

CHAPTER-II

DIFFERENT THEORIES ON *AHIMSĀ* AND *SATYĀGRAHA* BEFORE GANDHI

Nonviolence is not something which can be understood or analyzed as a simple concept. It is a system of interrelated beliefs and norms. It has been a prominent part of the *Vaiṣṇavite*, Jainist and Buddhist philosophies. *Ahimsā* is translated as non-violence. Non-violence is of two types: passive and active. Gandhi made a distinction between the two; he insisted that *ahimsā* is active, and rejected the passive non-violence of Jainas.

2.1. Different theories on Non-violence and *Satyāgraha*

Both Jainism and Buddhism discoursed non-violence as the basic principle of existence. These two religious schools were based on the basic theory of non-violence. Gandhi was deeply influenced by reading on these scriptures. The *Acaranga Sūtra* of the Jainas stated all life to be dear and precious, and Gandhi believed in it earnestly. The *Bhagvadgītā* was another important influence, on non-attachment and selfless action. Christianity was also another important influence on Gandhi's life. Gandhi was in search for a meaningful life, a life based on truth and honesty, a life that would possess moral courage to stand for the right and justice, even at cost of his own life.

Satyāgraha occupies a unique place due to both historical and substantive reasons. The idea of *Satyāgraha* was in place much before Gandhi, it was found in several religious anthologies including the *Upaniṣads*, the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Gītā* and the Quran. It was also practised by eminent personalities such as Prahlad, Harishchandra, Socrates, Plato, Jesus, Ashoka. Prahlad, the first individual *satyāgrahi*, offered *Satyāgraha* against the oppression of his father. Though it was not known then that it was what *Satyāgraha* meant. *Satyāgraha* is an active technique of action in a conflict

situation consisting of searching for the truth and a struggle for its justification. *Satyāgrahis* tried to bring about conflict resolution by non-violent means and it is possible only when the *satyāgrahi* confronts the opponent with non-violence by conviction rather than non-violence by convenience.

In the words of Gandhi, “The principle called *Satyāgraha* came into being before that name was invented. Indeed when it was born, I myself could not say what it was.”¹ Some westerners claim that Gandhi derived the idea of *Satyāgraha* from the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount. Some others believe that he was influenced by the writings of Tolstoy. Even though, Tolstoy himself assumed it from the New Testament. Gandhi derived his idea of *Satyāgraha* from his own *Vaiṣṇavite* faith. Maganlal Gandhi suggested the term ‘*Sadāgraha*’ which is a combination of Sanskrit words ‘sat’ and ‘*āgraha*’. ‘Sat’ means ‘truth’ and ‘*āgraha*’ means ‘firmness to truth’, and Gandhi called it *Satyāgraha*. *Satyāgraha* literally means ‘holding on to truth’ or insistence on truth.

‘*Satyā*’ also means ‘existence’. For Gandhi, God alone is or exists. All other things are temporary and transient. So, he called Him by the name of truth. He thought that truth was a more powerful name of God. An atheist may deny God but cannot deny truth. So, instead of saying ‘God is Truth’, he said ‘Truth is God’.

2.2. Different theories on Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in classical Indian philosophy

The philosophy of non-violence has a long history in the Indian religious thought and had many revivals in Hindu, Buddhist, Jaina, Jewish and Christian

contexts. *Ahimsā* has a broader meaning of having no ill feeling for any living being. *Ahimsā* was a part of the spiritual discipline in the traditional Indian philosophy. The Vedic conception of *ahimsā* is not comprehensive. It excluded the enemies from the application of *ahimsā*. In fact, in the *Yajurvedā* and the *Atharvavedā*, there are hymns which allow some form of violence.

‘Water and crops be helpful and favourable for us. The same should be injurious to those who think ill of us or whom we think ill of’. (*Sumitriyā na āpa Oṣadhayaha Santu dumitriya tasmay Santu yo asmāndveṣti yam cha vayam dviṣmaha – Yajurvedā*). This is a clear example of ancient thought that even the natural gift was denied to the enemies.

Some of the hymns in *Ṛg-Vedā* express *ahimsā* as synonymous to love. According to the *Vedās*, there is intimate relationship between man and God. The life of man has to be led under the very eyes of God. Besides the duties owed to God, there are also other duties to a man. Kindness to all is enjoined; hospitality is regarded as a great virtue. Virtue is conformity to the law of God, which includes the love of man. Vice is disobedience to this law. If we have sinned against the man who loves us, have ever wronged friend or comrade, have ever done an injury to a neighbour who ever dwelt with us or even to a stranger. Free us from the guilt of this trespass. These hymns of *Ṛg-Vedā* show *ahimsā* or love as the supreme virtue of man.

In some of hymns of the *Vedās* numerous sacrifices were prescribed. Animals were sacrificed in large numbers; the sacrifices were called ‘*paṣuyāga*’. These sacrifices were performed very often. This was a clear

instance of violence towards the animals which most certainly offended thoughtful and kind persons of the age.

The animal sacrifices were carried out by many acts of violence. There have been attempts before the advent of the Buddha to explain sacrifices as acts of non-violence because the sacrificed animals were believed to find a place in heaven. There is a case of clear compromise on the part of the Vedic interpreters who considered *ahimsā* as the highest value.

“Pacifism and non-violence are ancient beliefs. In India the pacifist tradition can be traced back to the earliest historical period. We have no written records belonging to the age of the Indus valley civilization. But the quarries at Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa have revealed that the Indus valley people were predominantly peace-loving. In fact, their pacifist attitude is considered to have been partly responsible for the eventual extinction of their civilization. It might have followed their defeat at the hands of the first wave of the more spirited and war like Aryans.”²

Hinduism, the oldest religion of India, is well-known for its non-violent and pacifist traditions. Its famous doctrine of ‘Advaita’, and aphorisms like ‘Soham’ (I and He) and ‘Tattvam asi’ (Thou art That) stand for spiritual immanence and emphasize the unity of all creation. War is incompatible with such a religion. In the *Ṛg-Vedā* there is no direct reference to pacifism and non-violence. Sometimes, animal sacrifices were performed in the *Ṛg* Vedic age. The *Ṛg-Vedā* affirms the doctrine of the unity of all mankind. We find this idea clearly expressed in the famous ‘*Puruṣa Sūkta*’: “*Puruṣa* himself is the whole universe.... All existence is a quarter of him. . . . The *Brāhmin* was his mouth;

the Rajanya was made from his arms; the *Vaiśya* was made from his thighs; the Sudra sprang from his feet.”³ Thus, the *Ṛg-Vedā* says that the whole community issues from, and is a part of, the one and only *Puruṣa*. Non-violence and pacifism seems to be the natural consequence of such a view.

It follows from this idea that a man doing violence to other man, would, indeed, be injuring himself and his creator. *Varnāśrama*-dharma also stood for the essential unity of the whole society. In a social order based on the consciousness of duty and on specialization of functions violence will naturally have been reduced to a minimum. Again, in *Varnāśrama*-dharma, the peace-loving *Brāhmaṇa* was prominent to the highest rank and was placed above the spirited and war-like *Kṣatriya*, who was allowed the use of violence, perhaps as a concession to his weakness. Thus, the use of violence was restricted only to a small section of the community.

The first clear beginnings of the tradition of pacifism and non-violence in India may be dated from the age of the *Upaniṣads*. In the *Upaniṣads* we find virtues like kindness and non-injury being explicitly enjoined upon the people. The non-violent tradition grew further in the two Sanskrit epics, the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*. Both the epics had remarkable influence over India.

2.2.1. Upaniṣadic theory of Non-violence and Satyāgraha

Ahimsā was part of the spiritual discipline in traditional Indian philosophy. It excluded the enemies from the application of *Ahimsā*. In the *Yajurvedā* and also in the *Atharvavedā* there are some hymns which allow some form of violence.

Some of the hymns in *R̥g-Vedā* express non-violence as identical with love. *Ahimsā* or non - violence has been known in Indian religions and philosophies for a very long time. It is not impossible that it is pre-Aryan in origin. The oldest written references to non-violence are found in Jainism, the historical origin of which is still unclear and also in the *Vedās* and the *Upaniṣads*. In the *Vedās* there is a verb which means, 'not to do violence'. As a noun *ahimsā* is mentioned for the first time in the *Kapisthalakatha Samhita* about 1000-700 B.C. In Jainism, Buddhism and the Yoga philosophy, non-violence is considered as a necessary norm for the sake of the spiritual development of the acting individual himself.

Since the time of the *Upaniṣads*, Hindu ethics have always stressed on the virtue of non-injury to all living beings. The *Upaniṣad's* thought is that God is the only absolute Reality. It is known as *Brahman* or *Ātman*. It is one. The world is not for itself; it issues from God and must therefore seek its rest in God. Throughout the process of the world we witness this infinitisation of the finite. Like the rest of the world, man feeling the pressure of the infinite in him reaches out his hand to clasp the highest. *Upaniṣads* assume that the God is the oneness of all finite things. The realisation of the oneness with God is the ideal of man. This is the highest truth. This highest truth cannot be attained by means of violence; but can be attained through *Ahimsā* or non-violence.

In *Upaniṣadic* thought, non-violence is interpreted as identical with reason. It is similar to the 'Golden Rule' of Aristotle. Human being is not a mere sense and instinct like the brute; it has a spiritual aspect with understanding and reason. Whenever a man is restrained by the sensuous desire, his life will be one of animal existence, without end or aim, killing and

embracing without purpose or reason. On the other hand, whenever a man conducts his life with understanding and reason, he attains the divine spirit. This divine spirit is the stage of self-realisation. *Katha Upaniṣad* says know the self or *Ātman* as the Lord who sits in the chariot called the body, buddhi or intelligence is the charioteer, mind is the reins, the senses are the horses, and the objects are the roads. The self, the senses and the mind combined, the intelligent call the enjoyer. But he who has no understanding but is weak in mind, his senses run riot like the vicious horses of a charioteer. He who has understanding, and is strong minded, his senses are well controlled, like the good horses of a charioteer. He who is without understanding, who is thoughtless and impure, never reaches the immortal state, but enters into the round of birth. But he who has understanding and he who is thoughtful and pure, reaches the state from which there is no return.

In some *Upaniṣads*, *Ahimsā* is described as quality of a disembodied soul alone. It can be realised by only man of detachment. The empirical or embodied self cannot attain the realisation of highest truth. The empirical self has inclination with the sensuous desires. So it is not controlled by the reason. Qualities such as weakness, rudeness, selfishness are of empirical self. This is the soul of animal with desire and passion. On the other hand, the disembodied soul is something higher than the embodied soul. This is the stage of bliss. At this stage, the natural instincts of man will be transformed into human nature, with meaning and purpose. The human is detached from sensuous desire. He realises himself as the *Sāt-cit-ānanda*. Such disembodied self alone can realise *Ahimsā*.

In some *Upaniṣads*, *Ahimsā* is interpreted as identical with ‘divine love’. The *Upaniṣads* hold that the whole world is born of God, as the self of man is. The essence of all things is alike. So, all finite love is deduced from self-love and is the form of the highest self-realisation. Love of wealth and property, class and country are special forms of self-love. The love of the finite has only instrumental value, while love of the eternal has intrinsic value. Finite objects help us to realise the self. The love of the eternal is supreme love, which is its own reward. To love God is to possess knowledge and immortality. Thus in the *Upaniṣadic* thought, the concept of *Ahimsā* is a tool by means of which we attain the self-realisation or oneness with God. It is the divine love which can be attained only by the man of detachment.

In the epics, philosophy of non-violence is interpreted as dharma. There are two epics in India *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*. These two epics are generally regarded as religious scriptures. They may be considered also as political works in the form of stories of two royal families. Although outwardly both the works stand for the great maxim: ‘Yato dharmah tato Jayah’ (virtue begets victory), the ways and means they prescribe diverge. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Truth is supreme and in the *Mahābhārata*, Truth is subservient to the necessity of political gain.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* begins with observance of Truth by *Daśaratha*, the king of Ayodhya. *Rāmāchandra*, son of *Daśaratha* represents the Truth. His actions and feelings are marked with Truth. The whole story of *Rāmāyaṇa* is the elaboration of observance of Truth. *Kaikeyi*, one of the wives of *Daśaratha*, insists on the observance of Truth and she wanted to bind *Daśaratha* to his original promise, which can be referred to as an insistence on Truth. *Rāmā*’s

friendship with *Sugrīva* is the second phase of carrying out of his Truth and of his promise to kill *Vāli*. *Rāmā* had promised *Sugrīva* before the sacred fire and *Rāmā* had to fulfil it.

Rāmāyaṇa may not be advocating non-violence to its fullest extent. In several events, desires violence to living beings without valid reason. *Sīta* refused to allow *Rāmā* to kill the denizens of the forest for no reason and create havoc among them. Throughout the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Rāmā* and the other important characters have not disobeyed Truth or have not indulged in unnecessary violence. The description of *Rāmarājya* in the work itself is based on Truth, justice and establishment of universal peace for all.

On the other hand, the story of the *Mahābhārata* begins with the burning of the 'lac' house. It was committed by the *Kauravās* to burn the *Pāndavās* to death. The story of *Mahābhārata* is described as the argumentation between the *Pāndavās* and the *Kauravās*. During the battle of *Kurukṣetra*, both the *Pāndavās* and *Kauravās* take choice to deceitfulness at the least opportunity. *Pāndavās* took the help of a eunuch, Shikhandi, to fight *Bhiṣma*, knowing well that he would abstain from fighting a eunuch. *Pāndavās* leaked false news of Drona's son, Aswatthama's death and killed the mourning Drona.

The lines of tears on the bow string were pointed out as a snake riding upwards by lord Krishna and Arjuna shot his arrow on that string resting on Drona's neck. Drona was thus killed. Duryodhana was hit below his belt which was prohibited in a club fighting. In the same way all the commanders in the battlefield on the *Kauravās'* side were killed with deceit. It is clear that the *Mahābhārata* did not care much for truthful behaviour in political affairs.

The *Mahābhārata* advocates *ahimsā* as the highest duty. Vyasa admires *satyā*, *ahimsā* and non-violent values at several places in the *Mahābhārata*. The wounded *Bhiṣma* thus exalted *ahimsā* in his discourse to *Yudhiṣṭhira*: “*Ahimsā* is the highest religion. It is again the highest penance. It is also the highest truth from which all duty proceeds.”⁴ The idea of *Satyagrāha* is also found in the epics of India. *Mahābhārata* is not real earthly war. The real war in the *Mahābhārata* was between the good and the evil, truth and untruth, violence and non-violence, light and darkness, right and wrong. Ultimately, good, truth, non-violence and right became victorious. *Vyāsa* has not praised violent technique. He regards non-violence as the highest duty. He praises truth and other non-violent virtues very highly at many places.

In the *Śāntiparva*, Kapila speaks of the ten ways to attain Brahman. The ten ways are: “kindness, forgiveness, peacefulness, non-violence, truth, straight forwardness, absence of pride, modesty, forbearance and tolerance.”⁵ In the *Vanaparva*, non-violence was expressed thus: “The hard and the soft yield alike to the soft; hence there is nothing impossible for the soft, hence the soft is more powerful than the hard.”⁶

The discussion on the *Mahābhārata* has an ontological meaning. The war of the *Mahābhārata* was for the sake of dharma. Moral and abstract principles are difficult to define. It is too subtle. The *Kurukṣetra* was above all a dharmaksetra. In the war, the forces are the same, but they are ranged on the sides of dharma and adharma. The *Pāndavā Yudhiṣṭhira*, was the son of dharma, and according to Indian conception, a dharma incarnate.

On the other side, Duryudhana, the eldest *Kauravā* was the incarnation of adharma. *Yudhiṣṭhira* engages in the war, with the *Kauravā* because in the position to which he has been reduced by his own foolishness, his dharma suffers diminution, it being impossible for him to fulfil his dharma as a *Kṣatriya*. In the end of *Mahābhārata* shows the victory of dharma.

Another chief character of the *Mahābhārata* was Arjuna, who refused to fight in the battlefield against his own kith and kin. Arjuna found himself in utter confusion whether to fight his own people or remain content in the position he and his brothers were thrown into. Arjuna does not see any good in killing his own people. He does not desire for victory nor kingdom and pleasure. Arjuna was of opinion that there cannot be real peace in fighting with arms and therefore fighting can be described as a ‘Ghora Karma’ (ferocious work). Thus the characteristic of Arjuna represents *Ahimsā*.

Thus both the epics, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* emphasise truth and *Ahimsā* as the paramadharma. Gandhi derived the notion of *Satyāgraha* from the *Vedās*, though the term *Satyāgraha* is not clearly mentioned in them. *Ahimsā* and truth are the twin roots of *Satyāgraha* and the greatest good of all, the goal of *Satyāgraha* is mentioned in the *Vedās*. In the *Ṛgvedā* and *Yajurvedā* there are glimpses of love and non-violence. In *Yajurvedā* the author also speaks of God pervading the entire world. It speaks of perfect unity and harmony amongst all living creatures because they are the children of one and same God. The *Puruṣa Sūkta* hymn of the *Ṛgvedā*, mentioned that the entire society should be based on four divisions *Brāhmana*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. In the *Ṛgvedā* it is said that the duties relative to the different casts are specific. The duties obligatory on the Brahmana are teaching, performance of ceremonial

sacrifice. *Kṣatriya* are protecting people from external aggressions and internal disturbances, chastising the wicked. *Vaiśya* are buying, selling and agriculture. *Śūdra* is being subservient to the other caste.

It is also stated that the law of love employed by the *Brāhmanas* is higher than the law of violence practised by the *Kṣatriyas*. Further in the *Rgvedā* the author has stressed ‘vayam’. Vayam stands for the greatest good of all. In *Yajurvedā* the author also speaks of God pervading the entire world. It speaks of perfect unity and harmony amongst all living creatures because they are the children of one and the same God. The aphorism “*Īśāvāsyamidam sarvam*”⁷, necessarily implies the values of truth, non-violence and justice.

In the *Upaniṣads*, though the word *Satyāgraha* is not clearly mentioned, the doctrines of truth and non-violence are clearly propounded. They have emphasized non-violence to all creatures. In the *Āchāndogyopaniṣad*, truth and non-violence are included among the five ethical virtues. The *Māndukyopaniṣad* advocates that truth alone becomes victorious in the long run. “I am no other than He”⁸, and “Thou art Thee”⁹ the two well-known *Upaniṣadic* aphorisms lucidly teach the doctrine of non-violence. These two maxims emphasize the oneness of all lives. This unity leads to the extension of non-violence even to the sub human creation.

2.2.2. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in the *Gītā*

In regard to the *Gītā* there has been a controversy that whether *Gītā* advocates *ahimsā* or *himsā*. The *Gītā* is the quintessence of the *Upaniṣads* and is considered to be the brightest gem in Indian philosophical literature. The central teaching of the *Gītā* is that one is bound to follow Truth and *Ahimsā*,

when there is no desire for fruit of action. There is no temptation for untruth or *Himsā*. In *Gītā*, *Ahimsā* is included in *Anāsakti*.

The *Gītā*, which is the most valued part, of the *Mahābhārata*, is not a treatise on non-violence nor was it written to condemn war which was not considered inconsistent with *ahimsā*. Similarly it does not advocate violence either. The theme of the *Gītā* is self-realisation and its means. The second and eighteenth chapters give us the central teaching of the *Gītā* regarding the way to self-realization, the ideal of *niṣkāmakarma*. *Sthitaprajña*, the ideal man of the *Gītā*, is humble and merciful, free from joy and sorrow, fear and hatred and is free from all desires. He is essentially a non-violent man, for violence has for its basis the desire to enjoy the results of one's action.

In the *Gītā*, the battlefield of *Kurukṣetra* represents the human body in which goes on a continuous struggle between good and evil. *Gītā* essentially teaches us the eternal message of selfless action with the spirit of detachment from the fruits of action (*Niṣkāma* karma). The *Gītā* gives us description of a holy war that has been rewarded for the performance of duty.

As Dr. Radhakrishnan elucidate in his 'Indian Philosophy vol. 1', "Right conduct is whatever expresses our real unity with God, man and nature; wrong conduct is whatever does not bring out this essential structure of reality. The unity of the universe is the basic principle. Good is whatever advances towards completeness and evil is whatever is inconsistent with it. This is the essential difference between Buddhism and the *Gītā*. In the *Gītā* we are assured that even though we may fail in our efforts, the central divine purpose can never be destroyed. It points out that the soul of the world is just, in spite of all

appearances to the contrary. The individual fulfils his destiny when he becomes the instrument of the increasing purpose of God.”¹⁰

When all passions of mind are destroyed and when one is free from hatred, prejudice, anger and obsession then only can one secure the calm detachment of mind required in the holy war. In war, Arjuna hesitates to kill his brothers and uncles. He hesitates to take part in war. Lord Krishna removes his ego and ignorance. The Karmayogi's actions are dedicated services to God. He ought not to think that he is killing the other in a war and he should not be afraid of losing his life. The *Gītā* says He who thinks of this (*Ātman*) as slayer and he who believes this to be slain, are both ignorant.

The *Gītā* insists man to be a Karmayogi. Renunciation in all action or wars against the profligate and corrupt society is the eternal message of the *Gītā*. All great sages who follow the truth have remunerated war. A Karmayogi, a seeker after truth, realises God through ceaseless performance of righteous action done in detachment. One who acts in the spirit of sacrifice with utmost selflessness realises God.

In the *Gītā*, Arjuna is shown as a non-violent man. If he would have been violent, he would perform the action on the basis of selfness and desire to enjoy the fruits of action. But instead of desire to enjoy the fruits of action, he fights with the spirit of detachment. He restrains all his passions, obsession, hatred and anger and fights, with the calm and tranquil mind. Such a warrior fights on a righteous path. He seeks self-realisation by desireless action, by renouncing fruits of action, and by dedicating all activities to God.

No doubt Arjuna, who had refused to fight, was convinced of his mistake after the discourse and agreed to join battle. But Arjuna was not conscientious objector. His pacifism was born of a temporary obsession, a disinclination to kill his own kith and kin due to false misfortune. He was not worried over the problem of killing as such. His hesitation was due to the persons whom he was intended to kill. The religious answer to this attachment would be that there is no kinsman and no no-kinsman. If therefore it is lawful to wage war at all, it makes no difference whether it is kinsman who are concerned or strangers. Thus Arjuna's infatuation was cowardice and killing and being killed, Krishna taught, is far better than cowardice.

It may be argued that Krishna, in spite of his detachment, was not neutral in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. He was on the side of right and truth. Though he renounced from fighting, he was an expert in war. His advice and expert knowledge were availed of by the *Pāṇḍavās*, and it is wrong to suppose that his support was only moral. But the Krishna of the *Gītā* is a liberated soul. He was attained perfect mental equilibrium and risen above violence and non-violence. Only such a person can kill for the good of all without the least attachment and is non-violent even while killing.

Those actions can be regarded violent, which have been done with the passion of anger, hatred and selfishness. The desire to enjoy the fruits of action, the narrow end of satisfying one's senses and passions dominate the violent man. But Arjuna has no selfish desire, no narrow personal end to achieve. It is impossible for a violent warrior, who kills others, to be desireless, detached, and indifferent to his pleasures and pains. It is not possible to kill one's own kith and kin in a calm and passionless state of mind. It is not possible to kill one's

brother after having killed all one's passions. The man who has no passions, who is indifferent to pleasure and pains and who is undisturbed by the death, he is the non-violence man. The fruit of action done in detachment consists in the realisation of truth. The result of this selfless action must be realisation of truth and non-violence. In the *Gītā* Arjuna is asked to fight this Dharmayuddha for the protection of Dharma, right, truth and good against Adharma, falsehood and evil. He is asked to fight in a spirit of detachment without any desire for reward.

But here a question arises, can the fight of Arjuna be called non-violent? *Gītā* accepts *Niṣkāma Himsā* as a necessity in life, and interested in social order and social uplift, it permits of this *Niṣkāma Himsā*. But this *Himsā* is no *himsā* to the *Gītā* at all. Gandhi accepts and applies in his practical life the teachings of the *Gītā*. He states that according to the letter of the *Gītā*, it is possible to say that warfare is consistent with renunciation of fruit. But after 40 years of continuous endeavour to fully enforce the teaching of the *Gītā* in his own life, he in his all humility feels that perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of *Ahimsā* in every shape and form.

The *Gītā* teaches *Anāsakta* Karmayoga. A man to be an *Anāsakta* Karmayogi has to perform duty for duties sake without any desire for the fruits thereof. F. Marry Barr states, "The result of this selfless detachment must be utter most truth and non-violence."¹¹ Amongst the illustrated characters, Arjuna is an imperfect incarnation, Krishna is the perfect incarnation. Arjuna is violent and is surrounded by the false notions of misfortune, aversion, attachment and irreligion. He suffers from the wickedness of 'mine' and 'thine'. He refuses to fight against his own kith and kin. Krishna is above all of them. He is perfect and non-violent. The votary of non-violence is called *Sthitaprajna*.

The Bhagavad *Gītā* claims that the only duty we have is to work in a non-attached way and not to get ourselves identified with the work. The *Gītā* prescribes two ways to attain this non-attachment. Lord Sri Krishna tells that work should not be given up but should be performed without attachment and desire for its fruits. Renunciation and performance of action both lead to liberation. Liberation is eternal, gives peace in this life and puts an end to rebirth. Performance of action is superior because it is easier and therefore suited for the vast majority, while renunciation of action is difficult to attain. Only a few extraordinary souls can follow the way of knowledge. The goal is to attain *Niṣkāma* karma.

Thus Sri Krishna asks Arjuna to perform his duties as a soldier, absorbed in Yoga, for that is the secret of work. Yoga is equanimity, indifference to success and failure, and one attains it when one's mind is free from desire for enjoyment and is firmly established in the self, and not to identify himself with his actions. They are in reality done by the gunas of *prakṛti*. It is only through delusion that a man identifies himself with them.

If a man sees inaction in action, then even in the midst of intense activity he experiences the eternal calmness of the soul. He is not affected by good and evil, happiness and misery. In all conditions he remains the same. He becomes *Sthitaprajña*, a man of steady wisdom.

2.2.3. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in Buddhist philosophy

In the Buddhist philosophy, the word '*ahimsā*' is used in various senses. It is more frequently used as *avihimsā* to denote *ahimsā*. In the eight – fold path of the Buddha, we have Right resolve as one of the constituents of the path.

Now this is explained as resolution of desires, resolution of unmalicious thinking, and resolution of non-violence or absence of cruelty. Sometimes, we find also the use of word *avihesā* to denote non-violence. This *avihimsā* or *avihesā* is explained as feeling of compassion. Sometime ‘*karunā*’ is presented in Buddhist texts as antidote to ‘*vihimsā*’. *Karunā* is for those who are overpowered by thoughts of violence.

Thus we see, *ahimsā*, *avihimsā*, *avihesā* etc find significant use in Buddhist texts. However, Buddhism laid great stress on more positive virtues like *maitrī* and *karunā*, we may say that if Jainism is ‘*ahimsā* – dharma’ Buddhism is ‘*karuna* – dharma’, especially later Buddhism with its different branches in the *Mahāyāna* complex. In fact, there is no great line of demarcation between ‘*Maitrī*’ and ‘*karunā*’ in Buddhism, although earlier branches of Buddhism of Hinayana complex are imbued with ideas of ‘*Maitrī*’ and later of *Mahāyāna* with abundance of *karunā*. Thus, *Ahimsā* in Buddhism is represented by twin concepts of ‘*Maitrī*’ and ‘*Karunā*’. There is also another concept of ‘*ksānti*’ (forbearance) which also partakes of elements of *ahimsā*.

Maitrī is complete abstinence of killing of living beings. It is also enumerated as the first ‘*kusālā kaṃa*’ (out of ten). This first Sila related to physical non-violence. Life is dear to all and so a Buddhist does not indulge in killing of any being. The Dhammapada says all bear the punishment. Life is dear to all. Comparing oneself to others, one should neither kill nor cause to kill.

‘*Maitrī*’ is exercised through certain meditative practices. It is also termed as one of the *apramānas*, because there is no barrier or limit in applying

this concept towards beings including animals in the three *Lokadhātus*. ‘*Maitrī*’ is also mentioned as power (*Maitrī - bāla*) in the Universe. In *Mahāyāna*, Buddhas are depicted as emitting the rays of *maitrī* from their bodies and thus promoting peace and joy everywhere.

This *Mattā* or *Maitrī* is defined as earnestness to do good and give happiness to others. So with this feeling the *Maitrī* is cultivated. *Maitrī* is an antidote to hatred. It is not so much ordinary human affection even in sublimated form but as a detached and impersonal benevolence raised to the highest possible pitch of intensity.

One powerful destructive vice in man is hatred. *Mattā* is the sweet and sublime virtue. It refines man in loving kindness. It enables one to regard the whole world as one’s motherland and all as fellow beings. The concept of *Maitrī* is often described in fine expression of a mother and her child. Just as a mother protects her only child at the risk of her life, even so one should cultivate boundless loving kindness towards all beings. But it is not the passionate love of mother towards her child that is stressed but her sincere wish for the genuine welfare of the child.

Another concept, which is similar to *Maitrī* is *Karunā*, which also is one of the brahmaviharas. The whole *Mahāyāna* Buddhism contains the concept of *karunā*. *Karunā* is the quintessence of later implication of Buddhism. It is altruism par excellence. Various portraits of this word are offered viz. ‘pity’, ‘love’, ‘compassion’, ‘mercy’ etc. But no rendering will convey the sweetness of this sublime concept. *Mahāyānists* have enlarged articulate in the praise of

karunā. The Buddha is described as *Mahākāruṇika*. *Mahākāruṇa* is also mentioned as one of the special attributes of the Buddha.

Another conception in Buddhism, which approximates non - violence is *ksānti*. The word has been rendered as ‘forbearance’, ‘patience’ etc. Keith and Suzuki interpret it as not feeling dejected in the face of evil’. It is also always interpreted as the opposite of *krodha*, *vyapada*. *Ksānti* is one of the *pāramitās* in Buddhism. Buddhas are supposed to be ocean of forbearance, and gentle forbearance is their spiritual garment. A Bodhisattva is the greatest forgiver and embodiment of forbearance. Even if his body is destroyed and cut up in the hundred pieces with swords and spears, he does not conceive of any angry thought against his cruel persecutors. In short, a bodhisattva is a paragon of virtue of forgiveness and his forgiveness is unfailing, universal and absolute even as the mother Earth suffers in silence all that may be done to her.

The above discussion of these concepts of *maitrī*, *karunā* and *ksānti* are nothing but non-violence in its fullness and perfection. They include physical, vocal and mental aspects of non-violence. This is the Buddhist approach to non-violence.

Gandhi was greatly influenced by Buddhism. Buddha himself was a great *satyāgrahi*. Buddha accepted the negative aspect of non-violence, and was emphatic on its positive aspect. Buddha resisted the killing of the poor and innocent animals. Buddha said, “If you want to do any sacrifice, sacrifice yourself, your lust, all your material ambition, all worldly ambition. That will be an enabling sacrifice.”¹²

Non-violence in its positive aspect as emphasized by Buddha, is love, gentleness, peace, compassion, pity, kind-heartedness and politeness. Buddha's teaching shows how the essentials of *Satyāgraha* are rooted in it.

“By no wrath should be conquer wrath;
Unworthy by worth should he overcome;
He should overcome the stingy by a gift,
By truth he who doth falsely speak”¹³

As a true *satyāgrahi* Buddha was a humanitarian. He inflicted suffering on his own soul to remove the suffering of the world. He was moved by old age, birth, death, sorrow and pain. He went into the wilderness and remained there praying and fasting in search of the light. After enlightenment, he wanted to share his achievement with the whole world.

As a *satyāgrahi*, Buddha actively engaged himself in social and humanitarian services. Love, for him is not merely a personal or social virtue, it is a universal virtue. It is a weapon for resisting evil by good, violence by non-violence and hatred by love. He didn't confine love and compassion to mankind alone but extended it to all living creatures. He believed in the unity or oneness of all that lives on the globe. Even the lowest creatures and crawling things are equal in spirit to mankind. A true lover of great and small creatures and things of the world remains fearless, according to Buddha.

The Buddha teaches *ahimsā* both as love and avoidance of injury to self and others. He enjoins the renunciation of onslaught on creatures, taking what is not given, lying malicious speech, greed, angry blame, wrathful rage, and self-conceit. Even the householder is to refrain from war and violence towards all

living creatures. War, conflict and violence settle no issues. They breed fear and lead to similar counter-measures. The Buddha averted a war between Kalyas and Sakyas. According to Buddha, victory breeds hatred, for the conquered is unhappy.

Buddha believed that the enemies could be converted into friends and help-mates. He said that hatred breeds hatred and enmity leads to enmity. The best way is the conversion of the opponent non-violently. He pleaded the cultivation of good feelings towards opponent. Like Buddhism Gandhi's *Satyāgraha* is not a negative doctrine. It is a positive doctrine which includes all constructive and reformatory endeavours. *Satyāgraha* in its positive aspect means besides others, love, gentleness and pity. Love according to Gandhi is universal virtue. He doesn't confine love to mankind alone. He extends it to all living creatures. Like Buddha, he also stresses the internal unity of all lives. Like Buddha he also inflicted suffering to his soul for removing the suffering of the world. *Satyāgraha* was a weapon of meeting evil by good, hatred by love and violence by non-violence, this weapon was the weapon of the strong which would not harm and humiliate the opponent rather it would convert the opponent non-violently. For him, a true *Satyāgrahi* should bear no ill-will towards anyone in his thought, word and deed.

Gandhi derived his notion of *Satyāgraha* from his own Vaishnavite faith. Raichand, Chaitanyadeo and Narsimehta were the great Gujarati teachers of Vaishnavism who intensified, widened and strengthened Gandhi's religious convictions. They preached to win evil by good, hatred by love, violence by non-violence and untruth by truth. They also preached absolute *ahimsā*. A vaishnava must be pure in his thought, word and deed.

Gandhi was also influenced by eminent personalities and derived his concept of *Satyāgraha* from them. He was profoundly impressed by ‘*Shravaṇa Pitribhakti Natak*’ and ‘*Harishchandra Natak*’ in his early years. The stories sparked in him the idea of truth and non-violence. *Shravaṇa* and Harishchandra adhered to truth and non-violence in spite of their immense self-suffering. As regards the stories, he wrote, “My commonsense tells me today that Harishchandra could not have been a historical character. Still both Harishchandra and *Shravaṇa* are living realities for me, and I am sure I should be moved as before if I were to read those plays again today.”¹⁴

Prahlad is regarded as the first *Satyāgrahi*. He was ordered by his cruel father not to utter the name of God. But he paid no attention to his order. He perceived God in everything. He also said that even God’s enemy is not apart from Him. He is in all and all is in Him. Prahlad’s angry father took recourse to different violent methods to change the life course of Prahlad. But he remained fixed in his stand till the last moment of his trial and faced a series of difficulties. He considered the enunciation of the name of God as the fundamental birth right of every individual.

Mirabai also was a great *Satyāgrahi*. She preferred divine love to mundane love. The latter is short-lived, the former is everlasting. She visualised Krishna (God) in everything. He was all in all to her. Devotee Mirabai drunk poison sent by the Rana to her wilfully and cheerfully without any protest or ill-will against him. The poison made no effect on her and she remained singing the glory of her lord as she was doing continuously. Sita was also a true *Satyāgrahi*. She launched *Satyāgraha* against Ravana’s temptations and oppressions and stuck steadfastly to her honourable stand. Bharat was also a *Satyāgrahi*. He justly

refused the crown offered to him by his father due to the selfishness and wickedness of Kaikayi (his mother). Vibhisan started *Satyāgraha* against the misdeeds of his devil brother Ravana, and adhered to truth non-violently for saving his Swarnapuri Lanka from annihilation. Ashoka turned the tide of his life after the victory over the bloody war of Kalinga and adopted Buddhism. Like Buddha, he emphasized the positive aspect of non-violence and peace. He gave up war, animal food and hunting and actively engaged himself in the propagation of Buddhist tenets far and wide. H. G. Wells writes “He is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory.”¹⁵ He preached universal peace, love and brotherhood. He carried the campaign of non-violence from door to door.

The Buddhist doctrine of non-violence is more practicable. The path of Buddha has been called the ‘Middle Way’ which he preached in his first sermon at Sarnath. Non-killing is the essence of Buddhism. The emphasis in Buddhist ethics was on non-violence in personal relations. “The Buddha was not strictly a social reformer.”¹⁶ “He did not advocate a literal application of non-violence to the punishment of criminals and to war.”¹⁷

2.2.4. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in Jaina philosophy

Ahimsā is the central principle in Jaina philosophy. It has been interpreted in various senses in different texts by different Jaina Acharaya. *Ahimsā* is the central theme of Jainism. In Jaina literature, the word dharma is synonymous with *ahimsā*. Jaina dharma is identical with *Ahimsā* dharma. *Ahimsā* is so central in Jainism that it may be undoubtedly called the beginning and the end of religion. *Ahimsā* is a quintessence of wisdom. *Nirvāna* is nothing

else than *Ahimsā* or non-violence. Therefore Jaina suggests that one should not injure living being. All beings from one sensed to five sensed ones are basically like one self. *Ahimsā* is also recognised as the first the anuvrata as well as *Mahāvratā*.

In Jaina philosophy *Ahimsā* or non-violence is not only something negative, but it has a positive aspect which is called *dayā* (compassion). *Ahimsā* or *dayā* is the beneficent mother of all beings. The positive *ahimsā* is expressed in the form of *karunā* dana or abhaya dana, the giving protection to all living creatures. In *Tattvarthasutra*, *ahimsā* is compounded of *maitrī* (friendliness to all beings) *pramoda* (happiness when in the company of virtuous) and *kārunya* (compassion to those who are without any virtue).

Jainas believes that the entire world is literally packed with an infinite number of embodied souls. All the elements are animated with souls. The embodiment of the spirit in the material body is the cause of misery. So life means pain even to souls with invisible bodies. To become a *muktātma*, a soul liberated from the bonds of the body, the individual must complete the process of nirjara, i.e., get rid of karmas. For this there are three means (triratnas), right faith (*samyak darshana*), right knowledge (*samyak jnana*), right conduct (*samyak charitra*). Right conduct consists in five vows of which non-killing is the first, the other four being truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. Monks have to observe them rigidly and laymen so far as they can.

Besides the epics of India, *Satyāgraha* was developed more clearly in Jainism, Buddhism and Vaishnavism. Though Gandhi's father was a Vaishnavite, frequently associated himself with Jaina monks. So Gandhi came

in contact with them. Mahavira advocated triratnas – right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. Amongst these three jewels, right conduct (samyak-charitra) consists of five great vows *ahimsā*, *satyā*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha*. Non-violence is the first, truth is the second of his teachings. Mahavira laid great stress on non-violence. Non-violence negatively means non-killing. According to him and his followers, non-violence is synonymous with refusal to take the life of even the smallest insects. In order to avoid violence Jainism preaches to his followers to take part in the fewest possible activities. Actions, thoughts and deeds should be free from violence. Mahavira preached to the monks that even breathing, eating and drinking, involve violence, therefore, these acts should be performed strictly and carefully. Jainism emphasized the negative aspect of non-violence. Gandhi included the *mahāvratas* of Jainism in the vows of a *Satyāgrahi*. Truth and non-violence were made by him the backbone of his *Satyāgraha*. According to him, a *Satyāgrahi* should not destroy even the smallest insects and he should observe non-violence in thought, word and deed.

Many other Jaina writers illustrate *ahimsā* as follows – All beings wish to live, not to be slain. Therefore, Jainas instruct not to indulge in killing. Amrtacandra holds that the appearance of any sort of passion on the surface of self is *himsā* and the self in its pure form is *ahimsā*.

Jaina thinkers have classified violence into 108 varieties. According to them, the violence is threefold. They are *krta*, *karita* and *anumodita*. This threefold violence becomes nine fold as it can be committed either by the instrumentality of mind speech and body. This nine fold violence again becomes twenty sevenfold for it can have three stages – *Sārambha* (thinking of

violence action), *Samārambha* (making preparation for violence), *Ārambha* (actual committance).

This twenty sevenfold violence becomes one hundred and eightfold as it could be inspired by any of the four passions viz – *krodha*, *mana*, *māyā* and *lobha*. The above classification shows how Jaina thinkers have taken a comprehensive view of non-violence. According to Jainism abstinence from killing others must be observed in thought, word and deed. The mere thought of killing is as much immoral as actually killing, hence according to Jainas, the principle of *ahimsā* naturally implies purity of thought, word and deed actuated by universal love and mercy.

It may be noted that in Jainism *ahimsā* vrata (vow of non-violence) is binding on all members of Jaina society, whether householders or ascetics. In the case of householder, it is applicable with limitation, but in the case of ascetics, it is to be observed absolutely without any limitation. Both these vows, as applied to householders and ascetics, are called *anuvratas* and *Mahāvratas* respectively.

From all these one thing is clear that one should identify oneself with others and should try as far as possible not to harm any body with the intention of harming. With this view of non-violence in their mind the propagators of non-violence have first tried to find out for what purpose the people practised killing of the living beings. People resort to killing for the sake of game and pleasure. For the purpose of food, drink and even for the religious ceremony the killing of living beings was allowed. War is also one of the causes of violence. When Mahavira noted all these types of violence he renounced the world and

took only such food and shelter what was not prepared from any violent means and only when there was utter necessity. He made a rule not to accept any food or shelter in which the killing of any living being was involved. In this way he became an example of non-violent life and then he practised non-violence in daily life.

Thus Jainism registered the first protest against killing. It was the first religion in India which raised its voice against any kind of violence, which is nothing but the expression of basic instinct of man.

2.2.5. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in *Sāṃkhya* philosophy

The universality of suffering is the main idea of *Sāṃkhya* system. In the philosophy of *Sāṃkhya* emphasis is laid on the path of *ahimsā* for liberation of *puruṣa*. *Sāṃkhya* interprets *Ahimsā* as sacrifice. *Sāṃkhya* holds that the earthly life is full of three kinds of pain *ādhyātmika*, *ādhibhautika* and *ādhidaivika*. *Ādhyātmika* is due to intra organic physical causes and includes all mental, bodily sufferings. The second *ādhibhautika* is due to extra organic natural causes like man, beasts, birds etc. The third *ādhidaivika*, is due to supernatural causes like the planets, elemental agencies, ghosts etc. But soul or *puruṣa* is not affected. It is pure consciousness.

The *Sāṃkhya* sets up the ideal of complete liberation from the bondage of material creation as the highest aim of religion. And that ideal is realised by regular concentration on the knowledge of the absolutely pure nature of the soul, to the complete exclusion of material pursuits. Thus the path of salvation, on this view must lie in abstract contemplation of functional activities of eternal

organs with the mental state fixed upon the soul. In other words, consciousness turned to itself is salvation.

The *Sāṃkhya* was quite outspoken on the point. Jnana-yoga is for those who have been disgusted with and have discarded all Karma – all materialistic or worldly desires. It maintains that the cultivation of the true knowledge of the essential nature of man is the key note of the statement of belief. This true nature of man is not *himsā*, but *ahimsā*, when man has accepted the real nature of truth he can realise and feel all these free, is salvation from all the terrors of worldly misery. The activities of man in undertaking will open up a road to permanent unalloyed blissfulness. Such a kind of happiness is attainable in heaven. The path, lies through the performance of sacrifices.

All duties, it must be clearly recognised, even those that are apparently non-ritual, are really part and parcel of a great life – scheme of sacrifice which covers all legitimate activities. Life is sacrificed to these duties for its own sake. But man cannot attain the real nature which is pure consciousness without the practice of non-violence. Thus the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy interprets the word non-violence as the path of sacrifice.

2.2.6. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in Yoga philosophy

In Yoga philosophy *ahimsā* is accepted as essential vow for liberation of individual soul. Yoga is the spiritual union of individual soul with universal soul. It is the spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of the body, senses and mind. Like *Sāṃkhya*, Yoga interprets soul as the pure consciousness. Consciousness is the essential nature of soul, the realisation of this pure consciousness is the end of man. The self remains in bondage due to

indiscriminate knowledge of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The conjunction of the soul with the worldly object is impure. This conjunction is the cause of ignorance. This conjunction of soul with worldly object is the cause of pain or pleasure. In this stage man lives with his brute nature of anger, desire, attachment etc. This is not real nature of man.

Patañjali in his *Yogasūtra* has delineated five yamas and niyamas. *Ahimsā*, *satyā*, *asteya*, *brahmaçarya* and *aparigraha* are the yamas, i.e. cardinal disciplines, of these disciplines, non-violence is the first, truth is the second. *Ahimsā*, for him is not merely a negative principle in the sense of avoidance of violence only, but also a positive virtue implying good will towards all living creatures. Gandhi included these five cardinal disciplines amongst the eleven vows of a *Satyāgrahi*. A *Satyāgrahi* could not be called a *Satyāgrahi* without following these vows. These are the pre-requisite qualifications of being a *Satyāgrahi*. *Satyāgraha* was not meant merely to avoid violence, but also to have good will towards all living creatures.

Gandhi studied *Patañjali's Yogasūtra* in 1903 at Johannesburg, included *ahimsā* in his pancha yamas. The five cardinal disciplines which have since had the pride of place in the Hindu technique of spiritual advancement. *Patañjali* lays down that *ahimsā* is not merely a negative doctrine in the sense of avoidance of violence; it also implies goodwill towards all creatures.

The real nature of man is essentially spiritual. This spirituality cannot be realised without true knowledge. In order to attain this stage Yoga brings in discriminate knowledge. The discriminate knowledge removes the impurity of soul. In order to realise pure nature of man, the soul should be separate from the

body which is possible only when one gets rid of karmas. This can be done by following the path of right knowledge, right insight and right conduct. Under the right conduct there are five vows. Among these *Ahimsā* is the most important. The other are truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. All other virtues (yama) are said to be rooted in it. *Ahimsā* is interpreted broadly as abstinence from hatred towards all living creatures in every way and at all times. It is not merely non-violence but non-hatred. The cultivation of friendliness, sympathy and cheerfulness with regard to things, pleasant regarded as the categorical imperative in Yoga philosophy. Yoga even does not justify the murder for self defence. Yoga asks us to control the body and not to indulge in killing. It also emphasises control of our breath and senses. Besides yoga emphasises the observances (Niyama) of purification, external and internal contentment, tapas and devotion to God. These are optional, though all who resort to Yoga are required to practise them regularly. A practise of these two favours the development of passionlessness or freedom from desire either for things of the world or the pleasures of heaven.

2.2.7. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta* philosophy

Like the Yoga, the *Nyāya*, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Mīmāṃsā* and *Vedānta* have conceived *ahimsā* as the ethical principle. *Nyāya* holds that life is a disease of the spirit, an activity excited by passion. The activity is due to defect of aversion, attachment and stupidity. Aversion included anger, resentment and hatred. Attachment includes desires and acquisitiveness. Stupidity includes misapprehension, suspicion, pride and carelessness. All these activities can be

removed by the practice of Yama and Niyama. Like Yoga, Naiyayika accepts the *ahimsā* as the chief vow for liberation of individual soul.

Vaiśeṣika holds that *Ahimsā* is a universal duty. It is admitted as the vow of universal benevolence. Dharma is *ahimsā* alone and adharma is *himsā* or hatred for creation. *Mīmāṃsā* accepts the view of the *Vedās*: animal sacrifice is for realisation of God. But this sacrifice of animal is not *himsā* because this kind of sacrifice has no attachment.

In *Vedānta* philosophy, *ahimsā* is conceived in the sense of love or compassion. The *Jīva* is the Brahman. There is no difference between *Jīva* and Brahman. *Jīva* remains in bondage due to *avidyā*. Its true nature is pure consciousness as Brahman. The realisation of ultimate truth, the *Nirguṇa Nirākāra* is the supreme end of living being or *Jīva*. Knowledge is the realisation of ultimate truth.

The other school of *Vedānta* also believes that the knowledge of God is blissful. One who believes God, believes the whole universe. One who loves God, loves all universe, because all things of the universe are created by God. One who loves own self also loves all selves, because all selves are essentially God. So, he cannot harm anything of the universe. True, peace and excellence lie not in self assertion, but in offering oneself as a contribution to the true being of the universe. Egoism is the greatest evil and love and compassion are the greatest good. Every individual must subdue his senses, which make for self-assertion, pride must give place to humility and resentment to forgiveness.

Rāmānuja advocates the path of devotion for realisation of God or truth. Devotion in *Rāmānuja* is man's reaching out towards a fuller knowledge of God

quietly and meditatively. He insists on an elaborate preparation for Bhakti, which includes viveka or discrimination of good, freedom all else and longing for God, continuous thinking of God, doing good to others, wishing well to all, truthfulness, integrity, compassion, non-violence and charity. Thus *Rāmānuja* accepts *ahimsā* as one path of realisation of truth.

Sometimes one sees non-violence interpreted narrowly as non killing. From very early times, it has been much more than a mere question of not killing. Non-violence originally meant not hurting physically. Apart from death, physical damage and bodily aches and pains were symptoms of violence.

The norm was thus negative from the etymological point of view. It forbade killing of a living being, a person or an animal also. The victim of damage was originally thought to be a physical being, but damaging by word or thought was also considered to be morally wrong. Thus non-violence was to be observed in thought word and deed. There is spiritual, verbal and physical non-violence.

The actual reason for the acceptance of non-violence as a moral norm is not in the first place social, that is to say the right of other beings to live and to realise themselves come after personal self regarding duty. So to the doctrine of karma, each moral act, each good or evil deed has necessarily through motivation, spiritual consequences for the doer. It is important for the acting subject to abandon an evil or impure will. Not merely doing physical violence to another, but also to speak about it, or intend it, meant in any case spiritual violence to the doer himself.

All the Indian philosophical school accepted non-violence, with the exception of the materialists. Different ways of thinking, however, interpreted it to some extent with different degrees. The yoga school stressed its necessity for the spiritual development of the individual. Jainism, on the other hand tried to create a ritual system within which one could apply the idea of non killing to every living creature in the same way. So in Hindu social philosophy, killing in war or as part of a sacrificial act, was not 'violence'. We must however, remember that this idea was not typical of the ascetic schools and was directed only at supporting society, especially for committed castes and even then there were limitation according to certain phases of life.

Originally, universally applicable positive virtues were not included in *ahimsā*. Different concepts were used for this, one spoke of friendliness, pity, and love. Connecting this positive virtues directed to other beings with non-violence have taken place in our own time just because of Gandhi's activity and from a wider point of view under the influence of Christianity. The widening of this concept of non-violence is not, in itself contrary to Indian tradition.

Traditionally, non-violence concerned a physical living being, man or animal and was a norm concerning the acting individual for his own spiritual good. As a concept, it did not have a positive application for social or political institutions. Gandhi has extended the meaning of non-violence and this traditional concept is a basis for Gandhi, although he widened considerably the concept of *ahimsā*. If, says Gandhi we can manage to apply non-violence successfully at home, it will in its pure form become an irresistible power in the service of the state. Thus the individual's attitude to those people he who has

personal dealings with everyday is the point of departure for extending the non-violence attitude.

2.3. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* in Western philosophy

Although Gandhi was an Indian, he was deeply influenced by the Western thinkers, writers, and prophets who are both ancient and modern. Gandhi owed indebtedness to the West. He didn't think that everything Western had to be rejected. He learnt about *ahimsā* from the Western tradition also. Gandhi says,

“I have nothing to be ashamed of if my views on *ahimsā* or non-violence are the result of my Western education. I have never tabooed all Western ideas nor am I prepared to anathematise everything that comes from the West are inherently evil. I have learnt much from the West and I should not be surprised to find that I had learnt something about *ahimsā* too from the West.”¹⁸

Gandhi was influenced by the two great Greek philosophers, viz Socrates and Plato. Socrates was a devoted *Satyāgrahi* who strove after Truth, Beauty and Goodness throughout his life. He expressed his profound feeling for truth. He preferred poison instead of leaving the pursuit of truth and non-violence. He is a great example of undertaking suffering for the sake of truth. He raised his voice against the superstitious social tradition, injustice, irrational system of imperialism, conventional rights of the savage people and exploitation.

Socrates, as seeker of truth, influenced Gandhi greatly. Gandhi regarded him as a great *satyāgrahi*. He had great admiration for Socrates and found in him a soul force which is capable of fighting against injustice, Socrates was

courageous enough to prefer a cup of hemlock than to give up his pursuit of truth and resisted superstitious beliefs of his people through non-violent means.

For Socrates when there was to be a choice between his conscience what he knew to be good and what the government of the day had ordered, and what he knew to be wrong, there was no hesitation even though it might have cost him his life. Indeed, his trial was a brilliant example of passive resistance. He had been preaching virtue to the Athenian youth. This tended to challenge the established order of thought and therefore established authority. Socrates was therefore, charged, among other things, with having corrupted the Athenians. The penalty was death. Socrates preferred the poison-bowl and his independence to a life of servile and superstitious obedience to human authority, even when it went under the name of government. ‘O Athenian’, says our sage, ‘I honour and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you’. At the same memorable defence, Socrates says of his most virulent and self seeking traducers, “Neither will Melitus nor Anytus harm me; nor have they the power, for I do not think that it is possible for a better man to be injured by a worse. He may perhaps have me condemned to death, or banished or deprived to civil right, and he or others may perhaps consider these as mighty evils. I, however, do not consider them so.”¹⁹

Socrates died a peaceful death, discoursing on the immortality of the soul. In ancient Greece he was a votary of truth and non-violence. While in prison, he was offered the opportunity to escape by his friends. But he preferred death in alternate to escaping quietly. All his life, he was engaged in fighting, non-violently the superstitions and prejudices of his people. The world knows today Melitus and his companions as murderers of a man almost divine, and Socrates

lives for eternity. This passive register, just after the sentence was pronounced upon him, delivered in his prison a discourse on the duties of a good citizen, and rejected the overtures of his friends to escape death by stealing out of the prison. Then, he was as hard as unyielding and all respect for law and order. The essence of his teaching and practice was that it is lawful to disregard a law or order when it is against one's conscience. But it is not lawful to try to escape the punishment that the law imposes for such disregard. Plato, an idealist of Greece, was a follower of Socrates. He gave priority to the moral regeneration of an individual which he thought, would be impossible with the spirit of violence. In his *Republic*, he puts philosophers prior to warriors. Plato, like his master Socrates, regarded truth and non-violence as great virtues.

Gandhi was also influenced by Islam religion as well. He studied Sate's translation of the *Quran* in South Africa. The study of this book condemned his popular notion that Islam was a religion of violence and coercion. He regarded, "Islam as one of the inspired religions, and therefore the Holy *Quran* as an inspired book and Mohammad as one of the prophets."²⁰ Mahammad was a prophet of humanity and champion of peace who preached truth, non-violence, love, pity, forgiveness, compassion, humility and justice throughout his life for the good of all. He looked down upon anger, aversion, malice, hatred and ill-will towards any of the living creatures. The very word 'Islam' means peace, safety and salvation. He also preached and practised the virtues of truth, non-violence and justice. The prophet found non-violence a better method of conquering evil. He said, "Turn away evil with that which is better."²¹ Gandhi has written in Harijan in July 1940 that the superiority of non-violence over violence has always been shown in the Quran. In his own words, "And I have

come to the conclusion that the teaching of the *Quran* is essentially in favour of non-violence. Non-violence is better than violence, it is said in the *Quran*. Non-violence is enjoined as a duty, violence is permitted as a necessity.”²² Basically, in Islam there is no place for aggression, oppression and persecution. The sword is not the tenet of Islam. *Quran* has permitted war for self defence. Mohammed himself fought defensive wars and forgave his defeated enemies. As regards defensive wars, the prophet said, “Permission (to fight) is given to those on whom war is made, because they are opposed. And surely Allah is able to assist them.”²³ As regards offensive wars, he ruled: “And fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not aggressive. Surely Allah loves not aggressors.”²⁴ The prophet took prosecution as worse than killing. He strictly prohibited persecution. He said, “And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from where they drove you out, and persecution is worse than slaughter.”²⁵ “And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is only for Allah. But if they desist; then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.”²⁶ It is obvious that the essentials of *Satyāgraha* are contained in the Islamic tenets of man’s duty.

2.3.1. Non-violence in Christianity

Besides Islam, Gandhi was deeply influenced by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. He studied Christianity in England and was very much impressed by the New Testament, specially the Sermon on the Mount. His deep commitment to non-violence came only after he read Christ’s ‘Sermon on the Mount’. As regards Jesus, he remarked that “the Sermon would be true to him even if Jesus might be a historical person.”²⁷ He compared it with the *Bhagvadgītā*. He said, “what the Sermon describes in a graphic manner the

Bhagavadgītā reduces to a scientific formula.”²⁸ As regards Jesus, Gandhi wrote, “Jesus occupies in my heart the place of one of the greatest teachers who have made a considerable influence on my life.”²⁹ He was a prophet, a Messiah, a humanitarian and a *Satyāgrahi*. He was regarded as “the greatest teacher of humanity”³⁰ and “the prince of *Satyāgrahis*.”³¹ Jesus in the west has been regarded as a passive resister, but Gandhi has taken to be a very active resister. He condemned the word ‘passive’ in the *satyāgraha* movement led by him in South Africa because he found it to be an inadequate equivalent of *Satyāgraha*.

Gandhi’s concept of *Satyāgraha* has a close relation with the Christ’s conception of the Cross. “Take up thy Cross and follow me,”³² says the Christ. The Cross is the symbol of non-violent retaliation. It is a powerful as well as wonderful medium of suffering for truth, of conquering evil by good and hatred by love. Christ opposed the use of physical force and preached the law of love-force. He preached love, non-violence and compassion not only for mankind, but for all living beings. Gandhi wrote: “Christianity’s particular contribution is that of active love. No other religion says so firmly that God is love and the New Testament is full of the word. Christians, however, as a whole have denied the principle with their wars.”³³ He wrote, “The virtues of mercy, non-violence, love and truth in any man can be truly tested only when they are pitted against ruthlessness, violence, hate and untruth.”³⁴ Love for Jesus was a collective virtue. Gandhi wrote, “The love that Jesus taught and practised was not a mere personal virtue, but it was essentially a social and collective virtue.”³⁵ The Cross is the way converting the opponents. Even the enemies who are at dagger’s drawn should be changed or converted into friends non-violently. Resist not him that is evil, according to Tolstoy, means that never resist him that

is evil, i.e. never do violence, never do an act that can't but be contrary to love, and if they then insult you, bear the insult and still don't inflict violence on any one else. 'Resist not evil', according to Gandhi, "evil was not to be repelled by evil, but by good; in other words, physical force was to be opposed, not by its like but by soul force".³⁶ Jesus at the time of crucifixion on the Cross prayed to God happily for the good and welfare of his enemies without cherishing any ill-will, hatred, anger and malice.

Christ's teaching of non-violence follows from his faith in the loving fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Christ believed in one God. He may be called by different names. For him, God is Truth, Love and Light. All are the children of one God therefore, there should be perfect harmony or love in the universe.

Christ, as others, didn't confine non-violence to personal affairs alone. He extended it to philosophical, social and economic spheres. In the economic sphere, he preached non-possession. He advised the people not to keep anything for the future. In the social sphere, he laid emphasis on equality. He preached, if someone has two kinds of things, he should provide it on to that person who has not. He advised the Jews to give up violence and convert his enemies into friends. He mixed with the publicans and the sinners not as a patron, but as one who would serve and convert them. He refused to regard temporal authority as equal to God's. Jesus challenged the authority of priesthood. In another words he was a real *Satyāgrahi*. Gandhi adopted his *Satyāgraha*.

On the another hand, Gandhi was influenced by Zoroastrianism. He studied the 'The sayings of Zarathustra' and followed his teachings to a great

deal. Zoroaster was a Persian prophet of humanity and founder of Zoroastrianism. He stood alone like Buddha, Christ and Mohammad for teaching the holiness and superiority of spiritual and moral forces over the immoral one's. He spoke of a ceaseless duel between the good and the evil forces which he called Ahuramazda and Ahriman. He preached truth, non-violence and love for all beings.

2.3.2. Jewish ideas of Peace and Non-violence

In Judaism, peace is not only the opposite of war. It is an ideal state of affairs. The fact is that true peace is an eschatological dream. Peace is one of the most esteemed values. Judaism is hardly Pacifistic. There are clearly times when Judaism permits and even requires, war. Jews have on occasion embraced nonviolence, even martyrdom, as a response to conflict, but not out of a sense that violence is categorically inappropriate. Since, in those situations non-violence was the best tactical option. Nonetheless, the minimization of violence is certainly a Jewish value.

2.3.3. Ralph Waldo Emerson

Gandhi was influenced by the western thinkers Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Tolstoy. Emerson married in 1829, but his wife died less than a year and a half later. At this point he doubted his beliefs and profession as a minister and he decided to resign, stating that it was because of the Eucharist. In 1832 he went to Europe, where he met such note worthies as Wordsworth, Coleridge and Carlyle.

Emerson gave public lectures, and in 1836 he published *Nature*. He had become the sage of Concord, and the literary colleagues gathering around him became known as the transcendental club. Emerson's inspiring lectures, essays and poems elucidated a philosophy of life based on the inner resources of the self and revelation from the divine presence of the soul. 'Trust yourself', he would say, and live spontaneously and freely in harmony with nature. He described the spiritual laws of life in great essays such as 'Compensation', 'Spiritual Laws', 'Love', 'Self-Reliance', and 'The over Soul'. He found his own insights echoed in the Hindu scriptures and the Romantic poets. He urged an American renaissance of culture and influenced writers such as Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne, and the Alcott family. He believed that culture was a way of modulating violence which is not power, but the absence of power. He concluded 'Self-Reliance' with these words: 'Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles'.

Emerson criticized the Mexican war, which he felt was caused chiefly by the interests of the slave states, and he predicted that there would be retribution for the nation just as there is for any private offender. In a discussion with Thomas Carlyle at Stonehenge Emerson put forward the pacifist philosophy of non-resistance and non-cooperation with governments which institutionalize violence as an indigenous American conviction. This idea was championed by the abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison and others who would not compromise on this point as Channing had. For Ralph Waldo Emerson "great are they who see that the spiritual is stranger than any material force and that thoughts rule the world."³⁷

For Emerson the soul transcends all conflict and has no enemies; soldiers he considered to be ridiculous. War is 'abhorrent to all right reason' and against human progress. From the perspective of spiritual oneness he spoke of the burning truth that he who kills his brother commits suicide'. He looked at the Civil War as retribution to cleanse the nation of the evil of slavery, and he detested the lack of freedom during the war. In 1865 he vowed that if martial law came to Concord, he would disobey it or move elsewhere. He anticipated that dream of good men not yet come to pass, an international Congress.

In 1838 Emerson delivered an address to the Boston meeting of the American Peace Society which has been published under the title 'War' and contains his thinking on the issues of war and peace. He described war as an epidemic insanity, breaking out here and there like the cholera or influenza, infecting men's brains instead of their bowels. He could see that violence was dangerously infectious. For Emerson war is part of wild and primordial societies, and the primordial stages of religion lead to religious wars. It is the ignorant and childish part of mankind that is the fighting part. Cruelty and violence are adolescent, and the nature spirit renounces them. Emerson noted that trade works against war gives people contact, knowledge and familiarity with their enemies.

2.3.4. Henry David Thoreau

Gandhi was influenced, to some extent, by the ideas and activities of the nineteenth century American thinker Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau was the first man to coin the term 'Civil Disobedience' and he wrote a pamphlet, on this. Gandhi found the book 'Civil Disobedience' a meaningful treatise. The sit-

ins gave the civil rights movement its mass base and made it a regional phenomenon. An act of civil disobedience that Henry David Thoreau advocated it as civil resistance.

Gandhi for his civil disobedience movement in South Africa was well-advanced before he got the essay of Thoreau on Civil Disobedience. In a letter dated 10 September, 1935 to P. Kodanda Rao, Gandhi denies that he took the idea of civil disobedience from Thoreau. He writes, “The statement that I had derived my idea of Civil Disobedience from the writings of Thoreau is wrong. The resistance to authority in South Africa was well advanced before I got the essay of Thoreau on Civil Disobedience.”³⁸ Gandhi was respectively influenced by the words and actions of Henry David Thoreau. The American anarchist refused to pay his taxes as a protest against slavery in America. He was the first to use the term ‘civil disobedience’ in one of his speeches in 1849. Gandhi however did not derive his idea of civil disobedience from the writings of Thoreau. The movement was then known as passive Resistance. Gandhi began to use Thoreau’s phrase to explain the struggle to the readers, but he found that even ‘civil disobedience’ failed to convey the full meaning of the struggle.

Thoreau’s theory may be summed up as the maximum of co-operation with all people and institutions when they lead towards good and non-co-operation when they promote evil. Unlike Gandhi, however Thoreau justified not only passive, but also active (violent) resistance to the American Government in the struggle against slavery. He believed in man’s natural impulses to goodness, argued for the supremacy, under all conditions, of conscience and held up the ideal of a future society without any government.

Thoreau had confidence in the efforts of social justice activists. Thoreau saw social justice activists, at least those working to change policy and institutions, as wasting their time. He thought it was more important to change 'individual souls' rather than social institutions. What he finds to be of utmost interest and importance is waking each individual to follow their own conscience even when this means breaking unjust laws.

Thoreau raised a voice alongside the unjust U. S. War against Mexico and U.S government that supported slavery and refused to pay the taxes. In 1849 he delivered a lecturer using the term 'Civil Disobedience'. Later he wrote the non-governmental treatise 'Civil Disobedience'. Before the perusal of Thoreau's work Gandhi practised it in South Africa against the tyranny of the government as 'Passive resistance'. By reading Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience' he tried to explain the mission of his struggle against the British as 'Civil Disobedience'. But he found that the phrase 'Civil Disobedience' could not convey its full significance so he used the term 'Civil resistance'. He believed that resistance is more dynamic and effective process than that of disobedience. This experience led to his writing the infamous "Civil Disobedience" which in turn influenced M. K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez and countless Non-violence activists. This contribution to non-violence theory is why Thoreau is still exalted as a non-violence theorist. He states that "If the alternative is to keep all just men in prison, or give up war and slavery, the State will not hesitate which to choose. If a thousand men were not to pay their tax bills this year, that would not be to pay them and enable the State to commit violence and shed innocent blood. This is in fact the definition of a peaceable revolution, if any such is possible."³⁹

Thoreau's way of thinking moves beyond the thinking of Thomas Hobbes, who believed that any government was better than no government. Thoreau on the other hand, sees justice as our primary loyalty, not laws. Rather than looking to the state for guidance and punishment. Each would look to themselves and their own good conscience for what is morally right. Through personal awakening, personal responsibility, and a shared commitment to our interconnected world, the state would wither and become unnecessary. Thoreau was motivated in part by his disgust with slavery and the Mexican American war.

The word civil has several definitions. The one that is intended in this case is relating to citizens and their interrelations with one another or with the state. So civil disobedience means "disobedience to the state." Sometimes people assume that civil in this case means observing accepted social forms; polite which would make civil disobedience something like polite, orderly disobedience. This misinterpretation is one reason the essay is sometimes considered to be an argument for pacifism or for exclusively nonviolent resistance. For instance, Mahatma Gandhi used this interpretation to suggest equivalence between Thoreau's civil disobedience and his own *Satyāgraha*.

Thoreau asserts that because governments are typically more harmful than painful, they therefore cannot be justified. Democracy is no cure for this, as majorities simply by virtue of being majorities do not also gain the virtues of wisdom and justice. The judgement of an individual's conscience is not necessarily inferior to the decisions of a political body or majority, and so it is not desirable to cultivate a respect for the law, so much as for the right.

Thoreau's influence upon Gandhi, F.I. Carpenter has written, "may partly be credited to Emerson's teaching, even if indirectly."⁴⁰ Although Thoreau's influence upon Gandhi was far greater. Emerson directly influenced Gandhi. He read Emerson during his second imprisonment in South Africa and he wrote to his son on 25th March, 1909 that Emerson, Ruskin and Mazzini "confirm the view that education does not mean a knowledge of letters but it means character building"⁴¹. Later in the same letter he wrote, "please tell Maganlalbhai that I would advise him to read Emerson's essays.....There is a cheap reprint out. These essays are worth studying. He should read them, mark the important passages and then finally copy them out in a note book. The essays to my mind contain the teaching of Indian wisdom in a western guru. It is interesting to see our own sometimes thus differently fashioned."⁴²

So Gandhi's non-violence was part and parcel of his resistance but Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience' was not completely non-violent in spirit. Thoreau applied 'Civil Disobedience' in political sphere only while Gandhi applied *Satyāgraha* in all spheres of life. So, Gandhi's *Satyāgraha* is more comprehensive and broader than Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience'.

2.3.5. Ruskin

Ruskin and Tolstoy also had deep influence upon Gandhi. Gandhi's first acquaintance was with Ruskin's *Unto the Last* on a railway journey from Johannesburg to Durban. It made a powerful impression on him. The contents of this book worked as a magic spell on him and changed the course of his life with Ruskin's ideals. Gandhi writes, "The book was impossible to lay aside, once I had begun it. It gripped me, I could not get any sleep that night. I

determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book.”⁴³ John Ruskin’s *Unto the Last* has also been one of the transforming influences that have shaped Gandhi’s views. He has been especially influenced by Ruskin’s ideal of manual labour. Later Gandhi wrote a paraphrase of this book entitled ‘Sarovodaya’. Gandhi depicted three lessons from Ruskin’s *Unto the Last*.

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer’s work has the same value as the barber’s, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is a life worth living.⁴⁴

Of these three principles, Gandhi says, he already knew the first: the second he had only dimly realized and the third had never occurred to him before. However, there are significant points of difference, and even contrast between Gandhi and Ruskin. Unlike Gandhi, Ruskin did not believe in non-violence, democracy and equality. Though Ruskin has not used the terms truth and non-violence in his book, even this book brought a marvellous transformation in Gandhi’s political life. He used some of Ruskin’s ideals in his *Satyāgraha* programme. Ruskin’s main concern was man. He was of opinion that some men were by nature superior to others. Hence it would be well to appoint such persons or person “to guide, to lead, or on occasion even to compel and subdue, their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will.”⁴⁵ He believed that man is not merely a physical entity, but a spiritual one. He condemned violence in the different walks of life. He worked for the annihilation of social, political and economic evils. Capitalism, industrialism and machinery were all thought by him to be hindrances in the way of attaining

ideal society and state. He gave importance for the development of a new social order, a society free from violence, coercion, exploitation etc. Like Ruskin Gandhi also gave more importance to social reforms. He adopted Ruskin's principles of bread labour, non-possession, distrust machinery and division of capital.

Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olives* is also one of Gandhi's favourites. Gandhi resembles Ruskin in several respects. Both advocated the supremacy of the spirit and trust in the nobleness of human nature. To both character is more important than intelligence; both seek to moralise politics and economics. Both emphasize the priority of social regeneration to mere political reform; both insist that the capitalist should adopt a wise paternal attitude in relation to his employees.

Ruskin believes "not in democracy but in the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others and upholds the advisability of appointing such persons or person to guide, to lead or on occasions even to compel and subdue, their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will. Ruskin thus does not stand for non-violence in principle. All the same he is against vengeance and retribution and urges the workers not to take part in armament industries. Unlike Gandhi again, Ruskin favours the extension of the sphere of state interference."⁴⁶

2.3.6. Tolstoy

Gandhi read Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God' in South Africa during as he puts it, a period of religious turmoil. He was impressed by the profound morality and the truthfulness of this book. Later he read other works of Tolstoy,

all of them made a deep impression on him. Gandhi was influenced most by Tolstoy's doctrine of Universal Love and its natural concomitant and non-resistance. The fundamental moral law that Tolstoy formulated was evil never destroys evil only good can destroy evil. His philosophy of non-violence was based on fundamental antimilitarism.

Gandhi marked as, "There is no doubt about it that Tolstoy's writings had a powerful effect on me. He strengthened my love for non-violence. He enabled me to see things more clearly than I had done before. His manner of putting this is all his own. At the same time I know that there were fundamental differences between us and though they will abide, they are of little consequence compared with so many things for which I shall feel ever grateful to him. My patriotism is patent enough; my love for India is ever growing but it is derived from my religion and is therefore in no sense exclusive."⁴⁷

The 20th century which was coming to an end was one of the most bloody in Russian history. Totalitarian dictatorship was established in 1917 and millions were murdered. Revolutionary violence, like a red wheel, ran through Russia bringing up generations of Russians in spirit of hatred and aggression. The fundamental moral law, evil never destroys evil which Leo Tolstoy formulated in the beginning of the century was ignored.

In reality there are only two methods of conflict resolution: to resist violence by violence or, resist violence by non-violence. Tolstoy's dimension was that true non-violence means not to be passive, not to reject active resistance and not to ignore reality. He believed that the main element of non-violent development

of Russia could be the giving back to the people their natural and legitimate right to own land.

In the 'Kingdom of God' Tolstoy writes, "..... However reluctant men may be to acknowledge it, they can't deny that one of the first conditions of Christian life is love, expressed not in words, but in deed."⁴⁸ In his 'War and Peace' he has shown how war leads to man's moral degradation of the worst sort. According to Tolstoy the Sermon on the Mount, which contains the essence of Christianity, teaches us to live in peace with all men, to harbour anger toward none, and to love all men alike without distinction of nationality.

There is much common between Tolstoy and Gandhi. Both of them based their teachings on the idea of universal love. Both are opposed to war and violence. Above all, both sketch inspiration from the Sermon on the Mount. In the early stages of his experiment in South Africa, Gandhi called himself a humble follower of Tolstoy. He also exchanged letters with Tolstoy and invited Tolstoy's comments on his well-known *Hind Swaraj*. Tolstoy, in turn, sent his blessings and fraternal greetings to Gandhi and his associates. But unlike Gandhi, Tolstoy is an extremist in his conception of non-violence. To Gandhi violence is not the greatest evil. Cowardice is a greater evil than violence.

Leo Tolstoy compared abolishing of violence in the human mind with religious revolution. He supposed universal peace could only be established with the destruction of the State. His outlook was that compulsory military service was extreme violence used to support state power. He precisely estimated the sore points in Russian life.

In general Tolstoy believed that political conflict takes a human being away from his or her inner spiritual life, reducing the 'level of social morality'. This makes it possible for the most immoral people like Danton, Marat, Napoleon, Taleyran, Bismark and others become heroes of their time. True morality is possible only outside the state and political parties, in the invisible heart of human beings.

Again, Tolstoy does not recognize the state at all and will have nothing to do with it. But according to Gandhi, the state can be completely eliminated only in an ideal condition, which is impossible of realization. He therefore, suggests the idea of a predominantly non-violent state as a practicable and possible ideal. All the same, Tolstoy and his ideas left a deep impress on Gandhi's life.

In the nineteenth century, some anarchist thinkers in Europe and America advocated non-violent resistance. "Godwin, Proudhon and Benjamin Tucker recommended a gradual elimination of the state, and that too, by peaceful methods, such as exposing the evils and injustices of the existing order, education in principles of anarchy and practice of passive resistance."⁴⁹ Another anarchist thinker, "Johann Kasper Schmidt of Germany propounded an individualistic doctrine and a plea for the right of civil disobedience."⁵⁰

Tolstoy's philosophy, which has been called Christian rebellion, is the application of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount to the solution of modern social and political problems. The core of the Christ's teaching and the one adequate solution for human problems, according to Tolstoy is love. Love is at the basis of Tolstoy's principles of non-resistance and non-co-operation. Tolstoyan non-violence is rooted in the conception that it is a crime to impose

one's will on any creature, to force it in any way. To quote from Tolstoy's famous letter to Gandhi; dated Kocheti, September 7, 1910, "The renunciation of all opposition by force.... means the law of love un-perverted by sophistries. Love, or in other words, the striving of men's souls towards unity and the submissive behaviour to one another that results there from, represents the highest and indeed the only law of life.... any employment of force is incompatible with love as the highest law of life and.... as soon as the use of force appears permissible even in a single case, the law itself is immediately negative."⁵¹

"Tolstoy believes that the Christian civilization, because it claims to be Christian and permits defence by means of force, has grown upon this strange contradiction, and as the law of love does not prevail, for it admits of no exception, there remains no law but that of the strongest. Tolstoy condemns the state."⁵² He is opposed to the use of force, payment of taxes, and compulsory military service. Organized society, he holds, should be replaced by informal co-operation, though he does not bother about giving the details of the ideal non-violent society.

2.4. Concluding Remarks

From the above discussions we can come to the conclusion that up to the nineteenth century, violence was regarded as strictly instrumental a means that needed an end to justify it. Most of the political thinkers have accepted the need for self preservation and have sought for a principle of political legitimacy that would justify the use of force to secure this end. But Kant had said "To maintain

one's own life is a conditional duty but it is an unconditional duty not to take the life of another who does not injure one.”⁵³

It was only Tolstoy who thought deeply about non-violence as the only permissible ethic in society. The defense of violence is only the justification of our worst vices. The circle of violence as Tolstoy was defined by consists of four expedients intimidation, bribery, hypnotism and organised militarism. This circle is complete and there is no escape except through non-violence. Whether Tolstoy was right or not but his extreme formulation of the gospel of non-violence has many parallels in Indian thought but specially in Buddhist and Jaina thought. Freud's famous letter 'Why war' why we rebel against war is that we cannot help doing so.

It is Henry David Thoreau who showed in his 'Civil Disobedience' that the law will never make men free; but it is men who have got to make the law free. Gandhi repeatedly declared that *ahimsā* was advocated in the *Gītā*, the Bible and the Koran and was particularly stressed by the Buddha and the Jaina teachers. Later on his concept of *ahimsā* based on the *Gītā* and linked it to the idea of non-attachment and freedom from hatred, pride and anger.

Although the conception of *ahimsā* is interpreted in different senses in different systems of traditional Indian and Western thought almost all systems accept it as the religious concept. Although the *Mahābhārata* preached *ahimsā* as '*ahimsā parama dharma*', the same here the Vedic thought also allowed the animal sacrifice in the name of dharma. Christ's teaching of non-violence follows from the faith loving fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. Jainism and Buddhism had more rigorously practised *ahimsā*. They were the

first to protest against the animal sacrifice and Jainism was against any kind of violence.

After a long decade of Indian history Gandhi utilised this powerful weapon of non-violence in India's liberation from socio-political bondage. This religious concept under dynamic leadership of Gandhi becomes a successful political weapon to stimulate people to gain their lost freedom. The non-violence struggle released the dormant energies of people and stirred them to action.

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