

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

**BA [Philosophy]
Fifth Semester
Paper V**

[ENGLISH EDITION]



**Directorate of Distance Education
TRIPURA UNIVERSITY**

Reviewer

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Regd. Office: 7361, Ravindra Mansion, Ram Nagar, New Delhi – 110 055

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SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

Contemporary Indian Philosophy

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Unit - II Swami Vivekananda (Jnana Yoga) The Real Nature of Man. The Way to the Realization of a Universal Religion. The Ideal of Universal Religion.	Unit 2: Swami Vivekananda (Jnana Yoga) (Pages 37-47)
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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary philosophy of India has been influenced by many thinkers. For a proper understanding of the Indian political scene in modern times, it is essential to obtain a fair idea of the ideas and philosophies of prominent political thinkers of the past that influence the modern political thought. The ideas preached by Swami Vivekananda has been discussed in this book. It will explain to you the concepts of Karma Yoga and Jnana Yoga.

Indian Social and Political Philosophy is rooted in the Vedas. The ancient and the modern political thinkers and philosophers condemn social evils like casteism, communalism, colonization and cherish the ideal of spiritual nationalism thereby propounding the message of universal brotherhood. Be it Gandhi or Ambedkar, both shared a similar political agenda, however, they differed only in their strategies. This book will introduce you to the idea which they both propagated and the ways through which they improved the society.

This book is written in a self-instructional format and is divided into four units. Each unit begins with an 'Introduction' to the topic followed by an outline of the 'Unit Objectives'. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to test the reader's understanding of the topic. A list of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit, and includes short-answer as well as long-answer questions. The 'Summary' and 'Key Terms' section are useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

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UNIT 1 SWAMI VIVEKANAND

(KARMA YOGA)

Swami Vivekanand
(Karma Yoga)

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Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda was the chief disciple of the nineteenth century mystic Ramakrishna Paramahansa and the founder of the Ramakrishna Math and the Ramakrishna Mission. He introduced Hindu philosophy, especially Vedanta and Yoga, to the Western world. He is also credited with raising interfaith awareness and bringing Hinduism to the status of a major world religion. He was a major force in the revival of Hinduism in modern India and is perhaps best known for his inspiring speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions at Chicago in 1893, through which he introduced Hinduism to the world. This unit will explain the ideas propagated by Swami Vivekananda.

Karma Yoga is one of the four yoga's i.e. the Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga. These four yogas are not related to each other, however a link has been established between the concept of Karma Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. They correspond to the different types of minds of the people in the world; but in custom they often intermingle, as there are many blends in types of men too.

The divisions of these yogas can be determined on the basis of the supremacy of one kind of character or another. The main goal of all these yogas is to attain freedom from the world in which we live and to get rid of all the sufferings and miseries. Karma Yoga is defined as the yoga of action which is based on the teachings

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of the Bhagavad Gita. It is a means through which one can achieve perfection through selfless actions of individuals.

In this unit, the concept of Karma Yoga has been discussed in detail. The essential traits of a karma yogi and the ways through which one can remove one's miseries have been analysed. It will also discuss the concept of duty and the relation between law and freedom.

1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Recognize Vivekananda as a philosopher of modern India
- Discuss the influence of Ramakrishna on Swami Vivekananda
- Describe the concept of Karma Yoga as propagated by Swami Vivekananda
- Interpret the achievements of a karma yogi who practices Karma Yoga
- Explain the ways through which an individual can get rid of his miseries
- Discuss the universal idea of duty with reference to the Bhagavad Gita
- Explain the relation between law and freedom

1.2 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: EARLY LIFE

Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 12 January 1863, in a traditional Kayastha family, and was given the name Narendranath Dutta. Since his childhood, Narendranath had varied interests and a wide range of scholarship in philosophy, religion, history, the social sciences, arts, literature, and other subjects. He evinced much interest in the Hindu scriptures like the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the epics Ramayana and Mahabharata and the Puranas. Even when he was young, he questioned the validity of superstitious customs and discrimination based on caste and refused to accept anything without rational proof and pragmatic test.

Narendranath's family moved to Raipur in 1877 for two years. Since there were no good schools there, Narendranath spent much of his time with his father discussing spiritual matters. For the first time the question of existence of god came to his mind. The family returned to Calcutta in 1879 but it is believed that these two years were the turning point in his life.

1.2.1 Joining the Brahmo Samaj

Narendranath started his education at home. He later joined the Metropolitan Institution of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in 1871 and subsequently the General Assembly's Institution. During these years, he studied the history of European nations as well as Western logic and philosophy, including the writings of David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and Charles

Darwin. Narendranath was fascinated with the evolutionism of Herbert Spencer and even translated Spencer's book on education into Bengali. Alongside his study of Western philosophers, Narendranath was thoroughly acquainted with Sanskrit scriptures and many Bengali works.

Narendranath's initial beliefs were shaped by Brahma concepts, which include the belief in a formless god and deprecation of idol. He was not satisfied with his knowledge of philosophy, he wondered if god and religion could be made a part of one's growing experiences and internalized. Narendranath went about asking prominent residents of contemporary Calcutta whether they had come 'face to face with god' but could not get satisfactory answers.

His first introduction to Ramakrishna occurred in a literature class in General Assembly's Institution, when Principal Reverend W. Hastie told his students that if they wanted to know the real meaning of trance, they should go to Ramakrishna. This prompted Narendranath to visit Ramakrishna.

1.2.2 Ramakrishna's Influence on Vivekananda

Vivekananda writes on his first interaction with Ramakrishna thus,

'The magic touch of the Master that day immediately brought a wonderful change over my mind. I was astounded to find that really there was nothing in the universe but God! ... Everything I saw appeared to be Brahman... I realized that I must have had a glimpse of the Advaita state. Then it struck me that the words of the scriptures were not false. Thenceforth I could not deny the conclusions of the Advaita philosophy.'

Narendranath's meeting with Ramakrishna in November 1881 proved to be a turning point in his life. About this meeting, Narendranath said:

'[Ramakrishna] looked just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him. He used the simplest language and I thought "Can this man be a great teacher?" I crept near to him and asked him the question which I had been asking others all my life: "Do you believe in God, Sir?" "Yes", he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir?" "Yes". "How?" "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intense sense." That impressed me at once. [...] I began to go to that man, day after day, and I actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance, can change a whole life.'

Even though Narendranath did not accept Ramakrishna as his guru initially and revolted against his ideas, he was attracted by his personality and visited him frequently. As a member of the Brahma Samaj, he revolted against idol worship and polytheism, and Ramakrishna's worship of Kali. He even rejected the Advaitist Vedantism of identity with absolute as blasphemy and madness.

Though at first Narendranath could not accept Ramakrishna and his visions, he could not ignore him either. It had always been in Narendranath's nature to test something thoroughly before accept it. He tested Ramakrishna, who never asked Narendranath to abandon reason, and faced all of Nendra's arguments and examinations with patience. Five years under Ramakrishna's mentorship transformed Narendranath from a restless, puzzled, impatient youth to a mature man who was

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ready to renounce everything for the sake of God-realization. In time, Narendranath accepted Ramakrishna as guru, completely surrendering himself as a disciple.

During the last days of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and some of the other disciples received the ochre monastic robes from Ramakrishna, which formed the first monastic order of Ramakrishna. Vivekananda was taught that service to men was the most effective worship of God. Ramakrishna asked Vivekananda to take care of other monastic disciples and in turn asked them to look upon Vivekananda as their leader.

1.2.3 Foundation of the Ramakrishna Math

After the death of their master, the monastic disciples led by Vivekananda formed a fellowship at a half-ruined house at Baranagar near the river Ganges. This became the first building of the Ramakrishna Math, or the monastery of the disciples who constituted the first monastic order of Sri Ramakrishna.

Narendranath and other members of the Math often spent their time meditating, and discussing different philosophies and teachings of spiritual teachers including Ramakrishna, Adi Shankara, Ramanuja, and Jesus Christ. In the early part of 1887, Narendranath and eight other disciples took formal monastic vows. Narendranath took the name of Swami Bibidishananda. Later, he was coroneted with the name 'Vivekananda' by Ajit Singh, the Maharaja of Khetri.

In January 1899 the Math was shifted to Belur, its current home.

1.2.4 A Wandering Preacher

In 1888, Vivekananda left the monastery as a Parivrâjaka—the Hindu religious life of a wandering monk. His sole possessions were a kamandalu (water pot), staff, and his two favourite books- Bhagavad Gita and The Imitation of Christ. Narendranath travelled throughout India for five years, visiting important centres of learning, acquainting himself with the diverse religious traditions and different patterns of social life. Moved by the suffering and poverty of the masses, he resolved to uplift the nation. Living mainly on bhiksha or alms, Narendranath travelled mostly on foot and railway tickets bought by his admirers whom he met during the travels.

During his travel in the Himalayas, he reportedly had a vision of the macrocosm and microcosm, which seems to reflect in the Jnana Yoga lectures, which he gave later in the West. At the end of January 1891, the Swami journeyed to Jaipur, where he studied Panini's Ashtadhyayi with a Sanskrit scholar.

Continuing his travels, he visited Ahmedabad and Porbander, where he stayed for almost nine months, in spite of his vow as a wandering monk, to perfect his philosophical and Sanskrit studies with learned pandits; he worked with a court pandit who translated the Vedas.

In 1892, Vivekananda travelled to southern India and reached Kanyakumari on the Christmas Eve of 1892. At Kanyakumari, Swami reportedly meditated on the 'last bit of Indian rock', famously known later as the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, for three days. Here he had the 'Vision of one India', which is also commonly known as the 'Kanyakumari resolve of 1892'. He wrote:

‘At Cape Camorin sitting in Mother Kumari’s temple, sitting on the last bit of Indian rock—I hit upon a plan: We are so many sanyasis wandering about, and teaching the people metaphysics—it is all madness. Did not our Gurudeva use to say, “An empty stomach is no good for religion?” We as a nation have lost our individuality and that is the cause of all mischief in India. We have to raise the masses.

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1.2.5 Parliament of World’s Religions

It was in early 1892 that Vivekananda heard of the Parliament of the World’s Religions and was urged by his followers to attend it. His disciples collected funds for the voyage to America and Vivekananda left for Chicago on 31 May 1893.

On arriving, Swami learnt that no one without credentials from a bona fide organization would be accepted as a delegate. When Professor John Henry Wright of Harvard University learnt that he did not have the credentials to speak at the Parliament, Wright is quoted as having said, ‘To ask for your credentials is like asking the sun to state its right to shine in the heavens’ Wright addressed a letter to the chairman in charge of delegates writing, ‘Here is a man who is more learned than all of our learned professors put together’.

Representing India and Hinduism, Vivekananda began his speech with, ‘Sisters and brothers of America!’ To these words he got a standing ovation from a crowd of seven thousand. He greeted the youngest of the nations in the name of ‘the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of sannyasins, a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance’. He quoted two passages in this relation, from the Bhagavad Gita- ‘As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee!’ and ‘Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths that in the end lead to Me.’ Despite being a short speech, it voiced the spirit of the Parliament and its sense of universality.

Vivekananda attracted widespread attention in the press. The American newspapers reported him as ‘the greatest figure in the parliament of religions’ and ‘the most popular and influential man in the parliament’. All his speeches at the Parliament had one common theme of Universality and gave importance to the concept of religious tolerance.

After the Parliament of Religions, Vivekananda spent nearly two whole years lecturing in various parts of the United States. ‘I do not come’, said Swamiji, ‘to convert you to a new belief. I want you to keep your own belief; I want to make the Methodist a better Methodist; the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian... I want to teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your own soul’. He later founded the Vedanta Society of New York.

He travelled to England twice where he met Miss Margaret Noble, an Irish lady who later became Sister Nivedita. He also interacted with Max Müller, a

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renowned Ideologist at Oxford University who wrote Ramakrishna's first biography in the West.

From West, he also set his Indian work in motion. He advised his followers and brother monks to launch a campaign of social service. 'Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes...and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral lessons on geography and such other subjects. No good will come of sitting idle and...saying "Ramakrishna, O Lord!"-unless you can do some good to the poor.'

In 1895, the periodical called Brahmavadin was started in Madras, with the money supplied by Vivekananda, for the purpose of teaching the Vedanta.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Why was Swami Vivekananda not satisfied with his knowledge of philosophy?
2. What is the significance of Vivekananda Rock Memorial?

1.3 KARMA YOGA BY SWAMI VIVEKANAD

Each soul is potentially divine.

The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy- by one, or more, or all of these -and be free.

This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or ritual, or book, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.

-Swami Vivekananda

Karma Yoga is defined as a system of ethics and religion which helps to attain freedom through means of unselfishness, and by good works. It is not necessary that the karma yogi should not believe in God, may not ask what his soul is, nor think of any metaphysical theory. He has to work on realizing the aim of selflessness. Every moment of his life must be realisation, as he has to solve by mere work, without seeking any help from either any kind of doctrine or theory, the very same problem to which the Jnani applies his reason and inspiration and the Bhakta his love.

The work of a karma yogi should be based on a proper viewpoint on the world in which he has to live. It is important that it should be based on a proper understanding of its nature, as if concentrating only on work, will result in extremism.

The nature of the world is imperfect and full of dissimilarity. There is an urge in man to set these imperfections and dissimilarity in a right way, however, a philosophic outlook will tell him that, while this aim may be partially achieved in patches or segments of the world, it is possible in the fullest sense.

It is important to ask the question whether any kind of permanent happiness can be given to this world. The sum total of all the good things in the world has been the same throughout in the relation to man's need and greed. It therefore, cannot be increased or decreased. For instance, one can observe the history of the human race, it has been noticed that the mankind suffers from the same kind of same miseries, enjoys the same pleasures and pains. These things are same with all the kind of people irrespective of the place to which they belong. However, it has been found that running along with all these incurable differences of pleasure and pain, there has ever been the struggle to lighten them. Throughout the history of mankind, human civilization has worked hard to smooth the passage of life for others.

'In modern time the millennium aspiration takes the form of equality, of liberty, and fraternity. His is also fanaticism. True equality has never been and never can be on earth...What makes the difference between man and man? It is largely the difference in the brain... We come into the world with unequal endowments; we come as greater men or as lesser men, and there is no getting away from that prenatally determined condition...Perfect equality will come only when a cycle of creation comes to its end.'

'Yet this idea of realising the millennium is a great motive power. Just as inequality is necessary for creation itself, so the struggle to limit it is also necessary. If there were no struggle to become free and get back to God, there would be no creation either. It is the difference between these two forces that determines the nature of the motives of men. There will always be these motives to work, some tending towards bondage and others towards freedom.'

A karma yogi must understand this nature of the world and should free himself from fanaticism as the motive power of his activity. Even while knowing that the imperfections of the world will continue, he must have the urge to do well as an innate tendency. This is realised to the extent that a person has become unselfish. 'That which is selfish is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral' -this should be the motto of a true karma yogi. Instead of external motives to stimulate him to action, the inner urge of love and goodness must take its place. It is only then, that the true essence of freedom from attachment and fanaticism can be realised.

The one striking example of a man given to good action without any external motive was the Buddha. He did not propagated any ideas of God in his theory, rather exhorted man to do well for its own sake. He is regarded as the greatest philosopher of all time, who preached such kind of philosophy which had a deep meaning. He is considered as the ideal karma yogi, who acted without any kind of motive and is regarded as the greatest man who has ever born; the greatest soul-power that has even been manifested.

1.3.1 Karma and its Effect on Character

According to the belief of Karma Yoga, the action which has been done by us cannot be destroyed until its results are shown. For instance, if an individual has performed a bad deed, then he or she will bear its consequences and the universe has no power over it. Similarly, if one performs a good deed then the universe has no

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power on its effect, thus, it can neither restrain it nor prevent it. The word 'Karma' is derived from a Sanskrit word where 'Kri' means 'to do' and all the actions performed by an individual is his 'Karma'. It can also mean the effects of actions.

The miseries of our life can be destroyed by the spiritual knowledge which one possesses. Any other kind of knowledge can satisfy our miseries, however, only for a time being. Thus, only spiritual knowledge has the power to remove our miseries permanently as it helps men to move out of their miseries spiritually, thus, helping any man spiritually to come out from their miseries of their life is the highest form of assistance that can be given to mankind. People who provide any kind of spiritual knowledge to man is considered as the greatest benefactor of mankind; and thus, we believe that such kind of beings are the most influential men as they assist men in his spiritual needs and spirituality is regarded as the true basis of all our activities in life. A spiritual person respects other and provides help to individuals in all spheres of life. It has been observed that if a man does not possess such kind of spiritual help, then even the physical needs cannot be satisfied.

After spirituality, intellectual help is another most important thing. The gift of knowledge is a greater gift rather than food or clothes; it is considered as even higher than giving life to a man, as the real life of man consists of knowledge. Ignorance is equivalent to death, knowledge is life. Life is of very little value, if it is a life in the dark, probing through ignorance and misery. When the question arises for helping others person physically, we must not consider and always make every effort to execute the mistake of thinking that physical help is the only help that can be given. This is because physical help cannot bring about any kind of permanent satisfaction, it is not only the last but the least important kind of help that can be given to a person. Let us consider an example of misery of hunger, which can be satisfied by eating something, but this feeling of being hungry comes within a course of time, whereas our misery can come to an end only when we are satisfied beyond all our wants. Once we possess knowledge of such a kind, it is only then that the misery of being hungry nor any kind of distress or sorrow will be able to move us.

It is not necessary that through physical help one can get rid of the miseries of the world. The miseries of man will continue to exist until the character or nature of man changes, these physical needs will always arise, and miseries will always be felt, and any kind of physical help will not be of any use. Thus, the only solution is to make mankind pure. If the world is enlightened by the power of knowledge, then, the miseries will cease to exist in the world. Let men have light of knowledge, let man's character be pure and spiritually strong and educated. Knowledge is the goal of mankind, not pleasure, as man mistakenly thinks. Pleasure and pain, happiness and suffering are our teachers. Through their impact on the mind, character develops. It has been concluded that suffering helps in the development of a character rather than happiness.

All knowledge is inherent in man and it thus, does not come from outside. All external factors are only stimulations that help its manifestation. 'Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind'. Works, with its consequences of enjoyments and sufferings, is the friction that brings it out. Every mental and physical activity is like a blow administered to the soul, by which fire struck, as it were, from it, and its

power and knowledge are made to manifest. This is the true nature and function of karma in its widest sense.

*Swami Vivekanand
(Karma Yoga)*

Every action and thought of ours leaves an impression in our mind. These impressions determine the way in which we behave at a particular moment and the way in which one responds to the situations. Thus, the way in which we lead a life is the means through which our character can be determined. Our present thoughts will help to shape our future. As a large number of small waves forms a huge wave, in the same way, the consequence of all of our actions that is the karma mount up to form tendency, an aggregation in our personality, which we refer to as character. Individuals, societies and nations have different kinds of needs which get fulfilled in different ways. However, there is one universal need of all individuals, societies and countries which is the need of character. If provided with attributes of a good character, then, man can emerge as a true man who can not only resolve his own problems but of others too. Man is regarded as a centre which attracts all the powers of the universe towards himself, fusing them all together and sending out his inner reaction to them as the manifestation of his will, which in common parlance is referred to as his personality or character. The mightiest of such waves of character are the Buddha's and the Christ's of the world. There are some who are really the salt of the earth in every country and who work for work's sake, who do not care for name, or fame, or even to go to heaven. They work just because good will comes out of it. There are others who do well to the poor and help mankind from still higher motives, as they believe in doing good and love good. The motive for name and fame seldom brings immediate results, as a rule; they come to us when we are old and have almost done away with the idea of life.

The question which arises here, is that, if a man works without any selfish motive in view, does he gain anything or not. It has been concluded that such a man gains the highest. 'Work for work's sake' is the most potent factor in the generation of tremendous characters like that of the Buddha and the Christ – 'gigantic souls, with wills powerful enough to overturn worlds, will they get by persistent work only for selfish gains in this world or the hereafter, or for reputation, or as expiation or sins committed. In such works the moral energy of action is frittered away while there may be worldly gains accruing. But unselfish work, done merely because one believes in doing good and loves good, goes to conservation of will and moral energy, and generates mighty characters. 'All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to you; but if restrained, it will result in development of power. His self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or Buddha.' 'Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth, and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideals, because in them lies such a manifestation of power.' These will make men into moral enormous; only they will have to wait for the accumulation of these tendencies.

Karma and its effect on character is one of the most remarkable power than man has to deal with. Man is, as it were, a centre, and is attracting all the powers of the universe towards himself, and in this centre is fusing them all and again sending

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them off in a big current. Such a centre is the real man- the almighty, the omniscient and he draws the whole universe towards him. Every movement of our life leaves an impression on the mind such as every work that we do every progress of the body, every thought that we think, and even such notion are not obvious up to the surface of our mind but they are sufficiently impact to subconscious mind. What we are today and every moment of our life is determined by these impressions on the mind. What we are just at that moment is the effect of all the impressions happened in our past life. If a person thinks about evil things, it will get reflected in his thoughts and life whereas virtuous thoughts result in good thoughts and actions. Character is what a person truly is, and his reputation is what he is supposed to be. When character and reputation are the same, this is the ideal state of being. The Greek word for character means to engrave one's mode of being in the world. Character is defined as the qualities or feature which helps to distinguish a person from another; the aggregate of distinguishing mental and moral qualities of an individual or a race as a whole; the stamp of individuality impressed by nature, education or habit; that which a person or a thing really is.

Swami Vivekananda says:

What you what is character, strengthening of the will. Continue to exercise your will and it will take you higher. This will is almighty. It is character that can cleave through adamant wall of difficulties.

And he proceeds to define character in manner:

The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. We are what our thoughts have made us. Thoughts live; they travel far. And so take care of what you think. Every work that we do, every thought that we think, bears an impression on the mind –stuff. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impression on the mind. Every man's characterise determined by the sum total of these impression. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad.

A question will be raised here- what is the place in this scheme of spiritual discipline for quietness, solitude and inwardness, which are associated with spiritual development? The answer is that man must learn to find solitude in the midst of the greatest silence and solitude, finds the intensest activity, and in the midst of the intensest activity finds the silence and solitude of the desert... He goes through the streets of a big city with all its traffic, and his mind is as calm as if he were a cave, where not a sound could reach him; and he is intensely working all the time. That is the ideal of Karma-Yoga, and if you have attained that you have really learnt the secret of work.

With all our feelings and actions, our tears and our smiles, our joys and our grief's, our weeping and our laughter, our curses and our blessings, our praises and our blames-every one of these we may find, if we calmly study our own selves, to have been brought out from within ourselves by so many blows. The result is what we are. All these blows taken together are called Karma which is work and action.

1.3.2 Each is Great in his Own Place

Swami Vivekanand
(Karma Yoga)

The sublime ideal of Karma Yoga should not be taught or taken as a discouragement or condemnation of men who cannot rise up to it: 'Even the lowest forms of work are not to be despised. Let the man, who knows no better, work for selfish ends, for name and fame; but everyone should always try to get towards higher and higher motives and to understand them.'

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Another such sublime ideal is the teaching, 'Resist not evil' which means that one should not react with any kind of hatred and violence against the forces which opposes you. Before this teaching becomes applicable, man should possess the power to resist. Without that, non-resistance will only be an act of cowardice. The law for such a person is first to develop that power of resistance, be it even through its use at first, and after he secured the power, to put the higher discipline into practice. For, duty and morality vary for individuals according to their mental constitution. Their capacity is determined by the stage of level of their evolution. What is relevant to him immediately is the next stage of evolution and not what is ultimate. Without recognising this, to harp only on the ultimate will be 'equivalent to condemning a vast portion of mankind. Not only so, it would be making men feel that they were always doing wrong, and cause in them scruples of conscience in all their actions; it would weaken them, and that constant self-disapproval would breed more vice than any other weakness would. To the man who has begun to hate himself the gate to degeneration has already opened; and the same is true of a nation.'

According to the Sankhya philosophy, the constitution of the body and the mind of man is based upon the three forces of nature which are sattva, rajas and tamas that stand for balance, activity and inertness. Man's character and his eligibility for particular moral standards depend on the relative dominance of these forces in him. Tamas symbolizes darkness or inactivity; Rajas is typified as activity, repulsion or expressed as attraction; and Sattva indicated the equilibrium of the two forces i.e. Tamas and Rajas.

There three forces exist in every man. Sometimes, tamas overcome due to which man become lazy, not willing to move, somewhat became inactive, bound down by certain ideas or by mere dullness. At other times, rajas prevails due to which man become active and sattva is the one which balances both of them. In every man, one of these forces is generally predominant. These force differ from man to man, if the nature of one man is laziness, dullness and inactivity then that of another man who is activity, power, and manifestation of energy. Apart from this kind of forces, one can also observe nature of the sweetness, calmness, and gentleness, which are due to the balancing of both action and inaction i.e. sattva. Thus, one can find typical manifestations of all these different forces in all creation whether it is observed in case of animal or plants

All these three factors deal with the concept of Karma Yoga. It helps us to do our work better by teaching what they are and how to employ them. Human society is a graded organization. Though we all know about duty and morality, however, the idea of morality differs from country to country. The meaning of morality will be

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different in one country as compared to another country. For instance, in a country, marriage can be allowed within the family whereas in another country, it is deemed as immoral.

Similarly, even in case of duty, the idea varies. For example, in a particular country, if a man does not perform certain actions, then it may be considered as unjust whereas if he performs those things, then other people may consider him wrong. Similarly, if a class of society thinks that certain things are among its duty, on the other hand, some would think that the things are not a part of duty. The only solution which is given to us is either to be ignorant where that particular group considers their opinion as ultimate truth while others are deemed as incorrect. Another solution is to be wise, these include those people who think that the idea of duty or morality does vary from region to region. It is important to realise the fact that these vary and thus, the duty of one state of life, in one set of circumstances, will not be same for another.

The ancient Hindu scheme of life is based on four ashrams and four Varnas which is based on the recognition of principle based upon the three forces of nature i.e. sattva, rajas and tamas. Its aim was to give, while placing the highest ideal before man, also adaptations of it for men of different natures and different stages of evolution- a practical way to evolve to higher standards through graded codes of conduct and activity. 'To each of these stages is intrinsically superior to another. The life of the married man is quite as great as the celibate who has devoted himself to religious work. The scavenger in the street is quite as great and glorious as the king on his throne. Take him off his throne, make him do the work of the scavenger, and see how he fares. Take up the scavenger and see how he will rule. It is useless to stay that the man who lives in the world; it is much more difficult to live in the world and worship God than to give it up and live a free and easy life.'

When Arjuna asked Sri Krishna 'Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking you to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto you. Please instruct me'. (Bhagavad Gita 2.7).

Like Vishnu has pointed out in his answer, Shri Krishna did tell the Karma Yoga to Sun God and then the Sun to his son Vaivasvata Manu and so on, but it got lost in course of time. Then, he again told the secret yoga only to Arjuna.

In the second chapter of Bhagavad Gita, wherein Sri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and a coward because of his refusal to fight, or proffer struggle, making the plea that the ethic of living in a community with family, teacher and companions involves doing them no violence and war is a defensible activity, but only against stranger, not against the blood ties; non-violence was the highest ideal of love. The answer offered by Sri Krishna, in urging Arjuna to overcome his faintheartedness and accept the battle. This is a great lesson for us all to learn, that in all matters the two extremes are alike i.e. the positive extreme and the negative extreme are always similar. For example, where the sensations of light are too slow, we are unable to see them, in the same way we do not see them when they are too rapid. The same thing can be observed in case of sound also, for instance, if pitch is low, we are unable to hear sound or when very high, we do not hear it either.

In case of man, the battle between resistance and non-resistance. For instance, a man does not resist reason and the reason for such a behaviour could be because he is lazy or weak. On the other hand, a man knows that he can know that he has the power to act but rather than that, he ignores and chooses to bless his enemies. Thus, one who from weakness resists not commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering resistance.

This implies that if there is true renunciation like the renunciation of Buddha who gave up his throne and renounced his position; but there cannot be any question of renunciation in the case of a beggar who has nothing to renounce. So we must always be careful about what we really mean when we speak of this non-resistance and ideal love. So it seems that honour and dishonour should not be taken to heart and a wise man will be indifferent to both. We must first analyse ourself and understand whether we have the power of resistance or not. After realising that we having the power then if we renounce it and do not resist, we are doing a grand act of love. But if we unable to resist, and yet, at the same time, try to mislead ourselves into the belief that we are actuated by motives of the highest love, we are doing the exact opposite. Arjuna became a coward at the sight of the mighty array against him; his “love” makes him forget his duty towards his country and king. That is why Sri Krishna told Arjuna with more positive argument for urging Arjuna to charge in to battle with his usual enthusiasm and makes an appeal that he is a Kshatriya and fighting in a war is just doing his duty. Krishna continues with this argument, describing the consequences if you do not this lawful battle, then you will fail your duty and glory and will incur sin.

Thou talkest like a wise man, but thy actions betray thee to be a coward; therefore stand up and fight!

This is main idea of Karma Yoga. The karma yogi is a man who understands the principle of non-resistance and is aware of the fact that this non-resistance is the highest ideal of power in actual possession. It is the duty of man to resist evil before reaching this highest ideal. In order to achieve this, it is necessary that the man should work with himself, fight with himself, and strike straight from the shoulder. It is only then possible that the man who has gained the power to resist, then non-resistance will be a virtue.

Inactivity or idleness should be avoided by all means. Activity always means resistance. When one stands against all kinds of evils whether it be physical or mental, one can succeed in resisting them. The process of resistance will in turn bring about a calmness inside the souls. It is very easy to say, ‘Hate nobody, resist not evil’, however, one is aware of the fact that this means that one should have this kind of attitude only after attaining a certain level of calmness and would require lot of patience. If someone criticises it, we pretend to believe that it does not matter to us, though it may hurt us, this shows non-resistance by us as we feel that it is better to resist rather to act.

It is necessary that an individual should take up his own ideal and endeavour to accomplish it. All the men and women, in any society, are not of the same mind,

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capacity, or of the same power to do things; they must have different ideals, and we have no right to criticise any ideal. It is necessary that the society should allow everyone to perform best things in order to suit their ideal and neither is it right to judge everyone. For example, it is not correct to judge the tree of apple by the standard of the oak, nor the oak by that of the apple. To judge the apple tree, one must take the apple standard, and for the oak, its own standard.

The Law of Karma is the law that governs activity. The law of Karma states that for every action there is a corresponding reaction. In simple words, Lord Jesus Christ said, 'As you sow, so shall you reap'. Newton's third law of motion is also similar, for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. This law that governs, the reactions to our actions in this world, is called the law of Karma.

According to the law of Karma, one has the freedom to choose our responses within a given situation. However, the reactions to those responses come automatically to us according to the law. The situations are out of our control and our attitude to that situation is within our control. We have no freedom to choose our situation and we have the freedom to choose our response or our attitude in that situation. Once we have made our choice we have no control over the reaction we will get. The reaction comes by the law of Karma.

We can choose to sow our seeds, but then we have to accept the fruits of what we reap. We cannot sow one seed and expect to get another fruit. That is beyond our control. The law of Karma controls that. If we sow a mango seed, we shall surely get a mango fruit. If we sow a neem seed we shall surely get a neem fruit. It is foolish to sow a neem seed and expect a mango fruit. As you sow, so shall you reap. Thus, whatever we get in life is because we have sown those kinds of seeds in the past which are fructifying now

For example, we have the freedom to choose to jump from the 10th floor of a building. However, once we jump, what happens to us is beyond our control. Once we have chosen our response then the reaction is totally out of our control. We are sure to get our reactions based on cumulative result of our present response and our previous actions.

It is wrong or incomplete to see law of Karma as an isolated case of action reaction. Law of Karma is a continuous chain that keeps track of all our actions and responses of all our past births also and gives each person the exact reaction at the correct time, place and circumstances. One can only begin to imagine the mind-boggling data and execution performed by the law of Karma involving all the countless living entities in the material world!

Good Karma has the power to strengthen the moral powers. Thus, it creates non-attachment; it destroys the tendency towards bad Karma and thereby purifies the mind or Chitta. But if the work is done with the intention of enjoyment, it then produces only that very enjoyment and does not purify the mind or Chitta. Therefore, all work should be done without any desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. All fear and all desire to enjoy here or hereafter must be banished for ever by the Karma-Yogi. Moreover, this Karma without desire of return will destroy the selfishness, which is the root of all bondage. The watchword of the karma yogi is 'not I, but Thou', and

no amount of self-sacrifice is too much for him. But he does this without any desire to go to heaven, or gain name or fame or any of other benefit in this world. Although the explanation and rationale of this unselfish work is only in Jnana-Yoga, yet the natural divinity of man makes him love all sacrifice simply for the good of others, without any ulterior motive, whatever his creed or opinion. Again, with many the bondage of wealth is very great; and Karma-Yoga is absolutely necessary for them as breaking the crystallization that has gathered round their love of money.

‘Blame nobody but yourself!’ If ever we get into any kind of trouble, we ourselves are usually to blame in some degree. It takes two to make a quarrel, and we sometimes provoke people without realizing it. Even if we are absolutely innocent and entirely sinned against, it still rests with us as to how we react. Some people get hurt more easily than others. They even take pride in it, saying, ‘I’m so sensitive!’ - As if it were something to brag about. But the really mature soul is not hurt by slights, insults, annoyances and frustrations which get the weakling down. The very fact that you are hurt is the thing for which you should blame yourself. Think of the martyrs who underwent agonizing torture, praising God with their last breath. Nothing that anyone could do had power to hurt them. They were immune. ‘Fear not them which kill the body’, said Jesus, ‘but are not able to kill the soul’. Nobody has power to hurt the real you except yourself.

Jesus said: ‘Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also’. One should love one’s enemies, bless the ones who curse you, do good to people who hate you and pray for the ones that spitefully use and persecute you.

‘If a man retires from the world to worship God, he must not think that those who live in the world and work for the good of the world are not worshipping God: neither must those who live in the world, for wife and children, think that those who give up the world are low vagabonds. Each is great in his own place’ – as the following story illustrates:

A king was always in the habit of questioning scholars and holy men: who is greater, a sannyasin or a householder? He wanted valid reasons also for the view expressed. No one was able to give him a satisfactory answer. At last a good sannyasin visited the king. When the point at issue was referred to him, he said that each is equally great in his place, and offered to prove it, if the king followed him in his wanderings for a few days. Agreeing to his proposal, the king set out with the sannyasin. In the course of their travel, they reached a place where the ruling monarch had arranged a swayamvara (marriage by choice) for his daughter. In swayamvara, the girl chooses from among the assembled suitors the one she like best. The king had proclaimed also that he would give half his kingdom to the man whom his daughter chose. So a large number of princes had assembled; but the girl, instead of choosing any of them, put the ceremonial garland of choice on a young and handsome sannyasin who was watching the scene from a corner. Startled at it, the sannyasin threw the garland away and walked fast from the place, followed by the girl who was madly infatuated with him. Towards evening, the sannyasin entered a forest and disappeared into the woods. While the girl was standing stranded in the forest, not knowing where to go, the king and the first sannyasin, who were following the

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two, went to her help. All the three of them took shelter under a tree on that cold night. A small bird, its mate and children saw from their nest these people shivering from cold under the tree. As a householder, the bird thought it its duty to extend them hospitality. It flew away, got a bit of burning firewood in its beak, and dropped it to its guests, who made a fire with it and relieved themselves of the cold. Next the bird thought it its duty to give some food to these hungry guests, and threw itself into the fire glowing below, so that they might eat its burnt flesh. Now, we felt that one small bird would be insufficient for three, and so threw herself also into the fire in pursuance of the wifely duty of fulfilling the purpose of the dead husband. He parent's footsteps were followed by the children too, as they felt it was their duty to carry on the work of their parents. Thus, all of them courted death in the discharge of their duties.

The sannyasin then said to the king who was surprised by all the experience he had that day: 'King, you have seen that each is great in his own place. If you want to live in the world, live in the world, live like those birds, ready at any moment to sacrifice yourself for others. If you want to renounce the world, be like that young man to whom the most beautiful woman and a kingdom were as nothing. If you want to be a householder, hold your sacrifice for the welfare of others; and if you choose the life of renunciation, do not even look at beauty and money and power. Each is great in his own place, but the duty of the one is not the duty of the other.'

1.3.3 The Secret of Work

The practice of Karma Yoga does not mean that one should possess enormous wealth. A person can serve with your mind and body. For instance, one should help others who is in need and by doing such kind of services, the heart will get purified. It is necessary to destroy one's ego in order to achieve the ideals of Karma Yoga. If one wishes to know, one must give and one must serve. To the self-centred, knowledge will ever be meaningless and empty.

To become a person who believes in Karma Yoga, it is difficult to be so in the beginning as it is difficult to get rid of the ego; one should be strict and firm in his mind in order to achieve that status. One should seek inspiration from the Lord in the form of prayers and by studying the lives of saints and from the sacred scriptures.

One should not pay much heed to the method of Nishkamya Yoga (the yoga of selfless service). People should work with right intention, for instance, should practice good kind of activities which will serve mankind. It is important to spiritualise all kinds of actions. After which, every kind of action would become an offering unto the Lord, when it is performed in the right spirit.

Karma Yoga is a great leveller as it helps in removing all illusory distinctions and differences. It leads to unity and a feeling of oneness. It helps to remove idleness and inertia. One should get involved in the practice of Karma Yoga, 'The Yoga of Selfless Service'. It elevates a man to reach a stature of divinity as it removes all kinds of impurities of the mind and helps individuals to seek a right kind of direction in life. It prepares an individual for the reception of divine light, divine grace and divine knowledge.

It expands the heart, breaks all the barriers that stand in the way of realising the ultimate unity and takes one to the door of intuition. It helps to develop divine virtues such as mercy, tolerance, kindness, cosmic love, patience and self-restraint. It destroys feelings of jealousy, hatred, malice and the idea of superiority. It is thus, the yoga of selfless action, where the results of the action are not given much attention. The work is regarded as the worship which is being offered to God. There is indescribable joy in the practice of Karma Yoga.

A karma yogi should be absolutely free from greed, lust, anger and egoism. After getting rid of all these, it will be possible only then to perform real service to humanity. A karma yogi should have an amiable, loving nature, perfect adaptability, tolerance, sympathy, cosmic love and mercy. He should be able to adjust himself to the ways and habits of others.

A karma yogi should have an all-embracing and all-inclusive heart. He should have equal-vision. He should have a cool and balanced mind. He should rejoice in the welfare of others. He should have all his senses under control. He should lead a very simple life. The person should be able to bear insult, disrespect, dishonour, censure, infamy, disgrace, harsh words, heat and cold and the pains of disease. He should have great power of endurance. He should have absolute faith in himself, in God, in the scriptures and in the words of his guru. Such a man is a good Karma Yogi and is able to achieve the goal quickly. The man who serves the world, really serves himself.

One will develop humility, pure love, sympathy, tolerance and mercy. The sense of separateness will be annihilated and the sense of being selfish will be completely removed. It will help you to understand a broad meaning of life and will understand the significance of unity and oneness.

If one wants to grow in the spiritual path, one must do all sorts of service daily, till the end of your life. One should not stop serving if one achieves the status of a karma yogi. It is also equally important to scrutinise the motives which you have set as each act will be spiritualised if the motives are pure.

Lord Krishna expects us to cultivate dynamic peace. He does not want us to be idle for even a single second. He characterises his 'dear ones' as those who are engaged in working for the commonweal. Such activity is known as the practice of yajna, dana and tapas-sacrifice, charity and self-control. Man should practise self-control. Man should practise charity-he should give, give, give. He should give whatever he has. He should transform all his daily activities into one continuous sacrifice. He should feel that he, Brahman, is offering the various actions into the infinite Brahman. He should perform all actions in a perfectly unattached manner.

Do your duty but inwardly feel that you are only an instrument in the hands of the Lord. Feel that you are a true self, the godhead within you, is the eternal witness. That is why Lord Krishna described yoga as karma-kushlam (skill in action). Karma Yoga is an art in itself. The secret of Karma Yoga is to combine deep interest with perfect detachment. If work is performed for work's sake, if such work is performed for the sake of the commonwealth, in a spirit of sacrifice-then you will enjoy an ineffable peace, a bliss that surpassed all understanding, all description. The gates of

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the kingdom of God will be thrown open to you. That is what the Lord assures us in the Bhagavad Gita. Selfless actions are not soulless actions.

Whatever is done without this realisation is an act performed in ignorance, is an act that would bind you faster to the wheel of samsara (cycle of birth and death). Three things are necessary when you practise Karma Yoga. You must be free from egoism; you must not expect any appreciation for the work that you do; and you must have a balanced state of mind in success and failure.

‘Devoted each to his own duty, a man attains perfection. How, engaged in his own duty, he attains perfection, to that listen’. If a person is devoted to his own duty, it then, attains perfection. By being loyal to our own level of feeling and ideas, to our own development of consciousness, we can evolve into higher states of self-unfoldment. Each one is ordered by his own *svabhava* and each can discover his fulfilment only in that self-ordered field of activity.

To feed the hungry, to cure the sick, to educate a man so that he may stand on his own feet – these are all good and valuable forms of service. However, spiritual service which gives enlighten to man, which makes him strong, which makes him strong, which removes all his wants forever, is the highest form of service.

All work is a mixture of good and evil in its results. Both good and evil in its results as they have their own Karmic effects

The Bhagavad Gita describe Karma Yoga as the path of ‘action’, of putting in 100 percent effort, without being attached to the outcome. Karma Yoga can be applied to everything you do: from the most trivial, ordinary tasks to greater, more challenging works. When action is performed selflessly, with full focus and attention, it brings fulfilment and freedom. Acting without being attached to the fruits of one’s deeds, this alone can lead to union with the Self, which is the goal of yoga. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil; yet individuals are commanded to work incessantly.

It is the selfless giving of oneself through the medium of work and stems from love which finds fulfilment in pure giving without thought of self-gain or acknowledgement. Karma Yoga is closely linked to Bhakti Yoga, for without love and devotion, it would be impossible to serve others selflessly. Performing one’s duties and serving humanity without any selfish motives purifies the heart and brings satisfaction. The solution reached in the Bhagavad Gita with regard to this bondage-producing nature of work is that, if we do not attach ourselves to the work we do, it will not have any binding effect on our soul. We shall try to understand what is meant by this ‘non-attachment’ to work.

All work leaves an effect on the mind that expresses itself as character. When a man has been repeatedly and continuously been doing good and avoiding evil, good action will become automatic with him. His character gets established in goodness, and he develops the capacity to control and restrain his senses and the mind if they drag him in the wrong direction.

There is, however, a still higher stage of work in which there is not even the bondage of the good. It is the ideal of working in complete freedom. This is what the Bhagavad

Gita teaches as detached work. In order to become detached, there are two requirements:

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· We have to believe in the idea that this world is not our real habitation, but only one of the many stages through which we are passing. Man in his ignorance thinks that the soul is for nature. But the truth is that nature is for the soul, for its education and ultimate liberation. When we regard ourselves as part of nature and its qualities, we are bound by the impressions that experience generate. We become slaves.

· Freedom is possible only through love, and not through the slavery that attachments produce. All attached work is only slave's work. It is not based on true love, for there is no love in slavery.

The test of love is this: 'Every act of love brings happiness; there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction. Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are eternally connected with one another, the three in one: where one of them is, the others also must be; they are the three aspects of the One without a second' 'Krishna says, "Look at Me, Arjuna! If I stop from work for one moment, the whole universe will die. I have nothing to gain from work; I am the one Lord, but why do I work? Because I love the world." God is unattached because He loves; that real love makes us unattached. Wherever there is attachment, the clinging to the things of the world, you must know that it is all physical attraction between sets of particles of matter-something that attracts two bodies nearer and nearer all the time and, if they cannot get near enough, produces pain; but where there is real love, it does not rest on physical attachment at all. Such lovers may be a thousand miles away from one another, but their love will be all the same...If you can invariably take the position of a giver, in which everything given by you is a free offering to the world, without any thought of return, then will your work bring you no attachment. Attachment comes only where we expect a return.'

Arjuna Said:

ज्यायसी चत्कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन।
तत्किं कर्मणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव॥

arjuna uvca
jyayas+ c-tkarmaGast- mat buddhirjanrdana.
tatkiE karmaGi ghMr-mE niyMjayasi k-[ava||3.1||

Meaning: O Janardana, If You consider that transcendental knowledge is better than work. Then why do you want me to engage in this horrible war, O Krishna? ||1||

व्यामिश्रेणेव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहवसीव मे।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम्॥
vymi[r-G-va vky-na buddhiE mMhayas+va m-
tad-kaE vada ni[icatyā y-na [r-yM.hampnuym||3.2||

Meaning: Your words seem to be contradictory and my mind is now confused. Therefore, kindly tell me which particular path is most beneficial for me. ||2||

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Sri Bhagavnuvca:

लोकेऽस्मिन्द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानया।

ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम्॥

lMk–.smindvividh nicmh pur prMkt maynagha.
jñnayMg–na sEkhyne karmayMg–na yMginm||3.3||

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Meaning: Bhagavan Shri Krishna said: O faultless one, previously I explained the two paths found in this world – the path of wisdom of the empirical philosophers and the path of action of those that must perform action. O Arjuna, a twofold path of Sadhana has been stated by Me in the past. The path of Self-knowledge (Jnana-yoga) for the contemplative, And the path of unselfish work (Karma-yoga) for the active. ||3||

न कर्मणामनारयानैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्रुते।
न च सन्न्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति॥

na karmaGmanrambhnaickarmyaE purucM.[nut–
na ca saEnyasand–va siddhiE samadhigacchati||3.4||

Meaning: One does not attain freedom from the bondage of Karma by merely abstaining from work. No one attains perfection by merely giving up work. A man cannot attain the state of divine consciousness free from material action simply by abstaining from action. Neither can perfection be attained simply by renunciation. ||4||

न हि कश्चिदक्षययपि जातु निष्ठत्यकर्मकृत्।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः॥

na hi ka[icatkcaGamapi jtu ticmhatyakarmak[t.
kryat–hyava[a% karma sarva% prak[tijairguGai%||3.5||

Meaning: One cannot abstain from activities even for a moment. Indeed, all living beings are forced to engage in activities due to the influence of the modes of material nature. Because no one can remain action-less even for a moment. Everyone is driven to action, helplessly indeed, by the Gunas of nature. ||5||

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि सयंम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्।
इन्द्रियार्थान्विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते॥

karm–ndriyGi saEyamyā ya st–manas smaran.
indriyrthnvimk htm mithycra% sa ucyat–||3.6||

Meaning: One who controls the external senses yet mentally dwells upon the sense-objects is said to be foolish and hypocritical. The deluded ones, who restrain their organs of action but mentally dwell upon the sense enjoyment, are called hypocrites. ||6||

यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते॥

yastvindriyGi manas niyamyarabhat–.rjuna.
karm–ndriyai% karmayMgamasakta% sa vi[icyat–||3.7||

Meaning: O Arjuna, The one who controls the senses by the mind and intellect, and engages the organs of action to Nishkaama Karma-yoga, is superior. However,

that person who controls the senses with the mind and engages them in karma-yoga (the path of selfless action) without attachment is superior. ||7||

Swami Vivekanand
(Karma Yoga)

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यावो ह्यकर्मणः।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्धयेदकर्मणः॥

niyataE kuru karma tvaE karma jyyM hyakarmaGa%.
[ar+raytrpi ca t- na prasiddhy-dakarmaGa%||3.8||

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Meaning: You should perform your prescribed duties, since action is better than inaction. You cannot maintain your existence without action. Perform your obligatory duty. Even the maintenance of your body would not be possible by inaction. ||8||

People often talk of 'rights and justice'. In fact what guides the conduct of man is only 'might or mercy' – might standing for all that is selfish, and mercy for all that is divine.

According to the path of devotion, unattached work takes another form. It consists in looking upon all work as 'worship' in case we believe in a personal God. There we offer all the fruits of our work to Him, and therefore we have no right to expect any return for it from mankind. The Lord Himself works incessantly and is ever without attachment. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man having no attachment to results. 'The selfless and unattached man may live in the very heart of a crowded and sinful city; he will not be touched by sin.'

The Mahabharata gives the following story of unselfish work:

'The mongoose related the story. There was once upon a time a Brahmin family that was so poor that the Bhiksha or begging had not given them any food for days. Fortunately after many days of starvation, the man who was head of the family managed to collect enough flour to make four chappatis. He ran home to allow his wife to cook those four chappatis to assuage their longstanding hunger. When she had finished making the four chappatis, one each for the man, his wife, his son and the pregnant daughter-in-law, a mendicant came to their door and asked for food. The Hindu Dharma requires that a guest is like a god and no mendicant be turned away from the door without some offering. That is what makes Karna so renowned in the Mahabharata and forms the basis of Pashtunwali the ethical code of the Afghan tribes.

So the elderly starved Brahmin told his wife to offer his share of one roti to the beggar. She did that but the beggar asked for more because his hunger was not fulfilled. The wife then offered her share of one roti to the beggar. She claimed that she was the Ardhangini of her husband and bore equal responsibility of his Dharma to feed any mendicant. The starved mendicant said he was still hungry and the son gave his share of his one roti to him in spite of his father's protest. The son said, 'This is my family and its reputation, morality and proper behaviour are my legitimate concern, greater than my life or salvation, but consistent with my principles'. The mendicant's insatiable hunger was not fulfilled and he asked if there was more food to give. The pregnant daughter-in-law then suggested that she should give her share of the last remaining roti. All the family members protested and objected on the basis, that she was pregnant and had been starved and should not jeopardize the life of the unborn foetus. The dutiful daughter-in-law replied, 'No one is born or even

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conceived without obligation. If this child whatever its sex, is part of this family, then it comes to this earth with its own obligations. It does not have the free will to decide, but as its mother and consistent with the ethics of my beliefs, it is my rightful choice to make this sacrifice on its behalf consistent with my Dharma and its. No living sentient creature is exempt from Dharma even before birth. The family agreed and the last of the four rotis was given to the mendicant, who was satisfied.

The mongoose said to the Pandava cook, “By chance, I rolled into the ashes of the Brahmin’s hearth and half my body turned golden, Since then for eons, I have rolled in myriad hearths where people proclaimed great sacrifices were made with purely altruistic motives, in the hope of making my whole body golden, but my reward has been disappointment and frustration. Is there no human being that is altruistic enough to fulfil my dream and wish by matching this ancient sacrifice?”

In an Indian home, the guest is Atithi-Narayana, i.e. God himself. The man received the guest and gave him his morsel of food without complaint. The guest was however, not satisfied with the tiny morsel of food. All the family members, starved for days as they were, also gave away their share for the guest. The guest was satisfied and offered his blessings to the family. The mongoose’s tail had touched the water that had been used to wash the feet of the poor but kind Brahmin and it instantly turned to gold. The water had flown away and mongoose couldn’t use it turn his entire body to gold and lift the curse.

Thereafter, it had ever been in search of another equally great act of kindness and reached the Halls of Yudhishtir’s palace. It rolled in the waters of Yudhishtir’s grand sacrifice but nothing happened.

The mongoose reminded everyone that the greatness of charity lies not in the mass of wealth but the spirit of generosity and Universal love in the heart of the donor.

After the Mahabharata war, the Pandava brothers performed a great sacrifice, in which gifts without limit were distributed among holy men and the poor. A mongoose with half of his body golden in colour was found rolling on the floor of the hall where gifts were being distributed. On being asked the reason, he declared: ‘You are all liars; this is no sacrifice. ... There was once a little village, poor Brahmin in a village (In ancient India, Brahmins were forbidden to take up other jobs than teaching and were supposed to earn their living by begging). He and his large family had starved for over a week and had finally procured a handful of puffed rice. They all happily, got fresh and sat down to share what was available. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they picked up the first morsel to eat, there was a knock at the door, a beggar appeared at the door begging for food and said he had not eaten for long. So poor Brahmin said, “Come in, sir; you are welcome,” He set before the guest his own portion of the food, So the elderly starved Brahmin told his wife to offer his share of one roti which the beggar quickly ate. The beggar asked for more because his hunger was not fulfilled. The wife saying, ‘Here is poor man, and it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him” and then offered her share of one roti to the beggar. The beggar, which he ate, and said he was still burning with

hunger. The son gave his share of his one roti to him in spite of his father's protest. The son said, "O this is my family and its reputation, morality and proper behavior are my legitimate concern, greater than my life or salvation, but consistent with my principles". The beggar ate that, but remained still unsatisfied; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed, blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation.

The mongoose said to the Pandava, 'By chance a few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor, half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice. Karma yoga therefore means helping others even to the point of death, without asking for any return. 'Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practicing charity to them. Thus it is plain that to be an ideal householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal Sannyasin; the true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder than, the equally true life of renunciation.' Is there no human being that is altruistic enough to fulfil my dream and wish by matching this ancient sacrifice?

1.3.4 Concept of Duty

While studying about the Karma Yoga, it is essential to understand about the concept of duty. However, the concept is difficult to understand as there is no universally accepted norm in regard to it. It varies from community to community, country to country, time to time, situation to situation, one state of life to another. 'The ordinary idea of duty everywhere is that every good man follows the dictates of his conscience. But what is it that makes an act a duty? If a Christian finds a piece of beef before him and does not eat it to save him life, or will not give it to save the life of another man, he is sure to feel that he has not done his duty. But if a Hindu dares to eat that piece of beef or to give it to another Hindu, he is equally sure to feel that too has not done his duty; the Hindu's training and education make him feel that away. In the last century there were notorious bands of robbers in India called thugs; they thought it their duty to kill any man they could and take away his money; the larger the number of men they killed, the better they thought they were. Ordinarily if a man goes out into the street and shoots down another man, he is apt to feel sorry for it, thinking that he has done wrong. But if the very same man, as a soldier in his regiment, kills not one but twenty, he is certain to feel glad and think that he has done his duty remarkably well. Therefore we see that it is not the thing done that defines a duty. To give an objective definition of duty is thus entirely impossible. Yet there is duty from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go Godward is a good action, and is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty. From the subjective standpoint we may see that certain acts have a tendency to exalt and ennoble us, while certain other acts have a tendency to degrade and to brutalise us. But it is not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kind of tendency in relation to all persons, of all sorts and conditions.'

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‘The Bhagavad-Gita frequently allude to duties depend upon birth and position in life. Birth and position in life and in society largely determine the mental and moral attitude of individuals toward the various activities of life. It is therefore our duty to do that work which will exalt and ennoble us in accordance with the ideals and activities of the society in which we are born.’ But it must be particularly remembered that the same ideals will not prevail in all societies and even in one society at all times. Forgetfulness of this leads to fanaticism, intolerance and brutality in the name of ideals.

‘Yet it is work through the sense of duty that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when work will become worship – nay, something higher-then will work be done for its own sake. We shall find that the philosophy of duty, whether it be in the form of ethics or of love, is the same as in every other Yoga-the object being the attenuating of the lower self, so that the real higher Self may shine forth – the lessening of the frittering away of energies on the lower plane of existence, so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher ones. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires, which duty rigorously requires. The whole organisation of society has thus been developed, consciously or unconsciously, in the realms of action and experience, where, by limiting selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the real nature of man.’

Ordinarily if a man goes out into the street and shoots down another man, he is apt to feel sorry for it, thinking that he has done wrong. But if the very same man, as a soldier in his regiment, kills not one but twenty, he is certain to feel glad and think that he has done his duty remarkable well. Therefore we see that it is not the thing done that defines a duty. To give an objective definition of duty is thus entirely impossible. Yet there is duty from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go Godward is a good action, and is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty.

‘Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels that it is runs smoothly ... and love shines in freedom alone ... the highest expression of freedom is to forbear.’ In the fulfilment of domestic duties in life, disharmony arises because the relationships are established not on love based on freedom, but on attachment based on the selfishness.

The only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind, of all ages and sects and countries, and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus: ‘Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin’.

The Bhagavad Gita mentions that the duties of humans are dependent upon birth and position in life. It helps to determine the mental and moral attitude of individuals towards the various activities of life. It is therefore, necessary to perform those duties which will help us to realise our ideals in accordance to the society in which we live. However, these ideals will not be considered as appropriate in other societies as they have different standards.

‘Purity is the first virtue in man or woman, and the man who, however he may strayed away, cannot be brought to the right path by a gentle and loving and

pure wife is indeed very rare.’ A pure woman should see everybody as her own child and should possess an attitude of a mother, similarly a man should also treat every women except his wife like a daughter, his mother or a sister.

‘It is the duty of the mother to think of her children first and then of herself. But, instead of that, if the parents are always thinking of themselves first, the result are always thinking of themselves first, the result is that the relation between parents and children becomes the same as that between birds and their offspring which, as soon as they are fledge, do not recognise any parents. Blessed, indeed, is the man who is able to look woman as the representative of the motherhood of God. Blessed, indeed, is the woman to whom man represents the fatherhood of God. Blessed are the children who look upon their parents as Divinity manifested on earth.’

The Mahabharata has an instructive story to illustrate how discharge of duties through pure, disinterested love can take man to the highest spiritual eminence. An ascetic with some psychic powers once went for biksha (alms) to a house. He was, however, kept waiting for some time by the housewife, who was engaged in her household duties. Full of anger at the delay, the ascetic thought of his miraculous power by which he had burnt with a mere look a crow and a crane that caused disturbance to his meditation by their cries. After some time the housewife cried out to the surprise of the ascetic, mildly chiding him, saying that all were not crow and crane, to be burnt in the flame of his anger. Surprised at the woman’s awareness of a fact which was, in the nature of things, absolutely unknown to any, the ascetic asked her how she had developed such powers of mind, and got the reply that it was by discharging her duties as housewife without any selfish motives that she had her mental development. She also advised him to go to a neighbouring butcher, if he wanted to know more of how a man can develop by doing his duties properly. It was the greatest surprise of his life to be told that he would have to learn wisdom from a butcher, of all men. But it was a still greater surprise when he understood that this butcher at his gruesome work had already come to know by intuition who had sent him to his shop. The butcher asked him to wait for some time, and after he had finished his work, took him home with him. Then he attended to the needs of his sick and old parents and afterwards come to converse with the ascetic. To some question of ascetic on themes like God and the soul, he gave a learned and enlightening talk, which is called ‘Vyadha Gita’ in the Mahabharata. My stifled by all these unexpected experience, the ascetic asked him why, in spite of his great wisdom, he was doing this gruesome work of a butcher. The butcher replied: ‘My son,’ replied the Vyadha, “no duty is ugly, and no duty is impure. My birth placed me in these circumstance and environments. In my boyhood I learnt the trade; I am unattached, and I try to do my duty well. I try to do my duty as a householder, and I try to do all I can to make my father and mother happy. I neither know your Yoga, nor have I become a Sannyasin, nor did I go out of the world into a forest; nevertheless, all that you have heard and seen has come to me through the unattached doing of the duty which belongs to my position.”

‘... A great Yogi... told me once the secret of work, “Let the end and the means be joined into one.” When you are doing any work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, as the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for

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the time being. Thus in the story, the Vyadha and the woman did their duty with cheerfulness and whole-heartedness, and the result was they become illuminated, clearly showing that the right performance of the duties of any station in life, without attached to result that grumbles about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot; to the unattached worker all duties are equally good, and form efficient instruments with which selfishness and sensuality may be killed, and the freedom of the soul secured. We all apt to think too highly of ourselves. Our duties are determined by our deserts to much larger extent that we are willing to grant. Competition rouses envy, and it kills the kindlines of the heart. To satisfy him, and it kills the kindlines of the heart. To the grumbler all duties are distasteful; nothing will ever satisfy him, and his whole life is doomed to prove a failure. Let us work on, doing as we go whatever happens to be our duty, and being ever ready to put our shoulders to the wheel. Then surely shall we shall we see the Light!

Karma Yoga is the way by means of which man's will power as expressed in action is utilised for his spiritual development. All power and excellences are given in the human spirits; and thoughts and actions are the means by which they are elicited and expressed in terms of character or personality. Actions are like waves in the ocean. However small, they do not perish, but combine together to produce a huge wave. So are actions of men, and the Buddha's and the Christ's of the world are the end-products- huge waves-of a long series of action done from a right motivation.

Generally all actions of men are selfishly motivated. Selfish action done for immediate results do not elicit the higher spiritual power of man. The moral energies are dissipated by such actions and only a spiritual stalemate, or even degradation, is the result. The moral energies are conserved only when actions are prompted by pure love, without any motivation of selfishness, and done with detachment. To attain to these excellences and thereby, complete the spiritual evolution of man, is the ideal of Karma Yoga.

But this highest ideal is not achieved all at once. Man has to go through the school of duty before he is fit for this higher development. Duty varies from man to man, from one state in life to another, from time to time, and from community to community. To present the highest ideal alone and condemn all who cannot come up to that, is an unhealthy habit. It creates inferiority complex and self-condemnation in man. This is very detrimental to man's progress. The Indian tradition therefore, maintains that every order of life, whether of the householder or the sannyasin, is equally good, if the duties appertaining to it are properly performed. Proper performance of duty without selfish attachment leads to spiritual progress. Reference has been made to the story of the dutiful woman, the sannyasin and the butcher.

However, care must be taken to see that duty does not degenerate into hypocrisy, prompting men to self-aggrandizement, exploitation and selfish attachments under the guise of duty. So also duty should not become a prison house or cause of enslavement for man. The more one has a sense of resignation to a higher will and one eliminates pure selfishness from one's motivation, the more will one become successful in this.

While love of God and resignation of all the fruits of one's action to him and cultivation of a sense of being only his instrument are helpful in the practice of karma yoga, even persons who have no such belief can become ideal karma yogis if they are motivated by pure love and goodness, if they are unattached in action, and seek no personal rewards for themselves. A person can become a karma yogi by fulfilling the following conditions:

- By repeatedly doing good action, man must reach a state when he has become incapable of doing harm to others
- He must be free from petty desires and ambitions
- He must have a philosophic outlook.

Like all other yoga's, freedom is also an important ideal of Karma Yoga. It is free from the idea of selfishness and is all about love and detachment, an individual reaches the same goal of spiritual freedom as those who pursue the other yoga's. A conspicuous example of perfection through good action is that of the Buddha.

The Ideal of Freedom

We will now discuss the ideal of freedom by understanding the concept of law and freedom.

Law and Freedom

The karma, besides meaning work, also implies the law of moral conservation, the application of the inevitable sequence of cause and effect to the moral realm. By law is meant this tendency of a series to repeat itself. It is more correct to say that this tendency is in our mind rather than in nature; for it is an expectation that this series will repeat itself. 'Certain phenomena, happening one after another or together, and followed by the conviction of the regularity of their recurrence-thus enabling our mind grasp the method of the whole series—constitute what we call law.'

Law is possible only within this conditioned universe. Our universe is only that portion of existence which is limited by our mind – this universe of the senses which we see, feel, and touch hear, think or imagine. It is only when 'being' or 'existence' get moulded into name and form that it obeys the law of causation. For this reason, as we understating it, cannot be free; for it is cast in the mould of time, space and causation. But that which get converted into human will is free.

This universe comes from freedom, rests in bondage, and goes back to freedom. It only speaks of the infinite being, and all our experiences, expectations, progression and digressions are within that, the sphere of bondage and limitation. Even the heavens that man picture are only repetitions of his experiences here, though they may be more ethereal than this earth of ours, and enjoyments there, keener than here. To acquire freedom we have to get beyond this is not possible until we give up the thirst after life, our attachment to our own transient condition.

Two ways are laid down for this—one called 'neti, neti' (not this, not this), and the other 'iti, iti' (this, this). The first is for men of gigantic will, whose mind and body obey their will, and who can therefore reject the life of bondage and rise into freedom. Such men are very rare. There is the way of jnana or reasoning. The second is the

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path for the vast majority – the way through the world, ‘making use of all the bondages themselves to break those very bondages themselves to break those very bondages.’ This is the path work. Abandoning of attachment is involved in this also, but ‘it is done slowly and gradually, by knowing things, enjoying things and thus obtaining experience ... until the mind lets them all go at last and becomes unattached.’ Each one’s individual life is like a quantity of water in a stream that rushes forward, but get into a hollow, goes round and round for a time as a whirlpool, and then rushes out again towards its destination of freedom forming whirlpools again on the way. The whole universe, including all jivas in it, is flying away from bondage, without being aware of it. The trend of life is in that direction, only man does not know it. Karma yoga asks man to be aware of this truth, and try to use instead of being knocked about in the repetitive process of this world, known as samsara.

Non-Attachment as the Way to Freedom

The way to attain freedom from the world is through non-attachment. Misery comes through attachment and not work. Attachment is the sense of identification with anything as ‘mine’. With the idea of possession comes selfishness brings misery. The more we say ‘I’ and ‘mine’, the more slavery grows, and the more misery too. ‘Do not even say “my child” in your mind. Possess the child, but do not say “mine”’. If you do, then will come the misery. Do not say “my house,” do not say “my body”’. The whole difficulty is there. The bodies are coming and going by the laws of nature, but we are free, standing as witness. This body is no freer than a picture or a wall. Why should we be attached so much to a body? If somebody paints a picture, he does it and passes on. Do not project the tentacle of selfishness, “I must possess it”. As soon as that is projected, misery will begin.’

Not to avoid work or the world, but to be unaffected by it like a lotus leaf in water is the ideal. This type of non-attached attitude is called vairagya, and practice of no yoga is possible without something of it. vairagya is essentially in the mind. ‘A man may be in rags and still very much attached.’ A man may leave all things and go into a forest, but his only possession, the body, can become an obsession for him and make him live a life of intense attachment.

Faith in God Makes Non-Attachment Easy

There are two ways of practising non-attachment. The first is for those who do not accept a God; for, karma yoga is relevant for them too. Reflecting on the nature of the world, they must discriminate and abandon attachment by the power of their will. But ‘For those who believe in God there is another way, which is much less difficult. They give up the fruits of work unto the Lord; they work are never attached to the results. Whatever they see, feel, hear, or do, is for Him. For whatever good work we may do, let us not claim any praise or benefit. It is the Lord’s; give up the fruits unto Him. Let us stand aside and think that we are only servants obeying the Lord, our Master, and that every impulse for action comes from Him every moment. Whatever thou worships, whatever thou perceives, whatever thou does, give up all unto Him and be at rest. Let us our whole body and mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord. Instead of the sacrifice of pouring oblations

into the fire, perform this one great sacrifice day and night- the sacrifice of your little self. "In search of wealth in this world, Thou art the only wealth I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee. In search of someone to be loved, Thou art the only one beloved I have found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee." Let us repeat this day and night, and say, "nothing for me; no matter whether the thing is good, bad or indifferent; I do not care for it; I sacrifice all unto Thee!" This sacrifice of our seeming self must become a habit with us.

Limitations of the Concept of Duty

Karma Yoga expects us to do our duty, at the same time, it wants us to rise at a higher plane. Ordinarily the sense of duty degenerates to the extent of making a man a prisoner of it. Sheer slavery-morbid attachment of flesh for flesh is sometimes interpreted as duty. Attachment, 'when it is chronic, we call it nature. It is a disease. So when attachment becomes chronic, we baptise it with the high-sounding mane of duty. We strew flowers upon it, trumpets sound for it, scared texts are said over it, and then the whole world fights, and men earnestly rob each other for his duty's sake. Duty is good to the extent that it checks brutality. To the lowest kinds of men, who cannot have any other ideal, it is of some good; but those who want to be karma yogis must throw this idea of duty overboard. There is no duty for you and me. Whatever you have to give to the world, do give by all means, but not as a duty. Do not take any thought of that. Be not compelled. Why should you be compelled? Everything that you do under compulsion goes to building up attachment. Why should you have any duty? Resign everything unto God. In this tremendous fiery furnace where the fire of duty scorches everyone, drink this cup of nectar and be happy. We are all simply working out His will, and have nothing to do with reward, for anything you do. No sooner do we perform a good action than we begin to desire credit for it... Misery must come as the result of such desires. The greatest men in the world have passed away unknown. The Buddha's and the Christ's that we know are but second rate heroes in comparison with the greatest men of whom the world nothing... Silently they live and silently they pass away; and in time their thoughts finds expression in Buddha's or Christ's, and it is these latter that become known to us... These Sattvika men are too near the Lord to be active workers, however good, have still a little remnant of ignorance left in them. When our nature has yet some impurities left in it, then alone can we work? It is in the nature of work to be impelled ordinarily by motive and by attachment. In the presence of an ever active Providence who notes even the sparrow's fall, how can man attach any importance to his own work? Will it not be a blasphemy to do so when we know that He is taking care of the minutest things in the world? We have only to stand in awe and reverence before Him saying, "Thy will be done". The highest men cannot work, for in them there is no attachment. Those whose whole soul is gone into the Self, those whose desires are confined in the Self, who have become ever associated with the Self, for them there is no work. Such are indeed the highest of mankind; but apart from them every one else has to work. In so working we should never think that we can help on even the least thing in this universe. We cannot as we are liable to help only ourselves in this gymnasium of the world. This is the proper attitude of work. If we work in this way, if we always remember that our present opportunity to work thus, is a privilege which has

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been given to us, we shall never be attached to anything. Millions like you and me think that we are great people in the world; but we all die, and in five minutes the world forgets us. But the life of God is infinite. “Who can live a moments, breathe a moment, if this all-powerful one does not will it?” He is the ever active Providence. All power is His and within His command. Through His command the wind blow, the sun shines, the earth lives, and death stalks upon the earth. He is the all in all; we can only worship Him. Give up all fruits of work; do well for its own sake; then alone will come perfect, non-attachment. The bonds of the heart will thus break, and we shall reap perfect non-attachment. The bonds of the hearts will thus break, and we shall reap perfect freedom. This freedom is indeed the goal of Karma Yoga’.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3. What are the necessary conditions through which a person can attain the status of a karma yogi?
4. Name the divine virtues which can be achieved through Karma Yoga.
5. State the universal idea of duty which has been accepted throughout the world.
6. How can you say that freedom is also an important ideal of Karma Yoga?
7. What is the idea of Karma Yoga?

1.4 SUMMARY

- Swami Vivekananda was born in Calcutta (now Kolkata) on 12 January 1863, in a traditional Kayastha family, and was given the name Narendranath Dutta.
- Since there were no good schools there, Narendranath spent much of his time with his father discussing spiritual matters.
- Narendranath started his education at home. However, he later joined the Metropolitan Institution of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar in 1871 and subsequently the General Assembly’s Institution.
- Narendranath initial beliefs were shaped by Brahmo concepts, which include belief in a formless god and deprecation of idol.
- Even though Narendranath did not accept Ramakrishna as his guru initially and revolted against his ideas, he was attracted by his personality and visited him frequently.
- As a member of the Brahmo Samaj, he revolted against idol worship and polytheism, and Ramakrishna’s worship of Kali.
- Though at first Narendranath could not accept Ramakrishna and his visions, he could not ignore him either.
- Vivekananda tested Ramakrishna, who never asked Narendranath to abandon reason, and faced all of Narendra’s arguments and examinations with patience.

- During the last days of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and some of the other disciples received the ochre monastic robes from Ramakrishna, which formed the first monastic order of Ramakrishna.
- Vivekananda was taught that service to men was the most effective worship of God.
- Narendranath and other members of the Math often spent their time in meditation, discussing about different philosophies and teachings of spiritual teachers including Ramakrishna, Adi Shankara, Ramanuja, and Jesus Christ.
- In 1888, Vivekananda left the monastery as a Parivrājaka—the Hindu religious life of a wandering monk.
- During Vivekananda's travel in the Himalayas, he reportedly had a vision of the macrocosm and microcosm, which seems to reflect in the Jnana Yoga lectures, which he gave later in the West.
- It was in early 1892 that Vivekananda heard of the Parliament of the World's Religions and was urged by his followers to attend it.
- In 1895, the periodical called Brahmavadin was started in Madras, with the money supplied by Vivekananda, for the purpose of teaching the Vedanta.
- Karma Yoga is defined as a system of ethics and religion which helps to attain freedom through means of unselfishness, and by good works.
- The work of a karma yogi should be based on a proper viewpoint on the world in which he has to live.
- There is an urge in man to set these imperfections and dissimilarity in a right way, however, a philosophic outlook will tell him that, while this aim may be partially achieved in patches or segments of the world, it is possible in the fullest sense.
- A karma yogi must understand the nature of the world and should free himself from fanaticism as the motive power of his activity.
- The one striking example of a man given to good action without any external motive was the Buddha.
- According to the belief of Karma Yoga, the action which has been done by us cannot be destroyed until its results are shown.
- The word 'Karma' is derived from a Sanskrit word where 'Kri' means 'to do' and all the actions perform by an individual is his 'Karma'.
- The miseries of our life can be destroyed by the spiritual knowledge which one possess.
- Spiritual knowledge has the power to remove our miseries permanently as it helps men to move out of their miseries spiritually.
- Helping any man spiritually to come out from their miseries of their life is the highest form of assistance that can be given to mankind.

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- The gift of knowledge is a greater gift rather than food or clothes; it is considered as even higher than giving life to a man, as the real life of man consists of knowledge.
- If the world is enlightened by the power of knowledge, then, the miseries will cease to exist in the world.
- The impression of our mind determines the way in which we behave at a particular moment and the way in which one responds to the situations.
- There is one universal need of all individuals, societies and countries which is the need of character.
- Karma and its effect on character is one of the most remarkable power than man has to deal with.
- Character is defined as the qualities or feature which helps to distinguish a person from another; the aggregate of distinguishing mental and moral qualities of an individual or a race as a whole; the stamp of individuality impressed by nature, education or habit; that which a person or a thing really is.
- According to the Sankhya philosophy, the constitution of the body and the mind of man is based upon the three forces of nature which are sattva, rajas and tamas that stand for balance, activity and inertness.
- The ancient Hindu scheme of life is based on four ashrams and four Varnas which is based on the recognition of principle based upon the three forces of nature i.e. sattva, rajas and tamas.
- The karma yogi is a man who understands the principle of non-resistance and is aware of the fact that this non-resistance is the highest ideal of power in actual possession.
- According to the law of Karma, one has the freedom to choose our responses within a given situation.
- Karma Yoga is a great leveller as it helps in removing all illusory distinctions and differences.
- The Bhagavad Gita describe Karma Yoga as the path of 'action', of putting in 100 percent effort, without being attached to the outcome.
- The Bhagavad Gita mentions that the duties of humans are dependent upon birth and position in life.
- Karma Yoga is the way by means of which man's will power as expressed in action is utilised for his spiritual development.
- The karma, besides meaning work, also implies the law of moral conservation, the application of the inevitable sequence of cause and effect to the moral realm.
- The way to attain freedom from is the world is through non-attachment.
- Attachment is the sense of identification with anything as 'mine' and with the idea of possession comes selfishness brings misery.

1.5 KEY WORDS

- **Karma Yoga:** It refers to the discipline of actions which are selfless and leads to a sense of perfection.
- **Advaita:** It refers to the Non-duality of Jeeva (microcosm) and Brahman (macrocosm).
- **Vedanta:** It refers to the end part of the Veda dealing with self-knowledge

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1.6 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. Swami Vivekananda was not satisfied with his knowledge of philosophy as his initial beliefs were shaped by Brahmo concepts, which includes belief in a formless god and deprecation of idol. He wondered if god and religion could be made a part of one’s growing experiences and internalized.
2. Vivekananda Rock memorial in the place in Kanyakumari, where Vivekananda after having travelled throughout India in order to perfect his knowledge, meditated on the ‘last bit of Indian rock’, It is significant also because it was here that he had the vision of India’, which is also commonly known as the ‘Kanyakumar resolve of 1892’.
3. The necessary conditions through which a person can attain the status of a karma yogi are as follows:
 - (a) By repeatedly doing good action, man must reach a state when he has become incapable of doing harm to others.
 - (b) He must be free from petty desires and ambitions.
 - (c) He must have a philosophic outlook.
4. The divine virtues which can be achieved through Karma Yoga are mercy, tolerance, kindness, cosmic love, patience and self-restraint.
5. The universal idea of duty which has been accepted throughout the world has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus: ‘Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin’.
6. Freedom is also an important ideal of Karma Yoga as it is free from the idea of selfishness and is all about love and detachment, an individual reaches the same goal of spiritual freedom as those who pursue the other yoga’s.
7. The moral energies are conserved only when actions are prompted by pure love, without any motivation of selfishness, and done with detachment. To attain to these excellences and thereby, complete the spiritual evolution of man, is the ideal of Karma Yoga.

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1.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on the early life of Narendranath Dutta.
2. What prompted Swami Vivekananda to establish the Ramakrishna Mission?
3. Why did Swami Vivekananda rejected the concept of Advaitist Vedantism?
4. How does the impression of mind determine the behaviour of an individual?
5. What are the factors on which a work of karma yogi should be based?
6. How can an individual destroy the miseries of one's life?

Long-Answer Questions

1. According to the belief of Karma Yoga, the action which has been done by us cannot be destroyed until its results are shown'. Discuss the statement.
2. Explain the concept of Karma Yoga as propagated by Swami Vivekananda.
3. Analyse the requirements which can help us to become detached from the material world.
4. Discuss the sublime idea of Karma Yoga.
5. Examine the concept of Karma Yoga through The Bhagavad Gita.
6. Identify the essential traits that a karma yogi should possess.
7. Discuss the concept of Sankhya philosophy.

1.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 2 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (JNANA YOGA)

Swami Vivekananda
(Jnana Yoga)

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Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 The Real Nature of Man
- 2.3 The Way to Realization of a Universal Religion/
The Ideal of Universal Religion
 - 2.3.1 Ramakrishna Mission
- 2.4 Summary
- 2.5 Key Terms
- 2.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.7 Questions and Exercises
- 2.8 Further Reading

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Swami Vivekananda, is considered as an important figure who introduced Hindu philosophies to the Western world. His philosophies and ideologies influenced the political ideas of contemporary India.

Vivekananda's theory of humanism asserts that an individual is not only an end in himself but also divine by nature. He believed that education is an important means through which humans could improve their condition. It is necessary that man should instil good qualities in themselves as these qualities are the essential traits through which a character can be judged in the society.

Swami Vivekananda believed that god is the ultimate reality of the world and propounded the idea of Jnana Yoga has been discussed. His concept of religion as a means through which realization could be achieved and the features of his philosophy have been highlighted.

This unit will discuss the concept of man-making education. In this unit, the ideas of Swami Vivekananda and the main aims of Ramakrishna Mission have been analysed. Ramakrishna Mission was started by Swami Vivekananda in the year 1897, in order to create national awakening among the people.

2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse the importance of education in improving the condition of the humans
- Discuss the concept of man-making education
- Interpret the features of the philosophy of education
- Explain the concept behind the formation of the Ramakrishna Mission

2.2 THE REAL NATURE OF MAN

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Jnana Yoga is one of most difficult of the four main paths of Yoga. It is the Yoga of knowledge or wisdom. It essentially requires great practise and will power. It involves introspection of one's own nature and the relationship between ego thoughts and mind.

Swami Vivekananda firmly believed that education is an instrument which leads to the betterment of human. He was greatly distressed to see the degradation in which the masses had fallen because of the denial of literacy and education. He was highly critical of the educational system itself with its western bias and lack of attention to the development of the mental ability and moral character in its pupils. He wanted a thorough re-orientation of the educational system. He declared, 'We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas. If education is identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages of the world and encyclopaedias are the *rishis*.' He quoted an old Sanskrit saying '*yatha kharaschandana bhara vahi bhara sya yetta na tu chandanasya*', which means, 'The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the weight and not the value of the sandalwood.' Vivekananda scoffed at the importance being given by the educational system to book learning and memory training. 'Education', he said, 'is not the amount of information that is put in your brain and run riot there, undigested all your life.' Swami Vivekananda observed, 'We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.'

How to judge a Man of Character

Swami Vivekananda observed, 'If you really want to judge the character of man, look not at his great performances. Watch a man do his most common actions. Those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of the great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is really great whose character is great always the same whatever be.' According to him 'intellectuality' is not the highest good. 'Morality' and 'Spirituality' are the things for which we strive. He remarks, 'Our women are not so learned, but they are more pure.' He does not consider a man educated only on the account that he manages to pass some examination and deliver good lectures. The basis of all systems, social or political, rests upon the goodness of man.

Cultivation of Heart

'It is the heart', he said, 'which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. Always cultivate the heart.' He always attached greatest importance to the development of compassion and fellow-feeling for the common man. In fact, his Vedantic philosophy convinced him that education must play an important role in making the pupil discover his identity with the rest of humanity, and especially with those who were much worse off than himself in economic and social condition.

Vivekananda reminded that the nation lived in the cottage and therefore, it was the duty of every educated youngster to go from village to village and make the people understand their real condition, awake them from their long slumber and advise them on how to improve their own miserable lot. The sunken vitality of the helpless victims of social injustice was to be restored physically, intellectually as well as spiritually. He said, 'I call him a Mahatma who feels for the poor. Let these people be your God—think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly—the Lord will show you the way.'

Vivekananda's Concept of Man-making Education

Swami Vivekananda saw the 'Divine in the form of the poor' whom he called *Daridra Narayan*. This denotes the direction of 'Man-making' education. It implies that education should develop a spirit of service, and the poor and the needy must be helped to raise themselves.

Man-making education also brings out the significance of the famous words said by Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions held in 1893 at Chicago. These were HELP, ASSIMILATION, HARMONY and PEACE. Accordingly, education should develop these qualities in man.

Man-making education is inherent in character development as well as vocational development. Man-making education is a comprehensive concept.

Man-making education includes physical and health education. He was also greatly concerned about the proper care of the body and the healthy development of one's physiques.

The chief elements of the man-making concept are enumerated as follows:

- Swami Vivekananda believed in the *Vedanata* philosophy, which considers that the ultimate goal of human life is to attain 'Unity with the Creator'. An individual must fully understand this.
- Service to man is equated with devotion to God. According to Swami Vivekananda, God resides in every human heart. Thus, man should develop the spirit of service to his fellow beings.
- Swami Vivekananda believed in the liberal concept of religion. Essential elements of all religions are the same. No religion is inferior to other religion. Man should follow an attitude of respect for all religions.
- According to Vivekananda, love is the highest goal of religion. Man should imbibe love for all and hatred for none.
- Swami Vivekananda developed a synthesis between science and spirituality. Man should attain knowledge of science and spirituality.
- Swami Vivekananda was a prophet of humanity. His concept of man transcends the cultural boundaries of the East and the West. He was a rationalist and thus, believed a man must develop a rational attitude in life.
- Man-making education must develop such individuals who are ethically sound, intellectually sharp, physically strong, religiously liberal, socially efficient, spiritually enlightened and vocationally self-sufficient.

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- Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission which is engaged in the task of man-making through its multifarious activities. It has opened several educational institutions, libraries and reading rooms, and hospitals and dispensaries. Hundreds of selfless workers of the Mission are working for the upliftment of the masses.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What kind of qualities should education instil in a man?
2. What makes man-making education is a comprehensive concept?

2.3 THE WAY TO REALIZATION OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION/THE IDEAL OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Vivekananda's philosophy and his views on religion can be summed up in the words of Dr V. K. R. V Rao, an eminent economist and educationist:

'God is the one reality that exists in the world and He is the Universal Reality. All phenomena, animate and inanimate, man and animal, body, mind and soul, are all His manifestations. Therefore, there is no difference between man and man in his basic essence and this should lead to all men feeling about and treating each other as they would do with their own individual selves. This understanding of the real nature of man, the universe and God is, however, hidden from man because of the veil cast by Maya; and it is the objective of 'Vedanta' to tear this veil and let man see himself in reality. This can be done through learning and practising 'Jnana Yoga' or 'Raja Yoga'. The Vedanta, however, does not only propound the Advaita doctrine. It also puts forward the dualistic understanding of God through the worship of the Personal God or one's 'Ishta Yoga' because it is based on man's natural feeling for loving one's nearest and dearest. And for doing this, he had to find a guru who had the power to transmit spirituality. At the same time, he himself should be fit to receive and get stimulated by this transmission. When a man reaches this stage, he gets filled with overwhelming love for God and the universe which he finds enveloped with God, and for all men whom he finds are but manifestations of his Personal God. His religion thus, leads him to love all men and find in their service his means for worshipping God. There is yet a third method of obtaining liberation from the shackles of one's ego and reaching God-consciousness. And this is Karma Yoga, the gospel of work without attachment, without selfishness and for the service of one's fellowmen. Even if one does not believe in God, one can follow the path of Karma Yoga and obtain, liberation, harmony and the peace that passes all understanding as was shown by Buddha. To these, he added the teachings of Buddha, Christ and Mohammed with their special stress on compassion, service and equality. Thus, he concluded by talking of the One, who he felt was the perfect example in actual life of all that he taught—Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.'

Religion Means Realization

For Vivekananda, religion was not just a question of belief. 'Religion', he said 'was realization, nor talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming; not hearing and acknowledging. It is the whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion. Religion has to be practised if it was to have meaning, and the practice had to take account of the call of social reality. In a letter written from Washington on 27 October 1894, he made his position very clear. He wrote, 'I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth. However sublime the theories, however well-spun may be the philosophy, I do not call it religion as long as it is confined to books and dogmas. The eye is in the forehead and not in the back. Move onward and carry into practice that which you are very proud to call your religion, and may God bless you.'

The essence of Vivekananda's teachings on religion was the universality of God and his accessibility both in form and without form, the divinity of man, respect and understanding of all religions, the equality and brotherhood of men, the supreme virtue of compassion, work without attachment, devotion without renunciation of the personal ego, and service of all men, especially of those who were poor or maimed or illiterate or disinherited, the *Daridra Narayans* of this world.

Ethics and Morality—The Real Basis of Life

The basis of all system, social or political, rests upon the goodness of men. No nation is great or good because their Parliament enacts certain laws, but because its men are great and good. People often work for the same ends but fail to recognize that fact. One must admit that law, government, politics are phases that are not final in any way. There is a goal beyond them where law is not needed. All great Masters teach the same thing. Christ saw that the basis is not law, that morality and purity are the only strength.

Love and Renunciation—The Motive Power of the Universe

Vivekananda has observed, 'What is the watchword of all ethical codes? "Not I, but thou", and this "I" is the outcome of the Infinite inside that is trying to manifest itself on the outside world. This little "I" is the result, and it will have to go back and join the Infinite, its own nature. Every time you say, "Not I, my brother, but thou" you are trying to go back, and every time you say "I", and not thou, you take the false step of trying to manifest the Infinite through the sense-world. That brings struggles and evils into the world, but after a time renunciation must come—eternal renunciation. The little "I" is dead and gone. Why care so much for this little life? All these vain desires of living and enjoying this life, here or in some other place, bring death.'

'We have been degraded down to the animal, and are now going up to emerge out of this bondage. But we shall never be able to entirely manifest the Infinite here. We shall struggle hard, but there will come a time when we shall find that it is impossible to be perfect here, while we are bound by the senses. And then the march back to our original state of Infinity will be sounded.'

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‘This is renunciation. We shall have to get out of the difficulty by reversing the process by which we got in, and then morality and charity will begin.’

Main Features of the Philosophy of Vivekananda

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The main features of the philosophy of Vivekananda are as follows:

- Vedanta constitutes the essence of the highest spiritual and ethical values of mankind.
- The teachings of the Upanishads have strength enough to provide solutions to our social problems.
- Human being is the incarnation of God.
- The essential parts of all religions are the same.
- *Atma* is the true reality.
- *Karmayoga* as a system of ethics and religion is needed for the attainment of self-control and self-realization.
- Service to mankind is the highest goal of religion.
- The best image for worshipping God is a human being who resides in every human heart.

Educational Philosophy of Vivekananda

His educational philosophy may be encompassed within these ten words, ‘Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.’ All knowledge, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. Man manifests knowledge, and discovers it within himself, which in turn pre-exists from eternity. What we call powers, secrets of Nature and force are all within. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which rings it out. Swami Vivekananda explains this as, ‘Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside, it is all inside. What we say a man “knows”, should, in strict psychological language, be what he “discovers” or “unveils”. What a man “learns” is really what he “discovers” by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received came from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple or in anything in the centre of the earth.’

2.3.1 Ramakrishna Mission

The national awakening of the Indian people found expression in the movement inspired by Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa, a great Hindu saint who sought religious salvation. He sought it through the following traditional ways:

- Reincarnation
- Meditation
- Devotion (*bhakti*)

He lived with the mystics of other faiths, including Muslims and Christians. He again and again emphasized that there were many ways to God and salvation and that the service of mankind was the service of God, for man was the embodiment of God.

It was his great disciple, Swami Vivekananda (Figure 2.1) an intellectual of very high caliber, who after the death of the saint founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 to propagate his teachings. The mission aimed at protecting Indians from the materialistic influences of the Western civilization. It idealized Hinduism including its practice of idol worship and polytheism. It aimed at the spiritual conquest of the world through revived Hinduism.



Fig. 2.1 Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda stressed on social action. He gave the idea of religious socialism. Earlier in 1893, he attended the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, and was able to communicate with the learned people of the world. His speech impressed all because of his rationality and reasoning. He said that in the West, the goal of an individual was independence, his language was money-making, and his education was means to politics. However, in India, the goal of an individual was *mukti* or self-realization, the language was the Vedas and the means were self-renunciation.

Vivekananda emphasized the indispensable oneness of all religions and harshly condemned any narrowness in religious matters. At the same time, he was convinced of the superior approach of the Indian philosophical tradition. He himself subscribed to Vedanta, which he declared to be a fully rational system.

Vivekananda criticized Indians for having lost touch with the rest of the world and becoming stagnant and mummified. He realized that India was in real need of science. He even condemned the caste system and the current Hindu emphasis on ritual, ceremonies and superstitions. He urged people to imbibe the spirit of liberty, equality and free thinking.

Vivekananda was also a great humanist. Touched by the poverty, misery and suffering of the masses of the country, he said to the educated Indians: 'So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least need to them.'

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The Ramakrishna Mission has many branches in different parts of the country and it carries on social service by opening schools, hospitals and dispensaries, orphanages and libraries.

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Quotes by Swami Vivekananda

- Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, that is the way great spiritual giants are produced.
- We are responsible for what we are, and whatever we wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by our present actions; so we have to know how to act.
- Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is the only sin to say that you are weak, or others are weak.
- You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.
- The goal of mankind is knowledge ... Now this knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside: it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'; what man 'learns' is really what he discovers by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.
- We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care of what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.
- Where can we go to find God if we cannot see Him in our own hearts and in every living being?
- You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself.
- The first sign of your becoming religious is that you are becoming cheerful.
- The world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.
- In one word, this ideal is that you are divine.
- The Vedanta recognizes no sin. It only recognizes error. And the greatest error, says the Vedanta is to say that you are weak, that you are a sinner, a miserable creature, and that you have no power and you cannot do this and that.
- The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them.
- All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.
- God of truth, be Thou alone my guide....
- If you think about disaster, you will get it. Brood about death and you hasten your demise. Think positively and masterfully, with confidence and faith, and life becomes more secure, more fraught with action, richer in achievement and experience.
- The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have faith in yourselves.
- You know, I may have to be born again. I have fallen in love with mankind.
- By the study of different religions we find that in essence they are one.
- Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the Truth.
- If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

3. State the aim of the Ramakrishna Mission.
4. What are the traditional ways through which religious salvation could be achieved?

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2.4 SUMMARY

- Swami Vivekananda firmly believed that education is an instrument which leads to the betterment of humans.
- Vivekananda was highly critical of the educational system itself with its western bias and lack of attention to the development of the mental ability and moral character in its pupils.
- According to Swami Vivekananda 'intellectuality' is not the highest good. 'Morality' and 'Spirituality' are the things for which we strive.
- Vivekananda reminded that the nation lived in the cottage and therefore it was the duty of every educated youngster to go from village to village and make the people understand their real condition, awake them from their long slumber and advise them how to improve their own miserable lot.
- The sunken vitality of the helpless victims of social injustice was to be restored physically, intellectually as well as spiritually, according to Swami Vivekananda.
- Swami Vivekananda saw the 'Divine in the form of the poor' whom he called *Daridra Narayan*.
- Man-making education is inherent in character development as well as vocational development.
- Vivekananda was greatly concerned about the proper care of the body and the healthy development of one's physique.
- Man-making education must develop such individuals who are ethically sound, intellectually sharp, physically strong, religiously liberal, socially efficient, spiritually enlightened and vocationally self-sufficient.
- Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission which is engaged in the task of man-making through its multifarious activities.
- There is no difference between man and man in his basic essence and this should lead to all men feeling about and treating each other as they would do with their own individual selves.
- For Vivekananda, religion was not just a question of belief as it is a process in which soul changes into what it believes.
- The essence of Vivekananda's teachings on religion was the universality of God and his accessibility both in form and without form, the divinity of man, respect and understanding of all religions.

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- Swami Vivekananda emphasized that the basis of all systems, social or political, rests upon the goodness of men.
- *Karmayoga* as a system of ethics and religion is needed for the attainment of self-control and self-realization.
- Vivekananda's educational philosophy may be encompassed within these ten words: 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.'
- The national awakening of the Indian people found expression in the movement inspired by Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa, a great Hindu saint who sought religious salvation.
- Swami Vivekananda, an intellectual of high caliber, who after the death of the saint, Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897 to propagate his teachings.
- Ramakrishna Mission idealized Hinduism including its practice of idol worship and polytheism.
- The Ramakrishna mission aimed at the spiritual conquest of the world through revived Hinduism.
- Vivekananda stressed on social action and thus, gave the idea of religious socialism.
- Vivekananda emphasized the indispensable oneness of all religions and harshly condemned any narrowness in religious matters.
- Vivekananda criticized Indians for having lost touch with the rest of the world and become stagnant and mummified.
- The Ramakrishna Mission has many branches in different parts of the country and it carries on social service by opening schools, hospitals and dispensaries, orphanages and libraries.

2.5 KEY TERMS

- **Reincarnation:** It refers to a philosophical concept which believes that a living beings start a new life in a different form after each biological death.
- **Renunciation:** It refers to a kind of formal rejection of a belief, idea or any course of action.
- **Polytheism:** It refers to the worship or belief in more than one god.

2.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. Education should instil the following qualities in man:
 - (a) Help
 - (b) Assimilation
 - (c) Harmony
 - (d) Peace

2. Character development as well as vocational development, makes man-making education a comprehensive concept.
3. The aim of the Ramakrishna Mission was to protect Indians from materialistic influences of the Western civilization. It thus, aimed at the spiritual conquest of the world through revived Hinduism.
4. The traditional ways through which religious salvation could be achieved are as follows:
 - (a) Reincarnation
 - (b) Meditation
 - (c) Devotion

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2.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. What are the essential ways through which a man can be judged?
2. State the premises of the Vedantic philosophy.
3. Why did Vivekananda believe that there is no difference between man and man regarding his basic essence?
4. What are the views of Swami Vivekananda regarding religion?
5. Write a short note on educational philosophy of Vivekananda.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the concept of Jnana Yoga.
2. Explain the views of Swami Vivekananda regarding education as a means of human betterment.
3. Discuss the concept of man-making education.
4. Analyse the main features of the philosophy of Vivekananda.

2.8 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 3 DR B.R. AMBEDKAR - I

Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 B.R. Ambedkar: An Introduction
 - 3.2.1 Phases of his Public Life
 - 3.2.2 Problem of Hindus Order
- 3.3 Social Justice
- 3.4 Annihilation of Caste
- 3.5 The Question of Reservation
 - 3.5.1 Hindu Code
 - 3.5.2 Conversion to Buddhism
 - 3.5.3 Citizens' Rights and Freedoms
 - 3.5.4 Reservation for the Backward Sections of the Society
 - 3.5.5 A Linguistic Reorganization of the State
 - 3.5.6 Views Regarding India's Partition
 - 3.5.7 Religion and Politics
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Key Terms
- 3.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 3.9 Questions and Exercises
- 3.10 Further Reading

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

B.R. Ambedkar, who was an Indian jurist, political leader, philosopher, thinker, historian, economist, scholar and a revolutionary. He was the first Minister of Law of Independent India.

Dr Ambedkar had to suffer a lot of indignities and discrimination due to him belonging to a lower caste. This led him to work for the upliftment of the lower castes. He formed many laws for the reservation and protection of scheduled castes and tribes in India's Constitution.

Ambedkar used democracy as a tool for social change in a peaceful way. He initiated various measures for removing untouchability. His views on economic development go back to 1918 when he participated in an academic debate on the problems of small size holdings in India and different ways to solve it.

Ambedkar preferred democracy more than any other form of government as it gave the people opportunity to participate in the governance, and also ensured immense opportunities of challenge and change.

In this unit, you will study in detail about the views of Ambedkar which helped to bring about a transformation in the Indian society especially in case of the oppressed classes.

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3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the various phases of B.R. Ambedkar's life
- Explain the problems of Hindu order
- Discuss the influences that shaped the life and thought of Ambedkar
- Analyse the influence of Buddhism and Marxism on Ambedkar
- Discuss the concept of *Varna* system
- Explain the notion of reservation in your own words

3.2 B. R. AMBEDKAR: AN INTRODUCTION

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 (*Vaiasakha Purnima*) at a place called *Mhow* near Indore in Madhya Pradesh, where his father was serving as the headmaster in the Army School. He was the fourteenth child of his parents (of whom only five-three sons and two daughters-had survived), Ramji Sakpal and Bhima Bhai. His mother died early when he was only five and he was brought up by his father's sister Mira Bai. Bhim Rao came from the *Mahar* group of untouchables, which was the largest group of untouchables in Maharashtra. In the view of some scholars, *Mahars*, who were the original settlers in Maharashtra were pushed aside by the invading Aryans.

Bhimrao's family had a military background. His father Ramji Sakpal and grandfather Maloji Sakpal had rendered military service to the British. His mother also had a military background, and her father was a *Subedar* Major from the village of *Murad* in the Thane District of Maharashtra. *Mhow*, which is on the border line of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, had itself been a military centre, a cantonment area.

Suffering from all the possible disabilities, segregation and discrimination, Bhimrao's family was kept out of the mainstream of Maharashtra' social and political setup.

As a young boy, Bhim Rao was sent to the local Marathi School, where his official name was registered as Bhima Ramji Ambavadekar. The family preferred the ancestral village rather than the caste as his surname. Later on, Bhima started his high school education in the Government High School of Satara. At school, he became a victim of segregation like every other untouchable boy. He was asked to sit away from them and was forbidden to mix and play with them. His Sanskrit teacher refused to teach him as Sanskrit was regarded as the divine language and the untouchables were not considered eligible for learning it. Hence, though Bhima wanted to study Sanskrit, he was forced to study Persian instead.

Ramji Sakpal shifted to Bombay upon termination of his services in 1904. Initially, the family had to live in a *chawl* in Parel. At this stage, Bhima was transferred to a High School in Parel and subsequently to the famous Elphinstone High School,

from where he passed his matriculation in 1907. Bhima was the first *Mahar* boy who had passed his matriculation with distinction.

Here, it should be noted that as per the tradition of his time, Bhima was married when he was just in the fifth standard, at the age of fourteen. His bride Rama Bai, daughter of Bhiku Valangkear, was just nine years old at the time of her marriage.

Bhimrao continued his college education at Elphinstone College with the help of a monthly scholarship of twenty-five rupees per month offered by the ruler of Baroda, *Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaikwad* who was well-known as a reform-minded king. The great professor Max Muller supplemented Bhimrao's education with the gift of books and clothes. He was still in college when he became a father. His first son was Yashwant. He passed his B.A. in 1913 with English and Persian as his main subjects.

After his graduation, he took up service in the princely state of Baroda. Here, he suffered humiliation even at the hands of his lowest subordinates. He had no option but to resign, as he could not suffer injustice and indignity.

In 1913, he had an opportunity to go abroad for his advance studies. He joined Columbia University in New York, USA, as a *Gayakwad* scholar and was the very first *Mahar* to undertake foreign studies. In 1915, he received his M.A. from Columbia for his dissertation *Ancient Indian Commerce*. In 1916, he registered for his Ph.D. based on the thesis *National Dividend for India: A Historical and Analytical Study*, which was finally accepted by Columbia University for the award of Ph.D. in June 1917.

In October 1916, he moved from Columbia to the London School of Economics and Political Science where he joined M.Sc. (Economics) and D.Sc. (Economics). He also joined the Gray's Inn for the degree of Bar-at-Law. His admission into these prestigious institutions in London was greatly facilitated by the introductory letters written by his professor in Columbia University, R.A. Selegman.

However, he was called back by the Maharaja of Baroda and was appointed his military secretary. He had to leave his job in utter disgust in view of the continued harassment and ill-treatment at the hands of the caste-ridden society. On his return to Bombay, he was appointed professor of political economy in the Sydenham College of Commerce and Economics at an attractive salary of 450 rupees per month. Even here, he was treated as a pariah by his caste-based Hindu colleagues, which led to his resignation in March 1920. Thereafter, he returned to London to resume his higher studies. However, before he left for London he had started a weekly paper called *Mooknayak* (Leader of the dumb) to champion the cause of the depressed classes in India.

He was awarded the degree M.Sc. (Economics) by the University of London in 1921 for his thesis, *Provincial Decentralization of Imperial Finance in British India*. Next year, he was called the 'Bar'. At the same time, he also submitted his thesis entitled, *The problem of the Rupee* for his D.Sc. in 1923. Upon completion of studies in London, Bhim Rao moved to Germany to study Economics for three months at the University of Bonn.

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In June 1923, he finally returned to India to start his career as a lawyer in Bombay High Court. However, as an untouchable barrister, he did not have a good practice and had to supplement his income by working as a part-time professor of law at the Batliboi's Institute of Accountancy.

It was in July 1924, that Ambedkar started his political career by establishing the *Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha* (The depressed classes' welfare association) to raise the educational level and the economic status of the depressed classes as well as to ventilate the hardships of these classes. He established this institution in collaboration with Sir Chimanlal Setalvad in 1927. He started his paper *Bahishkrit Bharat* to articulate grievances and voice the interests of the depressed classes.

In 1927, he was nominated as a member of Bombay legislative council. Next year, he was appointed Professor of law in the Government Law College, Bombay. He represented the untouchables in the Second Round Table Conference held in London. In 1932, the Ramsay MacDonald Award conceded the demand for separate electorates for the untouchables. Ambedkar was also present in the Third Round Table conference held in London in 1932–33.

Upon his return to India, he founded the Independent Labour Party, which contested elections held under the Government of India Act of 1935. His party had fielded seventeen candidates of whom fifteen were returned to the House. In June, 1935, he became the Principal and Perry Professor of Jurisprudence in Bombay's Government Law College. In 1942, the British Indian Government picked him up as a member of the Executive Council of the Governor General of India and was given the charge of Labour. He held this post until July 1946.

In 1946, he published his scholarly work, *Who were the Shudras?* He dedicated this work quite appropriately to Jyotiba Phule whom he described as 'The Greatest *Shudra* of Modern India', who made the lower classes of the Hindus conscious of their slavery and to the highest classes who had preached the gospel that 'for India, social democracy was more vital than Independence from foreign rule'.

In November 1946, he was elected to the Constituent Assembly of India from Bengal (rather than from his home state of Maharashtra). Therefore, he was nominated in the Constituent Assembly as the Chairman of its prestigious Drafting Committee. The Chairmanship of the Drafting Committee involved the very onerous task of finalizing and presenting to the Constituent Assembly the final Draft of the Constitution of India and to clarify and defend its controversial provisions. On account of the role he played in this capacity, he was universally acclaimed as the 'Architect of the Indian Constitution'.

Upon India attaining her freedom from the alien British Rule on the midnight of 15 August 1947, he was appointed by Nehru as the Minister for Law in his cabinet. After over a year, he had to resign from his job owing to his serious differences with Nehru on the question of the government's policy towards the Hindu Code Bill. However, in 1952, he was elected to the Rajya Sabha, a status which he enjoyed until his death in December 1956.

It was in 1948 that after the death of his first wife, Dr. Ambedkar married Dr. Sharda Kabir, a Maharashtra Brahmin, out of a sense of sheer revenge. She lived with him until the last moment of his life.

In June 1952, his old *alma mater*, the Columbia University honoured him with the Degree of L.L.D. (*Honoris Causa*) in recognition of the work done by him in connection with the drafting of India's Constitution. The University lauded him as 'one of India's leading citizens, a great social reformer and a valiant upholder of human rights'.

From 1949, he had started participating actively in the World Buddhist Conferences held in Kathmandu and Rangoon. In September of the same year, he published the Buddhist prayer book called the *Buddha Upasna Pantha*. In 1955, he formed the Bhartiya Buddha Mahasabha. It was in 14 October 1956 that he acrimoniously left Hinduism to become a Buddhist in Nagpur. The following month, he participated in the annual session of the World Buddhist Conference held in Kathmandu where he was praised as '*Nav Buddha*'.

His life came to an end in the early morning of 6 December 1956, when his second wife, Dr Sharda Kabir went to his bedroom to wake him up but found him dead. He died after prolonged illness.

As a great scholar of his time, Dr Ambedkar authored the following notable books and brochures:

- *The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and its Solution*, 1923
- *The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India*, 1925
- *Annihilation of Caste*, 1936
- *Thoughts on Pakistan*, 1946
- *Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah*, 1943
- *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables*, 1945
- *Who were the Shudras?* 1946
- *State and Minorities*, 1947
- *The Untouchables*, 1948
- *Maharashtra as a Linguistic State*, 1948
- *Thoughts on Linguistic States*, 1945
- *The Buddha and his Dhamma*, 1957

Besides these monumental works, the following works were published after his demise in 1956:

- *The Rise and Fall of India Women*, 1965
- *Dr Ambedkar on Buddhism*, 1982

He published two newspapers, or rather views-papers, one after another. The first views-paper launched by him was a *Marathi* fortnightly called *Mook Nayak*, which was renamed as *Bahishkrit Bharat* in 1927.

He was also responsible for establishing a number of educational institutions for the equal benefit of all, including the Scheduled Castes, the depressed and the oppressed people of India, for instance:

- Siddhartha College of Arts and Science, 1946
- Milind Maha Vidyalaya, 1951

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- Siddhartha College of Commerce and Economics, 1953
- Siddhartha College of Law, 1956

Finally, he was instrumental in establishing the following associations, institutions and political parties:

- Bahishkrit Hitkari Sabha, 1924
- Samta Sainik Dal, 1928
- Independence Labour Party, 1936
- People's Education Society, 1945
- Mumbai Rajya Kanistha Gaokamagal Association, 1955
- Bhartiya Baudh Mahasabha, 1955
- Republican Party, 1956

The most sacred spots relating to Dr Ambedkar's life and work are as follows:

- *Janma Bhoomi* – Mhow Cantonment, M.P.
- *Kranti Bhoomi* – Mahad
- *Deeksha Bhoomi* – Nagpur
- *Chaitya Bhoomi* – Chupati, near Shivaji Park in Dadar, Bombay

3.2.1 Phases of his Public Life

The three-and-a-half decade long public career of Dr Ambedkar can be studied under the following five major phases:

- **1918–1928:** Period during which he established himself as a lawyer and launched a series of satyagrahas to safeguard the interest of the depressed classes.
- **1929–1936:** Period during which he clamoured for separate electorates for the dalits.
- **1937–1946:** Period in which he held a number of public offices and used them for the benefit of the depressed classes.
- **1946–1950:** Period in which he prepared the draft of the Constitution of India, which earned him the title of *Modern Manu*.
- **1950–1956:** Period in which he relinquished Hinduism and adopted Buddhism.

Thus, Dr Ambedkar was the most renowned professor, barrister, legislator, constitution-framer, Cabinet Minister, social reformer and the uncrowned leader of the dalits, the depressed and oppressed classes of India for whose emancipation, welfare and upliftment he lived and died. The multi-faceted work of Dr Ambedkar made him the most eminent *Mahar*, architect of Indian Constitution and posthumously earned him the highest state decoration of Bharat Ratna.

Social ideas

As a *Mahar*, Dr Ambedkar had himself suffered a lot of indignities and discrimination at the hands of the so-called upper castes, and was, thus, always eager to bring revolutionary changes in the traditional social system of India. He wanted to rescue

the oppressed and the suppressed classes from the yoke of Brahmanism and casteism. This, he thought, could be possible only through the efforts of the oppressed and the suppressed people themselves, as he knew that the rights are never given in charity or donation. Like Bal Gnanadhar Tilak, he maintained that one has to fight for them, clamour for them and, for this, one has to struggle against the prevalent social structure, traditions, practices and beliefs.

3.2.2 Problem of Hindu Order

To Ambedkar, the very first problem of Hindu social system was the one relating to the origin to the *Shudras*. In his famous book titled, *Who were the Shudras?* Ambedkar mentions that the principle of graded inequality was the basis for determining the term 'associated life' as found in the four *Varnas*. In his opinion, the *Arya Samajis* had believed that the four *Varnas* of the Indo-Aryan society have been in existence from the very beginning. They believe that the Vedas were 'eternal and sacrosanct'. Ambedkar thought that certain portions of the Vedas, specially the *Purushasukuta*, were fabricated by the *Brahmanas* to serve their own purpose. In his view, the *Aryasmajists* had done a great mischief by preaching that the Vedas were 'eternal, without beginning, without end and infallible'. Such observations resulted in making the Hindu society a static society.

The *Purushasukuta* made the *ChaturVarna* a sacred and divine institution. It described originally the *Brahmanas* as the mouth, the *Kshatriyas* as the arms, the *Vaishyas* as the thighs and the *Shudras* as the feet of the *purush*. The great Hindu law-maker, Manu, also enunciated afresh the ideal of *Purushasukuta*. He also emphasized that the 'Veda is the only and the ultimate sanction for dharma'. He invested the social idea of *ChaturVarna* contained in *Purushasukuta* with the degree of divinity and infallibility which Ambedkar thought was not there before.

The Original three-*Varna* system and the Origin of the *Shudras*

Ambedkar also put forth his prepositions about the *Shudras*. According to him:

- The *Shudras* were one of the Aryan communities of the solar race.
- There was a time when the Indo-Aryan society recognized only three *Varnas*. The *Shudras* were not a separate *Varna*, but a part of the *Kshatriya Varna*.
- Then, at some point of time, there started an unending struggle between the *Shudra* kings and the *Brahmanas* in which the *Shudras* were subjected to various tyrannies and indignities and were excluded from the *Kshatriya* classes.
- *Brahmanas* hated the *Shudras*, inflicted tyrannies and indignities on them and refused to invest the *Shudras* with the sacred thread.
- Due to the loss of sacred threads *Shudras* became socially degraded, fell below the rank even of the *Vaishyas* and came to form the fourth *Varna*. They were, thus, downgraded from the second to the fourth *Varna*, which was created especially for them.

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Status of the Shudras

In fact, Ambedkar has summarized the status of a *Shudra* as follows:

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- He was to take the last place in the social order.
- He was considered impure and therefore no sacred act could be done within his sight and within his hearing.
- He was not to be respected like the other classes.
- His life had no value and anybody could kill him, without having to pay any compensation and even if some compensation had to be paid, it had to be of a smaller value as compared with that of the *Brahamana*, the *Kshatriya* and the *Vaishya*.
- He could not acquire knowledge and it was a sin and a crime to give him education.
- He could not acquire property and the *Brahamana* could take his property at his pleasure.
- He could not hold any office under the state.
- His duty and salvation lay in his serving the so-called higher classes.
- The higher classes were not to marry with a *Shudra*; they could, however, keep a *Shudra* woman as a concubine. But if a *Shudra* touched the women of a higher class, he was to be severely punished.
- He was born in servility and was to be kept in servility forever.

The Untouchables

Untouchability meant ‘pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular caste or family’. This practice of untouchability is peculiar to the Hindu social system. Ambedkar devoted his book, *The Untouchables: Who are They*, to discuss the origin of untouchability. He did not regard Hindu civilization as a civilization because it had continued to suppress and censor a large section of humanity. They were not only suppressed and enslaved; they were also not allowed to live inside the village along with the other castes, the so-called higher castes. As a matter of fact, from the very beginning they lived outside the village.

Unlike the *Shudras*, the untouchables were outside the four-fold *Varna* system. The *Shudra* was a *Savarana*, i.e., the one possessing a *Varna*. As against him, the untouchable was the *aVarna*, i.e., outside the *Varna* system. Since, the *aVarnas* were outside the *Varna* system, they were also made to live on the outskirts of the village and not inside the village. The system of separate and distinct quarters became a perpetual and permanent feature of Indian village system. As far as the *Mahars* of the Maharashtra were concerned they always lived outside the village, because they belonged to a tribe different from the one to which the settled tribes belonged. They were known as the ‘broken men’ who belonged to a different tribe, different blood and who were as such given quarters outside the village.

Evils of caste system

Ambedkar had provided a fairly long list of the evils that have polluted the Hindu caste system. Some of them are as follows:

- The membership of caste was confined to those who were born in it and it was therefore an exclusive membership.
- Its members were forbidden to marry outside the caste.
- They were prevented from possessing arms, so that they may not revolt against their oppressors and exploiters.
- They were denied the right of education.
- They were denied the right to property.
- They were assigned the jobs, not on the basis of their capacities, but on the of social status of their parents. There was no readjustment of occupations and therefore the caste became a direct cause of much of unemployment.
- The caste system embodied the arrogance and selfishness of a perverse section of Hindus who considered themselves superior enough in social status who had authority to use force on their so-called inferiors.
- The self-styled high caste people also claimed the right of ex-communication, which often meant death.

At the hands of these people, virtue had become cast-ridden and morality had become cast-bound.

Ambedkar has ventured to explain as to why there was no social revolution in India, despite the highly discriminatory and oppressive social system. He finds the answer in the conspiracy of the people of the higher caste to reduce the lower classes to a system of total disability. They were deliberately denied the means to escape and were made to become reconciled to their eternal servitude. They were denied military service, their suffrage, their political weapon, and education. The system of *ChaturVarna* denied these weapons to the masses of these people and paralysed and crippled them completely. They, thus, were left with no option but to accept their servitude.

Ambedkar also thought of certain ways to help these classes to overcome their servitude. The most important of these were as follows:

- The dignity behind the caste, and the *Shastras* which sanctioned it, should be destroyed.
- The system of scaling the caste in a graded order should be abolished.
- Inter-caste marriages should be encouraged as it would disturb the caste spirit.
- The monopoly of the *Brahmanas* over education should be abolished and education be made universal.
- The monopoly of the *Kshatriyas* over armaments and their exclusive right to constitute the nation's army should be abolished and recruitment to army should be by open, fair and equal competition.

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- They should be given the right to vote and to contest elections, at par with all other classes so that they too have equal opportunity to participate in their governance.

According to Ambedkar, the *Brahmanas* enslaved the mind and *Baniyas* enslaved the body and having done that, they divided the spoils that belonged to the governing classes. He also thought that *Brahminism* was opposed to democracy and the values for which it stood, especially the values of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and the rule of law.

In order to purge the Hindu religion of inhumanities, Dr Ambedkar made the following suggestions:

- There should be one and only one standard book of Hindu religion acceptable to all Hindus. On the other hand, preaching of any doctrine, religious or social, contained in the *Vedas*, the *Shastras* or the *Purnans*, should be penalized.
- The priesthood should be abolished. It must at least cease to be hereditary. There must be a state examination for priesthood.
- It should be made penal for a person who has no *Sanad* (certificate or degree) to officiate as a priest.
- A priest should be the servant of the state and like any other civil servant should be paid by the state and should be subject to the disciplinary action by the state in the matter of his morals, beliefs and forms of worship, in addition to his being subject along with other citizens to the ordinary law of the land.
- The number of the priests should be limited by law according to the requirements of the state, like other civil services. This would be the only effective way to kill the spread of *Brahminism*. He was of the following view, '*Brahminism* is the poison which has spoiled Hinduism. If Hinduism is to be saved it can be saved only by killing *Brahminism*.'

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Name the educational institutions set up by Dr Ambedkar.
2. State an important feature of the Indian village system.
3. Why were the Mahars of Maharashtra considered as 'broken men'?

3.3 SOCIAL JUSTICE

Dr B. R. Ambedkar was certainly not the first to have started the work of social emancipation and political mobilization of the millions of people of the depressed classes but, he was the most effective in highlighting the inhuman treatment to which they were subjected to in the Hindu society. His work was qualitatively different from that of his predecessors. He stood for the social liberation, economic emancipation and

political advancement of the downtrodden millions. He, however, counselled the oppressed people not to be compliant and obedient either to inequality or justice. He wanted them to fight against the forces of oppression and exploitation and remodel society in accordance with the norms and provisions as enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Dr Ambedkar was the symbol of the non-Brahmin social reform movement in modern India. As part of the general national awakening and democratic consciousness, Ambedkar's message succeeded in carrying the message of reform to classes which had so far been untouched by it. He combined in himself the role of a social reformer, a political leader and a spiritual guide of the untouchables. He played a unique role in shaping the mind and the political outlook of his community. His socio-political philosophy is India's most enlightened and modern gift to the weaker and backward section of our society. It has the potential to benefit and serve the larger interests of mankind.

Dr Ambedkar's mission throughout life has been an uncanny desire to secure justice – social, economic and political for the disadvantaged sections of the Indian society. In his writings, an alternative socio-economic and political framework emerges, wherein the pragmatic and visionary aspects of his thinking meet on even grounds. His social philosophy emanates in liberty, equality and fraternity. According to him, these three ideals were inherent in the teachings of Buddha. This trinity of ideals had a bearing in the Constituent Assembly where he delineated and emphasized the need of social democracy. While defining the basis of the Indian Constitution, he was conscious that the contents must be related to the interests of the weaker sections of society. In his scholarly pursuits as well as in his political activities, Ambedkar was driven by a desire to comprehend the vital issues of his time and to find solutions for the problems of Indian society. He raised certain pressing issues that no one was willing to take up or deal with and made sure that they were not ignored and trampled over by the so called 'upper classes'. Ambedkar planned his programmes to bring the downtrodden millions of India from a state of dehumanization and slavery into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and the exercise of legal and political rights.

Dr Ambedkar organized and inaugurated a number of conferences, attended a large number of meetings, started newspapers and wrote articles, editorials and books. The main theme in all these activities was the emancipation of the lowly, the poor and the untouchables. He repeatedly asked the Hindus to change their ways. Yet, despite his repeated requests, atrocities imposed on the untouchables continued and they were treated as less than human beings.

Dr Ambedkar relentlessly fought for the cause of the depressed and the deprived of the Indian society and this brought him to develop his philosophy of humanism which centres around the problems of man. As stated by Dr D. R. Jatava, 'Dr Ambedkar's social humanism is a philosophical thought in which man's social situation and the analysis of its problems have been given utmost importance... Man's dignity, protection of equal rights, values of individuality, welfare of common people, freedom of expression, just social order, right relations based on fraternity, man's all round development, man's liberty to express himself in the interest of new

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construction and perennial movement based activeness of the exploited people are some of the main features of Dr Ambedkar's social humanism ... Dr Ambedkar's humanism has been a movement for social freedom of the oppressed and expressed and exploited, and it has advocated that people must remain conscious and awake for each other's just interests, respect and rights'. Thus, we see how his dynamic and democratic humanism aims at liberating man from the bonds of social malaise.

Influences on the Life and Thoughts of Ambedkar

Dr Ambedkar was a social revolutionary and most renowned militant champion of the untouchables. He vehemently denounced the inequalities which Brahmanical Hinduism heaped upon the untouchables and fought for the cause of social equality. He experienced the injustices of being a member of a disadvantaged group of society. His aim was to establish an equitable social order in a pluralistic multi-religious and class-caste ridden Indian society. He was closely acquainted with the western political tradition, especially with liberation and at the same time quite well versed in ancient Hindu and Buddhist literature. He was influenced by the Indian as well as western intellectual and moral ideas of many great thinkers like Gautam Buddha, Jyotiba Phule, John Dewey (his mentor at Columbia University), Karl Marx and Justice M.G. Ranade. The ideas of John Dewey, Edwin R.A Seligman, the Fabians and British idealists had a deep impact on Ambedkar. He borrowed his notion of religion from Burke, theory of Government from J.S. Mill and Jefferson and the notion of social liberty from Booker T. Washington. Ambedkar was affected by Indian social system and ideologies and was influenced by the Western modernism. He used the methodology and strategy derived from the West to analyse Indian society. Though he admired the ideals of western liberalism and Marxism, he perceived their perfection in Buddhism. All the thinkers influenced Ambedkar in one way or another and shaped as well as reshaped his thinking process, convictions, and pragmatic approach to social justice. In order to understand the life and thoughts of Ambedkar one has to understand the influences of these personalities on Ambedkar.

Dr Ambedkar had great reverence for the life and message of Buddha. He appreciated Lord Buddha's belief in man's capacity to achieve salvation without extraneous aid. He regarded Buddha as his master and his teachings as the complete antithesis of Hinduism. Lord Buddha revolted against traditional Hinduism. According to Ambedkar, it was a powerful revolt against Brahmanism leading to the rejection of liberty, equality and fraternity. Buddhism attempted to restore the law of reason and rationalism in the life of the Indian people by doing away with prayers, rituals and sacrifices. Buddha fervently followed the doctrine of egalitarianism and humanism and his message was for all. Dr Ambedkar was greatly fascinated by the personality and philosophical profoundness of the founder of Buddhism. Buddha's indomitable faith in the capacity of man to shape his own destiny appears to have had a lasting influence on Ambedkar. Buddha's principles and philosophy had an immense impact on Ambedkar and this was proved by his conversion to Buddhism and his pragmatic attitude in his perception of social justice.

Mahatma Phule, the Martin Luther of Maharashtra, was considered by Dr Ambedkar as one of the greatest of our social reformers. He described Phule as

‘the greatest *shudra* of modern India’. Ambedkar remarked that Mahatma Phule made the lower classes of Hindus conscious of their plight and preached to India that social democracy was more vital than independence from foreign rule. Phule brought Ambedkar closer to the liberal and reformist traditions of Maharashtra. Under Phule’s influence, Ambedkar overcame the limitations of the liberal reformist movement by consciously becoming the man of the masses and forging a political organization to bring the masses together. Ambedkar not only believed in the driving force of principles and policies but gave equal importance to the work of implementing them. His main achievement was his positive contribution to the radical reformist theory and practice in Maharashtra. Here, also we find Mahatma Phule’s influence on Dr Ambedkar. Ambedkar continued the revolutionary work started by Jyotibha Phule.

Both Gandhi and Ambedkar were heroic and the very embodiment of revolt against the unjust social order existing in India. Both were critical of the evils of the Hindu social system, especially untouchability and were determined to uproot the evils while leaving the foundations of Indian culture undisturbed. As made clear by Professor Bipan Chandra, ‘Both share in common total opposition to caste oppression and caste discrimination and commitment to transform the social, economic and cultural conditions of *Harijan*’. Gandhi was against untouchability and wanted to abolish it with the help of adult franchise combined with a moral and social drive. In this context we see that Ambedkar’s approach was not radically different from that of Gandhi. Ambedkar was an enemy of the caste system and he stood for its total liquidation like Gandhi. He believed that the caste system would have to go if untouchability was to be eradicated. Though Gandhi favoured *varna vyavastha* in his early days, by 1935, he declared that the caste system would have to go and admitted that the *varna vyavastha* that he favoured earlier was non-existent in practice. Like Ambedkar, he asserted that Hinduism had to become casteless if it was to survive. However, their goals were same but the strategies adopted by all of them were different.

M.G Ranade was another great person who influenced Ambedkar. Both of them strove for the removal of all the evils prevailing in Hindu society and its reorganization. Like Ranade, Ambedkar also regarded the advent of the British in India as providential and responsible for the intellectual awakening of India and the introduction of the concepts of liberty, equality and fraternity. The British made Indians feel ashamed of their social customs and moral code and forced upon them the revaluation of social values besides giving a common system of law and government. According to Ambedkar, the age of Ranade was honest and more enlightened. Leaders like Ranade engaged themselves in studying and examining the facts of life and moulded their lives accordingly. Ambedkar held that Ranade was a great man not only by the standards of his time, but according to any standard. Ranade’s life was nothing but a relentless struggle against social injustice, social evils and for the social reforms. He struggled to create rights to vitalize the conscience of Hindu society which had become moribund and morbid. Ambedkar also followed his path and both of them wanted to create the ideal social democracy.

John Dewey was Ambedkar’s mentor at Columbia University in USA and his ‘Philosophy of Instrumentalism’ made Ambedkar pragmatic in his approach towards a

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critical analysis of the concrete problems facing humanity. John Dewey left an indelible mark in Ambedkar through his realistic, integrative and pragmatic approaches to systematically analysing the problems concerning politics, economics, society, religion and history. Dewey perceived these problems piecemeal and through idealism.

Besides the mentioned influences of great thinkers, Ambedkar's own bitter experiences went a long way in moulding his life, perception and ideas. Ambedkar bore the brunt of caste discrimination and often faced humiliation for belonging to a lower caste. It may be concluded that it was his own bitter experiences and the influence of the great thinkers that made him take a stand against Hinduism and the Hindu social order as he believed that it stood in the way of establishment of an egalitarian society.

Socio-Political Thoughts of Ambedkar

The eradication of untouchability and the caste system was the mission of Ambedkar's life. He analysed every problem of Indian society – economic, social, political, cultural and educational, keeping this mission in mind. He held that each of these problems had a caste dimension and the caste system made the depressed classes, mainly the untouchables, social outcasts, economically slaves and politically handicapped. They were oppressed, exploited and marginalized in every walk of life. For Ambedkar, safeguarding the interest of the depressed classes was of paramount importance because nobody had championed the cause of this deprived lot before. Keeping this in mind, let us now try to analyse the important tenets of his socio-political thought.

Ambedkar's Idea of Democratic Socialism

Democracy occupied a central place in Dr Ambedkar's ideological map. He was a true and sincere democrat and his major contribution to political thinking was to focus on the reliance of social democracy to political democracy. He believed that without social reforms, political reforms are meaningless since the state is ultimately a social institution. He warned that as long as there was inequality on the social and economic plane, there could be no political democracy. He firmly believed that political progress would be impossible without a reformed and enlightened society. This is why he believed that social reforms should precede political reforms.

Dr Ambedkar refers to democracy as a system which brings about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people without resorting to disputes and bloodshed. He desired to remove contradictions created by economic and social inequalities. He viewed democracy as a mode of associated living in which there would be no discrimination on social and economic grounds. He sounded a note of warning that democracy should not become a slogan or a mere form of government. He considered it to be a way of life through which social justice can be established.

According to Dr Ambedkar, the essential requirements for the successful working of a democracy are enumerated as follows:

- There must be no glaring inequality in society.
- There must be statutory provisions to protect the interests of the oppressed classes.

- There must be equality in law and administration and there should not be tyranny of the majority over the minority.
- An effective opposition which is an important factor in the working of a successful democracy.
- A moral order, without which democracy cannot sustain.

Ambedkar visualized the economic welfare of the people through the combination of state socialism with Parliamentary democracy. Though, he was a great admirer of the Parliamentary system of Government till 1947, he later thought that a non-parliamentary executive would suit India better. He pointed out that the representative nature of the executive does not necessarily ensure the rights for the minorities. In a Parliamentary democracy the elected majority works according to its own manifesto. Parliamentary democracy, seemed a must to him in order to protect individual freedom, as otherwise there were chances of it turning into a dictatorship. Dr Ambedkar's solution for this was to retain Parliamentary democracy and prescriptive state Socialism according to the law of the Constitution so that it will be beyond the reach of a Parliamentary majority to suspend, amend or abrogate it. In one of the speeches in the Constituent Assembly in 1949, Ambedkar pointed out that for the operation and survival of democracy, the people should hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving social and economic objectives.

Ambedkar and Indian Democracy

In the Indian situation, where the society is caste-ridden and the loyalties and interests are caste bound, any democratic government is bound to degenerate into a communal majority rule. This majority would be incapable of articulating and representing the interests of every member of society. Ambedkar exhorted the people to give up hero-worship which was a strong feature of Indian politics. For him, it was a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship. Hence, he repeatedly insisted on the need to banish hero-worship from the Indian political scenario. Ambedkar wanted the people of India to develop a sense of national solidarity. He held that the operation of caste in politics would vitiate the whole political atmosphere and the democratic institutions and processes would cease to perform the role of liberating Indian society and organizing the people into one nation. Ambedkar viewed nationalism as an emotional feeling that has great strength. In a discriminating society, the spirit of oneness cannot come into existence. He believed not only in political integrity and independence but also in social integrity. His nationalism was not aggressive nationalism, for he knew it would become irrational and give birth to intolerance. He held that political parties are indispensable part of democracy. There should be at least two parties to prevent a democratic government from becoming despotic. Under a one party government the danger of tyranny and misdirection to public affairs cannot be ruled out.

Ambedkar wanted a change in the life pattern of the untouchables. His work in public life developed in three directions: first, awakening and organizing the untouchables, second, securing political representations for the untouchables and third, encouraging the depressed classes to educate themselves. He knew that without political rights and political power, the elevation of the depressed classes would not be possible. For the achievement of political rights for them, Ambedkar submitted many petitions and

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memoranda for representation in the legislature and sought reservations in various fields of employment. He organized the Independent Labour Party for the landless peasants, agriculturists and the workers. In 1942, he formed another political party - All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF) which stressed that since the Scheduled Castes did not possess social and economic power, political power should be seized by them. In 1956, Ambedkar visualized the establishment of the Republican Party of India, as an opposition party which would join hands with other political groups in order to solve the problems of the untouchables. He also fought for the rights of women and this is a significant aspect of his social reform activity.

Ambedkar repeatedly stated that power was necessary to protect the rights of the people. He held that right must exist before the power is set up and it would be a serious error to reverse the order of precedence. He was of the opinion that rights are protected not only by law but also by the 'social and moral conscience of society'. If rights are opposed by the community, no one can guarantee them in the real sense of the term. On the other hand if social conscience recognizes the rights enacted by the law, it will be safer and more secure. Hence, it was absolutely necessary that a social organization is free from rigid social barriers.

Ambedkar's Views on Economic Development and Planning

As an academic economist, Ambedkar has made significant contributions to the various fields of economics. In the early period (1915-25), his focus was mainly centred on themes like public finance, monetary and international economics. But his economic writings in the later period dealt with a wide range of interrelated issues including perspectives on economic development and planning, the economic system and political economy of the caste system. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of democracy was reconciled with his concept of socialism. In a democracy, individual rights are indispensable and they can be protected by socialism. Individual rights are, to a certain extent, dependent upon the economic structure of society. He emphasized the need to strengthen the social and economic foundation for a smooth functioning of democracy. He advocated state Socialism in which the state would control the basic industries and economic exploitation could be avoided to a great extent. He recommended economic planning. As stated earlier, his concept of state socialism is constitutional state socialism along with parliamentary democracy. This combination was necessary to ensure that social and economic organizations would be more egalitarian and political means would thus, become more meaningful to the poor and underprivileged.

Ambedkar argued for an important place to be given to the labour and depressed classes in the planned economic development of the country. He wanted to develop programmes through planned economic development and translate them into simpler terms so that the common man could understand peace, housing, clothing, education and good health. He laid great responsibility on the state to provide the poor with facilities for their growth according to their needs. Though he wanted agriculture to be the primary industry in our country, he also wanted industries to be developed so as to rectify the imbalanced economy of India. Ambedkar emphasized industrial development as a solution to the problem of agricultural development. He

believed that development of the industrial sector was necessary to reduce the surplus labour in agriculture and to create favourable conditions for production. Ambedkar attributed industrialization with a key role to play, favoured economic planning, particularly in infrastructure and the social service sector, set up progressive labour laws and planning with focus on labourers and the down-trodden masses of India. He made a call for 'state Socialism' involving nationalization of basic and key industries such as insurance and agricultural land. He favoured a switch over to socialism through democratic means. He, in his economic vision, supported modern civilization and scientific development. He emphasized on the active role and participation of the state in economic and social development through the instrument of planning. He favoured special planning for the depressed classes and policy of reservation for protecting against discrimination and promoting their effective participation in the economic and social sphere. As suggested by Bhalachandra Mungekar, the main features of Ambedkar's model of democratic socialism may be summed up as:

- Basic freedom to the individual vis-à-vis the state to be guaranteed by the Constitution.
- Nationalization of the means of production such as land and key enterprises.
- Recognition of the role of private industries.
- Economic planning.
- No discrimination among citizens on the basis of caste, gender or religion.
- Democratic/Constitutional means for social change/transformation.

Ambedkar always wanted democracy to work towards socialism. He felt that to strengthen the foundations of democracy in India a new cultural basis was required and that Buddhism met such a need. The above analysis clearly indicates that the economic philosophy of Ambedkar is value-oriented, and his economic ideas, may well be applied in Indian society with special reference to the pitiable conditions of the Scheduled Castes and the minorities and other backward classes. Ambedkar was personally acquainted with the suffering of these people, and therefore, he believed in a positive approach to mitigate their socio-economic miseries.

Role of Reason in the Philosophy of Ambedkar

Supremacy of reason was a cardinal principle in Ambedkar's philosophy. His own criticism of the sacred literature and the past was based on this principle. He believed that Hindus were not free to follow this reason. On the other hand, the behaviour of the Hindus must conform to the sanctions laid down by *Manu*, *Veda*, *Smriti* and *Sadachar*. He wrote, 'Rationalism as a canon of interpreting the Vedas and *Smriti*'s is absolutely condemned by *Manu*'. It was considered to be as wicked as atheism and the punishment for it was excommunication. In case of any conflict between the *Veda* and *Smriti* or between the *Smriti* and *Sruti*, the solution was not based on reason. No attempt was made to find out which of them accorded with reason. In Ambedkar's opinion, there was hardly ever any reflective thought to be found in Hinduism.

Ambedkar's attack on the sacred literature and norms of the Hindus was in fact an attack on the graded inequality sanctioned by them. Though he accepted the

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teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* in the early days of his life, in his later life he criticized the *Gita* as a religious and political book which upheld the teachings of the Vedas and raised the Brahmins to a superior position. In another place he described the *Gita* as 'an irresponsible book of ethics, a compromise of all errors'. He also found in it the social philosophy based on the *Triguna* of *Samkhya* system which was a cruel pervasion of the philosophy of Kapila and which created the caste system and graded inequality a part and parcel of Hindu social life. Through these criticisms, he wanted to show the Hindus that it is the doctrines contained in their sacred books which are responsible for the decline and fall of their society. The question of the removal of the institution of untouchability inevitably led him to the criticism of the sacred books. Ambedkar after a careful review of the sacred literature of the Hindus felt convinced that no reverence was due to it. His predecessors were not so acutely conscious of this logical necessity. They never aimed at rejecting the sacred books as Ambedkar did. The difference between Ambedkar and the earlier social reformers was in the manner of their approach to the sacred books and in the purpose for which these books were used. The attitude of Ambedkar was radical and revolutionary and that of other social reforms was melioristic.

Ambedkar's Views on Religion

The concept of religion, for Ambedkar, is quite different from the traditional one. The traditional meaning of religion is some sort of belief in supernatural power. He did not consider the concept of God, soul and heaven as essential to religion. His view of religion is social and secular, and human morality is the key to this. For him, morality arises from the direct necessity for a man to love man. It does not require the sanction of God. In his opinion, it is not to please God that man has to be moral, but it is for his own good. According to Dr D. R. Jatava, 'Religion as morality, morality as love of man to man, and love of man as brotherhood is the essence of Ambedkar's humanism ... The fundamental purpose of Ambedkar's humanism is to reconstruct human society by establishing right relations between man and man as the basis of liberty, equality and fraternity'. Ambedkar acknowledged the power of religion and upheld its need, but there is no place in his religion for God and the transcendent. He subscribed to a secular religion, moving away from established religions and geared towards the sacred. He felt that since human beings are part of this world, the primary role of religion is to safeguard the moral domain.

Religion, according to Ambedkar, was essential for man as well as society. He considered it as an instrument for the upliftment of the individual. He said, '... I agree with Burke when he says that true religion is the foundation of society, the basis on which all true civil government rests, and both their sanction. Consequently when I urge that these ancient rules of life be annulled, I am anxious that its place shall be taken by a religion of principles which alone can lay claim to being a true religion'. He held that religion alone gave hope of a better life to the poor and so they cling to it and find solace in it.

Ambedkar exhorted his people to cultivate an enlightened view of religion and not to be lured by the traits of Hinduism like toleration and *bhakti* or to be attracted by the saints. He held that the saints were ineffective in the abolition of the

caste system because they did not attack the caste system. In fact, many of them were staunch believers in this system. He asked the common man not to resign himself to his fate and accept his position as a divine dispensation. According to him, 'Bhakti made their nerves soft, delicate and yielding'. Ambedkar wanted to root out this disease from their minds.

Dr Ambedkar was of the opinion that religion is an important element in education, in social organization and in the promotion of the spirit of devotion to the common good, but only when it shows utmost liberalism and acts upon the principle of secularism. He understood that it is not possible to annihilate religious systems from the Indian soil. So the only remedy for this, according to him, was that they should be more liberal and should improve social conditions of all without any sectarian feelings.

Ambedkar's view of religion was that it should be in accord with reason and morality and the fundamental tenets of liberty, equality and fraternity. It should not ennoble and sanctify poverty but offer its followers prosperity and salvation in this world instead of in the next. However, Hinduism never adheres to the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity and practices partiality towards some of its followers. So Ambedkar through his social reform movements was consistently attacking the criminal indifference of the people towards the dangerous effects of the social institutions of Hinduism. The rigid orthodoxy of Hindus led him to give up any hope of reforming Hinduism and to advocate Buddhist *Dhamma* instead.

Ambedkar and Buddhism

In Ambedkar's view, the real remedy to untouchability is to replace the social relations governed by the caste system of Hinduism by the one based on equality, justice and fraternity. It is in this context, he favoured the social philosophy of Buddha, which he thought would help to restructure the social, cultural and political relations to promote the well-being of majority of people. He described Buddha as 'the greatest teacher of mankind who taught the noblest doctrine of love'. He considered Buddhism as the religion of modern era which would eventually be embraced by the whole world.

It was K.A. Keluskar, a well-known Marathi writer and social reformer who presented Ambedkar a book called *Life of Gautama Buddha*. He read the book with great curiosity and learnt how Buddha had through selfless service improved the lot of the entire community. He was impressed by all that he had studied about the life of Gautam Buddha. Dr Ambedkar studied Buddhism and did a lot of research on the subject. He analysed the various aspects of Buddhism as a movement against dogmatism, conservatism and social inequality. Dr Ambedkar's research work on the social history of Buddhism, *The Untouchables*, was published in 1948. According to him, the origin of untouchability was the result of a struggle between Brahmanism and Buddhism. In comparison to Hinduism, Dr Ambedkar analysed the merits of Buddhism which had widely influenced the people during ancient times.

It was natural for Dr Ambedkar to seek refuge in Buddha, because, as he knew, the Buddha was the only philosopher, who brought about a social revolution and welcomed people from the *shudra* and untouchable communities into his fold. Dr Ambedkar also accepted people from the lower castes in the same way as the Buddha had. Buddha's humanism was the main factor that attracted Ambedkar and

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made him a true disciple of the Master, the enlightened one. After a lot of research, he accepted the Buddhism and its *trisanan*—Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* on 14 October 1956, in Naghaur and embraced Buddhism on this pious day along with more than two lakhs of men and women. They renounced *Varnadharmā* and became Buddhists. According to him, ‘Buddhism is a part and parcel of Bharatiya culture. I have taken care that my conversion will not harm the tradition of culture and history of this land’. This act was the first of many mass conversions of low caste Hindus to Buddhism. The conversion of Dr Ambedkar and his followers to Buddhism was an unprecedented historical event. Such a big conversion had not taken place since the time of Ashoka, the Great. They took refuge in Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, and then took vows for *Panch sheel* not to kill, not to steal, not to tell lie, not to consume liquor and not to indulge in adultery.

Ambedkar explained that the purpose of *Dhamma* is not to delineate the origin of the world but to reconstruct the world. In *Dhamma* there is no place for prayers, pilgrimages, rituals, ceremonies or sacrifices. Buddha also taught *prajna* (understanding as against superstition and supernaturalism), *karuna* (love), and *samata* (equality). Buddhism does not recognize caste and affords a full scope for progress. The Buddha never claimed his teachings to be infallible. He also did not claim divinity for him-self or for his religion. The basis of Buddhism is reason and a rational way to eradicate suffering.

The Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* are known as ‘*Tri Saran,*’ *Triratna* or the Triple Gems. The *trisanan* is the underlying source of unity behind all the Buddhist sects the world over. It is an emotional source of bringing together the entire community of Buddhists. When pronounced by the *Upasakas* or *Bhikkus*, their sounds pacify our mind and elevate it. It creates a feeling of brotherhood, of mutual love and sympathy. In fact, the Triple Gems bring all the Buddhists together and bind them in sacred bond. A refugee of the Triple Gem is also duty bound to liberate the people living in the lower levels of existence from suffering. As a true refugee in the Triple Gem, Ambedkar not only challenged the *varna vyavastha* of Hindu society, but also the validity of the superiority of the *Brahmins*.

The *Dhamma* is known as the ‘true refuge’, for it is the wisdom by means of which we attain *Nirvana*. The meaning of the word ‘*Dhamma*’ is to hold one from falling into low states of existence. Taking refuge in the *Dhamma* means the taking refuge in the Ten *Parmitas* which are the forms of spiritual practices by which one learns true submission and they are also the basis for attaining the cessation of suffering. The word ‘*Sanga*’ means ‘inseparable’. It also means ‘those who have the wish for liberation or *Nirvana*’. Any individual can enter *Sangha*, if he has faith in both the Buddha and the *Dhamma*. It is a home, where one could learn the lessons of right knowledge and right conduct. The aim of *Sangha* is to achieve the ideals of the *Dhamma* into practice. The *Sangha* is open to all, and there is no barrier of caste and community, if anyone wishes to take refuge in the *Dhamma*. The discriminations based upon the being of man or woman, rich or poor, low or high, do not have any place in the *Sangha*. All members of the *Sangha* are equal and are bound by the feelings of fellowship.

Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* all generate a pervasive feeling of unity. According to Ambedkar, a sense of universality prevails in them because without social brotherhood or spiritual unity, there is little hope of creating peace and harmony in the world. The Triple Gems touch the hearts of all those who feel oneness among human beings irrespective of their creed and colour.

‘The Buddha and His Dhamma’ by Ambedkar

Dr Ambedkar analysed the basic tenets of Buddhism in his magnum opus, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, published posthumously in 1957. He wrote it with the intention of creating a single text for new Buddhists to read and follow. He wanted to simplify the teachings of the Buddha that they might be easily understood by oppressed communities, specifically *dalits*. He made the Triple Gem widely known and acceptable through his work. Ambedkar conceived it as the Gospel of Buddhism as well as a defence against its critics. While embracing Buddhism, Dr Ambedkar told the vast gathering, that he was by renouncing Hindu religion reborn in his native land in order to continue his work for the revival of Buddhism and for the welfare of mankind. In theory, *The Buddha and His Dhamma* serve as the philosophical, ideological, and religious templates for Buddhists. It is a true guide for all the Buddhists. It is the best basis for propagating the *Dhamma*, at least in India. In a short passage excerpted from *The Buddha and His Dhamma* he asserted that the contemporary relevance of Buddha’s message. He made it clear that for the present world Buddhism is the only religion which can save it from the dangers of the Nuclear age. As stated by Valerian Rodrigues, ‘*The Buddha and His Dhamma* highlights the central issues that concerned him throughout his life and demarcate his view sharply from that of his adversaries. The work contains the central teachings of Buddha along with a commentary built into it. The commentary transposes the Buddha’s teachings to the present and suggests its contemporary relevance with respect to the problems that confront humanity. He saw Buddhism as an ideology that engages with the world, privileging the poor and exploited. Ambedkar also upheld the superiority of Buddhism over other religions especially Islam and Christianity’. He thus, established the hegemony of Buddhism with a new foundation.

The *Maha Bodhi*, a famous Buddhist journal in India, however, opined that *The Buddha And His Dhamma* was a dangerous book. Ambedkar’s interpretation of Buddhism as merely a social system, was not a correct interpretation of Buddhism but a new orientation. The title, pleaded this reviewer, should be changed from the ‘Buddha And His Dhamma’ to that of ‘Ambedkar And His Dhamma’; for Ambedkar preached non-Dhamma as Dhamma for motives of political and social reform.

Ambedkar and Marxism

Along with Buddhism the other ideology that deeply attracted Ambedkar in the 1950s was Marxism. In November 1956, he made a trip to Nepal to attend the World Buddhist Conference and there he spoke on Karl Marx and Buddha. He showed extraordinary interest in Marxism during the 1950s and he started working on a book titled *India and Communism*, which however, did not make much progress. Ambedkar held that he had come to a conclusion that the present or future generation would have ultimately

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to choose between the gospel of Buddha and the gospel of Karl Marx. On another occasion, while he was talking to Mr. Crowley, a leader of the scheduled Castes, he opined that, 'if the social structure was not altered, the present system was likely to collapse pretty soon, and added that the alternative, if democracy did not work in India, was something of communism'. According to him, Marx's philosophy was the satisfying philosophy for the lower orders.

Speaking on the topic 'Buddha and Karl Marx,' Ambedkar stated that the goal of Buddha and Marx was the same. According to Valerian Rodrigues, 'He (Ambedkar) identified certain crucial areas on which he agreed with Karl Marx: the task of philosophy is to transform the world; there is a conflict between class and class; private ownership of property begets sorrow and exploitation, and good society requires that private property be collectivized. He found that on all these four issues Buddha is in agreement with Marx. He, however, rejected the inevitability of socialism, the economic interpretation of history; the thesis on pauperization of the proletariat; dictatorship of the proletariat, withering away of the state, and the strategy of violence as a means to seize power'. Marx said that private property was the root cause of sorrow. It resulted in exploitation, suffering and enslavement. Buddha also wanted to abolish *Dukkha* (sorrow) and the expression sorrow was used in Buddhist literature in the sense of property.

Ambedkar's basic religious outlook came in the way of a proper assessment of Marxism. According to him, Buddhism and communism differed from each other in their means to achieve the same goal. Communism adopted violent methods to abolish private property. On the other hand, Buddhism stressed on non-violent means to achieve the goal. Buddha's method was different and it wanted to change the mind of man. His way was not to force people to do what they did not like to do even though it was good for them. His way was to alter the disposition of men so that they would voluntarily do what they would not otherwise do. The Marxist way was based on force. Moreover, the Buddhist system was a democratic system, whereas the communist system was based on dictatorship. Therefore, Ambedkar considered the Buddhist method as the safest and the soundest. The Buddhist method of bringing about a change was superior to the Marxist method because Buddha believed in persuasion, moral teaching and love. Ambedkar regarded Buddhism as a moral and tolerant alternative to Marxism. Thus, one can say that Ambedkar asserted that Buddhism could provide the missing dimensions for socialism and for this there was an urgent need for discussion between Marxism and Buddhism.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

4. Why did Ambedkar emphasize on the concept of parliamentary democracy?
5. What was the main aim of All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF)?
6. State the main features of Ambedkar's model of democratic socialism.
7. Why is the Buddhist method of bringing a change considered as superior to the Marxist method?

3.4 ANNIHILIATION OF CASTE

Caste is a fundamental institution of Indian society. It pervades the entire gamut of Indian social organization and there is hardly any aspect of Indian society which is not influenced by caste. Caste, in one form or the other, in a rudimentary or highly developed form, has always been associated with Indian society. The relation between caste and Indian society has been so long and so intimate that many have viewed caste and Indian society as coeval. The features of caste prevailing through the past centuries may be described under nine heads: hierarchy, endogamy and hypergamy; occupational association; restriction on food; drink and smoking; distinction in custom, dress and speech; pollution; ritual and other privileges and disabilities; caste organization and caste mobility.

A number of theories about the origin of caste have been given by Indologists and other social scientists. However, no one has so far succeeded in giving a satisfactory theory of the origin of caste. The very dynamic nature of caste seems to elude all efforts to theorize or generalize about the system. Some researchers believe that the caste system began with the Indo-Aryan migration to India. However, the theory of Indo-Aryan migration itself is a highly disputed topic.

Although many Hindu scriptures contain passages that can be interpreted to sanction the caste system, they also contain indications that the caste system is not an essential part of Hindu religion. The Vedas place very little importance on the caste system. Later scriptures such as *Bhagavad Gita* and *Manu Smriti* state that the four *varnas* are created by God. The traditional theory believes that the caste system has been established by divine ordinance or at least with divine approval. This theory views the caste system as a normal and natural system. On the other hand, the sociological theory regards the caste system as a man-made or artificially created and an ascriptive system of stratification in which status and role are determined by birth.

The traditional view has two versions: mythical and metaphysical. The metaphysical version explains the fixed function, hierarchy and other characteristics of caste. Each caste has a separate function and this function is determined by the nature and qualities of the caste members. The mythical version regards that the four castes have emerged from different parts of *Brahma's* body. *Brahma*, the lord of creation, created human beings from different limbs; the *Brahmanas* from his mouth, and so they were to be the intellectuals. Hence they were assigned the highest position in society and their occupation was priesthood. The *Kshatriyas* sprang from the arm of *Brahma* and were given the second position in society, that of warriors signified by the use of arms. The *Vasishyas* were given the third position and they were believed to be created from the thigh of *Brahma*. They become traders by occupation. *Shudras* who sprung from *Brahma's* feet were manual workers and they occupied the fourth or lowest position in society. As stated by Manisha Barua, '... it is generally believed that the Aryans who "invaded" India distinguished themselves from the original inhabitants of India as the "twice born"'. Three classes of twice born were recognized. The *Brahmin* performed the sacred

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functions. They had the right to study the Vedas. The *Kshatriyas* maintained the political order and the military functions; and *Vaishyas* supported the economic order ... The once born were the non-Aryans and were classified as *Shudras*. They were not allowed either to hear or to read the Veda and they were entrusted to perform the lower kind of physical labour'. In such hierarchies, it is recognized that proper functioning of each caste is necessary for the stability of society as a whole.

Varna System

The Sanskrit term *varna* is derived from the root 'vri' which means choice or to choose. This is contrary to the assumption that 'varna' denotes colour and hence signifies the qualities of some one. In the context of social hierarchies, it means social arrangements. At later stages, the word 'varna' came to be used for the four social classes, i.e., *Brahmana* (scholarly community), *Kshatriya* (warriors or political community), *Vaishya* (mercantile community) and *Shudra* (service providing community). There was nothing like higher or lower *varna* in the Vedic period. The divisions of society into four *varnas* or four orders were based on the division of labour. Brahmins acted as priests, *Kshatriyas* as rulers and fighters, *Vaishyas* as traders and *shudras* as the service class. Each *varna* worshipped different deities and followed different rituals. This difference was because each group had to achieve different objectives according to their occupational role. *Brahmins* wanted maximum holy lustre for which they worshipped *agni* (fire) and recited the *Gayatri mantra*. *Kshatriyas* wanted physical strength for which they worshipped *Indra* and recited *Trishubh* mantra. *Vaishyas* wanted cattle and wealth for which they worshipped *Visvedevas* and recited *Jagti mantras*. However, there were no restrictions on the matrimonial alliances or social relations or even on the change of membership from one *varna* to another.

The aim of the four fold *varna* system in India was division of labour. The theory of division of labour is one of the fundamental theories of social organization. It propounds that for the orderly progress of work in society, it is necessary that it be divided into classes according to natural tendencies. Thus, the responsibility of *Brahmanas* was to see to the proper execution of work like study of knowledge, teaching and other religious activities. The government, defence and direction of the state were left to the *Kshatriyas* while the *Vaishyas* carried on the agriculture, dairy farming and trading business. The *Shudras* served the other three *varnas*.

The *varna* system is a developed social system. Social stratification is found in all societies but it is difficult to find one as systematic as the Indian *varna* system. The object of this system was to put the different capabilities of man to proper and productive use in order to maintain the solid, organized and balanced state of society. Another major advantage of the *varna* system was the decentralization of power. Concentration of all power in the hands of one class may lead to exploitation and despotism. In the *varna* system, the power of knowledge, power of arms, power of wealth and power of labour were evenly distributed among the *Brahmanas*, the *Kshatriyas*, the *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* respectively. By keeping respect, authority and wealth separate, the *varna* system saved the society from the defects of concentration or localization of power.

In this way, the *varna* system shows a fine synthesis of the fundamentals of social organization, division of labour and decentralization. The convention was not severe and was based on inherent qualities and tendencies. Here we see the technical skill of the occupation was passed on hereditarily from generation to generation and because of practicing the same occupation over a long period of time 'occupational guilds' came into existence which later on came to be known as caste. However, at a later stage, when it became the caste system we see a rigid form which lost all its good qualities. The caste system which is said to be originated from the *varna* system, is very different from it. It lost the advantages of the *varna* system and became detrimental to society. Thus, we see that though the caste system was originally evolved for the necessary classification of human duty in order to preserve the organic stability of society, its original meaning and intention were forgotten through the passage of time. It is necessary for everyone to have consideration for the facts of world unity and goodwill. Humanity demands love for all, justice; fair treatment and help to the needy and this should form the basis of society.

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CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

8. What is the mythical version of the caste system?
9. State the aim of the four fold *Varna* system.

3.5 THE QUESTION OF RESERVATION

Dr Ambedkar was of the view that there is no link between the Hindus and the depressed classes just as there was practically nothing in common between the Hindu and the Muslims. If the then, British Government had agreed, in principle, to create a separate electorate for the Muslims, there should also be a separate electorate for the depressed classes. Just as the Muslims and the Sikhs had emerged as distinct communities, the depressed classes should likewise be treated as a separate community. Hence, separate electorates and separate constituencies should be created under the Government of India Act to give adequate representation to the depressed and the backward classes. The matter was considered at length at the Round Table Conferences and given shape under the Poona Pact.

Ambedkar had asked for the reservation of twenty-two seats out of one hundred and forty in elections to the then Bombay Legislative Council.

Since the separatist demands of both Jinnah and Ambedkar were in line with the traditional imperial policy of 'divide and rule', the British accepted their demand for equal but separate identities. It was later on sanctified by the Government of India Act 1935. When in 1946, the Constituent Assembly started functioning and Dr Ambedkar was elected as the Chairman of its Drafting Committee, he insisted not only on continuing the system of reservation but also extending it further. He was able to have his demand accepted and incorporated in the Constitution of India, which gives the so-called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes reservations to

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the extent of 15 and 7.5 per cent, respectively. For this purpose a separate state-wise schedule was annexed to the Constitution. This reservation was provided in respect of the Parliament, the state legislature, public-services and educational institutions.

Here, it may be noted that Dr Ambedkar was probably the only non-Muslim who had supported Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, as it was in consonance with his own demand for separate electorates. At this point, his major argument was that the so-called higher classes of Hindus had separated them for the *Kshatriya* class (the second class) and downgraded them lower than even the *Vaisya* class by creating a fourth category for them. Their social ranking was, thus, lowered from the second to the fourth.

Ambedkar's argument was that since these classes have been suppressed, oppressed and exploited and have been treated as the neglected classes and since Hinduism has never accepted them as one of its parts, they should politically, electorally and administratively be kept separate. No section of high class Hindus had accepted them as their own integral part. Therefore, to think of integrating them socially and emotionally in future would also remain a dream. This was the main premise on which he had totally disagreed with Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi thought it would be possible for the Hindu society to amalgamate and integrate socially and emotionally not only the religious minorities but also the variety of socially, educationally and economically weaker castes in the mainstream of the Indian society and state. However, by maintaining this, Gandhiji was simply giving vent to his idealism. He was forgetting that his own recurrent measures in the direction of restoration of communal unity, including his Hindu-Muslim unity fasts had, at best, received only a temporary success; and despite devoting a major part of his life to the amelioration of this castes, he had miserably failed to bring about communal unity on a durable basis. The most horrible aftermath of whose failure had resulted into the partition of India on communal lines and the bloody events that followed thereafter.

One of Gandhi's closest *Sabarmati Ashramite*, G Rama Chandra Rao (Gora), went on to observe in his book titled, *An Atheist with Gandhi* that if Gandhi was not assassinated in 1948 and was allowed to live for a few months or years more, he himself might have become an atheist.

Ambedkar was probably more realistic than Gandhi in thinking that those who have been kept separated for centuries would ever remain separated. They would never be able to get assimilated either in the mainstream of Hinduism or in the main stream of Indian society, in view of the inflexible attitude of the so-called high class Hindus, especially its militant section.

Hence, the only way to bring up the so-called Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes on a footing of equality was to keep them as a distinct and separate class or entity. Hence, as a champion of the depressed classes, Ambedkar stood for the philosophy of 'Equal but Separate'. This he thought was the only way to ensure to them the benefits of the high ideals of justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and the rule of law, which are the basic values on which the very edifice of our Constitution is created.

Unfortunately, once these classes emerged as separate entities, the political parties competed with one another to treat them as their vote-banks, rather than working for their all-round welfare and solving their problems.

Subsequently, this question got not only politicized, but was also taken to the courts. The Supreme Court, in its historical verdict, declared that it is the prerogative of the state to make reservations for any class or classes of citizens, but justice demands that the total number of reservations should not exceed 50 per cent. When Mr V.P. Singh became the prime minister, he sought to extend the reservation to an extent, which was far in excess of the Supreme Court's upper limit of 50 per cent. Not only the politicians and political parties vied with each other to increase the quota of the reservation, some states wanted to increase the actual population proportion of this class and consequently asked for raising it to the extent of even 70 per cent or more. Yet, these steps temporarily resulted in an unprecedented acts of violence, including acts of self-immolation by the students who rightly believed that 'merit' was being downgraded and subordinated to the 'caste' factor. This instance was an unforceable consequence of V.P. Singh's attempt to extend the benefits of reservation to the other backward classes as well, i.e., the socially and economically backward classes, other Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

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3.5.1 Hindu Code

Ambedkar was of the view that in India there is a Uniform Civil Code of Laws covering almost every aspect of human relationship except marriage and succession. The Hindu Code Bill drafted by him introduced only four new factors in the existing law. These were as follows:

- Abolition of the doctrine of rights by birth
- Absolute right over property to women
- Equitable share to daughter
- Provision for divorce not only to men, but equally to women as well

If the Hindu Code Bill, with these provisions, could be adopted it would be consistent with the provisions of Article 15 of our Constitution, which directs the state not to discriminate against any citizen on ground of 'birth', it would also be in accordance with the Article 13 of the United Nations Charter which lays down 'Encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification'.

Dr Ambedkar along with sixteen other members of the Select Committee of the Constituent Assembly, which was entrusted with the job of amending and codifying certain branches of the Hindu law, presented to the Constituent Assembly its report on 12 August 1948. The report contained following nine points:

- Preliminary
- Marriage and divorce
- Adoption
- Minority and guardianship
- Joint family property
- Women and property

- Succession
- Maintenance
- Miscellaneous

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Later on, he drafted the Hindu Code Bill along with these subjects. It was aimed at removing the legal obstacles in the social advancement of women. However, it was opposed by the orthodox section of the members of the Parliament, including a number of Congressmen. The Congress Party did not support the Hindu Code Bill. Prime Minister Nehru permitted the Congress members to vote on the Bill according to their conscience. This resulted in the dropping of the Hindu Code Bill and that marked the occasion for Ambedkar's resignation from the Nehru Cabinet.

3.5.2 Conversion to Buddhism

To Ambedkar, Buddhism was important not only because he agreed with its tenets and institutions, but also because it enabled him to reconstruct more scientifically and satisfactorily the history of ancient India, says K. Raghvaendra Rao, the illustrated author of *Makers of Indian Literature: Babsaheh Ambedkar*. According to Ambedkar, 'Ancient Indian History must be exhumed ... Fortunately with the help of the Buddhist literature ancient Indian History can be dug out of the debris which *Brahmin* writers have heaped upon it in a fit of madness.' He characterized Buddhism as a 'revolution', a revolution almost as great as 'The French Revolution'. Starting off as a religious revolution, Buddhism grew into a multi-pronged revolution—social, cultural and political. He suggested that the distinctiveness and profundity of the Buddhist revolution could be seen from an examination of the pre-revolutionary system, the ancient regime of India.

Ambedkar paints a sketch of the degraded condition to which the Aryan civilization had sunk prior to the advent of the revolution. It was, in short, a society riddled with social evils such as gambling, drinking and sexual immorality of all varieties. Buddha was the first and perhaps the greatest of the social reformers India had produced. His religion spread everywhere, spilling beyond the borders of India. It succeeded not only because of the content of its teachings but also because of the charismatic personality of its founder, who himself lived by his teachings. Through his own example, he showed what was pure life, what was right conduct, and by implication exposed the impurity and the immorality of the *Aryan Brahmanical* life of his time.

To enable the ordinary people to follow his high moral ideals, Buddha innovated the institution of baptism into a moral way of life. This consisted in converting to Buddhism, taking a vow to observe certain moral precepts. These were five in number and hence known as *panchshila*. These are as follows:

- Not to kill
- Not to steal, lie, be unchaste
- Neither to drink intoxicant liquor nor to eat at forbidden times
- Not to dance, sing or attend theatrical or other spectacles, use garlands, scents and ornaments
- Neither to receive money, nor to use high or broad beds

These apparently negative virtues stemmed from the cardinal virtues of love and wisdom. These Buddhist precepts constituted a direct challenge to the caste system, which had defiled the essence of *Aryan Brahmanical* order. The Buddha preached against the caste order and freely admitted *Shudras* to his *Bhiku order*. He also opposed the lower status accorded to women in the ancient regime, and admitted to the highest ranks in his order. Buddhism opened up its educational system both to the *Shudras* and the women.

It was in this context and due to these compelling reasons that Dr Ambedkar embraced Buddhism and advocated it as an ideal not only for India but for the whole strife-ridden world. His acceptance of Buddhism was not merely a negative gesture of leaving Hinduism, but was a positive act of commitment to a superior religious way of life.

Political ideas

Though Ambedkar was not primarily a political theorist, he did work with a fairly definite political and legal thought, which is widely reflected in the views he expressed on a variety of subjects, especially on the floor of the Constituent Assembly of India. Ambedkar regarded the state as a necessary institution, which he thought exists for the performance of the following three sets of goals:

- In the first place, it has individualistic functions as its goals. He subscribed to the view that ‘the right of every subject to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness and to free speech and free exercise of religion’ is sacred.
- In the second place, he also expected the state to perform judicial functions and maintained social, political and economic justice within the society, by eliminating or at least reducing inequalities of class, caste and religion. It must ensure the maintenance of law and order functions.
- In the third place, the state is required to see that every individual citizen enjoys ‘freedom from want and freedom from fear’.

By performing these functions, the state would act as a servant and an instrument of public welfare and would, thus, essentially be democratic.

Ambedkar had a marked preference for democracy not only because it gives largest possible participation to the people in their governance, but also because it ensures immense opportunities of challenge and change, without necessarily shedding unnecessary blood. It is a system which is neither hereditary, nor does it allow political power to be vested in or to be identified with a particular person. People elected through the system of Universal Adult Franchise hold the reins of power.

Ambedkar was generally in favour of the parliamentary form of democracy because he thought it to be the best available system. However, in view of the then prevailing extraordinary and highly abnormal circumstances in India, he personally preferred a presidential form of government as that would protect and promote India’s security, unity, integrity and sovereignty. It would be a highly centrifugal system as it would not only divide powers between the Centre and the states but would also effectively ensure political stability. Hence, in his view, a presidential form of government, unlike the parliamentary system, would imply a kind of federal

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system ensuring not only division of powers, but also encouraging the strengthening of democratic federalism. He had come to this conclusion by studying the views of the thinkers and writers like Alexander Pope who had publically expressed his view that 'Power corrupts its possessor and absolute power corrupts absolutely.' Hence, ideally speaking, that the state would be good or viable is based on the division, decentralization and maximum diffusion of power. Such a system would protect not only a strong central government but also the rights and freedom of the minorities who would generally be treated at par with others.

3.5.3 Citizens' Rights and Freedoms

Ambedkar was of the view that a democratic federal framework would ensure every citizen some minimum set of equal rights and freedoms and would not deprive them of the benefits of their profession. He also believed that the guarantee of minimum freedoms and rights alone would not make state an ideal state. In his view, each and every citizen should be able to enjoy all the freedoms and rights in consonance with similar freedoms and rights available to all others in the state. However, he believed that however, rich a state may be, it will have to provide these basic rights equally to one and all.

The rights and freedoms that Dr Ambedkar wanted the citizens of every liberal democracy to possess and enjoy are the rights that he succeeded to include in the list of Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in our Constitution. These are, in fact, the rights, which are intended to improve the quality of democracy and also help people in improving their own quality. However, the most important of these rights, which he was able to think of and provide, was the right to constitutional remedies. This right enables every citizen to have his violated rights restored by approaching the Courts to issue appropriate writs. He believed that if this right is not ensured to the citizens, all other rights would lose their importance as the state would go on delimiting and restricting these rights and these would, one day, virtually disappear. He regarded fundamental rights as the very soul the fountain and the fragrance of democracy.

3.5.4 Reservation for the Backward Sections of the Society

Ambedkar was eager that not only elaborate sets of rights be available to all the citizens, without discrimination, but that, by itself, would not meet the ends of justice. This is because in India there are a number of classes and sections of people who are historically, socially, educationally and economically backward. These include the *Shudras*, the *Avarnas*, the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the other socially, economically and sexually backward citizens of India. These have always been kept apart and away from the society and have never been allowed to get themselves assimilated in the mainstream of the Indian society. Therefore, the State will have to make special efforts to ensure these rights to them on the basis of priority, so that they are also able to come up to a normal level to enjoy the rights and freedoms, which others would ordinarily be enjoying in any case.

3.5.5 A Linguistic Reorganization of the State

In order to promote the cause of unity of India on the one hand and reduce social tensions on the other, Ambedkar was eager to reorganize the Indian provinces on a national linguistic basis. Such a reorganization would curb casteism, communalism, regionalism and fundamentalism. He was not willing to allow the state to reorganize itself on any other basis, as that would seriously threaten the unity and integrity of India. Here, it may be recorded that Ambedkar was also eager to encourage the various scripts and languages, whether regional, provincial or sectional. The scripts may vary, but in the interest of the unity of India, the language should be one, so that it may serve as a cementing, and not a divisive force. That is why, of all the languages spoken in India, he wanted Hindi to be the official language not only of the Central Government but also of all the provinces, so that it becomes a strong denominator of India's unity and integrity.

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3.5.6 Views Regarding India's Partition

As stated earlier, Ambedkar was probably the only non-Muslim leader of India's struggle for freedom who openly defended the Partition of India into India and Pakistan on communal grounds. He considered the view that every community should have the right and the autonomy to preserve, protect and enrich its culture and religion, and to that end, every community which has all the essential elements of a nation should have the right to secede and declare itself as an independent sovereign state. Therefore, he not only supported Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, but also asked the creation of an independent sovereign *Dalitistan*. He declared that those who have deliberately been kept separate for decades and centuries should have the right to live separately so that they are no longer oppressed, suppressed and exploited.

3.5.7 Religion and Politics

Ambedkar was strongly in favour of a secular state, i.e., a state which does not accord to any religion the status of a state religion. This view of Ambedkar was in contravention of his defence of Pakistan which, in any case, was to become an Islamic state. This is indicative of a clear contradiction of his views.

However, apart from his defense of Pakistan, one will find him asking the state to accord to every religion the status of equality and would not like it to interfere with any religion. He also did not want the state to impose or levy a religious tax, nor did he like the state to force people's conversion to others religions, because otherwise a citizen would lose the freedom of voluntary conversion. Hence, he wanted every province, having a distinct majority religion of its own, to protect, preserve and enrich its religion, as that would be in accordance with, and not opposed to, the spirit of federalism.

Critical evaluation

During his lifetime, Dr Ambedkar ventured to bring about a transformation in India's social and political structure and in this effort he succeeded to a very large extent.

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He dedicated his life towards the eradication of untouchability and the issues with which it had identified itself. Like the Indian liberal moderates of the World War I era of our freedom struggle, i.e., in line with Naoroji, Ranade and Gokhlale, he would give precedence to social reform and consider the task of political independence only as a second priority. His position was 'reforms first, freedom afterwards'. Similarly, he dedicated his life as much to improve the condition of Indian women as he had done for raising the status of the *dalits*. The oppression, suppression and exploitation which the *dalits* and the women had to suffer at the hands of the male and *Brahmana* dominated society was, in fact, a blot on the face of India. Just as he wanted reservation for the *dalits*, he was equally eager to bring about the Hindu Code Bill to improve the condition of women. When he thought he would not be able to reform Hinduism during his lifetime, he just got disgusted, left Hinduism viewing it as an incurable and unreformable religion, and adopted Buddhism encouraging his followers to do the same. However, despite all these shortcomings, limitations and failures, Dr Ambedkar would be remembered by the generations to come as a great social reformer, a jurist and one of the most prominent framers, rather the guiding spirit, of the Constitution of India.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

10. State the premise of right to constitutional remedies.
11. What were the new factors introduced by Ambedkar in The Hindu Code Bill?
12. Why did Ambedkar believe in the concept of a presidential form of government?

3.6 SUMMARY

- Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 (*Vaiasakha Purnima*) at a place called *Mhow* near Indore in Madhya Pradesh.
- Suffering from all the possible disabilities, segregation and discrimination, Bhimrao's family was kept out of the mainstream of the Maharashtra social and political setup.
- After completing graduation, Ambedkar took up service in the princely state of Baroda. Here, he suffered humiliation even at the hands of his lowest subordinates.
- It was in July 1924, that Ambedkar started his political career by establishing the *Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha* to raise the educational level and the economic status of the depressed classes as well as to ventilate the hardships of these classes.

- Upon India, attaining her freedom from the alien British Rule on the midnight of 15 August 1947, Ambedkar was appointed by Nehru as the Minister for Law in his cabinet.
- From 1949, Ambedkar had started participating actively in the World Buddhist Conferences held in Kathmandu and Rangoon.
- Ambedkar established a number of educational institutions for the equal benefit of all, including the Scheduled Castes, the depressed and the oppressed people of India,
- As a *Mahar*, Dr Ambedkar had himself suffered a lot of indignities and discrimination at the hands of the so-called upper castes, and was, thus, always eager to bring revolutionary changes in the traditional social system of India.
- For Ambedkar, the very first problem of Hindu social system was the one relating to the origin to the *Shudras*.
- Untouchability meant 'pollution by the touch of certain persons by reason of their birth in a particular caste or family'.
- Ambedkar did not regard Hindu civilization as a civilization because it had continued to suppress and censor a large section of humanity.
- According to Ambedkar, the *Brahmanas* enslaved the mind and *Baniyas* enslaved the body and having done that, they divided the spoils that belong to the governing classes.
- Dr Ambedkar was certainly not the first to have started the work of social emancipation and political mobilization of the millions of people of the depressed classes but he was the most effective in highlighting the inhuman treatment to which they were subjected to in Hindu society.
- Ambedkar had asked for the reservation of twenty-two seats out of one hundred and forty in elections to the then Bombay Legislative Council.
- Dr Ambedkar was the symbol of the non-Brahmin social reform movement in modern India.
- Ambedkar's socio-political philosophy is India's most enlightened and modern gift to the weaker and backward section of our society.
- Dr Ambedkar's mission throughout life has been an uncanny desire to secure justice- social, economic and political for the disadvantaged sections of the Indian society.
- Ambedkar planned his programmes to bring the downtrodden millions of India from a state of dehumanization and slavery into one of equality through the use of modern methods based on education and the exercise of legal and political rights.
- Dr Ambedkar relentlessly fought for the cause of the depressed and the deprived of the Indian society and this brought him to develop his philosophy of humanism which centres on the problems of man.

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- Ambedkar vehemently denounced the inequalities which Brahmanical Hinduism heaped upon the untouchables and fought for the cause of social equality.
- Ambedkar was influenced by the Indian as well as western intellectual and moral ideas of many great thinkers like Gautam Buddha, Jyotiba Phule, John Dewey (his mentor at Columbia University), Karl Marx, and Justice M.G. Ranade.
- Ambedkar appreciated Lord Buddha's belief in man's capacity to achieve salvation without extraneous aid.
- Both Gandhi and Ambedkar were heroic and the very embodiment of revolt against the unjust social order existing in India.
- Ambedkar was an enemy of the caste system and he stood for its total liquidation like Gandhi.
- Ambedkar's own bitter experiences went a long way in moulding his life, perception and ideas. Ambedkar bore the brunt of caste discrimination and often faced humiliation for belonging to a lower caste.
- The eradication of untouchability and the caste system was the mission of Ambedkar's life.
- Dr Ambedkar refers to democracy as a system which brings about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people without resorting to disputes and bloodshed.
- Ambedkar visualized the economic welfare of the people through the combination of state socialism with Parliamentary democracy.
- Ambedkar repeatedly stated that power was necessary to protect the rights of the people.
- Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar's concept of democracy was reconciled with his concept of socialism.
- Ambedkar's attack on the sacred literature and norms of the Hindus was in fact an attack on the graded inequality sanctioned by them.
- Ambedkar exhorted his people to cultivate an enlightened view of religion and not to be lured by the traits of Hinduism like toleration and *bhakti* or to be attracted by the saints.
- Dr Ambedkar was of the opinion that religion is an important element in education, in social organization and in the promotion of the spirit of devotion to the common good, but only when it shows utmost liberalism and acts upon the principle of secularism.
- In Ambedkar's view, the real remedy to untouchability is to replace the social relations governed by the caste system of Hinduism by the one based on equality, justice and fraternity.
- It was natural for Dr Ambedkar to seek refuge in Buddha, because, as he knew, the Buddha was the only philosopher, who brought about a social

revolution and welcomed people from the *shudra* and untouchable communities into his fold.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar - I

- The Buddha, *Dhamma* and *Sangha* are known as 'Tri Saran,' *Triratna* or the Triple Gems.
- Dr Ambedkar analyzed the basic tenets of Buddhism in his magnum opus, *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, published posthumously in 1957.
- Ambedkar's basic religious outlook came in the way of a proper assessment of Marxism.
- Caste is a fundamental institution of Indian society as it pervades the entire gamut of Indian social organization and there is hardly any aspect of Indian society which is not influenced by caste.
- The metaphysical version of the caste system explains the fixed function, hierarchy and other characteristics of caste.
- The mythical version regards that the four castes have emerged from different parts of *Brahma's* body.
- The Sanskrit term *Varna* is derived from the root 'vri' which means choice or to choose.
- The aim of the four fold *Varna* system in India was division of labour.
- The *Varna* system shows a fine synthesis of the fundamentals of social organization, division of labour and decentralization.
- Dr Ambedkar was of the view that there is no link between the Hindus and the depressed classes just as there was practically nothing common between the Hindu and the Muslims.
- Ambedkar was probably more realistic than Gandhi in thinking that those who have been kept separated for centuries would ever remain separated. Hence, the only way to bring up the so-called Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes on a footing of equality was to keep them as a distinct and separate class or entity.
- Ambedkar was of the view that in India there is a Uniform Civil Code of Laws covering almost every aspect of human relationship except marriage and succession.
- The Hindu Code Bill aimed at removing the legal obstacles in the social advancement of women.
- To Ambedkar, Buddhism was important not only because he agreed with its tenets and institutions.
- To enable the ordinary people to follow his high moral ideals, Buddha innovated the institution of baptism into a moral way of life.
- Though Ambedkar was not primarily a political theorist, he did work with a fairly definite political and legal thought, which is widely reflected in the views he expressed on a variety of subjects, especially on the floor of the Constituent Assembly of India.

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- Ambedkar was generally in favour of the parliamentary form of democracy because he thought it to be the best available system.
- Ambedkar was of the view that a democratic federal framework would ensure that every citizen sum minimum set of equal rights and freedoms and would not deprive them of the benefits of their profession
- Ambedkar was strongly in favour of a secular state, i.e., a state which does not accord to any religion the status of a state religion.
- During his lifetime, Dr Ambedkar ventured to bring about a transformation in India's social and political structure and in this effort he succeeded to a very large extent

3.7 KEY TERMS

- **Democracy:** It refers to a system which brings about fundamental changes in the social and economic life of the people without resorting to disputes and bloodshed
- **Caste system:** It refers to a hierarchically arranged social division of labour which is determined by the birth of a person.
- **Dissertation:** It refers to a long essay on a particular subject, especially one written as a requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree.

3.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. The educational institutions set up by Dr Ambedkar are as follows:
 - (a) Siddhartha College of Arts and Science, 1946
 - (b) Milind Maha Vidyalaya, 1951
 - (c) Siddhartha College of Commerce and Economics, 1953
 - (d) Siddhartha College of Law, 1956
2. An important feature of Indian village system is the system of separate and distinct quarters.
3. The *Mahars* of Maharashtra were considered as 'broken men' as they belonged to a different tribe, different blood and were as such given quarters outside the village.
4. Ambedkar emphasized on the concept of parliamentary democracy as it was a means through which individual freedom could be safeguarded otherwise, there were chances of it turning into a dictatorship.
5. The main aim of All India Scheduled Caste Federation (AISCF) was that the political power should be seized by the Scheduled Castes as they did not possess any kind of social or economic power.

6. The main features of Ambedkar's model of democratic socialism were as follows:
 - (a) Recognition of the role of private industries
 - (b) Economic planning.
 - (c) No discrimination among citizens on the basis of caste, gender or religion.
 - (d) Democratic/Constitutional means for social change/transformation.
7. The Buddhist method of bringing a change is considered as superior to the Marxist method because Buddha believed in persuasion, moral teaching and love as compared to the Marxist method which was based on force. Ambedkar regarded Buddhism as a moral and tolerant alternative to Marxism.
8. The mythical version of the caste system regards that the four castes have emerged from different parts of *Brahma's* body.
9. The aim of the four fold *Varna* system in India was division of labour.
10. The basic premise of right to constitutional remedies is that it enables every citizen to have his violated rights restored by approaching the Courts to issue appropriate writs.
11. The new factors introduced by Ambedkar in The Hindu Code Bill were as follows:
 - a) Abolition of the doctrine of rights by birth
 - b) Absolute right over property to women
 - c) Equitable share to daughter
 - d) Provision for divorce not only to men, but equally to women as well
12. Ambedkar believed in the concept of a presidential form of government for he was of the opinion that it would protect and promote India's security, unity, integrity and sovereignty.

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3.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. How did B.R. Ambedkar manage to continue his studies even though he was an untouchable?
2. Enlist the political parties established by Dr Ambedkar.
3. How has Ambedkar summarized the status of a *Shudra*?
4. What was Ambedkar's concept of religion?
5. Write a short note on the *Varna system*.

Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the influences of any two great thinkers that shaped the socio-political thought of Ambedkar.
2. Examine the role of reason in the philosophy of Ambedkar.

3. Discuss the concept of democratic socialism as propagated by B.R. Ambedkar.
4. Analyse the salient features of *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, the great work of Ambedkar on Buddhism.
5. Discuss the effect of Marxism on the philosophy of Dr Ambedkar.

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3.10 FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4 DR B.R. AMBEDKAR - II

Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Mahatma Gandhi: An Overview
 - 4.2.1 M. K. Gandhi: Life and Works
 - 4.2.2 Gandhism: Ideas and Ideals
 - 4.2.3 Gandhi and Economics
 - 4.2.4 Gandhi's Philosophy of Life-Sense of Human Unity
- 4.3 Gandhian Ambedkar
- 4.4 Untouchables
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Terms
- 4.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.8 Questions and Exercises
- 4.9 Further Reading

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4.0 INTRODUCTION

Our leaders realized the need for a united Indian society and the requirement for the participation of each and every Indian in the freedom movement. To ensure the participation of all, it was seen necessary to remove the inequalities from the Indian society by creating a just and egalitarian political, social and economic order. Our leaders paid special attention to the protection and promotion of the interests of the downtrodden and weaker sections of the society. The leaders wanted to eradicate evil practices like untouchability, suppression and exploitation and other forms of ostracism to which certain sections of society were subjected to.

Gandhi led the fight against the evils of social injustice in India. His influence over the masses was tremendous and the people of India had immense faith in him. He proclaimed that the abolition of untouchability and other social evils was very important in order to secure India's independence. Gandhi was most concerned about the miserable plight of the oppressed classes and the social injustices meted out to them. He renamed the untouchables, *Harijans* or people of God and lived in their ostracised colonies with them.

Gandhi appealed to the dominant castes to learn to respect human values and treat all equally. Focusing on the removing of untouchability, access to temples, education for the children of the lower castes, dignity of labour and village reconstruction, Gandhi wanted to bring about the social and material improvement of the depressed class and the downtrodden millions of India. He wanted to provide quality education to the children of the depressed classes so that they could stand on equal footing with the upper castes. Through village reconstruction, he provided the key to improve the economic condition of the poor and the socially oppressed. Gandhi

put forward his ideal of 'sarvodaya' or the 'Welfare of All' as an effort towards the total reconstruction and transformation of Indian society in accordance with his vision.

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Although there were people within the depressed classes who found in Gandhi an advocate for eradicating the social evils, many were sceptical of the outcome of Gandhian initiatives. Most prominent among the leaders of the depressed classes was Dr B.R. Ambedkar. He wanted to develop an independent identity for the depressed classes and to do away with the caste system. He realized that the caste based agricultural economy was the root cause of the suffering of the downtrodden. Ambedkar detested the inherent inequalities in the society that provided no scope for individual development. Dr Ambedkar's concern for the downtrodden and the underdog was profound and deep. Throughout his life he had been struggling for securing social, economic and political justice for the disadvantaged groups of the Indian society. He wanted to weave the pluralistic, multi-religious, class-caste ridden Indian society into an equal fabric. He considered the caste system in Hindu society as the greatest enemy of social harmony in this country. Ambedkar entered politics to eliminate the slavery and oppression of untouchables and to secure social justice, political and civil rights and constitutional safeguards for them. To achieve these goals he mobilized the depressed classes through various movements, conferences and meetings. It was mainly because of his untiring efforts that the scheduled castes emerged as a united and fighting force in our country. He was of the opinion that social justice alone could lead to social harmony and social stability. He dreamt of a strong and united India, where peace, prosperity and progress are established and where political, social and economic freedom was available to all, without any discrimination on the ground of caste, religion or sex. His social philosophy emanated in liberty, equality and fraternity. These assertions of his had a bearing in the constituent assembly also where he delineated and emphasized the need of social democracy. While visualizing the basics of the Indian constitution, Dr Ambedkar was clear in his mind about the place of the depressed class in India's political structure.

Ambedkar considered law as the weapon to produce an optimum social order and he believed that the Constitution should provide fundamental rights and social, economic and political equality to all citizens. The law, according to him, must also provide remedies against the invasion of fundamental rights. Hence, in order to remove social inequalities and achieve the goal of social justice a unique device of the reservation system was built into the Constitution. Reservation sought protective discrimination in favour of certain castes and class of persons. These categories of human beings constituted the socially under-privileged class. As a social humanist, Ambedkar believed in the equality of human beings and stressed the need of the guarantee of freedom to all without any discrimination.

In this unit, the ideas of both Ambedkar and Gandhi have been discussed in detail. Their different approaches towards the eradication of caste system and the similarities between their ideas have been discussed. The concept of untouchability and the efforts taken by Ambedkar to eradicate it from Indian society has also been explained in detail in this unit.

4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the views of Mahatma Gandhi regarding the upliftment of the society
- Analyse the view of Gandhi regarding education
- Distinguish between the socio-political thoughts of Gandhi and Ambedkar
- Compare Gandhi's and Ambedkar's economic ideologies
- Explain Ambedkar's views on caste and untouchability

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4.2 MAHATMA GANDHI: AN OVERVIEW

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on 2 October 1869, at Porbander in Kathiawad. His father was a Dewan of a petty state. As a student at school, he was slow, shy and hesitant. However, his observance of truth was real and continuous. After matriculating at the age of eighteen, he was sent to England for qualifying himself for the bar. On his return to India after four years, he practised law in Bombay but was not very successful. In April 1893, he sailed for Durban in South Africa in connection with professional work on behalf of a firm. His stay in South Africa for about twenty years was the formative period of his political life. It was in South Africa that he put into practice his weapon of *Satyagraha* (the policy of non-violent resistance) when he saw a series of insulting events of disgracing Indians. He founded the Natal Indian Congress in 1894.

Gandhi's educational philosophy took shape through his educational experience at the Tolstoy Farm at Transvaal in South Africa. On the farm, he undertook the responsibility of educating his own sons and other children. The children had to devote eight hours a day for vocational training and only two hours to book learning. The children aged from six to sixteen were happy in 'learning by doing' and 'learning by cooperation'.

Having won his laurels in South Africa, Gandhi came to India in 1914. He continued his educational experiments for a short time at Shantiniketan and then at Sabarmati and Sewagram, where he established his own ashrams. At Sewagram Ashram, Gandhi not only conceived the idea of his new system of education but also fought his battle for freedom.

4.2.1 M. K. Gandhi: Life and Works

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) came on to the Indian political scene at a crucial period of the Indian national movement. The people had lost faith in the principle of political moderation as imperialistic exploitation and oppression had become extremely severe and the whole nation was reeling under poverty and deprivation. The moderate leaders had been rejected, but the extremists and terrorists were equally frustrated and leaderless. With most of the extremists behind bars and with the increasing intensity of repressive measures by the government, political extremism had been

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severely restricted. Extremist leaders like Aurobindo Ghosh, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai, changed their political methods and programme after the Surat Congress in 1907. It appeared that for the time being, at least, they had suspended their uncompromising attitude towards the government. Aurobindo Ghosh condemned the terrorists and stressed that in their struggle for their rights, Indians should not harbour hatred for the government established by law. He also moderated his earlier stand of revolution by stating that his party would be prepared to cooperate with the government on the basis of progressive steps towards Swaraj.

Bipin Chandra Pal also changed his uncompromising stand by proclaiming openly that passive resistance did not deny the British government of India its right to rule. It was mainly aimed against the arbitrary and excessive administrative authority. Lajpat Rai too had become frustrated with the results of the militant movement in Punjab and the consequent government oppression. He, therefore, avoided political activity and gave his time to three issues—famine relief, Hindu–Muslim relations, and the untouchables.

At this critical juncture, the country was in dire need of a leader of the stature and determination of Mahatma Gandhi. In his personality, there was the harmonious blending of the best elements of political moderation and extremism. Like the moderates, he had great faith in the sense of justice and fair play of the British government. He had great admiration for the parliamentary institutions of Britain and during the First World War, he appealed to the Indian people to extend all help to the British government. He accepted G.K. Gokhale as his political ‘Guru’ and preached the principles of love and ahimsa, including love towards the enemy, the British government. However, at the same time, he knew that the moderate methods of prayers and petitions would no longer be of any use. He talked with a strength and determination unknown to the extremist leaders, and even while talking softly but steadfastly in the language of love and non-violence, he struck terror in the hearts of the imperialist rulers. He symbolized religious nationalism with all its esoteric significance and like the extremists, had the highest regard for India’s ancient traditions, customs and culture. He was a humanist and radical revivalist who fought against superstitious practices, religious hatred, casteism and many other kinds of vested Indian interests with equal vigour and dynamism.

With the passage of time, Gandhi became increasingly disillusioned with the British government in which he once had great confidence. During the First World War, Gandhi had asked the Indians to support the British government and make sacrifices with the hope that the government would take progressive steps in the direction of realization of Swaraj. But the Government of India Act, 1919 was a bitter experience for Gandhi.

The Government of India Act, 1919, known as the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms, introduced the novel system of diarchy in the provincial government. The functions of the government were divided into two halves – the reserved and the transferred. The governor with an irresponsible bureaucracy administered the reserved subjects and he administered the transferred subjects on the advice of the responsible ministers. This led to serious complications and resulted in deadlocks between the two halves of the government.

The Central Government had not undergone any change. The Government of India was still responsible to the British Parliament through the secretary of state. It was still an unrepresentative government with large powers in the hands of the officials. The autocratic and repressive nature of the government did not change. There was no indication of the government becoming more responsive to public demands or public welfare. All this was very much against Gandhi's expectations.

Gandhi's bitterness with the British government increased after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy, the proclamation of Martial Law in Punjab and the findings of the Hunter Committee. He lost all faith in the good sense and fair play of the British government, and decided to start the non-violent and non-cooperation movement.

With the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, Indian politics in general and the nationalist movement, in particular, assumed a kind of dynamism which was not known before. Under the leadership of Gandhi, the Congress decided to launch the non-cooperation movement in 1920. The movement was proposed to be a revolutionary step aimed at completely paralyzing British administration in India. For the first time in its history, the Indian National Congress decided to follow a policy of direct action.

There were several reasons for the Congress to launch the non-cooperation movement. Gandhi was convinced that there was the need for creating a mass base for the Congress and to involve the whole nation in the movement. Without mass participation and support mobilization, it was not possible to put pressure on the British to get them to concede to genuine Indian demands and give up the policy of bureaucratic high-handedness and despotism.

Gandhi was sure that the old method of cooperation with the government and faith in the British sense of justice had to be given up. It was possible for Gandhi to decide on a course of direct action against the British government in India, as by 1920, the moderates had been completely eliminated from the Congress and the extremists were in a majority.

After the First World War, Turkey had been humiliated and it suffered many restrictions owing to the Treaty of Sevres, which it was forced to sign with the Allies. The Muslims of India greatly resented the British attitude towards Turkey and started the Khilafat Movement against the British government. Gandhi extended support to the Khilafat Movement and he was sure that in the event of the Congress starting a non-cooperation movement, the Muslims of India would join hands with it as well.

The non-cooperation resolution was moved by Mahatma Gandhi himself in the Calcutta Congress, held in September 1920, under the presidency of Lala Lajpat Rai. Although the Non-Cooperation resolution was opposed by C R Das, B C Pal, Annie Besant, Madan Mohan Malviya and Jinnah, Gandhi was able to get it passed by a majority of 1855 against 873.

The famous Non-Cooperation resolution passed by the Congress said, 'In view of the fact that on the Khilafat question both the Indian and imperial governments have signally failed in their duty towards the Muslims of India and the prime minister had deliberately broken his pledged word that it is the duty of every non-Muslim Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Muslim brother in his attempts to

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remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him, and in view of the fact that in the matter of the events of April 1919 both the said governments have grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of un-soldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them and have exonerated Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who proved himself directly responsible for most of the official crimes and also callous to the suffering of the people placed under his administration, and in view of the fact that the debate in the House of Commons and specially in the House of Lords, betrayed an awful lack of sympathy with the people of India and showed virtual support to the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab and the latest vice regal pronouncement is proof of the entire absence of repentance in the matters of Khilafat and the Punjab, this Congress is of the opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of these two wrongs and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of Swaraj.'

In addition, it was said, 'This Congress is further of the opinion that there is no course left open for the people of India, but the approval of and the adoption of the policy of progressive non-violent, non-cooperation, until the said wrongs are righted and Swaraj is established.'

4.2.2 Gandhism: Ideas and Ideals

M. K. Gandhi was a man of action, a realist and a pragmatist. Even though he was an ordinary man like any other, he was able to achieve that realization, which made him the 'Mahatma'. He was essentially a religious man. He was not a politician. In his own words, he was not a politician masquerading as a religious man, but a religious man, who had been dragged into politics because of his great concern for his fellow human beings. He, therefore, practiced whatever he professed and never asked to follow anything that he had not practised in his own life. He did not believe in armchair theorizing or system-building. Thus, it was intuition and action rather than logic and system-building, which characterized the political philosophy of Gandhi. He entered in the field of politics to emancipate the people from the yoke of foreign domination. Swaraj, therefore, was the most important thing, which he kept in the forefront of his political programme. To achieve Swaraj, Gandhi adopted certain means and worked out his programme with the help of these means. The principles, which were followed by Mahatma Gandhi, were woven into a political philosophy by his followers. Gandhi did not differentiate between thought and action; for him, to think was to act.

With his novel method of non-violent struggle against the British imperialists, Gandhi became a dynamic force in the political and spiritual life of India. The Indians could have never fought the British with force, because it would have been suppressed by still greater force, which the British commanded. The symbolic use of the weapons of non-violence and Satyagraha were responsible for spreading patriotic fervour throughout the country. The British were not prepared for such an attack and had to surrender. During this period, Gandhi became the most vital force and his life and activities were identified with the Indians' struggle for national independence. His spiritual and moral impact was so great that after his assassination the Manchester

Guardian rightly commented that 'he was a saint among politicians and a politician among saints'. Gandhi's sincerity of purpose, his devotion to duty and the noble principles that he practiced, made him the ideal of many national leaders in India. Humayun Kabir had rightly said that Gandhi was an objective student of reality and that his method was essentially experimental and scientific. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a close associate of Gandhi for many years, has said 'we are associated (with him) seldom in logical debate and argument or philosophical discourses, we were associated in action'.

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The Influence on the thought of Gandhi

Gandhi read little in the realm of political theory or political thought. But whatever he read, he assimilated perfectly. He read the Bhagavad Gita and gave it a novel interpretation. He read it several times and considered it as the book of spiritual reference. He learnt about truth and non-violence from the Bhagavad Gita. He was also influenced by Patanjali's *Yogasutra*, the Ramayana and Mahabharata. He read some of the Jain and Buddhist writings and was deeply influenced by the principles of truth and non-violence. From the Upanishads, he got the inspiration for his faith in non-possession. He read the *New Testament* of the *Bible* and was greatly influenced by the 'Sermon on the Mount'. The dying words of Jesus: 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do', awakened Gandhi's faith in the rightness and value of Satyagraha.

The teachings of Lao-Tse and Confucius also influenced Gandhi's thought to some extent. Lao-Tse had taught the philosophy of non-assertiveness of ideal life. From the writings of Confucius, Gandhi learnt the principles of reciprocity. The principle means that men should not do to others what they would not do to themselves.

Secular writers like Thoreau, Ruskin and Tolstoy also influenced the moral and political philosophy of Gandhi. He learnt the principle of civil disobedience from Thoreau. Ruskin instilled in Gandhi, respect for manual labour. Tolstoy inspired him to think in terms of philosophical anarchism.

Comparing Thoreau and Gandhi, Pyarelal Nayyar says, 'Neither of these thinkers was a system-builder but both were profound thinkers, truth-seekers and truth-speakers. Both had a passion for truth and both represented a philosophy in action. Both also believed in the ideal of voluntary poverty.'

The Philosophy behind Political Action: Spiritualization of Politics

Gandhi was not a politician in the ordinary sense of the term. However, he exhibited unusual tact and intelligence in choosing the time as well as the methods and techniques to be used in launching his non-violence agitation. This made him the ideal of all the political leaders, who were striving for India's independence. The greatest contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to political theory and politics was the spiritualization of politics. He believed that if politics is to be a blessing for mankind and not a curse, then it has to be guided by moral and spiritual principles. The leaders must be guided by a sense of sacrifice and service. Gandhi stressed the importance of means and said that right and just means must be adopted to achieve right and just ends. Only the right means, he believed, could lead to the right ends.

Thus, according to him the ends and the means are the same things, looked at from different points of view.

Philosophical Anarchism

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Gandhi believed in the essential goodness of man. According to him, left unto himself, man can develop his spiritual and moral personality. Man alone is capable of achieving wonders in the world. The state should not interfere in the activities of the individual. Gandhi believed that the state is an instrument of exploitation. It exploits and oppresses the poor. The excessive interference of the state kills individual initiative and action. The state originates in an essentially violent society but in a society where the people are non-violent, orderly and disciplined, the state becomes unnecessary. Gandhi believed that all initiative must come from within man. Anything that is imposed by an external agency is evil, because it does not elevate the human soul. It deprives and degrades the human soul and stands as a positive hindrance to the spiritual and moral development of the individual's personality. In his introduction to Thoreau's essay on Civil Disobedience, Mahatma Gandhi (quoted by Pyarelal) writes, 'I heartily accepted the motto, that government is best which governs least ... carried out, it finally amounts to this, which also I believe, that government is best which governs not at all.' Instead of state activity, Gandhi preferred individual activity. The instruments of state, like force and coercion, rob individual action of its morality. Both Thoreau and Gandhi looked upon the state as a soulless machine. The ideal society envisaged by Gandhi is a stateless democracy. About the state of his imagination, he wrote in his work, *Young India*, 'In such a state (of enlightened anarchy) everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power, because there is no state.'

In spite of his distrust for the state, Gandhi did not dogmatize it. He believed that the state is necessary to perform certain functions for the good of the masses. He wanted it to exercise minimum functions, transferring more and more functions to voluntary associations. State action should be judged on its own merit and only that action which promoted the welfare of the masses was to be justified. In performing its functions, the state's object should be to serve the masses and these functions must be performed with minimum use of force. The state must follow persuasive rather than coercive methods.

The Welfare Concept of the State

According to Humayun Kabir, Gandhi was an inheritor of the liberal tradition; of the tradition of philosophical anarchism; and of the tradition of collectivism, that the good things of life ought to be shared. He would support a welfare state because of his great concern for the masses. Gandhi would have liked the Five Years Plans and other methods of planned development if they could have originated of the people. But a plan which increases government post, favouritism, nepotism and opportunities, corruption and laziness, would have been definitely rejected by him. He was, therefore, not in favour of concentration of heavy industries and the grand multipurpose river valley projects, which did not benefit the people in the proportion of the huge amounts spent on them.

His concern for the misery and exploitation of human beings compelled him to start a vigorous agitation against untouchability in whatever form it might exist. He condemned the practice of untouchability and broke the unhealthy practice of the caste system by such means continuous propaganda against untouchability. But at the same time, he upheld the Hindu ideal of the *varnashrama dharma*, according to which every person was to perform his allotted task in the society, in accordance with his training and capacities. Gandhi's ideal of 'class' was not Marxian. He called himself a weaver and a cultivator by profession and identified himself with those people with regard to food, dress, speech and the like.

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The Philosophy of Non-violence

Non-violence as taught and practiced by Gandhi is a product of the Indian doctrine of ahimsa or non-injury. Also, it means refraining from causing pain or taking anybody's life. Ahimsa means avoiding injury to anything on earth, in thought, word and deed. It also means the avoidance of harsh words, harsh judgements, ill-will, anger and cruelty. It means that one should not even permit an uncharitable thought against one's enemy.

On its positive side, ahimsa is similar to the Christian principle of love. It is omnipotent, infinite and synonymous with God himself. It is an all pervasive eternal principle.

Gandhi was not the originator of the idea of non-violence and other such means. However, he was the first to use them on a mass scale and in the field of politics.

As followed and practiced by Gandhi, non-violence did not mean weak submission to one's enemy, passivity or pacifism or sitting with one's hand folded in the face of danger or evil. It did not submit to the will of the evil doer. It is in short, Satyagraha, which means resistance to evil with all the moral and spiritual force that a person can command. It is the use of moral force or firmness in the vindication of truth. It stands for self-sacrifice and conscious self-suffering. In Gandhi's own words, 'It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer.' It is positive, dynamic and constructive.

Satyagraha is the weapon of the non-violent struggle. According to Gandhi, it can be successfully followed by those who are physically and morally strong but never by those who are morally weak. Pyarelal however writes, 'The starting point of Gandhi's technique was that non-violence is the strength of the weak.' It can also be used by women and children and illiterate man who are generally considered to be weak. Satyagraha means non-violent resistance to evil, not by another evil but by good. It is the overcoming of evil by good. In Gandhi's own words, 'The injunction, love your enemy is not only the noblest idealism, it is the most practical politics.'

Truth must be the basic principle of Satyagraha. Therefore, non-violence is a struggle for truth. The *satyagrahi* who wages the non-violent struggle must see that the cause for which he fights is absolutely true, so far as God enables him to see the truth. Whenever he knows that there is a violation of the principle of truth, he

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must not hesitate to confess it and renounce whatever gains he may have made. For the *satyagrahi*, truth is even more precious than victory. Thus, non-violent struggle is impossible without the realization of the principle of truth. It cannot be taken in a light-hearted spirit. According to Gandhi, it is not enough to say that God is Truth, rather, Truth is God. Thus, truth brings the *satyagrahi* nearer to God. He takes his orders from Him.

Gandhi believed that there is something of God in every man and that the *satyagrahi* can appeal to this divine element in man through love and conscious self-suffering. The *satyagrahi* has to rouse the moral giant who lies asleep in the nature of every man, through love and conscious self-suffering. In the words of Pastor Niemoller: 'Suffering strengthens those who suffer and weakness those who inflict suffering.' If truth is the basic principle of non-violence, love is the means by which it is realized. Non-violence' according to Gandhi' can 'melt even the stoniest hearts'. Gandhi discarded the use of force and wanted to convince his opponents through persuasion. It was also his conviction that one could hate the evil without hating the evil-doer. This he proved on several occasions, in his relations with the British. He said, 'If my love is sincere I must love the Englishman in spite of my distrust.' At another time, he said, 'I am fighting British imperialism, but I am not fighting the British. I am not fighting the Englishman or anybody. They are my friends but I will fight British imperialism.'

In the practice of non-violence, truth is the foundation and love is the weapon. Referring to the importance of love in the practice of non-violence, Gandhi writes, 'Love never claims. It ever gives. Love ever suffers, never resents, and never revenges itself.' Thus, for Gandhi, non-violence was a total philosophy of life, pervading the whole life of man and not applied merely to isolated acts.

Gandhi had tremendous faith in the goodness of his fellow men just as he had unshakable faith in God. He had abounding faith in human possibilities and strongly believed that human nature is never beyond redemption. He rightly believed that the masses are not always required for waging a non-violent struggle. According to him, 'One man can offer it just as well as millions.'

Satyagraha and fasting were usually criticized as forms of moral coercion. But Gandhi insisted that it was not coercion from any point of view – economic, psychological, political or moral. Fasting was prayer for Mahatma Gandhi. He said that fasting crucified the flesh and elevated the soul. 'A genuine fast', claimed Gandhi 'cleans the body, mind and soul. It crucifies the flesh and, to that extent, sets the soul free.' The call to fast, said Gandhi, came to him as a voice of God, after a great deal of mental and spiritual struggle. His fasting was meant to influence the people morally. Satyagraha and fasting were conscious self-suffering, and were meant to awaken the moral giant that lies dormant in every man. They were meant to quicken the conscience of the people. Satyagraha or fasting is an appeal to man's reason and his sense of decency and is not moral coercion. Gandhi had tremendous and almost child-like faith in the moral capacity of one's opponent.

The *satyagrahi*, in order to fight the non-violent warfare, has to prepare himself for it by self-discipline, civility and inner purity. Gandhi writes that a *satyagrahi*

should adopt poverty, observe chastity, follow truth and cultivate fearlessness. The *satyagrahi* has to be bold and shed the last vestige of cowardice. Fearlessness, Gandhi says, come out of selflessness. When one renounces self, there is nothing to fear. In Gandhi's words, 'If you want to follow truth, fearlessness is absolutely necessary. Fearlessness is the first requisite of spirituality. Cowards can never be moral.' In order to develop fearlessness, the *satyagrahi* must cultivate an attitude of non-attachment towards the material things of life. One should be in the world but not out of it. Gandhi held that so 'many of the so-called comforts of life are not only indispensable but are positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind. Renunciation is the way to realization.' This non-attachment and renunciation will give the required inner purity and character to the *satyagrahi*. The *satyagrahi* has to be perfectly disciplined without which the mind cannot attain the requisite firmness.

In the non-violence struggle, one should not be in a hurry for results. It requires great patience and perseverance, because at times, non-violent methods take much longer than violent methods to produce results. The non-violent fighter knows no defeat because of his infinite faith in God. However, Gandhi did not equate patience and perseverance with lethargy and fatalism.

4.2.3 Gandhi and Economics

'When the history of economic thought in India in recent times comes to be written,' wrote Anjaria (1941-2) an economist, 'Gandhi's name will certainly occupy a place of honour in it.' However, he hastened to add, 'it does not matter in this context whether we call Gandhi an economist or not: that is partly, at any rate, a question of definition of terms.'

Indeed, Gandhi was much further off the mainstream of economics than other Indian nationalist economists, such as Ranade, had been. Railways have spread the bubonic plague and increased the frequency of famines in India; machinery is a 'grand yet awful invention'; a doctor or a lawyer should be paid the same wage as a labourer; the law of supply and demand is 'a devilish law'; tractors and chemical fertilizers will spell ruin for India; tractors and chemical fertilizers will spell ruin for India. It is for voicing opinions such as these that Gandhi as an economist is remembered. Even a sympathetic reader may find it difficult to take such statements at their face value. This could help explain why, although Gandhi has come to be accepted worldwide as one of the outstanding political and moral thinkers of our time, his economic thought still attract little attention. Some of the methodological issues involved will be considered here.

Gandhi himself often likens his economic 'model' to Euclid's definition of a straight line but this is consistent with either interpretation. It could mean that like the straight line 'which cannot be drawn' the Gandhian model relates to an ideal economic order where people could well be motivated quite differently from those in any society that we know of. However, it could also mean that 'something like a straight line' can be drawn, and in economics as in geometry, the postulation method can help in achieving clarity in thought and in solving real-life problems, for 'we must have a proper picture of what we want before we can have something approaching it'. Both versions contain elements of truth.

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Gandhi was not an academic but the charismatic leader of the Indian national movement. He was inspired by a vision of 'Swaraj' (self-government) which, for him, meant not just freedom from colonial rule but the achievement of self-reliance, and self-respect, by the villagers who make up most of India's population. His economics was a part of this vision, which ruled out industrialization on Western lines as the 'optimal' path of economic development for India.

Thus, Gandhi was trying to describe an economic ideal to strive for rather than simply an economic plan to implement. To that extent his economics was utopian. However, 'utopian' can also refer to something 'impractical' or even 'impossible'. Gandhi's economic thought was not 'utopian' in that sense. It was currently meant to apply to an actual society, that of rural India in particular. It would still apply only to a few selected aspects of that society while neglecting others but that is true of all economic models. The case for this 'pragmatic' view of Gandhian economics appears more plausible if we remember the context of his writings.

Most of them appeared in daily newspapers or weekly journals, *Young India* (in English), *Navajiban* (in Gujarati), and *Harijan* (in Hindi), and were addressed to a mass audience whose attention he tried to capture by making his points short and sharp. In this, he succeeded and as a journalist, especially during the 1920s and 1930s, he exercised considerable influence. Exaggeration was the price of successful journalism. It must be remembered too that Gandhi's writings were produced and published in the heat of political battle. This led to simplified, sometimes over-simplified, conclusions.

Yet another argument in favour of this interpretation is that Gandhi regarded his conclusions on economic policy as only provisional. Thus, in his preface to *Hind Swaraj*, he described the views expressed there as 'mine, yet not mine'. They were his only in the sense that he hoped to act according to them. If, however, his views proved to be wrong he would have no hesitation in rejecting them. Gandhi's American biographer, Louis Fischer, notes this provisional aspect of Gandhi's ideas; he was always 'thinking aloud': He did not attempt to express his ideas in a finished form. You heard not only his words but also his thoughts. You could, therefore, follow him as he moved to a conclusion'. In the same spirit he came to admit that some of the things he had earlier condemned, for example, railways, motorcars and machinery, could in certain circumstances confer benefits too, and that they should not be prohibited altogether. Appropriate restrictions on their use could perhaps provide adequate safeguards against misuse.

Writings on Gandhian economics have usually focused attention on the specific policies that he proposed. Opposition to modern manufacturing production based on the use of machinery; advocacy of village industries, in particular, the spinning wheel; boycott of foreign goods—it is with policies such as these that Gandhi's name is associated. In our argument proper understanding of his views requires a rather different emphasis. The structure of his arguments, the assumptions he made, and the principles of conduct that he appealed to, must be regarded as of central importance. It is these, we believe, that make his specific policy proposals comprehensible, not the other way round. We thus agree with Anjaria that 'Gandhism is not just a series of disjointed maxims of policy or a catalogue of urgent reforms

and remedial measures' that 'What is called Gandhism is... only a distinctive attitude to society and politics rather than an ideology; a particular ethical standpoint rather than fixed formulae or a definitive system.'

From this point of view, what really differentiates Gandhi's approach to economic issues from the mainstream tradition is his extraordinary emphasis on the ethical aspect of economic behaviour. Indeed, he believed that economic and ethical questions were inseparable. Replying to the poet Tagore, who had reproached him for mixing these up, Gandhi wrote, 'I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics' (*Young India*, 3 October 1921). They could, Gandhi said be considered separately, as indeed they usually were; but for conclusions to be relevant and valuable, they should not.

Ethical and economic criteria must be considered together for either to be valid. True economics never militates against the highest ethical standard just as all true ethics, to be worth its name, must at the same time 'be good economics'. Since for Gandhi ethics also constitutes the essence of religion, the same two-way relationship holds as between economics and religion, and even more generally between economics and Dharma. 'If dharma and economic interests cannot be reconciled either the conception of that dharma is false or the economic interest takes the form of unmitigated selfishness and does not aim at collective welfare.' According to Gandhi, it is because standard economic analysis failed to take ethical considerations into account that economics itself had become largely irrelevant for either understanding behaviour or prescribing policy. Not only were the generally accepted principles of economics invalid for policy making, if they *were* acted upon they would make individuals and nations unhappy. 'Economists do not take men's conduct into account but estimate prosperity from the amount of wealth accumulated and so conclude that the happiness of nations depends on their wealth alone.' Accordingly, he likens the economics that disregards moral and sentimental considerations to 'wax-works that being life-like still lack the life of the living the flesh'.

For all his distrust of economic analysis, Gandhi never relinquished a belief in the vital importance of economic considerations for the life of individuals and nations, nor in the possibility that a less narrowly focused and more relevant economics could be developed. He never gave up entirely, never ceased to ask: 'Can we evolve a new kind of economics?'

These beliefs are an integral part of Gandhi's view of the nature of ethics. The relationship between economics and ethics worked both ways. While economic behaviour was laden with ethical concepts, ethics had to descend from the clouds and become 'good economics'. Ethics, Gandhi is saying, is not simply an exercise for philosophers. It must be relevant to the 'ordinary business of life' where one's options are limited by resource constraints. 'No person in this world has found it possible to maintain something which is a source of constant economic loss'. Trying to carry out ethically good policies by methods involving continuing economic loss was futile. Viable methods of financing projects had to be found. This helps explain why Gandhi, who worked all his life for the cause of protecting animals, and cows in particular, regarded schemes for conducting tanneries on sound economic lines as

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essential for the cause to succeed. That required exploring possibilities of profitable export, utilizing by-products, and 'putting bones, hides and intestines of cows to practical use'; and similar reasoning explains why Gandhi strongly opposed a proposal that cotton spinners should also be encouraged to weave. 'It can be clearly shown that this involves an economic disadvantage.' He continues, 'Whatever is basically harmful on economic grounds is also certainly harmful from the religious point of view. Untainted wealth can never be opposed to religion'.

On the whole we agree with Anjaria that 'the Gandhian system of economic thought cannot be adequately appraised merely in terms of current economic theory that rests on certain limited assumptions. It is a challenge to those assumptions themselves'. In that sense, Gandhi must be regarded as a dissident from the economic tradition. There are, however, a number of methodological positions that he held in common with that tradition. Among these, his adherence to the deductive method and to methodological individualism are especially noteworthy.

Gandhi was generally in favour of analytical reasoning based on the deductive method applied to a set of postulates. His writings contain numerous references to Euclid and Galileo whose approaches to problem solving he held out as models for the social sciences. While he criticized economic analysis for failing to take ethical considerations into account he was not against the method of abstraction as such. Some 'holist' critics of economics maintain that human behaviour constitutes a single 'organic' whole. Hence, they argue that even in principle, its economic aspect cannot be isolated from all the others. On this view human behaviour can only be observed or understood 'as a whole'. Because the method of abstraction does not apply, there cannot then be any such thing as 'economic analysis'. That was not Gandhi's view. He remained committed to the validity of analytical reasoning based on the method of abstraction. 'Euclid's straight line may not be capable of being drawn on a blackboard. But the impossibility of the task cannot be permitted to alter the definition'. The problem with the economic mode, as Gandhi saw it, was not that it abstracted from some aspects of reality but rather that the particular aspects it abstracted from were central to the phenomena under study. Ethical influences on economic behaviour could not properly be treated as disturbing factors that 'prevented economic laws from having free play'. It was not reasonable to abstract from them even as a first approximation. Nevertheless, if more appropriate assumptions were made valid conclusions could be reached using the deductive method.

Again, Gandhi's approach in ethics as in economics remains firmly rooted in methodological individualism. He opposed collectivist theories both of state and society. While he often chided his countrymen for failing to live up to the high moral norms of their own past, the norms themselves could not be derived from tradition, custom or religious text. 'It was good to swim in the waters of tradition but to sink in them was suicide' while 'to respect a tradition even when it becomes tyrannous spells not life but death and it should be discarded'. Thus, Hinduism was hemmed in by many old customs, some of which were praiseworthy but the rest were to be condemned. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata had logical and analytical truth but were not to be taken literally nor treated as historical record. Gandhi's belief in Hindu scriptures did not require him to accept every word and every verse as divinely

inspires, and he declined to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it might be, if it was repugnant to reason or moral sense. Even the Vedas were not exempt. 'No matter what is credited with Vedic origin if it is repugnant to the moral sense it must be summarily rejected as contrary to the spirit of the Vedas and perhaps what is more as contrary to fundamental ethics'. Gandhi had great respect for other religions, as he held for his own, and often quoted from the Bible or the Quran to make a point. Yet they too were subject to the same judgement, 'I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality.' As Gandhi often used religious terminology (a 'saintly idiom' as it has been called) in his speeches and writings, the critical, individual and rational nature of his approach to religion has sometimes been missed. Since it was only individuals who reasoned who had moral sense and exercised moral choice, individual conscience remained for him the ultimate court of appeal. Nation and society were not conceptually 'prior' to the individual members of the aggregate. Rather, the morality of a nation depended on that of individuals. 'If the individuals who constitute a nation do not observe moral principles, how can the nation become moral?' Similarly, 'if the individual ceases to count, what is left of society?' Clearly, Gandhi did not subscribe to a deterministic view of human action, either of the historical or the sociological kind. For him, 'Ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit.'

Gandhi also shared with the mainstream economic tradition a consequentialist approach to choice. For him as for the economists the assessment of consequences of various alternative courses of action is always the proper basis for choosing between them. There is one important difference; Gandhi usually interprets consequences in broader terms than the economist is apt to do. For Gandhi, they include moral as well as strictly economic effects and effects on others as well as on oneself. Nevertheless, it is to consequences that he looks rather than to any one overriding moral principle in terms which every alternative can be assessed, for 'It is not possible to enunciate one grand principle and leave the rest to follow of itself.' A recurrent theme in Gandhi's writings is that life is not one straight road. 'There are so many complexities in it. It is not like a train that once started, keeps on running.' Nor can one climb the Himalayas in a straight line. As a pluralist, he believes that in any actual choice a number of different moral principles are usually involved and there could be conflict between them. '(But) one's life is not a single straight line; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another.' The choice is often far from clear. 'Relative dharma does not proceed on a straight path, like a railway track. It has on the contrary to make its way through a dense forest where there is not even a sense of direction.' Looking at consequences helps us in finding a direction.

Consumption Behaviour: The Limitation of Wants

The concept of 'limitation of wants' is a typically Gandhian contribution to the theory welfare economics. This states that an individual's welfare is best achieved not, as economic theory suggests, by attempting to maximize the satisfaction of multiplicity of desires subject only to the prevailing budget constraint but rather by reflecting on his desires and trying to choose between them. The claim is supported by arguments

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bearing on the relationships between desire, satisfaction, happiness and welfare. While economic analysis often regards these more or less as synonyms, according to Gandhi they are quite distinct concepts.

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First, not all kinds of happiness contribute to human welfare. That drink or drugs can make people happy for a while is not, for example, a relevant consideration for policy. Second, not all kinds of desire-satisfaction contribute to happiness. Primarily this is because an individual's desires for goods and services do not form a fixed set such that their satisfactions would make the happy: 'We notice that the mind is a restless bid; the more it gets the more it wants and still remains unsatisfied.'

Multiplying one's daily wants in this fashion merely makes a person a slave to an unending sequence of desires and there is no slavery equal to slavery to one's own desires. Such a process does not lead an individual to any sustainable steady state consumption path. Those who are in the mad rush to multiply wants, thinking that this will add to their real substance, are mistaken. On the contrary, self-indulgence and the ceaseless multiplication of wants hamper one's growth because they are erosive of contentment, self-respect and peace of mind. It is from these that one's long-run happiness can be found, not just from obtaining what one likes at the moment. What is true for an individual is true also for society. Indeed, individuals may be impelled towards unlimited wants not only by their own desires but also by the prevailing social ethos. In modern Western society, states Gandhi, the basis of culture or civilization is understood to be the multiplication of all one's wants.

If you have one room you will desire to have two rooms, three rooms and the more, the merrier. Similarly you will want to have as much furniture as you can put in your house, and so on endlessly. The more you possess the better culture you represent or some such thing. Gandhi regarded such a culture as flawed.

Another reason why trying to maximize desire-satisfaction may not make an individual or a society happy is that the process of trying to satisfy a multitude of wants has its own costs. Such an attempt requires the extensive use of machinery, which could lead to pollution of the environment and a loss of creativity in work. Another usual characteristic is a 'mad desire to destroy and time, to increase animal appetites and go to the ends of the earth in search of their satisfaction'.

Typically, a country pursuing the quest will be 'made hideous by the smoke and the din of mill chimneys and factories' and its roadways 'traversed by rushing engines dragging numerous cars crowded with men mostly who know what they are after, who are often absentminded, and whose tempers do not improve by being uncomfortably packed like sardines in boxes'. Besides, in a country where everyone had a car, 'there would be very little room left for walking'.

Such things, observes Gandhi, are held to be symbolic of material progress but 'they add not an atom to our happiness'. Deliberate restriction of material desires by individuals by means of 'the utmost effort' offers a more rational solution. Another argument in favour of limiting wants turns on the adverse moral consequences of economic growth. As we have seen, at the heart of the Gandhian approach to economic issues is his belief that ethical and economic considerations are inseparable. The objective must be to bring about improvements in both the economic and the

moral well-being of individuals, and thereby of society. But material progress can itself affect moral standards. These 'externalities' must be taken into account in the overall reckoning and a balance struck. Sometimes they could be of a positive kind. This is likely to be the case when there is mass poverty. 'No one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation.'

Millions of people in India live on only one meal a day. 'They say that before we can think or talk of their moral welfare we must satisfy their daily wants. With these, they say, material progress spells moral progress'. Gandhi agrees with 'them'; but, he argues, what is true of thirty millions is not necessarily true of the universe. Indeed, such a deduction would be 'ludicrously absurd' for 'hard cases make bad law'.

'The only statement', suggests Gandhi, 'that has to be examined is whether it can be laid down as a law of universal application that material advancement means moral progress.' His answer is that it cannot—both at the level of individuals and societies, there are too many examples to the contrary. In general, Gandhi believes that material affluence beyond a point not only does not imply but actively hinders moral progress. Gandhi does not discuss whether, or how, one could determine just where the point was located but he was convinced that it does exist. For this reason, when discussing comparative standards of living of different societies, Gandhi always asked questions about moral and economic aspects. Neither literacy nor wealth *per se*, without a moral backing, had any attraction for him as a 'social indicator'. To a correspondent who had pointed out Japan's achievements in terms of material progress and the level of literacy, Gandhi responded, 'And why are you so enamoured of the material progress of Japan? I do not know whether the material had gone side by side with the moral progress'. There are echoes here of Ruskin who had written in *Unto This Last*: 'It is impossible to conclude, of any given mass of acquired wealth, merely by the fact of its existence, whether it signifies good or evil to the nation in the midst of which it exists. Its real value depends on the moral sign attached to it just as sternly as that of mathematical quantity depends on the mathematical sign attached to it.'

The limitation of wants appeared to be a way of avoiding adverse effects of material progress.

Whichever of these various justifications of the doctrine of limitation of wants one takes as primary, they have one thing in common, and that is, such limitation is not intended as a glorification of austerity but rather as an exercise in the optimization of overall individual welfare. In taking up such a position Gandhi anticipated a basic theme of the recent literature against economic growth. Indeed, he was one of the first writers to argue explicitly and in a systematic way that non-economic aspects of welfare are important and that a single-minded pursuit of the maximum satisfaction of material wants might not lead to the best of all possible worlds. In developing this thesis Gandhi was influenced by Ruskin and Tolstoy but he had a far more positive and practical approach than his mentors.

From a practical point of view, the question of what wants should be limited to is important. Gandhi appears to give different answers at different times. In some

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of his early writings he appeals to the principle of what he calls satisfying one's 'natural wants'. Each person should be able to satisfy all natural wants and no more. These are conceived as minimal, or basic, needs. One 'should make do with the fewest possible articles... and in the smallest possible quantity... no more than what is absolutely necessary to pay the body its hire'. However, natural wants will vary from one individual to another depending on metabolism. If one person has a weak digestion and so requires only a quarter pound of flour for his bread and another needs a pound, the former's natural want will be correspondingly lower. Natural wants also vary with climate. 'Fiery whisky in the north of the British Isles may be a necessity. It renders an Indian unfit for work or society. Fur coats in Scotland are indispensable, they will be an intolerable burden in India.' Some natural wants, according to Gandhi, could only be specified at the village, rather than the individual, level. To this category belongs transport and sanitation. He wrote, 'The roads should be so scrupulously clean in this land of crore of barefooted pedestrians that nobody need hesitate in walking or even sleeping in the streets. The lanes should be macadamized and have gutters for letting out water. The temples and mosques should be kept so beautifully clean that the visitors should feel an air of tranquil holiness about them. The village should as far as possible, be full of shady trees and fruit trees in and around them. It should have a *dharamshala*, a school and a small dispensary. Washing and privy arrangement should be such as may not contaminate the air, water and roads of the village.'

Elsewhere, especially in his later writings, Gandhi appears to take a rather broader view of basic 'needs'. The proliferation of material wants is still rejected as a goal. One's aim should rather be their restriction consistent with comfort, which is less narrowly interpreted than natural want. Typical of this broader outlook are passages such as the following:

'If by abundance you mean everyone having plenty to eat and drink and to clothe himself with, enough to keep his mind trained and educated. I should be satisfied. But I should not like to pack more stuff in my belly than I can digest and more things than I can ever usefully use. But neither do I want poverty, penury, misery, dirt and dust in India.' And again, 'Everyone must have balanced diet, a decent house to live in facilities for the education of one's children and adequate medical relief'.

More than half a century after Gandhi's death, the bill of goods that he prescribed as a minimum is still not one that the average Indian household is in a position to consume. The actual consumption of both rural and urban poor falls far short of the limits to wants that Gandhi set. On the other hand, the affluent, even many of those not so affluent, are often engaged in a frantic display of luxury consumption in a way that Gandhi had supposed to be peculiarly 'Western'. In this perspective the limitation of wants can be seen as a means of reducing economic inequality. This aspect of the doctrine comes out clearly in some of Gandhi's later writing, for example in his statement that while he did not want to taboo everything above and beyond the bare necessities, 'they must come after the essential needs of the poor are satisfied. First things must come first'. However, it remains somewhat peripheral to the doctrine itself.

Consumption Behaviour: Swadeshi

Swadeshi means indigenous or home-grown. The Swadeshi movement was a mass movement to encourage people, especially those living in cities, to develop the habit of consuming Indian rather than foreign products. They were also urged in particular to wear only *khaddar*, i.e., cloth made of yarn spun by villagers using the *charkha* or spinning wheel. The movement was undertaken by the Indian National Congress under Gandhi's leadership. During the 1930s, the movement became widespread in some parts of India.

Gandhi did not regard Swadeshi merely in terms of political expediency but sought to justify it by moral principles. The first relevant principle here is that of neighbourhood. One has a moral duty to help one's neighbours. While it is true that you have duties to all humankind, the duties you owe to different segments of humankind are not of equal importance. There is a hierarchy of duties based on the degree of proximity. Individuals' service to country and humanity consist in serving their neighbours. They cannot starve their neighbours and claim to serve distant cousins in the North Pole, for one must not serve one's distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. This was the basic principle of all religions and of 'true and humane economics'.

The neighbourhood principle has a direct consequence for the interpretation of Swadeshi, namely that local products should be preferred. Inhabitants of Bengal should only consume cloth made in Bengal in preference to substitutes imported from more distant parts. This was so whether the substitute concerned came from Manchester or Japan or Bombay or Ahmedabad. 'If Bengal will live her natural and free life without exploiting the rest of India or the world outside, she must manufacture her cloth in her own villages as she grows her corn there.' For the same reason, by consuming cloth or *ghee* made in Calcutta rather than those made locally the people (of Porbandar) were being 'chained with fetters'.

Between countries, the neighbourhood principle translates as patriotism. It is sinful to eat American wheat while a neighbouring grain dealer starves for want of custom. An individual's preference-ordering over commodity-bundles should be guided by patriotism. 'The law of each country's progress demands on the part of its inhabitant's preference for their own products and manufactures'. For Indians, there is an obligation to use Indian-made things whenever they are obtainable, even though they may be inferior to foreign articles. For instance, India produces a sufficient quantity of leather. It is therefore one's duty to wear shoes made out of Indian leather, even if it is comparatively dearer and of an inferior quality, in preference to cheaper and superior quality foreign leather shoes. For the same reason products of Indian textile, sugar, or rice mills 'must be preferred to the corresponding foreign products'.

Comparisons of price or quality are not relevant for the kind of consumer's choice decision Gandhi is talking about; but patriotism is: 'We attend flag-hoisting ceremonies and are proud of our national flag. Let me tell you our pride has no meaning if you do not like things made in India and hanker after foreign ones.'

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If a particular commodity is not made in India at all, the patriotism argument ceases to apply.

‘I would regard it as a sin to import Australian wheat on the score of its better quality but I would not have the slightest hesitation in importing oatmeal from Scotland if an absolute necessity for it is made out because we do not grow oats in India.’ (Young India, 15 November 1928)

For the same reason the argument did not apply to English lever watches, books or surgical instruments. Japanese lacquer work, Austrian Pins and pencils of Swiss watches.

While this argument applies to all home-grown products, Gandhi singles out the products of village industry for special attention. Within that category *Khaddar* claimed pride of place. Indeed, the Swadeshi movement came to be regarded primarily as a means of encouraging consumers to wear *khaddar*. Accordingly, people, especially towns-people, were asked to buy *khaddar* in preference to mill-made cloth and to boycott foreign cloth altogether. It was specifically the use of foreign cloth that Gandhi sought to prevent, not just British cloth and not all foreign goods, which he argued would be racial, parochial and wicked.

Gandhi’s identification of Swadeshi with village industry, and with hand-spinning, was based on a two-fold argument: that the urban population of India owed a special moral duty towards the villages, and that this duty would be best discharged by providing a market for village products and above all hand-spun cloth. The first part of the argument is a logical consequence of the principles of neighbourhood (there are few towns or cities in India that are not surrounded by villages) and patriotism (most Indians are villagers). Gandhi sought to support it further by introducing another moral principle, that of historical justice. Both economic and moral standards in the villages had declined through long neglect. City people as a whole were partly to blame. Reparation had to be made. ‘We are guilty of a grievous wrong against the villagers and the only way in which we can expiate it is by encouraging them to revive their lost industries and arts by assuring them of a ready market.’ We must, urged Gandhi, think of our household consumption requirements in terms of ‘rural-mindedness’, which was ‘in consonance with the true economics of our country’. The second part of the argument had more to do with standard economic analysis.

Spinning was a solution for rural unemployment. ‘The whole scheme of khadi rests upon the supposition that there are millions of poor people in India who have no work during at least four months in the year.’ Around three-quarters of the Indian population, who were agriculturists tilling their own land, belonged to the category. Even in a normal year, because agricultural work was seasonal, they remained idle for a third of the year or more. This, Gandhi believed, was the principal cause of their endemic poverty. Their normal life was lived on the border-line of starvation. If there was crop failure or famine, the extent of involuntary unemployment became much greater and many of them died of hunger and disease. For the ‘semi-starved’ but partially employed millions, spinning provided a means of part-time employment as well as insurance against famine. Thus, Gandhi saw spinning as a supplementary industry for agriculture rather than as a means of employment for village artisans.

Why, one might ask, choose spinning, rather than some other subsidiary occupation for agriculturists? Gandhi's answer to this was strictly pragmatic. Spinning had long been practised by villagers in the past. It required only a very simple and low-cost implement and little technical knowledge or skill. It could be easily learnt, did not require too much attention, could be done at odd moments and, for these reasons, was suitable as part-time employment for masses of rural people. Neither cattle breeding nor weaving, which had been suggested as possible alternatives to spinning as a supplement to agriculture, enjoyed these advantages, even though they were more remunerative. Spinning was 'the easiest, the cheapest and the best'. Again, 'the test of Swadeshi was not the universality of the use of article which goes under the name of Swadeshi but the universality of participation in the production or manufacturing of such article.' Judged by this test, spinning had a potential unmatched by other contenders.

That cotton spinning was a specific remedy for agricultural unemployment also implied that it was not recommended for universal adoption. It was not, for example, meant for individuals who already had more remunerative employment, such as urban workers in textile mills. It could not work in a district or region which did not have large numbers of people with idle hours at their disposal. Gandhi neither contemplated nor advised the abandonment of a single, healthy, life-giving industrial activity for the sake of hand spinning. On one occasion, he found that a number of women had been spinning who were not without occupation or means of living. 'Perhaps they spin in response to our appeal and because they realize it is for the good of the country.' Nevertheless, Gandhi remained firm in his resolve that their spinning should stop, 'for the *charkha* movement had not been conceived with such people in mind but only for able-bodied people who were idle for want of work'. The operative principle was quite clear: if there were no crises of semi-unemployed people there would be no room for the spinning wheel.

Gandhi's pre-occupation with the need to find a subsidiary occupation for farmers can be properly understood only if certain other considerations are kept in mind. The first is his view that the possibility of bringing about improvements in agricultural production itself was very limited. As an extremely high percentage of cultivable land in Indian was already under cultivation, there was little scope for increasing the agricultural area. Also, if agriculture was to provide the sole means of livelihood, one acre was estimated to be the minimum viable area for supporting a household. In these circumstances, extension of cultivation was not a plausible means of bringing about economic development in India.

To a number of nationalist economists, including Gandhi's own political mentor, G K Gokhale, improving the productivity of land already under cultivation did appear to be a promising solution. Towards this end they advocated concerted efforts, especially by government, to expand irrigation facilities so as to make farmers less dependent on the vagaries of rainfall and also to encourage them to adopt higher-yielding seed and improved agricultural practices. Gandhi did not take up this line of argument, because of his belief that proposals for agricultural improvements were 'chimerical' and not immediately available. He opined, 'Till now I believed that improvement in agriculture was impossible unless we had the administration of the

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State in our own hands. My views on this are now undergoing modification. I feel that we can bring about improvements even under the present conditions so that the cultivator may make some measure of profit from the land even after paying his taxes... The time has come to pay attention to agriculture.'

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However, Gandhi continued to oppose the 'industrialization' of agriculture by large scale use of mechanized techniques which were not only contrary to the kind of village society he wished to bring about, but would also mean 'trading' in soil-fertility for the sake of quick return'. This, he thought, would prove to be a disastrous short sighted policy resulting in virtual depletion of the soil. Without such innovation, however, it is doubtful whether agricultural productivity in India could be increased significantly.

The limitation of wants and Swadeshi both rest ultimately on the concept of ethical preferences. People should seek not simply to maximize satisfaction of self-interested desires subject to a budget constraint, but to achieve the long-run goals both of individual happiness and of helping others. The problem is that people's actual preferences may differ from their 'ethical preferences'. If Gandhian economics were taken as relating only to an ideal economic order, the difference would not much matter. Gandhi himself was much concerned about the difference between the actual preferences of urban Indians, especially in the matter of clothing, and what he thought their ethical preferences should be. He was not, however, entirely consistent in his analysis. In his more optimistic movements he appeared to believe that a 'true and national' taste for *khaddar* (an ethical preference) was already there in a latent form and hence that demand was likely to lag only briefly behind supply. The use of *khaddar* itself 'revolutionizes our tastes'. All that was necessary was to 'revive' the national taste for *khaddar* 'and you will find every village a busy hive'. More often he seemed unsure: '*Khaddar* has yet to become popular and universal' or even despondent: 'Khadi has not caught the fancy of the people'. After an initial spurt the demand for hand spun cloth failed to show any dramatic rise. Unsold stocks began to accumulate in parts of the country where efforts to increase production of hand spun cloth in the villages had been a success. Gandhi's conclusion was that khadi needed 'a great deal of propaganda'. After all, that was how all goods were sold. Textile mills 'had their own peculiar agencies and methods for advertising their wares'. In his presidential address to the Indian National Congress in November 1924, Gandhi criticized the proposition 'that supply follows demand'. Appropriate means of persuasion were necessary to encourage the consumption of *khaddar*.

Advertising campaigns were undertaken by the Congress and its agencies in favour of *khaddar*. Wearing it was made a prerequisite for membership of Congress. Exhibitions of village handicrafts were arranged to provide information to townspeople. Gandhi himself addressed mass meetings and wrote in the press in favour of *khaddar*. 'We', he declared, 'are the salesmen of Swaraj'. The urban middle classes were particularly targeted. The 'thinking portion' of the population had to give a lead; for '*Khaddar* which has to find a market must command preference among enlightened men'. That remained the favoured strategy, with 'the buying middle class at the one end and the manufacturing poor class at the other'. Some attempts were also made

to increase efficiency in production and marketing and improve the quality of the product. Much to Gandhi's disappointment, none of these measures succeeded in bridging the gap between ethical preferences and market demand. At an early stage of his campaign for *khaddar* Gandhi wrote somewhat wistfully about Queen Elizabeth I, who had prohibited the import of soft cloth from Holland, who herself wore coarse cloth woven 'in her own dear England' and 'imposed that obligation upon the whole of that nation'. Gandhi did not however aspire to such an option for himself. Sales talk was permissible, force never was. 'We do not want to spread khadi through coercion. We want to do our work by changing people's sense of values and habits.' But this was not enough for his cause to succeed.

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Technology, Industrialization and the Scale of Production

The central concern of Indian economic thought, since Ranade, had been the problem of industrialization. Different views were held on what constrained industrial development in India. For some it was economic drain. Others emphasized the lack of trained labour, credit facilities and entrepreneurial traditions. Yet others put the blame of the government for its failure to provide encouragement to Indian industry. All agreed, however, the industrial development was the long-run solution to poverty and famine. They agreed as well that the development of manufacturing industry on modern Western lines was desirable. Indeed, most Indian economic writing from the last decade of the 19th century onwards was concerned with how to speed up this process. Gandhi, on the other hand, did not regard industrialization as a goal that India should adopt. The overall vision which led Gandhi to his doctrines of the limitation of wants and Swadeshi also led him to oppose modern industrial development. The use of machinery and large scale production in urban centres were, he thought, to be avoided as far as possible.

According to him the three essential characteristics of machinery are the following: Firstly, it displaces human or animal labour instead of supplementing it or merely increasing its efficiency. Secondly, unlike human labour there is no limit to its growth and expansion. Thirdly, it appears to have a law of its own, which leads not only to labour being displaced but to it being displaced at an ever-increasing rate. This occurred not because such displacement was considered by the users of machinery to be socially or economically desirable, but as a consequence of the nature of technological progress per se.

Gandhi's opposition to modern, machine-based industrial development is a natural consequence of his characterization of machinery itself. 'I am against machines just because they deprive men of their employment and render them jobless. I oppose them not because they are machines, but because they create unemployment.' The answer to the question, discussed in classical political economy since the time of Ricardo, of whether machinery leads to unemployment, was, for Gandhi, self-evident. 'If one machine does the work of a hundred men, then where are we to employ those hundred men?' Now, one could argue that workers thrown out of work by the introduction of improved machinery would find employment elsewhere. Gandhi was perfectly aware of this argument. However, he rejected it, firstly because opportunities of employment were, in his view, fairly limited; and secondly, because

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the division of labour resulted in workers having very specific skill, which meant they could not easily be re-employed elsewhere in the economy. The tendency of machinery to throw workers out of their jobs was, Gandhi believed, a general one which operated everywhere, but its consequences were particularly grave for a country such as India with its huge population. The proliferation of mechanized industries in such a society would create large scale unemployment with horrendous social effects.

Gandhi's second main argument against the pursuit of industrialization by means of machine-based production was that it would concentrate production and distribution in the hands of the few. More specifically, it would lead to further encroachment of the cities on the villages, making rural people even more dependent on the cities than they already were. Gandhi's vision of village Swaraj could never be achieved through such a process. Because industrial production would be concentrated in a few urban centres, the economic as well as the political power of the urban elite would be strengthened at the expense of the masses of the villagers. Mass production in its usual sense, that is production by the fewest possible number through the aid of complicated machinery, could not serve the interests of the masses themselves. Gandhiji's solution was production by the masses through self-employment. He said, 'It is mass production in people's own homes. If you multiply unit production a million times would it not give you mass production on a tremendous scale? Distribution could be equalized only when production was localized, in other words when distribution was simultaneous with production. Furthermore, when production and consumption were both localized the pursuit of economic growth for its own sake, regardless of the consequences, would be avoided; there would be no temptation to speed up production "indefinitely and at any price".'

Gandhi's opposition to the use of machinery was neither total nor all inclusive. In a way, his objection was to industrialization in the sense in which it is usually understood rather than to the use of machinery as such. 'I am not against machinery as such but I am totally opposed to it when it masters us.' However, he also said, 'Every machine that helps every individual has a place'. His favourite example of a helpful machine was Singer's Sewing machine which supplemented human labour and increased its efficiency but did not dispense with the labour itself. Another was surgical instruments. Not only did he approve of such life-saving appliances but also of the complicated machinery used for making such appliances, for here such machinery was absolutely essential. As he said, 'We want to cultivate the hand process to perfection but where it is found to be absolutely necessary let us not hesitate to introduce machinery.' Yet another example is sanitation. Asked by a correspondent whether, because of his dislike of machinery, he opposed the adoption of flush toilets Gandhi replied, 'Where there is ample supply of water and modern sanitation can be introduced without any hardship on the poor, I have no objection to it, in fact it should be welcomed as a means of improving the health of the city concerned. At the moment it can only be introduced in towns.'

A more important exception is the case of public utilities which could not be undertaken by human labour. In such cases, Gandhi would approve of mechanized modern techniques. However, he would like them to be regarded as key industries

to be owned and operated by the state in the public interest. Thus, such cases are to be treated as exceptional.

Gandhi remained, however, totally committed to his opposition to extensive use of machinery for the production of basic necessities. He maintained this position to the end, strongly opposing the use of machinery for grinding corn, manufacturing cloth or ploughing the land. If Gandhi were prime minister of India he would stop all machine driven ploughs and flour mills and restrict the number of oil pressing factories. He might perhaps not destroy the existing textile mills but certainly would not help them and in any case would not permit new ones to be set up. Ideal villages which are self-reliant with regard to food, which have not a single flour mill and in which the residents grow all the cotton they need and manufacture their own cloth, right up to the stage of stitching garments in their own homes, should, he stated, be awarded prizes and exempted from taxes.

Some have suggested that he was not really opposed to the use of machinery but only to its misuse. Gandhi himself complained in various writings that his opposition to machinery was misunderstood for he was not against machinery as such. Similarly, he observes that 'machine power can make a valuable contribution towards economic progress'. Nevertheless, the role that he ascribed to machinery in the process of industrial development was a very limited one. 'It is said that now India is going to be industrialized. But industrialization of my conception has to be carried out in the villages with the *Charkha* plying in every home and cloth being produced in every village.' Essentially this is a vision of self-employed villagers producing their subsistence, including food and clothing, by manual labour, using very simple tools and implements. This is very different from industrialization. He did, it is true, accept that some large scale private industry would continue, for example in the production of cotton textiles. Trusteeship would help lessen its ill effects.

Gandhi's ideas on machinery are closely linked to his concept of Swadeshi. Neither has had any significant effect on economic policy. Developing countries, India in particular, have not chosen to adopt village industries as an alternative to modern industrialization. Indirectly, however, Gandhi's ideas about technology have had some influence by providing a warning that mechanization on Western lines may not necessarily be the optimal solution for countries with a very different resource-endowment. Instead, countries with plentiful labour and relatively little capital might benefit by concentrating on light industries and on labour-intensive techniques for producing their products. In the sense his ideas may have played some part in encouraging the adoption of what has been called intermediate or 'appropriate' technology in highly populated but capital-poor developing countries.

Trusteeship and Industrial Relations

Gandhi's theory of trusteeship was developed as an alternative to doctrines of socialism and communism (the two words are used more or less interchangeably in Gandhi's writings) which started becoming popular in India following the Russian revolution of 1917. These doctrines, wrote Gandhi, had brought to the forefront the question of what 'our' attitude towards the wealthy should be. He took socialist doctrine to mean essentially that the property of the rich – princes, millionaires, big industrialists

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and landlords – should be confiscated and they should be made to earn their livelihood as workers. Gandhi disagreed. All that one could legitimately expect of the wealthy was to hold their riches ‘in trust’ and use them for the service of society as a whole. ‘To insist upon more would be to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs’

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The rationale of trusteeship was that everything on earth belonged to and was from God. If an individual had more than his ‘proportionate’ share of wealth, or talent, he became a trustee of that part for the people as a whole. The rich should therefore use their talents to increase their wealth, for the sake of the nation. Trusteeship, thus, was a form of moral responsibility but it was quite different from either charity or benevolence and in a way it was an alternative to them. ‘If the trusteeship idea catches philanthropy as we know it will disappear’.

Trusteeship is, by nature, voluntary. The wealthy should come to accept their role as trustees. In the long run trusteeship could also be institutionalized, leading to what Gandhi described as ‘statutory trusteeship’. A trustee should be able to nominate his successor, for legal ownership would still be vested in the trustee and not in the state. However, the trustee’s choice of successor would be subject to conditions which would serve both as a check on the individual’s choice and as a signal of social approval. Thus, a proprietor who held his property as a trust could not pass it on to his children by inheritance unless the latter agreed to become trustees. If they were not prepared for this, the owner should nominate some other person.

The concept of trusteeship implied among other things that industrial relations should be built on cooperation rather than conflict. The mill owner should stop looking on labour simply as a means of earning profit, but rather as partners in a common enterprise. This implied in particular an obligation on the part of the employers not only to pay a living wage but also to ensure a clean working environment and provide facilities for cheap nutritious food, sanitation and elementary education for workers’ children. But trusteeship implied obligations for workers, too. In the prevailing system of industrial relations, while the capitalists tried to obtain maximum work with minimum payment, the workers hit upon various tricks whereby they could get the maximum pay for minimum work. The result was that a rise in wages did not mean an improvement in efficiency. When a system of trusteeship came to prevail, the mill hand would stop nursing ill will towards his employer and come to regard the mill in which he worked as his own. Such an approach had economic as well as ethical merit for if it came to be accepted, strikes and lockouts would become infrequent, productivity would increase, and the costs of maintaining a ‘heavy supervisory establishment’ to keep workers in order, would no longer be required. Trusteeship could also lead in a natural way to profit-sharing and to workers’ participation in management.

In bringing about a change from the existing system of industrial relations, based on a conflict of interest, towards based on trusteeship, it was enlightened industrialists who had to take the lead. Gandhi himself did not regard capital to be the enemy of labour and in principle held their coordination to be ‘perfectly possible’. However, as in most things in life, an ideal could only be realized approximately. He said, ‘Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid’s definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall go further in realizing a state of

equality on earth than by any other method.' On being asked, towards the end of his life, if he knew of any industrialist who had fully lived up to the ideal of trusteeship, Gandhi replied, 'No, though some are striving in that direction.' While the success of this, as of any enterprise depended on voluntary participation rather than coercion, Gandhi believed some sanctions were legitimate if some industrialist simply refused to behave as trustees, even after being given every chance. Different kinds of sanction could be applied, depending on circumstances. One was to bring the force of public opinion on erring industrialists to mend their ways. This could be expressed by direct action from below, a form of what Gandhi called non-violent non-cooperation. If that too failed to persuade the owners of capital to act as trustees, depriving them of their possessions by the exercise of state power might ultimately become necessary, 'with or without compensation as the case demanded'. However, by and large, peaceful and rational conversion to the principle of trusteeship would remain the norm.

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Gandhi put forward two main arguments in support of his belief that trusteeship was a better way of dealing with problems on inequality and exploitation than communism. The first argument was based on the unequal distribution of ability. According to Gandhi 'Although we are all born equal, that is to say, that we have a right to equal opportunities, nevertheless we have not all the same abilities'. Consequently, it was natural that some of us would be more fitted than others to acquire material gain. Entrepreneurial ability was scarce and, properly harnessed, could be socially valuable. If the rich were deprived of their wealth and made to earn their living as manual workers 'society will become poorer, for it will lose the gifts of a man who knows how to accumulate wealth'. Depriving society of the services of such capable people would not be in the interests of the country, especially if the country itself were poor and underdeveloped. Trusteeship, on the other hand, tries to preserve such abilities while utilizing them for the wider interests of society. Accordingly, Gandhi's advice to the eldest son of a prominent industrialist, who had been a friend and political ally, was that if he was already engaged in business he should remain so, but should use fair means and be a trustee. Secondly, Gandhi justified trusteeship by the principle of non-violence. The communist alternative of dispossessing the wealthy of the means of production by confiscating their property violated that principle. The soviet communist system, even though it had some good aims, such as the elimination of exploitation of the poor by the rich, was based on the use of force which was unethical, and because of this Gandhi had strong doubts about his final success.

Gandhi has been accused of double standards on this point, for as we have seen he too approved of state ownership of industry if private owners failed to accept a trustee role. However, as elsewhere, he was prepared to accept the lesser of two evils. Private industrialists, he thought, should be encouraged to cooperate with labour in a spirit of partnership and, given a chance, perhaps many would. If trusteeship did not work a minimum of state ownership would be necessary as a last resort but Gandhi, unlike the communists, did not regard this as either inevitable or good in itself. He had the greatest fear of the power of the state, which while apparently doing good by the minimization of exploitation can do the greatest harm

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to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress. Elsewhere he described the state as representing violence in a concentrated and organized form, opining that 'the individual had a soul but the State is a soulless machine'. In his view, 'the violence of private enterprise is less injurious than the violence of the State'. Coercion by the state could only be a necessary evil and trusteeship remained the preferred alternative.

There was one form of state intervention with property which Gandhi did not regard as coercion, namely, high rates of wealth or inheritance taxes.

Riches have not yet been sufficiently taxed. In this, of all the countries in the world, possession of inordinate wealth by individuals should be held as a crime against Indian humanity. In England they have gone as far as 70 per cent of the earnings beyond a prescribed figure.

Gandhi fails, however, to recognize that the argument based on the scarcity of entrepreneurial talent, which he had used against communism, applied in some measure against such 'democratic socialist' methods as well.

Charity, Leisure and the Sanctity of Work

This section discusses Gandhi's views on charity. As you have seen, he rejected the view that individuals' economic behaviour either was, or should be, guided solely by self-interested preferences. One would therefore have expected him to be favourably disposed towards charity, which economists themselves regards as an exception to their rules; it is the classical example of non-self-interested behaviour. Gandhi's view of charity is more complex, however.

In an early piece of writing, Gandhi quotes in full a well-known passage from the New Testament of the Bible, which extols the virtue of charity. Gandhi's own writings show quite clearly that he had considerable doubt whether what was usually regarded as charitable action represented a virtue at all. He seems to have taken his cue from two particular statements in the biblical passage he referred to, which suggested that the practice of charity must itself satisfy some other norms in order to qualify as 'true charity'. 'And though I bestow all my goods to the poor and though I give my body to be burned, and have no charity it profits me nothing' and again, '...charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly....' Gandhi, too, did not approve of charity irrespective of consequences. Indeed, he took it for granted that charity need not be a good thing, that 'there is no reason to believe that charity per se is meritorious'. In order to judge whether a particular charitable action is good or bad one must look to its expected consequences for recipients, donors and society at large. The effects that Gandhi was most concerned with were those on the incentive to work. For this reason, the idea of giving free meals to a healthy person who had not worked for it in some honest way was particularly abhorrent to him. Giving free meals to the poor had long been an honoured Hindu custom. It was known as *Sadavrata*, which literally means 'the constant task'. Some European authors had written in praise of *Sadavrata*, saying that the Indians had developed a system of feeding the poor that was self-organized, providing an alternative to the work-house.

Gandhi world has none of this. The system, he maintained, had done no good to India. Indeed, it was an evil custom which had degraded the nation and encouraged idleness, hypocrisy and crime. If food were available without effort, those who were habitually lazy would remain idle and become poorer (CW 28: 7). Philanthropic businessmen in contemporary India who sought to acquire religious merit by the practice of *Sadavrata* were actually committing a grievous wrong.

During a visit to Calcutta, Gandhi came across hundreds of hungry people being provided with a free meal by a private philanthropist. The sight appeared to him as being 'neither ennobling nor honourable to those who had organized the meals for the hungry people of Calcutta from day to day'. Perhaps the donors did not know what they were doing but 'were ignorant of the irreparable harm they were doing to India by this misplaced benevolence'. Such misplaced charity according to Gandhi, added nothing to the wealth of the country, whether material or spiritual and only gave a false sense of merit to the donor. For the same reason, he exhorted Parsi millionaires of Bombay not to give all their money to the poor, for they wanted to keep those crore of people dependent on their *Sadavratas*.

Gandhi allowed an exception to this condemnation of *Sadavrata*. It was commended for the lame, the crippled and those who were disabled by disease, for such people could not work. Even in this case however, relieving hunger was not the only objective. Preserving dignity and self-respect was no less important. 'Even the disabled should not be fed with thousands of people watching them. There should be a proper place, private and quiet for feeding them.'

The able-bodied poor should have no 'free lunch'. 'By their efforts, by their own work, these people should earn their livelihood and get their clothing, and they must not be taught to depend on others for their necessities.' Philanthropists who wanted to help could open institutions where meals would be given under clean, healthy surroundings to men and women who would work for them. The ideal work, believed Gandhi, would be spinning cotton but they should be free to choose any other work that was appropriate and feasible. But the rule should be 'No labour, No meal'. The same principle applied to beggars. They should be offered work and food but if they refused to work, they should not be given food.

Those who could not work because of physical disability should be taken to institutions financed by the state, rather than left to live by begging, which only encouraged fraud. The vast majority of street beggars were mere professional idlers 'when they are not much worse', and those who have money to spare do an ill-service to those beggars and to the country by giving them money, food or clothing.

Gandhi's view of charity is in line with his consequentialist view of ethics. In this respect, it differs from the Buddhist view which regards the act of alms-giving as conferring merit on the donor irrespective of consequences. It is also in keeping with Gandhi's ethical 'pluralism'. There are a number of different moral principles which could conflict: the principle of helping others justifies charity to beggars; the principle of self-reliance requires beggars to work. Gandhi's solution is a compromise between the two, an exercise which is impractical from an ethical viewpoint.

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As was usual with Gandhi, his remarks on charity were meant to apply primarily to a specifically Indian context. They have, however, a more general aspect. Governments of Western countries are under increasing economic pressure to reform their existing schemes of welfare payments, proposals have recently come up, for example, to link the eligibility of the unemployed to receive a dole to their willingness to work if jobs are provided. Such proposals have been attributed to a narrow 'economic' outlook and criticized on moral grounds. Gandhi would probably have approved of them but for moral rather than strictly economic reasons.

Of some interest, too, are Gandhi's views on leisure. His position on the role of leisure is somewhat more complex. In a properly functioning economy, he states, everyone would be in a position to enjoy a sufficiency of leisure. Village Swaraj is described as a place where 'everybody is a toiler with ample leisure'. On the other hand, the principle of limitation of wants applies just as much to leisure as to the consumption of goods and services. Leisure is 'good and necessary' only up to a point. Beyond that it becomes an indulgence, which is contrary to religion and ethics. Too much leisure could erode the human faculties. Whether the leisure was voluntary or involuntary, as in the case of Indian agriculturists who were unemployed for a third of the year, did not, Gandhi believed, make a fundamental difference in this regard. He felt nothing but dread at the prospect of our being able to produce all that we want, including our foodstuffs, 'out of conjurer's hat' so that we could have eternal leisure.

This attitude comes out also in some of his writings on machinery, which was referred to in the previous section. Industrial civilization based on the use of machinery could enable greater output to be achieved with reduced working time, a prospect that Gandhi did not welcome. 'I know that socialists would introduce industrialization to the extent of reducing hours to one or two in a day but I do not want it.'

Underlying Gandhi's ideas on charity and on leisure, there is a common thread. This is the concept of the sanctity of labour and especially 'bread-labour' – a term Gandhi borrowed from Tolstoy. This implies that every individual should earn the basic necessities, such as food and clothing, by the performance of manual labour. Even those who earn their livelihood by mental labour should do some amount of manual labour.

For Gandhi, the distinction between manual and mental labour was not quite as rigidly drawn as it was for Tolstoy, for physical labour, too, provided opportunities for the exercise of intelligence. Intention and purpose were important and could help increase efficiency. Intelligent body labour was the highest form of social service, 'for what can be better than that a man should by his personal labour add to the useful wealth of his country'.

Analytically, the distinction between physical and mental labour was less fundamental for Gandhi than that between work and non-work. It was the sanctity of work as such that lay at the heart of Gandhi's argument.

Gandhi's Quotes

The following are the famous quotes of Gandhi:

- A 'No' uttered from the deepest conviction is better than a 'Yes' merely uttered to please, or worse, to avoid trouble.
- A coward is incapable of exhibiting love; it is the prerogative of the brave.
- A man is but the product of his thoughts what he thinks, he becomes.
- A man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.
- A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.
- A policy is a temporary creed liable to be changed, but while it holds good it has got to be pursued with apostolic zeal.
- A principle is the expression of perfection, and as imperfect beings like us cannot practise perfection, we devise every moment limits of its compromise in practice.
- A religion that takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them is no religion.
- A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history. A vow is a purely religious act which cannot be taken in a fit of passion. It can be taken only with a mind purified and composed and with God as witness.
- A weak man is just by accident. A strong but non-violent man is unjust by accident.
- Action expresses priorities.
- Action is no less necessary than thought to the instinctive tendencies of the human frame.
- All compromise is based on give and take, but there can be no give and take on fundamentals. Any compromise on mere fundamentals is a surrender. For it is all give and no take.
- All the religions of the world, while they may differ in other respects, unitedly proclaim that nothing lives in this world but Truth.
- Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.
- Among the many misdeeds of the British rule in India, history will look upon the act depriving a whole nation of arms as the blackest.
- An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.
- An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind. An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching.

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- A coward is incapable of exhibiting love; it is the prerogative of the brave.
- A man is but the product of his thoughts what he thinks, he becomes.
- A man who was completely innocent, offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies, and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act.
- A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people.
- A policy is a temporary creed liable to be changed, but while it holds good it has got to be pursued with apostolic zeal.
- A principle is the expression of perfection, and as imperfect beings like us cannot practise perfection, we devise every moment limits of its compromise in practice.
- A religion that takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them is no religion.
- A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.
- A vow is a purely religious act which cannot be taken in a fit of passion. It can be taken only with a mind purified and composed and with God as witness.
- A weak man is just by accident. A strong but non-violent man is unjust by accident.
- Action expresses priorities.
- Action is no less necessary than thought to the instinctive tendencies of the human frame.
- All compromise is based on give and take, but there can be no give and take on fundamentals. Any compromise on mere fundamentals is a surrender. For it is all give and no take.
- All the religions of the world, while they may differ in other respects, unitedly proclaim that nothing lives in this world but Truth.
- Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.
- Among the many misdeeds of the British rule in India, history will look upon the act depriving a whole nation of arms as the blackest.
- An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.
- An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind.
- An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching.
- Fear has its use but cowardice has none.
- Fear of death makes us devoid both of valour and religion. For want of valour is want of religious faith.
- First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win.

- For me every ruler is alien that defies public opinion.
- Freedom is never dear at any price. It is the breath of life. What would a man not pay for living?
- Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err.
- Gentleness, self-sacrifice and generosity are the exclusive possession of no one race or religion.
- Glory lies in the attempt to reach one's goal and not in reaching it.
- God is, even though the whole world deny him. Truth stands, even if there be no public support. It is self-sustained.
- God sometimes does try to the uttermost those whom he wishes to bless.
- God, as Truth, has been for me a treasure beyond price. May He be so to every one of us.
- Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.
- Healthy discontent is the prelude to progress.
- Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress.
- I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill.
- I believe in equality for everyone, except reporters and photographers.
- I believe in the fundamental truth of all great religions of the world.
- I believe that a man is the strongest soldier for daring to die unarmed.
- 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.
- I claim to be a simple individual liable to err like any other fellow mortal. I own, however, that I have humility enough to confess my errors and to retrace my steps.
- I do all the evil I can before I learn to shun it? Is it not enough to know the evil to shun it? If not, we should be sincere enough to admit that we love evil too well to give it up.
- I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following.
- I have also seen children successfully surmounting the effects of an evil inheritance. That is due to purity being an inherent attribute of the soul.
- I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and Non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could.
- I have worshipped woman as the living embodiment of the spirit of service and sacrifice.

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- I know, to banish anger altogether from one's breast is a difficult task. It cannot be achieved through pure personal effort. It can be done only by God's grace.
- I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ.
- I look only to the good qualities of men. Not being faultless myself, I won't presume to probe into the faults of others.
- I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.
- I reject any religious doctrine that does not appeal to reason and is in conflict with morality.
- I suppose leadership at one time meant muscles; but today it means getting along with people.
- I will far rather see the race of man extinct than that we should become less than beasts by making the noblest of God's creation, woman, the object of our lust.
- I would heartily welcome the union of East and West provided it is not based on brute force.
- If cooperation is a duty, I hold that non-cooperation also under certain conditions is equally a duty. If I had no sense of humour, I would long ago have committed suicide.
- If patience is worth anything, it must endure to the end of time. And a living faith will last in the midst of the blackest storm.
- If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with the children.
- Imitation is the sincerest flattery.
- In a gentle way, you can shake the world. In matters of conscience, the law of the majority has no place.
- In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.
- Increase of material comforts, it may be generally laid down, does not in any way whatsoever conduce to moral growth. Infinite striving to be the best is man's duty; it is its own reward. Everything else is in God's hands.
- Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being.
- Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause.
- Intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit.
- Is it not enough to know the evil to shun it? If not, we should be sincere enough to admit that we love evil too well to give it up.

- It has always been a mystery to me how men can feel themselves honoured by the humiliation of their fellow beings.
- It is any day better to stand erect with a broken and bandaged head than to crawl on one's belly, in order to be able to save one's head.
- It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our hearts, than to put on the cloak of nonviolence to cover impotence.
- It is easy enough to be friendly to one's friends. But to befriend the one who regards himself as your enemy is the quintessence of true religion. The other is mere business.
- It is health that is real wealth and not pieces of gold and silver.
- It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh.
- It is the quality of our work which will please God and not the quantity.
- It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.
- Just as a man would not cherish living in a body other than his own, so do nations not like to live under other nations, however noble and great the latter may be.
- Justice that love gives is a surrender, justice that law gives is a punishment.
- Let everyone try and find that as a result of daily prayer he adds something new to his life, something with which nothing can be compared.
- Let us all be brave enough to die the death of a martyr, but let no one lust for martyrdom.
- Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.
- Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men.
- Man can never be a woman's equal in the spirit of selfless service with which nature has endowed her.
- Man falls from the pursuit of the ideal of plan living and high thinking the moment he wants to multiply his daily wants. Man's happiness really lies in contentment.
- Man lives freely only by his readiness to die, if need be, at the hands of his brother, never by killing him.
- Man should forget his anger before he lies down to sleep.
- Man's nature is not essentially evil. Brute nature has been known to yield to the influence of love. You must never despair of human nature.
- Measures must always in a progressive society be held superior to men, who are after all imperfect instruments, working for their fulfilment.
- Moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort.

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- Morality is contraband in war.
- Morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality.
- Morality which depends upon the helplessness of a man or woman has not much to recommend it. Morality is rooted in the purity of our hearts.
- My life is my message.
- My religion is based on truth and non-violence. Truth is my God. Non-violence is the means of realizing Him. Nearly everything you do is of no importance, but it is important that you do it.
- No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.
- Nobody can hurt me without my permission.
- Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as is cooperation with good.
- Non-violence and truth are inseparable and presuppose one another.
- Non-violence is not a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of
- Non-violence is the article of faith.
- Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.
- Non-violence requires a double faith, faith in God and also faith in man. Non-violence, which is the quality of the heart, cannot come by an appeal to the brain.
- Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed.
- One's own religion is after all a matter between oneself and one's Maker and no one else's.
- Only he can take great resolves who has indomitable faith in God and has fear of God.
- Peace is its own reward.
- Poverty is the worst form of violence.
- Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by acts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.
- Prayer is a confession of one's own unworthiness and weakness.
- Prayer is not an old woman's idle amusement. Properly understood and applied, it is the most potent instrument of action.
- Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.
- Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.

- Providence has its appointed hour for everything. We cannot command results, we can only strive.
- Purity of personal life is the one indispensable condition for building up a sound education.
- Religion is a matter of the heart. No physical inconvenience can warrant abandonment of one's own religion.
- Religion is more than life. Remember that his own religion is the truest to every man even if it stands low in the scales of philosophical comparison.
- Rights that do not flow from duty well performed are not worth having.
- Satisfaction lies in the effort, not in the attainment, full effort is full victory.
- Self-respect knows no considerations.
- Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy.
- Spiritual relationship is far more precious than physical. Physical relationship divorced from spiritual is body without soul.
- Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.
- That service is the noblest which is rendered for its own sake.
- The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
- The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problem.
- The essence of all religions is one. Only their approaches are different.
- The good man is the friend of all living things.
- The greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated.
- The human voice can never reach the distance that is covered by the still small voice of conscience.
- The law of sacrifice is uniform throughout the world. To be effective it demands the sacrifice of the bravest and the most spotless.
- The main purpose of life is to live rightly, think rightly, act rightly. The soul must languish when we give all our thought to the body.
- The moment there is suspicion about a person's motives, everything he does becomes tainted.
- The only tyrant I accept in this world is the still voice within.
- The pursuit of truth does not permit violence on one's opponent.
- The real ornament of woman is her character, her purity.
- The spirit of democracy is not a mechanical thing to be adjusted by abolition of forms. It requires change of heart.

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- The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.
- There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.
- There is a higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience. It supersedes all other courts.
- There is a sufficiency in the world for man's need but not for man's greed.
- There is an orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is no blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings.
- There is more to life than increasing its speed.
- There is no principle worth the name if it is not wholly good.
- There is nothing that wastes the body like worry, and one who has any faith in God should be ashamed to worry about anything whatsoever.
- Those who know how to think need no teachers.
- Those who say religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion is.
- Though we may know Him by a thousand names, He is one and the same to us all.
- To believe in something, and not to live it, is dishonest.
- To deprive a man of his natural liberty and to deny to him the ordinary amenities of life is worse than starving the body; it is starvation of the soul, the dweller in the body.
- To give pleasure to a single heart by a single act is better than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.
- Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear.
- Truth never damages a cause that is just.
- Truth stands, even if there be no public support. It is self-sustained.
- Unwearied ceaseless effort is the price that must be paid for turning faith into a rich infallible experience.
- Violent means will give violent freedom. That would be a menace to the world and to India herself.
- Violent men have not been known in history to die to a man. They die up to a point.
- We do not need to proselytise either by our speech or by our writing. We can only do so really with our lives. Let our lives be open books for all to study.
- We may have our private opinions but why should they be a bar to the meeting of hearts?

- We may never be strong enough to be entirely nonviolent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep nonviolence as our goal and make strong progress towards it.
- We must become the change we want to see in the world.
- We should meet abuse by forbearance. Human nature is so constituted that if we take absolutely no notice of anger or abuse, the person indulging in it will soon weary of it and stop.
- We win justice quickest by rendering justice to the other party.
- 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 or democracy?
- What do I think of Western civilization? I think it would be a very good idea.
- What is true of the individual will be tomorrow true of the whole nation if individuals will but refuse to lose heart and hope.
- Whatever you do may seem insignificant to you, but it is most important that you do it.
- When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator.
- When restraint and courtesy are added to strength, the latter becomes irresistible.
- Where love is, there God is also.
- Where there is love there is life.
- You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body, but you will never imprison my mind.
- You must be the change you wish to see in the world.
- 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.

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4.2.4 Gandhi's Philosophy of Life-Sense of Human Unity

The purpose of human life is the realization of the benevolent law; and the duty of every individual is to mould his own life in accordance with it. Thus, he has to help in the historical task of promoting human freedom and unity. If we wish to break down the narrowness which circumscribes human life, our method of change also should be guided by a high sense of human brotherhood and of the dignity of man. While not co-operating with certain institutions, people should bear no ill-will against their adversaries. They should patiently try to convert their adversaries into willing partners in the establishment of a new order based upon a more comprehensive sense of human unity.

He believed that the mind of the modern man, who has inherited a vast accumulation of cultural and cognate achievements, would be far superior to the mind of the one who lived in the prehistoric times. Therefore, progress is the result

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of education rather than heredity. There has been an unbroken succession of thinkers and of prophets who have led mankind from higher to still higher aims and objectives. This phenomenon is by itself the proof of the operation of a higher law, which rules the destiny of mankind. In many of Gandhi's writings such a faith is clearly implied.

Self-Discipline and Self-Purification

Gandhi personified in himself the high ideals of charity, purity, sacrifice and service. He had an ardent desire that India should establish a socialist society where the peasant and the worker will be provided with the means for full development and freedom of expression. As a staunch believer in *Ahimsa* and Truth, Gandhi strove hard to make the people realize the futility of resorting to violence. Moreover, his advice to the statesmen of various countries was to the effect that reliance on violence for solving international controversies ought to be avoided. He made the fear-ridden people fearless and they became bold enough to demand freedom for India. The prison houses and the gallows which used to frighten the people were transformed into holy shrines. He taught the virtue of 'self-discipline' and 'self-purification' to the people. He inculcated in them the importance of organized action for overcoming social, economic and political maladies. He introduced religious principles into politics and set about the task of spiritualizing politics with some success. He uplifted the downtrodden people and helped India transform itself into a self-respecting nation. Handling of public funds, he emphasized, was a trust which should never be betrayed. He himself would spend hours, if need be, accounting for the last pie. Gandhi's personal example and disciplined life tended to wean even the wicked away from graft and corruption. And he imparted to his followers a concern for the well-being of the downtrodden. The present Government of India has been striving hard to promote the well-being of the oppressed sections of the Indian society.

Factors which Inspired Gandhi's Views

Gandhi was influenced by the teachings of Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavir and also by several ancient Hindu philosophical monographs, such as the Upanishads, Patanjali's *Yogasutra*, Mahabharata of Ved Vyas and last but not least the Bhagwad Gita. From the Upanishads, Buddhism and Jainism, he learnt the concept of *ahimsa*. The Bhagwad Gita inspired him to become a *Karmayogi*, which means a person who is selflessly devoted to work. Self-realization and disinterested performance of one's duty were the principles which he learnt from the *Gita*. Gandhi was influenced by the teachings of Christianity and Islam as well. He was very impressed by the noble and simple life of Jesus Christ. He particularly liked one impressive sentence in the Bible that is 'Hate the sin, don't hate the sinner'. Christ's adherence to non-violence also deeply influenced him. Moreover, Gandhi learnt the value of *Satyagraha* from the Christian teachings. He points out that 'It was the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which really awaken me to the rightness and value of *Satyagraha*.' Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of god is within You' was another source of inspiration to Gandhi. He admits that Tolstoy is one of the three modern writers who have exerted the greatest spiritual influence on his life.

From Ruskin, Gandhi learnt three basic principles

- The good of man is to be found in the good of all
- The work of a barber is as good as that of a lawyer, both being the means to earn one's livelihood
- The farmer, the labourer or any other individual who is doing physical labour must be given due importance.

He learnt from Ruskin the principle of dignity of labour. From Henry David Thoreau, an American philosopher and anarchist, Gandhi learnt the 'concept of Civil Disobedience'. In other words, Gandhi learnt many concepts from several sources, religious and philosophical which were developed to suit Indian conditions.

Service for Humanity as the Core of His Philosophy

Service for humanity is the core of his philosophy. He believes in the absolute oneness of God irrespective of the different names by which we call Him, and thus there is the essential unity among His living creations. Man's ultimate aim is the realization of God and all his endeavour—social, political and religious—must be guided to this end. He said, 'The immediate service of all human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, simply because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and be one with it—I am a part and parcel of the whole and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity.' For Gandhi, God lives in the temple of humanity and man becomes great exactly in the degree to which he works for the welfare of his fellow men.

Truth and Righteousness as the Highest Religion

Gandhi remarked, 'Life without religion, I hold, is life without principle, and life without principle is like a ship without a rudder.' Just as a ship without a rudder will never reach its destination, so will a man without religion never reach his destined goal. By religion Gandhi does not mean dogmas or rituals. There is no religion as something that transcends, 'which changes one's very nature, which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and whichever purifies'. Gandhi emphasizes the moral basis of religion. He said, 'True religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other.' He believes in the universal religion, propounded by Swami Vivekananda in the Parliament of Religions. In the same strain Gandhi says, 'Even as a tree has a single trunk, but many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium.' He advocates the study of other religions besides one's own, because it 'will give one a grasp of the rock bottom unity of all religions and afford a glimpse also of the universal and absolute truth which lies beyond the dust of creeds and faiths'. We should have an attitude of respect and reverence towards all religions. 'Study and appreciation of other religions need not cause a weakening of regard for one's own religion; it should mean extension of that regard to other religions'.

Social Order Visualized by Gandhi

What was the social order that Gandhi visualized? The answer is: A society would help each human being to realize the highest aim of his life in a co-operative endeavour

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to search after the truth. A co-operative approach implies love and fellow-feeling and excludes all thought of hatred and exploitation. Thus the social order has to be based on truth and non-violence, the other name of love. Exploitation in any form—social, political, economic or religious—has to disappear because it devastates the divine dignity of human beings. The economic and social structure of the society must depend on decentralized industry and agriculture. Everyone has to be independent for one's vital needs; for dependence brings helplessness, and helplessness engenders exploitation. And yet one has to be inter-dependent since a co-operative living demands it. To materialize this vision of a society, Gandhi evolved a scheme of education after many trials and experiments over a period of 40 years. His ideas revolutionized people's views on education in those times. In 1937, the All India National Education Conference was held in Wardha, which unanimously approved of his idea and appointed a committee of the leading educationalists with Dr Zakir Hussain as its Chairman to give shape to Gandhi's plan. The report of the committee embodies what is known as the Wardha Scheme of Basic National Education.

Meaning of Education

'By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit.' This is how Gandhi summed up his idea of true education. He further said, 'All-round implies a harmonious development. "Drawing out of best" recognizes a great potentiality coiled up in the child which can be realized and developed to its perfection through education. "Body, mind and spirit" is a vision of the whole man.' The first emphasis is on the body and the culmination point is the spirit. It is through practical work that one attains intellectual development. But intellectual attainment is neither the beginning nor the end of education. It is a mid-point. The individual has yet to blossom to perfection to bring forth all that is best in him. All development, all personal advancement is in the search of Truth, which is the realization of the spiritual essence that is in a human being. Thus, education cannot be confined to childhood and youth—it has to take into account the entire life of a human being; and that is the significance of the phrase 'best in child and man'. So education will not be complete till one realizes the Self—the perfection. Education is through life and for life. Education must take care of the child as a whole, that is, the human personality in all its aspects—physical, intellectual and spiritual. But what is the purpose of education? It should be the function of education to bring about a harmonious development of all the aspects of human personality so that it can grow to its highest stature and serve the society at its best.

Gandhi's Views on Education

Gandhi propounded his views on education in the following words:

- **Education for a just social order:** 'The ultimate objective of the new education is not only a balanced and harmonious individual but also a balanced and harmonious society—a just social order in which there is no unnatural dividing line between the haves and the have-nots and everybody is assured of a living wage and right to freedom.'
- **Meaning of education:** 'By education, I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit.'

- **Education through craft:** ‘The uniqueness of this scheme is that education is to be given “through” village crafts. The end in view is not to be accomplished by merely adding a village craft to the current syllabus.’
- **Self-supporting education:** ‘Self-sufficiency is not a “prior” condition, but to me it is the acid test. This does not mean that basic education will be self-supporting from the very start. But taking the entire period of seven years, income and expenditure must balance each other. Otherwise, it would mean that even at the end of this training the basic education student will not be fit for life. This is the negation of basic education. ‘Nai Talim’ (new education) without the self-support basic would be like a lifeless body.’
- **Dignity of labour:** ‘It is a crime to make education merely literary, and to unfit boys and girls for manual work in later life. Indeed I hold that as the large part of our time is devoted to labour for earning our bread, our children must from their infancy be taught dignity of such labour. Our children should not be so taught as to desist labour.’
- **Religious education:** ‘To me religion means Truth and *Ahimsa* or rather Truth alone, because Truth includes *Ahimsa*, *Ahimsa* being the necessary and indispensable means for its discovery. Therefore anything that promotes the practice of these virtues is a means for imparting religious education and the best way to do this, in my opinion, is for the teachers to rigorously practise these virtues in their own person. This very association with the boys, whether on the playground or in the class room, will then give the pupils a fine training in these fundamental virtues.’
- **Spiritual training:** ‘I made the children memorize and recite hymns, and read to them from books on moral training. But that was far from satisfying me. As I came into closer contact with them, I saw that it was through books that one could impart training of the spirit. Just as physical training was to be imparted through physical exercise, and intellectual through intellectual exercise, even so the training of the spirit was possible only through the exercise of the spirit. And the exercise of the spirit entirely depended on the life and character of the teacher. The teacher had always to be mindful of his Ps and Qs whether he was in the midst of his boys or not.’
- **Education and character:** ‘The end of all knowledge must be building up character. What is education without character and what is character without elementary personal purity?’
- **The teacher:** ‘Woe to the teacher who teaches one thing with the lips and carries another in the heart.’
- **Medium of instruction:** ‘Our language is the reflection of ourselves and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best thought, then I say that the sooner we are wiped out of existence the better for us.’
- **The foreign medium:** ‘The foreign medium has caused a brain fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them for

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filtrating their training to their family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land.'

- **Curriculum and spinning:** 'In any curriculum of the future, spinning must be a compulsory subject. Just as we cannot live without eating, so it is impossible for us to attain economic independence and banish pauperism from the ancient land without reviving home-spinning.'
- **Freedom but under discipline:** 'The pupil must have initiative. They must cease to be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves and yet be thoroughly obedient and disciplined. The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measures of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied; unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity injurious alike to self and one's neighbours.'
- **Co-education:** 'Before launching on such experiments, a teacher has to be both father and mother to his pupils and be prepared for all eventualities, and only the hardest penance can fit him to conduct them.'
- **Textbooks:** 'I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that books are required more for the teachers than for the taught. And every teacher, if he is to do full justice to his pupils, will have to prepare the daily lesson from the material available to him. This too, he will have to suit to the special requirement of his class.'
- **Women's education:** 'As for women's education, I am not sure whether it should be different from men's and when it should begin. But I am strongly of opinion that women should have the same facilities as men and even special facilities where necessary.'
- **Handwriting:** 'Handwriting is an art. Every letter must be correctly drawn, as an artist would draw his figures. This can only be done if the boys and girls are first taught elementary drawing.'

Gandhi and Naturalism

To quote MS Patel, 'Gandhi has a strong claim to be ranked among the leading naturalistic educators of the world. He cannot however, be called an extreme naturalist. Like Rousseau, he believes that natural and rural environments are important educative agencies but he does not hold with him that the child should be segregated from the baneful influence of man and society. His attempt at rescuing education from the four walls of the school room cannot be passed over in silence.'

The important points of naturalism in the educational philosophy of new education are as follows:

- Gandhi agrees with Rousseau that the child is good by nature and this fact must be kept in mind while planning his education.
- Like the naturalists he advocates freedom for the child. He says, 'If children are to find themselves, they must be allowed a sufficient degree of freedom, if they are to develop their powers to the fullest, they must be prepared to accept the appropriate discipline and training.'

- He greatly stresses the importance of educating the child in natural surroundings. He expects ‘the teachers to educate village children in their villages so as to draw out all their faculties through some handicraft’.
- Like all naturalists he minimizes the importance of textbook. He said, ‘I do not even remember having made much use of the books that were available. I do not find it at all necessary to load the boys with quantities of books. I have always felt that the true textbook for the pupil is the teacher. I remember very little that my teachers taught me from books, but I have even now a clear recollection of the things they taught me independently of books. Children take in much more and with less labour through their ears than through their eyes. I do not remember having read any book from cover to cover with my boys.’

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Gandhi and Idealism

In the words of Shri MS Patel, ‘A study of his writings will lead to the conclusion that Gandhi is an idealist to the core. Idealism is ingrained deeply in his nature as can be seen from his upbringing and early education.’

The goal of life is self-realization, and this was to be achieved not by withdrawing from the worldly life but by serving his creatures. His *Dharma* consists training the spirit which takes place through purity in our daily lives.

The idealism of Gandhi is reflected in the following words: ‘Long before I undertook the education of the youngsters at the Tolstoy Farm I had realized that the training of spirit was a thing by itself. To develop the spirit is to build character and to enable one to work towards knowledge of God and self-realization, and I held that this was an essential part of the training of the young, and that all training without culture of the spirit was of no use and might be even harmful.’

Like all other idealists, Gandhi believed in the harmonious development of personality, and advocated that different types of social culture and physical activities may be undertaken to achieve this end.

Gandhi and Pragmatism

According to Shri MS Patel, Gandhi’s contribution to the pragmatic philosophy of education is unique. The introduction of a basic craft as the centre of education, the co-ordination and correlation of the content of the close relationship of education with actual life, the method of learning by doing, the individual initiative, the sense of total responsibility and emphasis on experiment as the means of discovering truth are some of the outstanding features of Gandhi’s pragmatic philosophy of education.

Gandhi’s educational philosophy is pragmatic due to the following reasons:

- He had an experimental approach towards life. Gandhi believed that reality is that which can be verified. He himself calls his autobiography *My Experiments with Truth*.
- Gandhi advocates, like a pragmatist, that a child should learn from the real experiments of life.

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- The project method of the pragmatist and the basic scheme of Gandhi have many common points. Like a project, a basic craft is to be a socialized activity involving participation in social relationships.

‘The greatest achievement of Gandhi’, according to Shri MS Patel, ‘is that he, in his educational philosophy, gives due place to the dominant tendencies of naturalism, idealism and pragmatism which fuse into a unity, give rise to a theory of education which would suit the needs of the day and satisfy the loftiest aspirations of the human soul.’

Principles of Basic Education

The principles of basic education are as follows:

- **Free and Compulsory Education for Seven Years:** Education should be free and compulsory from the age of seven to fourteen years. Seven years’ course will not only impart elementary education but also secondary education. At the age of fourteen the school should be able to produce intelligent citizens. They should acquire effective literacy and should develop proper control over their senses and should be mature for social appreciation and attitudes. The education should be both manual and intellectual.
- **Education to Centre on Some Craft:** It should be productive, manual and should centre on some craft. It must have educative possibilities. Different subjects should be grouped around it, and craft as such is not to be taught. The whole education is to be imparted through it. Craft is not added to the number of literary subjects in basic education. A craft has got tremendous educational possibilities.
- **Self-Supporting Basis of the Plan:** Gandhi was fully aware of the financial condition of our people. They could not spend a single penny on education of their children. It was the duty of the State to provide free and compulsory education to all the children of the State. He was fully aware that the government would never spend any amount to educate the teeming millions of India. He, therefore, wanted to make education self-sufficient. He could not wait till sufficient funds were made available by the State. He, therefore, suggested that education should be self-supporting. Hence, he introduced a manual productive craft, the sale of which would make education self-supporting.
- **The Medium of Instruction:** Mother tongue, according to Gandhi, is not only to become the medium of instruction but also to occupy the first place in languages. All expression in a natural way is possible through the mother tongue. To force a foreign language means waste of energy, time and money. It is also non-psychological for those who are not of linguistic taste. Even graduates cannot express themselves fully in English. The result is that they can neither express themselves in English nor in their mother tongue. If they express themselves in their mother tongue, they will use many English words but they won’t be able to use complete sentences in English or their mother tongue. In the basic system, national education is to be imparted through the mother tongue.

- **The Cult of Non-Violence:** Gandhi had firm conviction in non-violence. So how could this scheme of education remain uninfluenced from non-violence? Gandhi says, 'We have to make this training school as a school for winning freedom and for the solution of all our ills of which the chief one is our communal troubles. For this purpose we shall have to concentrate on non-violence. Hitlers and Mussolinis accept violence as a fundamental principle. Ours is non-violence, according to the Congress. All our problems have, therefore, to be solved non-violently. Our arithmetic, our science, our history, will have a non-violent approach and the problems in these subjects will be coloured by non-violence.'

According to Gandhi, 'Our Mathematics will always keep humanity at the centre of calculation in the evolution of power factors. History will not remain the record of kings and wars but a survey of humanity striving for a better world. Our Political Science and Economics will shift from competition and militarism to co-existence and protection. Our Engineering and Science will create things for human comforts. We will, thus, concentrate on village industries and not on city industries. We will have to review our village handicrafts if we want to keep all 7, 00,000 of our villages alive and not only a fraction of them.' The social order of Gandhi's contemplation was to be free from economic power in the hands of a few for the exploitation of many. For this accomplishment, society's politics, economic and education must stand on non-violence, truth and justice.

- **The Ideal of Citizenship:** The ideal of citizenship is an important feature of basic education. The spirit of citizenship should be filled in the child
- **Relationship with Life:** Education should be closely related to life. Wardha Scheme unifies knowledge and does not allow division of knowledge into watertight compartments. Everything is to be taught through the principle of correlation. There are three centres of correlation—craft, physical environment and social environment of the child. These three centres of correlation will achieve perfect integration of curriculum.

Self-Supporting Aspect

Gandhi observed, 'Self-sufficiency is not a prior condition but to me is the acid test. This does not mean that basic education will be self-supporting from the very start. But taking the entire period of seven years, income and expenditure must balance each other, otherwise it would mean that even at the end of this training the basic education student will not be fitted for life. This is the negation of basic education. "Nai Talim" without the self-supporting basis would be like a lifeless body.'

'When I used the word "self-supporting" I did not mean that all the capital expenditure would be defrayed from it, but at least the salary of the teacher would be found out of the proceeds of the articles made by our pupils. The economic aspect of the basic system of education is thus self-evident.'

'I would, therefore, begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and by enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus, every

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school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools.'

'I am very keen on finding the expenses of a teacher through the product of the manual labour of his pupils because I am convinced that there is no other way to carry education to crores of our children.'

'Primary education thus conceived as a whole is bound to be self-supporting even though for the first or even the second year's course it may not be wholly so.'

'My "Nai Talim" is not dependent on money. The running expenses of this education should come from the educational process itself. Whatever the criticism may be, I know that the only education is that which is self-supporting.'

'If such an education is given, the direct result will be that it will be self-supporting. But the test of success is not its self-supporting character, but the whole man has been drawn out through the teaching of the handicraft in a scientific manner. . . . The self-supporting part should be the logical corollary of the fact that the pupil has learnt the use of every one of his faculties.'

'I can imagine a school entirely self-supporting. If it became, say, a spinning and weaving institution with perhaps a cotton field attached to it.'

'If every school introduced spinning, it would revolutionize our ideas of financing education. You can work at a school for six hours per day and give education to the pupils.'

'It is easy to see that every school can be made self-supporting without much effort and the nation can engage experienced teachers for its school.'

'Education under *Swaraj* will aim at making boys self-supporting from their youth. Any other profession may be taught to them, but spinning will be compulsory.'

'Surely if the State takes charge of the children between seven and fourteen, and trains their bodies and minds through productive labour, the public schools must be fraud and teachers idiots if they cannot become self-supporting.'

'But as a nation we are so backward in education that we cannot hope to fulfil our obligations to the nation in this respect in the given time during this generation, if the programme is to depend on money. I have, therefore, been bold, even at the risk of losing all reputation for constructive ability to suggest that education should be self-supporting.'

'Land, building and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupil's labour.'

'We (Teachers) should be intellectual bankrupts if we cannot direct the energy of our children so as to get from them after a year's training, one *anna* worth of marketable labour per hour.'

Evaluation of the Scheme

The Wardha Scheme is imbued with Gandhi's cardinal creed of non-violence and the idea of a co-operative community. Shri Mahadev Desai explained, 'The idea of self-supporting education cannot be divorced from the ideological background of

non-violence, and unless we bear in mind that the new scheme is intended to bring into being a new age, from which class and communal hatred are eliminated and exploitation is eschewed, we cannot make a success of it.' The self-supporting society has to eschew hatred and exploitation for its very existence and must sustain itself through love, non-violence and the spirit of co-operative living.

It was only natural for this great man of our country to have the courage and conviction to launch such a revolutionary experiment. To quote the words of Dr Zakir Husain's Committee: 'Thus the new scheme which we are advocating will aim at giving the citizens of the future a keen sense of personal worth, dignity and efficiency and will strengthen in them the desire for self-improvement and social service in a co-operative community.'

The fact is that the underlying spirit of basic education has not been fully understood by many. Prof. Saiyidain in the foreword of the report of the Assessment Committee on Basic Education (1956) expressed the need for a careful reorientation of ideas, attitudes and techniques: 'It is therefore a matter of great surprise, though it is certainly one of disappointment that the full implications of basic approach have not yet been realized by many teachers and educational administrators.' Professor Mujeeb has rightly pointed out that 'The opinions of great men do not in the least absolve us from the duty of thinking for ourselves. They are flashes of inspiration which reveal to us aspects of truth and reality that may have remained invisible without them. But this is all. We cannot live for them or even by them. We can only live for ourselves, and we should look only within ourselves for the light that guides and the win that creates.' Gandhi would never brook the idea of the dogmatic acceptance of his own scheme by the people. He himself was the relentless critic of his own philosophy: 'You should not accept anything out of your regard for me.... The scheme should be accepted after full and mature consideration so that it may not have to be given up after a little while.' Though Gandhi had a desire to teach all the subjects through handwork, he was nevertheless aware that every one of these subjects could not be so taught, and therefore 'we will teach as much of these subjects through the *takli* ([spindle]; or any other basic craft) as possible'. He would not dogmatically interpret basic education as education through craft. This is true to a certain extent, but that is not the whole truth. The roots of 'Nai Talim' go deeper. It is based on truth and non-violence in individual and collective life. Untruth and violence lead to bondage and can have no place in education.

We must remember that Gandhi combined in himself the visionary and practical man. He was a man experimenting with truth. His thoughts evolved and grew with time. He realized with experience: 'It has become clear that the scope of basic education has to be extended. It should include the education of everybody at every stage of life. Education has to be as broad as life itself. It has to be adjusted and reoriented with the needs of time and the temper of a new society.'

Originality of Gandhi

MS Patel, in the book, *True Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, rightly says that 'his (Gandhi's) educational philosophy is original in the sense that he arrived at it through personal experience without drawing on the accumulated experience of

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others. It may not be original in the sense that the likes of it was never preached by anybody in the past; but it should be noted that its presentation and adaptation on a nation-wide scale are undoubtedly novel and original.' In the words of Acharya Vinoba Bhave, 'It may not be a new thing but it has been presented in a new light.' Gandhi himself says: 'I do know that the aim in the Middle ages or any age was never to develop the whole man through crafts. The idea is original.'

Gandhi and other Educators

The precursors to Gandhi's philosophy of education may belong to one of the two types, viz., (i) those who exercised direct formative influences on his philosophy, and (ii) a host of others who had reached similar or identical conclusions before, though Gandhi may have reached his conclusions independently of what they had taught. Among those who had exercised direct formative influence on his philosophy are Raichandbhai of Gujarat, Ruskin and Tolstoy. Those who had reached similar conclusions are Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Dewey and Karl Marx. Rousseau had advocated manual work just to eliminate prejudice against it. Pestalozzi recommended it for sense training and tried to show that industrial and intellectual training could go side by side. But Gandhi was bold enough to make craft as nucleus of the whole instruction and not an extra or additional subject. There is close resemblance between the theories of Gandhi and Froebel in so far as both lay particular emphasis on activity and constructive work in school life. Gandhi gave the constructive work of Froebel a concrete shape and a local habitation, though quite independently of him. Gandhi differs from Dewey in that he does not mean to supplement literary training with manual training, but makes manual training the means of literary and intellectual training. Karl Marx maintained that education should be related with productive process. But Gandhi does not attach a school to a factory or workshop; to him the school itself is the workshop where work is an essential instrument of learning.

Basic education is the result of Gandhi's experiments and experience spread over a long time. It will have far-reaching consequences and will have its way into distant lands. In short, his new scheme of education is 'new', 'epoch-making,' 'original' and 'revolutionary'.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. What was the greatest contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to political theory and politics?
2. What differentiates Gandhi's approach to economic issues from the mainstream tradition?
3. What was Gandhi's idea of true education?
4. What was Gandhi's belief as an idealist?
5. State one reason why Gandhi's educational philosophy is pragmatic?

4.3 GANDHIAN AMBEDKAR

B. R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi started work for the eradication of untouchability and social evils existing in the society around the same period and they even worked together for a short spell. Gandhi was a towering figure in Indian politics and Ambedkar had great respect for him for he effectively voiced the concerns of the downtrodden and espoused the removal of untouchability. Ambedkar agreed with Gandhi on the issue of non-violence. He, like Gandhi stood firm on the issue of purity of means, which to him was an important differentiating feature between Buddhism and Marxism. The concept of religion, for Ambedkar however, is quite different from the traditional one. The traditional meaning of religion is a belief in the supernatural. But Ambedkar did not consider the concept of God, soul and heaven as essential to a religion. Like Gandhi, human morality is the soul of Ambedkar's concept of religion. Both of them were humanists and great champions of the downtrodden masses. However, looked at the problem of untouchability from two different viewpoints. Gandhi had a keen sense of justice and human dignity, but it was conditioned by his religious convictions. Ambedkar's views were shaped by personal experience of the inequalities of the caste system. He had personally suffered the humiliations and insults meted out to an untouchable by a caste ridden society. So, he initiated activities through his own separate and distinct platform.

Though Gandhi opposed the practice of untouchability, he thought that it had no connection with the caste system. Till 1922, he supported the caste system. Ambedkar quotes Gandhi on this issue, 'I believe that Hindu society has been able to stand because it is founded on the caste system. Caste has a readymade means for spreading primary education, caste has a political basis. Caste can perform judicial function. I believe that inter-dining or inter-marriages are not necessary for promoting national unity. The caste system cannot be said to be bad because it does not allow inter-dining or inter-marriage between different castes. To destroy caste system and adopt Western European social system means that Hindus must give up the principle of hereditary occupation which is the soul of caste system. The caste system is a natural order of society. This being my view I am opposed to all those who are out to destroy the caste system'. But later Gandhi became critical of caste system and suggested an alternate to it. He said, 'The best remedy is that small castes should fuse themselves into a big caste. There should be four such big castes so that we may reproduce the old system of four *varnas*'. But Gandhi's concept of *varna* system is based on the principle of hereditary occupation. He had faith in the *varna* system and did not think it essential to end the *varna* system to eradicate the practice of untouchability. He considered the *varna* system as an ideal form of social organization.

To Gandhi, *varna* does not stand for any inequality. He views all *varnas* as equal because they are all important for the community. This system brings material well-being to society and spiritual freedom to individuals, according to Gandhi. As he believed in the spiritual oneness of all life he opposed untouchability and considered it an impassable barrier in the path of India's progress. For Gandhi, *swaraj* was not

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possible without the removal of untouchability as for him the definition of *swaraj* was, 'freedom for the nearest of our countrymen'. He wrote, 'An untouchable is outside the pale of respectable society. He is hardly treated as a human being. He is an outcaste hurled into an abyss by his fellow-being occupying the same platform. The difference, therefore, is somewhat analogous to the difference between heaven and hell'. He viewed this as a moral problem.

As a practical social reformer, Gandhi pointed out that inter-dining or inter-caste marriage does not help in the removal of untouchability. He strongly felt that the real cure lies in bringing about a change of heart in society. That is why he was not enthusiastic about popularizing these practices. He was also against the operating of separate schools or institutions for *Harijans* as these further perpetuate feelings of separation and inferiority. Gandhi also disapproved of the idea of a separate electorate for untouchables for he believed that the untouchables were part of the Hindu society and a separate electorate may divide the Hindu society.

Ambedkar, on the other hand, considered caste and the caste system as the major weakness of Hinduism. He believed that it was not merely based on a division of labour. It was a division of labourers into unnatural and watertight compartments. It disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. Ambedkar argued that social evils like sati, child-marriage and prohibition on widow-remarriage were the outcome of the caste system. He was against the graded inequality underlying the caste system. He found Gandhi subscribing to caste initially and later opposing it while still upholding *varna*. Ambedkar however felt that the principle underlying Gandhi's conception of *varna* was the same as that of caste, i.e., assigning social agents on the basis of birth rather than worth. According to him, *chaturvarna* divided the society into castes and sub-castes and they lost open door character and became self-enclosed units. Prohibition of inter-marriages or endogamy further accentuated the caste divisions. Gail Omvedt observed, 'On the question of caste, Ambedkar directly challenged both Gandhi and Nehru and other socialists. He saw Gandhi's project of reforming caste and eradicating untouchability but maintaining *swadharma* as illusory; '*Ramarajya*' was to him simply medieval backwardness'. One of Ambedkar's most important arguments against Hinduism was untouchability because it did not let Hindus act as a community. Ambedkar initially believed that Gandhian intervention would push forward the social reforms agenda. However, later he realized that Gandhi had succumbed to the pressures of traditional beliefs and instead of social transformation became the agent of orthodoxy. Ambedkar felt that Gandhi's strategy for the abolition of untouchability placed the 'untouchability' at the behest of the caste Hindus. Later, their relation worsened and after 1933, Ambedkar fought a relentless battle against Gandhi, although they continued to share a number of concerns.

Ambedkar was fighting for the recognition that 'untouchables' were a separate element in India, and therefore, should be provided with appropriate constitutional safeguards. He suggested his own strategies to confront untouchability and always warned the untouchables not to fall into the trap of Gandhism. He exhorted them to fight for political power. He aimed at securing political power for the untouchables. He demanded rightful representation of the depressed classes in the legislative council

and demanded a separate electorate for them in the First Round Table Conference. However, Gandhi disapproved of the idea of a separate electorate for untouchables as he believed that it would only divide the Hindu society further and began a fast unto death against this till this idea was scrapped. Instead, a provision for a reserved joint electorate was put forward to give a larger share of seats to the depressed classes than what was promised by the communal award. But Ambedkar's dislike towards the Congress and Gandhi continued. He felt that the issue of untouchability and the caste system had been relegated to the background by the Congress. He started work outside the Congress party and his views in this regard were expressed in his works, *What Congress and Gandhi have done to the Untouchables* and *Mr. Gandhi and the Emancipation of the Untouchable*. These works familiarize one with Ambedkar's reservations about Gandhi's prescriptions towards the problems faced by the depressed classes. He was opposed to the paternalistic attitude of Gandhi and other Congress leaders towards the depressed classes and he repeatedly stated that the Congress had done nothing to help these people in their struggle against the Hindu orthodoxy. He was against the Gandhian suggestion of treating untouchability as a religious problem but in no way did he want any division within the Hindus for the greater cause of political emancipation. To him, more than untouchability, it was important to understand the problem of untouchability. He therefore, demanded a special electorate for the depressed classes so that they would select their own representation in the legislative bodies to protect their interests.

Ambedkar held that political democracy in India required as education, enlightenment, elevation of the lower classes and the guarantee of the fundamental rights to them without which *swaraj* would be a new slavery for them. He asserted that without fulfilling these conditions, India would not be called a democracy. He always defended democracy as it was capable of bringing out revolutionary changes in the economic and social life of the people without bloodshed. However, he pointed out that for the operation and survival of democracy, the people should hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving social and economic objectives. It meant abandoning the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and *satyagraha*. He viewed democracy as a mode of associated living in which there would be no discrimination on social and economic grounds. It should be supported by the social base that is essential for its successful operation.

One of the solutions suggested by Ambedkar for the removal of caste barriers and untouchability in the Hindu society was inter-caste marriages and inter-dining, although the latter by itself is too weak a method to forge any enduring bonds. He called upon the Hindus to annihilate the caste barrier which is a great hindrance to social solidarity and to set up a new social order based on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. He suggested inter-caste marriages as one of the solutions to the problem. He firmly believed that if the caste Hindus are freed from the thralldom of *shastras* and their minds are cleaned of the perpetual notions founded on the *shastras*, they would inter-dine and inter-marry without any hesitation. Thus, he held that society must be based on reason and not on the deplorable traditions of the caste system. And this, he reiterated, was only possible by the education of the masses. As it is stated by Neelam Pathania, 'Dr. Ambedkar had a vision of a statesman.

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He could realize that cherished goal of freedom movement could not be achieved, and if achieved, the accomplishment could not be lasting, unless every section of the society was integrated in mind and conduct, and that was not possible unless the downtrodden and depressed classes were assured equality and freedom, rather, protection against exploitation in free India. . . . The development of free India, and stability of the Indian society as a free nation after independence, it was realized, largely depended on the establishment of an order based on political, social and economic justice'. Ambedkar as a great social humanist believed in the equality of human beings, considered every human being as an end in itself and stressed the need for guarantee of freedom to all without any discrimination.

Annihilation of caste discriminations was a speech that Ambedkar had prepared when asked to preside over the Jatpal Todak Mandal conference. Even though the conference was cancelled due to various reasons, Ambedkar published his speech. He had a deep and perfect understanding of the evils of caste system and this he presented competently in his speech. He correctly diagnosed the problems faced by Hindu society as a result of the caste system. His solution to the problems, as analysed in this speech, was annihilation of this system. He held that even though we run many programmes for the upliftment of the backward classes, true equality can only be attained if we give up the caste system. In effect, he sought a religious reform as well.

From the mentioned account it is clear that while Gandhi and Ambedkar wanted to eradicate untouchability and establish an egalitarian society, their approach to the problem and solution was different. This was explained by Dharam C. Vyas as:

Gandhi's viewpoint:

- Abolish untouchability
- Maintain *varna vyavastha* which he argued was different to the caste system; a difference so subtle and difficult to comprehend
- He believed that the hearts of the upper castes could be changed to treat the lower castes equally and his entire struggle was directed towards bringing that change of heart.

Ambedkar's viewpoint

- Abolish caste system.
- Ambedkar believed that the caste system derived its strength from the Vedas and *shastras* and hence asked for the destruction of the *shastras*. A proposition so strong and it provided the ammunition to the detractors.
- He wanted a strict legislation in place to make sure that caste could not be misused again.

To Gandhi, one way of removing the curse of untouchability was to bring about a change in our attitude as he considered it an amoral problem. He believed that it could be mitigated only by a change in the hearts and minds of caste Hindus. He was not in favour of legislative measures in favour of backward classes for the upliftment of untouchables. He felt that one cannot remove untouchability by enforcing

laws. On the other hand, what Ambedkar sought was a legal remedy to these social problems. It is to Ambedkar's credit that his struggle for the real freedom of India's millions of untouchables resulted in a national consensus in favour of the abolition of untouchability and the granting of certain constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In order to remove social inequalities and achieve the goal of social justice the unique device of the reservation system was built into the Constitution. This protective discrimination was aimed at balancing the benefits of society between the haves and the have-nots. It was mainly designed to uplift the backward sections of society without harming the interest of the caste Hindus and other advanced sections of the society. Thus, as the main architect of the Indian Constitution, Ambedkar outlawed untouchability and gave equal status to all citizens. But in spite of all these provisions provided for the depressed classes in India, their struggle for social justice continues even today and though 'positive discrimination' is securing the outcastes equal opportunities, it is now displacing those who are actually more qualified.

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Difference in the Economic Views of Gandhi and Ambedkar

While Gandhi propounded village *swaraj* and villages as the basic units of democracy, Ambedkar advocated leaving the village life to condemn caste hierarchy and upper caste domination. Urbanization was his answer for breaking the shackles of the caste system. Gandhi tried his best to preserve the beauty and health of the Indian villages. Hence, he stressed on the maintenance of villages in India. He said that if the villages in India go, nothing of India would remain. Ambedkar on the other hand felt that village life was one of the main reasons for the pathetic condition of the untouchables.

Again, according to Gandhi, industrialization is a curse for mankind as it depends entirely on our capacity to exploit others. He maintained that free India should seek an alternative to industrialism by practicing a simple and evolved life through strengthening its thousands of cottage industries. Ambedkar on the other hand, argued for the industrialization of India, because it was, for him, the soundest remedy for the agricultural problems of the country. He wanted to reorganize agriculture in a big way to develop it as one of the important industries. In fact, he thought of relating the useful areas of agriculture to industrialization. The reorganization of the Indian agricultural system on the lines suggested by him would help to wipe out completely the factories of social oppression and economic exploitation. Through this he wanted to root out the monopoly of big land-holders and his attempt was to free the landless labourers from the grip of the feudal lords of Indian society.

Though Ambedkar did not favour the nationalization of all industries, he wanted the key industries to be owned by the State. He felt that this could be helpful to safeguard and promote the interest of the poorer and the weaker sections of Indian society. He favoured an economy based on common ownership of property, at least with respect to ownership of agricultural land and key basic industries. But Gandhi advocated the concept of trusteeship based on harmonious class-relations. These were the basic differences of opinion between Gandhi and Ambedkar in the sphere of economics.

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Conclusion

Thus, we can conclude that, although the goals pursued by Gandhi and Ambedkar were almost the same, their strategies differed. Both of them were the champions of untouchables and they considered untouchables as the most shameful smear on the Indian social fabric. They thought that social reforms in India should precede its political freedom. While Ambedkar worked for the self-generation of the downtrodden masses, Gandhi wanted their emancipation to come about through their co-operation with the higher classes. Thus, they set out on a journey of profound engagement with each other and they were deeply affected and transformed by each other. Despite their differences in their approaches to social problems, Gandhi and Ambedkar did come closer later in life. By the end of his life, Ambedkar duly recognized Gandhi's contributions and acknowledged that the depressed classes had been 'nearest and dearest' to Gandhi. It was at Gandhi's instance that Ambedkar was appointed as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Constitution. Both Ambedkar and Gandhi dreamt of a strong and united India, an India of peace, prosperity and progress and an India in which freedom is available to all without discrimination. We have to rededicate ourselves to this great ideal which they put forward and for which they valiantly fought and relentlessly worked throughout their life. That would be the best tribute to these great leaders of our country.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 6. Why did Ambedkar consider caste system as the major weakness of Hinduism?
- 7. Why was the process of industrialization abhorred by Gandhi?

4.4 UNTOUCHABLES

Untouchability which is a unique social institution was a great barrier, according to Ambedkar, in the formation of an equitable order of society and hence his major writings were concerned with untouchability and the caste system. According to him, one of the major weaknesses of Hinduism was the caste system and its segregation of untouchability. Caste is not a physical thing, but a state of mind. He held that the religion which has inculcated the notion of caste is to be blamed for this belief. He believed that the caste system is not merely division of labour but has disorganized and demoralized the Hindus. The caste and caste consciousness has served to keep alive the memory of past feuds between castes and has prevented solidarity. Virtue and morality become caste ridden and caste bound. So Ambedkar opposed untouchability and stood for a radical change in the socio-political system to bring about an equitable society. He denounced the caste system and fought relentlessly to establish a society based on the democratic ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. For this he wanted the *varna* system to be dismantled. Ambedkar believed that eradication of caste system should be centred in the social reforms.

Ambedkar's life was shaped and influenced by bitter and discriminatory personal experiences of being a *dalit*. He therefore, wanted to enquire into the origin and development of the caste system and the practice of untouchability. His rational enquiry of Hindu religion led him to the conclusion that *varna* and caste system originated in Vedic culture. He argued that graded inequality is the normative anchor of the caste system. Graded inequality restricts the reach of equality to the members of the caste. According to Ambedkar, *Chaturvarna* presupposes the classification of the people into four definite categories, the *Shudras* being the lowest category. They were denied all rights and privileges including that of securing education. Ambedkar found caste as to be a fixture of the Hindu religion. He found Gandhi subscribing to caste initially and later opposing it but upholding *varna*, instead. Gandhi upheld *varna* system as the basis of social organization based on division of labour. Ambedkar however felt that the principle underlying Gandhi's conception of *varna* is the same as that of caste, i.e., assigning social agents on the basis of birth rather than worth. It led to upholding graded inequality and denial of freedom and equality.

It is said that the institution of untouchability is a corollary institution of the caste system of Hindu society. V.S. Nargolkar states, 'Untouchability is largely an out-growth of the system of caste and caste in its turn is the illegitimate child of the concept of *varna*'. Justice Nasrullah Beg is also of the opinion that, 'the evil of untouchability is not a separate institution by itself. It is a corollary of the institution of caste system warp and weft of the Hindu society'. As stated, many scholars and writers are of the opinion that untouchability is a corollary of the caste system. But when we go into the details of caste system we find that these observations are not very relevant.

On the basis of the different definitions of caste, the main features seem to be:

- Segmented division of society based on hierarchy
- Restriction on feeding and social interest
- Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections
- Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation
- Restriction on marriage

Here, we find that there is no mention of untouchability. Though the caste system generates a feeling of superiority among the higher class and a feeling of inferiority among the lower class, it has nothing to do with 'untouchability'. Ambedkar rightly observed this in his work, *Caste in India, their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*, 'the idea of pollution has been attached to the institution of caste only because the caste that enjoys the highest rank is the priestly class, while we know that priest and purity are old associates. We may therefore conclude that the idea of pollution is a characteristic of caste only in so far as caste has a religious flavour'. Hence we can say that untouchability is not a corollary of the caste system.

The caste system divides the Hindu society into four *varnas* whereas untouchability divides the Hindu society into 'touchable' and 'untouchable'. The high class Brahmins of the caste system impose social and religious restrictions on

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the so called low caste and observes 'untouchability'. This led Dr. R.K. Kshirsagar to write, 'undoubtedly, caste system has consolidated the institution of untouchability by enforcement of several disabilities and restrictions under the fictitious belief of "purity". As such caste and untouchability are so intertwined with each other that one cannot safely bifurcate them. However, the minutest observation reveals that the reality is different, both are separate institutions, at least at their inception'. Hence we can say that untouchability and caste system, though closely related, are different in nature. Untouchability, we can say, has been mainly a creation of the people than any scripture or divine being.

According to B. R. Ambedkar, the caste system has been a blot on Hinduism and it has robbed the Hindu religion of its vitality and brilliance. Untouchability is the worst feature of the caste system and it is deeply embedded in the minds of Hindu society. Ambedkar held that it acted as a powerful barrier against the emotional integration of the people of India as their entire outlook was coloured by it. It had divided the Indian society into high born and low born castes and untouchability continued to exercise a predominant hold on the social life of Indian society, especially the Hindus. According to Mahatma Gandhi, 'untouchability is phenomenon which is peculiar to Hinduism only and it has got no warrant either in reason or in *shastras*'. When we look into details, we see that untouchability had initially originated in the contempt and hatred of Buddhism by the *Brahmanic* forces which became a part of Hindu social habit and later a part of Hindu religion. Here we should not forget the fact that untouchability during the earlier days was not so rigorous. But as time went by it became more injurious, humiliating and inhuman in nature.

Ambedkar had fully realized the meaning of caste and untouchability in his childhood and adolescent life. He experienced the anguish emanated for the discrimination based on the low and high of the Hindu social system. Social criticism is the foundation of Ambedkar's philosophy and action. It revolves around the humiliation he and other members of the depressed class underwent in India as untouchables. He fought for the liberation of all people who were systematically separated and segregated from the mainstream. He found the caste system to be an outdated, impracticable, irrational and superstitious social practice. He narrated the damages done by the caste system on society and set out to make with the annihilation of caste as his goal. His prime concern was the establishment of an egalitarian society and he fought consistently for human dignity and social equality.

The most important part of Ambedkar's career was, in a nut shell, to secure social and political equality. He, therefore, pleaded the realization of economic and social democracy in India, for political democracy was unreal unless preceded by economic and social democracy. According to K.L. Bhatia, '... to Ambedkar social democracy means to enable every person to lead an all round life involving as much the cultivation of the mind as also the satisfaction of basic physical wants. This has been the aim of human society. The cultivation of the mind depends on *Saddhamma* – the combination of *Pradhva*, *Sila*, *Karuna* and *Maitri*. *Saddhamma* means the eradication and amelioration of all social barriers between man and man, the worth and not the birth is the measure of man, it promotes equality; it kindles in man the spirit of fraternity. This is, on the one hand, the way of life based on liberty, equality

and fraternity; this is, on the other hand, the way of attaining a government based on social democracy which is the corner stone as well as a milestone of social justice'. Social justice therefore, means justice which is not confined to a fortunate few, but takes within its sweep large masses of disadvantaged and underprivileged segments of the society.

Ambedkar felt that caste system wrought injustice to the lower caste by denying them basic human rights and preventing them from rising to the cultural level of higher castes. So the untouchables remained uncivilized and backward. This prevented the feeling of fraternity in the Indian society. The lower caste are not treated as equals in society and were discriminated against as untouchables. Untouchability, according to Ambedkar, meant the imposition of social disabilities on a person by reason of their birth in a certain caste. They were prohibited from using public roads, wells, schools, shops, and other public utilities. They were not allowed to come into the mainstream of social life. The upper castes treated them as lowly and polluting groups. According to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, 'untouchability is the notion of defilement, pollution, contamination and the ways and means of getting rid of that defilement. It is a case of permanent, hereditary stain which nothing can cleanse'. Thus, the practice of untouchability reinforced inequality and Dr. Ambedkar foresaw that only a casteless society that has inner strength can defend itself and also attain the goal of independence. The solution that Ambedkar proposed was the 'annihilation of caste'. He suggested inter-caste marriage and inter-dining for the purpose although the latter by itself is too weak to forge any enduring bonds. Further, he felt that hereditary priesthood should be abolished and it should 'remain open to all the co-religionists endowed with appropriate qualifications as certified by the state'. He felt that the Hindus would not accept these suggestions.

Ambedkar saw and studied that the social and economic conditions of the untouchable people were very deplorable and pitiable. The poverty along with untouchability ruined their life. He started his mission to uplift them to the level of human beings. He advocated that their social and economic conditions must be improved and they should not be treated as untouchables. He stood firmly for their human rights and for a respectful place for them in Hindu society. Ambedkar knew that unless the depressed classes did not get share in the political power, their subjugation would not end. In the second Round Table Conference, Ambedkar succeeded in convincing the British authorities of the need for a separate electorate for the depressed classes and got it. A separate electorate would mean that untouchables would vote for their own candidates and be allotted their votes separate from the Hindu majority. The McDonald Award, known as Communal Award, granted the depressed classes separate electorate. Gandhi felt that separate electorate would separate the *Harijans* from the Hindus. The thought that the Hindus would be divided pained him grievously. Gandhi vehemently criticized the principle of separate electorate and began to fast unto death against it. It created a political stir in the country. Dr. Ambedkar was threatened with dire consequences, if Gandhi died. In order to save the life of Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar signed the agreement known as Poona Pact, on 24th September 1931. This agreement scrapped the separate electorates. Due to public pressure and the persuasion by national leaders, Ambedkar

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finally agreed to be satisfied with greater representation through reservation instead of separate electorate. Gail Omvedt in her article, '*Dalits: Miles To Go*' wrote, '...even though he accepted the compromise of the Poona Pact, he believed till the end that the elected *Dalits* would simply become stooges of the upper caste-dominated parties.' Disturbed by Gandhi's attitude towards untouchables, Ambedkar wrote a book entitled '*Annihilation of Caste*' and made a historic announcement at Yeola that the untouchables would denounce the Hindu society to accept another religion.

In October 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party as he felt the need for having a political organization for the labourers and the depressed. It struggled for attaining human status for the workers belonging to the depressed classes. The party won fifteen out of seventeen seats in the Bombay Provincial Assembly elections and Ambedkar himself got elected in it. In 1942, he was nominated as a member of the Governor General's Executive by the British Government, as in-charge of the Labour department. In 1946, Ambedkar founded the People's Education Society which started a number of schools and colleges for the students of depressed classes. In August 1947, he was elected as the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee. When India became independent, Babasaheb Ambedkar became the first law minister of independent India. He once said that he took charge of the posts not for any individual gain but to safeguard the larger interest of the depressed classes.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

8. State the main features of caste system.
9. What do you understand by the term 'saddhamma'?

4.5 SUMMARY

- M. K. Gandhi (Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi) was born on 2 October 1869, at Porbander in Kathiawad.
- Gandhi's educational philosophy took shape through his educational experience at the Tolstoy Farm at Transvaal in South Africa.
- Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) came on to the Indian political scene at a crucial period of the Indian national movement.
- Under the leadership of Gandhi, the Congress decided to launch the non-cooperation movement in 1920.
- M. K. Gandhi was a man of action, a realist and a pragmatist.
- Gandhi believed in the essential goodness of man. According to him, left unto himself, man can develop his spiritual and moral personality. Man alone is capable of achieving wonders in the world.

- Satyagraha and fasting were usually criticized as forms of moral coercion. But Gandhi insisted that it was not coercion from any point of view – economic, psychological, political or moral.
- Writings on Gandhian economics have usually focused attention on the specific policies that he proposed.
- What really differentiates Gandhi’s approach to economic issues from the mainstream tradition is his extraordinary emphasis on the ethical aspect of economic behaviour.
- Gandhi was generally in favour of analytical reasoning based on the deductive method applied to a set of postulates.
- Gandhi’s view of charity is in line with his consequentialist view of ethics.
- For Gandhi, the distinction between manual and mental labour was not quite as rigidly drawn as it was for Tolstoy, for physical labour, too, provided opportunities for the exercise of intelligence.
- The purpose of human life is the realization of the benevolent law; and the duty of every individual is to mould his own life in accordance with it.
- Gandhi believed that the mind of the modern man, who has inherited a vast accumulation of cultural and cognate achievements, would be far superior to the mind of the one who lived in the prehistoric times.
- Service for humanity is the core of his philosophy. He believes in the absolute oneness of God irrespective of the different names by which we call Him, and thus there is the essential unity among his living creations.
- Like Rousseau, he believes that natural and rural environments are important educative agencies but he does not hold with him that the child should be segregated from the baneful influence of man and society.
- In the words of Shri M S Patel, ‘A study of his writings will lead to the conclusion that Gandhi is an idealist to the core. Idealism is ingrained deeply in his nature as can be seen from his upbringing and early education.’
- The ideal of citizenship is an important feature of basic education. The spirit of citizenship should be filled in the child.
- The Wardha Scheme is imbued with Gandhi’s cardinal creed of non-violence and the idea of a co-operative community.
- The precursors to Gandhi’s philosophy of education may belong to one of the two types, viz., (i) those who exercised direct formative influences on his philosophy, and (ii) a host of others who had reached similar or identical conclusions before, though Gandhi may have reached his conclusions independently of what they had taught.
- Ambedkar and Gandhi started work for the eradication of untouchability and social evils existing in the society around the same period and they even worked together for a short spell.

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- Gandhi had a keen sense of justice and human dignity, but it was conditioned by his religious convictions.
- Ambedkar's views were shaped by personal experience of the inequalities of the caste system.
- Though Gandhi opposed the practice of untouchability, he thought that it had no connection with the caste system.
- Gandhi views all *varnas* as equal because they are all important for the community.
- As a practical social reformer, Gandhi pointed out that inter-dining or inter-caste marriage does not help in the removal of untouchability.
- Ambedkar considered caste and the caste system as the major weakness of Hinduism.
- Ambedkar was fighting for the recognition that 'untouchables' were a separate element in India, and therefore, should be provided with appropriate constitutional safeguards.
- Ambedkar was against the Gandhian suggestion of treating untouchability as a religious problem but in no way did he want any division within the Hindus for the greater cause of political emancipation.
- Ambedkar held that political democracy in India required as education, enlightenment, elevation of the lower classes and the guarantee of the fundamental rights to them without which *swaraj* would be a new slavery for them.
- One of the solutions suggested by Ambedkar for the removal of caste barriers and untouchability in the Hindu society was inter-caste marriages and inter-dining,
- Annihilation of caste discriminations was a speech that Ambedkar had prepared when asked to preside over the Jatpal Todak Mandal conference.
- Ambedkar held that even though we run many programmes for the upliftment of the backward classes, true equality can only be attained if we give up the caste system.
- To Gandhi, one way of removing the curse of untouchability was to bring about a change in our attitude as he considered it an amoral problem.
- While Gandhi propounded village *swaraj* and villages as the basic units of democracy, Ambedkar advocated leaving the village life to condemn caste hierarchy and upper caste domination.
- According to Gandhi, industrialization is a curse for mankind as it depends entirely on our capacity to exploit others.
- Though Ambedkar did not favour the nationalization of all industries, he wanted the key industries to be owned by the State.

- While Ambedkar worked for the self-generation of the downtrodden masses, Gandhi wanted their emancipation to come about through their co-operation with the higher classes.
- Despite their differences in their approaches to social problems, Gandhi and Ambedkar did come closer later in life. By the end of his life, Ambedkar duly recognized Gandhi's contributions and acknowledged that the depressed classes had been 'nearest and dearest' to Gandhi.
- Untouchability which is a unique social institution was a great barrier, according to Ambedkar, in the formation of an equitable order of society and hence his major writings were concerned with untouchability and the caste system.
- Ambedkar's life was shaped and influenced by bitter and discriminatory personal experiences of being a *dalit*.
- It is said that the institution of untouchability is a corollary institution of the caste system of Hindu society.
- The caste system divides the Hindu society into four *Varnas* whereas untouchability divides the Hindu society into 'touchable' and 'untouchable'.
- According to B. R. Ambedkar, the caste system has been a blot on Hinduism and it has robbed the Hindu religion of its vitality and brilliance.
- Ambedkar felt that caste system wrought injustice to the lower caste by denying them basic human rights and preventing them from rising to the cultural level of higher castes. So the untouchables remained uncivilized and backward.
- Ambedkar saw and studied that the social and economic conditions of the untouchable people were very deplorable and pitiable.
- The McDonald Award, known as Communal Award, granted the depressed classes separate electorate.
- In October 1936, Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party as he felt the need for having a political organization for the labourers and the depressed.

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4.6 KEY TERMS

- **Orthodoxy:** It refers to a belief in which conventional ideas are accepted.
- **Ostracism:** It refers to a process of social boycotting.
- **Untouchability:** It refers to a status of specific groups who are confined to menial and despised jobs.
- **Nationalization:** It refers to a process in which the power is transferred from private to state ownership.

4.7 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

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1. The greatest contribution of Mahatma Gandhi to political theory and politics was the spiritualization of politics.
2. Gandhi’s extraordinary emphasis on the ethical aspect of economic behaviour differentiates Gandhi’s approach to economic issues from the mainstream tradition.
3. Gandhi summed up his idea of true education by stating, ‘By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit... education cannot be confined to childhood and youth—it has to take into account the entire life of a human being; and that is the significance of the phrase ‘best in child and man’.
4. Like all other idealists, Gandhi believed in the harmonious development of personality, and advocated that different types of social culture and physical activities may be undertaken to achieve this end.
5. Gandhi’s educational philosophy is pragmatic as he had an experimental approach towards life. Gandhi believed that reality is that which can be verified. He himself named his autobiography as *My Experiments with Truth*.
6. Ambedkar considered caste system as the major weakness of Hinduism as it was not merely based on division of labour but was a division of labourers into unnatural and watertight compartments. It thus, disorganized and demoralized the Hindus.
7. The process of industrialization was abhorred by Gandhi as industrialization depends entirely on our capacity to exploit others. He maintained that free India should seek an alternative to industrialism by practicing a simple and evolved life through the strengthening its thousands of cottage industries.
8. The main features of caste system are as follows:
 - (a) Segmented division of society based on hierarchy
 - (b) Restriction on feeding and social interest
 - (c) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections
 - (d) Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation
 - (e) Restriction on marriage
9. *Saddhamma* means the eradication and amelioration of all social barriers between man and man, the worth and not the birth is the measure of man, it promotes equality; it kindles in man the spirit of fraternity.

4.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Short-Answer Questions

1. Who influenced the thoughts and ideas of Gandhi and how?
2. State the arguments given by Gandhi against the pursuit of industrialization.

3. What is the common link between Gandhi's ideas on charity and leisure?
4. Write a brief note on the Wardha Scheme.
5. Differentiate between Gandhi and Ambedkar's viewpoints of untouchability.
6. Why was Gandhi not keen to popularize inter-marriage and inter-dining?
7. Why did Gandhi disapprove of the idea of a separate electorate?

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Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of Gandhian economics.
2. Discuss about Gandhi's theory of trusteeship.
3. What is education according to Gandhi? What are his views on education? Discuss in detail.
4. Examine the concepts of idealism and naturalism in Gandhi's educational philosophy.
5. List and explain Gandhi's principles of basic education.
6. Critically examine Gandhi's views on depressed classes and untouchability.
7. Compare and contrast the socio-political views of Gandhi and Ambedkar.
8. Analyse the reasons that made Ambedkar fight against untouchability.

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