

**CHAPTER-IV**

**INFLUENCE OF GANDHI ON THE LEADING  
THINKERS OF 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY**

In this chapter all the proposed thinkers Martin Luther King Jr., Aung San Suu Kyi and Dalai Lama are being discussed in the light of Gandhi's philosophy of Non-violence and *Satyāgraha*. Here the discussion on the thinkers on the proposed issues has been carried out the way their views are influenced by Gandhi and the respective theorisation accepted as well as speculated by them followed by transcendence of Gandhian *Satyāgraha*.

The reason for the selection of the thinkers is that they are all actively engaged in socio-political movements, and were influenced by Gandhi's thought. The thinkers are being dealt with in an analytical condor ultimately realizing their desired objectives in the proper light of Gandhian Non-violence and *Satyāgraha*. Thus the chapter has been divided into the following sections under which their competence would be critically examined.

This chapter deals with the Influence of Gandhi on the Leading Thinkers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In this chapter I would like to concentrate on the persons who were influenced by Gandhi, his theory of non-violence and *Satyāgraha*. I have mentioned three persons who were deeply influenced by Gandhi in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; they are Martin Luther King Jr., Aung San Suu Kyi and Dalai Lama.

Is *Satyāgraha* relevant to the present-day society or the twenty first century? The answer is not a simple 'yes' or 'no'. When we try to decide whether it is relevant to the present day society, the fundamental thing we have to consider is the nature of the present-day individuals.

In this age the prospect of mankind is shaped by issues that are beyond any individual nation's ability to solve the global issues. While there is no commonly accepted definitions of 'Global Issue' yet most people are easily able

to cite examples such as climatic change, Bird flu, migration, financial crisis, terrorism, global poverty, human rights and inequalities in opportunities.

## A

### **4.1. Influence of Gandhi's Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* on Martin Luther King Jr.: A Historical Ground**

After Gandhi, Martin Luther King had demonstrated the values of Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* as an effective weapon for correcting untenable positions. How Martin Luther King Jr. first became acquainted with Gandhi? Why did he actually embrace non-violence as a way of life to effect creative social change? King states in his book *Strength to Love* that he was exposed for the first time to the pacifist position by Dr. A.J. Muste. Martin Luther King Jr. was attracted towards the political philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi first as a student at Crozer Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended a series of lectures on Gandhi's life and works delivered by Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson, President of Howard University who had just returned from India and Dr. A.J. Muste in September, 1948. The message that he received from the symposium had such an effect on him that in order to explore more on M. K. Gandhi. Dr. King had bought a hand full of books on Gandhi, a dozen approximately. King was moved by his presentation, but doubted the practicability of the position. He felt at that time that while war could never be a positive or absolute good, that it could serve as a negative halt to the spread of evil forces. "I felt that while war could never be a positive or absolute good, it could serve as a negative good in the sense of preventing the spread and growth of an evil force. War horrible as it is, might be preferable to surrender to a totalitarian system Nazi, Fascist or Communist."<sup>1</sup> King states that during this

period he had almost despaired of the power of love in solving social problems. This might have been influenced by his reading of Nietzsche's *Will to Power* and *The Genealogy of Morals*.

“Like most people, I had heard of Gandhi, but I had never studied him seriously. As I read I became deeply fascinated by his campaigns of non-violent resistance. I was particularly moved by the Salt March to the sea and his numerous fasts. The whole concept of *Satyāgraha* was profoundly significant to me.”<sup>2</sup> As Martin Luther delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, his scepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and he came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform. However, the Gandhian technique of non-violence was one of the most potent weapons obtainable to the Negro in his struggle. “If we are to have peace on earth, our loyalties must become ecumenical rather than sectional. Our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective....we are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tide into a single garment of destiny... if we are to have peace in the world, men and nations must embrace the non-violent affirmation that ends and means must cohere.”<sup>3</sup> Gandhi's successful campaign of ‘active pacifism’ convinced King that the Christian ethic was a powerful instrument for reform. The outcome of non-violence is the creation of the beloved community, while the outcome of violence is horrible. Violence is not the symbol of radicalness or revolutionary fervour because it has been constantly used for many purposes, including simple self-expression. What makes violence revolutionary is when it plays the role in a strategy for a fundamental social change.

Non-violent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice. For oppressed people, King saw three possible options as they faced the opponent

1. They can accept it to their oppression and simply take it; which was the way of coward and worse than violence.
2. They can oppose their oppression using violence and
3. They can oppose non-violently.

“Through violence, you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish truth.... Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that. The beauty of non-violence is that, in its own way and in its own time, it seeks to break the chain reaction of evil”.<sup>4</sup>

King wanted the revolution to change the society from a ‘thing-oriented’ society to a ‘person-oriented’ society. Gandhi’s idea of *Satyāgraha* provided Martin Luther a new instrument for combating social evil. From Gandhi he took not only the idea of the relevance of creative non-violence but also the lesson that different religious communities should cooperate in the quest of justice.

In his own way, Martin Luther added new dimensions to Gandhian non-violence to make an effective tool of his fight against evil. Racial disturbances occur in the land of Thoreau, Emerson, Martin Luther King several decades after the eradication of the demon of racial discrimination. Martin Luther adopted Gandhi’s doctrine of non-violence as the most effective weapon at his command to fight against racial segregation. From his background, he gained Christian ideals, but from Gandhi he had learned his typical operational technique. The Montgomery bus boycott was a protest of passive resistance

depending upon moral and spiritual forces. He realised that the Christ had enlightened the way and Mahatma showed that how it could work.

#### **4.1.1. Martin Luther King's philosophical views on non-violence**

Gandhi's study convinced Martin Luther that true 'pacifism' is not non-resistance to evil, but non-violent resistance to evil. He was influenced by Gandhi's non-violence and the Christian ethics. There is a world of difference between the two positions. Gandhi could resist the evil more effectively than those violent resister with his love over hatred. True pacifism is not unrealistic submission to the evil power. It is a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love, with the faith that it is better to be the recipient of violence than the inflictor of it. It multiplies the existence of violence and bitterness in the universe, while the former may develop a sense of shame in the opponent and thereby bring about a transformation and change of heart. He pointed out that non-violence is not a miracle that works overnight, but it went off very well in Montgomery. In Montgomery, Alabama bus boycott, King called upon all participants to act with a spirit of kindness and an ethic of non-violence.

“Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they do not know each other; they do not know each other because they can't communicate; they can't communicate because they are separated.”<sup>5</sup> Martin Luther accepted Gandhi's theory because war and violence have failed through history to solve human problems. Violence only seems to multiply violence. So it is matched by its opposite force, non-violence. Robert Woito states that war is the denial of community, for it breaks the unity essential to establish non-tyrannical law. Violence also breaks the sense of community because it seeks to end or limit participation in the decision making

process. Joan V. Bondurant defines violence as the wilful application of force in such a way that it is intentionally injurious to the person or group against whom it is applied. Distinction for Bondurant is that with violence, force is used to intentionally harm the opponent. But with non-violence, force is used to make a change, not to purposefully harm another. If the use of force may lead to harm, the harm should be inflicted on the person who is also using the force, so she calls for self-suffering through self-sacrifice. In Gandhi's non-violence, Martin Luther found the realization of the Christian concept of returning love for hatred and the need of self-sacrifice instead of inflicting suffering on the opponent. He mainly stated Christian principles of love—"Our actions must be guided by the deepest principles of our Christian faith. Love must be the regulating ideal. Once again we must hear the words of Jesus echoing across the centuries: love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you."<sup>6</sup>

After the bombings in Montgomery, many of the officer friends of Martin Luther's church and other trusted friends urged him to hire a body guard and armed watchman for his house. But he refused the advice.. But when they insist him he agreed and went down to the sheriff's office and applied for a license to carry a gun in the car; but this also was refused. Then he reconsidered "How could I serve as one of the leaders of a non-violent movement and at the same time use weapons of violence for my personal protection?"<sup>7</sup>

Martin Luther has shown how oppressed people deal with their oppression in three characteristic ways. "One way is acquiescence: the oppressed resign themselves to their doom. They tacitly adjust themselves to oppression and thereby become conditioned to it. In every moment toward freedom some of the

oppressed prefer to remain oppressed. A second way that oppressed people sometimes deal with oppression is to resort to physical violence and corroding hatred. Violence often brings about momentary results. Nations have frequently won their independence in battle. But in spite of temporary victories, violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem; it merely creates new and more complicated ones. The third way, open to oppressed people in their quest for freedom is the way of non-violent resistance. The non-violent resister agrees with the person who acquires that one should not be physically aggressive toward his opponent, but he balances the equation by agreeing with the person of violence that evil must be resisted. He avoids the non-resistance of the former and the violent resistance of the latter. With non-violent resistance, no individual or group need submit to any wrong, nor need anyone resort to violence in order to right a wrong.”<sup>8</sup>

Martin Luther’s non-violence is not passive resistance but it is an active resistance. Passive resistance often gives the false impression that this is a sort of do nothing method in which the resister quietly and passively accepts evil. Nothing is further from the truth. The non-violent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent but his mind and emotions are always active, constantly seeking to convince his opponent that he is wrong. The method is physically passive, but spiritually active. It is not passive non-resistance to evil, but active non-violent resistance to evil.

In the Greek New Testament there are three expressions for love—‘eros’, ‘philia’ and ‘agape’. “In Platonic philosophy eros means the yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. Second, there is philia means intimate affection between personal friends. Philia denotes a sort of reciprocal love; the person



loves because he is loved. When we speak of loving those who oppose us, we refer to neither eros nor philia; we speak of a love which is expressed in the Greek word agape. Agape means understanding, redeeming goodwill for all men. It is an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is the love of God operating in the human heart.”<sup>9</sup>

Agape means unbiased love. It makes no difference between friend and enemy, that means one can expect no good in return. Here the person searches not for his own good, but for the good of his neighbour. Agape seeks nothing in return. Agape acquired that a person loves others not because he likes them and not because that person’s ways appeal to him and not even because that person can help or protect him in some other way. A person loves others not only because God loves them, but in addition it is the only way to make a peaceful society. So, it is not a weak passive love but is love in action. “Above all, our experience has shown that social change can take place without violence.”<sup>10</sup>

In his acceptance speech for the Nobel peace prize, King said that non-violence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time. He tried to fashion his philosophical commitment to non-violence into a practical strategy of action. He developed a basic five-point program of non-violence.

1. King argues that nonviolence is not for cowards.
2. King insists that non-violence is not to be used to defeat opponents but to win their friendship and understanding. King understands that converting opponents to his cause is far more effective than defeating them. Defeated opponents will only seethe in defeat.

3. King advises that non-violence should be used to fight evil and not the person caught up in those evil forces. King is an eternal optimist about human personality. He believes that all people are redeemable and that non-violence is the catalyst for that redemption.
4. Non-violence is beneficial because it avoided the physical harm that violence inflicted on the body. It also avoids 'internal' or psychological harm to the spirit.
5. Finally, King argues for a non-violent remedy because the forces of the universe are bent toward justice. Non-violent activists will be able to accept pain and suffering without retaliating. Because they know that their efforts would ultimately be rewarded.

It must be emphasized that King's concern for social justice and the employment of non-violent direct actions are rooted in his theology and ethics. His theology is largely shaped prior to his encounter with Gandhi's teaching. Thus, when considering the influence of Mahatma Gandhi upon King's thought and action, one cannot ignore the distinct Christian roots of King's theology and ethics. Many of the concepts attributed to Gandhi are perhaps better attributed as cardinal tenets of a school of Christian theology already alive in King's thought.

Martin Luther was particularly moved by the Salt March to the sea and the numerous fasts. The whole concept of *satyāgraha* was profoundly significant to him. King was impressed by the amazing results of Gandhi's campaign to find and live truth and he called it a victory of love. Gandhi strengthened King's belief that there is a moral obligation to resist evil. King clearly declared that his non-violent protests were directed against the forces of evil at work in the unjust

systems and not against the persons at work in the systems. To him the Montgomery bus boycott, the struggle in Birmingham, the march on Washington and the march from Selma to Montgomery were not struggles of racial tension but the conflicts between justice and injustice. Victory was never his aim but freedom and justice. King arrived at a system of definite philosophical and theological convictions about the nature of God, human nature, the direction of history, the mission of the Christian Church and the role of the state in social reform.

#### **4.1.2. Comparing Gandhi and Martin Luther King**

“Non-violent resistance had emerged as the technique of the movement, while love stood as the regulating ideal. In other words, Christ furnished the spirit and motivation, while Gandhi furnished the method.”<sup>11</sup>

- a. King accepts Gandhi’s non-violent direct action as an acceptable and effective mode of fighting injustice and discrimination.
- b. He got his first opportunity of experiment with Gandhi’s philosophy and strategy on 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1955 in Montgomery, Alabama. When Mrs. Rosa Parks had refused to give up her bus seat to a white man and was arrested.
- c. Like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther also subscribed to the decentralization of political power and equitable distribution of economic resources.
- d. A man of religion, both Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther believed, in the spiritualization and secularization of politics.

#### **4.1.3 Martin Luther did not find the following methods of Gandhi to be suitable**

- a. Non-payment of Taxes advocated by Thoreau and Gandhi
- b. Fasting and vegetarianism
- c. Like Gandhi, King never emphasized asceticism as necessary for non-violence. The Montgomery boycott was an example of a successful non-violent movement without asceticism.
- d. Gandhi used his non-violent resistance to turn the Indian masses against the British government to end British rule in India. But King used non-violent strategy to win rights for blacks.

Non-violence was not a way of life for King exactly the way it was for Gandhi. King's philosophical commitment to non-violence did not extend to vegetarianism. Additionally, although he made several attempts, King did not conduct fasts as a method of political resistance to the same extent that Gandhi did.

#### **4.1.4. A comparison of goals and programs advocated by Gandhi and King**

##### **4.1.4.1. Gandhi:**

5. Adult education and health programs
6. Development of village industries and sanitation
7. Elimination of liquor
8. Organization of labour *Satyāgraha*
9. Self-purification as a condition of achieving political independence

##### **4.1.4.2. Martin Luther King:**

- a. Breadbasket program
- b. Federal grants for housing, employment and education

- c. Government guaranteed income
- d. Organization of unions
- e. 1963 Bill of rights for the disadvantaged

“Violence as a way of achieving racial justice is both impractical and immoral. It is impractical because it is a descending spiral ending in destruction for all. The old law of an eye for eye leaves everybody blind. It is immoral because it seeks to humiliate the opponent rather than win his understanding; it seeks to annihilate rather than to convert. Violence is immoral because it thrives on hatred rather than love. It destroys community and makes brotherhood impossible.”<sup>12</sup>

Martin Luther King Jr.’s non-violent direct action was designed not just to win black citizens the rights and freedom that white citizens enjoyed by virtue of their birth in the country. He had a dream that his children would no longer be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. He lived up to Gandhi’s prophecy that the relevance of non-violent direct action to the context of democracy would one day be proved by an American Negro. And it was established by Dr. King. He was able to make the black man realize that he was ‘somebody’ and that somebody made it possible to live together with the white man and meet him on the table of brotherhood.

Government action is not a complete answer to the present crisis, but it is a significant partial accomplishment. Morals can’t be legislated but behaviour can be regulated. The law can’t make an employer to love. “We must depend on religion and education to alter the errors of the heart and mind; but meanwhile it is an immoral act to compel a man to accept injustice until another man’s heart is set straight. As the experience of several Northern states has shown,

antidiscrimination laws can provide powerful sanctions against this kind of immortality.”<sup>13</sup> Church has always taken the responsibility to broaden horizons, challenge the status quo and break the mores when necessary.

Martin Luther’s weekly remarks as president stressed that the use of violence in their struggle would be both impractical and immoral. To meet hate with retaliatory hate would do nothing but intensify the existence of evil in the universe. Hate begets hate; violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. So, the forces of hate must meet with the power of love and physical force must meet with soul force. The aim must never be to defeat or humiliate the oppressor, but to win his friendship and understanding. “Admittedly non-violence in the truest sense is not a strategy that one uses simply because it is expedient at the moment; non-violence is ultimately a way of life that men live by because of the sheer morality of its claim. But even granting this, the willingness to use no-violence as a technique is a step forward. For he who goes this far is more likely to adopt non-violence later as a way of life.”<sup>14</sup> Non-violence requires non-cooperation with evil; it also requires cooperation with the constructive forces of good. Without this constructive aspect, non-cooperation ends where it begins.

King states that non-violent direct action was behind the victory in Birmingham. A huge majority of those who engage in non-violent action in the U.S. are not pacifists. Most African Americans who risked their lives in his campaigns were not believers in pacifism. They used non-violent direct action situationally. There are many pacifists who rarely if ever engage in non-violent action, rarely do civil disobedience. That would be a big surprise to the

hundreds of thousands of people of colour in the U.S. who have used non-violent direct action in campaigns for over a century.

There were no more powerful moments in the Birmingham episode than during the closing days of the campaign, when Negro youngsters ran after white policemen, asking to be locked up. There was an element of un-malicious mischief in this. To their most bitter opponents Martin Luther said “We shall match our capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will but we will continue to love you. We cannot in good conscience obey your unjust laws because non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good... One day we shall win freedom, but not only for ourselves. We shall so appeal to your heart and conscience that we shall win you in the process and our victory will be a double victory.”<sup>15</sup>

## **B**

### **4.2. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha*: Aung San Suu Kyi**

No one can deny that Aung San Suu Kyi has played a critical role in the political development of Myanmar and will remain an influential political figure in the contemporary political scene. To understand Myanmar politics, one must understand her personality, political philosophy and her role in the political life of the country. She has been the answer to almost all Myanmar’s socio-political problems. By non-violence she means the positive action. Whatever you want you have to work for that idea. It does not mean sitting; doing nothing and hope to get what you want. Her vision is that non-violence is not passive. She said, “Violence is its own worst enemy and fearlessness is the sharpest weapon

against it. It is not least Aung San Suu Kyi's impressive courage which makes her such an effective symbol, like Gandhi and her father Aung San. Aung San was shot in the middle of his struggle. He became the unifying symbol of a free Burma and an inspiration to those who are fighting for a free society. In addition to his example and inspiration, his position among his people, over forty years after his death, gave Aung San Suu Kyi the political point of departure she needed. She has indeed taken up her inheritance, and is now in her own right the symbol of the revolt against violence and the struggle for a free society.”<sup>16</sup> The idea of freedom in Burma is not contrary to its tradition, it has been part of it from the very start. Aung San Suu Kyi addressed several hundred thousand people in front of the large Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon, presenting a political program based on human rights, democracy and non-violence. On the 18th of September, 1988 after hesitating for a few weeks, the armed forces reacted by tightening the restrictions. The so-called ‘State Law and Order Restoration Council’ (SLORC) was established, and martial law was introduced under which meetings were banned and persons could be sentenced without trial. However, from the point of view of the ruling junta Suu Kyi has been the source of all political problems.

#### **4.2.1. Buddhism and its history in Burma**

Buddhism is the most defining aspect of Burmese life. The history of Buddhism in Burma possibly extends more than two thousand years to the Buddha's time. The most important qualities of Burmese culture is the Buddhist values of loving kindness and compassion and respect for education. Burma is known as one of the major countries following *Theravada* Buddhism. Both



*Theravada* and *Mahāyāna* Buddhism were practised among the Burmese people. At least eighty percent of its population being born Buddhists and the other form of Buddhism is *Mahāyāna*. *Theravada* means, ‘the way of the elders’ or ‘small vehicle’. *Mahāyāna* means great vehicle. *Mahāyāna* Buddhism contains much that is taken from Hinduism and Trantism, which involves many secret and magic rituals. *Mahāyāna* Buddhists tend to believe that their religious practices and attitudes are broader and therefore greater than the *Theravada* sect. *Theravada* Buddhism was to be the major factor in forming the character of Burmese society. *Theravada* Buddhism was rooted at Pagan for the first time in 11th century by the King Anawratha. In 1948 after independence both civil and military governments have supported *Theravada* Buddhism.

According to Aung San Suu Kyi, “Engaged Buddhism is active compassion or active metta. It is not just sitting there passively saying, I feel sorry of them. It means doing something about the situation by bringing whatever relief you can to those who need it the most, by caring for them, by doing what you can to help others.”<sup>17</sup> What she has learned by Buddhist teachings is that there were two kinds of speech- one which was truthful, beneficial and acceptable; and the other which was truthful, beneficial but unacceptable, that is to say that does not please the listener. *Theravada* Buddhism is not a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, it is not a system of faith or worship. It is a path to follow for harmonious living and its essence is *Metta*, loving kindness to all creatures and self. Compassion is a part of *Theravada* Buddhism. As a *Theravada* Buddhist, Aung San Suu Kyi respects *Mahāyāna* Buddhism as well.

Drawing on Buddhist precepts Aung San Suu Kyi wrote that the concept of law was based on dhamma, righteousness or virtue not on the power to impose insensitive and inflexible rules on a defenceless people. Burmese Buddhists never made the intellectual leap from freedom in the religious realm to the political. Buddhist political thought argues that men originally lived in a state of nature where they were virtuous, respected the rights of others and fulfilled their obligations consciously. Buddhism as she argues places the highest value on man who alone has the ability to attain the supreme state of Buddhahood.

#### **4.2.2. Influence of Gandhi's Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* on Aung San Suu Kyi**

Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi stands alongside the Dalai Lama and Martin Luther King in the international struggle for freedom and human rights. For the past twenty years she has been the voice for democracy in Burma and in 2007, gave her support to the monks, nuns and citizens whose protests were brutally crushed by the military regime. Her determination to restore democracy has come at immense personal cost. Under house arrest for many years, she has preserved in her non-violent struggle for Burma's freedom. From the beginning of her involvement in the peaceful political struggle she offered a fresh visualization of a free Burma where the people might be able to enjoy self-rule and civil rights.

Aung San Suu Kyi was mainly influenced by Gandhi and Buddhist's principles and actions. "I am influenced to some degree by their principles and actions. But primarily the reason why I object to violent means is because I think it would perpetuate a tradition of changing the political situation through

force of arms.”<sup>18</sup> Once entrenched in the fight for freedom and democracy in Burma, Suu Kyi embraced numerous of Gandhi’s protest techniques in her own resistance movement against Burma’s military junta. Suu Kyi was influenced by Gandhi’s teachings and read not only his writings but also those of the philosophers who had influenced him. The use of non-violence in achieving a political solution is very practical. In her own words “If you want to establish a strong tradition of democracy in this country one of the basic principles of achieving it is that you bring about political change peacefully through consulting the will of the people via the ballot box and not through force of arms. If you want democracy you must demonstrate its principles; you need to be consistent in politics.”<sup>19</sup> At the age of seventeen when Aung San Suu Kyi was studying Political Science at Delhi University she acquired her lasting admiration for the principles of non-violence embodied in the life and philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. Her campaign of civil disobedience in Burma was directly inspired by that example. She cited both Gandhi and Martin Luther King as models. “The fact that Suu Kyi was in Burma was slowly becoming known in certain political and diplomatic circles. It was hard to maintain a low profile for the daughter of a national hero, as Suu Kyi indeed was.”<sup>20</sup>

“We would like the people to see and understand why a political system is tied up with our daily lives. Why we cannot ignore politics and just concentrate on economics, as the authorities would like us to do. We want them to understand that our struggle for democracy is a struggle for our everyday life, that it is not removed. It is not something that we do when we have a bit of free time or when we feel like it. We want freedom from fear and want. There are people today who enjoy materially secure lives, but they can never be sure when this

will be taken from them. There must be a sense of security that as long as we are not doing harm to others, as long as we are not infringing the laws which were brought about so that we should not harm each other, we should be able to rest secure in the knowledge that we ourselves will not be harmed. That the authorities cannot remove us from our job, kick us out of our house, throw us in prison or have we executed, if we have done nothing to warrant such actions.”<sup>21</sup>

Under house arrest for several years Aung San Suu Kyi has preserved and continued in her non-violent struggle for Burma’s freedom. For her only in a democratic society man can truly exercise his freedom. Democracy acknowledges the right to differ as well as the duty to settle differences peacefully.

#### **4.2.3. A Critical Survey of Aung San Suu Kyi’s Views on Non-violence and *Satyāgraha***

Aung San Suu Kyi encouraged people to focus on deeds, rather than on people. Her strength was the power of truth and non-violence. People may not think but the power of truth is great indeed. The effect of truth is reassuring but the effect of untruth is very frightening. Truth can’t be separated from sincerity and good will. “But truth is a very large concept. Pure truth absolute truth is beyond ordinary beings like us because we can’t see things absolutely and as a whole. The search for truth has to be accompanied by awareness. Awareness and objectivity are closely linked. If you are aware of what you are doing you have an objective view of yourself. And if you are aware of what other people are doing you become more objective about them too. For example, awareness means that when you are aware of the fact that somebody is shouting you don’t

think to yourself ‘what a horrible man’. That is purely subjective. But if you are aware you know that he is shouting because he is angry or frightened. That is objectivity.”<sup>22</sup>

Aung San Suu Kyi’s speech in which she summoned her father’s work patriotism and desire for a free and democratic Burma was an emotional and powerful unifying message to her fellow countrymen. As daughter of Aung San, she was not only a moving reminder of the Burma, but also the living symbol of hope and future for all of Burma’s people.

“Non-violence means positive action. You have to work for whatever you want. You don’t just sit there doing nothing and hope to get what you want. It just means that the methods you use are not violent ones. Some people think that non-violence is passiveness. It’s not so.”<sup>23</sup>

#### **4.2.4. Aung San Suu Kyi and Gandhi: On Transition**

Suu Kyi does not want to establish a change through violence in her region. Because she was afraid if democracy is achieved through violence they will never be able to get rid of the idea that brings necessary changes through violence. The method would be threatening all the time. Because there are always people who do not agree with democracy. If democracy is achieved through violent means, there will be the hard core of those who have always been against the democracy movement who will think, it was through violence that they changed the system and if we can develop our own methods of violence which are superior to theirs, we can get back the power. And it will go on in this vicious cycle. It is as much a political tactic as a spiritual belief that

violence is not the right way. It would simply not assist in building up a strong democracy.

Aung San Suu Kyi worked through her grief by throwing herself into winning the struggle for democracy. From the outset she noticed that the people in the streets, who were calling for change, wanted something new and different. Therefore, she refused to join any of the other older politicians who wanted the leaderless revolution. She shared her father's belief in democracy and its achievement through peaceful means. As a pragmatist, she responded to changing the conditions both in her role and speech. On 18<sup>th</sup> September 1988 she joined the National League for Democracy (NLD) party and became its general secretary. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) considered Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) party to be particularly troublesome. Her visits and speeches across Burma had gained quite a following and support for her National League for Democracy (NLD) party. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) used contradictory tactics where members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party were concerned. They encouraged political parties to declare themselves openly. They however, imposed severe restrictions on speech and freedom to assemble. Many violators of the laws were arrested and sentenced to prison without having a trial. Even during her detention she didn't know what would happen from one day to the next, rather she was firmly determined and leaned heavily on her faith in the teachings of Buddha and never hated her oppressors.

Suu Kyi has chosen the way of non-violence simply because she thought it is politically better for the country in the long run to establish that can bring about change without the use of arms. This has been a clear National League for

Democracy (NLD) policy from the beginning. Here she is not thinking about spiritual matters at all. She says, “Perhaps in that sense, we are not the same as Mahatma Gandhi, who would have probably condemned all movements that were violent. I am not sure. But he did say at one time that if he had to choose between violence and cowardice, he would choose violence. So, even Gandhi, who was supposed to be the great exponent of non-violence, was not somebody who did not make any exceptions. We have chosen non-violence because it is the best way to protect the people and in the long term assure the future stability of democracy.”<sup>24</sup> She spoke out sharply against the murder in the streets of non-violent demonstrators by the soldiers as they strengthened their power. She spoke out strongly as the military increased its violation of human rights, intimidation and repression. She continued to call for peaceful change through free and fair elections, but this became more difficult as the military rulers began to arrest her followers and harass her. Her speeches focused increasingly upon the behaviour of the military which she eventually described as fascist and an obstruction to peaceful change. She had recognised very early that the military had no real intention of allowing free and open politics to flourish. In November 1995 the National League for Democracy (NLD) began a boycott leading the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to expel it from the National Convention for breach of discipline. The issue of democratization returned to the public agenda in August 2003.

One of Aung San Suu Kyi’s most famous speeches are from *Freedom from Fear*, which began: “It is not power that corrupts, but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it.”<sup>25</sup> She also believes that fear spurs many world leaders to lose

sight of their purpose. She once said government leaders are amazing, so often it seems they are the last to know what the people want. She has chosen non-violence because it is the best way to protect the people and in the long term assure the future stability of democracy. She says this is the reason why her father changed from violence to non-violence. She thought that somebody certainly ought to choose the non-violent way because it means that fewer people will be hurt.

Suu Kyi insisted at all times that the movement should be based on a non-violent struggle for human rights as the primary object. She spoke to the common people of her country as they had not been spoken to for so long as individuals worthy of love and respect. In a prolonged campaign of civil disobedience she flouted a great number of the Draconian measures introduced by the authorities. Matters came to a head in July 1989. After the death of her father Suu Kyi had decided to point her finger at the main obstacle to political change. She voiced the belief, shared by many but never spoken in public that the army was still being controlled by the retired general Ne Win. She expressed the doubt that the ruling junta ever intended to keep their promise of transferring power to a civilian government. When she announced her plan to lead a march to pay tribute to the martyrs, the authorities moved quickly to fill the streets with troops. Faced again with the prospect of terrible bloodshed in Rangoon, Suu Kyi called off the march.

If we define violence as any action that gives pain to others, this broadens the definition so much that none of us is capable of real non-violence. Even if our intention is to help somebody, we may cause pain to that person by telling him a painful truth. So, in those terms, it is difficult to talk of pure non-violence.



In general what we mean by violence these days is physical violence. As long as our thoughts, emotions and words are not translated into physical action, people will more or less accept that our methods are non-violent. We can actually keep from performing acts that give physical pain to others. Then of course, there are those who will argue that mental pain is worse than physical pain.

Suu Kyi chooses non-violence as an expedient political tactic. To quote her: "I do not hold to non-violence for moral reasons, but for political and practical reasons."<sup>26</sup> However, non-violent action as well as civil resistance in lieu of armed conflict is also political tactics in keeping with the overall philosophy of her Theravada Buddhist religion. Her aim in politics is to work for democratization of Burmese political system. She believes that democratic institutions and practices are necessary for the guarantee of human rights and for a free, secure and just society where Burmese people are able to realize their full potential. In her writings and speeches freedom is a universal idea, which was given modern approval in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the UN in 1948. For Aung San Suu Kyi freedom was more than constitutional guarantees, it was also psychological. She believes that the resolution of all problems and differences is best achieved through free discussion and dialogue. Her forthright criticism of the State Law and Order Restoration Council's (SLORC) constitutional ideas and the support of the people in her fearless defense of freedom and democracy make it clear why she and not her military opponents is the one who represents the political tradition of Burma.

### 4.3. Non-violence and *Satyāgraha*: The Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama is the highest-ranking lama of Tibetan Buddhism. Since the 17th century, the Dalai Lama has been the political and spiritual leader of Tibet. He is also considered an emanation of the Bodhisattva *Avalokiteshvara*, an iconic figure who represents boundless compassion. The term ‘Dalai Lama’ takes on different meanings according to different people. For some this term signifies a living Buddha, the earthly manifestation of *Avalokiteshvara*, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. For others it means a ‘God King’. At the end of the 1950’s, to be the Dalai Lama meant fulfilling the function of Vice President of the Steering Committee of the People’s National Congress of the People’s Republic of China. But none of these designations correspond to the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. To him the title ‘Dalai Lama’ represents the responsibility that has to be fulfilled.

Each Dalai Lama is recognized as the reincarnation of the previous Dalai Lama. This does not mean, however, that a Dalai Lama’s soul has transmigrated from one body to another through the centuries. According to the age old spiritual tradition, the Regent and the Tibetan government consulted oracles and Lamas for signs and clues of where the next Dalai Lama would be born. Buddhists, including Tibetan Buddhists, understand that an individual has no intrinsic self, or soul, to transmigrate. It’s a bit closer to a Buddhist understanding to say that the great compassion and dedicated vows of each Dalai Lama causes the next one to be born. The new Dalai Lama is not the same

person as the previous one, but neither he is a different person. The Dalai Lama is the incarnation of Chenrezig who is the Buddha of Compassion.

#### **4.3.1. Buddhism and its history in Tibet**

Marxist view is that man is ultimately responsible for his own destiny and this reflects Buddhists thought as well. Buddhism in the Tibetan tradition is a very complete form of Buddhism. Tibet required peaceful relations with their neighbour. Dalai Lama's claim was that Tibet had never been part of China. They are ethnically and racially distinct peoples. Neither they speak the same language nor their script anything is like the Chinese script. The difference between Tibet and China was that to one the killing of human beings was a fact of life and to the another it was unthinkable. It made him realise that the Chinese leadership was not truly Marxist dedicated to a better world for all, but highly nationalistic. "According to Buddhist thought, a Bodhisattva is someone on the path to Buddhahood who dedicates themselves entirely to helping all other sentient beings towards release from suffering. The word Bodhisattva can best be understood by translating the Bodhi and Sattva separately: Bodhi means the understanding or wisdom of the ultimate nature of reality, and a Sattva is someone who is motivated by universal compassion. The Bodhisattva ideal is thus the aspiration to practise infinite compassion with infinite wisdom."<sup>27</sup>

The founder of Buddhism was a historical figure, Siddhartha, who came to be recognised as the Buddha Shakyamuni. This was more than 2,500 years ago. His teachings, now known as Buddhism, were introduced to Tibet during the fourth century AD. They took several centuries to supersede the native Bon

religion and become fully established. Tibetans are by nature quite aggressive people and quite warlike, their increasing interest in religious practice was a major factor in bringing about the country's isolation. Before then, Tibet possessed a vast empire, which dominated Central Asia with territories covering large parts of northern India, Nepal and Bhutan in the south. It also included much Chinese territory. In 763 AD, Tibetan forces actually captured the Chinese capital, where they extracted promises of tribute and other concessions. However, as Tibetans' enthusiasm for Buddhism increased, Tibet's relations with her neighbours became of a spiritual rather than a political nature. This was especially true of China, where a 'priest-patron' relationship developed. The Manchu Emperors, who were Buddhists, referred to the Dalai Lama as 'King of Expounding Buddhism'.

The fundamental precept of Buddhism is Interdependence or the Law of Cause and Effect. This simply states that everything which an individual being experiences is derived through action from motivation. Motivation is thus the root of both action and experience. From this understanding are derived the Buddhist theories of consciousness and rebirth.

Buddhists further believe that the basic nature of consciousness is neutral. It is possible to escape from the unending cycle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth that life inevitably entails, but only when all negative karma has been eliminated along with all worldly attachments. When this point is reached, the consciousness in question is believed to attain first liberation and then ultimately Buddhahood. However, according to Buddhism in the Tibetan tradition, a being that achieves Buddhahood, although freed from samsara, 'the

wheel of suffering', as the phenomenon of existence is known, will continue to return to work for the benefit of all other sentient beings until such time as each one is similarly liberated.

#### **4.3.2. Influence of Gandhi's Non-violence and *Satyāgraha* on Dalai Lama**

The recent Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. He was born in 1935, two years after the death of the 13th Dalai Lama. When he was three years old, signs and visions led senior monks to find the little boy, living with his farming family in North-eastern Tibet, and declare him to be the 14th Dalai Lama. He began his monastic training at the age of six. He was called upon to assume the full responsibilities of the Dalai Lama in 1950, when he was only 15, after the Chinese had invaded Tibet.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama fled Tibet on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1959. Since then he has been living in exile in India. During the period 1949-50, the People's Republic of China sent an army to invade Tibet. For almost a decade Dalai Lama remained as political as well as spiritual leader of Tibetan people and he tried to re-establish peaceful relations between the two nations Tibet and China. But the task proved impossible and he came to the unhappy conclusion that he could serve his people better from outside.

In November 1950, with Chinese forces entering Tibet, the Government of Tibet in Lhasa sent an urgent appeal for support to the United Nations. Even though, a series of embassy efforts the appeal but was fruitless. Tibetans had no alternative but to enter into direct negotiations with the Chinese authorities. The

delegation was instructed to consult with the Kashag and the Dalai Lama before concluding any agreement with the Chinese authorities. On April 29, 1951, the Tibetan and Chinese delegations met at an army headquarters in Beijing. As negotiations proceeded, it became increasingly clear that the Chinese would not agree to any of the Tibetan demands. All negotiating positions put forward by the Tibetan delegation were rejected and delegates were threatened with physical violence and kept virtual prisoners by their Chinese hosts. Furthermore, the Tibetan negotiators were not given permission to contact the Kashag in Lhasa, nor the Dalai Lama who was stationed temporarily in Dromo. Instead they were required to obey with Chinese position. Following days of debate characterized by continuous compromise by the Tibetan delegation, the agreement was finally concluded. It guaranteed, among other things, that the existing political system in Tibet would be maintained and that the authority of the Dalai Lama would not be challenged. Final copies of the agreement were signed by both delegations on May 23, 1951 but without receiving approval from the Kashag and the Dalai Lama. Before the Kashag and Dalai Lama were told of the agreement, Chinese officials announced 'the peaceful liberation' of Tibet on April 27, 1951. The Dalai Lama describes his initial reaction to the announcement as a 'terrible shock'. When the officials arrived in Dromo, they were accompanied by Chinese General Zhang Jingwu who managed to convince the Dalai Lama that re-negotiation of the agreement would be difficult now, but possible at a later date. On this premise, the young Dalai Lama decided to return to Lhasa with his ministers where he was immediately faced with an escalation of Chinese military presence. By September 1951, 3000 troops were stationed in Lhasa and that number quickly increased to 20,000. "In April 1954,

Nehru had signed a new Sino-Indian treaty which included a memorandum known as Panch Sheel, Whereby it was agreed that India and China would under no circumstances interfere with one another's internal affairs. According to this treaty, Tibet was part of China.”<sup>28</sup> Only after he had arrived safely into exile in India the Dalai Lama was free to repudiate the Seventeen Point Agreement. At a press conference in Mussorie, India on June 20, 1959, the Dalai Lama said, the approval of the Tibetan Government was secured under compulsion and at the point of the bayonet. The representatives were compelled to sign the agreement under threat of further military operations against Tibet by the invading armies of China leading to utter ruin of the country.

On April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1959, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came to see Dalai Lama in Mussoorie. The Dalai Lama made it clear that he can't ever accept violence. He told Nehru that his main concern was twofold: “I am determined to regain Tibet's independence, but for now, my priority is to put an end to the bloodbath. At these words Nehru told that is not possible, you say that you want independence and at the same time that you don't want a bloodbath. Impossible!”<sup>29</sup>

When Dalai Lama was studying Buddhism, he was taught to take care of nature, since the practice of non-violence applies not just to human beings but to all sentient beings. “Everything that is animate possesses consciousness. Wherever there is consciousness, there are feelings like pain, pleasure and joy. No sentient being wants to suffer. On the contrary, all beings search for happiness. In Buddhist practice, we are so used to this idea of non-violence and

to the wish to put an end to all suffering that we are careful not to attack or destroy life unwillingly.”<sup>30</sup>

In 1956 when Dalai Lama visited to Delhi, he made a pilgrimage to Rajghat on the banks of the Jamuna river where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated. He felt very grateful to be there and grateful also to be in the country that had adopted *ahimsā*, the Mahatma’s doctrine of non-violence. When he stood praying, he experienced simultaneously great sadness at not being able to meet Gandhi in person and great joy at the magnificent example of his life. To him, he was and is the consummate politician, a man who put his belief in altruism above any personal considerations. He was convinced too that his devotion to the cause of non-violence was the only way to conduct politics.

#### **4.3.3. Dalai Lama’s views on Non-violence and *Satyāgraha***

“Unfortunately, although we have entered the twenty first century, we have not made a clean break with past habits. I refer to the belief that we can solve problems with weapons. It is because of this idea that the world continues to experience all sorts of difficulties. But what should we do? What is to be done when the major world powers have already made their decisions? We can wish for a gradual end to the tradition of wars?”<sup>31</sup>

Human rights violations in Tibet are amongst the most serious problems in the world. With a thousand million people against Tibetan’s six million, China could forcefully erase the entire Tibetan race from the face of the earth. Learning to forgive is much more useful than merely picking up a stone and throwing it at the object of one’s anger, the more so when the provocation is



extreme. “In the history books we learn that one nation wins a war while another loses it. Over the centuries, conflicts have succeeded each other, showing how true it is that no war that has ever been won has signified the end of war. Quite the contrary confrontation continues from generation to generation and the parties that capitulated yesterday hope to become the conquerors of tomorrow. What if the Dalai Lama’s commitment were precisely to break this cycle of conflict? From that point of view, the fifty years that have passed would be neither pointless nor lost. On the contrary, they would represent victory over war.”<sup>32</sup>

Westerners view is that in the long run the non-violent methods of passive resistance advocated by Gandhi are not suitable for everyone and that they are more appropriate in the East. Being more energetic, Westerners expect immediate results, whatever the situation, even at the cost of their lives. “I think this attitude is not always the best one. On the contrary, the practice of non-violence is beneficial in every case. It simply requires determination. Even though the liberation movements in Eastern Europe quickly attained their goal, nonviolent protest, by its very nature, usually requires patience.”<sup>33</sup>

Human beings have the desire for peace, they all want to avoid suffering and be happy. On 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1987 before the Human Rights Commission in the Congress in Washington, Dalai Lama announced a Five-Point Peace Plan in which he called for the transformation of Tibet into a zone of peace, a sanctuary where humanity and nature could live together in harmony. It encompasses the following points:

1. The transformation of the whole of Tibet into a zone of peace.

2. Abandonment of China's population transfer policy which threatens the very existence of the Tibetans as a people.
3. Respect for the Tibetan people's fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms.
4. Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and the abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.
5. Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet and of relations between Tibetan and Chinese peoples.

Dalai Lama's aim of the Five-Point Peace Plan was that, the whole of Tibet, including the eastern provinces of Kham and Amdo, be transformed into a zone of *Ahimsā* in keeping with Tibet's position as a peaceful Buddhist nation. The following are key elements of the proposed *Zone of Ahimsā*

1. The entire Tibetan plateau would be demilitarised.
2. The manufacture, testing and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and other armaments on the Tibetan plateau would be prohibited.
3. The Tibetan plateau would be transformed into the world's largest natural park or biosphere. Strict laws would be enforced to protect wildlife and plant life; the exploitation of natural resources would be carefully regulated so as not to damage relevant ecosystems and a policy of sustainable development would be adopted in populated areas.
4. The manufacture and use of nuclear power and other technologies which produce hazardous waste would be prohibited.

5. National resources and policy would be directed towards the active promotion of peace and environmental protection. Organisations dedicated to the furtherance of peace and to the protection of all forms of life would find a hospitable home in Tibet.
6. The establishment of international and regional organisations for the promotion and protection of human rights would be encouraged in Tibet.

“Non-violence is not limited to an absence of violence, for it is a matter of an active attitude, motivated by the wish to do others good. It is equivalent to altruism.”<sup>34</sup> So, even though it is difficult to bring about positive change in society itself, it is undoubtedly worthwhile to try. We cannot solve human problems with weapons. Obviously wars produce conquerors and conquered, but only temporarily. The victories from wars cannot last very long. “I am quite certain that because of my commitment to non-violence, based on a genuine desire for universal brotherhood and sisterhood, there have been some positive results, however slight.”<sup>35</sup>

Dalai Lama’s point of view is that “From a strictly practical standpoint, we note that violence can sometimes be useful. A problem is resolved more quickly by force. But such a success is often obtained at the expense of the rights and well being of others. Any problem resolved that way engenders yet another problem.”<sup>36</sup> Once Chinese Chairman Mao said that political power comes from the barrel of a gun. At this Dalai Lama supposed that “He was only partly right: power that comes from the barrel of a gun can be effective only for a short time.

In the end, people's love for truth, justice, freedom and democracy will triumph. No matter what governments do, the human spirit will always prevail.”<sup>37</sup>

#### **4.3.4. Dalai Lama and Gandhi: On Transition**

It is often noticed that decisions made out of desperation often go wrong. Therefore, rather than make decisions based on emotion, we need to analyse carefully and make them according to their reality. The main problems we confront today are created by us, whether they are violent conflicts, destruction of nature, poverty, hunger and forth. “They can be resolved but only through human effort, understanding and the development of a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. To do this, we need to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another and for the planet we share, based on a good heart and awareness.”<sup>38</sup> If there is bloodshed, the man in power will have safe shelters, they will flee the painful penalty by finding asylum. But what will happen to the poor people, the children, the old and the sick? They are the ones who will have to abide the brunt. When weapons speak, they create death and destruction without distinguishing between the innocent and the guilty. The missile launched by the enemy does not respect the innocent, the poor, the defenceless the very people deserving of compassion. Consequently, the real losers are the ones who lead a simple life.

“When the Dalai Lama is reproached for limiting Gandhi's inheritance to non-violence, he points out that the context doesn't allow them to reproduce in Tibet the methods that freed India from English control. Gandhi could in fact defend himself freely in a court of law and although the colonial regime of the British Raj was severe, it still respected the basic rights of individuals, which is

not the case with the Chinese authorities. Therefore, the Dalai Lama advocates cultivating the spirit of Gandhi's struggle while adapting it to the Tibetan situation."<sup>39</sup>

Gandhi is the political figure for non-violent struggle and his portrait is present in many Tibetan administrative offices. A great model of peace and reconciliation, the Mahatma was honoured posthumously at the same time as the Dalai Lama during the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize. By doing so, the Nobel committee meant to repair its mistake in not having conferred this distinction on him before.

To prevail over India's independence from British colonial power, Gandhi organized not only just non-violent resistance but also civil disobedience, non-cooperation with the occupiers and protest marches. When the Dalai Lama is reproached for limiting Gandhi's inheritance to non-violence, he points out that the context does not allow them to reproduce in Tibet the methods that freed India from British control. Gandhi could in fact defend himself freely in a court of law and although the colonial regime of the British Raj was severe, it still respected the basic rights of individuals, which is not the case with the Chinese authorities. Therefore, the Dalai Lama advocates cultivating the spirit of Gandhi's struggle while adapting it to the Tibetan situation.

There is the need to have an international cooperation without any difference on the grounds of geographical, political, economic and cultural matters. The spirit of love and brotherhood animating from non-violence has to be approved to the international level. The international problems have to be sorted out, discussed and solved in good faith by assuming the method of persuasion, negotiation, adjustment and compromise without resorting to

violence, by being rational and moral. By being integrated, the fear of unseen hazard arising out of division could completely be avoided.

In 1989, Dalai Lama won the Nobel Prize for Peace but the news didn't matter to him much because he realised that it would mean a great deal to the people of Tibet, for it was they who were the real winners of the prize. His satisfaction derived from what he has seen as international recognition of the value of compassion, forgiveness and love. He was pleased by feeling that at that moment the people of many countries were discovering for themselves that peaceful change was not impossible. "In the past, the idea of non-violent revolution had seemed perhaps idealistic and I drew great comfort from this overwhelming proof to the contrary."<sup>40</sup>

Peace, in the sense of the absence of war, is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold. It will not remove the pain of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones in floods caused by senseless deforestation in a neighbouring country. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free. True peace with oneself and with the world around us can only be achieved through the development of mental peace. The other phenomena mentioned above are similarly interrelated. "Thus, for example, we see that a clean environment, wealth or democracy means little in the face of war, especially nuclear war and that material development is not sufficient to ensure human happiness. Material progress is of course important for human advancement. Inner peace is the key: if you have inner peace, the external problems do not affect your deep sense of peace and tranquillity. In that state of mind you can deal with situations with calmness and reason, while

keeping your inner happiness. That is very important. Without this inner peace, no matter how comfortable your life is materially, you may still be worried, disturbed or unhappy because of circumstances.”<sup>41</sup> The Dalai Lama’s award of Nobel Peace Prize brought a deserved recognition of Tibetan’s struggle for freedom and justice. It reaffirmed their conviction that with the weapons of truth, courage and determination they will succeed at freeing their country.

“So although it is difficult to bring about positive change in society itself, it is undoubtedly worthwhile to try. It is possible. This is my firm belief. Whether or not we succeed is a different matter: what is important is that we do our best.”<sup>42</sup>

The Dalai Lama is active in spreading India's message of non-violence and religious harmony throughout the world. He has said that democracy has deep roots in India. He considers India the master and Tibet its disciple, scholars like Nagarjuna went from Nalanda to Tibet to spread Buddhism in the eighth century. He has noted that millions of people lost their lives in violence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so let the 21<sup>st</sup> century be a century of tolerance and dialogue.

Human beings by nature wish for happiness and do not want any suffering. We sometimes quarrel with each other, sometimes criticise and sometimes fight but as a whole we are all the same human beings. From a broader viewpoint we are all brothers and sisters. Clearly, the Dalai Lama has acknowledged the influence of Gandhi on his way of thinking.

“The discourse on the Tibetan cause itself has taken a turn and the Tibetan imagination is now linking the Gandhian concept of non-violence vis-a-vis

Tibet with international values, like human rights and environmental consciousness and with Buddhism.”<sup>43</sup>

Both Gandhi and Dalai Lama balanced their responsibilities as spiritual and political leaders. Gandhi supported struggle for independence. He was, however, disillusioned by the form in which independence ultimately came and the violence it produced. The Dalai Lama has perceived that balance differently, removing himself from day-to-day nationalist politics and showing equanimity. For Gandhi politics cannot be separated from religion. Religion signifies a man's social contact. True religion is one's attitude to social service and upliftment of the poor and suffering millions.



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