins."*

—Said Mahtama Gandhi Ji

The values and attitudes we live by affect how we relate to other people and to all our activities in the environment, and so are a major influence on our prospects for achieving a sustainable future.

Gandhi successfully demonstrated to a world, weary with wars and continuing destruction that adherence to Truth and Non-violence is not meant for individual behaviour alone but can be applied in global affairs too.

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Mahatma Gandhi: Transformation from Politician to a Saint



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Abstract—Mahatma Gandhi is one of the most famous Indians ever to have walked the planet. Through his work, the less privileged people of the world have gained a higher quality of life. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the pre-eminent political and spiritual leader of India during the Indian independence movement. He was the pioneer of satyagraha, the resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience, firmly founded upon ahimsa or total non-violence, which led India to independence and has inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. Gandhi first employed non-violent civil disobedience as an expatriate lawyer in South Africa, during the resident Indian community's struggle for civil rights. After his return to India in 1915, he organized protests by peasants, farmers, and urban labourers concerning excessive land-tax and discrimination. After assuming leadership of the Indian National Congress in 1921, Gandhi led nationwide campaigns to ease poverty, expand women's rights, build religious and ethnic amity, end untouchability and increase economic self-reliance. Gandhi employed non-cooperation, non-violence and peaceful resistance as his weapons in the struggle against British. He aimed to achieve Swaraj or the independence of India from foreign domination. Gandhi spent a number of years in jail in both South Africa and India. As a practitioner of ahimsa, he swore to speak the truth and advocated that others do the same. Gandhi lived modestly in a self-sufficient residential community and wore the traditional Indian dhoti and shawl, woven with yarn he had hand spun on a charkha. He ate simple vegetarian food, and also undertook long fasts as a means of both self-purification and social protest. His campaigns of passive resistance and civil disobedience proved to be a great success. Gandhiji will always be remembered as a true nationalist who worked tirelessly for upliftment of the people of India.

Keywords: Independence, Disobedience, Truth, Untouchability, Fundamental Rights, Nationalist, Movement

INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was the pre-eminent political and spiritual leader of India during the Indian independence movement. He was the pioneer of satyagraha, the resistance to tyranny through mass civil disobedience, firmly founded upon ahimsa or total non-violence, which led India to independence and has inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. Although Mahatama Gandhi was in no way the originator of the principle of non-violence, he was the first to apply it in the political field on a huge scale. The concept of nonviolence and nonresistance has a long history in Indian religious thought and has had many revivals in Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Jewish and Christian contexts. Gandhi explains his philosophy and way of life in his autobiography *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. He was quoted as saying: "When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall — think of it, always." "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

In applying these principles, Gandhi did not fail in taking them to their most logical extremes in envisioning a world where even government, police and armies were nonviolent. He was of the view that the science of war lead one to dictatorship but the science of non-violence alone can lead one to pure democracy. Power based on love is thousand times more effective and permanent than power derived from fear of punishment. In accordance with these views, in 1940, when invasion of the British Isles by Nazi Germany looked imminent, Gandhi offered the following advice to the British people (*Non-Violence in Peace and War*): "I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions...If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourselves, man, woman, and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them."

However, Gandhi was aware that this level of nonviolence required incredible faith and courage, which he realized not everyone possessed. He therefore advised that everyone need not keep to nonviolence, especially if it were used as a cover for cowardice. Gandhi guarded against attracting to his satyagraha movement those who feared to take up arms or felt themselves incapable of resistance. Gandhi also came under some political fire for his criticism of those who attempted to achieve independence through more violent means. His refusal to protest against the hanging of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Udham Singh and Rajguru were sources of condemnation among some parties. Gandhiji's championing of non-violence, even when facing a violent adversary, has stimulated public reflection and enkindled political action in different forms across the world.

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

In South Africa, Gandhi faced discrimination directed at Indians. He was thrown off a train at Pietermaritzburg after refusing to move from the first class to a third class coach while holding a valid first class ticket. Travelling farther on by stagecoach he was beaten by a driver for refusing to travel on the foot board to make room for a European passenger. He suffered other hardships on the journey as well, including being barred from several hotels. In another incident, the

magistrate of a Durban court ordered Gandhi to remove his turban-which he refused to do. Apartheid was thriving, so anybody who was not white was treated as inferior, second class citizens. Gandhi decided to do something about this problem though, and began his method of passive resistance and non-cooperation, drawing on the likes of Tolstoy and Jesus as his inspirations. These events were a turning point in his life, awakening him to social injustice and influencing his subsequent social activism.

It was through witnessing firsthand the racism, prejudice and injustice against Indians in South Africa that Gandhi started to question his people's status within the British Empire, and his own place in society. Gandhi extended his original period of stay in South Africa to assist Indians in opposing a bill to deny them the right to vote. Though unable to halt the bill's passage, his campaign was successful in drawing attention to the grievances of Indians in South Africa. He helped found the Natal Indian Congress in 1894 and through this organization, he molded the Indian community of South Africa into a homogeneous political force. In January 1897, when Gandhi landed in Durban he was attacked by a mob of white settlers and escaped only through the efforts of the wife of the Police Superintendent. He, however, refused to press charges against any member of the mob, stating it was one of his principles not to seek redress for a personal wrong in a court of law.

In 1906, the Transvaal government promulgated a new Act compelling the registration of the colony's Indian population. At a mass protest meeting held in Johannesburg on 11th September that year, Gandhi adopted his still evolving methodology of satyagraha or non-violent protest, for the first time, calling on his fellow Indians to defy the new law and suffer the punishments for doing so, rather than resist through violent means. This plan was adopted, leading to a seven-year struggle in which thousands of Indians were jailed including Gandhi, flogged, or even shot, for striking, refusing to register, burning their registration cards or engaging in other forms of non-violent resistance. While the government was successful in repressing the Indian protesters, the public outcry stemming from the harsh methods employed by the South African government in the face of peaceful Indian protesters finally forced South African General Jan Christiaan Smuts to negotiate a compromise with Gandhi. Gandhi's ideas took shape and the concept of satyagraha matured during this struggle. Satyagraha—Gandhi's nonviolent action—was not a way for one group to seize what it wanted from another. It was not a weapon of class struggle, or of any other kind of division. Satyagraha was instead an instrument of unity. It was a way to remove injustice and restore social harmony, to the benefit of both sides. Satyagraha, strange as it seems, was for the opponent's sake as well. When Satyagraha worked, both sides won.

He wanted the basic human rights of food, clothing, shelter, education, jobs, healthcare, and dignity for the hundreds of millions of impoverished Indians. But he called for justice by first living in radical solidarity with the poorest of the poor. He demonstrated in his daily life, through the use of the spinning wheel and communal living, how they could transform their own lives, even as they sought political independence. He wanted to stop oppression everywhere in the world, but he did not want to use the methods of the oppressors and in the process become just another imperialist. He wanted to reach the heights of sanctity in his own life, and so he disciplined himself ruthlessly, denied himself basic pleasures, and shared his mistakes and faults with the world.

GANDHI'S STRUGGLE FOR INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE

On July 18, 1914, after negotiating a breakthrough settlement with the government, Gandhi left South Africa for good. He embarked on a trip to England, and finally returned to India permanently on January 9, 1915, to a hero's welcome. Under the guidance of G.K. Gokhale, a revered politician, Gandhi spent his first year back rediscovering his homeland by criss-crossing the country, learning its problems and listening to the poor. He reacquainted himself with India's needs and potential and studied how he could apply the lessons of satyagraha learned in South Africa to India's struggle for independence from Britain. Gandhi set up another ashram, on the Sabarmati river near Ahmedabad, where he lived for the next sixteen years. Over 250 people eventually joined his community, which practiced the same austerity he originally witnessed at the Trappist monastery in South Africa. Each member professed 14 vows, including truth, nonviolence, celibacy, poverty, fearlessness, physical labor, tolerance of all religions, and making their own clothes. They prayed together, ate together, farmed the land, published newspapers, and prepared themselves to suffer and die in the nonviolent struggle for independence.

CHAMPARAN AND KHEDA

Gandhi's first major achievements came in 1918 with the Champaran agitation and Kheda Satyagraha, although in the latter it was indigo and other cash crops instead of the food crops necessary for their survival. Suppressed by the militias of the landlords mostly British, they were given measly compensation, leaving them mired in extreme poverty. The villages were kept extremely dirty and unhygienic and alcoholism, untouchability and purdah were rampant. Now in the throes of a devastating famine, the British levied a tax which they insisted on increasing. The situation was desperate. In Kheda in Gujarat, the problem was the same. Gandhi established an ashram there, organizing scores of his veteran supporters and fresh volunteers from the region. He organized a detailed study and survey of the villages, accounting for the atrocities and terrible episodes of suffering, including the general state of degenerate living. Building on the confidence of villagers, he began leading the clean-up of villages, building of schools and hospitals and encouraging the village leadership to undo and condemn many social evils.

Gandhi employed non-cooperation, non-violence and peaceful resistance as his weapons in the struggle against British. In Punjab, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of civilians by British troops caused deep trauma to the nation, leading to increased public anger and acts of violence. Gandhi criticized both the actions of the British Raj and the retaliatory violence of Indians. He authored the resolution offering condolences to British civilian victims and condemning the riots which, after initial opposition in the party, was accepted following Gandhi's emotional speech advocating his principle that all violence was evil and could not be justified. But it was after the massacre and subsequent violence that Gandhi's mind focused upon obtaining complete self-government and control of all Indian government institutions, maturing soon into Swaraj or complete individual, spiritual, political independence.

His main impact came when he was arrested by police on the charge of creating unrest and was ordered to leave the province. Hundreds of thousands of people protested and rallied outside the jail, police stations and courts demanding his release, which the court reluctantly granted. Gandhi led organized protests and strikes against the landlords who, with the guidance of the British government, signed an agreement granting the poor farmers of the region more compensation and control over farming, and cancellation of revenue hikes and its collection until the famine ended. It was during this agitation, that Gandhi was addressed by the people as Bapu (Father) and Mahatma (Great Soul). In Kheda, Sardar Patel represented the farmers in negotiations with the British, who suspended revenue collection and released all the prisoners. As a result, Gandhi's fame spread all over the nation.

In December 1921, Gandhi was invested with executive authority on behalf of the Indian National Congress. Under his leadership, the Congress was reorganized with a new constitution, with the goal of Swaraj. Membership in the party was opened to anyone prepared to pay a token fee. A hierarchy of committees was set up to improve discipline, transforming the party from an elite organization to one of mass national appeal. Gandhi expanded his non-violence platform to include the swadeshi policy—the boycott of foreign-made goods, especially British goods. Linked to this was his advocacy that khadi (homespun cloth) be worn by all Indians instead of British-made textiles. Gandhi exhorted Indian men and women, rich or poor, to spend time each day spinning khadi in support of the independence movement. This was a strategy to inculcate discipline and dedication to weed out the unwilling and ambitious and to include women in the movement at a time when many thought that such activities were not respectable activities for women. In addition to boycotting British products, Gandhi urged the people to boycott British educational institutions and law courts, to resign from government employment and to forsake British titles and honours.

In 1932, through the campaigning of the Dalit leader B.R. Ambedkar, the government granted untouchables separate electorates under the new constitution. In protest, Gandhi embarked on a six-day fast in September 1932, successfully forcing the government to adopt a more equitable arrangement. This was the start of a new campaign by Gandhi to improve the lives of the untouchables, whom he named Harijans, the children of God. On 8th May, 1933 Gandhi began a 21-day fast of self-purification to help the Harijan movement. Gandhi returned to the head in 1936, with the Nehru presidency and the Lucknow session of the Congress. Although Gandhi desired a total focus on the task of winning independence and not speculation about India's future, he did not restrain the Congress from adopting socialism as its goal. The World war II broke out in 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Initially, Gandhi had favored offering non-violent moral support to the British effort, but other Congressional leaders were offended by the unilateral inclusion of India into the war, without consultation of the people's representatives. All Congressmen elected to resign from office en masse. After lengthy deliberations, Gandhi declared that India could not be party to a war ostensibly being fought for democratic freedom, while that freedom was denied to India itself.

As the war progressed, Gandhi intensified his demand for independence, drafting a resolution calling for the British to Quit India. This was Gandhi's and the Congress Party's most definitive revolt aimed at securing the British exit from Indian shores. Quit India became the most forceful

movement in the history of the struggle, with mass arrests and violence on an unprecedented scale. Thousands of freedom fighters were killed or injured by police gunfire, and hundreds of thousands were arrested. Gandhi and his supporters made it clear they would not support the war effort unless India was granted immediate independence. He even clarified that this time the movement would not be stopped if individual acts of violence were committed, saying that the ordered anarchy around him was worse than real anarchy. He called on all Congressmen and Indians to maintain discipline via ahimsa, and Karo Ya Maro (Do or Die) for the cause of ultimate freedom.

In 1947, India gained independence, something that Gandhi had worked towards for a long time. He was against partition though, wishing that those of Muslim and Hindu faith could live peacefully side-by-side. He was also very critical of the caste system, whereby some Indians of high social standing were deemed 'untouchable'. When Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948, the world hailed him as one of the greatest spiritual leaders, not just of the century, but of all time. He was ranked not just with Thoreau, Tolstoy, and St. Francis, but with Buddha, Mohammed and even Jesus. "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth," Albert Einstein wrote at the time.

Gandhi's legacy includes not just the brilliantly waged struggle against institutionalized racism in South Africa, the independence movement of India, and a ground-breaking path of inter-religious dialogue, but also highlights the first widespread application of nonviolence as the most powerful tool for positive social change. Gandhi's nonviolence was not just political: It was rooted and grounded in the spiritual, which is why he exploded not just onto India's political stage, but onto the world stage, and not just temporally, but for all times. Gandhi was, first and foremost, a religious man in search of God. For more than fifty years, he pursued truth, proclaiming that the best way to discover truth was through the practice of active, faith-based nonviolence. If he had wanted, Gandhi could have lived a very comfortable life as a lawyer. Instead he devoted it to prayer, fasting and meditation. He wore basic clothes and lived off fruit, vegetables and milk. He gave up his personal comfort to bring well-being to millions of others.

The tie that binds Gandhi's life together is that Gandhi tried to be a person of integrity and authenticity. He wanted to do God's will, and he did not want to be a hypocrite. That meant he had to identify as radically as possible with the poorest people on the face of the earth. If he wanted to achieve the heights of divinity, he said to himself, he had to touch the bottom of humanity and become one with the starving millions. He learned quickly that the path to God required the ongoing purification of his own heart and life. Throughout fifty years of letter-writing, he always maintained that the way to peace, justice and salvation, begins first with the purification of one's own heart and daily life. As he purified his inner life, he stepped deeper into public turmoil and willingly suffered for his political beliefs, undergoing repeated arrests, trials, imprisonments, death threats, attempts on his life, constant verbal abuse and fasting for his causes, coming to the brink of death on several occasions.

Never had such religious idealism been practiced politically and socially on the world stage. "I am endeavoring to see God through the service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor down below, but in every one," Gandhi wrote to a friend on August 4, 1927. If God is in everyone, Gandhi believed, then he would have to love everyone, even his enemy. He would

have to side with the most oppressed, impoverished, suffering people on the planet, and not just once, but every day and for the rest of his life, come what may. If he remained true to this hard road, he knew his outcome was assured: not only political independence and peace, but the vision of God. In this spiritual search, Gandhi came up with the method of satyagraha as a holy strategy for social and political revolution and widespread structural change. If one were willing to suffer and die for justice and peace, Gandhi taught, without even the desire to retaliate or kill, then the spirit of all-encompassing redemptive love would capture even God's attention, win the sympathy of the world and wear down the opponent in the process until justice and freedom were achieved. It is a foolproof method, he insisted.

As Gandhi sought the spiritual roots of political struggle, he realized more and more that he could never hurt or kill another human being, or indeed, any creature; that there was no cause, however noble it may appear that justified the taking of another life. "Every act has its spiritual, economic and social implications." "The spirit is not separate. It cannot be." Gandhi saw everything he did as a religious act. "I believe God is always near me," he wrote a friend in 1906. "God is never away from me. May you also act in this faith. Believe that God is near you and always follow the truth." To understand Gandhi, we need to notice his daily dedication to prayer, meditation, and scripture study. When he was a child, Gandhi's nurse taught him whenever he was scared, to repeat God's name over and over again throughout the day. He tried to continue this practice every day for the rest of his life. He sought to experience the presence of God every minute of his life. This personal spiritual search, coupled with his dramatic public search for God's nonviolent transformation of the world, inspires us today to attempt the same spiritual journey in our own lives. Prayer was critically important for Gandhi. Each morning, he spent one hour in silent meditation before sunrise. Each evening, he spent another hour in silent meditation. Every day for fifty years, he read from Koran, Bhagavad Gita.

Gandhi viewed the Hindu scripture as a radical call to complete renunciation, steadfast love, and perfect nonviolence. He wrote many commentaries on the Gita, translated it several times, and tried to change his life and habits to fit its teachings. Using the teachings of the Gita, he summed up the model human being as one "who is jealous of none; who is a fount of mercy; who is without egotism; who is selfless; who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery; who is ever forgiving; who is always contented; whose resolutions are firm; who has dedicated mind and soul to God; who causes no dread; who is not afraid of others; who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear; who is pure; who is versed in action yet remains unaffected by it; who renounces all fruit, good or bad; who treats friend and foe alike; who is untouched by respect or disrespect; who is not puffed up by praise; who does not go under when people speak ill of him; who loves silence and solitude; and who has a disciplined reason." Gandhi spent his days trying to incarnate this spiritual ideal. Gandhi then was not just as lawyer, politician, activist, social reformer, or revolutionary: Gandhi was a contemplative, a person of God, a saint. He showed the possibilities not just of Hinduism and Christianity in practice, but what it means to be human. He did so because he relied on God. He allowed God to disarm his heart and in the process became an instrument for God's disarmament of the world.

GANDHI'S MESSAGE OF NONVIOLENCE

Gandhi's greatest contribution to humanity is his message of nonviolence as the way to peace, justice, and God. Gandhi took seriously the biblical commandments, "Thou shalt not kill" and "Love your enemies," along with the Hindu tradition of *ahimsa* (non-killing), and applied this renunciation of violence to his own heart and life as well as to South Africa, India and the world. But he taught that nonviolence is not just refusal to kill: it is the action of love and truth as a force for positive social change. Indeed, he insisted that nonviolence was the most active and powerful force in the world. Since he saw it as the force of God, the method of God, the power of God at work for good among the human race, he concluded that nonviolence is more powerful than nuclear weapons. If millions of ordinary Americans would practice nonviolence, would peacefully, publicly and actively resist the production and maintenance of nuclear weapons, disarmament would be assured. Nonviolence always works, he said, because it uses the method of suffering love to melt the human heart.

Though few nations have disarmed, Gandhi's life and teaching offers an ideal that many uphold. From grassroots activists to Nobel Laureates, billions of people around the world know about Gandhi and have been touched by him. Dorothy Day, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, and Archbishop Tutu have all expressed their debt to Gandhi. While Gandhi was a brilliant political strategist and revolutionary, what set him apart from others was his unique reliance upon God in his public practice of nonviolence. Nonviolence for Gandhi was not just a tactic, but spirituality, a way of life, the centre of his religion. "Nonviolence succeeds only when we have a real living faith in God," Gandhi insisted.

GANDHI'S CONTRIBUTION TO MODERN SPIRITUALITY

Gandhi's contributions to modern spirituality include not only his impact on social movements around the world through the political strategy of active nonviolence and satyagraha, but his transforming influence on religion itself. Many of the world's religions have been inspired to return to their root beliefs of truth and nonviolence that they all share in common. Gandhi's influence is so great and yet so sublime that it is hard to categorize his many contributions and achievements. But a few essential teachings can be gleaned for his life work and testimony. Gandhi's primary contribution to spirituality and the world itself is nonviolence. Gandhi insisted that if our worship of God is honest, if our faith is sincere, if we want to be people of prayer, indeed, if we want to be fully human, we need to become people of nonviolence. Gandhi worshipped the God of nonviolence, and announced that every major religion was rooted in nonviolence. He taught that nonviolence could be put into practice at every level of human life, in our own hearts, among our own family and friends, in our local communities, as well as nationally and internationally. He said that each of us can do it, from the poorest prisoner to presidents willingness to go to jail and his defense of the untouchables were other ways to share in the poverty of the masses. "Self-realization I hold to be impossible without service of and identification with the poorest," Gandhi wrote. If we want to find God, he said, we must go to the poor, walk with them, serve the poor, learn from them, be disarmed by them and become one with them. The poor will teach us the truth, show us God, and share God's reign with us. Gandhi held that radical purity of heart bears enormous positive ramifications for the entire world. He

firmly believed that the more we purify our inner lives, the more our lives will serve God's work to end war, poverty and injustice. He taught that personal integrity was necessary for an authentic spirituality, for nonviolence. To this end, he suggested regular fasting throughout one's life, and became an advocate and proponent of fasting as a way to repent of one's personal sins and the sins of those we love.

Gandhi practiced a living solidarity with the poor and oppressed. Long before liberation theology, Gandhi gave away his money and personal possessions, renounced his career, moved to a communal farm, made his own clothes, dressed like the poorest Indian peasants, and shared their meager diet of fruits and vegetables. He asked the people to serve one another. Then, peace would grow among us. "Whether humanity will consciously follow the law of love, I do not know," Gandhi wrote. "But that need not disturb me. The law will work just as the law of gravitation works, whether we accept it or not. The person who discovered the law of love was a far greater scientist than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its workings. He firmly believed that the more we purify our inner lives, the more our lives will serve God's work to end war, poverty and injustice. Gandhi practiced peace through prayer and mindfulness. He radiated peace and laughed constantly. He was full of joy. The more influential his life became, the more he relied on prayer, seeking greater solitude, even taking one day a week in total silence for the last two decades of his life. His commitment to prayer and his devotion to the spirit working in his heart through prayer transformed Gandhi from a politician to a saint, someone who does God's will, through whom God speaks and moves and touches the human race.

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Embracing the Other in Religions



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Abstract—*'Embracing the other in religions' is a positive response to the phenomenon of diversity in religious traditions in the society. It is a process towards harmonious and peaceful living. It invites believers to broaden their faith to a circle of all faiths. The humans are by nature social beings. The social character requires one necessarily to get related to the religious other. The path to the divine is realistically not vertical, but horizontal. In other words, the sisterly, brotherly and friendly state of relatedness with other human beings, as implied in embracing the other in religions, is the culmination of the spiritual search of the humans. This establishes the relevance of religion and religious endeavour in social life, as well.*

The relation of one religion to the other has to be unquestionably positive and it can in no way afford to be negative. An 'exclusive' understanding of one's religion is totally anti-social and depressing. An 'inclusive' perspective of the religious other is definitely better, but still is self-centred. 'Pluralism' is creditable by way of its broad-vision of situating all traditions in their due place, but advocates an existence that is unrelated to the other, like parallel lines. 'Relativism' promotes a disconnected and scattered position in life. Besides, 'tolerating the other' is negative and is highly insulting to the dignity of the other. Having 'peaceful coexistence with the other' seems to be a passive predicament, like that of the cemetery. A believer has to go beyond all these responses, because they are either negative or incomplete.

Having 'good will towards the other' is basic to a positive step towards the other in religions. Considering him or her 'on equal footing' is an extension of the good will. 'Respecting the other' would mean holding him or her in esteem. 'Interacting' with the religious other is a creative way of getting related with him or her. 'Accepting the other' is engaging with him or her whole-heartedly and learning from him or her. 'Cooperating or collaborating with the other' is a shared commitment to the common concerns of the society. Being in 'harmony with the other' would mean holding a relationship of 'fellowship' with the religious other, through diverse pro-active processes. 'Embracing the other in religions' would imply celebrating all these positive sentiments across the horizons of faith-perceptions and making faith or religion worth the while.

Keywords: *Religion, faith, other, embracing, harmony, inclusive, sharing, fellowship*

INTRODUCTION

Can any human being have a direct access to the divine? Are the gods and goddesses conceived, idolized and adored by the humans in diverse traditions of civilizations the infallible locus of the divine embodiment? In spite of the due relevance of the symbolic representations of the divine in religions, are religious systems capable of providing human beings with a short cut to the eternal God proper? I do not think so. On levelheaded terms, the vertical relation to the divine makes real sense in the context of the horizontal relations. The genuine abode of the divine is the creation and the living beings in a general way and human beings in a particular way. Human beings are the living temples of God. Recognizing God in other human beings and beings is the irrefutable proof for staying tuned to the divine. It is in this context that 'embracing the other in religions' speaks volumes of the spiritually elevating divine stories, validly so.

KEY CONCEPTS

EMBRACING

'Embracing'¹ would mean 'holding someone closely in one's arms, especially as a sign of affection'. It also implies 'accepting a belief, theory or change willingly and enthusiastically'. Welcoming whole-heartedly, taking to one's heart, receiving with open arms, adopting a different way, etc are some of the connotations of this meaning. It is an act of eager clasp of something that was foreign to the one who performs the act. In brief, embracing refers to a positive, affirming and outgoing disposition.

OTHER

'Other'² implies many shades of meaning, such as 'person or people aside oneself', 'person different from the one implied or specified', 'the remaining one of the several', 'of a different character or quality', 'opposite or contrary to oneself', 'a different person', 'an additional person', 'another person', etc. Difference from oneself is the definitive character of the other.

RELIGION

'Religion', deriving from the Latin root, 'religare'³, means 'to tie, to fasten, to bind, to hold together and to re-connect'. It implies 'reverence for the sacred'. It refers to the bond with God or spiritual beings and with the human and the natural worlds. As an organized collection of beliefs, cultural systems and world views, it is oriented to provide the humans with a meaning in life. Religion may involve dogmas, rituals, pilgrimages, fasts, etc, as well.

There are various systems of sacred histories, symbols and narratives. An ethical and moral life style is the practical utility of religion. The word 'religion' is used interchangeably with 'faith'⁴ at times, though faith is the core reality of conviction and confidence that can exist even outside the confines of any religious system. The engagement with the divine could be open-ended and of free-style, too.

OTHER IN RELIGIONS

'Other in religions'⁵ clearly refers to the plurality of religious perceptions, affiliations and persuasions. Anthropologists opine that there are thousands of major and minor religions in the world, though the prominent ones are around a dozen only. Peoples and civilizations inherit a certain religious tradition, acquire a system of religious belief and practice of their choice or opt for a faith or an ideology of their heart's content in a free-style manner.

Besides, the same religious following admits various streams and strands. If so, the immense plurality of religious backgrounds and tastes cannot be ruled out for obvious reasons. Now, the point in question is how a person of one religious point of view perceives a person of another believer. Another believer is slightly a different person and therefore is 'the other'. Has the other in religions to be hated or kept at a distance? If not, how could 'embracing the other in religions' be a reality? The answer to these questions will decide the destiny of the humanity, especially for times ahead of us.

BEYOND NEGATIVE AND PARTIAL PERSPECTIVES

EXCLUSIVISM

Exclusivism⁶ is the theory or policy of excluding a person or a collection of persons from a place, group or privilege. Religious exclusivism⁷ is the belief or doctrine that only one particular religion or belief system is true. Accordingly, one believes in one's religion as a channel of salvation and discards other belief systems as destined to perdition. Strict monotheism, concept of 'chosen race' and restricted entry to heaven, etc are a few of the features of exclusive theories in Abrahamic religions, especially of earlier times.

Exclusive understanding of religion stresses on the uniqueness of one's icon of divinity and the finality of the scripture that is a record of his teachings. An exclusivist faith tends to justify religious wars, forced conversions, persecution of religious minorities and bans against inter-religious fellowship and marriage. A modified form of exclusivism accommodates other faiths as legitimate to some degree and respects them. But, the position of centrality of one's faith does not allow the adherents to part with the above tendencies. This is true about all believers.

Since any claim to truth by nature is exclusive, some degree of exclusiveness is inevitable. All the same, the moderate view of religion provides for some scope for dialogue with other religionists. Believers of all religious traditions have to go beyond the respective schools of thought and attempt to weigh the logic of one's own tradition as the only one. Though embracing the religious other is a far-flung dream, getting out of the psychological ghetto of exclusive mindset will certainly serve the first step towards it. One needs to get freed of this enslaving mindset in order to recognize other beliefs.

INCLUSIVISM

Inclusivism⁸ is a view that recognizes the presence of other religious traditions. It also admits that God is present in other religions. At the same time, it avows the essential legitimacy of the tradition one is affiliated to. It proceeds to include other religious traditions in such a way that

the efficacy of one's own tradition spills over that of others in an anonymous way. In other words, one's icon of faith is the source of salvation not only for oneself, but also for others, though they are not aware of the same. Such a point of view was mooted by Karl Rahner, a theologian of Roman Catholic origin.

The beauty of this position is that it does not involve conversion to the faith of the other. It is not mandatory for one to know the religious tenets or scriptures of the other tradition. Change of allegiance is not required at all. But, the benefits of salvation from the other are assured. The dynamics of such a theory is that 'God, as per my tradition, reaches out to every human being in his or her own personal religious history'⁹. People experience the grace of the same God one knows, regardless of the religion they belong to.

Besides, the universal understanding of one's divine icon and the faith tradition is a matter of credit. God reaches out to all humanity and he makes it through ways known to him alone. Because of such an outlook, one considers other religious traditions within the design of God and as lawful. This sympathetic approach to religions tends to ignore ungodly elements within religions. The principle applied here appears to be 'knowledge of the truth is an occasion for liberation'¹⁰. The voluntary submission to God is the saving factor.

All the same, inclusivism is, in a way, arrogantly exclusivist from the perspective of other religions. To say that others are saved by the merit of the faith I am affiliated to is in fact an insult to other faiths. Here, other believers are treated as false. But, it is as if my neighbour actually lives by my money, though he or she earns his livelihood and lives by it. Such a claim is illogical and superfluous. No doubt, in spite of the positive attitudes in an inclusivist view point, one has to go a long way towards accepting the religious other as he or she is.

PLURALISM

Pluralism¹¹ holds the view that all the religions of the world are equally true and valid. John Hick placed this view forward. Accordingly, all religions reveal the truth about God, man, world and salvation. Bhagavadgita support this view thus, 'by whatsoever way men worship me, even so do I accept them; for, in all ways, O Partha, men walk in my path'¹². The popular understanding too falls in line with this thinking 'all religions lead to the same God and all paths lead to heaven'.

Pluralists argue that God is not at the centre and at any one religion. Religions are fundamentally same and are only superficially different. Therefore, no one religion is the one and only way of salvation. There are several religions. Pluralism rules out the finality of religions and affirms the validity of all religions. Words like absolute, unique, only and final are meaningless for pluralists. Pluralism also paves the way for the evolutionary understanding of religions, by way of higher forms following the lower forms.

Pluralism has an inbuilt capacity for promoting tolerance among the religionists. Since absolute statements are downgraded, the legitimacy of all religions gets instated. The monopoly over truth is pluralized. Nevertheless, the core characteristic of truth, which excludes everything else contrary to it, smacks of stating that 'all religions are untrue'. Besides, it has a danger of being self-dependent and unrelated to the other. Therefore, though pluralism opens up the religious world for all, it seems to be exclusive in certain ways. No wonder, embracing the religious other is still much ahead of being pluralistic.

RELATIVISM

Relativism¹³, obviously, is a concept that argues for the relative or subjective value of all that life has, especially truth. It is a principle that rules out the possibility of any knowledge, truth or morality existing as absolute. It affirms that they exist only in relation to culture, society or historical context. It underscores the differences in perceptions and opinions. Ethics applies only to a limited context. Truth all the more is relative, as per the linguistic and cultural contexts.

Relativism holds all points of view as equally valid and no system of truth as more valid than the other. Since no objective standard or norm of truth is acceptable, it refutes God as absolute truth. Accordingly, the individual reserves the right to philosophical, religious, political, social and moral positions. No wonder, this pervasive and permissive phenomenon of modern times seems to do away with the very idea of right and wrong. 'Your truth and my truth', 'there cannot be anything that is mandatory for all', etc are the slogans of relativism.

The negative implications of relativism are numerous. The entire society is affected by this perspective. Media could become loose as well as law, indecisive. The sense of sin seems to disappear. All types of absolutism are denied as old-fashioned and untenable. Such a predicament is illogical, because society slips into lawlessness and chaos. If everyone does what is right in his or her own eyes and if each one becomes the custodian of himself or herself, social life will be impossible. As a matter of fact, society cannot do away with certain common foundation of truth and absolutes, lest society be fragmented and shattered.

Relativism can be individual or societal. When a certain community, country or society holds the theory of relativism, considering some things right or wrong could be granted as legitimate. For instance, driving on the left or right side of the road, principles of child rearing, burial practices, wedding ceremonies, etc are ways of cultural setting. Similarly, when individuals reserve the right to be relativists, one could get irritated by a sound while another wouldn't and one would amass immense wealth while another would be satisfied with a modest income.

Nonetheless, if everything is relative to the individual and no absolute truth is accepted, there would be no common ground for the humans. Besides, if there is no absolute truth, there can be enormous absolute truths, that too, entirely of different kinds. Though relativism safeguards the freedom of the individual or individual communities, it can make the society very badly individualistic, self-centred, scattered and chaotic. Relativism has absolutely no scope of embracing the religious other. Evidently, one requires travelling much beyond, in view of getting related to the other.

TOLERATING THE OTHER

The concept of tolerance emerged in the second decade of the twentieth century as against the intolerant practice of 'shuddhi'¹⁴, which was the method of proselytizing pursued by reformist Hindus of the Arya Samaj. The idea served balancing the politics of caste then. Later, the word was used for representing the ideology of contrasting the proselytizing approach of religions. Today, tolerance is very often understood to be an indirect advocate of religious freedom and the spirit of Indian secularism.

Toleration would mean the capacity to endure something,¹⁵ i.e., physical resistance, hardship or pain. It is the power of invulnerability as regards surviving odds. It is the ability of an organism to withstand or handle a difficult environmental condition. It is the willingness to tolerate the existence of opinions or behaviour that one dislikes or disagrees with. Tolerance is a demand of certain situations that even if one disagrees on something, one has to put on show tolerance. It is the capacity to endure continued subjection to something. It also means refraining from adverse reaction to anything, even to corruption.

Tolerance is an immune response to any foreign substance. It demands going beyond prejudice. It is a liberal mindset that paves the way for broad-mindedness and open-mindedness. It is a fair and permissive attitude towards those whose religion, nationality, etc., differ from one's own. It is a power to bear with the opinions and practices of others. It is the ability to recognize and respect the beliefs and practice of others, as well. In spite of laying a foundation for certain positive perspectives, tolerance as such is a negative value and highly falls short of an affirmative and creative approach to the other in religions.

PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE WITH THE OTHER

Peaceful coexistence¹⁶ was a theory that was developed and applied by the Soviet Union. This was an attempt to combat the cold war with regard to the foreign policy of Marx and Lenin. This was later adopted by the 'socialist states' of the Soviet union for coexisting peacefully with the capitalist states. This was a very powerful antidote to the disagreement and antipathy between communism and capitalism. This theory established better relations between the Soviet Union and the western world, particularly between the US and NATO countries and the nations of the Warsaw pact.

The Panchsheel Treaty¹⁷ (Five Principles) between China and India, signed in Peking in 1954, enunciates the basic etiquette for governing relations between the respective states and the same contribute to peacefully coexisting with each other. They are 'mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and cooperation for mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence'.

Peaceful co-existence, observably, means existing side by side without aggressing upon each other. Peace here stands for, first and foremost, not violating each other. This point could be articulated clearly by the Jain philosophy of 'live and let live'¹⁸. It affirms honouring the sacred area of individuals and institutions. While abstaining from meddling with the other, it also prepares the way for collaboration between the parties concerned. However, an active engagement with the other as in embracing the other is still quite a distance ahead.

TOWARDS POSITIVE AND CREATIVE PERSPECTIVES

GOOD WILL TOWARDS THE OTHER

Good will¹⁹ is a friendly disposition. Goodness is its core spirit. It is a positive temperament. It is a helpful and cooperative attitude. Benevolence, empathy, kind-heartedness and kindness are contained in its inner make up. It is an attitude of willingness, interest, positive quality and good relationship. It is a cheerful compliance and kind regard also.

Faith is a mindset of superior quality. Good will is its core worth. Being positive in mind and heart, in oneself and towards others is essential to its relevance. That would amount to state that a believer has necessarily to have a friendly temper in relation to another believer. An attitude of joining hands with the other in favour of him or her is its expression. Noble, kind and soft sentiments for the co-believer is indeed the test of one's faith. The state of happy, homely and regardful way of thinking will enable the believer to appreciate and value the great values inherent in the tradition of the religious other.

ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH THE OTHER

Equal footing²⁰ is the principle that assures social equality. It argues for same status to all individuals or communities in a given society or institution. All individuals and communities have equal rights before law. Accordingly, all have equal access to freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, right to property, right to social goods and services, right to voting, right to security, etc. Equality of opportunities, obligations, health facilities, freedom from discrimination, and the like, furthers this equal footing in life. Social equality also necessitates immunity from discrimination on the basis of sex, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, origin, caste, class, income, property, language, religion, convictions, opinions, health or disability of any sort.

All religious traditions, irrespective of the magnitude in their philosophy, history and ethical values, have a right to exist. Immunity from discrimination, in spite of its strength as majority or minority, is an inviolable fundamental right, bound by justice. All religious communities have a duty to protect each other. The religious community that commands strength by number and social values has a supplementary responsibility to take care of the smaller religious entities. As per the Constitution of India, equal opportunities are allotted to all religious traditions to practice, propagate and grow. In this context, the principle of equal footing is to be practiced by all believers. Social equality is the groundwork for building mutuality among believers of diverse traditions.

RESPECTING THE OTHER

Respect²¹ is a positive feeling of esteem for a person or another entity. It could be an individual, a nation or a religion. It is a specific feeling of regard for the actual qualities of the one respected. Respect can be both given and/or received. Depending on an individual's cultural frame of mind, respect can be earned. Respect is built over a considerable span of time. Continued caring is required in interactions in order to maintain or increase feelings of respect among individuals.

A sense of esteem for the other believer is fundamental to a creative way of existing side by side. One should have a sense of admiration for at least the core values of the other's religious tradition. Regardful way of holding the other is what is required by respecting the other. Respect is a positive value. Considering the other in a reverential frame of mind would definitely lead one to treating the other believer and his or her faith important and valuable. Respecting the faith values of the religious other is an occasion for learning from the other and thus enriching oneself.

INTERACTING WITH THE OTHER

Interaction²² is a two-way action. It is a reciprocal action between two or more entities. It occurs as two or more persons or objects have an influence or effect upon one another. Interaction makes the concerned parties stay connected to each other. It is a relational move towards life. As an exercise of meeting the other face-to-face, it is a process of deep socialization. Interaction is a non-dominating style of life. It is a relational approach to life. It is an ongoing endeavour and is oriented to peace among religions, nations and cultures.

When interaction involves the other in words, it is 'dialogue'²³. The word 'dialogue' means 'converse' or 'speak' and 'across', 'with', 'through', 'between', 'among', etc., respectively. It is conversation between two or more. It is an exchange of ideas, views and experiences. It is an interaction on equal footing. Dialogue involves both speaking and listening. One-sided speaking is can only be a monologue. Dialogue is a two-way communication between the concerned parties.

Interaction or dialogue necessitates one to open up to the other. It is a positive attitude of goodwill towards the other. It involves learning from the other, respecting, loving, serving and promoting the other. It is a combination of give and take; it is both question and answer, in a single unit. Interaction or dialogue would mean mutual relations, mutual conversion and mutual transformation. It is a co-journey of life, a joint pilgrimage to God. It is a related existence. It would mean having a 'shared' language, a shared ideology, a shared culture, a shared commitment, a shared faith, a shared conviction and a shared spirituality. It would mean 'being present to the other', being a mirror to the other. It is a means to purify, enrich and transform the other. It would imply 'walking and working together' in life.

Interaction or dialogue is a 'democratic' perception of life. It implies a brotherly-sisterly and friendly style of life. It is a humble way of life, in the sense that it refrains from all sorts of encroachment of the religious other. It maintains an aesthetic view of life, by seeing beauty in diversity. It combines singularity and mutuality and ensures enrichment and an integrated growth. Interaction or dialogue ends in religious harmony and harmony begins with religious dialogue. Both are complementary. Interaction is an 'inclusive, interactive, participatory, collaborative, cooperative, constructive and positive process of life', as regards the other in religions.

ACCEPTING THE OTHER

Accepting²⁴ would mean 'welcoming' something. It denotes receiving with gladness or approval. It involves giving consent. It means believing or recognizing the validity of something. It could mean obtaining and acquiring, too. Giving credit to, putting confidence in, being convinced of and having faith in are some variations of the notion. Accepting implies 'counting on, replying on, depending on, trusting, etc. It is an affirmative response. Admitting, regarding favourably and agreeing to take up a duty or responsibility are the nuances of the word, as well.

The above meanings are to be applied to the religious other. Every believer has to recognize the validity of the religious path of the other. He or she needs to maintain a welcoming attitude to other believers. He or she has to celebrate the presence of the other with an inner cheerfulness. This disposition has to be extended to the values, beliefs and worldviews of the other tradition of

faith. He or she has to place trust in the other and in the positive elements of his or her belief system. Accepting the other in religions would mean a voluntary and favourable temperament to the persons who profess a different faith.

COOPERATION WITH THE OTHER

Cooperation²⁵ or collaboration is the process of individuals or groups acting or working together. It is oriented to their common or mutual benefit. There is no sense of competition between them. Fairness is a basic requirement for cooperation. Altruistic partnerships, good of the society or the institution, personal status, reputation, etc are some of the objectives of cooperation. Having shared goals is essential for working with the other. Knowledge-sharing, resources-pooling, etc are a few instances of the same. Collaboration is a decentralized way of working. It calls for a larger outlook to life and a superior form of leadership. It implies working together by partners who are more or less of equal footing.

Collaboration with the religious other implies a team work with him or her. Cooperation with him or her is acting together for a common cause. Finding oneself on the same platform is indispensable for acting together. The common ground with believers of other faith could be mutual interest or some social cause. Cooperation among believers is a great opportunity for gauging the worth of the believers in the process. The partnership of the believers is like being a mirror to each other, in which either of them could check the spiritual and moral fitness. Addressing social problems together is in fact living the faith in practice. Having a shared vision and mission in life is the realistic approach to faith and all faiths. Cooperation with the religious other is the practical form of embracing the other in religions.

HARMONY WITH THE OTHER

The word 'harmony'²⁶ means integration, co-ordination, unity, balance, etc. The Hindi synonym for the word harmony is 'samanvay'²⁷ and it has two parts, 'anvay' and 'sam'. 'Anvay' means 'agreement, co-ordination', etc. and 'sam' means 'on equal footing' or 'equally' and 'totally'. Samanvay implies a five 'S' formula: sadbhaav (good will), sambhaav (equal footing), sammaan (respect), sehyog (co-operation) and samanvay (harmony). All the meanings of harmony together compose a complete perspective of life.

The word 'harmony' is grounded in the world of music. It is the 'pleasing effect' that emerges from a group of musical sounds as they are sounded all together. A single note cannot produce harmony. The concord among many notes does. Solo players conduct themselves in such a way in an orchestra that they make a single musical effect and as a result create fine and sublime sentiments. It is the co-ordination of melody and rhythm. Singing, playing and dancing present a complete music and present a model for perfect harmony.

In the larger setting, harmony is a 'pleasant blend of diverse elements of life in a single whole'. It is an agreement between perceptions, ideas, opinions, feelings, attitudes and actions. It is an arrangement of interests and tastes, colours and shapes, traditions and practices, streams and strands, etc. It is a sense of order in the entire universe. It is the logic of proportion. It is an album of related things that agree with each other. It is a variety of parts that co-operate or work

together for a common purpose and with mutual benefit. The different parts function with an equality of importance and a unity of purpose.

Harmony of faiths contains the best of sentiments that do complete justice to the divine and the human realms. Being in harmony with other faiths and their adherents is the ultimate utility and relevance of one's own faith. In a state of harmony of faiths all faith traditions have their due space and are secure, in the sense all faiths have. The state of harmony of faiths is in fact the celebration of differences.

EMBRACING THE OTHER

'Embracing the other in religions'²⁸ is a positive process of engaging with the religious other. It is a creative way of including the other believer into one's circle of being. It is an affectionate style of remaining related with the other and his or her faith. It involves accepting the perception of the other as regards life, ideas, faith, theories and practices as valid. The attitude of an open heart and mind is the core of the engagement with the other. The spirit of enthusiasm and willingness to bridge the gap between the alien faith of the other and the familiar faith of one's self is the transforming power of the meeting with the religious other.

Embracing the other in religions is a process that liberates the partners in question unto a mutual conversion. The 'I's are transformed into a single 'we'. The partners are able to see themselves in each other, as if in a mirror. They start 'sharing with' and 'sharing in' the faith perspective of the other as well as learning from each other. As they walk together as fellow pilgrims, they realize that they are making a joint pilgrimage to the same divine power. 'Embracing the other in religions' is the way forward for believers of all religious traditions, especially in the twenty-first century, truly so.

CONCLUSION

Diversity of religious traditions is one of the most fundamental realities in the human society. 'Situating one's self amidst the above ocean of diversity' is the challenging task before every individual. Establishing balance and harmony between many-in-relation-to one and one-in-relation-to many is a lifelong process of growing up in faith. That would amount to state that one's faith has to broaden towards a circle of all faiths. Only then, the social character can be justified. If God is really God, he, she or it does not require any praise or veneration. What is done to human beings, especially the religious other, is equal to what is done to God.

Therefore, excluding the other in religions would mean excluding God from one's life. Including the other smacks of a condescending spirit and denotes seeking oneself while relating to God. To be pluralistic with others would mean having almost a parallel existence with God. To be relativistic to the other would mean I follow my way and let God mind his business. Tolerating the other would signify a sense of discomfort and helplessness with regard to the presence of God. Peacefully coexisting with the other would mean allowing God to exist by one's side, without any considerable relation.

Having good will, having respect for and accepting the other would mean to recognize God as he, she or it is. Interacting with the other on equal footing and cooperating with the other would

mean being co-creator with God in living the life gifted by God. Being in harmony with the other would mean being in harmony and union with God. Embracing the other in religions would imply a positive and creative process that leads to harmonious and peaceful living. This state of harmony gives the perfect testimony of the divine and social character, in which human beings are created. No wonder, this state will furnish a realization that the 'other' in religions is not really 'other', but is 'an extension of my own divine-human self as well as belongs to my own world of faith, which is social and multi-faceted in character. 'Embracing the other in religions' establishes the relevance of religion and the ultimate meaning of human life, as well.

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Peaceful Coexistence in Multi-Cultural Societies: The Qu'ranic Perspective

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Abstract—*In a current global society, it is no longer possible to lead an isolated life. People of different faiths and belief live together. It is therefore, necessary to understand each other's needs aspirations, faiths, belief and practices. Religion is a potential force and an agent for the generation of peace and happiness; it facilitates goodwill among people and helps them to lead a life of spirituality and fulfilment. Islam is the first voice in the world which sent an invitation for universal brotherhood and unity. The Qura'nic vision of peace is not limited to the borders of the particular country or the confines of its own followers or community, it embraced all of humanity. Islam is synonymous with peace. It encourages its followers to explore every possible avenue for peaceful negotiations to sort out the conflict among the people and put their all efforts to establish peace in the society. The Holy Quran appeals to Muslims to engage in constructive dialogue with the people of other faiths on the basis of what they have common belief and doing of righteous deeds. The Holy Quran emphasizes that all the people have the right to follow the religion of their own choice. Islam calls on people of different faiths to have mutual respect for each other on the basis of their common humanity while following their own religions. In this paper, I will delineate the Qura'nic position to promote the peace in the world and establish the manner of universal brotherhood. How does Quran expect Muslims to live and interact with the people of other faith? I will also examine how the Quranic vision of world peace and human brotherhood as exemplified in the life of the Prophet of Islam who is the supreme exemplar in Islamic tradition.*

Keywords: *Islam, Quran, Coexistence, Freedom, Harmony, Dialogue*

INTRODUCTION

In the name of religion as we have seen in the past, and even today that people have suffered from superstition, self mortification, intolerance, violence, hatred, bigotry, exploitation and so on and so forth. All these create a very gloomy picture of the world today. Peaceful coexistence addresses most of these issues and tries to find amicable solution to them. Peaceful coexistence is the most basic and important need of the times. This paper explores the ability of Quranic teachings to contribute and to strength inter-faith dialogue in order to overcome the inter-religious conflicts in various parts of the world. So that creative peace can be established on the earth. This paper also aims to find out a way of mutual understanding, respect and tolerance to work in unity for peace and prosperity for the entire humanity in the light of Quran.

THE QURANIC VISION OF PEACE

The Quranic vision of peace is not limited to the borders of the particular country or the confines of its own followers or community, it embraced all of humanity. Islam is synonymous with peace. It encourages its followers to explore every possible avenue for peaceful negotiations to sort out the conflict among the people and put their all efforts to establish peace on the earth. The Quranic view of peace and coexistence is interwoven with its view of a universal moral discourse that unites all human beings. According to the Quran, human beings are created with an innate disposition (*fitrah*). Islam embraced certain universal human values that could form the basis for interaction with the people of other faiths. The basis of such universal moral order can also be traced to verses like the following, "Human kind, be aware of your duties to your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women".ⁱ The verse suggests a common genesis and unity of human beings based on God's creation. It also implies that human beings have to recognize and to live in peaceful manner with the people of other faiths with their differences. The Quran also views human diversity as a basis for understanding and peaceful coexistence. The Holy Quran says: "O, People, We have created you from one male and female (*Adam and Eve*), and We have created to in different communities and tribes so that you may know each other".ⁱⁱ In the light of this verse, human diversity should enhance the recognition of rather than confrontation with the other.

QURANIC THEORY FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Islam brought to the world the message of peaceful coexistence, not only in theory, but also in practice. The truth is that Islam is a peaceful way of life: it was so for the man of past and it is so for the man of today. Human beings are to coexist in peace and harmony, diversity and differences in faith were to be judged by God. Quranic concept of peaceful co-existence is the view that human beings are united under one God.ⁱⁱⁱ They are to strive towards virtuous deeds^{iv} for most noble person in the eyes of God is the one who is most pious.^v These and other verses command Muslims to build bridges of understanding and cooperation with fellow human beings in order to create a just social order. Peaceful co-existence requires that people abstain from abusing and denigrating those who do not share their beliefs. Deriding and mocking others can engender violence and hatred. Therefore, the Quran urges respect for the beliefs of others. The

Quran further states, "Had God willed, they would not have been for not idolaters and, we have not appointed you a watcher over them, neither are you their guardian. Abuse not those to who they pray, apart from God, otherwise, they will abuse God in revenge without knowledge. So, we have decked out fair to every community their deeds: then to their lord they shall return, and He will tell them what they have been doing."^{vi}

THE PROPHETIC EXAMPLE OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

The Prophet of Islam had formulated an important principle of peace. This principle took practical shape in the *Hijra* emigration. It was in adherence to this principle that the Prophet of Islam immigrated to Medina, leaving his hometown Mecca in the thirteen years of his prophet hood. The community (*Ummah*) that the Prophet established in Medina comprised not only Muslims but also the Jews who lived with them in Medina. The Prophet himself articulated and implemented the Quranic demand of peaceful co-existence with the followers of other faiths. The Prophet envisioned the Jews as being an important component of Medina community and outlined the rights and obligations of the Jews of Medina. The constitution states, "Whoever of the Jews follows us has the same help and support as the believer, so long as they are not wronged by him and he does not help the enemies of Muslim. The constitution also states the Jews of *Banu A'raf* are community along with the believers, to the Jews their religion, and to the Muslims their religion. This applies both to their clients and to themselves, with the exception of anyone who has done wrong or acted treacherously; he brings evil only on himself and on his household" Another articles of the document states that between the Jews and Muslims is sincere friendship and honourable dealing, not treachery. There is help for the person wronged. Such terms indicates the basis of a pluralistic society that the Prophet envisioned, a society that fully implemented the Quranic pronouncement of peaceful coexistence with followers of other faiths.

THE CONCEPT OF MUTUAL RESPECT IN QURAN

Islam teaches us to respect every man who is good whatever his religion may be, and to be drawn towards merits and virtues whatever be the religion or race of the person who possesses them. All human beings were creatures of God. The Holy Quran emphasises that all the people have right to follow the religion of their own choice. In Islam, all human beings are brothers and sisters unto each other. Islam calls on people of different faiths to have mutual respect for each other on the basis of their common humanity while following their own religion. According to Islam, the life of human being is a trust from God, irrespective of his or her ancestry, colour, or language. Humankind is the best of all creations^{vii} and is created of the best stature.^{viii} So, every human deserves respect by nature.

RELIGIOUS HARMONY IN THE LIGHT OF QURAN

What the world needs today is an acceptable formula for the attainment of religious harmony. Religious pluralism is a historical fact. Religious pluralism is not only a hard fact but also necessity to maintain the dynamism and growth of a religious worldview. In this connection, one of the commands of the Quran is that, there is no compulsion is religion.^{ix} Another place Quran

declares that "you have your religion and I have mine".^x When the Prophet Mohammad migrated to Medina, he issued a declaration his acceptance of the religion of Muslims for the Muslim and the religion of Jews for the Jews.^{xi} This principle formulated by the Holy Quran is the best described not as religious harmony, but as harmony among religious people. A great example of this principle is found in the life of Prophet of Islam. It concerns the conference of three religions which was held in the Prophet's own mosque in Median. Mohammad Husain Haykal writes in his book, *The life of Mohammad*: "The three scriptural religious thus confronted one another in Medina. The delegation entered the prophet into public debate and these were soon joined by the Jews, thus resulting in a tripartite dialogue between Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This was a truly great congress which the city of Yathrib had witnessed. In it the three religions which today dominate the world and determine its destiny had met, and they did so for the greatest idea and the noblest purpose."^{xii} In view of this historical reality, it is clear that the suggestions made by Islam as how to produce harmony among the different religions is the only viable solution. There are a number of similar verses in the Quran which make it quite plain that one's choice of religion or faith is wholly a matter of individual conscience.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN ISLAM

Religious freedom is not under attack in the Quran, but is actually upheld by it. Islam recognises complete freedom of religion and belief for every human being. The Holy Quran excludes compulsion from the sphere of religion. It lays down in the clearest words: there is no compulsion in religion—the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error.^{xiii} The Holy Quran has stipulated that all human humans were a single Ummah^{xiv} and God has created them from a single man and a single woman and has divided them into various groups to know one another.^{xv} If God had wanted to create people with the same faith, He would have done that, but He had not done it on purpose.^{xvi} The holy Quran has noted that there is no compulsion in accepting the religion^{xvii} but also has specified that if God wanted, He could have made all people Muslims or believers^{xviii} but God has decided to let them choose their way and also see the results.^{xix} He has ordered Prophet Mohammad that his duty is to spread the message of God and has no right to force people to accept religion. Therefore, every person is responsible for his or her conduct and acts: if the people follow the right path they would have done justice to themselves and if they choose unwisely; they would harm their own cause.^{xx} God has told Prophet Mohammad that if people did not accept his invitation to faith, just to tell them that he will follow his own act and they will follow their own acts. This Quranic verse assesses that every person actions according to their own logic and every person will be naturally held accountable for what he has done.^{xxi} Therefore Islam maintains that no person is allowed to force others into holding a certain faith, even if it is the best.^{xxii} When Islam introduces itself as the best religion but does not impose this on others. Quran has noted that Islam is only religion acceptable to God^{xxiii} but also specifies that if followers of other faiths acted in their belief in God and did well. God will also reward them.^{xxiv} This verse considers a unique right for all humans which make way for peaceful coexistence of various religious groups.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE IN THE LIGHT OF QURAN

The objective of inter-faith dialogue is to create mutual understanding, respect and tolerance to work in unity for peace and prosperity of humanity at large without harming the identity of any religion. It is believed that every religion has some universalized values as a common ground. Islam meets all the requirements, needed for interfaith dialogue. The Holy Quran laid down the basis of interfaith dialogue. Peace treaty of Hudaibiyah in the History of Islam was the result of successful dialogue of its kind. The treaty was signed despite divergent views of people. Interestingly, the Quran called this peace process as the greatest victory. The Prophet of Islam (P.B.U.H) at Hudaibiyah agreed to enter a ten years Peace Treaty with the people of other faith. As per this treaty, it was agreed that the Muslims and Non Muslims will not harm each other and in the shade of the produced security they shall be free to follow their own religion and none should plot against the other. The companions of the Prophet not wanted to remove the words *Messenger of God* from the treaty. The Prophet himself removed it from the treaty as the unbelievers were not ready to accept him as Messenger of God. It is important to keep in mind here that he was far more powerful than the combined strength of all the unbelievers at that time but he preferred to go with peace treaty and agreed to their condition.

The amazing point about Islam is that even in the most dominant and most powerful time of Islamic sway, it is suggested that if Muslim enter a peace treaty with the followers of other religions should have lordship over others. Islam orders its followers that faith and religion is not impossible.^{xxv} The Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) has no duty to be dominant over people's life, but only is entitled to reveal and explain the religion^{xxvi}. God is kind to everyone and His mercy is for all humanity.^{xxvii} Inter-faith dialogue is today's necessity to restore peace, harmony in the world. Islam meets all the requirements, needed for inter-faith dialogue. Dialogue has not only been an important principle in Islam, but also Quran has also stipulated that it should be conducted in the best possible manner^{xxviii} and based on good argument.^{xxix} God has mentioned frequent cases of dialogue between His messengers and their opponents and has advised Prophet Mohammad (P.B.U.H) to engage in dialogue with people.^{xxx} The Prophet of Islam started his mission with dialogue and argument.^{xxxi} The profound study of the Holy Quran and tradition of Prophet, as he is living Quran, show that he considered dialogue the sole legitimate way for peaceful coexistence and to find solutions to social and political problems. Any dialogue should be based on common points and progress within the Quranic framework. Islam is synonymous with peace. It encourages its followers to explore every possible avenue for peaceful negotiation to sort out the conflicts. The Holy Quran appeals Muslims to engage in constructive dialogue with people of other faiths on the basis of what they have common in doing righteous deeds.

TOLERANCE IN THE LIGHT OF QURAN

Islam is a tolerant and forward looking religion that calls the whole world towards itself and is also ready to tolerant all the religious beliefs of the world. While being aware of the truth of the falsehood people, Islam encourages its followers to mingle with them, live with them in peaceful manner, interact with them and share in their happiness and sorrow. Islam is a flexible religion. It encourages Muslims to covenant with non-Muslims, commerce with them, joint ownership and of properties and borrowing and lending with them. Tolerance has been the principle

throughout the history of Islam. It has been one of the main underlying causes of its successful dissemination. The concept of Qur'anic tolerance extends protection not only to Muslims and the people of the book (*Ahl al-Kitab*) but even to strangers who openly declare idolatry. If one of the idolaters seeks protection, grant him protection so that he may hear the word of God.^{xxxii} This indicates clearly that Quran envisioned a diverse community that was united under common moral values. Human beings are to coexist in peace and harmony. Diversity and differences in faith were to be judged by God only since, Is not He (God) the best of judges.^{xxxiii}

UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD IN THE LIGHT OF QURAN

Islam is the first voice in the world which sent an invitation for universal brotherhood and unity. Islam always persuaded people to live with tolerance, harmony, love, brotherhood and peace on the earth adding that humanity is more precious than any of the religions. The prophet of Islam created a bond among Muslims that is superior to all bonds. A Muslim, wherever and where ever he is, is the brother of another Muslim and he has right over other. The Prophet said: "A Muslim is brother to a Muslim. Neither the wrongs him, nor hands him over". "Every Muslim's blood, property and honor are sacred to a Muslim."^{xxxiv} All Muslims under the sky constitute a single body. Muslim may live in different geographical areas, speak different languages and practice a variety of socio-cultural customs yet they still follow the Islamic norm with regard to conduct their daily activities. The Quranic teaching proposes unity rather than conflict as the basis for social relations and mutual assistance. Islam makes all mankind one great brotherhood and exhorts all of us to seek the path of peace through the righteousness and beneficence of our conduct towards each others. The Qu'ranic concept of universal brotherhood of mankind is also evident from the fact that the word "Muslim" has come only 42 times in the holy Qu'ran whereas the word "man" came 65 times furthermore the word "mankind" appeared as many as 240 times. This clearly shows that the welfare of the entire human kind is one of the principal concerns of Islam.

CONCLUSION

India and other parts of the world are facing serious problems of extremism and intolerance whereas religious harmony and tolerance is the need of the day. Peaceful coexistence is one of the most important human ideals. Peace and harmony constitute the soul of Islam. The Holy Quran has laid the foundation of peace and has leveled the path to peaceful coexistence. The Holy Quran emphasizes that all the people have the right to follow the religion of their own choice. Islam calls on people of different faiths to have mutual respect for each other on the basis of their common humanity while following their own religions. The followers of various religions have learned that to adhere the Quranic teachings to live together like members of one big united family in the small village of this new age world. Needless to say that gaining this mutual understanding is much easy in modern days than it was in old era. Peaceful coexistence is the most basic and important need of the time. It is Islam that brought to the world the message of peaceful coexistence, not only in theory, but also in practice. Hence, Islam, in short is the science of strife-free living, supported by a factual history of peaceful co-existence. It seeks for peaceful coexistence and mutual tolerance between the people of different religions and cultures.

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Embracing the Other in Margin: Gandhian Understating of Poverty, Marginalisation and Development



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Abstract—Poverty is an extremely complex phenomenon, which manifests itself in a dense range of overlapping and interweaving economic, political and social elements. These include economic deprivation, assetlessness, low income levels, hunger, poor health, insecurity, physical and psychological hardship, social exclusion, degradation and discrimination, and political powerlessness and disarticulation. It may be transient, as during sudden natural disasters, or chronic and persistent over time. In mainstream Marxist literature, poverty is conventionally defined predominantly in terms of expropriation of the legitimate control over the mode of production of the working classes by the exploiting classes. It is seen to be the result of the fact that the producing classes do not own the assets of production, such as land and capital. In contemporary literature, poverty is frequently understood in terms of the lack of control not only over land, but also forests, water and mineral resources.

There are other approaches as well, such as those that view poverty and marginalisation in terms of social exclusion and discrimination. However, none of these definitions adequately address questions such as why those excluded in particular ways may or may not be as badly off economically as some but there is something specific to that marginalisation that results in a structured and continuous denial of rights.

It was in Gandhi's ideas and action one finds scope for recognizing people for what they are and celebration of the very principles that are anti-thesis to modern society—values such as femininity, non-productivity, etc. it was with the strength of such perspectives that one can hope to visibilize the people condemned into the dark tunnels of society. This research is an effort in that direction.

One glaring aspect of the marginalized groups' life strategies that has been unconscionably invisibilised is their sense of agency expressed through their collective and individual actions. While this paper would pay due attention to the individual, micro life strategies of the poorest, its primary focus would be privileging their collective expression of agency, and will argue that the notion of joint humanity is very important.

Keywords: Poverty, Development, Sociology, Marginalisation, Human Agency, Coping, Collectivisation.

INTRODUCTION

Almost all poverty-specific research is principally conducted under the banner of different Social Sciences in general and Development Studies in particular. Although Development Studies (it also includes policy studies) aspires to claim a place in the fold of social sciences, there is a crucial difference in their treatment of their respective objects of study, both in approach and in emphasis. For the former poverty is a primary and avowed concern, whereas for the latter it is incidental that knowledge about poverty is added. Thus the present research undertaken here has to clarify whether it brackets itself in the category of Development Research conducted in the fashion normalized by Development Studies discipline or in the category of a social science research. The difference between them is decisive as some mutually challenging and reciprocally critical foundational notions guide them. Choosing one over the other is not just a matter of research focus but also expressive of the values and worldview we stand by. Much of the research conducted under the umbrella of Development Studies in the form of poverty research tends to proceed by taking some crucial notions as given while Social science research would treat them as contestable and problematic. One can think of even "poverty" here. In the same way, the foundational conceptions of "society" and "human person" that underlay these two disciplines are different in a significant way. In a manner of saying, one might argue that social sciences have not dealt with poverty as exclusively as perhaps the Development Studies. The causes are political in both camps, albeit the good that has happened in either of the camps. However in the final analysis, poverty research not tempered by the debates and insights of the social sciences tends to produce conclusions and results that are incomplete and superficial, when not self-serving.

POVERTY STUDIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Our understanding of poverty and marginalisation is heavily structured by a divisive logic of modernity. Seldom does such understanding engage in a self-reflexive inquiry into its own ways of constructing the categories that are now taken as 'given', for example 'poverty' as a construct. Since their very existence and relevance rest on postulating a foundational reality called 'poverty', they present it as a well-rounded singular object and as an ever-persisting reality. But since this has a strong bearing on policies and practices of governmental and non-governmental organisations, we need to dissect this notion and explore an alternative perspective. Talking about alternative, one can hope to learn a lot from Gandhian understanding of poverty and marginalisation.

Before going into that, let us discuss the problems besetting the prevailing understandings of poverty.

The first such problem flows from the social sciences' historical and intellectual legacies, that are decisively modern. Historically social sciences were born in times when the western hegemony was establishing itself through colonialism very stridently. As the products of modernity these disciplines mostly sided with the colonial empires and furthered their agendas. Though there were dissenting voices within social science fold, the dominant voices were supportive of the colonizing forces as they saw the latter as the harbingers of modernity. Though the criminal intentions of the colonizing forces were taken note of by the most conscientious among the social

scientists, they were pardoned for they were treated as necessary costs to be paid for promoting and disseminating modernity. In this sense the social scientists were willingly missing the trees of criminal acts of colonialism for the wood of modernizing intentions of the imperial forces.

Thus the social sciences were more focused at the processes that contributed to the dissemination and effects of modernity. As a result poverty was treated as the reality specific only to the non-modern societies, and poverty was regarded as the manifestation of the deadweight of the traditions. Hence social science research was obsessively fixated with modernity and the factors that promote it. If caste, race, agrarian economy, village power relations etc were studied by Social sciences it was not so much for the impoverishment they caused but for the challenges they posed for the spread of modernity. Poverty and other social ills were thought to melt into air with the arrival of modernity. The untrammled optimism for modernity and the redemptions it will bring upon the societies mired in traditions had persuaded the social scientists to give scant attention to poverty. If any thing, poverty was regarded as a problem coming in the way of modernity marching successfully. By strengthening modernity, poverty was thought to disappear.

METHODOLOGICAL RIGIDITIES

Secondly, on the methodological front too there was least encouragement for grappling with poverty, *let alone* conceptualizing it. Much of social science disciplines particularly sociology, political sciences, and anthropology, were steeped in functionalist and systemic paradigm due to which they were intensely concerned about normal state of affairs in the society and about the processes and means for maintaining it. Poverty and all its manifestations were regarded as abnormal and therefore dysfunctional to the society. While the social scientist were alarmed at the higher incidences of abnormality in society they still treated them as the excreta that would be washed away by the oncoming waves of normalcy achieved by the engulfment of the entire society by modernity. The social scientists' persuasive recommendations for social engineering were aimed at working on the reinstatement of normalcy. It was believed that normalcy defined in modernist spirit will establish the equilibrium and will banish abnormality in their wake. This resulted in the whole focus centering on social engineering and the effects of it on the wider society.

Poverty thus was consigned to the status of the crust on the surface of the society that will have to be eliminated forthwith through social engineering efforts. Social sciences, as they were growing in the shadow of the supremacy of scientific rigour in natural sciences, had assigned the task of studying poverty to less theoretical disciplines like social work and development studies. However the latter were 20th century phenomena and very much the product of the social engineering orientation of the social sciences. Development Studies, on the other hand, aspired to objectify poverty so that doing so would help development professionals and the agencies they belong to have a "problem" that can be "managed". The result: Development studies, solidified the multifaceted experience of impoverishment into a managerial issue for the development sector. Marginalised persons too were understood in the same sense. They are those who failed to integrate themselves into the redeeming processes of modernity, for reasons mostly personal-personal incapacity, inability and inadequacy. Many of the development studies disciplines in various incarnations too took this up uncritically and went about understanding, assessing and

measuring poverty without ever problematising it as a relational product. Poverty was understood by the Development studies only with a biomedical perspective, which treated poverty as a disease that has crept into society like a germ into the human body. It was in the manner of going to war that poverty was approached.

DEVELOPMENT AS ELIMINATION OF POVERTY

The absence of discourses on poverty and marginalisation in social sciences can also be explained in terms of how they conceptualize development. Development in social sciences is understood in mostly positive terms in that it was treated in terms of several presences that affirmed development. For example development was measured in terms of what have to be established rather than in terms of what have to be eliminated. A society was regarded as developed if it has acquired scientific spirit, rational attitude and economic prosperity. It was believed that the establishment of these traits would drive away all other problems and social ills. With this understanding, social sciences had taken upon themselves the task of informing various social forces as to how these presences can be brought in. Such conception of development compelled them to study those processes that maintain or facilitate or act as impediments to these traits.

Simultaneously development studies offered a contrastive view on development. In their conception, development was understood in terms of the elimination of negative presences. Development is such a state in society when poverty and other such 'social ills' are eliminated. In the development studies' perspective poverty and other such phenomenon were given the kind of place that disease occupied in biomedical disciplines. Therefore maintenance of normalcy calls for singling out the disease and bringing it under the microscope for analysis, measurement and management. Poverty was a disease and it was studied in the same spirit in which diseases were studied in medical sciences. For these disciplines development is the 'normal' state that every society has to strive for. However, now there is an easy way out to achieve development (easy way out only conceptually but not in reality where poverty elimination proves to be an elusive task)–eliminate poverty and there comes development! The easy equivalence of development with the absence of poverty triggered off unfettered interest in poverty, its kinds and types.

Poverty became an issue of grave importance only in the last three decades. Ever since human and social development was no longer assumed to be an automatic concomitant of economic development and as something that had to be actively pursued and established, social development has become a big techno-managerial concern of the development agencies, both that of the state and non-state. This shift has bred a different understanding of poverty and who the poor are. This shift has also legitimized the arrival and continued presence of an army of development institutions, organisations and professionals that have assumed the mandate of facilitating, achieving and consolidating development in the societies and groups deemed underdeveloped by them. They have all come together to create a particular reality called poverty in a fashion that validates their interventions in the society and the lives of the impoverished members in it. The way, in which international development organisations, particularly World Bank, have suddenly brought poverty at centre of the development discourse, hides certain self-serving intentions of these institutions, rather than just the noble concerns for the poor. At once, poverty was very extensively and vigorously studied by Development Studies. Many poverty

studies soon ensued. In the long run, both the noble and not-so-noble intentions of poverty studies have conspired and worked overtime to establish a distinct ontological reality of being poor and poverty. It is as if they have carved out a new species of human—the one who is in poverty.

GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE

Studies on poverty and marginalisation in all their manifestations (development studies etc.) are seemingly immune to the critical inputs from eastern visions, particularly Gandhian vision. Pitching their significance only in relation to policy influencing and policy making, they sacrifice research rigour and critical inquiry for the sake of arriving at spectacularly grand generalizations that are amenable to policy formulations. In the same spirit, they seldom engage in a self-reflexive inquiry into their own ways of constructing the categories that are now taken as 'given', for example 'poverty' as a construct. Since their very existence and relevance rest on postulating a foundational reality called 'poverty', they present it as a well-rounded singular object and as an ever-persisting reality.

Once poverty is understood as a 'construct', the deconstruction of it leads to the reinvention of human as free individuals, who do not define themselves in terms of lack and deficiency. Such is the power of this construct that by successfully amalgamating local conditions of absence of material wealth with the global conception of material wealth as the necessary and sufficient condition of good life, the social majority of humanity has been reduced to non-humans in need of assistance. What is worse, instilling that sense of such social majority, it has made "seeking assistance" as part of their self-definition. When the non-rich (materially) believes that they are 'poor' and only through external assistance they can overcome their being poor, what gets valorized is the whole army of development experts and their institutional apparatuses—they alone can eradicate poverty.

What the development studies has done, or what the mainstream social sciences has failed to question, is absolutisation of 'poverty' as material deficiency. While material deficiency was definitely part of people's expectation of distress and destitution in the pre-modern societies they were deeply embedded in their culture and linked to spatial-temporal specialities.

How each culture or even each category of people went about constituting non-materiality, differed from one society to another or even within a society? In a similar manner, a whole host of non-material aspects too were considered as constituting destitution. This non-materiality too was culturally embedded. In some cultures, not having neighbours to live close-by gave them a sense of deficiency, whereas in certain other societies and groups having too many neighbours living in close proximity was distressing. Besides these, other culturally deemed notion too come to define inability, such as abandonment, not having people to love and be loved, neglect, not having respect, domination by others, discrimination, oppression, deprivation, hunger, malnutrition, homelessness ill-health and exclusion from educational possibilities etc. had been considered as constituting their experience of "meaningless-ness".

The deconstruction of poverty will also lead to rescue of human from a whole gamut of reductionism to which he/she has been subjected to. It may also result in the triumph of local versus the global, because, at present, the latter seems to have imposed its abstraction on the lived experience of the vernacular societies.

We argue that it can rescue human, because, the existing discourse on poverty has devalued human beings as meaning-seeking individuals and indeed reduced them as saleable commodities through the notion of labour-as-essence, as in the same way as the earth has become a saleable product through the notion of land. What it has entailed is that the poor is one who is unable to sell himself/herself to meet his/her requirements.

The equation of man with labour and nature with land has its origin in the economization of society, whereby resourcelessness came to be defined as a problem. And resourcefulness acquired extraordinary significance. Therefore economic resourcefulness largely in the form of material resources became identified with being 'developed' and the lack or absence of which is being 'underdeveloped'. It gets further individualized when such resourcefulness is equated with personal possessions. Those without individual possessions in abundance need to emulate the ones with lots of such individual possessions.

In this scheme of things what is available to the community or group as a whole does not qualify the members of such group or community as 'resourceful' people. For instance as individual with unusual quantity of wealth even in the midst of the community of people suffering from hunger or malnutrition or oppressions and dominations is still wealthy, whereas the eastern worldview before being influenced by modernity saw meaninglessness not at the individual level but at the collective community level. The suffering of one's community or another member thereof is also the suffering of the evaluating individual. The state of existence of any of his/her caste member is also extended upon the evaluating individual of the same caste. Echoing his Gandhi locates the poverty of the community or society not the poor but in the greedy rich and their thieving nature, Gandhi said, "I suggest that we [the resourceful people] are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use, and keep it, I steal it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world." In another place Gandhi again emphasizes the collectivist vision thus, "Welfare of the country is certainly included in the welfare of the world, and individual welfare is included in the welfare of the country. On the other hand, individual welfare should include the welfare of the world" (Gandhi, 1934, 22 March).

But what modern/capitalistic logic has done is to subjugate the collective consciousness to quantified individualized global abstractions. In the same way, the cultural understanding of self gets subordinated to the economic understanding of self. This consequently has led to subjugation of local by national and even more dangerously of national by global. What emerged from such series of subjugations is that materiality has got triumphed over non-materiality.

The death of diversity in understanding one's existence occurs exactly at the point when singular global-level abstract definition of poverty is imposed on the psyche of everyone. Thus in contrast to societies that valued detachment over attachment to material possessions, "having more" material wealth come to be privileged. In place of societies that united individual with communities when defining their selves, releasing of the individuals from the holds of the communities got prioritized. The reversal of hierarchies ended up privileging a whole host of development experts who can be trained only in western/modern knowledge system. Similarly the right to judge whether

someone is poor has been divested of concerned individuals or their communities and has got vested in global institutional apparatuses located in western world. Curiously these institutions are the creations of the western nations that privilege themselves only on account of possessing more material wealth, though concentrated in the individual hands.

Here once sees a curious paradox: While the western world treats the unusual wealth of one individual/individuals as generalizable to the healthiness of their societies, they refuse to generalize the wealth/ resourcefulness of the society or communities to the individuals in the eastern societies or the impoverished in their own societies. This paradox is sustained only because wealth is quantified in the form of GDPs and per-capita incomes, rather than seen as an experience whose quality and necessity is left to the assessment and judgment of individuals/communities. It is true that the so-called rich nations like USA has vast oceans of improvised people, yet the country remains a rich nation. If one goes by Mandela's understanding of freedom or Gandhian understanding of liberation, then the so called rich nations will have to lose all their moral authorities to judge other humanities as 'poor'. Mandela in one of the profound statements he has made says "Freedom is indivisible; the chains on any one of my people were the chains on all of them, the chains on all of my people were the chains on me". Gandhi in his own refreshing way says that the dawn of freedom will not occur if the last man in India is not liberated. And it is a public knowledge that Gandhi refused to enjoy any luxuries of the world, until such luxuries reached the last man on the earth. He has advocated the same for all the resourceful people in the world. He said "all people having money or property should hold it in trust for the society" (Gandhi, 1939). "

But such sense of shame and guilt has been made to vapourize with the arrival of experts and expert institutions on the one hand and compartmentalization of individual psyche as conterminous to individual body and experience on the other. The very moment of acceptance of oneself as resourceful is also the very moment at which the moral responsibility and joint humanity with the existence of the other get dispelled from the vision.

In this effort the role of social sciences is decisive. Particularly the science of psychology has contributed immensely to the atomization of individual mind, by inventing such compartmentalized psyche as emerging and dying with the birth and death of such individual.

In Gandhian and Buddhist view of poverty one can see the tendency to culturalise and moralise poverty in contrast to the overly secularized and abstracted conception of poverty enunciated by western paradigms. In social science framework too such culturalised understanding of poverty was absent until the arrival of Amartya Sen—whose eastern sensibilities aiding that cannot be exaggerated.

The strength of Gandhian vision is that the cultural context of poverty is called into question rather than mere condition of poverty. In such a vision one avoids the tragic tendency of locating poverty in the poor--his/her lack of initiative and effort (Rosen, George. 1982: p. 437). In the secularized understanding of poverty, not only the poverty of the individual is traced to the individual psyche, but even the poverty of the entire society gets traced to the individual poor. It is through this unfair tracing the poor gets solidified into a group, though they themselves are a

highly variegated people in their own right. But this location of poverty in poor becomes necessary for the experts to rescue themselves as the cause of poverty.

But, by locating poverty in the cultural context and seeing it as the product of the prevailing structure of unequal relationship, Gandhian vision calls into question the issue of dominance, oppression and inequality in power and conceptual categories organized in favour of the most powerful. Thus, poverty is seen as the outcome of conceptual shifts as well as the result of relationship patterns. Here the blame is laid at the doorsteps of knowledge producers and dominant groups.

But this uncomfortable vision must be laid to rest and put to relegation. As new scapegoat has to be found so that the 'resourceful' group can exonerate itself, it becomes all the more necessary to locate the scapegoat that has 'frustrated' every well-meaning attempt at development. Excluded a priori were those experts that had prepared or advised the general strategies for the eradication of poverty. On the other hand it was equally embarrassing to accuse the intellectually bankrupt governments of most of the southern nations for the continued troubled state of affairs.

Those left open that final, easily available common target for the abuses of despair-the low-income groups, including the landless labourer the small farmer, the unemployed craftsman. And since they could be calculated upon not to react or return the attack, experts and government set about the task at will.

But what is forgotten and swept under the carpet is the truth that "the principal obstacles set in the path of the emancipation of the poor came not from below but from above--from the ruling groups at the village, regional, national and international levels, who only allowed change on their own terms".

In the Gandhian vision we can note the problematisation of, both material and culture of wealth-making as the cause of poverty, rather than poor. It is immensely significant to remember that when Gandhi talks of trusteeship, he lists out prescription for the so called 'resourceful' to re-vision their wealth-making and their relationship with wealth (Appadorai, 1969, p. 326). Throughout his writing/thinking he formulated lessons for the rich and other resourceful groups change their ways of being. This is a highly ethicised version of poverty. Elaborating further, Jeevan Kumar writes, "Basically, Gandhi suggested this concept as an answer to the economic inequalities of ownership and income, a kind of non-violent way of resolving all social and economic conflicts prevalent in the world. Therefore, man's dignity, and not his material prosperity, is the centre of Gandhian economics. Gandhian economics aims at a distribution of material prosperity, keeping only human dignity in view. Thus it is dominated more by moral values than by economic ideas. According to Gandhi, Trusteeship is the only ground on which one can work out an ideal combination of economics and morality (Jeevan Kumar 2007, pp. 1-3).

In sum Gandhi provides enough scope for the social origins of poverty and clearly argues that poverty as scarcity as socially-produced rather than as objectively existing. This vision has immense potential to radically restructure our thought processes and practices concerning poverty elimination and development.

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Gandhi and Mahaya Buddhism



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Abstract—*Gandhi once said that the Buddha was the greatest teacher of ahimsa (non-violence) and that he “taught us to defy appearances and trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love.”¹ Albert Schweitzer once said that “Gandhi continues what the Buddha began. In the Buddha the spirit of love sets itself the task of creating different spiritual conditions in the world; in Gandhi it undertakes to transform all worldly conditions.”² Margaret Chatterjee maintains that Gandhi’s position most closely resembles Mahayana Buddhism.*

This essay covers several topics related to Gandhi and Buddhism. The first section discusses nonviolence in Buddhism and how it differs from Jainism and how it is compatible with Gandhi’s view. The second section addresses the problems regarding Gandhi’s misconceptions about Buddhism. The third section explores the issue of self-suffering in the Buddha and in Gandhi. The fourth section discusses the issue of the Bodhisattva ideal and Gandhi’s status as the Mahatma. The fifth section offers a positive view of the Buddhist self in order to counteract the pervasive negative view that one generally encounters. Focusing on the thoroughly empirical method of Gandhi’s experiments in truth, the sixth section will suggest a constructive comparison with the Buddha’s famous claim that “those who know causation know the Dharma.” The seventh section will discuss the relationship between morality and beauty and show how this relates to a Buddhist-Gandhian virtue ethics. In the last section I argue that commentators who interpret Gandhi as a follower of Advaita Vedanta cannot do justice to his firm commitment to the individual and cannot make sense out of his political activism.

Keywords: *Peace, Bodhisattva, Virtue, Non-violence, Truth, Buddhism, Ethics*

INTRODUCTION

Gandhi once said that the Buddha was the greatest teacher of *ahimsa* (non-violence) and that he "taught us to defy appearances and trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love."¹ Albert Schweitzer once said that "Gandhi continues what the Buddha began. In the Buddha the spirit of love sets itself the task of creating different spiritual conditions in the world; in Gandhi it undertakes to transform *all* worldly conditions."² Raghavan Iyer concurs: "Gandhi was, in fact, following in the footsteps of the Buddha in showing the connection between the service of suffering humanity and the process of self-purification"; and even more emphatically he speaks of "Gandhi's profound reinterpretation of Hindu values in the light of the message of the Buddha," Observing that Gandhi establishes a middle path between Jain individualism and the Vedantist dissolution of the individual, Margaret Chatterjee maintains that Gandhi's position most closely resembles Mahayana Buddhism. Chatterjee claims that one of Gandhi's prayers has Buddhist overtones: "The goal of the devotee is seen as the relief of suffering humanity, not as personal release from bondage. The mood expressed is much closer to the Bodhisattva than to the arhat ideal."

This essay covers several topics related to Gandhi and Buddhism. The first section discusses nonviolence in Buddhism and how it differs from Jainism and how it is compatible with Gandhi's view. The second section addresses the problems regarding Gandhi's misconceptions about Buddhism. The third section explores the issue of self-suffering in the Buddha and in Gandhi. The fourth section discusses the issue of the Bodhisattva ideal and Gandhi's status as the Mahatma. The fifth section offers a positive view of the Buddhist self in order to counteract the pervasive negative view that one generally encounters. Focusing on the thoroughly empirical method of Gandhi's experiments in truth, the sixth section will suggest a constructive comparison with the Buddha's famous claim that "those who know causation know the Dharma." The seventh section will discuss the relationship between morality and beauty and show how this relates to a Buddhist-Gandhian virtue ethics. In the last section I argue that commentators who interpret Gandhi as a follower of Advaita Vedanta cannot do justice to his firm commitment to the individual and cannot make sense out of his political activism. With this preservation of individuality, it is possible to propose a convergence of Gandhian and Buddhist humanism--a humanism of nonviolence and compassion.

NONVIOLENCE IN BUDDHISM

As in Jainism, *ahimsa* is preeminent in Buddhist ethics. Not killing is the first of the Five Precepts, and this prohibition includes all sentient beings from insects to humans. Buddhists (except some Tantric sects) firmly reject the ritual sacrifice of animals, although many allow the eating of meat as long as Buddhists are not the butchers. (Jains criticize Buddhists for being complicit in this violence against animals.) Both Buddhist and Jain farmers can eliminate pests who are destroying crops, but Buddhists perform atoning rites afterwards. While pacifism is the ideal, Buddhists and lay Jains may kill in self-defense. Unlike Jain ascetics, Buddhist monks have not only served as soldiers, but have raised and led armies, especially in Japan, Korea, and Tibet.

Finally, in some Mahayana schools Bodhisattvas may kill persons who will, if not stopped, murder others in the future. Appealing to consequentialist arguments, Buddhists defend such "preemptive strikes": Bodhisattvas accrue merit that they then can bequeath to others, and the would-be murderers are saved from the horrors of Hell³. Needless to say, Jains are scandalized by what they see as a crass rationalization of violence.

Many scholars have observed that the word *ahimsa* occurs only rarely in Buddhist scripture and commentary. Compared to the Jains, the Buddhists conceive of *ahimsa* as a positive virtue or, more precisely, an enabling virtue for higher virtues. Therefore, Buddhists usually speak of these other virtues rather than *ahimsa* itself. In S. Tachibana's *The Ethics of Buddhism* the word is used only once, and then only as one of seven Sanskrit words meaning benevolence or compassion. Nonviolence, however, comes out very clearly in Tachibana's formulation of the Buddhist categorical imperative: "We ought not to hurt mentally and physically our fellow creatures as well as our fellow men, but to love and protect them."⁴ The Jain formulation of *ahimsa* is almost always negative, while the Buddhist expression is almost exclusively positive.

Some of Gandhi's exceptions to *ahimsa* would appear extreme and unacceptable even to contemporary proponents of euthanasia. Gandhi proposed that a dying man must euthanize his handicapped child if he thought that no one would care for her. If his own son were suffering from rabies and there was no cure, then he should be euthanized. In both cases it is more important to relieve pain and preserve personal dignity than to follow lock-step the rule of nonviolence. This means that in many cases passive *ahimsa* is actually *himsa*. If a man who runs amuck and threatens to kill others, Gandhi insists that he must be killed; furthermore, the killer should "be regarded a benevolent man."⁶ Gandhi once told a Jain friend that *ahimsa* was not absolute and that one should always be "capable of sacrificing nonviolence for the sake of truth."⁷ If one cannot be true to himself without defending himself and others, then violence may be necessary.

GANDHI'S MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT BUDDHISM

It was not until he reached England that Gandhi discovered the great religious classics of his own Indian tradition. He first read the *Bhagavad-gita* in Sir Edwin Arnold's translation, and he read with "even greater interest" Arnold's verse rendition of the Buddha's life and thought.⁸ Writing to a Burmese friend in 1919, Gandhi said that "when in 1890 or 1891, I became acquainted with the teaching of the Buddha, my eyes were opened to the limitless possibilities of nonviolence."⁹ Gandhi declared that he was proud of the accusation (lodged by his own son) that he was a closet Buddhist, and he claimed that Buddhism was to Hinduism as Protestantism was to Roman Catholicism "only in a much stronger light, in a much greater degree." This comment represents a slight against Roman Catholicism, which currently has the most compassionate and most understanding Christian mission in Asia. It also reveals Gandhi's mistaken belief that Buddhism, along with Jainism, are simply reform movements within Hinduism.

Gandhi's persistence in believing that the Buddha was a theist is yet another instance in which his own religious views clouded his understanding. Gandhi's argument that "the Law (*dharma*) was God Himself"¹⁰ is true only in Mahayana Buddhism, where the cosmic Buddha is called the

dharmakya, literally, the Body of the Law. (Surendra Verma's suggestion that Gandhi's idea that God is Law, as it is not a Hindu or Jain idea, must have come from Buddhism is certainly worth serious consideration.¹¹ The Buddha himself, however, did not claim any transcendental or cosmic nature, and the deification of the Buddha came after his death. Furthermore, Gandhi's insistence on the Buddha's theism is ironic given the fact that he constantly wavered between personal theism and an impersonal pantheism, or even an impersonal "truthism." After all, Gandhi is most famous for his proposition that "Truth [not a supreme person] is God," a strategy partially designed to attract atheists to his cause. In any case, the Buddha adopted the Jain-Sankhya-Yoga view of the relationship between humans and gods. This view is neither theistic nor atheistic: the gods do indeed exist, but they, like all other nonhuman beings, have to have human incarnations in order to reach Nirvana. Finally, although I personally embrace Gandhi's theism, if the ethics of nonviolence is to have the most comprehensive acceptance, a nontheistic form would obviously be more preferable.

Nirvana is, in a word, freedom--freedom not only from hate and greed, but freedom from craving, the unquenchable desire for those things that we can never attain. One significant assumption of the Buddha's position is that ordinary desires, even for the Enlightened One, are acceptable. This is the clearest mode of understanding the Buddha's Middle Way between extreme asceticism on the one hand and sensualism on the other. It is also a good way to see Buddhism as a religious humanism accessible to all people.

GANDHI, SELF-SUFFERING, AND THE BUDDHA

A typical Gandhian response to the misdeeds of others was to shame them completely by doing their penance for them. This proved to be very effective not only against the British but with his own family and followers as well. It is most intriguing to see how Gandhi has imposed his own principle of self-suffering on the life of the Buddha. Although not used by the Buddha or his immediate disciples, civil protest through acts of self-immolation has been common in ancient as well as modern Asia. (Buddhist monks burning themselves to death during the Vietnam War and Falun Gong suicides in China are the most recent examples.) Gandhi was of course aware of this tradition of self-immolation,¹² but he still believed that his own particular adaptation of yogic *tapas* was new with him and that his practice of it had not yet been perfected.¹³ Presumably he would have seen protests through self-immolation as still too passive as compared to the engaged and dynamic nature of his own *satyagrahas*. (The Vietnamese monks, as far as I can remember, were not actively engaged in dialogue with the American officials.) Some commentators contend that there are instructive parallels between Gandhi's self-suffering and the suffering of the Bodhisattva, and we shall assess this claim in the next section.

If Gandhi does conceive of self-suffering as doing penance for others, then he has gone far beyond the traditional view of *tapas*. Indeed, it may even be at odds with the law of karma, which holds that karma is always individual not collective. (This means that only the individual person can work off her karmic debt.) Gandhi, however, appears to believe in collective guilt: "If we are all sons of the same God and partake of the same divine essence, we must partake of the sin of every person."¹⁴ He once observed that the "impurity of my associates is but the manifestation of the hidden wrong in me,"¹⁵ so this does appear to focus on individual karma, but his position is

still equivocal and problematic. Margaret Chatterjee finds Gandhi's position very implausible, for, in the two cases she mentions, it is very difficult to see any "strict causal line[s]" between the actions of others and any implication of guilt on Gandhi's part.¹⁶ By seeing *tapasya* as a process of self-purification rather than doing penance for other people, one can make better sense of Gandhi's actions. In this light Gandhi would have said that he could not demand perfection in others as long as he found imperfection in himself.

THE MAHATMA AND THE BODHISATTVA

A critic might say that the most significant difference between the Buddha and Gandhi was that the Buddha was a world-denying ascetic and that Gandhi was not. The following passage sums up this view very nicely:

Outwardly it would be hard to conceive of two individuals more different. On the one hand is the tranquil Buddha who walks serenely and calmly across the pages of history, or traditionally sits peacefully on a lotus with a gentle smile of infinitive compassion.... On the other hand is the Mahatma, speed and energy in every movement, laughing and sorrowing in his ceaseless endeavour to help mankind with the problems of human life....¹⁷

Gandhi must have heard similar comments, because he formulated this own firm response: "The Buddha fearlessly carried the war into the adversary's camp and brought down on its knees an arrogant priesthood. [He was] for intensely direct action."¹⁸ Who is correct? The truth as usual lies somewhere in between. Although he did frequently confront brahmin priests (the scriptures report that they were almost always converted), it can hardly be said that the Buddha destroyed the Vedic priesthood. (It continues to have great power even today.) Furthermore, although Buddhism and Jainism can take much credit for the reduction of animal sacrifice, it still continues today as an integral part of Goddess worship in Northeast India and Nepal. And even Gandhi admits that because of India's own weaknesses, the Buddha's, as well as the Jains', message of universal tolerance and nonviolence failed miserably. (Much blame, according to Gandhi, must be laid at the feet of Shankara for his "unspeakable cruelty in banishing Buddhism [from] India.")¹⁹ Finally, Gandhi is making the Buddha more of a political activist than he ever was. Gandhi should take sole credit for his own brilliant synthesis of religion and political action. As one commentator has said: "One cannot picture the Buddha training his disciples to face lathi charges as did the Mahatma."²⁰

The spiritual transformation of the entire world is the goal of most schools of Mahayana Buddhism. As opposed to the ascetic ideal of early Buddhism, where the emphasis was on personal liberation, the focus in Mahayana schools is on universal salvation. The vow of the Bodhisattva should be well known to those who know Buddhism: the Bodhisattva, even though she is free of karmic debt, vows not to enter Nirvana until all sentient beings enter before her. (The Bodhisattva's extra sacrifice caused some perceptive Buddhists to ask whether that made Bodhisattvas superior to the Buddha himself, who of course did not wait for the others.) The Bodhisattva ideal and the comprehensive range of universal salvation makes it relevant to contemporary debates about animal rights and the protection of the environment.

Gandhi does claim to have suffered--his fasts were long and many--for the good of all (*sarvodaya*); and he did declare that in his next life he wanted to be reborn an untouchable;²¹ but this still does not constitute anything like the soteriology that we find in Buddhism and Christianity. Gandhi obviously did not claim to have taken away the sins of the world as Buddhist and Christians claim their saviors do.

THE DYNAMIC SELF IN THE BUDDHA AND GANDHI

Siddhartha Gautama's response to the axial discovery of the self was strikingly unique: he proposed the doctrine of no-self (*anatman*). This conceptual innovation was so provocative that it was bound to invite misinterpretation, and unfounded charges of Buddhist "nihilism" continue even to this day. Gautama anticipated Hume's view that the self is the ensemble of feelings, perceptions, dispositions, and awareness that is the center for agency and moral responsibility.²² The Buddha's view, however, is superior to Hume's, primarily because Gautama supported real causal efficacy among internally related phenomena. While Hume deconstructed any theory of causality, the Buddha reconstructed causal relations with his theory of interdependent coorigination.

Gautama rejected the soul-as-spiritual-substance view of the Upanishads, Jainism, and Sankhya-Yoga, and he deconstructed the "spectator" self of these philosophies 2,500 years before recent thinkers dismantled the Cartesian self. As opposed to strict deconstruction, for example, Buddhists hold that selves, though neither the same nor different throughout their lives, are nevertheless responsible for their actions. These selves are also real in the sense that they are constituted by relations with their bodies, other selves, and all other entities. This is why the Buddhist self should be viewed in relational or process terms rather than the negative implications of the no-self doctrine. The Buddhist self is relational primarily in the sense of its dependence on the five *skandhas* and the internal relations this dependence entails. From this analysis we can clearly see that the Buddhist self is a robust personal agent full capable of maintaining its personal integrity and taking full responsibility for its actions.

GANDHIAN AND BUDDHIST EXPERIMENTS IN TRUTH

The Buddha's famous statement "a person who sees causation, sees the Dharma"²³ implies that people know how to act, not because of abstract rules or absolutes, but because of their past and immediate circumstances. Those who are mindful of who they are and how they relate to themselves and others will know what to do. The "mirror of Dharma" should not be seen as a common one that we all look into together, as some Mahayana schools believe, but it is actually a myriad of mirrors reflecting individual histories. Maintaining the essential link between fact and value, just as Greek virtue ethics did, the Buddha holds that the truth about our causal relations dictates the good that we ought to do.

The Buddha's MiddleWay is a distinctively personal mean between extremes, much like Aristotle's relative mean. Aristotle defined a moral virtue as "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by [practical reason]..."²⁴ For example, Aristotle thought it was always wrong to eat too much, but each person

will find his/her own relative mean between eating too much and eating too little. A virtue ethics of moderation is still normative, because the principal determinants in finding a workable mean for eating are objective not subjective. If people ignore these objective factors--e.g., body size, metabolism, and other physiological factors--then their bodies, sooner or later, will tell them that they are out of their respective means.

If this analysis is correct, then the traditional translation of the moral imperatives of the Buddha's eight-fold path may be misleading. Translating the Sanskrit stem *samyag*--that appears in each of the words as the "right" thing to do makes them sound like eight commands of duty ethics. Instead of eight universal rules for living, they should be seen as virtues, i.e., dispositions to act in certain ways under certain conditions and personal circumstances. Both are equally virtuous, because they have personally chosen the virtues as means, means *relative* to them.

GANDHI AND THE BUDDHA: THE AESTHETICS OF VIRTUE

Drawing on the tradition of Greek virtue ethics, one could define ethics as the art of making the soul great and noble. (Here the meaning of art would be the idea of creating a unique individual piece rather than making copies from a mould as in craft art.) It was Confucius who conceived of moral development as similar to the manufacture of a precious stone. At birth we are like uncut gems, and we have an obligation to carve and polish our potential in the most unique and beautiful ways possible. Gandhi appears to agree with this view: "Purity of life is the highest and truest art" and "Life must immensely excel all the parts put together. To me the greatest artist is surely he who lives the finest life."²⁵

If are to speak of a Gandhian or a Buddhist virtue ethics, at least two major differences must be noted vis-à-vis the Greek tradition. First, for both Gandhi and the Buddha pride is a vice, so the humble soul is to be preferred over Aristotle's "great soul" (*megalopsychia*). (Aristotle's *megalopsychia* may even be too close to megalomania for the comfort of most contemporary persons.) Second, neither Gandhi nor the Buddha would have accepted Aristotle's elitism. For Aristotle only a certain class of people (free-born Greek males, to be exact) could establish the virtues and attain the good life. In stark contrast, the Dharmakaya and Gandhi's village republic contain all people, including the poor, the outcast, people of color, and women.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: GANDHIAN AND BUDDHIST HUMANISM

It is common to interpret Gandhi in terms of Vedanta philosophy, especially Advaita Vedanta, the most dominant school. Gandhi's several references to a quality less absolute and two equivocal affirmations of the principle of *advaita* offer some support for this view.²⁶ The Advaitin interpretation offers a solution to the basic puzzle about Gandhi's self-suffering, which I have mentioned above. The principle of non-dualism allows Gandhi to see the sin of the other as his own sin, because in reality there is no distinction between him and others, between the "I" and the "Thou."

The problems of consistently maintaining an Advaitin Gandhi manifest themselves most clearly in Bhikhu Parekh's otherwise excellent book on Gandhi's political philosophy.²⁷ After summarizing basic Indian philosophy he claims that Gandhi, just like Shankara, envisioned a

two-tiered religion of a personal theism focusing on Shiva, Vishnu, Devi and an impersonal monism of Atman-Brahman. People in the second tier would recognize the illusion of individual self and consciousness, would eventually put the phenomenal world behind them, and would move from the worship of individual deities to experience the total unity of Atman-Brahman. Gandhi must object already at this point, because he wavered between personal theism and impersonal monism and never claimed that one was superior to the other.

There is sufficient evidence to call Gandhi a pantheist, but many commentators are not careful enough to distinguish between pantheism, where the cosmos and its parts are both real and divine, and the Advaitin position where only Atman-Brahman is real. John White has suggested,²⁸ echoing medieval Jain arguments, that there is a basic inconsistency in Advaita Vedanta, because from the standpoint of the unliberated souls both Atman-Brahman and the phenomenal world exists, albeit the latter only in a derivative and temporal mode, whereas from that standpoint of the liberated souls the world does not exist. The Advaitin is not even consistently non-dualistic, because, until all humans are liberated, the Advaitin position is, as White calls it, a "transcendental dualism," a dualism of divine reality and derivative phenomena roughly equivalent to Christian theology. The principal difference is that God creates the world in Christianity whereas it is the creation of ignorance in Advaita Vedanta.

Daisaku Ikeda, the philosophical leader of the Soka Gakkei, paraphrases the medieval monk Nichiren Daishonin as saying: "The Buddha is an ordinary human being; ordinary human beings are the Buddha."²⁹ There are two interpretations of the second phrase depending upon whether one follows early Buddhist texts or embraces later Mahayanist views. From the standpoint of early Buddhism to say that we are all Buddhas simply means that all of us have the potential to understand the Four Noble Truths and to overcome craving in our lives. The Mahayanist interpretation would be that we all possess a Buddha-nature metaphysically equivalent to the Dharmakaya, the cosmic "body" of the Buddha. Given his commitment to a general Vedantist concept of soul, Gandhi would have felt very comfortable with the Mahayanist position, particularly since it respects diversity within unity and supports a dynamic and engaged concept of self. I therefore conclude that Buddhist humanism—a humanism of nonviolence and compassion—may be the very best way to take Gandhi's philosophy into the 21st Century.

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Knowledge and Faith and their Utilization for Human Peace and Happiness: Said Nursi's Perspective

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Abstract—*The highest aim of the human's inborn character and the most inspirational result of the human's innate nature are to have faith in God. And the most dignified position and the greatest status in the ranks of humanity are to achieve the knowledge of God within faith in God. The most delightful happiness and the sweetest reward for human beings are to attain the love of God within the knowledge of God. The purest joy for the human spirit and the finest pleasure for the human heart are to experience the spiritual taste contained within the love of God. Surely, all true happiness, pure joy, pleasant bounty, and sheer taste are all found in and experienced through the knowledge of God and the love of God.*

For Nursi knowledge and faith both are important preconditions for the human happiness. It is through knowledge that life, from the first unicellular organisms to humans has been able to exist and to preserve itself, and faith in God would help to create happiness in the life, as Nursi further proclaims with firm conviction that a person's joy and happiness in this world is dependent upon and commensurate with his or her knowledge and love of God.

Mahatma Gandhi the father of the nation, was a strong faith oriented personality wanted to spread peace through faith and knowledge. He says

"I believe in the fundamental Truth of all great religions of the world. And I believe that if only we could, all of us, read the scriptures of the different Faiths from the stand-point of the followers of those faiths, we should find that they were at the bottom, all one and were all helpful to one another".

The paper would precisely focus on the Bediuzzeman Said Nursi's perspective (who is also the spiritual guide of Ustad Fathullah Gulen) in this regard as to how Knowledge and Faith can best be utilized to create peace and happiness in society. All religions in the world concentrate on knowledge and faith to achieve true peace and happiness. Since his interpretation of the Knowledge and Faith is quite universal, therefore it would be of a great tribute to him if I introduce his teachings on Non-violence day.

Keywords: *Knowledge, Faith, Logic, Rationality, Spirituality, Love, Peace, Happiness*

A BRIEF SKETCH OF USTAD NURSI

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was born, in 1877. It was the period of great challenges and the time of unbelievable social, economic and ideological development from Eastern Asia to Europe and America. When Nursi started to make his voice heard through his Peaceful Dinamic Movement on the intellectual scene of the Ottomans, almost all the Turkish republic of today had been occupied and annexed by Russia, while the Muslim Turkish Khanates of the Far-East had been swallowed by China¹. However, exception of Iran, the whole of the Islamic countries were under the rule of either British or French Colonies.

Born in the heart of Euro-Asia, in a village in Eastern Anadola, he, since the very first year of his life, was deeply involved in the world's innovation. Still, being born in the village Nursi, from which he later on received the name Nursi, he belonged to the traditional Oriental society.

That is why; he made his first step in receiving education from the famous oriental scholars and teachers of the region. That was the beginning of his growing up, and became his first school of life. He realized all the importance of education and showed at a very early age, unique ability and extraordinary intelligence in his studies. Moreover, when he was only sixteen years old, he debated with many distinguished scholars on many topics. Thus, through debates or philosophical discussions, which were very popular in many Oriental countries, he became famous and well received among scholars in Turkey. However, the age in which Badiuzzaman started his movement known as "Nur Movement" was the age of disaster and perdition.

What is even more important, Nursi was not a traditional scholar in the real sense of the term; he also studied many modern branches of sciences and humanities. He dedicated himself to understanding of the ambivalent nature of the world, to understand all the aspects of the Universe and the Mankind. His intellectual and social life and struggle are like a reflection in a model person's life of the various stages that Islamic world has passed through this century.

This combination of classical theology on one hand, and modern knowledge, on the other, allowed him to turn into one of the most outstanding reformists, spiritual leaders and educationists of his time. He understood that traditional knowledge would not be sufficient enough to carry debates with representatives of Western scholarly thought.

Nonetheless, Nursi's approach to Islam through his movement became apparently more clear when he distinguished the leading Islamic values saying.

"Love, brotherhood and affection are basic to Islam, and they are its bond. Fairness and favourable thinking mark the Islamic character"².

For Nursi knowledge and faith both are important preconditions for the human peace and happiness. God would help to create happiness in life, as Nursi further proclaims with firm conviction that a person's joy and happiness in this world is dependent upon with his or her knowledge and love of God.

¹Badiuzzama Said Nursi and the Ideal of Islamic Unity, Husain Celik

²From the Risale-i Nur Collection. The Damascus Sermon by Badiuzzama Said Nursi. Translated from Turkish, By Sukran Vahide. P.51,

Nursi emphasizes on the use and importance of two inter-related notions; Faith in God (*Iman-billah*) and knowledge (*Ilm*) in particular the knowledge of God (*Ma'rifetullah*). However, for Nursi these two essential concepts appear to constitute the very roots of the meaning of human happiness. Consequently, they deserve to be called the two fundamental realities of life upon which a believer's world-view is supposed to rest and evolve and through which his worldly affairs are expected to be handled efficiently and daily problems be resolved satisfactorily. Moreover, through the fusion of these two core realities, which ultimately results in the completion of the love of God (*Muhabbetullah*), a believer will be able to receive spiritual pleasures from this physical life, as Nursi himself explicitly declares:

"You should definitely know that the highest aim of the human's innate character (*khilkaḥ*) and the most sublime result of the human's inborn disposition (*fitraḥ*) are to have faith in God. And the most exalted position and the greatest status in the ranks of humanity are to attain the knowledge of God within faith in God. The most delightful happiness and the sweetest bounty for *Jinn* and human beings are to attain the love of God within the knowledge of God. The purest joy for the human spirit and the finest pleasure for the human heart are to experience the spiritual taste contained within the love of God. Surely, all true happiness, pure joy, pleasant bounty, and sheer taste are all found in and experienced through the knowledge of God and the love of God".³

Nursi further proclaims with firm conviction that one, who has attained these two life-sweetening realities, knowledge and love of God, indeed, enjoys whatever one possesses, small and big, material and spiritual in this world. But, he who lacks them, even if he owns the whole world, cannot find peace within himself and outside, because, without faith and knowledge, he feels physically and spiritually weak, vulnerable, and helpless, especially when he is exposed to possible calamities, hardships, miseries, pains, and fears of this bewildering fleeting world.⁴

According to Nursi, it is faith in God that ensures and guarantees the peace and security of human beings. It is the knowledge of God that enables them to lead a fruitful life and attain happiness in this world. And it is the love of God, which in fact is the necessary outcome of the unification of these two fundamental principles that allow human to turn this transient abode into, what Nursi terms, "a garden of recreation" and enjoy the short-lived pleasures of this garden but with full sense of responsibility and accountability, while at the same time hoping to attain the permanent pleasures of the eternal abode. Human beings, after all, have been created for eternity; therefore, the real pleasures for them lie in such eternal matters.⁵

THE NECESSITY OF FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE FOR HUMAN PEACE AND HAPPINESS

For Nursi Faith in God involves at least two dynamic performances on the part of a human; one involves finding God through the self-reflection and the observation of the world. The other, a consequence of the former, is rather a spiritual action, as it demands complete reliance on God in all circumstances and at all times, which can be achieved by knowing God. The centre of these

³Mektubat, 20, p. 448; The Letters, 20, p.265.

⁴Ibid.

⁵İşârâtü'l-İ'câz, Bakara 2:25, p. 1243.

two cognitive and spiritual activities, according to our thinker, is not the soul (*nafs*) or the mind (*zihn*) or the intellect, (*aqil*) as philosophers asserted in the past; rather it is the heart, he declares:

"Is that which is established in the heart. If it is only in the intellect, it lacks value for human being⁶." Knowledge without the insight of the heart, he further proclaims, turns into a form of ignorance".⁷

It is noteworthy to mention here that knowledge for Nursi has at least two types. The first one is such that when we have it once and reflect on it once or twice, it is sufficient. The other one is however just like a bread or water that all the time we need to think of it. And we cannot say about this knowledge, for instance, that we have understood it once and that is enough. The knowledge of faith, Nursi affirms, belongs to the second category.⁸

CONCEPT OF FAITH

"God is the Protector of those who believe; He leads them out of darkness into light"⁹

Faith' as a true relation to God is identified with 'luminosity' and paying careful attention to God, whereas unbelief, as a severance of that relation is compared to darkness and heedlessness. Therefore, when the light of faith enters the heart of a person, Nursi stresses, he will become not only enlightened in himself but also illuminate others. Consequently, he will become truly heedful of his Creator and continue to put his reliance on Him as long as he maintains his faith.

Belief or faith is a trust and sincerity of doing something without any logic trying to interpret it. Religiously, faith is stronger than reason. While Islamically, faith is called "*iman*" or "*Aqidah*", it is a complete submission to the will of God. It includes belief, profession and the performance of deeds consistent with the man's commission as vicegerent on earth, all according to God's will.¹⁰

In the same context, Bediuzzaman draws people's attention to the importance of faith. He pointed out:

"If any person wants to understand this world and man's spirit within the world and the nature and value of religion, and how the extent to which the world is a prison, understanding religion is important. Without religion man becomes the most miserable of creatures".¹¹

From the foregoing statement of Nursi, it's crystal clear that the knowledge and belief in Islam are the foremost important components to attain human happiness and peace and a clear invitation posed by Bediuzzaman Nursi to the people worldwide. He goes on saying:

"Unbelief leads to misery, pain, and misfortune, all of which Nursi epitomizes in the concept of misguidance (*dhalalat*). As for the former state of faith, it generates happiness, joy, and pleasure, all of which he sums up in the notion of guidance".¹² (*hidayat*)

⁶The Letters, Preface to the Seeds of Reality, p. 541.

⁷Mektubat, 20, p. 448; The Letters, 20, p.265.

⁸Barla Lahikasi, 27. Mektup, p. 1516.

⁹The Holy Qur'an 2:257.

¹⁰The Holy Quran: Ya-Sin: 82-83.

¹¹Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, The words, p 45.

LOGIC AND FAITH

The classical logic is such guiding force that distinguishes humans from all other living beings including animals. Nonetheless, what makes human into human, claims Nursi is indeed "faith" and in saying so he probably intends to provide reasons based on the Qur'an. An alternative definition of human being to that of the Muslim philosophers' such as Al-Farabi and Ibn-e-Sina, who had literally borrowed the well-known Aristotelian definition: "A human being is a rational animal." (*Haiwan-e-Aaqil*) Nonetheless, rationality is also regarded by Nursi as an essential distinguishing feature of human being that other living beings do not possess; but, as he argues, unless rationality is crowned and illuminated with faith, it will be fruitless, if not completely useless.

Faith, therefore, for Nursi's, is more important for human beings than mere rationality. Such a conviction sounds astonishing and challenging, and even it may give the impression that as if he is downgrading the value of rationality in relation to faith. However, we may begin to see the positive side of this view, even if we do not agree with it completely, if we look closely into possible causes of today's crises in many parts of the world, most of them, particularly the economic ones, do not arise because of the insufficiency of rationality in people's approaches to conducting and managing their businesses, but as a result of many diverse factors, most common of which is uncontrolled and self-centred human behaviour, which is generally caused, according to Nursi's diagnosis, by the lack of faith. For it is by virtue of faith, he indicates, that human being is able to connect himself with His Creator and thus uses all his physical and immaterial resources responsibly as a trust on His behalf and within the limits set by Him.' A person, who is devoid of faith, on the other hand, severes his relation with God and thus employs all of those resources, mostly irresponsibly, for the sake of his own carnal soul.¹³ Consequently, the conscience (*vijdan*) of such a person is constantly troubled and remains unrest until it is reconnected to God.

Nursi often demonstrates the strength of faith with the necessity of light, while he compares the negativity of unbelief to the futility of darkness. So much so that all the wonderful inscriptions of the Divine Names and all their beautiful reflections can only become manifest in human being through the light of faith, or to put more precisely, through the luminous connection of faith, without which otherwise they all remain concealed. He further says:

"Depending on the degree of the strength of this luminous relation, human being gains a comparable value and elevates his rank even higher than that of the angelic beings. But, once he cuts off this dynamic spiritual connection, he may descend to the lowest of the low and even turns into a beast."¹⁴

¹²Sözler, 23, p. 132; The Words, 23, p. 320.

¹³The Words, 6, p. 40

¹⁴Sözler, 23, p. 132; The Words, 23, p. 319.

Faith is not only the light that enables human being to discover all the works of the Divine art that are hidden in his body and the universe, but also empowers him with a kind of forceful insight through which he himself is able to read them consciously and help others to read in the same way. Besides, faith is exclusively for human being, who is the most precious of all creatures in the eyes of God. As such, he should first turn to himself and by virtue of his faith try to discover all the meanings dormant in his microcosm. If he fails to do so, he becomes no longer a true human being, as Nursi warns:

O human being! You consider yourself as a true human being. Read yourself! Otherwise, it is likely that you become either an animal-like human or inanimate."¹⁵

Every act of God and every inscription of His Names are inherently loaded with numerous hidden meanings; they can be uncovered only by the luminosity of faith and rendered intelligible only through the insight of faith.¹⁶

ANSWER TO A PROBABLE QUESTION

The question may arise as to why there is a need for knowledge and faith in God to attain human happiness, when there are man made laws to regulate human behavior? This can be answered in two ways.

First, Islam maintains that **ethics** has a major role to play in human lives, and the Quranic ethical code deals with aspects that human laws may not touch upon. Secular laws may not provide universally accepted moral systems and ethical standards. It is religion that gives them a uniform standard. Furthermore, in Islam, every individual has the responsibility to promote a healthy society, the community has the obligation to take care of its poor and needy. Thus Islam places collective responsibility to create a model society for the rest of the world to emulate.

Second, in global age, morality, or the lack of it, is no longer a personal affair. Injustice, cruelty, brutality, breach of trust etc., have become part of national policies. It therefore becomes the responsibility of religion to provide a universally accepted morality, and it is up to religion to educate the conscience of the masses in this respect. Islamic morality emphasizes justice for all. It enjoins upon its followers a respect for differences, be they religious, racial or political. Nevertheless, these are an integral part and principal components to be utilised to attain human peace and happiness.

CONCLUSION

Islam is a religion that emphasizes on the responsibility and accountability of human beings. Although, Islam teaches that God has predetermined the span of our life and the time of our death, "it does not mean that even our actions are predetermined by Him. We surely are free in our actions and are, therefore, accountable for them before God.

¹⁵Sözler, 33, p.316; The Words, 33, p.719.

¹⁶The Words, 23, p. 320

From Nursi's standpoint, the worst type of misguidance is forgetting one's self due to the disconnection of one's faith-bond with the Creator. Such a misguided person, when working and performing his duty, forgets himself completely and recognizes no limits whatsoever to his ego and thus becomes arrogant. He only remembers himself when it is time to collect the rewards and the fruits. A guided person, on the other hand, does quite the opposite. On account of his constant connection with the Creator, he always remembers himself while fulfilling his tasks and duties and forgets himself when it is time to get the rewards. A believer therefore guided by his faith works sincerely and happily for the sake of his Lord not for himself.¹⁷

By this holistic vision Nursi aims to explain and convey to the Muslims and non-Muslims alike, at least three main Qur'anic teachings. The first is the vitality of faith in God for human being for a true understanding of the purpose of creation. The second one is the importance of the preservation of this faith by human being in order to maintain the sound and healthy relation between him and other fellow human beings and all creatures. The third one is ensuring that the meaning and significance of this faith be properly and thoroughly understood, and transmitted efficiently and adequately through generations. That is why he rigorously emphasizes that humanity becomes humanity through faith.¹⁸

It is frequently suggested that the problems affecting us stem from moral degradation and abandoning of ethical principles. While striding in the world of science and technology, humanity has forgotten the fundamental principles and has neglected essential human values which have come as a clear threat for humans to attain security, peace and happiness. People are continuously motivated to live to earn and consume more. In the pace of life the spiritual and moral sides of human nature seem to have been forgotten. Homes have grown larger, but families have grown smaller. Human beings have journeyed to the depths of space, but have strayed from the paths leading inward to their own selves. Information technology has been developed to an astounding degree, but psychological problems, social injustices, global crises, and ecological disasters have also increased which is a clear threat to the material and spiritual future of humanity.

How has all this happened? Science should have brought greater understanding of the human being, nature and the purpose of creation.

This is because, science was misunderstood and misused. It was utilized solely in serving particular interests and material needs. However, the source of these problems was the absence of knowledge and faith and spirituality, which keep humanity away from overload and turn them towards doing well. Sometimes the loss of spirituality has been the cause of people suffering loneliness and unhappiness and their becoming insensitive and aggressive.

¹⁷Al-Mathnawi al-'Arabi al-Nuriya, Shu'la, p. 636.

¹⁸Sözler, 23, p. 134; The Words, 23, p. 324.

For the human beings to live with the dignity they deserve, various civil and social organizations work to resolve the problems, but more often than not, they neglect spiritual aspects. Risale-i Nur, the magnum-opus Quranic Exegesis authored by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi offers a variety of solutions to these problems. Its method is based on acquiring knowledge and faith and connecting it in the best of ways to attaining human peace and happiness.

It is only through the intuitive power of faith that one can exceed beyond the boundaries of this perceptible material world and notice the importance of the metaphysical aspect of things to attain happiness and satisfaction in life. In another word, the happiness of humanity in this world and the next depends on their faith, as Nursi firmly states:

“Faith necessitates affirmation of Divine unity, which in turn necessitates submission to God, which in turn necessitates reliance on God, which in turn necessarily leads to happiness in this world and the next”.¹⁹

¹⁹ The Words, 23, pp. 322-323

An Appraisal on 'Embracing the Other' in Praxis: The Inherent Unifying Dynamics of Community Meal Services in Religion



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Abstract —*We know how special a meal is for a family and for any gathering. Eating together, being together and sharing from the same preparation builds bonds and deepens the commonality of a shared identity. This paper titled "An Appraisal on 'Embracing the Other' in Praxis: The Inherent Unifying Dynamics of Community Meal Services in Religion" attempts to present a practical approach of emulating the intrinsic values encapsulated within religious meal services. The presentation specifically focuses on Guru ka Langar in Sikhism and the Eucharist in Christianity.*

Guru ka Langar is a community kitchen run in the name of the Guru, usually attached to a Gurudwara. Guru Nanak, the first Guru of Sikhism, started this communal meal, the Langar, which has served two primary intended purposes: firstly in fostering the principle of equality between all peoples of the world regardless of religion, caste, colour, age, gender or social status and secondly to put into practice the spirit of humble, selfless social service, thus expressing the ethics of sharing, community living and inclusiveness.

Jesus lived a life of selfless service and was endowed with supernatural capacities which were oriented for the welfare of the less fortunate ones in the society. Despite his enormous influence and power, he lived a simple and poor life and in humble service to humanity. In his last supper, although being their master, he washed the feet of his disciples and asked them to "do this in my memory"—that is, to embrace one another in love, service and humility. The Eucharist is this meal celebrated in memory of the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples.

Jesus' call to "do this" in his memory, and Nanak's vision of sharing the communal meal have the eternal principles of sacrifice, love, service and equality encapsulated in the meals they instituted. The effort in this paper (within the theme of the seminar: 'Embracing the Other' commemorating the International Day of Non-Violence) is to subtly attempt highlighting that within the in-depth study of these meals, there is an enormous scope for 'embracing the other' and facilitating the well-being of contemporary humankind.

Keywords: *Langar, Eucharist, Community Meal, Service, Table Fellowship*

INTRODUCTION

We know how special a meal is for a family and for any gathering. Eating together, being together and sharing from the same preparation, builds bonds and deepens the commonality of a shared identity. This paper titled "**An Appraisal on 'Embracing the Other' in Praxis: The Inherent Unifying Dynamics of Community Meal Services in Religion**" attempts to present a practical approach of emulating the intrinsic values encapsulated within religious meal services. The presentation specifically focuses on *Guru ka Langar* in Sikhism and the Eucharist in Christianity.

Guru ka Langar (literally meaning *Guru's* communal dining-hall) is a community kitchen run in the name of the *Guru*, usually attached to a *gurudwara*.ⁱ *Guru Nanak*,ⁱⁱ the first *Guru* of Sikhism, started this communal meal, the *Langar* (Hindi: लंकर) which has served two primary intended purposes; firstly in fostering the principle of equality between all peoples of the world regardless of religion, caste, colour, creed, age, gender or social status and secondly to put into practice the spirit of humble, selfless social service, thus expressing the ethics of sharing, community living, inclusiveness and oneness of all humankind.

Jesus lived a life of selfless service and was endowed with supernatural capacities which were oriented for the welfare of the less fortunate ones in the society. Despite his enormous influence and authority, he lived a simple and poor life and in humble service to humanity. He time and again shared table fellowship with social outcasts, the poor, the sick and the needy. In his last supper, although being their master, he washed the feet of his disciples and asked them to "do this in my memory"—that is, to live, like him, embracing one another in love, service and humility. The **Eucharist** is this meal celebrated in memory of the last supper Jesus shared with his disciples.

Being a Christian myself and having lived in the North of India and often amidst the multi-religious social setting, I was inspired to attempt presenting my experiences, research and reflections; sincerely acknowledging the inherent enormous potential for peace, sharing and human well-being, which we possess in our motherland. The effort in this paper (within the theme of the seminar: 'Embracing the Other' commemorating Gandhi Jayanti and the International Day of Non-Violence) is to subtly attempt highlighting the basic, intrinsic, similar and dissimilar aspects of the community meal of the Sikhs and the Eucharistic meal of the Christians, in a bid to foster and arrive at an inclusive, realistic, constructively critical, humane, mutually enriching, community and praxis-oriented paradigm.

This paper acknowledges that the present age is engulfed with the horrors of divisions and all that can keep us separated. But the presentation also recognises that Jesus' call to "do this" in his memory, and Nanak's vision of sharing the communal meal have the eternal principles of sacrifice, love, service and equality encapsulated in the meals they instituted. Thus a genuine and in-depth study of these meals, would for sure, provide us an enormous scope for 'embracing the other', widen our perspectives of understanding one another and facilitating the well-being of contemporary humankind.

GURU KA LANGAR

After presenting a brief description of *Guru ka Langar* in the introduction, this part of the paper attempts to reflect on the intrinsic aspects of *Sangat* and *Pangat* within the context of *Langar*. The twin concepts of *sangat* and *pangat* were introduced by Guru Nanak in a bid to bring people together as a congregation for prayer, meditation, discourses and to share a meal of fellowship as well. Thus there was a sharing of a common bond in both, thought and deed; which enabled inculcating a common mode of worship and social praxis as well.

SANGAT

Guru Nanak had a subtle way of constructively challenging the prevailing status quo. Recognizing a level of individualism prevalent in the religious practices of his time, Nanak in turn instilled a sense of social consciousness, wherein each one supports and contributes towards the physical and social growth of humanity as a community. Thus he introduced the concept of *sangats*; the closest meaning which could be attributed to this concept is the idea of coming together as a congregation that shares a wavelength of interests and wants to be identified as a community in which the members support each other towards their temporal and spiritual welfare.ⁱⁱⁱ

A Community Seeking the Divine

Sangats were typified with an assembly of devotees in worship—recitation of hymns and singing of *shabad*,^{iv} and listening to discourses. This assembly had no distinction of classes, gender or status. This exhibited equality itself was the most striking facilitation for the person and the community, to reflect on the oneness of God. The approach here was to contribute collectively even to the concerns of another's spiritual growth and liberation, as in contrast to the individualism in the then prominent religions which emphasized the search of individual *moksha*.^v

Sangat is also called *Sat Sangat* (congregation of true ones) or *Sadh Sangat* (the congregation of the saints) and it highlighted the chief belief, that the *Guru*^{vi} manifests himself in the *sangat*. Thus being part of the *sangat* is considered to be spiritually a must for a Sikh and s/he is recommended to spend considerable time there, since here s/he receives enlightenment, direction and strength to live the tenets of Sikhism.^{vii} (GSSG 12, 65, 81, 303)^{viii}

The Community being Aware of the Social Situation

Guru Nanak and his successors attached a great deal of importance to the *Langar* as it became, in their hands, a potent means of social reform, chiefly through the discourses and interactions *via* the *sangats*. This avenue was well utilized as a platform to exchange views on common problems and generate a feeling of communal and national consciousness at a time when the sense of nationalism was absent among the populace. The movement generated a consciousness of creating a society characterized with equality and a spiritual reform that took recourse to the inner spirit, rather than external rituals and irrationality. Those who join the *sangat* learn to serve

and become convinced to aid social causes. One learns to work in a co-operative and democratic set-up and by doing so the sense of selfishness vanishes. Energies are now directed to *seva* and social well-being.^{ix}

PANGAT

This system was popularized by Guru Amar Das, the third *Guru* of Sikhs. *Pangat* as a modality was adopted to make visible and further instill the principle of equality by fostering a sitting arrangement during the *Langar* which was intended to serve the purpose of ensuring equality.^x

Equality: The Praxis of its Literal Meaning

Pangat literally means a 'same row'. It stands for people sitting and eating together in the same row during the *Guru kalangar*. It does not simply mean sitting in a row; it means sitting equally at par with each other without any type of distinction. No special meals, seats or sections (in the *Langar*-hall or any other part of the *gurdwara*) can be reserved for any one whosoever he/she may be. The concept of *pangat* is to bring an end to hierarchy of caste, creed, colour, sex, status and any other dissension. We can thus expect to see at a *Langar*, a landlord sitting along with his workers or some person from the high caste having his meal along with a *dalit* and so on.^{xi} The acceptance of equality in all spheres is well expressed as one serves the *pangat* where people of all ranks, denominations and political affiliations rub shoulders, share the same food and partake the *Karah Parsaad*.^{xii}

The Tenet of Seva Practiced

Seva is another cardinal principle and a unique institution of Sikhism. *Seva* is not ordinary unpaid service. It is voluntary, selfless, and humble, without motive, without hope for reward or compensation. *Pangat* in the community mess gives practical training in the discipline of service. Children and younger folks are specially entrusted the role of serving food to the gathering arranged in rows, in a bid to foster an early formation. As one goes to every person seated s/he may recognize visible or known differences, but the gesture of humbly serving food practically intensifies the spirit of equality. Thus the service is an orientation towards inculcating equality and strengthens oneself to be free of biases and distinctions. The practiced habit then is expected to find expression beyond the *Langar*-hall, out in the required social contexts of deprivation, necessity, hospitality, hostility, etc.^{xiii}

Comprehensively, *seva* can be practiced in any form: through money, body, mind, etc. *Seva* can be done by cooking food or by washing dishes in *Langar* (the sacred Sikh kitchen); by sweeping and cleaning floors in the *gurdwara*; by helping the poor and the needy in the street; by imparting knowledge; by participating in national struggles; by doing any humanitarian action and so on. It is a part of a Sikh's being to do some *seva* as a daily routine. *Seva* in a *gurdwara* is generally believed to be more sacramental, as it disposes one to be humble, tolerant, and generous. It also brings the satisfaction of being useful for humanity.^{xiv}

THE EUCHARISTIC MEAL

The introduction presented a concise description of the Eucharist. This part of the presentation attempts to highlight the dual aspects of the Eucharist as a sacrament or a rite and its praxis in living (living what is professed, reflected, recalled or prayed during the rite).

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

Humans are not sustained or satisfied by physical necessities alone. There is an inner urge in us to transcend, to search for the spiritual core of our existence. The Eucharist is such a meal that nourishes us not at one table only, but at two. Jesus reminded his listeners, "Man does not live by bread alone" (Mt. 4: 4).^{xv} The Eucharist is similarly a coming together of two liturgies, that of the word and that of the food or the Eucharist.^{xvi}

The Liturgy of the Word

The proclamation of the readings from the Bible occupies a very special significance, in that we embrace the readings as God's Word. This understanding is well articulated in the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*), "He (Jesus) is present in His word, since it is He Himself who speaks when the Holy Scriptures are read in the Church" (SC 7).^{xvii} Words, as we know are for the communication of thoughts or ideas, but here it is not just information but a subtle formation that takes place unto the one who is open to receive God's intervention unto his/her life. The Word is thus a power which can actuate a transformation.^{xviii}

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

For the Eucharistic liturgy the congregation centres their attention upon the centrally located altar—both, a place of sacrifice as well as the table from where the assembly is fed. During this rite, the prayers, aspirations, hopes and gifts of the community are presented. These and other gifts are all united with the chief symbolic offering of bread and wine. The latter are used as a means to recall the last supper of Jesus with his disciples and his command to do likewise. These also recall the sacrifice of Jesus' body and blood on the Cross. Consuming the sacred and sacramental offerings of bread and wine, each one is reminded to offer themselves to love God and fellow humans. The themes of sacrifice, thanksgiving and meal are celebrated here.^{xix}

THE CHALLENGE OF LIVING THE EUCHARIST

The challenge of living the Eucharist arises due to the fact that the memorial meal could be limited to a mere ritual and the actual intended praxis might not see its materialization. If the Eucharist does not find a continual existential effect in the quality of one's life, then there is a plain reduction of the substantial medium to a mere rite.^{xx}

LANGAR AND THE EUCHARIST REVISITED

PARALLELS SHARED

The basic similarity shared is that both the ceremonies are embraced as a community meal and distinctions of caste, class, gender, age, race, etc. are expected to be disregarded entirely. Some spiritual, human and ceremonial aspects are described below and corresponding scripture and relevant texts consolidating the views are cited.

Spiritual Facilitation

Both Sikhism and Christianity acknowledge the divine presence in and through the community celebration of the meal. The teaching of the Catholic Church upholds:

To accomplish so great a work, Christ is always present in His Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations. He is present in the sacrifice of the Mass, not only in the person of His minister, [...], for He promised: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). (SC 7)^{xxi}

Sangat, acknowledged as the fellowship of the holy with the divine, is applauded as a means of moral and spiritual uplift: (*vich sangat har parabh varatda bujhahu sabad vichar*) "The Lord God prevails in the *Sangat*, the Holy Congregation; reflect upon the *Shabad* and understand." (SGGS 1314) The same experience and sentiments are carried along within the sharing of the meal in the *pangat*.

Ceremonial Aspects

Both the traditions have a similarity in the dual emphasis given to scriptures and to a meal shared. *Sangat* and *Pangat* bring about the aspects of prayer, reflections, meditation on scriptures and meals shared. Parallels shared in the Eucharist are the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the meal.^{xxii} Both of these parts are indispensable to the meals. These parts are also acknowledged to be the sources of enlightenment, to comprehend the mysteries of the divine and human living and for instilling dispositions of sharing and concern for fellow humans.

Human Elements

Both traditions emphasize **equality** and that there is no distinction before God and it should not be created by humans. The Bible stressed that the sacrifice of Jesus (which the meal commemorates) has done away with all that could separate us: "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him." (cf. Rom 10:12)^{xxiii} Thus it's obvious to say that the commemoration of that very same sacrifice would definitely uphold and foster equality. The Guru Granth Sahib also echoes the same: (*jaanhu jot na poochhahu jaatee aagai jaat na hay*) "Recognize the Lord's Light (Spirit) within all, and do not consider social class or status; there are no classes or castes in the world hereafter." (SGGS 349)

Gender equality is a very significant approach in both the traditions. The Bible, right in the first book of Genesis and thus from times immemorial seems to have acknowledged equality and dignity to both the genders: 'Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh"' (Gen. 2: 23a).^{xxiv} Guru Nanak took note of the prevailing practices of *Sati*,^{xxv} and how religion sort of legitimized inequality and injustice to women, despite the sublime identity and responsibility intrinsic to womanhood. Women in Sikhism are not viewed as an impediment and were never isolated as an antithesis to spiritual elevation. On the contrary, the inimitable feminine qualities and roles are extolled and recommended as well.^{xxvi} Sikhism bears testimony to this equality.

There is respect and participation for both the genders. Man is born from a woman; within woman, man is conceived; to a woman he is engaged and married. Man is friends with woman; through woman, the future generations exist. When his woman passes away, he seeks another woman; to a woman a man is bound. So why call her bad? From her, kings are born. From a woman, woman is born; without woman there would be no one at all (SGGS 473).

Thus this approach is well acknowledged in that women share important roles in the ceremonial meals and other aspects of religion and life.

SOME DISSIMILARITIES

The Eucharistic meal celebrated in different parts of the world considers the prevailing customs and culture of the area and accordingly has variations in the rite. However there are very limited variations within the *Langar* and a standard set of requisites in terms of dressing, postures and ceremonial procedures are maintained.

Within the Rite

The intensity of accommodation for the *Langar* is complete: anyone can come, participate in the *sangat*, sit in any *pangat*, consume the *prasaad*, share the *Langar* meal, etc. However, during the Eucharistic celebration participation of persons belonging to other religions and even at times, Christian inter-denominatory brothers and sisters may not have a spontaneous reception. Those not initiated in the Christian faith and with the actual reception of Baptism and the Eucharist would not be encouraged to receive the consecrated bread and wine. It's true that an appropriate initiation in understanding the depths of the mystery of the Eucharist and its accompanying and meaningful ritual actions are important. But a very important reflection would be if whether sufficient measures are employed to ensure that those not permitted the reception of the sacred species or certain privileges within the rite are given the experience of equality and importance^{xxvii}

Beyond the Rite

One of the chief distinguishing aspects noted is, that the Eucharist sometimes could lack a real and tangible fellowship of a meal. The Eucharistic celebration is a memorial of Jesus' Last Supper indeed and the consumed food in the form of a piece of bread dipped in wine is received in faith as the real body and blood of Jesus. However this rite is not always followed with a meal

or a get-together to sit, share, eat, talk, etc. There may be communities wherein there is a holistic or considerable social interaction. But having such interactions are not considered substantially or definitely required. On the other hand, in the case of the Sikh tradition, eating together in the *pangat* before, during or after the *sangat* is indispensable.^{xxviii}

TOWARDS MUTUAL ENRICHMENT

God inspires every human and intervenes in our lives. Much more we are expected to inculcate an incarnational theology of experiencing and extracting the versatility of the divine presence in our cultures. (cf. EN 18)^{xxix} Jesus or Nanak did not totally discard great values, symbolism and principles enshrined within the contemporary religions then. They however extracted all that is beautiful and uplifting in and around them. Many Christians living in the North West of our country have drawn much inspiration from the Sikh culture and have truly made their faith an incarnational adventure without compromising the essential tenets.^{xxx} This part of the presentation attempts for a similar effort of showcasing a mutual sharing, wherever possible, for an integrated and constructive exchange and growth.

Formation of the Mind

Formation of the mind would imply a basic attitudinal shift from expecting the presence of God and spirituality in mere doing or following procedures, to acknowledging God's presence in his creation, primarily in oneself and one's fellow human beings.

Desacralization was one of the chief tasks Guru Nanak took up. He sensed the futility of humans seeking to appease gods by rituals, instead of seeking God within and with others. Guru Nanak fearlessly explicits:

Someone may go to Ganges, Godavari, Kumbha festival, or bathe at Kaydaar Naat'h, or make donations of thousands of cows at Gomti; he may make millions of pilgrimages to sacred shrines, or freeze his body in the Himalayas; still, none of these is equal to the worship of God (SGGS 973).

He realized that the divine is so vast a reality, yet so much within the reach of our inner selves:

Burnt offerings, sacred feasts, intense meditations with the body upside-down, *pooja*, and taking millions of cleansing baths at sacred shrines of pilgrimage: the merits of all these can be obtained by enshrining the Lord within your heart for a fraction of a second (SGGS 1349).

Jesus conveyed the same necessity of **awakening one's inner spirit** and avoid blind recourse to practices, rituals and irrational beliefs. He announced: "the hour is coming when neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father ... the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." (Jn. 4:21b, 23b). However Jesus was actually echoing the ancient wisdom articulated by Prophets who lived prior to his coming: "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings." (Hos. 6:6).^{xxxii}

Our minds in the contemporary era are facing an outburst of media options, where we seem to be constantly fed with information. We need new horizons of the spirit to impact our minds and our

very being itself. Jesus and Nanak were great communicators and the ceremonies inherited from their inspiration have the proclamation of the scriptures to be an intrinsic aspect of the same. Thus these ceremonies as mediums of storytelling must be invigorated to garner more interest, especially in the young and distracted minds. Sharing a common meal in our land (and in the Asian context at large) may seem challenging given the plethora of ideologies, religious and cultural diversity and the social pain of poverty, injustice and corruption. However these very characteristics, coupled with the propensity of wanting to listen to life experiences, stories, parables, etc. will reveal to us the need to **revitalize the intuitive character** of Indians who would favor the frequent use of stories rather than straight propositions, parables rather than discourses. And surely the medium of the meal would be very facilitating.^{xxxii}

Formation of the Heart

When we shift focus in searching God within, we realize that He is found in his creation and primarily in fellow humans. The Bible articulates the same: "If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." (1Jn 4:20) Knowing that **God dwells in our fellow human beings** would now shift emphasis in seeking him there. And what could be a better expression than service. The Eucharistic meal each time celebrated reminds the gathering of the joyful hope we wait to celebrate a meal in eternity and the chief decisive criteria during our judgment after death would be whether we served Jesus present in others, especially those in need of our care and concern (cf. Mt. 25:31–46).^{xxxiii}

Without doubts, Christianity is well acknowledged for the unparalleled quantum of service rendered to humanity through charity and mediums of social service. Sikhism *via* the establishment of *sangats* has as well done yeomen service to humanity-social projects for the benefit of the masses, looking after the needs of the poor, the pilgrims, the hungry and the disabled. *Langar* is an institution basically fostering service to Humanity. Being acknowledged as a divine service, it is undertaken with a sense of humility. According to certain Sikh schools of thought, the word 'charity' would not exactly suffice; since it would imply a donor and a recipient and correspondingly a sense of arrogance of the part of donor, which in a way, demeans the one receiving it.^{xxxiv} The act of *seva* is reckoned as one of being submitted before others and as the path towards salvation: "In the midst of this world, do *seva*, and you shall be given a place of honor in the Court of the Lord." (SGGS 26)^{xxxv}

Formation of a New Humanity

Love, service, respect and concern for the spiritual and temporal good of fellow human beings was the indispensable agenda of Jesus and Guru Nanak. Our sincere approach to this ideal would primarily require accepting an ever pervading sense of **equality** among humankind. However can we deny the fact that discriminatory demarcations like the caste system and other dividing mechanisms are still rooted in the psyche and social fabric of this land? Religious sanctions at times have legitimized some unequal systems, giving it permanence, thereby perpetuating the stain and stink of injustice to fellow and equal beings. Reflecting on the Eucharist and the

Langar, our inability to contribute against this and similar dividing factors would entail that we have not understood and lived the spirit of these ceremonies.^{xxxvi}

We are to remind ourselves and understand that the Eucharist and the *Langar* is **a family meal**. A family meal is an excellent example of communion and dialogue. In the family meal, the parents continue to give themselves *via* their daily labor, their intensity of love and concern and thus nourishing the same life which sprang from their body; with the same body now transformed thorough love and love's labor. With every meal the child's life sinks deeper into the parent's soil and into every sphere of life that is related and rooted in it. In eating the family meal, one's filiation with the family is strengthened.^{xxxvii} The Eucharist and *Langar* share the great parallel of having the tremendous potential for giving **a new identity to humanity as one family**, despite the shadows of distinctions, discriminations and insecurities looming over.

The Eucharist carries with it, the call to *metanoia* for individuals, for the community and from the community unto others. *Langar* extolling equality has the inherent capacity to each time remind the participants that the sublime **responsibility of building community** is going to be a perennial necessity to the fragmented humanity. Guru Nanak had then suggested a socio-economic formula for the re-organization of social relations in the community in the form: *Kirat karo, Wand Chhako, Nam Japo* (Contemplating on God's name, work diligently and share with others, specially with the needy).^{xxxviii} Thus both these communitarian meals remind the partakers of the accompanying and ongoing communal obligation.

The spirit of **true socialism** at *Langar* must be understood and allowed to flourish even beyond the socio-religious field. This aspect is indeed essential in society, religion, politics, and the government; often which reveal separatist tendencies. It needs to be encouraged by the Sikhs themselves, that members of their faith will prove to be a guiding example to other communities in India.^{xxxix} Equally edifying are the efforts of Christian spiritual leaders calling forth for a progressive growth of community awareness—from forming 'Basic Christian Communities' to 'Basic Human Communities'; recognizing, that embracing each person, irrespective of religious affiliations, is indeed sublime and truly being spiritually mature.^{xi}

Jesus washing the feet of his disciple before his Last Supper and his primary commandment to love one another and ultimately his self-sacrifice for humanity was a total unfathomable paradigm shift towards the understanding of God, humanity and our approach to life as a whole. Guru Nanak in the 15th century was revolutionary in combating a status quo of oppression and inequality in the legitimization of religious rites, rituals, traditions, irrational beliefs and customs. Both these icons among humans have left before us a legacy and **a challenge to transform the face and identity of humankind itself**.^{xii} And to humanity that carries along the scars of wars, terrorism, socio-cultural biases, caste and class discriminations, economic disparity, unemployment, injustice, etc. these community meals have a challenge to perennially remind its part-takers to be **messengers of harmony, reconciliation and peace**.^{xiii}

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

S. Radhakrishna in his work, 'The Principal Upanishads' notes that Mahatma Gandhi was inspired from Guru Govind Singh's writings in framing his public prayer: *Ishvara Allah tere nama*

mandira masjid a tere dhama sabko sanmati de bhagavana (Isvara and Allah are Thy names, temples and mosques Thy abode. Grant to all the right understanding)^{xliii} Gandhi also accounts that he stood in awe at the principles of Christianity, but was taken aback with many Christians not practicing the same. He specifically notes the deep inspiration he received from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.^{xliiv} Without hesitation we can deduce that **Gandhi was enriched with and inculcated the universal and eternal treasures of his milieu.** Gandhi's signal service to Hinduism, as also to every other religion, lay in his efforts to shift individualistic and idealistic moorings unto a realistic and universal embrace. Thus in reference to the ongoing considerations on 'embracing the other', we would need to acknowledge, that like Gandhi, we primarily ought to have a deep sense of awareness and openness to learn, adapt and personalize the basic human values and all that would enhance life and human well-being.^{xliv}

The just articulated **ideal finds a praxis in the unbiased religious meal services.** The significance of meals and the food symbolism in the Indian tradition as a whole is an unfathomable reservoir of inspiration and wisdom. On a personal front, the food symbolism of Sant Tukaram serves for me a perennial source of inspiration.^{xlvi} A deeper introspection on the already elaborated Eucharistic meal and *Langar*, will make us realize that it was indeed so very insightful that both Jesus Christ and Guru Nanak have utilized the simple, every day, yet deeply significant medium of a meal to perpetuate principles of human fellowship and divine experience. The ceremonies of the *Langar* and the Holy Eucharist are inseparable for Sikhs and Christians. For the Sikh, participating in the *sangat* and joining the *pangat* accounts to be the most humane and sacred means for being connected with God and fellow humans. For Christians the Eucharist is given the pivotal place and the Church articulates that the meal (Eucharist) is "the source and summit" of Christian life.

Thus the effort in this presentation (after an initial briefing on the two meals) is to facilitate a mutual enrichment from the insights of the *Langar* and the Eucharist in a bid to arrive at a praxis-orientation of truly 'embracing the other'. Few aspects were highlighted; however these are not exhaustible. In-depth understanding of the intrinsic principles encapsulated within the meals, will but open up horizons to bring hope to build a new humanity of equality, fellowship and peace. Jesus and Nanak have epitomized the possibility of human fellowship via the medium of a meal. And upon understanding and part-taking of the same, we are left with the vocation of doing what they wished and willed 'in their memory'.

END NOTES

ⁱ*Gurdwara Sahib* is the place of worship for Sikhs. *Gurdwara Sahib* is a compound word created by combining *Gur*, meaning *Guru* and *Dwara*, meaning door or house. Thus the word *Gurdwara* means the door or house of the *Guru*. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is always present in the *Gurdwara Sahib*. Cf. Frank A. Salomone, ed., "Sikhism", in *Encyclopedia of Religious Rites, Rituals and Festivals* (London: Routledge, 2004), 403.

ⁱⁱGuru Nanak (1469–1539) is the founder of the religion of Sikhism and is the first of the ten Sikh Gurus. Born to a Hindu family, (in Rai Bhoi Ki Talvandi, Delhi Sultanate, now Nankana Sahib, Punjab, Pakistan) he showed a deep spiritual nature from early childhood. As he matured and became absorbed in meditation, he questioned rituals, idolatry and the rigidity of the caste system. He set up a unique

spiritual, social and political platform based on equality, fraternity, love, goodness and virtue. Cf. Gurinder Singh Mann, "Sikhism," in *Encyclopedia of Global Religion*, ed. Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2012), 1174–1175.

- ⁱⁱⁱ Cf. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, *Sewa Langar Sangat & Pangat The Sikh Red Cross* (accessed 18 September, 2014); available from <http://hsdilgeer.com/sewa.htm>
- ^{iv} *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* is the Holy Scripture of Sikhs compiled by Sikh Gurus and some devotees. *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* shows the path to attain salvation and to be one with God. *Shabad* refers to any single hymn from the *Guru Granth Sahib Ji* or more abstractly the divine Word or the command of God. *Shabads* are sung in the *Gurdwara Sahib* and in holy congregations. Cf. Pashaura Singh, "Sikhism: Practicing Tradition Today" in *South Asian Religions Tradition and Today*, ed. Karen Pechilis and Selva J. Raj (New York: Routledge, 2013), 229–232.
- ^v *Moksha* a Sanskrit term implying liberation or release from the cycle of birth and death. It has different connotations in the various philosophical schools of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Sikhism also believes in reincarnation and accepts the aspect of *moksha* as a spiritual and temporal liberation. Cf. Roshen Dalal, *The Penguin Dictionary of Religion in India* (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2006), 311.
- ^{vi} The concept of *Guru* in Sikhism stands on two pillars, i.e., *Miri-Piri*. *Piri* means spiritual authority and *Miri* means temporal authority. Therefore, *Guru* in Sikhism is a teacher-leader. The word etymologically means: *Gu*: darkness, *ru*: Light or revelation. *Guru* is thus the dispeller of darkness and the revealer of light. At times it is referred to God, other times impersonally and at other times to a spiritually mature person. Cf. C.L. Datta, "The Concept of Guru in Nanak's Philosophy" in *Papers on Guru Nanak: Punjab History Conference*, ed. Fauja Singh and A.C. Arora (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1970), 199–201.
- ^{vii} Harnam Singh Shan, *Sayings of Guru Nanak: A Dictionary of the Thought of the Founder of Sikhism* (Amritsar: Dharam Parchar Committee, SGPC, 2003), 358.
- ^{viii} The corresponding numbers refers to the page number on the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* abbreviated as SGGGS. Hereafter the abbreviation and page number will be cited as such. All references to the Sri Guru Granth Sahib are from Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, In English Translation, Volume One and Two (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1984 and 1985).
- ^{ix} Taran Singh, "Guru Nanak's Spiritual Thought," *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 18, No. 197 (February-March, 1970): 44.
- ^x Cf. H.S. Bhatia and S.B. Bakshi, ed., *The Sikh Gurus and Sikhism* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 2000), 24.
- ^{xi} Several directives for the pangat were well prescribed to ensure the sublime service during the Langar. Cf. Daljeet Singh, *Sikhism: A Complete Study of its Theology and Mysticism* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1979), 282–283.
- ^{xii} *Karah Parsaad* is the sacramental food served at religious ceremonies in the presence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji. It is a symbol of equality of all members of the congregation. *Karah Prasaad* is made of flour, sugar and ghee (clarified butter). Cf. Frank A. Salomone, ed., "Sikhism", in *Encyclopedia of Religious Rites, Rituals and Festivals*, 404.
- ^{xiii} Cf. Harsh Mander, *From Langar with Love* (accessed 18 September, 2014,); available from http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/Harsh_Mander/from-langar-with-love/article4294049.ece
- ^{xiv} Cf. Harpreet Singh Soora, *Seva: The essence of Sikhism* (accessed 18 September, 2014); available from <http://www.sikhspirit.com/khalsa/news58.htm>
- ^{xv} (Mt 4:4) refers to the text from the Bible. In the New Testament, Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 4, verse 4.
- ^{xvi} (Please Note: Being a Roman Catholic Christian, my views and other references presented are not about all the Christians, but from the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Christian Church). Cf. Raymond Moloney, *Our Splendid Eucharist* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2005), 22.
- ^{xvii} (SC 7) refers to point number 7 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the Catholic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 4, 1963. The Constitution attempted to foster greater lay participation in the liturgy of the Catholic Church. Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (accessed

19 September, 2014); available from [http:// www.vatican.va/ archive/ hist_councils/ ii_vatican_council/ documents/ vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html)

^{xviii}Cf. Desmond Rebello, "Eucharistic Spirituality Today," *Dhyana*, Vol. 4 (April 1995): 7. Please also refer to the Biblical texts: From the New Testament: (1Thes. 2:13) Paul's 1st Letter to the Thessalonians, chapter 2, verse 13 and (Heb 4:12) the Letter to the Hebrews, chapter 4, verse 12.

^{xix}Johannes H. Emminghaus, *The Eucharist Essence Form Celebration*, Trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1978), 28–31.

^{xx}Ramon Nubiola, *Union with God through the Eucharist* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1987), 49.

Could also refer:

(AA 4) In the decree *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Number 4) Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (accessed 19 September, 2014); available from [http:// www.vatican.va/ archive/ hist_councils/ ii_vatican_council/ documents/ vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651118_apostolicam-actuositatem_en.html)

(GS 38) The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World called *Gaudium et Spes* (Number 38) Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* (accessed 19 September, 2014); available from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

^{xxi}(SC 7) refers to point number 7 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (accessed 19 September, 2014); available from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

^{xxii}Refer to Chapter 1 (of this paper) on the elaboration on *Sangat* and *Pangat* and Chapter 2 for the description of the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist.

^{xxiii}(Rom 10:12) refers to the text from the New Testament of the Bible. Letter of Paul to the Romans, chapter 10, verse 12.

^{xxiv}(Gen 2:23a) refers to the book of Genesis of the Old Testament in the Bible, chapter 2, verses 23a.

^{xxv}*Sati* refers to a custom within some Asian communities in which a recently widowed woman immolates herself, typically on the husband's funeral pyre.

^{xxvi}Cf. Chhanda Chatterji, "Allusions of Gender Equality in the Verses of Sri Guru Granth Sahib." *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, Vol. XXVII, No. 2 (July–December, 2008): 111–112.

^{xxvii}Cf. George Keerankeri, "The Eucharist and India's Quest for Community" in *Body, Bread, Blood: Eucharistic Perspectives from the Indian Church*, ed. Francis Gonsalves (Delhi: ISPCK and Vidyajyoti, 2000), 28–29.

^{xxviii}The reception and understanding of the identification of the species of bread and wine may differ in different denominations, Churches, etc. Cf. Vidya Sagar, "The Christian Community in Punjab: An Analogy." *Religion and Society*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (June, 1991): 12–13.

^{xxix}(EN 18) refers to point number 18 of the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelization in the Modern World) issued by Pope Paul VI on the theme of Catholic evangelization. Cf. Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (accessed 19 September, 2014); available from http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi_en.html

^{xxx}Cf. Vidya Sagar, "A Study of the Christian Community in North-West India." *Religion and Society*, Vol. 42 (June, 1995): 52–56.

^{xxxi}(Jn. 4:21b, 23b) refers to the Biblical text in the New Testament, Gospel of John, chapter 4, verses 21b and 23b. (Hos. 6:6) refers to the text in the Old Testament, Prophet Hosea, chapter 6 and verse 6.

^{xxxii}Cf. Santos Yao, "Table Fellowship of Jesus with the Marginalized: A Radical Inclusiveness." *Journal of Asian Mission*, Vol. 3, Issue 1 (2001): 36–37.

^{xxxiii}(1Jn 4:20) refers to the biblical text of the New Testament, the first Letter of John, chapter 4, verse 20. (Mt 25:31–46) refers to the text in the New Testament, The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25 and verses 31–46.

- ^{xxxiv}Cf. H.S. Bhatia and S.B. Bakshi, ed., *The Sikh Gurus and Sikhism* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, 2000), 117.
- ^{xxxv}Harnam Singh Shan, *Sayings of Guru Nanak: A Dictionary of the Thought of the Founder of Sikhism* (Amritsar: Dharam Parchar Committee, SGPC, 2003), 358.
- ^{xxxvi}George Keerankeri, "The Eucharist and India's Quest for Community" in *Body, Bread, Blood: Eucharistic Perspectives from The Indian Church*, ed. Francis Gonsalves (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 25–28.
- ^{xxxvii}Samuel Rayan, "The Eucharist and a New Personalism for India" in *India and the Eucharist*, ed. Bede Griffiths and others (Ernakulam: Lumen Institute, 1964), 36–40.
- ^{xxxviii}*Kirat karo, Wand Chhako, Nam Japo* are considered to be the three Pillars of Sikhism. Wazir Singh, *Humanism of Guru Nanak: A Philosophical Inquiry* (Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 1977), 167–168.
- ^{xxxix}Cf. Harsh Mander, *From Langar with Love* (accessed 18 September, 2014); available from http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/columns/Harsh_Mander/from-langar-with-love/article4294049.ece
- ^{xl}I have taken note here of the insights of Alphonse Thainese in his book 'Participatory Communion' which reviewed the FABC documents from 1970–2006. The author recalls late Pope John Paul II's address at Assisi, Italy some years ago wherein the prelate emphasized that the social teaching is a clarion call for the Church to move out of the sacristy. The author devotes the last section of the book (like a sort of a culminating note) to impress the need of the 'Small Christian Communities' to gradually form into 'Small Human Communities'. He presents practical suggestions and attempts to arrive at a **participatory communion** and a **praxis oriented community** which would extend the social horizons to all humans and to every concern of the land. Cf. Alphonse Thainese, *Participatory Communion: An Ecclesiological Inquiry on Lay Participation in the Local Church Based on the Documents of the FABC (1970–2006)* (Delhi: ISPCK, 2008), 290–293.
- ^{xli}Cf. R.V. De Smet, "Affinities between Guru Nanak and Jesus Christ." *The Sikh Review*, Vol. 19, No. 207 (February, 1971): 9–10.
- ^{xlii}Cf. S. Arokiasamy, "The Eucharistic Community: Oneness and Otherness" in *Body, Bread, Blood: Eucharistic Perspectives from The Indian Church*, ed. Francis Gonsalves (Delhi: ISPCK, 2000), 49–50.
- ^{xliiii}S. Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1953), 139.
- ^{xliiv}The Sermon on the Mount is found in the New Testament of the Bible, in the Gospel of Matthew, chapters 5 to 7. A. Jayabalan, "Gandhi and Christianity: A Critical Perspective." *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (January–March, 2005): 447–448.
- ^{xlv}Cyriac Vazhayil, "Theologizing from a Gandhian Perspective." *Vijnanadeepti*, Vol. 4, Issue 1 (2001): 95–96.
- ^{xlvi}Sant Tukaram (1577–1650) from Dehu, a town close to Pune in Mahārāshtra, India was a prominent spiritual poet of the *Bhakti* movement in India. He was a great devotee of *Vitthala* or *Vithoba*, a form of God Vishnu and had numerous devotional compositions in Marathi. Although being from the lower caste, he was well versed with Hindu philosophy and was highly influential. He promoted social equality and had many miracles attributed to him. Cf. Thomas Dabre, *The God-Experience of Tukaram: A Study in Religious Symbolism* (Pune: Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, 1987), 1ff.

Mahatma Gandhi and Turkish War of Independence



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Abstract—As the title suggests, the main objective of this paper is to highlight the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi in the Turkish war of independence. Gandiji is an apostle of non-violence and peace. He kept trying to reach the depths of nonviolence, beginning with his own heart and soul. Along with it he introduced a new method of social change, which he called “Satyagraha” (truth force), it means resisting untruth by truthful means. His example and teachings inspire us to apply the same in our pursuit of an end to war, nuclear weapons, environmental destruction, violence, hunger, poverty and injustice, and the creation of a culture of peace, justice and nonviolence. Mahatma Gandhi’s contribution includes not just the struggle against racism in South Africa, the independence movement of India, but his contribution was significant and memorable in Turkish war of independence or revolution (1919-1924). Mahatma Gandhi was one of the biggest moral supporters of the Turkish cause when the victorious Allied powers were bent on partitioning Turkey. The important question, which comes to our mind in this contest, is why and how Mahatma Gandhi championed the Turkish independent movement. In order to deal with this argument I focus on the historical events and happenings of that period of time in Turkey and India in my paper. The paper also deals with Gandhi’s role in the Khilafat and Non-cooperation movement and the extent to which he went on to champion the cause of Turkish war of independence and the sentiments of Indian Muslims towards the Holy places of Islam and Sultan-Khalif. The main objective of the paper is to highlight upon ideas of non-violence and peace of Mahatma Gandhi which he propagated and practiced till the end of his life and is still relevant in the contemporary world order which is so conflict laden.

Keywords: *Non-violence, Peace, Khilafat Movement, Non-cooperation Movement, Muslims, Turkish War of Independence, Islam*

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world is a victim of all kinds of social evils, violence and corruption. The present world scenario lacks peace, stability and order. At this backdrop it is important for us to emphasize the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi on peace and non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi is the apostle of peace and non-violence as he always propagated the idea of peace and the use of non-violence to transform the society, politics and culture. He propagated the first widespread application of nonviolence as the most powerful tool for positive social change. Gandhi's idea of nonviolence was rooted and grounded in political and spiritual dimensions. This is the reason why he is not just relevant and significant in India's political stage, but also on the world stage, for all times. Gandhi's conscience motivated him to challenge injustices, and doing so, he made a great impact on the world, even during his own lifetime. He was one of the few people widely known around the world in his time.

Mahatma Gandhi kept trying to reach the depths of nonviolence, beginning with his own heart and soul. Along with it he introduced a new method of social change, which he called "Satyagraha" (truth force), it means resisting untruth by truthful means. His example and teachings inspire us to apply the same in our pursuit of an end to war, nuclear weapons, environmental degradation, violence, hunger, poverty and injustice, and the creation of a culture of peace, justice and nonviolence. Gandhi studied the New Testament and the Bhagavad Gita in depth. His reading of the religious scriptures, particularly of the Sermon on the Mount, deepened his convictions and gave him a moral and spiritual framework that determined the rest of his life.

Mahatma Gandhi's contribution includes not just the struggle against racism in South Africa, the independence movement of India, but his contribution was significant and memorable in Turkish war of independence or revolution (1919–1924). Mahatma Gandhi was one of the biggest moral supporters of the Turkish cause when the victorious Allied powers were bent on partitioning Turkey. The important question, which comes to our mind in this contest, is why and how Mahatma Gandhi championed the Turkish independent movement. In order to deal with this argument I focus on the historical events and happenings of that period of time in Turkey and India.

During the First World War the Muslims of India were in very painful dilemma. They were confused between their duty as loyal citizens of the British Empire and as the followers of their religious chief, the Sultan-Caliph of Turkey. Initially the Indian Muslims agreed to help England when she promised not to attack the Caliph's sovereignty and prevent the disintegration of Turkey. This was promised by the British Premier Lloyd George and the Viceroy of India. The Muslim contention was that the Jazarat-ul-Arab including Mesopotamia, Arabia, Syria and Palestine, with all the holy places situated therein must always remain under the direct suzerainty of the Khalifa.¹ These promises were forgotten once the war was over. The Allied powers under the British dictates were determined to partition Turkey. This betrayal of promise acted as a catalyst at the root of the Muslim sentiments in India. They were convinced to fight

¹R.K. Sinha. 1994. The Turkish Question Mustafa Kemal and Mahatma Gandhi. Delhi. Adam Publications. P. 54.

against the unjustified Treaty of Sevres, but the main problem faced by the Indian Muslims was that who would lead the Indian Turkish protest in order to ensure justice for Turkey. At this juncture, Mahatma Gandhi took up the responsibility to lead the movement on behalf of the Indian Muslims. Gandhi declared: "It would be morally wrong and an act of injustice to keep company with all those who have been unjust to Turkey and we should keep away from such an evil course at any cost". At the same time he also challenged the Government of India, saying: "His Excellency should resign if the Peace Terms are not revised". Mahatma Gandhi termed this agitation as 'peace terms with Turkey', which was an open non-violent revolt against the false promises which he considered as immoral and irreligious. There were many other political changes and complexities of the period after the First World War, instead of expected positive reforms and more freedom there came repressive measures in the form of Rowlatt Bills to suppress the revolutionary movements in India, followed by the massacre of The Jallianwala Bagh of Amritsar and the martial law in Punjab. All these events in the post-war period had antagonized the Hindus with the same vigor as Muslims had over the possible humiliation of Turkey. Hence, this was the political atmosphere of India when some Muslim leaders formed themselves around mid-1919 into a Khilafat Conference. The help from the Hindus came in a prominent way under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi who championed the Turkish cause soon after his arrival from South Africa.²

On May 9, 1919, at a special meeting of the AnjumanZiaul Islam at Bombay in the presence of Gandhi, Maulvi Abdul Raof moved the following resolution regarding the issue of Turkey: to settle the question of the Khilafat in accordance of the wishes of the Muslims in India; to desist from the proposed dismemberment of the Turkish Empire; that Constantinople, which has been the seat of the Khilafat for four centuries and which is predominantly Muslim by faith and Turkish by race must remain the capital of Turkish Empire. It was proposed that the fulfillment of the above questions entirely will bring about the restoration of the normal feelings among the Muslims of India.³ Gandhi was always in contact with the government and used all the peaceful and non-violent measures to bring about a resolution to the grievances of the Muslims of India on the Turkish issue.

Gandhi was convinced that the question of Turkey was an Empire question which concerned millions of Muslims in India and abroad. Therefore in a huge meeting held at Sonapur Masjid, Gandhi proposed a vow of Hindu-Muslim unity. He claimed that Hindus would give enthusiastic support to Muslims in their just claims regarding the retention of Turkey as a sovereign State with full regard for their feelings as to the holy places and the Khilafat. Further he warned the Muslims to present their case before the world firmly, unflinchingly and peacefully.

Gandhi himself wanted to protest against the government but lawfully. His every step was meaningful and had a strong moral support and firm determination. According to Gandhi the Khilafat question or that of the peace terms with Turkey was important and he believed that on the satisfactory solution of this problem depended the peace of India and he launched speech

²R.K. Sinha. 1994. The Turkish Question Mustafa Kemal and Mahatma Gandhi. Delhi. Adam Publications. p. 56.

³Young India, May 14, 1919 (Mahatma Gandhi's first English Weekly in India, 1919-1923).

campaigns for mobilizing the people. All the above mentioned steps taken by Gandhi were guided by his idea of non-violence and peace, Gandhi had a firm belief that, "*Changing the world begins with changing yourself; you have to become the change you want to see in the world.*" For him, every individual must try to bring positive changes in oneself and the efforts of each one can bring changes to the world in totality. This thought is relevant in the present day conflict laden world where nations are using all sorts of violent measures against the other.

The major shock came by with the publication of the Treaty of Sevres on May 14, 1920, in India. This treaty announced the terms of dismembering Turkey and this particular event crossed the limits of Gandhi's humiliation and he completely lost his confidence and faith in the British sense of justice. He made the biggest decision of his life to refuse to cooperate any longer with the British government until their demands were fulfilled. The great apostle of co-operation of 1919 became the great apostle of non-cooperation of 1920. The great peaceful but rebellious revolt began with Mahatma Gandhi as the leader of Hindu-Muslim unity.⁴

Gandhi's non-cooperation program was adopted by the Khilafat Committee at Bombay on the 28th May, 1920, as the only means now left to the Muslims. The only important aim of Gandhi at this hour was to persuade the Congress to launch the non-cooperation. He also decided to go on an extensive tour of the country to rally the people behind the Turkish cause.⁵ His idea of combining Khilafat movement along with non-cooperation movement is one of the biggest proofs of his dedicated commitment towards the Turkish war of independence and protecting the sentiments of the Indian Muslims linked to their holy places.

Along with the Congress committees, the Khilafat committees too were established in different parts of the country. The Hindus displayed great enthusiasm in raising the Angora Fund and they willingly subscribed to the fund. The Muslims had chosen to starve for some days in order to contribute to the Khilafat fund meant for the safety of Turkey. These collected funds were sent to Constantinople from time to time where it was received by the representatives of Mustafa Kemal Pasa.⁶

Gandhi protested against the British and Their policies peacefully with determination. He told the people: "I am not anti-British, I am not anti-government, but I am anti-truth, anti-humbag and anti-injustice and as long as the government spells injustice, it may regard me as its enemy, implacable enemy." In the process of civil disobedience or non-cooperation, he warned the nation of any kind of violence and indiscipline. He gave more importance to prayer and fasting and peaceful demonstration of their demands.

On the other hand, the defeat of the Greeks in the first battle of Inonu which forced Britain and its allies to reconsider the Treaty of Sevres and soften its provision to some extent. But, Gandhi did not want a limited revision but a total revision of the unjust treaty. The year 1921 ended with mass arrest, repression, atrocities and joyful news of the victory of the Turks over the Greeks at the

⁴R.K. Sinha. 1994. *The Turkish Question Mustafa Kemal and Mahatma Gandhi*. Delhi. Adam Publications. pp. 83-84.

⁵B.R. Ambedkar. 1946. *Pakistan or the Partition of India*. Bombay Thackers. p. 141.

⁶R.K. Sinha. 1994. *The Turkish Question Mustafa Kemal and Mahatma Gandhi*. Delhi. Adam Publications. p. 109.

Sakarya River. This victory proved the strength of the Turks under Mustafa Kemal. According to some eminent scholars, this victory was interpreted separately by the nationalists and khilafatists. For the nationalists saw it as a first major blow to the imperialist powers and the khilafatists found in it the grand victory of Islam. They adored Mustafa Kemal as the "sword of Islam" and the Turkish Grand National Assembly gave him the title of "GAZI", the fighter of Islam.

But this victory did not bring an end to the Turkish struggle for independence. In the beginning of 1922, Gandhi made it clear to the British government and their allies that "If the Treaty of Sevres is not revised to our satisfaction, the Turkish or the Khilafat agitation is not finished. The virtue lies in India's determination not to be satisfied with anything less than her demands." This speech of Gandhi and some other speeches of this period puzzled the Viceroy and he ordered to arrest Gandhi. On 10th of March, 1922, Gandhi was arrested. The British government was faced with lot of disorder in this period and so they proposed that the Allies should evacuate Constantinople, giving back to the Sultan his former suzerainty over Holy places, and also restore Thrace and Smyrna to Turkey.

After his arrest too, Gandhi's voice for the Turkish cause was believed to be remain in the hearts and minds of Indians. He told people that, "you are not fighting to sustain any wrong or even misuse. You are backing the Turks, because they represent the gentlemen of Europe, and because the Europeans, especially the English prejudiced against them is due, not to the Turks being Mussalmans and not assimilating the modern spirit of exploitation of weaker people and their lands. In fighting for the Turks, you are fighting to raise the dignity and purity of your own faith."⁷

By August 30, the main battle was over. Hence, after three and a half year of enemy occupation reached India, all India shared the news with great celebration. The main reason behind their jubilation was the frustration and defeat of Britain's design to partition Turkey and wipe out the Turks from Constantinople. On July 24, 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed to the entire satisfaction of the Turkish people. As Mustafa Kemal remarked: "This treaty is a document expressing the final failure of the plot against Turkey, a plot laid centuries ago, a plot which was to have succeeded with the Treaty of Sevres. It is a diplomatic victory the like of which is not recorded in the Ottoman history." This treaty was the outcome of the famous Turkish swords backed by India's unforgotten memorable moral support provided by Mahatma Gandhi who was, at that time, in the British prison due to the Turkish agitation.⁸

In conclusion it can be stated with ample justification that Gandhi is an apostle of non-violence and peace. Be it in the struggle against racism in South Africa, the independence movement of India, and his contribution in Turkish war of independence (1919-1924), Gandhiji kept his principles of non-violence and peace intact. He was a selfless person who could embrace people belonging to any part of the world. He worked all throughout his life fighting against injustice, racism, evil and his ideas are relevant in the contemporary world order which is conflict laden.

⁷Young India, September 29, 1921.

⁸R.K. Sinha. 1994. The Turkish Question Mustafa Kemal and Mahatma Gandhi. Delhi. Adam Publications. p. 128.

Gandhi and Religious Conversion



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Abstract—*In a time, when the complex and emotionally charged issue like conversion has been exploited by fundamentalists, confused by liberals, not being comprehended by many what all the fuss is about, revisiting Gandhi's view on conversion is in itself a great significance so far as India's multi cultural and pluri-religious society is concerned. Gandhi's views on religious conversion are being characterized by communal harmony. His definition of conversion means a definite giving up of the evil of the world, adaptation of all the good of the new and a scrupulous avoidance of everything evil in the new. Conversion should, therefore, mean a life of greater dedication to one's own country, greater surrender to God and greater self purification. For him, conversion is a heart process known only to and by God. It must be left to itself.... Those who believe in it have a perfect right to follow their own course without let or hindrance, so long as it is kept within proper limit. In this sense, he was not against right to conversion (convert's right). But he was against right to conversion so far as it means missionary right to convert people. He was against such conversion since it leads to mutual decrying of rival faiths which gives rise to mutual hatred. This is why, he was against any kind of propagation. To him, propagation of religion is nothing but the negation of toleration and the best way of dealing with such propaganda is to publicly condemn it. He was not only against conversion by missionaries, but also against shuddhi by Arya Samaj. Regarding shuddhi (reconversion) he is of the opinion that there is no such thing as proselytism in Hinduism, as it is understood in Christianity, or to a lesser extent in Islam. The Arya Samaj has, he thinks, copied the Christians in planning its propaganda. To him, the real shuddhi movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. This paper is just an elaboration of this theme.*

Keywords: *Conversion, Atmaparivartan, Dharmantara, Propaganda*

It is Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi whose inclusiveness places him in opposition to conversion to a religious tradition other than one's own. Here he seems to typify the mainstream Hindu position. In fact, religious fundamentalists and nationalists have co-opted him to their own purposes on the issue of religious conversion. However, on the issue of religious conversion, neither Gandhi nor Ambedkar can be ignored. The starting point and ending point of both are quite opposite. Gandhi was a reformer in the sense that he was in favor of *atmaparivartan* but not a proselytizer since he was against *dharmantara* (a change of religious tradition). Gandhi along with Ambedkar has remained a powerful critique of Christian missionaries. In deed to both converters and converts Gandhi represents a most genuine challenge to deeper and most honest introspection. Hence, revisiting Gandhi's view on conversion is in itself becomes a great significance.

It is Gandhi "I am against conversion, whether it is known as *shuddhi* by Hindus, *tabligh* by Muslims or proselytizing by Christians..." (Cited in Rao 1994, P. 56). It seems from the above statement that Gandhi was against religious conversion but the real fact is that he had a different kind of mind set. His definition of conversion means a definite giving up of the evil of the world, adaptation of all the good of the new and a scrupulous avoidance of everything evil in the new. Conversion should, therefore, mean a life of greater dedication to one's own country, greater surrender to God and greater self purification (*Young India*, 20 August 1925).

GANDHI AND PROSELYTIZERS

For Gandhi, conversion is a heart process known only to and by god. It must be left to itself... Those who believe in it have a perfect right to follow their own course without let or hindrance, so long as it is kept within proper limit, i.e., so long as there is no force or fraud or material inducement and so long as the parties are free agents and of mature age and understanding. According to him, the cases of real honest conversion are possible. He was of the opinion that "if some people for their inward satisfaction and growth change their religion, let them do so..." (*Young India*, 19 January 1928). Gandhi believes that oppression within one's religious tradition was not sufficient reason for abandoning it. In fact he supports intelligent conversion but at the same time he knew that the so-called untouchables and *shudras* are not converted by an appeal to reason because of his own choice of being a *Harijan*. To place his actual words "having become a *Harijan* by choice, I know the mind of the Harijans. There is not a single *Harijan* today who can fall in that category (change of faith out of heartfelt conviction and spiritual urge) what do they understand of Islam? Nor do they understand why they are Hindu... they are what they are because they are born in a particular faith. If they change religion, it would be merely from compulsion or some temptation held out to them in return. In present atmosphere, no voluntary change of faith should have any validity" (Cited in Rao 1994, P. 62).

Gandhi's opposition to conversion is located within the context of his unique understanding of religion. His understanding of religion transcends religiosity. It is essentially a spiritual quest for *moksha*, but one rooted in the reality of service to the last and least in this world. For him, religion is a personal concern, not a matter of labeling but of belief and action. It is thus a quest for a moral and spiritual identity. To quote him "I believe that there is no such thing as

conversion from one faith to another in the accepted sense of the term. It is highly a personal matter for the individual and his god. I may not have any design upon my neighbor as to his faith, which I must honor even as I honor my own. For I regard all the great religions as true, at any rate for the people professing them, as mine is true for me... And seeing that it takes all my resources in trying to bring my practice to the level of my faith and in preaching the same to my co-religionists, I do not dream of preaching to the followers of other faiths" (*Harijan*, 28 September 1935). Gandhi moves on to say that a quest for religious identity is moral and spiritual and within the context of one's Varna and dharma. Both are ascribed at birth, hence, Gandhi cannot see people making a change of identity either. It would be against the social and moral responsibility of the convert towards his own Varna. His understanding of *varnashrama* dharma does not allow for a *dharmantar*. For him, there can be no changing your *dharma*. This would amount to *adharma*. It is much like changing your mother. Your mother may be bad so you may try to reform or improve her, but you do not, or rather cannot, ever change her for another. For even an adopted mother can never ever become the birth mother. This colored his whole attitude to caste and conversion.

GANDHI AND CONVERTERS

Gandhi's understanding of conversion as prevails in India is that "it is the transference of allegiance from one fold to another and the mutual decrying of rival faiths which gives rise to mutual hatred" (Cited in Rao 1994, P. 57). For Gandhi, religious proselytization and conversion has the potential to further heighten tensions and precipitate destabilizing consequences: "it is impossible for me to reconcile myself to the idea of conversion after the style that goes on in India and elsewhere today. It is an error which is perhaps the greatest impediment to the world's progress towards peace. 'Warring creeds' is a blasphemous expression. And it fitly describes the state of things in India, the mother-as I believe her to be-of religion or religions. If she is truly the mother, the motherhood is on trial" (*Harijan*, 30 January 1937). In this sense, he was totally against Christian conversion. He understands Christian conversion as forcible conversion. To him "to change one's religion under threat of force is no conversion but rather cowardice. A cowardly man or woman is dead weight on any religion. Out of fear they may become Muslim today, Christian tomorrow and pass into a third religion the day after..." (Cited in Rao 1994, P. 63). At the same time he has also said that religion cannot be forced upon an unwilling heart. It will mean death to the three religions. He continues by saying that "I do not know a single writer on Islam who defends the use of force in the proselytizing process" (ibid. 59). "There is nothing in the Koran to warrant the use of force for conversion. The holy book says in clearest language possible: there is no compulsion in religion. It is therefore, up to the leaders of the Muslims to declare that forcible repetition of a formula cannot make a non Muslim into a Muslim. It only shames Islam..." (ibid). One who is forcibly converted to Islam ceases to be a man. To recite the *kalma* through fear is meaningless... I would never mind if a Hindu recites the *kalma* willingly and with full heart. But, if he does so out of fear of losing his life or possessions, then he takes the name of god in vain.

Christian conversion, for Gandhi, is an outside intervention to the personal matter of converts. To Gandhi, conversion to Christianity seems to involve an unfortunate change of identity, an Europeanization of the convert, an awkward cultural alienation to the point of disowning his past. He notes "As I wander about throughout the length and breadth of India I see many Christian Indians almost ashamed of their birth, certainly of their ancestral religion, and of their ancestral dress" (*Young India*, 20 August 1925). Further this leads to a certain political alienation that he decried "The moment a person here turns to Christian, he becomes a Saheb log. He almost changes his nationality...and begins to fancy himself a limb of the ruling class. What the Christians are afraid of losing, therefore, are not their rights but anomalous privileges..." (*Harijana*, 13 January 1940). In an address to foreign missionaries, Gandhi is convinced that "Every nation considers its own faith to be as good as that of any other. Certainly, the great faiths held by the people of India are as adequate for her people. India stands in no need of conversion from one faith to another" (*Young India*, 23 April 1931). Gandhi would urge missionaries to live rather than preach their faith. He holds that "proselytizing under the cloak of humanitarian work, is, to say the least, unhealthy...Conversions have nowadays become a matter of business, like any other. I remember having read a missionary report saying how much it cost per head to convert and then presenting a budget for the next season" (*Young India*, 24 September 1931). What Gandhi demands is the purity of motivation in missionary service and informed consent from the converts.

Gandhi feels that missionaries are unconsciously exploiting the vulnerability of the untouchables in converting them. Gandhi's intention may well have been to protect such people, whom he saw as all too vulnerable from over-eager proselytizers. Gandhi has demanded for them that "no matter what may be their (missionaries) policy under normal circumstances, they must withdraw from the indecent competition to convert the *Harijans*" (cited in Kumarappa ed. 1941: 147). However, his paternalism towards *dalits* seems to deny them any agency in such matters. Today he has come to be resented more by the *dalits* themselves than the missionaries against whom his criticism was directed in the first place. However, overtly at least Gandhi here is protecting *Harijans* and not so much Hinduism, which he feels confident can stand on its own. His tolerance is unbounded: "I do not expect the India of my dream to develop one religion, i.e. to be wholly Hindu, or wholly Christian, or wholly Mussalman, but I want it to be wholly tolerant, with its religions working side by side with one another" (*Young India*, 22 December 1927).

So far as *shuddhi* (reconversion) is concerned, he was of the opinion that, "there is no such thing as proselytism in Hinduism, as it is understood in Christianity, or to a lesser extent in Islam. The Arya Samaj has, I think, copied the Christians in planning its propaganda..." (Cited in Rao 1994, P. 58). The Arya Samaj preacher is never so happy when he is reviling other religion... My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from same god but all are imperfect because they come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real 'suddhi' movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of god, when those who are in my fold are everyday denying god by their action? In addition to it he had said that, unless those who have been converted are brought back to Hindu fold quickly, the cleavage between the Hindu and Muslim may become permanent... (ibid. 61).

So far as propoganda is concerned he is of the opinion that “no propoganda can be allowed, if the *Malkanas* wanted to return to Hindu fold, they had a perfect right to do so whenever they liked. But no propoganda can be allowed which reviles other religions” (Cited in Rao 1994, P. 58). For that would be negation of toleration. The best way of dealing with such propoganda is to publicly condemn it. He says “if I had the power and could legislate, I should stop all proselytizing. In Hindu households the advent of a missionary has meant the disruption of the family coming in the wake of change of dress, manners, language, food and drink” (*Harijan*, 5 January 1935). The reason behind his opposition, as Gouri Viswanathan points out, Gandhi still “believed Christian conversions were the instruments of British colonialism and therefore must be resisted as vigorously as ‘British rule” (Viswanathan 2001: xii). His judgment was very harsh: “Christianity has been inextricable mixed up for the last one hundred and fifty years with British rule. It appears to us synonymous with materialistic civilization and imperialistic exploitation by the stronger white races of the weaker races of the world. Its contribution to India has been; therefore, largely negative (*Young India*, 21 March 1929).

However, in his later stage of life when Gandhi has been asked that “Will you under Swaraj allow Christians to go on with their proselytizing activity without any hindrance? He paused for a reply. ‘No legal hindrances’, replied Gandhi, ‘can be put in the way of any Christian or anybody preaching for the acceptance of his preaching” (*Harijana*, 13 January 1940). In fact, he feels that in independent India, there is no longer any need to forbid religious conversion or have been legally banned, even though he remain opposed to them.

Theologically, Gandhi does not privilege any one religion over another, not even his own. He is emphatic about giving them all equal respect. He is a Universalist who cannot reconcile himself to conversion: “For me the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden, or they are the branches of same majestic tree. Therefore they are equally true, though being received and interpreted through human instruments equally imperfect. It is impossible for me to reconcile myself to the idea of conversion...” (*Harijan*, 30 January 1937). Though not a converter himself, Gandhi has a remarkable effect on others. He is so open and close to other religious tradition that he compels them to an internal self-critique, at least when they are receptive to the challenge he represents. Even when he opposes them, the missionaries could not but respect him. They are most appreciative of Gandhi’s integrity.

Gandhi’s view on conversion and propoganda is because of his distinct understanding of religion and secularism. For Gandhi, in nature, there is a fundamental unity running through all the diversity we see about us. Religions are given to mankind so as to accelerate the process of realization of fundamental unity. He continued by saying that when you look at these religions as so many leaves of a tree, they seem so different but at the trunk, they are one. Unless and until we realize this fundamental unity, wars in the name of religion will not cease. For him the only way to avoid this war is the toleration. To put him, “Hindu -Muslim unity requires the Musalmans to tolerate, not as a virtue of necessity, not as a policy, but as a part of their religion...even so is it expected of the Hindus to extend the same tolerance as a matter of faith and religion to the religions of other” (Cited in Rao 1994, P. 40). He continues by saying that the need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. They must be brave enough to love one another, to tolerate one another’s religions,

even prejudices and superstitions. This requires faith in oneself. And faith in oneself is faith in God. Difference of religious opinion will persist to the end of time; toleration is only thing that will enable person belonging to different religions to live as good neighbors, friends and cousins. That's why, he is of the opinion that no propaganda can be allowed...., as it was against toleration. For him, all worship the same God although under different names.... it is wrong for anyone to say that his God is superior to that of another. Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to everyman even if it stands low in the scale of philosophic comparison. It is a misfortune that, today... they (religions) have become a potent cause of strife and mutual slaughter. Religion is dragged down to the low level of crude materialism to lure people into which the most cherished sentiments of millions of human beings are trodden under foot. In such a situation Gandhi had suggested that, "we can only pray, if we are Hindu not that, a Christian should become a Hindu, or if we are Muslims, not that a Hindu or Christian should become a Muslim, nor should we even secretly pray that any one should be converted but our innermost prayer should be that a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim and a Christian a better Christian. At the same time he was in favor of reformation of Hinduism. He was of the opinion that, "for reform of Hinduism and for its real protection, removal of untouchability is the greatest thing... if this, the blackest spot on Hinduism, is removed, you have automatically all that *shuddhi* and *sangathan* can be expected to yield" (Cited in Rao 1994, P.105). So long as the poison of untouchability remains in the Hindu body, it will be liable to attacks from outside. He says that, removal of untouchability is a spiritual progress and also warns Hinduism that "let us not shut our eyes to the plain fact, the 'untouchables', and the scheduled classes are target because they are the weakest point of Hinduism... I maintain that caste, as it is understood, must go if Hinduism is to survive" (ibid.106). When the poison of untouchability entered Hinduism, the decline began... if untouchability live, Hinduism must die. The Hindu wants Swaraj in India and not a Hindu raj. Even if there is a Hindu raj and toleration one of its feature, there will be place in it for the Muslims as well as the Christians (ibid. 394). However for him, religion is not a test of nationality but a personal matter between man and God... it must not be mixed with politics or national affairs. He had a strong view that the so-called majority community has no right to impose itself on others... the minorities must be made to realize that they are as much valued citizens of the state they live in as the majority.

Though Hindu fundamentalist takes opportunistic supports from Gandhi so far as his understanding is concerned, yet, Gandhi must not be wrongly understood. There was no Hindu temple in the ashrams Gandhi founded. There was a prayer hall welcoming all faiths. He was a deeply religious person who was truly inter-religious. Yet, if we disagree with him even on many religious issues, he inspires us on others. Gandhi's stance on conversion is founded not on the denial of any rights, e.g., the freedom of choice and freedom to preach; but on his concept of duty, the obligation imposed by one's dharma. For him duty is first and must constrain rights. Hence the obligations of duty limit the exercise of rights. Gandhi's opponents, both the converts and converters, position themselves on the basis of their rights. For them rights comes first and defines duty.

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Being with the Other: (IM) Possibility of Ethics of Alterity



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Abstract—*In the present era of social and political revolution, the importance of an ethics of commitment is more relevant than ever. The distinction has to be made between the ethics and politics of the present moment. It is in this compulsive focal point of history that I see the importance of Gandhian ethics very relevant. Inspired by Gandhian ideology and the practice of satyagraha (the practice of non-violent resistance), the 'Arab Spring', as it is known, aims at the coexistence of Islam and democracy. The aim of the present paper is to see the importance and acknowledgement of the Other as essential for ontological existence of Self. The second half of the paper revisits the tension between Self/Other in postcolonial context and in a deconstructive mode argues about the (im) possibility of ethics of alterity.*

Keywords: *Thics/Politics, Self/Other, Postmodern/Postcolonial, Gandhi, Levinas, Derrida, Arab Revolution*

The origin of the present paper lies within a critical historical moment which not only disturbed me but also unequivocally associated my Self with millions of Others in almost a revolutionary fashion. This disturbing moment was the sad incident of the suicide of a young Muslim, Mohamed Bouazizi, who sacrificed his life for a 'common cause'. His death moved millions in the Middle East and sparked off a revolution—millions of young people like him mobilized themselves on ethical grounds to change the face of political dictatorship across the Middle East. This Arab Revolution (2010) continues to shape and reform not only the geo-political relations of the East and the West but also the way we perceive power relations in post-colonies. Many questions arise about the nature of revolution with special reference to a spirit which is normative in nature, especially in relation to postcolonial nations, which are different from other nations in the sense that it is repeatedly haunted by its colonial past. Middle-Eastern countries were part of the colonial project, but even after the fall of empires, most of them have continued to witness coercive imperial treatment by their own leaders. White colonizers have been replaced by their own people. A handful of people have appropriated most of the wealth in newly independent nations. This class of people continues to work on behalf of their white masters in post-colonies. Though power centers have been demolished, countries like the US continue to decide the fate of millions of people who are over-burdened by a double condition—'postcolonial' and 'postmodern'.

History, clearly, is not a linear progression or regression, it is an interplay of 'challenge and response' (Arnold Toynbee) to historical incidents and provocation. It is a dialogic interpretation, an interplay between several contradictory, hierarchical forces. The forces, if enacted on the basis of mutual respect and collaboration, ensure that goodwill and stability prevails in society; whereas if there is provocation and exploitation, social stability gets disturbed and voices of resistance are heard, as we see in the recent democratic uprising in the Arab countries. Inspired by Gandhian ideology and the practice of *satyagraha* (the practice of non-violent resistance), the 'Arab Spring', as it is known, aims at the coexistence of Islam and democracy. What has provoked the revolutionaries to assimilate and unite, forgetting their narrow communal religious differences, is the exploitation caused by autocratic rulers and the lack of democracy. Their struggle is for building an ethical democracy, in which faith in religion will be a personal choice for believers or non-believers in a free and pluralistic civil society. While the role of religion in such an uprising is ambivalent. The project of the Arab revolution is a "good life" for its people, irrespective of communal differences, through a "pluralistic democratic society with freedom and justice for all" (Dallmayr 174). Such a project, in my view, leads towards freedom from blind fundamentalism and participates in the "conversation of humankind" towards building a cosmopolitan community, an emerging cosmopolis.

There has been an ongoing debate about the uses and abuses of using the prefix 'post' as a common precondition to understand the aftermath of colonialism and modernism. Irony is inherent in any attempt to understand the strategic nature of modernism and colonialism, as

The ultimate value of community in propagating liberal democracy and individual responsibility is another important area to discuss. Miller says that community is an indispensable foundation for democracy (Miller 1989). But can a cosmopolitan community construct liberal democratic practice, or can liberal democracy be introduced in a community with a cosmopolitan

consciousness? Democracy is based on equality, liberty and fraternity. Gandhi advocated self-rule (Dallmyre 153) or self-government as the essence of democracy. But his conception of self-rule was not selfish rule or autocratic rule over Others (Chantal Mouffe), but the cultivation of a humanitarian consciousness which considers self rule as self-control or self-moderation for the sake of shared wellbeing, and to build a just and ethical society on the basis of non-violence.

Though Gandhi's concept of self-rule does not address global society in the age of globalization, but I would argue that modern liberalist individual democracy is a combination of ethics and politics, the private and the public, a just association of self-rule, which is the moral aspect, and self-government, which is the political aspect. This ethico-political linkage is the essence of liberalism in modern democracy, which resembles a cosmopolitan community. Communication is a very important factor in the success of liberal democracy. The discourse on democratic systems that takes place in a cosmopolitan community comprises the inclusion of others, the negotiation of differences, the wellbeing of the 'general public', and the construction of the 'we' instead of 'I'. Such a community reconciles the dichotomies between universal rights and particular rights, global and local, public interest and private interest, common welfare and individual welfare, and so on.

Every 'encounter' has a specific context and needs to be understood in its spatial and temporal dimension. The colonial encounter is not like other focal points in the history of human civilization where two different cultures generally interact. It is full of violence, but given to the better understanding towards the Other, Levinasian philosophy offers better understanding of human nature and can make living together possible.

Living together does not necessarily or primarily mean living together in peace. It also implies a compulsion, a law which forces people of different religions, cultures, languages etc. to live together. This is a process of learning to live together, only after which living together with peace is possible. For example, the members of a diasporic community or a multicultural society must leave aside their personal whims and cooperate—something which to a certain extent political laws help one to do. Attaining a 'living together in peace' is a long drawn out process which is preceded by living together badly, or as enemies or strangers, or even with wars—as Derrida says, "one must well live together". Note that the word "well" is here used as an adverb rather than as an adjective. If used as an adjective it would mean a living in peace and harmony with the Other. It signifies either to "live together" or die, with whatever and whoever you cohabit with. He believed that "even if this cohabitation is resigned, armed, organized, at times guaranteed by a contract, a constitution, and some institutional jurisprudence, it answers to a common, and therefore higher, interest" (*Living Together* 24–25).

The idea of living together once again takes us to Derrida's concepts of 'forgiveness' and 'reconciliation', which are essential for peaceful cohabitation. "Living together, 'I belong to that which does not belong to me, to my own, to a language, a site, to a "my home, " that do not belong to me and which I will never possess. Belonging excludes any absolute appropriation, even the radical right of property" (37).

Politics seems to privilege the liberal aspect of human beings—portraying them as free to take their own decisions and do anything they desire. This sort of freedom can be misused by

totalitarian powers too (as in the case of Nazism and Fascism). Postmodernism seems to rob the agency from the human being and declares the death of humanity, which has given rise to study of post-subjectivity. One form of this post-subjectivity can be sought out in the works of Levinas, for whom the subjectivity gets its energy in form of being 'responsible for the Other'. Responsibility is not a burden here, but ethically a choice that relates the "me" to the other and helps both to thrive.

A recent elaboration in postmodern theory can be seen in the works of Jean-Luc Nancy, who, like Levinas, promotes the philosophy of 'living together' not only as an ethical choice to be made by troubled postmodern subjects but also an ontological condition for being. His works emphasize the need to exist together in the age of multiculturalism and plurality. For him the idea of singular existence derives meaning only when singularity encounters plurality, and the sole aim of such an encounter is to enrich the human experience.

Colonialist expansion used not only modern techniques to conquer but also to justify any degree of violence. Is this irony also a constitutive part of postmodern and the postcolonial? The answer varies based on the positionality of the analytical mode. Some critics have considered it a futile enterprise because, as Ato Quayson points out, "[Postmodernism] is ultimately apolitical and does not feed into larger projects of emancipation" whereas for others "there is a productive way of seeing the two as mutually reinforcing" (87–88).

One of the most important issues about postmodernism is how and why the prefix 'post' was joined to the term 'modernism'. This debate takes us back to the Age of Enlightenment and the rise of reason brought about by philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, G.W.F. Hegel and others. The human ability to reason was the ground on which human freedom was based. With the coming of the twentieth century and especially after the Holocaust, thinkers such as Jean-Francois Lyotard attacked reason. This attack illustrates the primary shift from modernism to postmodernism. Postmodernism rejects the unitary idea of reason, especially in the political context.

Postmodern theory is suspicious of the notion of humans possessing an undivided and coherent self which acts as the standard of rationality, and guarantees all knowledge claims irrespective of time and place. It no longer believes that reasoning subjects act as vehicles for historically progressive change. (Woods 10)

Gluing the prefix "post" can certainly seem like an attempt to homogenize the conceptual framework, which both these movements have been significantly denying so far. Also, whereas postmodernism emphasizes a "linguistic turn", postcolonialism claims to understand a "cultural turn". I believe they both can be understood and bolstered by an "ethical turn".

It is power which is at the heart of a radical distinction between ethics and politics. The relation between ethics and politics, even the notions themselves, can never be same in the thinking of powerful imperial centers and in those of suppressed societies. For the latter, ethics is a reality which forms their social relations, whereas power and its unethical use pay little heed to any such social relation. Colonial discourse objectifies and determines the values of colonized people as "savage", because they consider their ethical social relations as unscientific. Science for them had become a tool to dominate and exploit, one of the "technologies of domination" (Foucault).

Science, being a hallmark of colonial modernity and enlightenment for the colonizers, provided a means of upholding a totalitarian outlook towards Others. There ought to have been moral aims, for instance in a discipline like Anthropology, which ought to acknowledge the Others and respect their differences.

Notions of the Other and alterity have formed the crux of philosophical debate since the days of Plato. Freud imparted a new critical currency to it using a comprehensive psychological model, which was later challenged and reconstructed by the poststructuralist methodology of Lacanian psychoanalysis. To encounter the Other one doesn't necessarily have to cross boundaries: sometimes that Other is just beside us or within us. Social, economic, cultural and political frameworks approach the question and problem of Otherness with their specific methodologies. The rise of minority studies, animal studies, feminism, posthumanism and queer studies has problematized and reshaped the question of Otherness. Postcolonial theory, however, has always emphasized the dichotomous model of Self/Other, the premise of which is the power relation between the West and the East, the power struggle and relation of aggression and resistance between the colonizer and the colonized. But relying excessively on this model tends to keep us oblivious to other important factors like the relationship between Self and community¹ or collective, and how, in the light of this new relation, we can go beyond the premise of power relations and consider the journey of the postcolonial community as postmodern and finally as cosmopolitan or global, a consideration that might help us think beyond dichotomies. My aim is to see whether the agenda of the cosmopolitan community, which is an emancipatory agenda, a liberating project, can transcend the dichotomies and differences of postcolonial studies, and also to seek a new kind of relation of self with community, where Self and Other are not struggling to establish a space; rather, the relational space is itself based on cooperation and living with difference. In other words, can the relation of Self and community or the place of Self in community help us to think beyond the dichotomy?

If modernity is an age of certainty and stable identities, the postmodern society believes in fluidity, collective membership, and multiple identities. It is an age of insecurity, the impact of which could be stressed on by referring to the postmodern idea of community. Due to globalization and current problems in the world situation, a clear shift can be found from the modern concept of community to the postmodern conception. The postmodern community is a 'fragile' community, open to 'difference', focusing on 'contingency', and 'liminality'² and 'less rooted in stable social relations' (Delanty 104). One important characteristic of postmodernism is decentralization, or having multiple centres; it is not the age of 'grand narrative' or structure. To the postmodern community, as Delanty says, "[M]arginality is everywhere. Postmodern communities are nomadic, highly mobile, emotional and communicative" (104). If modernity and postcoloniality gain their strength from a sense of nationalism, postmodernity relies on mass culture, transnationalism, and subcultures where the conflicts or dichotomies become porous because identities are not stable and people are less rooted in their indigenous cultures or less rigid in their ideologies. Nationalism, which in the colonial period acted as a source of unity for people, has undergone considerable change. Postcolonial studies, though valorizing nationalism, mainly stress differences or dichotomies, the conflict and the resistance, the power struggle between the West and the East, the colonial masters and the weaker barbarous colonized section, the 'we' and 'they'. Renowned postcolonial critics like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and even

Spivak focus mainly on difference, resistance and interaction, and the voice of the Other as the voice of resistance and an assertion of identity, inadvertently emphasizing the relevance of dichotomies which remain still prevalent, and thus, in my opinion, still measured on the scale of the western concept of modernity. In this paper, I discuss alternative modernity and modernity in the postcolonial context while reinforcing the contribution of the Others or the subalterns in bringing modernity, but the dichotomy between Self and Other continues to exist. It is time to go beyond the postcolonial context of dichotomous communities, since the postmodern community is a 'fractured community' (Lindroos 2001) based on a heterogeneous society where both Self and Others are unstable and 'non foundational'; therefore, how can the conflict between Self and Others be stable?

Since the latter half of 20th century, postcolonialism has emerged as the most dominating field of studies, daring to turn the world upside down, making the reality about the 'Orientals' visible to the so called superior Occidentals . Eurocentric discourse about social and political culture has been challenged by postcolonialism, which demands the exclusion of discrimination and introduces an alternative way to look at the other side of the world that has been long neglected by western writers and critics. Since colonies have gained independence or political sovereignty, there has been a clear slow shifting of balance of power. Countries such as India, China, Brazil, and Australia have coming out of the dark shadow of colonialism and started influencing the social, political, economic and cultural scenario of the world; empire or imperialism has attained a new meaning, from forceful imposition of power to an informal or indirect power on the interest of common multitude. Fernando Coronil argues that after Edward Said's path breaking book *Orientalism* (1978), postcolonial studies became an indispensable reference for at least two reasons. First, it produced a lucid critique of Western metaphysics that exposed the scandal of Eurocentric categories and imperial metanarratives. Second, it stimulated a plethora of studies that examined neglected dimensions of imperial domination and subaltern subject formation. No longer privileging political economy, these critical studies turned culture, broadly understood as forms of representation, into a center of analysis. It expanded our understanding of the subaltern by treating gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, in their intersections with class, as fundamental sites of subjugation. The *post*-of postcolonialism became at once a temporal and an epistemic marker, a critical lens through which to view the complicity between knowledge and power in multiple domains, past and present. (636)

However, in spite of its achievements, postcolonialism has its limitations as well. With the advent of the new idea of imperialism, postcolonialism and its philosophy fail to capture the new paradigm. After 9/11, the neoconservative Stanley Kurtz blamed postcolonialism as propagating an 'extremist' and anti-American approach. Moreover, postcolonial critics deal with binaries or dichotomies which have been fashioned by western culture. The concept of Otherness and the relation between Self and Other has changed. Robert Young argues that postcolonialism should rethink the Other and avoid tagging stereotyped features as either Self or Other. With the developmental of continental philosophy of Levinas, Foucault, and most recently Nancy, the paradigm has changed, showing the interdependence of supposed dichotomies like Self and Other. Again, there are areas like postcolonial Others who were not considered part of postcoloniality. Susie Tharu considers postcolonialism as "too diffuse and too narrow" a category (642). Simon Gikandi criticizes postcolonialism on two grounds: "It is a universally

acknowledged fact that postcolonial theory doesn't make sense to literary and cultural scholars outside English. Or, to put it in more modest terms, in order for postcolonial theory to make sense to other linguistic and literary traditions, it has to be transformed or disfigured." (635). He also insists upon the importance of ethical dimension in postcolonial criticism and points out its lack, suggesting that it should be borrowed from postmodernism to enhance the importance of humane values. In spite of this limitation, the importance of postcolonial studies in addressing the postcolonial community as not anticolonial but beyond colonialism and embracing the world cannot be denied. Sunil Agnani argues that *Postcolonial* as a historical term was extended to a type of criticism. The fact that the extension of this term has failed as an enduring or repeatable reading practice does not mean the term is bankrupt. Its emptying may instead be a sign of a productive crisis from which the field (or whatever it transmogrifies into) will benefit. (639) Benita Parry also writes in "What is Left in Postcolonial Studies" that postcolonialism needs "a different theoretical paradigm if it is to participate in the critique of globalization" (355) and we should have the desire not to keep it stagnant and push beyond its limits according to the demands of time. Various critics like Benita Parry and Aijaz Ahmad had announced the demise of the postcolonial condition on the grounds of its inability to sustain equal growth for everyone in a postcolony. But Hamid Dabashi's thought-provoking book *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* published in 2012 seems to announce the official death manifesto for postcolonialism. Despite its subtitle, this book is a eulogy of the ethical choices made by innumerable Arab men and women who collectively dared to challenge the political and social realities around them. It shows how a new 'empire of multitudes' pulled down neo-colonial despots like Ben Ali (Tunisia), Hosni Mubarak (Egypt) and Muammar Gaddafi (Libya). The book not only threw a new light over the nature of colonialism but also asked for a normative commitment on behalf of the Arab populace to ensure the victory of democracy in its true sense.

Postcolonial subjectivity has been constructed from the ability of engagement and resistance of postcolonial subjects against the colonial empire. The concept of alterity or 'epistemic Other' is the most important feature in bringing change in postcolonial subjectivity, because the construction of the subject is followed by alterity or otherness. In the postcolonial context, this kind of alterity or otherness or difference is responsible for creating binaries or dichotomies. Postcolonial studies attempts to dismantle the binaries through the emphasis on the otherness of the Other, where this kind of subject formation and the traditional concept of identity and individuality has been interpreted in a radically different way. Concepts such as the coexistence of Self with Others, the relationality, the shift of conflict from Self and Others to conflict within the Self, the sharing of experience, being-in-common, cosmopolitan consciousness, etc. have altered the basic features of the postcolonial community.

Community is neither an open nor a closed space, neither based on differences nor on commonality, focusing neither on individuality nor on collectivity, neither on the Self nor on the Other, but it is "sustained by its own reflexivity, creativity and awareness of its limits" (Delanty 112). Community is not a bordered territory (Nancy); it refers to symbolic spaces of commonality and differences where different kinds of relation and search for belongings from local to translocal to global seem to constitute fractured identities. It might be 'imagined' and 'utopian' since it is abstract and invisible, but it achieves a cognitive and practical status for the sustenance and demands of the postmodern globalized world. It has a moral and ethical undertone which

assimilates and collaborates with differences through active discourse and communication. In this globalized world where the world in the sense of humanity is always under the threat of terrorism, nuclear holocaust and cold war, cosmopolitan consciousness in a world community can serve as oxygen or an essential resource for survival; and liberal democracy with its proper combination of state functionaries and cosmopolitan laws can accommodate us for the simple reason that we are human beings irrespective of differences.

One of the latest books which puts forth the ethical philosophy of Gandhi in the context of present political upheaval is Leela Gandhi's *The Common Cause: Postcolonial Ethics and the Practice of Democracy, 1900–1955* (2014), which I view as a post-script to my chapter because of the possibility it opens up of seeing the presence of ethical framework in world democracies in general and postcolonial democracies in particular. The 'common' is generally understood as common welfarism, an ethos of sharing, recognition of experience and intersubjective relation of empowerment. Unlike care for worldly things, here commonality refers to a common cause, a common motivational force for people to attain ethical perfection—which is essentially an imperfection. Leela Gandhi describes 'common cause' as a "transnational project of self ruination and radical relationality"; it is not passive relationality but "an acutely individuated dedication to becoming common—the effect of an idiosyncratic disregard for the self by the self for the cause of inclusive sociality" (109).

As my study of ethics in politics shows, democracy, refined through practices and exercises, can attain for the common good, but the democratic spirit with excessive emphasis on ethical perfection might lead to dictatorship, which is antithetical to democracy. Therefore Leela Gandhi, inspired by M.K. Gandhi's 'ethics of conscience' as captured in the book *Hind Swaraj*, proposes an ethics of imperfection or imperfect historiography. M.K. Gandhi rejects democracy as an institutional system but believes in constructing Swaraj (*swa*=self and *raj*=rule). Such *swaraj* or self-rule is to be cultivated and practiced for the common cause or collective dimension. Common causes can't be classified as for Self or for Other, but provide a site or scope for encounter where people, both oppressor and oppressed, collaborate to attain a visible commitment to eradicate institutional suffering.

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Accommodation of Linguistic Diversity in India



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Abstract—*This paper analyses the accommodation of linguistic diversity in the complex terrain of India arguing that states should accommodate linguistic diversity, while probing the question of how should states accommodate linguistic diversity, largely borrowing arguments from Alan Patten’s work. After analysis of the Indian experience of linguistic community becoming territorial community to accommodate linguistic diversity, the functioning of Eight Schedule and other constitutional provisions, the paper concludes that we have a complex combination of norm-and-accommodation model and the official-languages model, and that we need to go beyond the status quo in order to ensure that the linguistic diversity of India is not lost in the wave of globalization on one hand and regional movements on the other. Theories of deliberative democracy can prove helpful in this regard.*

Keywords: *Linguistic diversity, accommodation, Eight Schedule, language, states, minority, promotion.*

INTRODUCTION

The social utility of a common public language is often put forth in terms of communicative function, mutual solidarity, national cohesion and ease of public administration. However, we live in a context of multiplicity and diversity of language and this linguistic diversity often act as a source of controversy. As Anvita Abbi points out, homogenization of language under 'national integration' often leads to agitation and revolt.¹ We witnessed this in India, after independence when an attempt was made to make Hindi as the sole language of communication with the state, leading to several mobilizations around the question of language. The linguistic reorganization of states that followed led to minority languages at national level becoming majority language at state level, along with the rise of new linguistic minority groups in each state. More recently, we witnessed the attempted imposition of Ukrainian language on the largely Russian-speaking Crimea and the consequent referendum leading to secession from Ukraine.

A more serious issue is the phenomenon of 'diglossia' (Ferguson 1959; Fishman 1972) wherein people use their own native language in intimate context but switch to some higher status language in public context. The place of this higher status language is increasingly being taken by English given the imperatives of globalization.² Further, Abbi highlights the process of 'self-proclaimed linguistic suicide' by tribal communities as well as the submersion of identity at the level of home domain wherein mother tongue and minority language is being replaced by dominant regional or global language.³

In the given context, two problems arise—how should people communicate with one another in informal, non-state contexts and how should public institutions serve a linguistically diverse citizenry. Should the states accommodate linguistic diversity or should they adopt the policy of institutional monolingualism making the citizens adapt to a common public language in the name of national unity and solidarity?

This paper takes the stand that states should accommodate linguistic diversity. The first part of the paper will go into the arguments for this claim in brief. The second part will probe the question of *how* should states accommodate linguistic diversity, largely borrowing arguments from Alan Patten's work. Third part analyses the Indian experience of linguistic community becoming territorial community to accommodate linguistic diversity, complemented by the Eight Schedule and other constitutional provisions. In doing so, the paper seeks to analyze whether this has been the desirable way to accommodate diversity in a democracy.

WHY SHOULD STATES ACCOMMODATE LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY?

Three main arguments can be delineated for this:

¹Anvita Abbi, 'Vanishing Diversities and Submerging Identity', in Asha Sarangi (ed.), *Language and Politics in India* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

²Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, 'Introduction: Language Rights and Political Theory Context, Issues and Approaches', in Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (ed.), *Language Rights and Political Theory* (OUP, 2003).

³Ibid, p. 306-07.

INTRINSIC DIVERSITY ARGUMENT

The first group of arguments, posited by scholars like Boran and Reaume, holds diversity of languages as valuable in itself and laments that world's languages are dying. Such justifications, posited by Idil Boran (2003) and Denise Reaume (2000) among others assert the intrinsic value of languages arguing that since languages are intrinsically valuable, the disappearance of linguistic diversity marginalization of any language should be avoided. In its strongest form, this position makes preservation of vulnerable languages to be the supreme goal of language policy, which trumps other objectives. However, as Weinstock among other critics argue, if taken seriously, this line of justification implies that speakers of vulnerable languages not just have a right but also a duty to maintain their language. It can thus impose serious restrictions on speakers on vulnerable language, constraining their choice.⁴

CONTEXT OF CHOICE ARGUMENT

Second set of arguments asserts that language is a part of one's societal culture. Alan Patten adapts Will Kymlicka's framework of societal culture to include language and argues that language supports a societal culture when an adequate context of choice is available in that language. Unilingual speakers of minority language don't have access to an adequate context of choice if a common public language is imposed. Context of choice argument is applied to 'vulnerable societal cultures' which need minority language rights to protect the vulnerable language from deterioration. However, in cases where the societal culture is not 'vulnerable', or where the language does not correspond to an intact 'societal culture' with adequate choices, this justification is inapplicable and limited.⁵ The problem is that many national minorities cannot be said to have a societal culture because of number or territorial dispersion. This entails another justification which Patten gives in the form of Fairness Rights.

FAIRNESS ARGUMENT

According to fairness version of linguistic rights, it is unfair to eliminate certain language options and therefore language rights should be given. This argument rests on the exclusionary nature of traditional models of citizenship which are inadequate for modern pluralistic society. Every state has to choose what languages to use for official business. The choice of one language over another can never be regarded as culturally neutral, even if inevitable.⁶ A common public language can lead to marginalization of linguistic minorities and to prevent such disadvantage, states should accommodate linguistic diversity. Patten argues that according to 'right to linguistic security, minority speakers have a right to protection against 'unfair or coercive practices' that threaten to compromise the survival or flourishing of their language.⁷ This set of

⁴See: Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, 'Introduction: Language Rights and Political Theory Context, Issues and Approaches', in Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (ed.), *Language Rights and Political Theory* (OUP, 2003).

⁵Alan Patten, 'The Justification of Minority Language Rights', *Politics, Princeton University*, 2008.

⁶Joseph H Carens, 'Justice as evenhandedness', *Seminar*, December 1999. <http://www.india-seminar.com/semsearch.htm>

⁷Ibid

arguments based on fairness seems most plausible and it's based on this that Patten advances his 'promotion-oriented approach of language rights.'

APPROACHES TO ACCOMMODATE LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

In order to investigate that how should states accommodate linguistic diversity, Alan Patten in his works distinguishes two approaches to language rights—Norm and accommodation approach and Promotion-oriented Approach.

NORM AND ACCOMMODATION APPROACH

Under this approach, some normal language, usually the majority language, dominates public communication, in courts, legislatures, education, delivery of public services etc. Special accommodations are then made for people who lack sufficient proficiency in this normal language of public communication which can take different forms depending on the circumstances, eg transitional bilingualism, immersion education programs, interpreters etc. This approach is concerned with establishing communication between the public institution and those with limited proficiency in the usual language of public business to exercise the rights.⁸ This approach has the telos of applying the 'norm' on everyone.⁹ Consequently, it leads to a certain 'othering' of the linguistic minorities and those who deviate from the norm. People who could speak the majority, or normal, language of public communication, cannot claim accommodation rights. This instrumental approach is also responsible for the phenomena of 'diglossia' and submersion of linguistic identity as mentioned before.

PROMOTION RIGHTS APPROACH

These rights promote the language and are not contingent on lack of proficiency in majority language. Also, these rights are not restricted to the private sphere. Under the promotion-oriented approach falls the Officials Languages approach. This approach involves a degree of equality between different languages that are accorded official status. Any public service that be received in one official language can be received in other official language too. This approach, which is not just about facilitating communication but takes a non-instrumental view of language, has been posited by scholars like Rubio Marin and Reaume and is connected with multi-nation states.¹⁰

⁸Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, 'Introduction: Language Rights and Political Theory Context, Issues and Approaches', in Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (ed.), *Language Rights and Political Theory* (OUP, 2003).

⁹This approach also includes what Heinz Kloss terms 'toleration rights'. It gives discretion to minority language speakers in private contexts only but doesn't indicate anything about the obligation of the institution to recognize minority languages.

¹⁰See: Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, 'Introduction: Language Rights and Political Theory Context, Issues and Approaches', in Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (ed.), *Language Rights and Political Theory* (OUP, 2003).

PRORATED OFFICIAL MULTILINGUALISM

Alan Patten's model of prorated official multilingualism can be placed under this approach of promotion rights. He suggests a scheme of prorated official multilingualism¹¹ under a liberal neutrality model. However, he disassociates liberal neutrality with benign neglect and rather argues that a coherent neutralist approach in language policy would involve even-handedness instead of disestablishment as the latter is not possible in language policy.¹² Under his scheme, each language spoken by the community enjoys the same recognition. There is no restriction on who can access public institution in a particular language. His model is not a model of transitional accommodation for those who lack fluency in majority language but a form of equality of treatment between speakers of different languages. In this manner, liberal neutrality model establishes fair background conditions under which different languages and language identities can survive. But, this scheme is prorated in the sense that some account is taken of the number of people demanding services in each recognized language.¹³

It is to be noted that while norm and accommodation model assumes a coherent nation state, official language approach recognizes speakers of language as constituting a distinct nation, making the former a preferable policy by many states. Multilingualism is seen as a step towards a multination state. Regional language groups see themselves as forming a distinct nation within the larger state. Such sub-state nationalism converts debates over status of regional languages into debates over nationhood. But, assertions of nationhood involve a claim on territory making secession possible. So western countries have been unwilling to accord official status to regional languages to avoid claims of territorial self-government.¹⁴

INDIAN EXPERIENCE

What has been the experience of India? Does India fit this model of prorated official multilingualism suggested by Patten or does it follow a norm and accommodation model?

The linguistic-cultural heterogeneity of India has been deeply affected by the project of nation-building. In pre-independence years, it was believed that linguistic consciousness was part of national consciousness and helped its growth. However, after independence, the prime concern of the leaders was maintenance of national unity. But, nation-building project can stimulate defensive nationalist responses with desires for territorial self-government. If it imposes a

¹¹See: Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, 'Introduction: Language Rights and Political Theory Context, Issues and Approaches', in Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (ed.), *Language Rights and Political Theory* (OUP, 2003).

¹¹In two different works (2003; 2008), Patten uses different terminology to explain broadly the same framework—'official rights approach' and 'prorated official multilingualism'. It is in the earlier work (2003) that he had used the word 'prorated'.

¹²Disestablishment is possible in case of religion, but not language as he state has to choose some language to conduct its business.

¹³Alan Patten, 'Liberal Neutrality and Language Policy'. *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 2003.

¹⁴Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten, 'Introduction: Language Rights and Political Theory Context, Issues and Approaches', in Will Kymlicka and Alan Patten (ed.), *Language Rights and Political Theory* (OUP, 2003).

common public language, it can face resistance from regionally concentrated and historically rooted language groups. This is what happened in India. Nationalist project attempted to implement a lingua franca that could become the official and national language of the country gradually. The forms of resistance against the imposition of Hindi found expression in various regional language movements and movements for linguistic reorganization of states. Under the persistent pressures of linguistic and regional groups, central government yielded. The formation of Andhra Pradesh on basis of language brought out the relationship between language and political identity. The linguistic premise was considered insufficient for formation of Andhra Pradesh, yet conceded. Thus linguistic homogeneity came to be accepted as a principle for state reorganization.¹⁵ Language-identity based states meant that groups that had been in minority in the country became majority in the region.¹⁶

A study of Andhra Pradesh's experience of linguistic identity and conflict between demands for Vishalandhra v/s Telangana can be found in the work of K. Srinivasalu.¹⁷ Srinivasulu raises the important question that why in spite of the resources of print, visual and electronic capitalism and the ingredients for the formation of a nationality on basis of Telugu language, Vishalandhra has failed as an 'imagined community' and has been challenged by the assertion of the Telangana identity. This is because the Telangana movement problematizes the idea of unity on basis of language and exposes the hegemonic design implicit in the homogenization process through which various dialects are subsumed under one standard telugu. The rise of Telangana identity politics in the 1990s can be seen as a reaction to the process of Andhrasation in the garb of telugu self-respect and the deep distrust by people to the idea of a unified telugu state.¹⁸

Nonetheless, linguistic reorganization of states and conversion of linguistic communities to territorial communities normalized and institutionalized linguistic diversity through administrative structures of different states and their regions, and made possible region-wise management of multilingualism. According to Asha Sarangi, the reorganization of states along linguistic lines was also a process of 'federalizing the linguistic diversity' at several levels.¹⁹ For example, through the Kerala Official Language Act 1969, Malayalam and English were made official languages. Nonetheless, Tamil and Kannada minorities were allowed to use their language for correspondence with state government with provision of a language cell for translation. This kind of multilinguality has been maintained in other states as well depending on each state's composition.

¹⁵Over the years newer hierarchies have emerged and newer alliances formed around languages and ethnicities of caste, class and region undermining the exclusive criterion of linguistic homogeneity.

¹⁶Gurpreet Mahajan, 'Introduction', in Gurpreet Mahajan (ed.), *Accommodating Diversity: Ideas and Institutional Practices* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁷K. Srinivasulu, 'Discourses on Telangana and Critique of the Linguistic Nationality Principle', in Asha Sarangi and Sudha Pai Ed.), *Interrogating Reorganisation of States* (Routledge, 2011).

¹⁸Ibid

¹⁹Asha Sarangi, 'Linguistic Diversity in a Federal Polity: An Indian Experience', in Gurpreet Mahajan (ed.), *Accommodating Diversity: Ideas and Institutional Practices* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

While Sarangi sees linguistic reorganization as a means of federalizing linguistic diversity, others like David Laitin see it as a means of language homogenization.²⁰ He argues that after reorganization, almost all states legislated a single official language and the Union government provided resources to the states to develop their languages to appease regional sentiments, leading to homogenization of language.

The linguistic reorganization of states, howsoever fraught with tensions and in a way, „always unfinished“, has been complemented by constitutional provisions and the Eighth Schedule. Language provisions of the Indian constitution are contained in Part Seventeen, in Articles 343-51. Constitution declares Hindi in Devanagiri script as the official language. In addition, it recognizes 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution as official languages that are used at the level of state administration thus taking into account linguistic diversity.

Inclusion of a language in Eighth Schedule (ES) has several privileges. Several languages listed in the ES are used for official purposes in different states through Article 345, with a caveat that official language adopted by a state should be spoken by atleast 15 percent of the state's population. Further, languages of ES are protected and promoted and are instrumental in linguistic reorganization also. Consequently, various language communities are demanding inclusion of their language in the ES.

By recognizing 22 languages in ES, and linguistic reorganization of states with official regional language of their own, it seems that India fits the model of official multilingualism and liberal neutrality in language policy as posited by Alan Patten. Languages of ES become media of instruction in examination, legal and administrative occupation, receive means to increase their cultural capital, union and state increase promotional grants to these languages etc. This shows India has adopted a promotion-oriented approach to language rights.

However, there are several problems in this model. Firstly, and most importantly, promotion and protection of language rights is limited to the 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule. Given the vast number of languages in India, a number of languages are waiting to be recognized formally, while others have been subsumed under the dominant regional languages. Part of the problem is that the constitution did not lay down any criteria to be followed for including particular languages in the ES. Inclusion in or exclusion of a language in ES is not based on any set principles or ideology, but is a function of political contestation and mobilization. Abbi criticizes the 'reductionist policy' of Government of India, which basically lists a few languages as 'scheduled' and assimilates a large number of languages under these 'scheduled' languages. According to Abbi, the 'assimilationist goal...is a device to swallow the small fish—the languages not included in the ES. This has led to loss of identities for many languages.'²¹ For example, Hindi subsumes 47 languages under its fold.

²⁰David Laitin, 'Language Policy and Political Strategy in India', *Policy Sciences, Vol. 22, Policymaking in Developing Countries*, 1989.

²¹Anvita Abbi, 'Vanishing Diversities and Submerging Identity', in Asha Sarangi (ed.), *Language and Politics in India* (Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 302-03.

²²Gurpreet Mahajan, 'Introduction', in Gurpreet Mahajan (ed.), *Accommodating Diversity: Ideas and Institutional Practices* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

Secondly, there are contestations over official versus non-official languages in densely multilingual states. The reorganization of states precipitated the conflicts over state official and regional languages and over minority language as language-based states created new minorities. With the reorganization of states, the relationship between major and minor languages has undergone shifts. The newly reorganized states had to deal with the large proportion of population considered as part of cultural-linguistic minorities. In several states, emergent linguistic majority began to follow politics of majoritarianism and exclusion. What mitigated the excesses of the majoritarian politics have been the various constitutional provisions given to linguistic minorities. For example, Article 30 allows minorities to set up their own educational institutions. Another safeguard is that in states where minorities are more than 30 percent of the population, government notifications have to be issued in minority languages. However, this provision is hardly implemented.²² Further, Article 350A was inserted which provides for facilities for instruction through mother tongue or linguistic minorities at the primary stage of education.

In practice, languages of administration and education have primarily remained the dominant regional languages with certain constitutional safeguards for minority languages. This indicates towards a norm-and-accommodation approach, with the official languages listed in ES serving as the set of norm. Various constitutional provisions then accommodate linguistic minorities.

To sum up, Indian experience of federalism suggests that India has been successful in protecting and promoting major national minorities that became state majorities after linguistic reorganization (e.g., Sikhs in Punjab, Nagas in Nagaland, etc). However, interests of internal minorities, i.e., linguistic minorities within states, have not been adequately protected, but attempt have been made to accommodate them. Policies aimed at protecting diversity should be tempered by a regime for internal minorities. One can argue thus Indian experience with respect to linguistic diversity has been a combination of norm-and-accommodation model for linguistic minorities and official multilingualism with promotion rights for a limited number of languages. Given the inadequacy of the norm-and-accommodation approach, and rise in the incidence of majoritarian politics, and sons of soil movement, what models of accommodation can be helpful for linguistic diversity need to be further probed, through an engagement with theories of consociationalism, deliberative democracy and traditions of tolerance particular to India in order to ensure that the linguistic diversity of India is not lost in the wave of globalization on one hand and regional movements on the other.

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Plural India: The Gandhian Path of Secular Democracy and Peace Building



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Abstract—*This paper aims to delineate various aspects of a plural society and how it operates in India through multifaceted forms and how the Gandhian projection of secular democracy and peace building becomes a propitiation for this dilemma. Issues pertaining pluralism, religion, and secularism are very much frequent in contemporary heterogeneous societies. In particular the study of their interactions will prove that each of them is strongly influenced by the others. The extensive literature on these concepts is testimony to their importance. There is continuing disagreement regarding definitions of each; without standard definitions, efforts to measure the extent and the social locations of behavior related to them will inevitably lead to controversy; so it is pertinent to analyse these snags in various societies and how they are accommodated in a multi cultural society like India.*

The numerous and subtle nexus among pluralism, religion, and secularism call for careful analysis. Using the qualitative method of research this study tried to approach these issues from various corners and concludes that secularism which was the vision of Gandhi is the formula for peace building. The conflict can be reduced only by transferring the issue entirely into the secular arena. That is to say, there is an important connection between pluralism and secularism. Pluralistic societies that do not have a substantial amount of secularism are generally unable to develop the mutual tolerance which religious diversity requires. If there are secular interests the members of different religious communities can share a basis for mutual respect and accommodation in religious matters also.

Gandhi through non violence and Satyagraha became a pioneer for the Indian bands to tackle the hurdles in front of them. A decentralized polity, a positive attitude towards cultural pluralism, and a genuine concern and respect for human rights are the best guarantors of Indian secularism, understood as interreligious understanding in society and the state policy of non-discrimination and of equal distance from the religious concerns of the people.

Keywords: *Plurality, Gandhi, Secularism, Democracy, Peace Building, India, Religion, Nonviolence*

WHAT IS PLURALITY AND HOW IT IS IN INDIA?

Plurality is the existence of a multitude of communities who differ in their beliefs, language, and cultural and social norms, as well as in their geographical locations, covering hills, mountains and river valleys on the one hand, and sandy deserts to seas on the other. (Dadhich, 2014) India is, of course, abundantly diverse in all senses. It has several faiths and religions, many languages and racial groups, different geographical and climatic regions, etc. It, therefore, satisfies the necessary condition of multifarious heterogeneity for plurality. This heterogeneity has arisen on several counts. One, it has a vast land expanse of continental proportions, which makes it impossible to be singular and uniform. Two, as a society, it is very ancient and that equips it with an adaptability that can accommodate and absorb the difference and heterogeneity in its fold. In the process, it enlarges its cultural and social canvas. Three, it had very strong interaction with the rest of the world through flourishing trade and business on the one hand, and invasions and campaigns on the other. The former facilitated absorption of heterogeneity through a process of osmosis and tolerance dictated by economic interests, while in the case of the latter it was rather forced. Either way, there was propagation of heterogeneity and adaptation of difference. Over a long period of time, it all gets assimilated and becomes a part of the mainstream norm and behaviour.

India, in its all multifarious magnificence, beautifully celebrates this plurality with its “unity in diversity”. Plurality is by no means superficial, euphoric or surrealistic; it is sublime, yet solid and concrete. It is one wholesome cultural and social entity with definitive content. This is the identity of inclusivity and plurality, and that is what forms the kernel of India as a cultural, social and intellectual being. This is because any one or even a group of the different constructs cannot truthfully represent India’s core in its entirety. India is, therefore, quintessence plural and inclusive. It is not to say that it is all very rosy and sweet between different communities and religious groups. There are certain tensions on account of economic, political, social, educational and developmental aspirations of different communities. As we see them presently in good measure and quite open, yet there can be no alternative prescription but a plural and inclusive one.

It should however be stressed that plurality does not mean a collection and sum of various diversities, but it is rather a synthetic whole that is born out of mutual engaging interactions. For that, it is imperative that one is not only respectful of the other’s faith and belief, but also that this respect is rooted in knowledge and an informed appreciation of it. This is what determines the measure and strength of the plural mind. Apart from the visible reasons of conflict between various groups, one of the reasons could very well be that plurality is not strong enough. That people of one faith or community have not assimilated and appreciated well in an informed way to other’s faith and beliefs. It is, therefore, necessary to always keep on charging continually the plural mind’s batteries. This is the basic and primary requirement for the health of the plural mind. We should all be very conscious of it and should invest due care and effort in strengthening deeper and truer understanding between various groups and their faiths and beliefs. This will give rise to a meaningful and engaging synthesis which is so essential for a healthy plural mind. Plurality in this engaging and interactive mode could, in fact, provide a true and faithful barometer of society’s peacefulness. Plurality is, therefore, organically knit together

like a patchwork design. The greater the interaction and resonance between its constituents, the richer and stronger would be a plural society.

The other is the fact that India had all through its history an absorption of all those who came in as invaders or otherwise, with the sole exception of the Europeans, whether British, French or Portuguese. How do we understand this? It is, again, perhaps because of the plural mind. Unlike the definitive European mind, the Indian mind is not driven by the force of civilising and bringing them all to one right order. This is simply because the plural mind does not offer one path, it instead offers multiple and different paths, each being equally valid and acceptable. Hence, the addition of one or few more is quite easily accommodated. It is, perhaps, ultimately the plural mind which the Europeans found difficult to cope with. It was so intense and all-encompassing that they could neither completely isolate themselves, nor could they live with it.

It is thus; abundantly clear that for a heterogeneous society that has of necessity a plural mind, secular democracy is not only natural but the only option for a harmonious and peaceful way of life. The plural mind, therefore, promotes peace, harmony and democracy. It is a matter of mind that Gandhi could not only envision non-violence as a supreme value but also marshal it as an effective political and social tool to fight the British colonial power. Thus, plurality is a natural innate trait of the Indian mind; else it would not have survived this long.

COMING OF GANDHI THROUGH NON VIOLENCE AND SATYAGRAHA

After the violent uprising of 1857 against the British occupation of India, the Indian freedom struggle rarely resorted to violence. Until the 1920s, the Indian struggle used the techniques of petitions, appeals and court actions; later came the use of the agitational methods of marches, demonstrations and protest meetings. In the 1920s the Gandhian leadership transformed the freedom struggle into a genuine mass movement that used the methodologies of *Satyagraha* (nonviolent struggle) in the forms of nonviolent non-cooperation and civil disobedience. *Satyagraha* used peaceful strikes, marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, hunger strikes and courting imprisonment.

The principles and the practices of *Satyagraha* produced multifarious effects. Firstly, by avoiding violence and military means, *Satyagraha* develops rational debate and emphasizes political process. Secondly, by undermining the power of the police and by avoiding the politicization of the military, *Satyagraha* prepared the grounds for the acceptance of "civilian supremacy," a basic condition of democracy. Thirdly, *Satyagraha* built among the masses the habits and behavioural patterns of peaceful discussion, compromises and nonviolent settlement of disputes. These methods of conflict resolution are indeed the methods of secular democracy. Fourthly, *Satyagraha* demanded the avoidance of psychological violence, i.e., prejudice, hatred, disrespect towards those who disagree or who oppose. (Naidu, 1989) *Satyagraha* believes that because human beings are not evil by nature, *Satyagrahis* should not hate individuals while fighting social institutions; (Naidu, 1989) they should win their opponents through love, service and sacrifice; (Naidu, 1989) they should build bridges between all human beings. Thus *Satyagraha* stands firm on the principles of equality of all, freedom for all and fraternity among all human beings. Because secular democracy demands respect for differences and cooperation of all citizens, *Satyagraha* prepared the Indian masses for accepting the rules and regulations of secular

democracy. Finally, while violent struggle needs a small and clandestine group of young and physically fit people (mostly men) who are equipped with weapons, *Satyagraha* depends upon open and active participation of the masses consisting of all types of men and women, who possess self-confidence, courage and goodwill to carry on nonviolent campaigns in non-cooperation and civil disobedience. The national Congress movement under Gandhi involved millions working at all levels—village, district, province and nation—and organized through democratic structures and functions.

SECULARISM, RELIGION AND INDIA

The term 'secularism' carries different shades of opinion and meaning: multi-religious state, no-religious state, religiously-neutral state, anti-religious state, or a state with established church having an attitude of impartiality towards all other religions etc. (Luthera, 1969)

Secularism as a concept has its origin in western countries and relates to the separation of the church from the state, giving the state a position of neutrality between different religions, amounting to even while at indifference of state towards religion, while the same time guaranteeing all citizen the right to profess any religion. In some ways the word 'secular' was used as a contrast to the word 'religious', which sometimes led people to believe that secularism is opposed to religion. But broadly speaking it was used not as opposed to religion but as divorced from all religion or religion having nothing to do with the conduct of state affair.

In India the concept has been used not as state's indifference meaning towards religion(s) but as treatment of all religions in an equal fashion and ruling out discrimination of any Indian on the ground of his religion. Use of 'secularism' in this sense has been characterised by Ashish Nandi as "Indianism" which has no place in Oxford English Dictionary or in the Webster Dictionary. The long practice and peculiar conditions have given a distinct meaning to secularism in Indian context. It has come to be interpreted in a positive sense, unlike its negative connotation in the western world. The state is indifference but equal respect and distance towards all religion.

Most of the Indian political leaders have differed on this issue. Gandhi believed that state while giving fair treatment to all religions, could still maintain equal distance from all religions as well as religious communities. Nehru as a social engineer wanted a secular state where no community or group or party was permitted to usurp the rights of others. (Nehru, 1949) S. Radhakrishna exhorted that, "The religious impartiality of the Indian state is not to be confused with secularism or atheism. Secularism is in accordance with the ancient religious tradition of India." (Radhakrishnan, 1964) B.R. Ambedkar also remarked: It is all very good to say that we proposed in our Constitution a secular state. I have no idea whether members understand when they use the word. 'Secular state' really means what the Constitution is intended to mean. (Ambedkar, 1951) Contemporary Indian secularism intends to restrain all-pervasive religions to private matters on the basis of certain underlying mystical notions of equivalence of all religions (*sarva dharma samabhava*) or non-sectarianism.

But in India religion did not allow the state to come up independently, and perform its secular functions. Only the British rulers, in succession to their western tradition, tried to govern India on the lines of a religiously neutral state. But they made full use of religious differences existing

among the Indian people as the basis of their policy of divide and rule. They withdrew after dividing the country in 1947, leaving its major part in the hands of Indian leaders who were equally close to religiosity of the masses, and were superficially acquainted with the nature of modern state.

A state is characterised as "secular" when it has no official established religion and it does not discriminate among its citizens on the basis of religion. There is general argument over this characteristic of secular state. However with regard to the purpose and object of a "secular state" there is hardly any unanimity among the scholars and practitioners of secularism. A secular state as defined scientifically means a state, which recognises every citizen as equal and does not recognise any social or religious stratification as vehicles for exercising political rights, which is tolerant towards all religions with special emphasis on the protection of minorities and preservation of communal harmony. The essence of secularism, however, rest on two basic principles: (a) Separation of religion from politics (b) Acceptance of religion as purely and strictly private affair of individuals having nothing to do with the state.

Gandhi was the most powerful impulse of secularism in our country. He was of the view that the religiosity of our society was its great strength, which should be utilised at the political platform. Religion in the best sense of the term was the strongest part of the value system of our society. In 1928 Gandhi declared: After long study and experience I have come to these conclusion that (i) all religions are true (ii) all religions have some error in them (iii) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. (November, 28,1936) Gandhi was of the view that there should not be any state religion. "Even if the whole community had one religion, state interference would probably always be unwelcome". He opined that the state should be secular in the sense that everyone living in it should be entitled to profess his religion without let or hindrance so long as the citizens obeyed the law of the land. There should be no interference with missionary effort but no mission could enjoy the patronage of the state. Nehru also described, Mahatma Gandhi as "essentially a man of religion, a Hindu to the innermost depths of his being". In a famous passage in his Autobiography Gandhi wrote, "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, 1948) Gandhi and Nehru, the master and disciple approached the problem of the relation between religion and politics from very different angles, but essentially their positions were not so far apart as far as the nature of the Indian state as concerned. Gandhi, a deeply religious man saw merit and truth in all religions and he "felt that any form of political association based exclusively on adherence to a particular religion was worse than undemocratic".

Talking with a Christian missionary in September 1946, Gandhi said: 'If I were a dictator, religion and state would be separate. I swear by my religion, I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The state has nothing to do with it. The state would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not your or my religion. That is everybody's personal concern!' (Iyer) He was totally against the idea of a state religion or state support for any religion. 'A society or group', he said, 'which depends partly or wholly on state aid for the existence of its religion, does not deserve or, better still, does not have any religion worth the name'.

PECULIARITIES OF INDIAN SECULARISM

In India, the existence of deep religious diversity has ensured a conceptual response to problems not only within religions, but also between them. Without taking it as a blueprint, other societies might examine the Indian conception. Several features of Indian secularism can be identified that distinguish it from other variants. First, multiple religions are not mere extras added on as an afterthought, but were present at the starting point as part of the foundation of Indian secularism. Deep religious diversity is an integral part of India's social and cultural landscape. Second, this form of secularism has a commitment to multiple values, namely, liberty, equality and fraternity—not conceived narrowly as pertaining to individuals, but interpreted broadly to cover the relative autonomy of religious communities and their equality of status in society—as well as other, more basic values such as peace, toleration, and mutual respect between communities. The acceptance of community-specific rights brings to the third feature of Indian secularism. Since it was born in a deeply multi-religious society, it is concerned as much with inter-religious domination as it is with intra-religious domination in the aftermath of the horrors of Partition. Fourth, Indian secularism does not erect a wall of separation between religion and state. There are boundaries, of course, but they are porous. This situation allows the state to intervene in religions in order to help or hinder them without the impulse to control or destroy them. This intervention can include granting aid to educational institutions of religious communities on a non-preferential basis, and interfering in socio-religious institutions that deny equal dignity and status to members of their own religion or to those of others—for example, the ban on untouchability and the obligation to allow everyone, irrespective of their caste or gender, to enter Hindu temples. Fifth, Indian secularism is not entirely averse to the public character of religions. Although the state is not identified with a particular religion or with religion more generally, official, and therefore public, recognition is granted to religious communities. Sixth, this model shows that in responding to religion, we do not have to choose between active hostility and passive indifference, or between disrespectful hostility and respectful indifference. We can combine the two, permitting the necessary hostility as long as there is also active respect. The state may intervene to inhibit some practices as long as it shows respect for other practices of the religious community, and does so by publicly lending support to them. Seventh, by not fixing its commitment from the start exclusively to individual or community values, and by not marking rigid boundaries between the public and the private, India's constitutional secularism allows decisions on these matters to be made either within the open dynamics of democratic politics or by contextual reasoning in the courts. Eighth, one might say that Indian political secularism shows a marked preference for morally grounded secularisation in each of the senses mentioned above. There is no process out there which cannot be brought partially under human (democratic) control. Nor must an attempt be made for a blanket, morally insensitive restriction, privatisation, or decline of religion. Ninth, it opens up the possibility of different societies working out their own secularisms. In short, it opens out the possibility of multiple secularisms. Tenth, it breaks out of the rigid interpretative grid that divides our social world into the Western modern and the traditional, indigenous non-Western. Indian secularism is modern, but departs significantly from mainstream conceptions of Western secularism. Finally, the commitment to multiple values and principled distance means that the state tries to balance different, ambiguous, but equally important values. (Bhargava, 2013)

HOW INDIA TACKLED THE SHACKLES OF DEMOCRACY

Indian democracy has lasted for the last sixty eight years without violent disruptions, while all its neighbouring sister states—Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka—have suffered from military coups, civil wars, dictatorships, territorial disintegration or political instabilities. Why has Indian democracy survived and flourished while 70-80% of countries in the world today are being run by anti-democratic autocracies. While addressing this question; the significance of Gandhi comes into our mind. He defines democracy as “the rule of unadulterated non-violence.” (October, 13, 1940) Increasing coercion, militarization and authoritarianization can undercut existing democratic structures and processes, and can eventually lead to an atrophy of the democracy. Through all its structures and functions, democracy relies heavily upon nonviolent conflict resolution that invariably results in peace building.

A land of more than 1600 languages and dialects, India could not avoid linguistic conflicts. In many parts of the world linguistic parochialism has caused untold prejudice, hate and violence. However, in India such conflicts were avoided or dissolved and settled through democratic solutions and peaceful adjustments. First of all, the Indian Constitution acknowledges the equality and importance of 22 languages. Second was a dramatic and far reaching solution—the map of India was redrawn on linguistic lines. No other country in the world tried such radical and peaceful reorganization of its political units. Thirdly, a bilingual language formula was devised for official purposes—Hindi is to remain the national language and English is accepted as the official and administrative language. Fourthly, for educational purposes, a trilingual formula was devised. Education could be in the national language or in English or in the regional language. However, educational institutions are expected to encourage students to learn at least one language of another region. The peaceful coexistence of the constitutionally reorganized 22 languages of India is nothing short of a modern miracle performed through nonviolence and secular democracy.

As the most multiracial, multireligious and multilingual nation in the world, India has faced the violent challenges of multiculturalism. While bicultural Canada is facing a potential break-up, tricultural Bosnia has suffered the cruelties of ethnic cleansing and the multicultural Soviet Empire has already broken up into 22 new states and their ethnic conflicts, India has maintained, since independence, its territorial integrity, its political sovereignty, and its democratic existence. In the earlier phase, when the Tamils and the Telugus in South India developed some separatist tendencies, they were quickly won over through democratic compromises and peaceful reorganization of the state on linguistic-cultural lines. Next, the tribal conflicts in the Northeast region of India raised the slogans of separatism, inspired and encouraged by neighbouring Bangladesh, China, Myanmar, and some Western Christian missionaries. After its initial military response, New Delhi sought a peaceful and democratic solution. The region was reorganized into six new states of the federal union.

For an objective appreciation, the achievement of Indian democracy should be compared with what happened in other multicultural nations. East Pakistan broke away to become Bangladesh,

Eritrea separated from Ethiopia, and Singapore was thrown out of Malaysia. Yugoslavia broke up into six new states and Czechoslovakia into two new states. The separatism of Katanga in Congo, of Biafra in Nigeria, of eastern Cyprus, of Northern Ireland, and of Tamils in Sri Lanka has caused mass massacres and vast devastations.

A serious challenge to Indian democracy came from the terrorism of peasant guerrillas, organized in 1948 by the Indian Communist Party along the lines of Maoist guerrillas in China, in the Telangana district of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. The Telangana terrorism was later re-enacted by the Indian Maoists in Naxalbari in West Bengal and some other regions during the 1960s. This challenge of peasant violence against feudalism was met in India through two approaches: one, Bhoodan, the nonviolent "land gift" movement; the other, democratic legislation to end landlordism. Bhoodan, organized by Vinoba Bhave, a disciple of Gandhi, appealed to the conscience of landlords and collected and distributed among the landless peasants more than five million acres of land. This nonviolent process was furthered and supplemented by democratic decision-making in state legislatures that acquired from the feudal and absentee landlords millions of acres of surplus lands for free distribution among the landless peasants and the rural poor. The nonviolent abolition of Indian feudalism was one of the most significant economic revolutions of history. Losing their guerrilla wars, the Communist movements were driven to seek a role in democratic politics. India was the first country where a Communist revolutionary movement felt compelled to abandon terrorism and violence in favour of electoral politics. Thus Indian democracy proved its unique capability of transforming Communist terrorism and peasant revolution into peaceful electoral politics for conflict resolution and peace building

Only a nonviolent revolution can establish a nonviolent democracy. The nature of a revolution predetermines the nature of the political system that the revolution establishes. A violent revolution cannot establish a non-violent polity. In other words, the values, the tools and the techniques of the pre-revolutionary phase continue to colour and characterize the post-revolutionary concepts, structures and functions. History provides ample evidence that dogmatism, hatred and violence that shape a violent revolution continue and undermine all attempts to build an effective and peaceful democracy at the end of the revolution.

Ending feudalism (landlordism) and distributing land among the landless peasantry have produced blood baths, civil wars and military coups in every country. India is only one exception where feudalism was eliminated and peasants were liberated from slavery and exploitation through peaceful Gandhian methods. Equipped with a piece of land and the democratic vote, the Indian peasantry shunned guerrilla wars and civil wars and became highly politicized and involved in the democratic process.

The Gandhian impact was holistic. The Gandhian movement was not only agitational but also "constructive", laying the foundation for future democracy. Gandhi designed the so-called "Constructive Programme" that included literacy campaigns, health and hygiene, cottage industries, *Khadi* production, animal husbandry, ending untouchability and religious bigotry and inculcating the spirit of self reliance, community service and peaceful settlement of disputes.

These programmes prepared the way for democratization and peace building. Of course, all the followers of Gandhi and all the *Satyagrahis* did not all the time follow the way of nonviolence that Gandhi had prescribed. In other words, all the people of India were not strict adherents of nonviolence; many did not agree with Gandhi's ideas of political unity, religious harmony, caste elimination, women's liberation, limited industrialization and so on. Against all his preaching and pledging, the country was partitioned in the end. Yet the facts remain that millions followed Gandhi and participated in nonviolent struggles; many more, though politically inactive, admired and appreciated, and accepted Gandhian ideas and methods of nonviolence. Thus the Gandhian nonviolent revolution paved the way for post-revolution secular democracy. This was a unique achievement.

CONCLUSION

As a test case in conflict resolution and peace building, Indian democracy leads us to the following conclusions: First nonviolence can be psychological, structural and physical. The practice of nonviolence can shape intellectual, social, economic, environmental and political aspects of human existence. In its essence, democracy is a system that rests on nonviolence. As such, nonviolent democracy is the best guarantee for conflict resolution and peace-building. As the opposite of democracy, dictatorship is least conducive for peaceful resolution of disputes and is more prone to militarism, war, political instabilities and disintegration. Second, violent revolution cannot lead to or sustain meaningful democracy in the post-revolution phase. The values, tools and techniques of revolutionary violence linger on for a long time. Third, dictatorship, however benevolent and well-intentioned, cannot develop democracy or nurture nonviolence.

Finally, Indian democracy has been largely successful in practicing nonviolent conflict resolution and in building peaceful civil society, as vindicated by unique experiments and unprecedented policies—nonviolent revolution, peaceful ending of feudalism, combining democracy and industrialization, adoption of universal adult franchise in a highly illiterate society, conducting the world's largest elections every five years, defusing the Cold War through nonalignment and sustaining, without military coups, civil wars or political disintegration for 68 years, the world's largest democracy with the most multiracial, multireligious, and multicultural population on the planet Earth. In spite of all possible criticisms and defects, thoughtful and objective commentators must admit the unique and the overall achievements of Indian democracy through peaceful policies and secular democratic development.

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What is Genius of the Kazakh Poet Abay Kunanbayuly?

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Abstract—*This article is about the great poet, philosopher, thinker, composer, educator of Kazakh people in the nineteenth century Abay Kunanbay. Despite nor the era of colonial oppression, nor feudal-bourgeois system with all its shortcomings, when spread rot and humiliated people, as well as hid in prison, he was able-in spite of all the abominations being and destiny-to raise an unprecedented height resistance of the national spirit, singing and introducing into the consciousness of their fellow tenacity and boldness instead cowardice, focus, instead of a loss, the pursuit of knowledge, rather than ignorance and miserable careerism The acts instead.*

Abay Kunanbay was born (July 29) August 10, 1845 in Chingiz Mountains Semipalatinsk region, in the family of a feudal lord Kunanbai Uskenbaev. His family was aristocratic, that is why Abay received a broad education. He attended a madrassa-Islamic school, is a both a high school and seminary. In addition, Abay was a disciple of the ordinary Russian school. The true figure, genuinely caring about his people, seeking and finding the way to new vertices. Today the name of Abay for many people on all continents should flush with the names of Shakespeare, Goethe, Pushkin and Moliere. Abay is the founder of Kazakh written literature. In the history of Kazakh literature Abay took pride of place, enriching the Kazakh versification new dimensions and rhymes. He introduced a new poetic form: octave, hexastich and others. Abay created about 170 poems and 56 translations, written the poem "Iskander", "Magzum", "Legend of Azim," "Words of edification" ("Kara sozder"), consisting of 45 philosophical parables in which he castigates oppressed position of women, denigrates the human envy, lies, meanness, ignorance, ignorance of the Kazakhs. And the words of edification speaks of the unity of the nation, the friendship between the Kazakhs, ridicules cowardice, hypocrisy, sycophancy. In these parables Abay raises issues of history, education, law and morality.

Abay was also a talented and original composer. He created about two dozen tunes that are popular these days.

The formation of his world view, on the one hand, influenced the greatest eastern thinkers and poets (Ferdowsi, AlisherNavoi, Nizami, Fuzuli, Ibn Sina), and on the other-Russian classics. Through Russian literature, he became acquainted with the literature of Western Europe. Among his translations: Lermontov's poem, fable, a poem of Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin", poems of Goethe and Byron. Abay made as a reformer of poetry, creating new poetic dimensions. AbaiKunanbay died at home (June 23) July 6, 1904.

Keywords: *Abay Kunanbayuly, Kazakhstan, culture, philosophy*

Today the name of Abay for many people in all the continents stands par with the names of Shakespeare, Goethe, Pushkin and Moliere. Abay is the founder of modern Kazakh written literature. Through his literary works, Kazakh nation went from unfortunate past to a happy future. In recognition of his talent and services to the whole of mankind, UNESCO announced the year 1995—the year of Abay in the whole world. The joint decision of the President of Russia Vladimir Putin and Kazakh President NursultanNazarbayev declared 2006 the Year of Abay in Russia.

Greatness and phenomenal genius of Abay expressed in the fact that in the era of colonial oppression and humiliation he was able-in spite of all the abominations being and destiny-to raise an unprecedented height resistance of the national spirit, singing and introducing into the consciousness of their fellow perseverance and confidence instead of cowardice focus instead of a confusion, the pursuit of knowledge instead of ignorance and miserable careerism, act instead of humility. The true leader, genuinely caring about his people, seeking and finding the way to new heights.

"Fan of the critical mind, enlightened and ardent fighter for the culture, the tragic loner in a dark environment, bigots, covetous, the gray-bearded elders feudal, Abay was a prominent figure not only in the history of the Middle East. He walked on his way through the darkness and the stagnation period. Our generation Abay with his immortal creations grown of folk Kazakh and Russian classical poetry, it is striking phenomenon. Shady mountain cedar stands it in the history of his people. He took the best from the centuries-old culture of the Kazakh people and enriched the treasures of the world, and the beneficent influence of Russian culture. "Said about him writer MukhtarAuezov

It is known that Abay always dreamed of being not his father's son, but the son of the Fatherland. And today, he achieved his dream, and sits on a place of honor-in the hearts of the Kazakh people, as recognized by the whole world wise and insightful teacher, poet and genius of mankind. And that strong evidence is that the celebration of the anniversary of Abay did not start in Almaty and Semipalatinsk, not Karaul and Zhidebay-the home of the poet, but in the advanced countries of the West and the East, in the widely recognized European and Asian countries, in such major capitals of civilization as Moscow and Istanbul, Paris and Beijing. That we must first of all goodwill authoritative international organizations-UNESCO considered it possible to break the tradition of honoring "round" calendar dates announced in 1995 the "Year of Abay", has decided to celebrate the anniversary around the world under its auspices. This is

regarded as a high moral and political support for young independent state of Kazakhstan has only recently gained its sovereignty and logged as an equal member of the community of independent nations, as a good and kind attention and trust of the Kazakh people.

AbayKunanbayuly born in Chingiz in Semipalatinsk district of the West Siberian governor-general (since 1845 Semipalatinsk region) (under the current administrative division in Abay district of East Kazakhstan region) in the family of a baiKunanbaiOskenbaev (Uskenbaev) Tobykty kind of Kazakh tribe Argyn. Abay's family belonged to the local nobility; grandfather (Oskenbai) and grandfather (Irgizbay) dominated in his race as rulers and biy. Started in childhood home schooling at the mullahs was continued at madrassas Mullah Ahmed Riza in Semipalatinsk, where he taught Arabic, Persian and other Oriental languages. Also attended a Russian school. By the end of the five-year study began to write poetry, first attributing authorship to his friend KokpayuDzhantasov. With 13 yearsKunanbay father begins to teach Abay activity head of the clan. Some timeAbay worked as an executive parish. At age of 28, Abay departs from it entirely to educate himself, but only for 40 years creating his first adult poems. Significant event for the Abay was his association with political exiles EP Michaelis, N. Dolgoplov, S. Gross.

In shaping the worldview of Abai influenced poets and scholars of the East who shared humanistic ideas (Ferdowsi, AlisherNavoi, Nizami, Fuzuli, Ibn Sina and others), as well as works of Russian classics, and through them, and European literature in general. He translated Krylov, Lermontov, Pushkin, Goethe and Byron. Characteristic of the history of the poem "Karangytunde tau kalgyp" ("Mountains slumber in the dark of the night"), which became a folk song. Goethe wrote «Wanderers Nachtlied» («Night Song Wanderer»), Lermontov shifted it into Russian ("Mountain Peaks sleep in the darkness of night ..."), and after another half-century AbayKunanbayev conveyed its contents in the Kazakh language.

AbayKunanbay contributed to the spread of Russian and European culture of Kazakhs. Subsequently, it was followed by TurarRiskulov. (Soviet statesman in Central Asia, chairman of the Muslim Bureau of the Communist Party of Turkestan (1919))

According to the Soviet literature, Abay ridiculed some tribal customs of village, acted "against the slave status of women" and "against the social evil and ignorance." Soviet literary sources, repeating the phrase, sometimes referred to in its confirmation of the poem "Finally, I became a parish ..." (1889), "The lord bosses pleased ..." (1889) and "Kulembayu" (1888). KunanbayAbay Kazakh poetry was an innovator; the innovative nature of the poems are dedicated to the seasons: "Spring" (1890), "Summer" (1886), "Autumn" (1889), "Winter" (1888), poems about poetry assignment (to teach the good and condemn the bad). Topics of poems "Masgud" (1887) and "The Legend of Azim" based on motives eastern classical literature. In the poem "Iskander" countered the mind in the face of Aristotle and greed in the face of the conqueror Alexander the Great.

In the history of Kazakh literature Abay took pride place, enriching the Kazakh versification new dimensions and rhymes. He introduced a new poetic form: octave, hexastich and others.

Abay created about 170 poems and 56 translations, written poems, "Words of edification" ("Kara sөzder").

Abay was also a talented and original composer. He created about two dozen tunes that are popular these days. Some of his poems AbayKunanbay shifted to the music, and song for his poem "KəzimniHkərasy" ("You're the pupil of my eyes," Maria Petrova translation) became a folk:

AbayKunanbay had a great influence on the nascent Kazakh national intelligentsia late XIX-early XX centuries. Thus, the leaders of the movement AlashOrda perceived Abay as a spiritual leader of the revival of the Kazakh nation. AlikhanBukeikhanov was the first biographer of Abai. His article "Abay (Ibrahim) Kunanbay"-Kazakh national poet obituary was published in the newspaper "Semipalatinsk leaf" in 1905. Then, with a portrait of Abay it was printed in the journal "Notes of Semipalatinsk section of the West Siberian department of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society" in 1907.

In 1914, the expert said V.V. Gordlevsky chosen as prominent representatives of Kazakh literature of Abay and Mirzhakyp Dulatov to publish their texts in the "Eastern Miscellany" issued in honor of the 70th anniversary of the famous orientalist, Academician NI Veselovsky.

WORDS OF EDIFICATION

Famous work was the prose poem "Kara soz" (a literal translation ("Prime (literally-black), the word"), consisting of 45 short parables or philosophical treatises. These "edification" raises the problems of history, education, morals, and the rights of ethnic Kazakhs. "Kara soz" Abay created in his declining years. He knows the price of everything-business, temptation, but it passes and there is only wisdom. Attempted translation of the work a bit, since it requires not only a poetic talent, but also of philosophical thinking . Already in 1945, the 100th anniversary of Abay, the publishing house "Fiction" released a compilation of selected translations of his works into Russian, with translations Viktor Shklovsky called "edification" Later this translation be published in 1954 and 1979, also known translations of Kazakh writer SatimzhanaSanbaeva titled "words of edification" (1970) and writer Roland Seysenbaeva called "Book of words" (1992-1993). So is there a way to spiritual revival? It turns out there. Abay advises bother, get rid of poverty. For: "A hungry man is not easy to maintain prudence and honor, even more difficult to maintain a constant commitment to the sciences. Only when a person is free from concerns about a piece of bread, he feels the need of knowledge and culture ... "But who, where to look for knowledge and culture?

Abay fully experienced all the hardships of his troubled times. His father, Kunanbay was large, colorful personality, as an influential power brokers of the steppe, and of the king's officials, to feel confident in both the old and the new time, the originality of the man whom one of the European travelers and eyewitnesses described the "steppe Cicero" . Wise, powerful, ambitious young father withdrew from Abay Muslim madrasas and Russian parish school to attract the business of government. He plunged into the midst of a ruthless struggle between the old and the new, between tribal traditions and cynical psychology autocratic colonialism, trying to be the patron humiliated on all sides, downtrodden people. Soon, however, convinced of the futility of their efforts. Sooner disappointed in everything, he parted ways with the recent illusions of youth and wholly given to creativity, devoting his last twenty years of his life. And now his work became the proud heritage of mankind. As a poet, Abai Kazakh raised improvisational poetry to

the level of a truly realistic writing poetry. Expanded its subject. Introduced a hitherto unknown to her genres and forms. Rejecting the traditional foreign-sounding wordy descriptions and praise, has created deep social and philosophical lyrics, revealing the inner state of the person and the underlying currents multifaceted existence. Tender, melodic, sensual oriental poetry found in his work a wonderful harmony with the intellectual, psychological Western literature.

Truly without Abay could not truly born Abaevanschool-written literature at the beginning of the XX century, with its civic spirit, style diversity, ostrosotsialnoy oriented, vibrant art palette. In lyric Magzhan Zhumabaeva, Berniyaza Guliyev, Shangereya Bukeeva, Shakarima Kudayberdyeva in scientific and political writings Alikhan Bukeyhanova, Ahmet Baitursynov Omar Karasheva, Hallel Dosmukhanbetov, Mukhamedzhan Serali-on, in prose Sultanmakhmud Torajgyrov, Spandiyara Kubeeva, Mirzhakyp Dulatov Zhusupbek Aymautova with brilliantly reflected the new, deep national ethical and aesthetic criterion of literary schools, developed and systematized brilliant experience Abai. Sanitized this sacred source of our Multi-layer, multi-genre fiction has become a reliable spiritual support in the tragic trials of the XX century. She faithfully served not only his people, but also meets high aesthetic demands of multinational reader the former Soviet Union and even the world. And in this sense we are infinitely obliged unique talent Abay in the last century boldly moved apart borders of national perception.

Significant worldwide phenomenon Abay was not only because of its literary quest. He did not confine its scope. Literature was for him a kind of golden gates in the boundless world of universal spirit, extending from antiquity to the cosmic distances, which may encompass only prompt mind; she, literature, provides an insight into all areas of fundamental being, in all the infinite phenomena of the world, man, nation, history, and spirit in their indissoluble unity, integrity, harmony and push the boundaries of human knowledge. Complex and contradictory reality of the era determined the power and scope of Abay thoughts, his research pathos. In the intense search for a way to the truth, he fully comprehended the national stock of his people, determined the depth of his tragic fate. So he began painfully seeking an antidote to all its troubles, the right way to its future. Deep compassion, sympathy with him, Abay he rose to the height of universal humanism. He overcame in all the squabbles that occur between people and nations. Although officials did not favor rulers, to the neighboring Russian people and other nations always treated with care and respect. Despising the royal rule, genuinely honored the great Russian culture and learned from it.

Abay was convinced that spiritual interference brings numerous and small nations. Thought: man is a friend. And the human race is perceived in unity, not dividing it into East and West, the Middle and Far. In the name of improving the lives of steppe peoples believed it was necessary to examine closely the life and culture of developing nations. Aggressively looking for ways of improvement of the social environment in which his people lived. Shared his observations and reflections. Had a huge impact on the Kazakh intelligentsia beginning of the century, and ran to social progress. Kazakh public consciousness of the XX century and stirred up his humanistic educational ideas. For social and community reflections Abaya should listen carefully especially nowadays, when the society undergoing fundamental changes. It is quite obvious: the great philosopher steppe is not called casting loving tears of compassion for the poor common people True love for the people he saw in the wake of his honor and pride, his civic activism and self-

esteem, so that thereby take their destiny on their own shoulders. Such a drastic step was forced to go Abaya, on the one hand, the policy pursued by the king's satraps human dignity and on the other-in front of a burgeoning social plebeian. Abay understood to fight this evil in the open-hopeless. Child born after the uprising Kenessary, barely having time to get out of the cradle and stand on your feet, you know that the freedom he does not shine, it is doomed to live under the yoke, and it has seen only a tiny lawsuit small miser. That's the credo that seems at first sight obstinacy proved Abay own life. Living in a remote Kazakh village koshomnom, he learned not only the majority of the Russian classics, but also translating them into the Kazakh language and convincingly promoted their creativity. Moreover, through the Russian language he became acquainted with Byron, Goethe, Schiller, Lesage, Dumas, Miscavige and also "announced" their Kazakh. An inquisitive mind it penetrated into Greek and Roman era, he intently studied the works of prominent thinkers from Aristotle and Socrates to Spinoza and Spencer. Attracted his attention and study of Darwin, as well as labor professor at New York University John William Draper; he was trying to understand the history of social thought in Europe, to understand the relationship between Catholicism and science. Why, and he admitted as: "My Kaaba moved to the West." Soulful poet, sensitive and deep thinker, he tried to make sense of life through the life of the steppe rest of the world. Again and again he reread familiar from childhood tomes in Arabic and Persian languages, with a fresh look delved into poetry, history and philosophy of the East, evaluated them in a new way. Especially, he carefully studied the work of Tabari, Rabguzi, Rashid addin, Babur, Abylgaziev. Thoroughly mastered the eastern logic and Islamic law. Was well informed about the cultural and spiritual life of the Central and South Asia of his time.

Abay mind occupied history and culture is not only the external world; great was his knowledge of national culture, in his worldview and duhoustroystve undoubtedly beneficial role played inescapable sadness and rage in the works Korkut, Asan-sympathizer, atalyk, storyteller Sypyra, Kodantaychi, Kaztugana, Dosmambeta, Shalkiiza, Markaska, Zhiembeta, high truth wise improvisations Wills and Bukhara zhyraubiysTole, Kazybek and Aiteke. And if to these names add another sacred names Turan featured scientists, historians and poets-Hodja Ahmet Yassavie, Al-Farabi, Yusuf Balasaguni Mahmud of Kashgar, Mohammed HaydarDulati, Kadyrgalidzhalairy, Muhammad ibn Qays, HusanAdtsinBarshynlegi-then necessarily surprised truly encyclopedic knowledge and the phenomenal horizon of our great compatriot. Indeed, it can be given to the divine, as in ancient boundless steppes, golden bowl covering two giant continent, could have been born as a mighty spirit and extraordinary intelligence, does not fit into any traditional school performance or cultural trends.

Was immensely broad intellectual outlook, Abay and infinitely varied as the palette of his feelings, expressing all spheres of human existence. Impressionable heart and depth of sober mind, imaginative and sensual perception of the world, harsh criticism and lyricism strikingly harmoniously blended and combined in this complex spiritual person, emphasizing integrity and wise maturity rare human nature. There was no place in it complacency and philistinism. Truthfulness and tragedy in their dialectical unity. Where did the steppe bard, who was born and worked in the Asian wilderness, a spiritual rationalism and maximalism? From these proud and bold moral ideals, the person in question at the center of all things, these wide-ranging philosophical views that seeks the steep changes in the society? From the books of wisdom he

learned it? Or inspired by the close contemplation of their environment and era? Or came upon this very bleak, dull everyday existence?

Having studied the sages of the East and the West, he came to the conclusion-is the true God and true are his words: he did not inspire anyone-be the meanest, whether bloodsucker, whether a parasite, then not heeding God, it is impossible to get rid of contamination; be crushed a greed; not standing on the path of righteousness, the society does not improve; to correct people, everyone is obliged to cultivate. For this purpose, "it is not necessary to enjoy every little thing to be ashamed of and what ought not to be ashamed of." Then, most importantly salvation-in labor. In understanding Abay: "Work that increased knowledge. Work reinforces memory. Work orders acquired knowledge, selects necessary from the unnecessary, inspires the mind. "Therefore, the work-the basis of all good, hard work-the main meaning and purpose of human life. Laziness, on the contrary,-the source of all evils, it gives rise to pandering, hypocrisy hopelessness. Abay was convinced that only through the work of a man reaches moral perfection, and thus may raise a family in a new attitude to such a concept, as a father, the mother, a friendly, friendly, related debt. Otherwise, a slacker and a parasite, money spender inherited wealth, captive plants within the home and society, extravagance, cheating, servility, pettiness, parasitism, and other ugly phenomena. What kind of correction of morals here is all about?

By Abay, attitude to work-the only measure of all things on earth, listen to this passage from his "six words." "One of the Kazakh proverb says:" The beginning of skill in the union. "But what kind of unity is it? Believe it-a community of cattle, property, food. Beli so, then what is the use of wealth, and the harm from poverty? Is it worth it to work for the sake of wealth, primarily by getting rid of the family? No, unity should be in the minds and not in a common good ... To achieve unity at the cost of cattle-that is the beginning of moral decline. Brothers should live in harmony, without being dependent on each other and trusting each in their own destiny. Otherwise they forget God; and will not take a case, and will seek misfortune on each other ... How can you achieve unity? This is, without a doubt, the person who has made an enormous contribution to the development of spiritual interaction between the Kazakh and Russian peoples.

We find in him the answers to the burning problems of our ongoing current domestic and foreign policy. In his testament: "Love, my brother, all of humanity," based not just diplomacy coexistence, and the fundamental principle of unity and brotherhood of all mankind. In this covenant Abaya is the cornerstone of our practical politics, for which we must build relationships with neighboring and distant countries. Abay and again inspires us do what others are doing, adopt their culture and science. This requires a cultural, economic and political relationships. In modern parlance-integration.

And another of his core tenet: "If Kazakh does not respect Kazakh, then the life ill be hateful around"-is central to our national solvency. Is it in the struggle for the future of the people we do not need friendship, harmony, unity? Even as need! So, we need to listen more carefully to the covenant Abay not reproach others, and for the benefit of themselves. Abay thought: a person can be happy only when his desire and efforts to understand and share, and others. Good attention inspires. Not casually said to them: "Friendship appeals to friendship." So he constantly spoke like a spell of national unity, integrity, called for mutual understanding, peace

and harmony. That people can prosper, he shall live in peace and trust, as well as in the world and trust with neighboring countries.

The poet was well aware that the only salvation for the Kazakhs, who lost their land, independence, freedom, in saving his spiritual peace, self-awareness, human dignity and honor. Only in this case it is possible to preserve their national mentality. For this purpose he lived and fought.

As far as we are removed from the death of Abay, so we will move closer to him spiritually, this can not be a shred of doubt. Situation of the people can not remain unchanged over time people enlightened, fed with fruits of knowledge and art, the glory of Abay will grow day by day. Pulled people to ashes Abay, calling him his first poet, and then the light of love will last and will strengthen the ties between the people and Abay. We were not destined to become witnesses of those days, but our spirit will hear and rejoice. This indicated an enviable vision of growing national consciousness, light catches in its historical development, the old economic and social way of life finally outlived its usefulness and its shift more firmly declares itself a new socio-economic system. It is impossible in this natural phenomenon to perceive a certain randomness. That would be a cursory glance at the vitality of the national spirit. In this case, we would never be given to unravel the phenomenon of a brilliant individual, as Abay.

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The Potential of Social Media in Preventing Identity Based Conflicts



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Abstract—*The relevance of a 19th century leader like Gandhi in a 21st century is primarily due to his teachings of nonviolence. The increasing massive violence of contemporary society cannot lead people towards wellbeing and peace because of the inherent violence's present in many of foundational edifices of contemporary societal living. In a context of this sort, the teachings of Gandhi acquires immense significance because he showed a path and victory of nonviolence in the war of injustice and violence perpetuated of any source and nature. The contributions of media in the socio-political events have been immense since the freedom struggle, eventhough, in course of time, the structure, the form, ownership and content of media had underwent changes, but in no way, it had dwindled its popularity among people. In this post-globalisation age, the influence of new digital media has been pervasive in all spheres of society. Social media, the virtual community network of people is making a mark in all socio-economic cultural life of people. This paper attempts to explore the potential of social media in preventing identity based conflicts from the perspective of Gandhian teachings. It is carried out by analyzing the Facebook pages started on the theme of communal harmony, one humanity notion etc.*

Keywords: *Social media, Gandhian secularism, people-centric, Identity, Feminine political strategies, Gender conflicts, communal harmony.*

INCLUSIVE NATURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media which belongs to new media forms is a platform where possession of media by few is dissolved and the door of accessibility is open to a wider group. In other words, media is getting decentralized in digital age. Initiating a debate or generating an opinion / support for a social cause from all over the world have gone into the hands of ordinary people. Hitherto, people were at the receiving end of media content never the participator in content formation. In other words, the boundaries of communicator and receiver are blurred. As a consequence, the agency of people experience more space in order to control media than in the past. This is a positive contribution a social media can offer in this conflict ridden world. Gandhi, throughout his political life believed in mass participation of people at all levels of societal engagements. In his times, he restored to travelling to meet people. Now in this digital age, a different scenario of infrastructure in order to reach out to public is present in society.

On the face of it, a quick look at the active Facebook pages on the above theme in cyber world reveals, the less discriminating nature of social media while incorporating its members to the group. It operates to welcome people to join the group because inherently, a social media group functions in a direction to expand the group/ followers list. In other words, online interactions indicates the presence of various identity groups in the cyber world of which most of them in a face to face interaction may continue to exist as completely unknown people. This has largely to do with the unique nature of interactions happening in the cyber sphere, which privileges an individual to connect with people without travelling to the time and space of the other fellow and also the absence of stress of inviting somebody to come to our own time-space for an interaction. Moreover, memberships to a Facebook group happens without much of a moral or institutional criteria's; unlike the other social groups. Therefore, the unstructured nature of social media facilitates more number of people to join.

Moreover, it is socially and psychologically less straining to be part of a diverse identity network group in a cyberspace than in a face to face interaction. The insignificance of the orientation of your body, the freedom to time your response, separation of actions and words accounts for the above character. Excessive institutional interventions and consensus are being minced in social media's in comparison to earlier forms of media, is in a way, providing a platform for the voices of people. The language of the ordinary people in a commonsensical world forms the major part of texts posted in social media sites. Language of intellects and experts do not receive any special privileges. Gandhi spoke in the language of ordinary people. This helps to easily connect and relate with one another among people though it is a public forum in spirit.

The network society of information age is evident from the profile of the people who follows these social media sites. A Sikh, a Muslim, an African, a Hindu, a Korean belonging to same group interacting about similar topics and interests in a non-hierarchical manner is something that as of now, social media is only capable of offering. Because communication systems of earlier times were hierarchical and highly unidirectional. In the past, such a group was only part of bureaucracy or institutions. But now, it is started by common people who share similar interests. This new trend of media in the hands of people is creating ruptures in the already empowered state institutions and arrogant legitimacy of national and international policies. Platform for Expression of dissent was very limited for ordinary people in pre-globalisation times. But things

have considerably changed with the arrival of social media. Gandhi, in his life time used to write personally and separately the responses to each letter. Because, he acknowledged and respected the diversity of the agency, contributions and interests of each individuals and also he believed in a communication of mutual interactions.

The increased frequency of global connectedness happening in social media can provide insights and critiques of our own social flaws to people. Gandhi believed in the notion of learning from other value systems, without giving up one`s own. The possibility for this sort of practice can be significantly high in a social media sphere because of its continuous exposure to the entire global events.

On the other hand, certain sections of society are quite invisible in this space, particularly, marginalized sections primarily on account of lack of accesses to internet technology and their abysmal circumstances. (Carr , Deborah 2007: The global the digital divide.)

Popular critics of Face Book accounts and other social media opines of the phatic communication (Vincent Miller: 2008) happening in this group. It is not necessary that a discussion on serious issues can only prevent identity conflicts. In fact, it can be more a fulfilling experience towards identity harmony since we are able to chat about the mundane activities with a wider group thereby demonstrating certain amount of solidarity. Harmony among Groups sustains through continued participation and interaction of serious and non-serious matters. Thus social media helps to bring the diverse groups on the platforms of public and private sphere in hand in hand effortlessly. Dismissing the potential of social media on this account is a matter for reconsideration. In other words, a continuous dialogue between people on mundane activities can enhance the harmony building processes. Because, everyday activities of commonsensical world reflects the social value systems and its intricacies. A more and more interaction can facilitate an environment for accommodation of values of various social groups.

MODERNITY, SOCIAL MEDIA AND GANDHI

The western notion of state institutions as responsible for the prevention of identity based conflicts dominates Face Book pages. This is very much evident from the criticisms and comments regarding the legal and judicial systems of our nation, whenever there is a conflict outbreak. Reposing security and prevention of conflicts primarily in the hands of law and state is a notion that modernity introduced to the society. Eastern philosophy had always believed in the role of social institutions, communities and people in this regard. Gandhian approach very much falls in later category. Externalization of the sources for conflict rather than locating the same within oneself hardly finds the space in new media engagements. Gandhi believed and practiced that each individual has a moral responsibility in abjuring the skirmishes of any magnitude, at any part of the world. Violence perpetuated in the outside world were always understood as flaw within oneself in Gandhian life. The fasting carried out by Gandhi during Hindu -Muslim riots after independence exemplifies it at its best. Any text\posts in social media on personal initiatives are very lacking in number. A strong condemnation of violence and critiquing of state structures are happening; but not much of a reflective thinking and actions at the individual level.

As a continuum to this trend, the increasing discharge of surveillance activities on people in the name of prevention of conflicts finds space and acceptance in social media pages and the changing discourses on peace keeping.

Similarly, a trend of abhorrence to tradition than correcting the flaws within tradition dominates the social media pages, which in a way is reflecting, traces of colonial influence and the mood of larger section of middle class. Photos like `caste away caste` corroborates the above notion because instead of appealing for equal status of all castes, abolition of caste is preferred. This is indicating a deep internalization of western ideologies. The injustice perpetuated via caste system can be fought by wining equality of all caste groups and most importantly the solution is not ostracizing of caste system from traditions because traditional identities of this sort instills a sense of depth in the culture and identities of common people. Gandhi, constantly talked about the need to critique one`s tradition by standing inside in it. The untouchability propagated via caste system was opposed vehemently by Gandhi, but simultaneously, he insisted on performing the so-called menial jobs of society by every individual and not advocated for western model of equality, in which caste never had any role.

THE DYNAMICS OF GENDER IDENTITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE GANDHIAN STRATEGIES

The Facebook groups started on communal harmony related topics mostly figure the gender conflicts happening across the globe. The posts on increasing rape incidents , Afghan women`s education, honour killings, Saudi Arabian women driving a car etc. invites the responses of people in the network group. At the peripheral level, this, in a way indicates the attention received for these issues in online community.

Women participation in matters of common concern have always existed with its share of complexities. The direct and active participation of large number of women in political matters was confined only to movements led by Gandhi. In all other cases, masculinity of a woman have brought her into public sphere because of the foundational violence involved in political strategies. Gandhian approach and practice being essentially feminine, reached out to participation of women in freedom movements. On a different note, the social media of online community is encouraging once again for women participation and viewpoints in the common concerns of public sphere. As all of us know, an online interaction as a public forum do not entails the physical presence of participating individuals. From women point of view, this is extremely determining factor for the smooth participation because it relieves her from theconscious burden of carrying and orienting her own body to public and the subsequent patriarchal gaze and oppression associated with it; even though the invisible and influential handof patriarchy can be subtly observed in the cyber sphere too. Still, one cannot dismiss the promise of social media for women in participating processes which facilitates gender equity and other peace keeping events. Supporting evidences of the patriarchal nature of public sphere are found in Nancy Frazer`s work `Rethinking the public sphere` in which she argues that public sphere was constituted by a number of significant exclusions and how the public sphere conceptualized by Habermas in his work `the structural transformation of public sphere was essentially the common concern of privilege`.Also, if at all, the Talks of women liberation happened in that sphere, it was done largely by men only, with very rare exceptions. The

agencies of an ordinary women are seldom visible. In this context, women been able to contribute in texts on a wider variety of issues in social media pages are very encouraging signs. The actions mediated and carried out in social media for common concerns are highly feminine in nature in comparison to earlier forms of media and political approaches. Governments of present times, have bowed to the pressures of social media supports which is nothing but supporting a cause or a guarding a principle by sitting at our homes in whatever parts of the world.

The mentioning of Gay rights on a communal harmony FaceBook page indicates wider concerns of identity conflicts in society. In a way, a sensitive issue like gay rights are better discussed to a wider group without much of an emotional fuzz in an online interaction than social interactions or other forms of media. The space for these issues indicates the vast potential of the platform called social media in dealing with identity issues.

LIBERAL APPROACH

The Facebook group on communal harmony, onepeople.sg etc. reflect predominantly the encouragement for the co-existence of multiple religion among people`s life. Acknowledgment and greeting for various religious festivals elucidate the above argument. Moreover, social media celebrates the intermixing of people in a religious festival like that of a Muslim child dressed up in the lord Krishna`s attires on the eve of *krishnajayanthi* , a Hindu greeting Eid Mubarak on the eve of Ramzanin terms of circulating images and comments. This is reflecting the everyday secularism of ordinary people, spoken by Gandhi. In Gandhi`s view, the ordinary people of Indian society had always practiced to take part in other religious festivals without losing or comprising on one`s own religious consciousness. Critiquing of one`s own religion was recommended by being part of it rather than distancing or separating from it. Gandhi, though practised Hinduism, incorporated various elements of other religions throughout his life. The forgiveness and unresorting to violence towards one`s enemy in his politics of non-cooperation and non-violence are something that was inspired from Christianity. For Gandhi, religion is a form of consciousness which involves simultaneous innateness and transcendence in one`s life. All this notions and approach of religion invariably ensures communal harmony without sacrificing one`s personal choice of religion.

In his work, *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi is acknowledging the need to get rid of flaws of our tradition like untouchability, sati but he never embraces the western state institution like law, railways, medicine rather he holds his feet deeper into the tradition of our civilizations.

In such a context, social media texts and observations, do not in any way intent to convey that earlier such practices of everyday secularism of ordinary people do not existed; instead only on the wider reach of such continued reaffirmation of positive practices among people. Because, earlier images on these occasions were more institution propagated rather than people propagated though the commonsensical ordinary world of India had practiced secularism. Moreover, the secularism adopted by Indian state have always been criticized for its extreme institutional, unfitness to Indian state because of the values practiced and advocated in our civilizations from all quarters of society including Gandhi.

The dynamics of patriotism and its unfolding in Facebook accounts is revealed primarily through our understanding of relations shared with neighboring countries. In fact, a demonstrative Indianans is lacking in these online pages. This can in a way be attributed to the globalisation culture. As all of us know, nation-state lost its active role in the life of citizens with the implementation of neo-liberal policies and the subsequent structural adjustment programmes. Privatization of many sectors dwindled the demonstrative patriotic loyalties among ordinary people significantly.

On the other hand, addressing Pakistani`s as friends, a passing thought on the painful partition of India and Pakistan on the eve of independence, teachings of Gandhi, a reflection on the deep pains and regrets induced mutually in wars etc. indicates the aspiring oneness. Gandhi have always envisioned actions and principles for the larger humanity and not limiting to any territorial boundaries. He believed more in creative anarchy and compassion of ordinary people than in an established state. The discharge of emotions regarding the welfare of human kind from people on a wider platform would not have been heard in the pre-digital age of media or before. Because, until then the language of state and its institutions were heard throughout the world with few exceptions here and there. State institutions and structures being soulless would not have been inherently sensitive to the wellbeing of the whole of humanity. But on the other hand, the ordinary people may have been corrupted by injustice of their circumstances but will never loss the spirit of humanity in their actions however little it may be. Feeling equally for the fellow Indians and Pakistanis in a war perpetuated by state reveals this undying spirit of oneness.

CONCLUSION

Identity interactions, solidarity and prevention of conflicts can only be done effectively by working with people on a large and wide scale. Mediated and unmediated continuous interpersonal dialogues are essential to it. Social media can contribute significantly in this context primarily for the reason that the content of media can be discharged by people. Gandhi, who believed in the potential of a mobilized masses for pursuing social causes had given a new phase and shape in our freedom struggle movements. Until then, common people were never part of our independence movement that significantly. With the demise of Gandhi, we have been drifting away from the ordinary people and their voices. Social media of present times, have emerged as an ally for the ordinary people and their voices in this context, unlike those state mediated structures and few private owned arrangements.

On the other hand, these social media group helps to understand the mood of large middle class of our country. It was very rare a sight to see a text on the personal initiatives taken by people in their personal life. In other words, non-victims is lacking an empathetic understanding to these issues of identity conflicts. Their responses are more impulsive, sympathetic and lacking coordinated sustained actions and views. Social media is also throwing light on the changing middle class aspirations and conceptualization of societal change.

In the study of identity conflicts, it is often found that a strong sense of 'we' and 'they' feeling and the subsequent deprivation of resources as one of the reasons for identity conflicts.

Interestingly, social media never promotes such a sense of intense `we and `they` feeling. In other words, the network of people engaged in social media encourages and rewards for global acceptance of and by people or the larger humanity. The sense of rootlessness and ephemerality experienced by an individual engaged in such social media is also a matter for thought.

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Role of Integrated Education for Promoting Cultural Co-existence in a Pluralistic Society



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Abstract—*Pluralistic society refers a society in which citizens can legally and publicly hold multiple competing ethical views and are allowed to choose for themselves what ethical beliefs they wish to hold. The major issues commonly seen in a pluralistic society is ethnicity. This may be in the form of caste disputes, communal conflict, racial discrimination, and linguistic differences. India is characterized by more ethnic and religious groups than the other countries of the world. Education system has a significant role in preclude ethnic conflicts. So, the purpose of this research study is to analyze the role of integrated education for promoting cultural co-existence in a pluralistic society.*

Integrated education is a system that has been made to coordinating the students, teachers, staff, facilities, programs and activities combine individuals of different races (caste and tribe) religion, region, and language etc. Integrated education primarily looks for the group integration as well as the value integration in educational settings. It is assumed that integrated education is more suitable in a pluralistic society than segregated education for promoting cultural co-existence and social cohesion.

Keywords: *Pluralistic society, Ethnicity, Integrated education, Cultural co-existence, Group integration, and Value integration.*

INTRODUCTION

Human beings are always aware about the identities of others when they go for an interaction. These identities are race (caste and tribe), religion, region, and language etc. Identity based discrimination and ethnic conflict are the major threats in a pluralistic society all over the world. It seems to be common almost in all the countries, where people are divided into separate ethnic groups such as racial (caste and tribe), religious, regional, and linguistic bases. In Indian scenario, since the independence the growing challenges of ethnic conflict and instability receiving significant attention, because of the cultural diversity.

India is a better example for multicultural pluralistic society. Pluralistic society refers a society in which citizens can legally and publicly hold multiple competing ethical views and are allowed to choose for themselves what ethical beliefs they wish to hold. India is characterized by more ethnic groups than most other countries of the world. Aside from the much noted 2000 odd castes and tribes, there are 8 major religions, 29 state regions and 9 union territories, and 15 odd languages spoken in various dialects.

"The concept of pluralism has been employed to designate the co-existence of different ethnic, religious and ideological groups in a modern society." (Berger and Luckmann, 2010) "It is a situation in which there is competition in the institutional ordering of comprehensive meaning for everyday life." (ibid) The preliminary task of this study is to identify the various socio-cultural issues related to the segregated education system in a pluralistic society.

The major issues commonly seen in a pluralistic society is ethnicity. This may be in the form of caste disputes, communal conflict, racial discrimination, and linguistic differences. Broadly these ethnic clashes are taking places both between and within states. The former are concerned with regional competition and power distribution, while the latter are the result of hostility rooted in racial, religious, and linguistic bases. Most of the violence occurred in the states of Assam, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, UP and other regions are mainly because of the ethnic and religious conflicts.

Education system has a significant role in preclude ethnic conflicts. So, the purpose of this research study is to analyze the role of integrated education for promoting cultural co-existence in a pluralistic society. Integrated education is more effective to reduce ethnic conflicts and violence when it is imparted taking into account the social and cultural context and the needs of a society. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values and with the universal human values. It should also be globally relevant.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher followed Grounded theory as the method for this study. Grounded theory is a qualitative kind of research method. "In this method the research question or sensitizing question should be one that grounded theory can investigate. However, the research question is somewhat dependent on the world view of the researcher. Although the research focus may emerge from a variety of sources, the actual formation of the question arises from the researchers notions about the nature of reality, the relationship between the knower and what can be known,

and how best to discover reality. (Annells, 2011) Thus the selection of grounded theory as a method can be viewed as from the basic philosophical belief about inquiry as held by the researcher.

PLURALISTIC EDUCATION

Many people believe that there is a single acceptable way to live, look and behave. The standards for determining what is appropriate derive from the mainstream culture. Anyone who deviates from standards is considered to be inferior. As a result, those who deviate are subjected to discrimination, being denied equal access to institutional opportunities and political rights. Multicultural education is a potential for correcting these distortions and inequities. (Pang, 2001)

Education in a pluralistic society is called multi-cultural education. Multicultural Education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in school and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism. (Melnick) Baptiste defined multicultural education as “a process of institutionalizing the philosophy of cultural pluralism within the education system.” (Baptiste, 1979) According to Gay multi-cultural education is “a set of beliefs and explanations that recognizes and values the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping life styles, social experiences, personal identities, and educational opportunities of individuals, groups and nations” (Gay, 1995).

Multicultural education may be given in an integrated or segregated form. Segregated education system probably leads to the conflict and violence in a pluralistic society. Integrated education with a secular mode will create the opportunity to understand various believe and customs. So, in this study the researcher focuses on integrated education because it assumed that it will be more applicable for promoting social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

One of the theories of ethnic conflict tells that “the conflict occurs between ethnic groups when they interact more than when they are kept separated.” (Douglas Dion, 2001) This theory implies that attempts at desegregation will necessarily be associated with ethnic conflict and violence. In Indian scenario as a multicultural society the desegregation is very large, so the possibility for ethnic violence is also more. Segregation cannot be considered as a better solution for ethnic conflict and it is not practical in India's case especially in this modern era. Besides, someway segregation becomes the cause of ethnic conflict. So it is more relevant to find out a better solution for this social problem. Education system has a significant role in preclude ethnic conflicts. In case integrated education is the best one.

INTEGRATED EDUCATION

Integrated education is a system that has been made to coordinating the students, teachers, staff, facilities, programs and activities combine individuals of different races (caste and tribe) religion, region, and language etc. Integrated education is not an independent concept. It is the integration of both people as well as the value in the educational system. Integrated education can be start from individual level and it can be extended to school, community, national and global levels.

Many countries are practicing integrated education. The concept of integrated schooling was highly effective in Ireland. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), a voluntary organization, promotes, develops and supports integrated education in Northern Ireland. This movement promoted integrated education by connecting two communities to provide a balanced education, while allowing the opportunity to understand and respect all cultural and religious backgrounds. They attempted to bring the children, parents and teachers from both Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions together. The first integrated school in Northern Ireland, Lagan College, was established in Belfast in 1981. In South Africa the first multiracial school named, Waterford Kamhlaba started in 1963 with a direct opposition to the apartheid regime. But the school opened on part of what had been Waterford farm, owned by Irish immigrants, high on a hill overlooking the capital, Mbabane was a great success.

In this study integrated education primarily looks for the group integration as well as the value integration in educational settings. Group integration is the imparting people from various groups in single educational settings. Group integration may be given in the form of multi-caste education, multi-religious education, multi-lingual education, multi-racial education and multiclass education or altogether. Value integration is the inculcation of various socially accepted values in the educational curriculum. Value integration classified as traditional religious value and modern democratic values. In this study three models that is moral education, secular and peace education are included.

GROUP INTEGRATION

Group integration combines the concept of social integration as well as system integration. "Social integration is an orderly or conflictual relationship between the actors, while system integration is an orderly or conflictual relationship between the parts of social system." (Mouzellis, 1992). "Social integration refers to a person's sense of belonging or attachment to a community." (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974) The above given definition is the narrow meaning of the concept of social integration. In the broader sense it a person's belongingness to the entire society. So, in this study the Group integration refers the broader meaning of the concept of social integration. Group integration is the cooperative behavior of people from different ethnic groups and communities in a society. It is a person's sense of belonging or attachment to the entire community or whole society.

In Lockwood's view conflict theories concentrate on problem of social integration. Hebermass applied an internalist perspective to social integration and externalist perspective to system integration to differentiate both concepts. He sees class struggles as pertaining to social integration- given that as he says, they point to a conflictual relationship between actors rather than to functional incompatibilities between institutional subsystems. He linked the modern economy and polity with system integration and remaining institutional sphere with social integration. Marxism combines both system and social integration to social change.

A study conducted in Loss Angeles metropolitan area reveals that social integration into the local community significantly reduce feeling of vulnerability and reduce fear of crime. (Adams and Serpe, 2000) In the examination of ten neighborhoods in Chicago Levin and Salem (1986) show that socially integrated people express lower fear of crime when compared to the less socially

integrated. People living in the suburbs are less fearful of crime compare to urban population. The reason is that urbanism is one of the antecedents to social integration. Dealing with individual crime, conflict and violence social integration is relevant. In case of collective crime, conflict and violence system integration or functional integration is important. Following this structural functional perspective the system integration also has role in ethnic conflict.

But the system integration is not an easy task. Without proper understanding among the members of groups, the integration will lead to a direct conflict. So before going for integration process there should develop some mutual understanding among people. The cause of some ethnic conflicts and communal violence happened in India was because of interaction without this mutual understanding. Communal violence in Assam, Odisha and Kerala are examples for this.

Education in the perspective of group integration is classified as multi-caste education, multi-religious education, multi-lingual education, multi-racial education and multiclass education. Multi-caste education should be ensured in caste rigid society. It will help the students from different caste background to understand each other. For ensuring this kind of integration caste based reservation should be promoted at initial stage in educational institutions. Multi-religious education can also be called multi-faith education. It help the child to understand others faith through the education process. Community based reservation will help to ensure the group representation.

Multi-lingual education gives the opportunity to learn in the child's owns language medium rather than an aliened language. Multi-racial education required in a society with multiple races. The concept of multi class education is that integrating students from different economic background in single classroom. Group integration is the primary step of integrated education process. If there is a proper interaction among the various ethnic groups, it will help them to understand the similarities and dissimilarities among the group.

VALUE INTEGRATION

Value integration is another prime motive of integrated education. Basically values are innate and inherited by an individual and it has some worthiness. Some values are acquired from environment as the part of socialization process of an individual. Values are usually influenced by the changing philosophical ideologies, cultural and religious perspectives, social, political and geographical conditions.

In modern emerging society, there has been a revolutionary change in the field of values due to many factors in addition to the influence of modern culture, industrialization, modernization, urbanization, globalization and multinationals. Values are the guiding principles, decisive in day to day behaviors as also is critical life situations. Values are a set bring of principles or standards of behavior. Values are regarded desirable, important and held in high esteem by a particular society in which a person lives.

The erosion of moral and spiritual values in modern society is something that has been virtually accepted, and it is rampant in all spheres of activity. To some extent this is true the world over,

but it is specially tragic for a country like India, which has from the beginning of its civilization sought to base itself upon certain spiritual and moral values. In fact, is the reason why, despite tremendous upheavals and long centuries of foreign aggression and subjugation, India has retained some vitality and dynamism.

To revoke the threat of this value erosion value education should be enhanced in our educational system. It refers various program of planned educational action aimed at the development of value and character. At the childhood individual physical development is concerned, during adult age intellectual and spiritual values start dominating the corporal values. Therefore the professional enhancement programmers and educational practitioners should be awarded about these things while imparting value education. Integrated education consist the following value aspects of education such as moral, secular and peaceeducation.

Moral education is essential for the development child personality. It can be given in the form of secular and non-secular form. In a pluralistic society moral education should be given in a secular mode. Secular education aim for the harmonious co-existence of various religious ideas, believes, and customs within a social system. According to Bruce "the secularization paradigm combines an assertion about changes in the nature of religion, and collection of related explanations of those changes." (Bruce, 2010)

The term secularism was misused and misinterpreted in various manners. Secularism neither denies nor affirms the truth of religion. "Secularism postulates that political institutions (social) must be based on the economic and social interests of the entire people without reference to religion, race or sect that all must enjoy equal rights and no privileges or special claims should be allowed for any group on the basis of religion." (Nomani, 1970)

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. Peace education is more suitable in a conflict prone society and more required at the time of insurgency. "Peace education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence on scales ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable futures". (R.D. Laing.1978) "Peace Education a holistic process that includes the teaching for and about democracy and human rights, nonviolence, social and economic justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disarmament, traditional peace practices, international law, and human security". (Global Campaign for Peace Education, Hague 1999)

"Peace education embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on a philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet. Peace education is skill building. It empowers children to find creative and non-destructive ways to settle conflict and to live in harmony with themselves, others, and their world. Peace building is the task of every human being and the challenge of the human family". (Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman. 1988)

The basic concepts embedded in the above definitions are that peace education is a remedial measure to protect children from falling into the ways of violence in society. It aims at the total development of the child. It tries to inculcate higher human and social values in the mind of the child. In essence, it attempts to develop a set of behavioral skills necessary for peaceful living and peace building from which the whole of humanity will benefit.

CONCLUSION

Ethnic conflict and violence are an internal threat to the nation. In some way it is dangerous than external attacks or wars. Religious based ethnic groups are big challenge to the national unity than all other ethnic groups. Religion itself is not a problem. We should respect all religion and religious practices, because religion is a culture of society. One can observe some similarities as well as differences in all religions. Religion should be a personal choice and an individual freedom too. One should get an opportunity to worship the god according to the wish. Ethnic minded people think that all other community people are in wrong path. This thought is the prime reason for all ethnic issues. These value differences lead to conflict. Conflict arises in human mind which outbursts in the form of violence. The good and bad are decided by ethnic people through value judgment, which is relative. The ethnic groups are creating hate, fear and enmity among the people. They only wanted their own group development. For this sake they compartmentalize the people.

Integrated education is highly significant in a multicultural ethnic society like India for making social cohesion. Integrated education is the process of acquiring education in an environment that has been made into combine individuals of different communities, castes and races. The researcher concludes that the integrated education is more suitable in a pluralistic society than segregated education for promoting cultural co-existence and social cohesion. The better way of implementation of integrated education should help to reduce ethnic conflict in a multicultural ethnic society.

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Non-Violence: A Prerequisite for Peace and Security



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Abstract—

“The term non-violence signifies the total absence of both “direct” (physical) and “indirect” (structural) forms of violence”

—Manfred B. Steger: 2001

The paper deals with the problem of violence in the society and explores how the spirit of non-violence can bring in peace and security in a world facing the threat of disintegrating into pieces. Ever since the dawn of creation humanity has been trying for peace and tranquillity. Some choose the path of morality, ethics and religion and others adopted the course of economic, politics and social sciences yet the problem is as unsolved as it had been from the onset. Violence is still prevailing in our society. In the ancient times efforts were made by various leaders (e.g. twenty-fourth Jain ‘Tirthankara’ Mahavira and Gautam Buddha) created peace through non-violence. Both the reformers adopted the path of non-violence and applied it in their own lives. In modern times Mahatma Gandhi adopted this ideal of non-violence. Although he was not the first person who used this weapon but he was the first person who raised non-violence to a level never achieved earlier according to Mark Shepard (Mark Shepard, 2002). Krishna Kriplani again asserts that ‘Gandhi was the first in human history to extend the principle of non-violence’ (Krishna Kriplani, 1990). According to Gandhi non-violence is the new version of Sanskrit word of ‘Ahimsa’. Ahimsa implies avoidance of physical violence. Gandhi’s non-violence meant the search for truth. Gandhi strongly follow the path of non-violence. Gandhian philosophy of life is based on the concept of truth and non-violence. He believed in non-violence for social change and rejected the total use of violence. Generally Gandhi used the concept of non-violence for social reforms, civil disobedience and non-violent direct action. In modern times non-violence is used as a powerful tool for social protest, revolution and political change. The term non-violence is used as a synonym for peace. According to Martin Luther violence can bring momentary victories, it can never bring permanent peace.

Keywords: *Non-violence, morality, ethics, social change, civil disobedience, social protest and political change*

INTRODUCTION

“Non-Violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting of one’s whole soul against the will of the tyrant” (M. K. Gandhi: 1920). India has diversity of culture and civilization and has many religions. Every religion promotes the idea of non-violence; still it is facing the problem of violence. Gautam Buddha and Mahavira have taken birth in India. Both supported the idea of non-violence. Non-violence has played a great role in India’s history in creating peace. With the passage of time non-violence attained great significance in our culture. India gave the slogan of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam’ to humanity. Gautama Buddha is significant in creating peace all the world over. Since independence India is dealing several problems such e.g. poverty, unemployment, illiteracy etc. These problems are causing violence. There is need to create awareness about non-violence and promote the idea of non-violence.

In modern times violence has become a part of society. It needs attention to resolve this issue. Non-violence is the only way to solve the crisis. United Nations has taken a great step to create awareness by declaring 2nd October (birthday of Gandhi) as the “International Day for Nonviolence”. Now a days there are various problems of communal riots, insurgency, naxalism, cross border terrorism, regional issues and water disputes etc. History bears testimony to the fact that non-violence has not resolved any problems. Satyabrata said that injustice gave rise to conflict and conflict is the reason for creating violence. The society needs nonviolent actions to face these conditions. In the ancient time Buddha played a very important role to create peace. Jesus sacrificed his life for the cause of justice, peace and love. Hazrat Mohammad (PBUH), founder of Islam, also preached for justice, peace and love (Satyabrata Chowdhary: 2003). According to Gandhi violence meant injury. The only way to combat violence is non-violence. Non-violence is the practice of being harmless to self and others under all conditions.

Gandhi is regarded as the pioneer of non-violence. He was deeply influenced by *Bhagvad Gita*, *Bible*, Tolstoy’s ‘*Kingdom of God is Within Us*’, Ruskin’s ‘*Unto This Last*’, Thoreau’s ‘*On the Duty of Civil Disobedience*’ and Plato’s dialogue of Socrates (B.N. Ray: 2008). Violence is increasing in everyday life. Trudy Gower said “violence requires the application of physical force” (Trudy Gower: 2008). On the other side nonviolent action requires peaceful means. Non-violent methods are better means to combat violence. Mahavira said that the non-violence is complete aloofness from violence. Buddha also emphasized on the use of non-violent actions. Nonviolent actions have been practiced by various people from time to time. The principle of “PanchSheel” by nations encourages non-violence in international politics.

Gandhi supported the idea of ahimsa to create secure environment. Gandhiji adopted the principles of Ahimsa, Truthfulness and Absorbing suffering and understanding the reason of conflict. Through non-violence he fought several struggles in South Africa, Champaran and Kheda Satyagraha, Non-cooperation movement, Salt Satyagraha and Quit India Movement. ‘By Satyagraha’ Gandhi literally ‘means holding truth. Truth is the soul and spirit. It is known as soul force’ (Young India: 1921). Gandhi regarded non-violence as the greatest soul force against hate will of the tyrant. He believed in achieving victory through non violent means over injustice. He effectively used non-violence in the political sphere as well as social sphere.

Non-violence is an umbrella term used for a wide range of methods for dealing with conflict which share the common principle i.e. physical violence. According to Gandhi, ahimsa is the greatest force available to humankind, "It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of a man" (M.K. Gandhi: 1935).

According to Martin Luther non-violence is the way of life for courageous people. It seeks to win friendship and understanding. It defeats injustice. Non-violence holds voluntary suffering can educate and transform. Non-violence chooses love instead of hate. Non-violence believes that universe is on the side of justice. He believed that every violence can be solved through peaceful means and peaceful actions. At the centre of non-violence is the principle of love (Martin Luther).

Another Political Scientist and best known writer on non violent action Gene Sharp defined 'three broad categories of nonviolent action protest, non-cooperation, and intervention. Protest includes such means as demonstrations, marches, and vigils. Non-cooperation involves strikes and boycotts, which may be social, economic, or political in their impact. Intervention includes fasts, nonviolent occupations, and the operation of a parallel government' (Gene Sharp: 1970). Gene Sharp in his book '*Waging Nonviolent Struggle*' describes 198 methods of non violent action.

There is need to secure the society from violence. Peace security is very important to combat violence. Mahatma Gandhi is considered the founder of non-violence movement. Gandhi challenged the violence of colonialism and other forms of oppression. There are various examples of movements that used non violent methods. Mahatma Gandhi's movement against the imperial regime of British India, Martin Luther King's and James Bevel's adoption of Gandhian methods in their campaign to win civil rights of African Americans, Cesar Chavez's campaign of non-violence in the 1960s to protest the treatment of farm workers in California and '*Velvet Revolution*' in Czechoslovakia against the communist government. Ackerman and Duvall said that "a mass movement can force a favourable outcome in one of three ways: by coercing a ruler to surrender power or leave; by inducing a regimeto compromise and make concessions; or by converting regime's views of the conflict, so that it believes it should no longer dictate the results"(Ackerman and Duvall: p. 501).

Another study highlights that Gandhian views on non-violence emphasised on the practical wisdom that can be used and applied by peace activists. He provided a model of political power i.e. based on fearlessness and ahimsa (Manfred B. Steger: 2001.). Gandhi effectively used the power of non-violence. Non-violence is the tool against the injustice and violence prevailing in the society. National Foundation for Communal Harmony (2012) is contributing to create an atmosphere for non-violence. It promotes the principle of non-violence in resolving disputes between religion and other groups. It promotes Gandhian principle of non-violence. "Naxalism may have relative socio-economic and political deprivation as a genuine causal factor. But promoting and popularising the significance of non-violence can help concentrate on finding solutions to the very cause behind conflict" (National Foundation for Communal Harmony: 2012).

In present time media plays a very important role in promoting the idea of non-violence. It also creates awareness about consequences of the violence. It helps to create religious harmony among people. There are also great personalities who has done great task in the field of non-violence such as Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa in India, Martin Luther King Jr. in America, Nelson Mandel in South Africa, and Aung San Suu Kyi in Myanmar. These are the people who followed the path of non-violence.

According to Gandhi means are as important as ends. It is correct to say about him "Moral values like truth, non-violence, renunciation of the pleasures of life etc., political ideas such as freedom, democracy, peace etc., social objectives such as abolition of castes distinctions, emancipation of women, unity of all religious groups and communities etc.-these were indivisible parts of his life and teachings" (S. Ghosh: p172). Gandhi deeply emphasised on the non-violence as he said "A non-violent resolution is not a programme of 'seizure of power'. It is a programme of transformation of relations ending in a peaceful transfer of power" (M.K. Gandhi: 1946). Martin Luther also clearly said that "The non-violent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but also refuses to hate him. At the centre of non-violence stands the principle of love" (Martin Luther King Jr.: 1959). Non-violence has become an instrument to fight against injustice. Gandhi effectively used non-violence in politics as he said, "Some friends have told me that truth and non-violence have no place in politics and worldly affairs. I do not agree. I have no use for them as a means of individual salvation. Their introduction and application in everyday life has been my experiment all along" (B.N. Ray: 2008).

According to Nathan "Governmental Organisations and Non Governmental Organisations are necessary to create the framework of non-violence and peace. Non-violence can also be created through communication, negotiations and strong will power" (Nathan C. Funk: 2002). Media also promotes the idea of peace through their programmes.

CONCLUSION

In modern times non-violence is used as a powerful tool for social protest, revolution and political change. Now the world is facing nuclear problem, terrorism and also other problems. There should be a peaceful environment and secure non-violent actions. According to the nonviolence paradigm, genuine power derives from willpower and human solidarity rather than from violence, which undermines community and sows the seeds of its own destruction. Nonviolence offers an approach to peacemaking that has been used not only to counteract forms of social discrimination and political repression but also to resist foreign imperialism or occupation. "If you want peace," assert nonviolentactivities, "work for justice-justly" (Nathan C. Funk: 2002).

In the present time Public Interest Litigation is used as a strong weapon against violence. Gandhi said that an eye make the whole world blind for example Palestine-Israel conflict has resulted in blood, despair, death and helplessness. Finally we can conclude that non-violence can fight with any kind of problem. Religion, education, media and communication play a very important role to create awareness about non-violence. Since independence India is facing several problems that can be solved by the effective use of non-violence.

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