

Is Gandhi out of date

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PREFACE

The first part of this pamphlet was written early as 1969 for an All-India Essay Competition held in the observation of the Gandhiji's Birth Centenary year. Though it was judged as best it has been lying with me and since Mumbai Sarvodaya Mandal was prepared to publish I touched it only here and there and left practically in it's original form, though it bears the impress of the times.

However, to make amends for it I have add a second part to it wherein important world problems have been discussed in very brief light of Gandhiji's thinking. I hope they both together will be found useful by the readers.

I am highly thankful to my friend Shri Daniel Mazgaonkar for his initiative in the publication of this pamphlet and still more to Smt. Sunandatai Kalushte, the chairperson of Mumbai Sarvodaya Mandal for undertaking it.

Vishwanath Tandon

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We take the opportunity to thank Smt. Anuradha Mohni for getting the work of typing, proof reading done in time and for giving valuable suggestions.

We did not have the time to send the proof to Kanpur to Dr. Tandon though he had expressed his willingness to have a look at the final press copy of the booklet as we wanted to get this work done at the earliest.

We are solely responsible for any kind of error that might have been overlooked inspite of our efforts and hope that the readers shall condone us for the same.

Smt. Sunanda Kaluste President, **Mumbai Sarvodaya Mandal**

PART ONE

IS GANDHI OUT OF DATE ?

Pitirim A. Sorokin, (1889-1968) famous sociologist and philosopher of history, has dedicated his book, 'The Reconstruction of Humanity', to Mohandas K. Gandhiji, whom he considers as 'Deathless'. As opposed to it, to many western minds the ideas of Gandhiji and his ways have been a matter of much perplexity. Another opinion heard was that "Gandhian philosophy was neither with the age nor ahead of the age, but it was against the age". This somewhat echoed the view of many educated Indians, who, while revering Gandhiji as the 'Father of the Nation', had been rejecting his ideas as outdated, a relic of a bygone outlook and mentality. Thus these two contradictory views have been held about him and an attempt has been made here to examine his ideas mostly in the light of the thinking of some topmost thinkers of the century and in the context of the problems before the world.

A Superficial View

The latter view is based on the fact that Gandhiji had rejected many of the contemporary pet notions and prevailing trends of the time. In an age of scepticism he was a religious man with his ideas anchored to his faith in the existence of God. In conditions wherein wickedness seemed to predominate in humans, he repeatedly affirmed the essential goodness of humans. In a period of ethical relativism and nihilism, he pleaded for certain ethical norms as permanent and fundamental for human conduct. While Freud was pointing to the dangers of the suppression of the libido, he advocated Brahmacharya and rejected birth control, permitting intercourse only for the purpose of procreation. In an age of materialism and craze for a higher and higher standard of living he preached wantlessness, self imposed simplicity and austerity in living. While the modern world was taking to more and more gadgets and was advancing towards a

computer civilization, he rejected modern industrialism and advocated the cause of village industries. In a world where distances were being annihilated, he stood for economic self-sufficiency at the village or regional level. Amidst the increasing urbanization and the growth of metropolitan cities, he preached the values of a rural civilization and called upon the youths of India to go to the villages. While the world trend is towards political centralization and increase in state functions, he pleaded for decentralization of political power and held that, 'that government is best which governs the least.' In a world where the ideas of class animosities and conflicts are gaining adherents, he laid emphasis on the harmony of interests by talking of Sarvodaya, the welfare of all. In an age of increasing armament and violence, he stood for disarmament and non-violence. Though a staunch advocate of economic equality, he rejected nationalization and expropriation, advocating "trusteeship". And, lastly, to a world that has come to look down upon physical labour as an evil to be avoided as much as possible, his idea of Basic Education seemed to be "a retreat from civilization".

Thus looked at, Gandhiji stood for a culture which the world is fast outgrowing. But it is not really so. A great quality of a seer or a prophet is that he looks far ahead of others and is able to see beyond the outer phenomena and to intuitively see what is not generally apparent to others. That is why he is hardly honoured in his own country and times. The same is true of Gandhiji. The western world is now increasingly realizing the correctness of his insights, but we, who have yet to develop an independent individuality of our own, lag behind in that realization with consequences, already grave and dangerous to our country. Independent India, while paying lip homage to the memory of that great soul, has conveniently forgotten his suggestions and ideas for which he stood the whole of his life, and has adopted policies antithetical to them. Gunnar Myrdal, the Swedish politician and economist, writes, 'The social and economic revolution he (Gandhiji) had looked forward to had been, first, postponed and, later, shelved altogether - except for some continued rhetorical exuberance in public speaking. Instead of

the economic equalization he had seen coming, inequalities have been widening. The concentration of financial power has increased. The land and tenancy reforms have been little more than a sham.

There has been no fundamental reform of education, which still serves to preserve and mark off the gulf between those who work with their hands and those who, having acquired the badge of education, do not have to do so."¹ And he further says, "The development of Indian politics since the attainment of independence, which he himself barely survived, Gandhiji would in all certainty have censured severely."² Still more pathetic is the lament of Louis Fischer, who observes, "India has impoverished itself by exporting its finest treasures. It gave birth to Buddha. Now hundreds of millions follow him outside India and only a handful inside. India's earth and air nurtured Gandhiji. How many Indians can be counted in his native country? How much influence do these Gandhians exercise? Is Gandhiji to become the lost Mahatma? Is the prophet to be without honour in his homeland?"³ Such is the view of foreigners who cannot be accused of any bias against either the Government or the people of India.

The Times

However, for a rational examination of the relevancy of Gandhiji's ideas, we must, first of all, look into the conditions of the age and its needs and I do so here, with the solitary exception of Dr. Sarvapally Radhakrishnan, on the basis of some top western social thinkers themselves.

There is no gainsaying the fact that we are living in an age of unprecedented crisis.

Dr. Radhakrishnan writes, "Whereas in the case of earlier civilizations the challenges were of a material and external nature, the problems of the latter ones are mainly inward and spiritual."⁴ The root cause of it is that the resources of the spirit are on the decline while the achievements of the mind have reached

alarming proportions. There is a cultural lag between the power human being has acquired over the forces of nature and the corresponding self-control he needs, to use them for constructive purposes. Thus the present civilization is beset with a danger which is internal if humankind is taken as a whole, but which is both external and internal as far as any particular country is concerned. This danger is of a nuclear holocaust. The fact that so far it has been avoided is no guarantee that it would not happen at all. The experience of history warns against the danger involved in the very piling up of armaments, for 'the guns go off their own volitions.' A nuclear war may even come about unintentionally. It may be initiated by a mechanical defect in the radar or the nervous breakdown of some important officer working under a great strain of responsibility.

War has an intimate connection with the ways of our individual and social life, and is a consequence of violence we find therein. To eliminate it, we have to strengthen the forces making for life, and the three factors on the side of life are love, the instinct of creativeness and the joy of life. But the present-day conditions have checked and enfeebled them. The conventional conception of success and the present economic system with its overemphasis on the material aspects of life and on competition, run counter to a life of love. It has engendered envy, hate, cupidity, egotism, and an inordinate ambition and lust for power. Crime and delinquency statistics, the divorce rate, the rising tide of illegitimate births and higher incidence of broken homes, all point to a lack of a life of love. The modern system of production kills the instinct of creativeness by depriving the worker of opportunities for creative self-expression. A person is so constituted that if he lacks creative outlets, he takes pleasure in negative creation or destruction. Lastly, the present-day worker feels no joy in life, he has to work hard for his living, and the desire for an increasingly higher standard of living makes his work harder and harder in spite of his abhorrence for his work. The high-speed machine production runs counter to his capacity. His physical heritage is better suited to simpler tasks, to a wider diversification of functions and to a

less monotonous toil than he has to perform. The result is that a large number of workers hate their jobs, and this feeling is further increased by the fact that their work and routine are controlled by others who pay them wages. No happy life can possibly be built on the basis of such hated work. Therefore they do not feel any joy in life and consider it not worth living. No wonder then, that some find relief in suicide while others run after thrills in life, going to extremes in their leisure activities. Elliot and Merrill have pointed out that the hectic character of American life is a result of the morbid desire to escape from the unpleasant reality of the factory or the machine shop. The worker seeks oblivion from his work rather than recreation of his vital forces. He can seldom find it at home, and hence he seeks escape in drinking bouts, delinquent and criminal conduct, prostitution, etc.⁵ Such an attitude of dissatisfaction with and of escape from life breeds war.

Further, modern industrialism has led to exploitation, imperialism and national rivalries, and these have been important causes of modern wars. The present-day centralization and concentration of power is itself a consequence of this industrialization. Never before in history the life and death of so many depended upon so very few. The greatest autocrat of the past had only a fraction of the tremendous power held by the rulers of today. Hence one of the most important problems of the day is of taming and control of arbitrary power and unlimited ambitions.

Another consequence of modern industrialism is the destruction of traditional moral values. There has come about a loss of faith, an intellectual and moral vacuum, and a loosening of the grasp of the meaning and purpose of life. There has been a virtual breakdown of civilization -an erosion of values, a dissipation of human purposes, and a reversion to sub-human levels of conduct. Then there also has been a loss of the sense of community. The word 'society' has lost its meaning because the old intimacy, feeling of kinship, neighbourliness and interdependence have vanished. Relations between individuals have become like those between

living machines and they look upon each other as means. Thus, as Erich Fromm has pointed out, modern society consists of 'atoms', little particles estranged from each other, but held together by selfish interests and by necessity to make use of each other.⁶ All this explains the wayward conduct of the modern youth who is not even aware that anything like society or community exists, hippism and student revolt are simply symptoms of a severely sick society. A recent publication of an American university on hippism says, "There is something *wrong*, something deadly, something *seriously fatal* about the present world! Happiness proves that fact. Those who become hippies see much of what is wrong with the world; they see the hypocrisy, the phoniness, the hollow shams, the dishonesty, the dog-eat-dog competition, the threat that humankind will wipe itself off the face of the earth; they see the threat to land, water and air pollution; they see all the horrendous problems of the world - but they retreat into their own selfish little drugged world.... They see clearly that something is wrong, but they don't know what to do about it."⁷ The pamphlet also observes, "Many millions today are desperately seeking, searching, often they know not what. Modern education, the blurring of right and wrong, the double standards of the world, the philosophy of permissiveness and experimental psychology, uncertainty and general insecurity, the growth of affluence and leisure, the idea that might makes right and there are no absolute standards - all these factors contribute to the widespread growth of disillusionment, immorality, rebellion against society and the growing *escapism*."⁸

The epidemic of Student Revolt like hippism also reflects the malaise of society. It is a reaction of those who are activists by temperament, while the latter is of the gentle, the passive and the quiescent. Hippism has no relieving features, while the Student Revolt is not without some justification and it commands some sympathy. However, both are warning signals which society should heed before it is too late!

Under the present system the political, social and economic problems are so complex that they are beyond the grasp of common person. This produces in him a feeling of helplessness, a feeling which is increasing with further rapid changes in society to which he is unable to adjust himself with corresponding rapidity. Its consequences are deep and far-reaching. It "creates among people apathy and passivity, hostility and sullen discontent and turns them into easy victims of clever manipulations of popular emotions."⁹

Another curious phenomenon is that though the present-day world is itself a product of the life of the mind, it is getting out of tune with it. Mechanization and industrialism is reducing humans to a robot. He is now governed by the anonymous authority of conformity, has no convictions of its own, no individuality and almost no sense of self. The net result of all these developments is in the words of Lewis Mumford, " We have reached a point in history where man has become his most dangerous enemy.....Today it is man's higher functions that have become automatic and constricted and his lower ones that have become spontaneous and irrepressible."¹⁰

Such is the crisis facing the modern civilization and the way out of it lies in a basic change in the prevailing economic and political systems, and in the prevailing philosophy of life. The change in the economic system must make the world simpler. It should make the 'man', and not the 'machine' and dominate the scene. It should emphasize co-operation and the sense of community, and should decentralize economic power. The new system of production should provide outlet to the creative instincts of men and women and induce joy in life. In the words of Bertrand Russell, " It is not only more material goods that men need, but more freedom, more self-direction, more outlet for creativeness, more opportunity for the joy of life, more voluntary co-operation, and less involuntary subservience to purposes not their own."¹¹ The new political system must simplify problems and provide greater opportunities to the common man to be the arbiter of his destiny

by enabling him to take a more intelligent and a bigger part in the political management of society. Lastly, the new philosophy of life must be that of love, for without a positive concentration on love in all its phases, we can hardly hope to rescue the world from the insensate forces of hate, violence and destruction which threaten it. The new philosophy must also conserve what is good and lasting in the traditional moral values; it must inculcate in people a favourable attitude towards work; and it must inspire them with a sense of the unity of humankind and of neighbourliness. It should be a philosophy that would promote a zest for life.

This is wherein lies the relevancy of Gandhiji's ideas. They fundamentally meet the needs of the age. I deal below with important controversial aspects of his thought.

Philosophical Assumptions

Gandhiji was a religious man, but not in any narrow and sectarian sense. His religiousness consisted of 'an abiding faith in the absolute values of truth, love and justice and a persistent endeavour to realize them on earth.' Some sort of religious spirit is ingrained in human nature, and even in anti-religious communist countries the throne of God is (was) not vacant. As A. N. Whitehead once said, "Religion is a world loyalty", and Gandhiji was religious in the best sense. His conception of God is all-comprehensive and catholic. It includes all those elements and aspects in which he can be conceived. He writes, "That Law then which governs all life is God. Law and Law-Giver are one."¹² At another place he says, "To me God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life and yet He is above all and beyond these."¹³ However, he finally expressed his conception as 'God is Truth', and he included sincere and truthful atheists in the category of believers. He said to Gora, an avowed atheist, "You may

call yourself atheist, but as long as you feel akin with humankind you accept God in practice."¹⁴

A belief in something higher like God is acknowledged to be a practical necessity by even a sceptic like Bertrand Russell. He says, "If life has to be fully human, it must serve some end which seems, in some sense, outside human life, some end which is impersonal and above mankind, such as God or truth or beauty. Those who best promote life do not have life for their purpose."¹⁵ Humanists' attempt to replace God with society suffers from serious drawbacks. H.E.Hockings writes, "The death of God leaves society in the place of the Absolute; and like many other potentates who fall short of omniscience as well as omnipotence, we realize that his pretensions are tolerable only when he is humble and recognizes a law above him."¹⁶ As such Gandhiji's belief in God and his advocacy of it is no out- of-date attitude. What is really out of date is fanaticism and Gandhiji is far from it. That is why he could say to Gora, "I can neither say my theism is right nor your atheism wrong. We are seekers after truth. We change whenever we find ourselves in the wrong. I have changed like this many times in my life. I see you as a worker. You are not a fanatic. You will change whenever you find yourself in the wrong. There is no harm as long as you are not fanatical."¹⁷ His God did not scare Gora away !

The doctrine of the essential goodness of human nature does not deny the existence of wicked tendencies in man. It only refuses to subscribe to the view that he is basically wicked. On the contrary, it regards human nature to be normally kind and loving. The very fact that a person always tries to justify or explain away one's own wrong actions, and that evil deeds usually hit headlines in the newspapers, testifies that they are abnormal to humans. Gandhiji was of the view that even a scoundrel has redeeming features. He holds that there are chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music"¹⁸ Thus this doctrine only affirms faith in the ultimate victory of the goodness in humans over their evil propensities.

In spite of all criticism this faith is present in all of us. Who is there who ever loses all hopes of the reformation of one's own dear and near ones? Such faith forms the very basis of education which presumes human being's inherent capacity for cultural development. Most of our evil actions emanate from frailty and not from perversity or depravity. And generally whatever perversity there is, it is due to wrong environment and upbringing. Erich Fromm, a psychoanalyst of repute, says, "Destructiveness is the outcome of an unlived life. Those individual and social conditions which make for the blocking of life furthering energy produce energy produce destructiveness which in turn is the source from which the various manifestations of evil spring."¹⁹

Such faith in humans is the need of the hour. It is the only force that can reform the world. It is not a matter of ignoring evil or human wickedness. It is the only 'realism' that we can afford.

Sarvodaya

These days when the destiny of individuals and nations are becoming so closely linked up together, recognition of the concept of Sarvodaya is another necessity. We were taught long ago that the 'world is a whole and we are members one of another', and now this truth is being reinforced by modern science. A peaceful world requires besides change in its social, economic and political structures a new philosophy of the identity of interests between individuals and individuals, groups and groups, and nations and nations. In the concept of Sarvodaya all such antitheses of interests disappear, and this concept is no figment of imagination. It is a reality to which recent researches in the field of psychology testify. Erich Fromm differentiates between self-love and selfishness, and observes, "It is true that selfish persons are incapable of loving others but they are not capable of loving themselves either."²⁰ Similarly, he is of the opinion that love for others implies equally love for oneself. To cite him again, "If an individual is able to love

productively, he loves oneself too; if he can love only others, he cannot love at all."²¹ All this signifies that there can be no possible antithesis between the genuine interest of various individuals and groups and the uplift of all is no mirage. The belief in the antithesis of interests is a product of capitalism with its emphasis on competition and struggle. Communism inherited it from capitalism and intensified it.

Ethical Ideas

Gandhiji's main emphasis was on morality. But he did not always subscribe to conventional morality. According to him, "True morality consists, not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it."²² With a man who acted upon his inner voice and according to the truth as it appeared to him at a particular time, it could not but be so. His ethical vows, though reminiscent of the cardinal disciplines laid down by ancient Indian sages, gave a new and unorthodox interpretation to the old terms in consonance with the needs of this age. While as a believer in the existence of Absolute Truth, he acknowledged that the truths perceived by us are relative and hence fanaticism and intolerance are unjustified. An individual can only attain Absolute Truth by acting upon one's relative truths.

His second cardinal ethical principle is of nonviolence. While Truth is the highest law, nonviolence is the highest duty. The two are so intertwined that they cannot be separated. Nevertheless, as a means Ahimsa is of greater concern to us in our everyday life. Gandhiji held that if we take care of the means, the end is sure to take care of itself. Hence all his emphasis on the purity of means. This is the most revolutionary contribution of Gandhiji from which follows the doctrine that the rules of morality of individual life have equal validity in inter- group and international relations. Gandhiji has been much criticized for it on the ground of expediency. But that is short-sighted. The doctrine, "As the means, so the end", is

scientific and there can be no escape from it. Ralph Borsodi observes, " If history demonstrates anything, it demonstrates that mistaken means, mistaken procedures, mistaken tactics, inflict far more misery upon mankind than mistaken goals. It is far better to use methods that are right methods that are humane in pursuit of a mistaken goal, than to use bad and mistaken methods in pursuit of a goal which is right."²³ We may well hope that as scientific attitude towards life develops in us, the emphasis on the purity of means will find easier acceptance. If we have to remove distrust between nations, and not to do so would be courting a disaster, international dealings must follow the rules of morality deemed valid for individual life.

Gandhiji's wider definition of nonviolence which includes ill-will', hatred and exploitation in the category of violence' is also very appropriate today.

The fact that he is no literalist in his conception of nonviolence, exhibits his pragmatism, a distinguishing feature of the modern mind.

However, the discipline of Brahmacharya (celibacy) does give an impression that he is outmoded. In an increasingly permissive society of today where illegitimate births are losing their stigma and in a country like Sweden about one-third girls are reported to be pregnant at the time of marriage, and when contraceptives are advocated as a state policy to check the explosion of population, Gandhiji's emphasis on Brahmacharya and his opposition to contraceptives seem to contradict the trends of the time. But is Gandhiji wrong? Are we not in an inordinate hurry to approve of things whose overall and long-term effects are yet to be explored? P. A. Sorokin writes, "Our survey shows that there has been and still continues to be a decline of creativity in most of the countries of the world. The decline is caused by many factors, not the least of which is the growth of sex freedom."²⁴ He also says, " Notably clear are the warning symptoms of the consequences of excessive sex freedom in the field of vitality and mental health. To prove their growing vigour, people boast of a longer lifespan and of greater

health. They seem to forget that the greater part of the increased life expectancy is bought at the cost of a decrease of the population of young people. This is specially so in those countries where the birth-rate is intentionally brought down.

And at the same time in boasting of the general health, people seem to forget the striking high percentage of young men rejected by the armed forces in the advanced countries because of physical and mental disorders. When the positive gains in the budget of vitality are weighed against the liabilities, the former are seen to be much less than they like to proclaim. And if in the future the birthrate should decline even these modest gains would be wiped out by the increasing proportion of old people in the population."²⁵ As regards mental health, he observes that "psychoneuroses and functional psychoses are on the increase, and have already reached a dangerously high level. If disorderly sex lives continue to be more the rule, there is little hope of stopping the deterioration."²⁶ Investigations and surveys done by others too confirm the fact that the cultural condition of a society rises in exact proportion as it imposes pre-nuptial restraints upon sexual opportunity.

There are also psychoanalysts who do not see eye to eye with Freud. Erich Fromm says, "The complete satisfaction of all the instinctual needs is not only not a basis for happiness, it does not even guarantee sanity. Yet Freud's idea could only have become so popular in the period after the First World War because of the changes which have occurred in the spirit of capitalism, from the emphasis on saving to that of spending, from self-frustration as a means for economic success to consumption as the basis for an ever-widening market, and as the main satisfaction for the anxious atomised individual. Not to postpone the satisfaction of any desire became the main tendency in the sphere of sex as well as in that of all material consumption."²⁷

I have cited above the two well-known thinkers at considerable lengths simply to show how correct was the attitude of Gandhiji. In refusing to being blown off by

the prevailing wind, he maintained the quality of a good leader, which is to lead and not to be led by. It does not mean, however, that most of those sex notions which prevail in India today are justified. What is rather needed is a rational attitude towards them and Gandhiji's ideas on Brahmachrya are to be construed as an attempt in that direction.

Gandhiji's advocacy of non-stealing lays stress on morality in the method of earning one's livelihood, while the discipline of non-possession sets limits to one's possessions. The present trend towards providing social security to citizens in all types of states does away with the need of accumulation to meet future requirements, and ipso facto for the right of private ownership. However, non-possession does not mean poverty. It stands for an affluent society wherein possession vests in society and there is proper distribution. It, of course, does imply a simple life. This discipline is essential for the peace and stability of society. Humankind may not long survive in this age unless people love each other and share their affluence with each other. But all this is possible only if the sense of private ownership is greatly weakened.

Gandhiji's theory of trusteeship is an application of the principle of non-possession. It was very much ridiculed during his lifetime. But it was so either due to a misunderstanding of the theory or because of certain preconceived notions of the critics themselves. Trusteeship has two aspects - a permanent aspect and a temporary one. The former signifies that everything a person has, including his talents, is a trust and should be fully devoted to the service of society. In its latter aspect it is a technique of advancing towards the relinquishment of private ownership. There can be no valid objection against the former. It rather fulfils a crying need of the age. A.E.Morgan, a former Chairperson of the T.V.A., observes, "Modern life with its rapidly growing complexities, greatly increases the number of situations in which the only sound relation is that of a trustee, and the growth of the sense of responsibility has not been sufficiently rapid to meet these changing

conditions."²⁸ What else it is if not a sense of trusteeship which is expected of the bureaucracy in a welfare state and of the party members in a communist state?

As regards the economic principle of trusteeship, the latest trend is to consider both state and private capitalism as unsatisfactory and to devise a new form of ownership with the advantages of both. Some individuals in the West have even acted upon the idea of trusteeship in their industries. They have surrendered their proprietary rights either to the community as a whole or to their employees. They have formed a trust or some kind of partnership in which they themselves have remained no longer. A notable example of it is of a firm of chemical manufacturers in England, Scott Bader & Co. In West Germany, attempts to neutralize entrepreneurial capital have taken the legal form of the Foundation. Thereby the enterprise itself does not come within the framework of the foundation, but its capital does. The Foundation which has a charitable purpose, disposes wholly or partly the returns from the capital and uses them to endow social or cultural ventures.²⁹

Another ethical principle advocated by Gandhiji is that of Swadeshi, "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote".³⁰ It signifies no narrowmindedness for it denotes service of one's neighbours with the clear idea that they are part of the whole humanity to which the ultimate allegiance is due. That is why to Gandhiji, Swadeshi was 'an acme of universal service'.³¹ It only recognizes that an individual's capacity for service is limited, and one who runs to serve the whole world while neglecting one's neighbours, serves neither the world nor one's neighbours. It stands for no narrow-minded self-sufficiency. Gandhiji wrote, "To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's own country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be a criminal folly and a negation of Swadeshi spirit."³²

There are also a few other ethical disciplines emphasized by Gandhiji, but I need not dilate upon them here. All of them, including those which have been touched upon above, embody the principle of a happy individual and social life. It has been true of all ages, is true of the present one and would be true of the future as well. Of course, every age has to interpret them in the light of its experience and the problems it has to face.

Economic Ideas

Gandhiji's most vehement criticism has been on the score of his economic ideas. The extreme views expressed by him in Hind Swaraj against modern civilization and machinery have provided an easy handle for it. At the same time, the baneful effects of modern industrialism are more visible now than they were during his lifetime. More and more persons are realizing the truth of the saying, 'all that glitters is not gold.' Many western thinkers themselves are not happy over the growth of cities. A.E.Morgan finds fault with city-life because of its failure to keep alive mutual confidence and goodwill, so essential for the existence of society, and because of the destruction of the emotional ties of affection and the sense of social responsibility. He holds that urbanization harms both villages and cities. It robs the village of its most intelligent people, while the migration of the riff-raffs of the villages and small towns to the cities increases crimes and vice. He is of the view that this dual harm has been one of the major causes, though an indirect one, of the decline of nations, cultures and civilizations.³³ Another writer, Mirium Beard says, "Men suffered on the land Beard says, "Men suffered on the land but survived; while in the cities they flourished - and faded."³⁴ Thus the virtues of a small community are being more and more realized. Similarly, the agrarianism of Gandhiji has also its supporters in the dynamic Israel and in the highly industrialized U.S.A. There is a school of thought which holds that agriculture is both a basic occupation and a natural way of life.³⁵

The parasitic nature of modern industrialism is disturbing the balance of nature and many scientists are worried about it. It is resulting in increasing deforestation, soil-erosion and the destruction of many such insects, worms and animals as play an important part in the restoration and maintenance of soil-equilibrium. The heavy calls it makes on mineral resources has also disturbed some in the west. E. F Schumacher was a staunch advocate of 'renewable economy' as against 'non-renewable economy'. It, combined with the undesirable sociological consequences of modern industrialism has compelled some to favour the substitution of the centralized mode of production by the decentralized one and a check on the present craze for higher and higher standard of living. True, their number is yet very small, but it may increase with time. A factor very favourable to decentralization is that modern science is quite capable of developing a new technology of decentralized production which may have most of the advantages of the present system without its demerits. The trend towards the invention of small or portable instruments may prove a prelude to it.

As regards simplicity of life, there is, first of all, a growing realisation that all is not well with a materialistic outlook of life and with too much affluence. Adlai Stevenson says, "The dreary failure in history of all classes committed to pleasure and profit alone, the vacuity and misery accompanying the sole pursuit of ease, the collapse of the French aristocracy, the corruption of imperial Rome, all these facts of history do not lose their point because pleasures of today are no longer the enjoyment of the elite." Doubts are also being expressed if the present trend of expanding economy can be maintained for long in view of the revolt of Asia and Africa. But this is not all. Other virtues of a simple life are also gaining recognition. A. E. Morgan writes, "Simple living and self-sustaining activity makes less demand of the haves on the have-nots, reduce the element of competitive status and in effect make the world favourable for a much greater proportion of people to live with satisfaction and without frustration."³⁷ This is one consideration. The second, as expressed by Wilfred Wellock, is," The fact that

peoples' circumstances compel them forever to be thinking about the increase of earnings, dulls spiritual interest and perception, lowers the quality of the mind and spirit and jeopardises the spiritual quality of the home. Less and less interest is taken in public affairs. As a result the Governments meet with less criticism, which in times of crisis may be disastrous."³⁸

Intimately connected with the principle of simple living is another Gandhian principle of self-sufficiency. This principle, whose usefulness as a defence measure needs no elucidation these days, is also being appreciated in the West for its other merits. Says Wellock, "The achievement of self-sufficiency is intensely satisfying, it saves a nation from worrying about whether it will be able to keep its markets. Were a largely self-sufficient economy the general rule, most of the tensions which arise between nations today would be eliminated. It would then be possible to make the transition from expansionist materialism to a creative, spiritually motivated economy, from the quantitative to a qualitative civilization."³⁹ And he further writes, "A bitter struggle for world market and supplies lie ahead. The weaker nations' will be faced with economic breakdown and the spread of communism. The alternative is the adoption generally of a reasonable self-sufficient economy and a qualitative civilization together with a vigorous policy of international co-existence."⁴⁰

Though Gandhiji ruled out all machinery ideally, in practice his approach was pragmatic. The final position as it emerged was that he was not opposed to machinery as such but to the craze for it and to its dominance over humans. He had no objection to simple tools and to such machines as saved individual labour and lightened the burden of the millions. He was also not opposed to centralized key industries and to the use of machinery for such work as could not be undertaken by human labour. Generally his attitude towards machinery was determined by Indian conditions, and once he even said, "I would favour the use of machinery if thereby India's pauperism and resulting idleness be avoided. I have

suggested hand- spinning as the only ready means of driving away penury and making famine of work and wealth impossible."⁴¹ Humans being the supreme consideration with him, he judged everything from the point of view of their total welfare, and considered that economics false which ignored moral values.

Gandhiji's view of machinery, especially in the context of Indian conditions, has the support of many. S. Moos, a British economist, said in a B.B.C. talk in 1953, "Western ideas, if they are to suit Indian conditions will have to be revised. Is it really good economics to spend scarce resources for the import or output of labour saving machines for use in industries which can command gigantic armies of unemployed?"⁴² Similarly, Professor John K. Galbraith, an eminent economist and formerly U.S. ambassador in Delhi, is of the view that "full employment is more desirable than increased production combined with unemployment."⁴³ However, what is more important is that Gandhiji's attitude towards machinery is now being better appreciated in the west. Richard B. Gregg observes, "He (Gandhiji) belongs to India but there are increasing signs that appreciation of him and his wisdom is growing greater in some other parts of the world, especially in America whose ways seem to be wholly opposed to his. Perhaps that is because Americans have experienced the futility of unchecked industrialism and are beginning to realize that it is a blind alley leading to a desert."⁴⁴

Thus the conception of economic decentralization represents a progressive movement to eliminate the evils of large-scale industrialization. It is no index of medievalism as is generally thought by Indian intellectuals. In fact, it is the centralists devoted to the cult of the colossal who are, really speaking, conservative and behind the times.

Political Ideas

The fundamental idea of Gandhiji in the field of political science is of political decentralization. It has its basis in his principle of non-violence. The ultimate

sanction behind every form of government is and has been of the military and the police, but it is all the more so in a government wherein power and authority are centralized. The common people who are not active participants in it and who very often even fail to understand the problems facing society, cannot and generally do not feel that they have any stake in maintaining that government. On the other hand, the concentration of power into the hands of a few excites jealousy in others who try to oust them from power. Recent experience has demonstrated the danger that lurks in this struggle for power, and the opportunity it offers to ambitious military generals to seize power for themselves. Thus non-violence demands decentralization in which the citizen is not a mere occasional passive voter, but an active and vigilant participant in the political administration of society to the maximum extent possible. An administration enjoying an active support and cooperation of the common people would rely least on the military and the police.

This idea of decentralization is further reinforced by Gandhiji's conception of democracy and self government. To him, democracy means in essence "The art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all; ⁴⁵ and self-government is a 'continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or it is national.'⁴⁶ His touchstone for a true democracy is that it 'runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much state interference'⁴⁷. Thus Gandhiji arrived at his idea of participatory democracy wherein there is as much of effective local self-government as is consistent with the unity of a country. Here as well, Gandhiji is not alone to think on these lines. Many in the West too are perturbed at the growing 'alienation' and 'dehumanisation' in their society, and they characterize their democracy as 'formal' and 'inorganic'. In order to remove this defect they have been compelled to think in terms of either, devolution or decentralization. These, no doubt, are two different concepts especially in their spirits, but in early stages decentralization

can have its beginning only in devolution of power in the centralized states of today. While Bertrand Russell pleads for devolution laying down the general principle that smaller bodies should be left with all those functions which do not prevent the larger bodies from fulfilling their functions,⁴⁸ Erich Fromm uses the word 'decentralization'. He is of the view that so far the development of democracy has been in the extension of franchise, but now further progress lies in a step recognizing that true democracy cannot be made in an atmosphere of mass voting, but in relatively small group corresponding perhaps to the old Town Meeting. In small groups the issues can be discussed thoroughly, and people have personal contact with each other which makes it more difficult for demagogic and irrational influences to work on their minds⁴⁹. He writes, "The aim of humanistic socialism can be attained only by the introduction of maximum of decentralization compatible with a minimum of centralization necessary for the functioning of an industrial society. The functions of a centralized state must be reduced to the minimum, while the voluntary activity of freely cooperating citizens constitutes the central mechanism of social life."⁵⁰ However, it is G.D.H.Cole who is nearest to Gandhiji when he observes, "I am neither a Communist nor a Social Democrat, because I regard both as creeds of centralization and bureaucracy, whereas I feel sure that a socialist society that is true to its equalitarian principle of human sister/brotherhood must rest on the widest possible diffusion of power and responsibility, so as to enlist the participation of as many as possible of its citizens in the task of democratic self-government."⁵¹

It is remarkable that when Gandhiji put his finger on the defect of the prevailing type of democracy, the thing was not as visible as it is now. The non-participatory democracy did serve society as a useful transitional stage from autocracy when common people lacked political consciousness and the state did not interfere much in the life of the people. But now with the spread of education and the various mass media, with the increasing centralization of functions and power, there is bound to be a revolt against the formal democracy of today. The students

revolt with a demand for participation in decision making is only a pointer in that direction.

Basic Education

Of all the items of Gandhiji's Constructive Programme, the most important is Nai Talim. Gandhiji himself regarded it as a spearhead of a silent social revolution. The fundamental principles of this system of education are two - all education must be woven round a craft, and the produce of the craft be made economically remunerative to meet the recurring cost of education. This system of education is expected to bridge the gulf between the city and the village, between the intellectual and manual workers, and thereby to bring about a classless society.

The first principle of Nai Talim (Basic Education) commands the support of many famous psychologists and educationists, e.g., Stanley Hall, T. R Nunn, John Dewey and A. E. Morgan. Dewey said to Shriman Narayan in 1949, "Gandhiji's system of education is, I am sure, one step ahead of all other systems. It is full of immense potentialities and we all hope to learn much from India in this revolutionary efforts."⁵² More recently, Gunnar Myrdal has recommended it for Indian primary and secondary schools.⁵³ In the communist countries they combine work with education to bring about the labourization of the intellectual and the intellectualization of the labourer. Nai Talim represents a deeper process of the same by imparting education itself through work. Thus it is both psychologically correct and socially progressive.

Satyagraha

Gandhiji's international prestige is largely due to his developing the technique of Satyagraha. More than half a century ago William James had felt the need of a moral equivalent of war, but it is Gandhiji who imparted tangibility to that dream. Since war is considered to be a lunacy in this age of hydrogen bomb, a search for a

technique of civilian defence is briskly on in England, Sweden, the U.S.A. and elsewhere. In this field the ideas and methods of Gandhiji act both as a guide and as a source of inspiration. No doubt, thinking on the subject is yet at a preliminary stage, but it is no cause for dejection because the future is with it and in certain countries governments are also anxious that the technique of civilian defence is developed. Alstair Buchan, Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies, London, says, "For it may be that in concepts like the nonviolent defence of countries lies the key to the preservation of society in a world order that contains so many explosive new forms of power, physical, psychological and economic, that fire-arms will become too dangerous to use."⁵⁴ Another well-known writer, commander Stephen King-Ball, has advocated non-violent defence in his book 'Defence in a Nuclear Age'.

The non-violent techniques of Gandhiji are proving highly contagious. The Black movement in the U.S. under the leadership of the late Martin Luther King Jr. had followed a Gandhian pattern and the non-violent resistance by Czechs to the Russians, though not successful, are noteworthy. A more recent example is of the resistance initially offered by the people of Bangladesh to the military dictatorship of General Yahya Khan under the leadership of Shaikh Mujibur Rahman. True, it only proved to be a passing phase because in the face of the violence of the Pakistani army, they were compelled to resort to guerilla warfare, but it is nonetheless significant. Civil disobedience had also been resorted to in Poland and Russia. Fasts for peace had also been witnessed in the colleges and universities of the USA, and thousands of people had courted imprisonment there for refusing to fight in Viet Nam. Thus Gandhiji has been very much alive in America and to some extent elsewhere as well. No doubt, in many cases, there had been a misuse of the Gandhian technique, and Gandhiji would not have approved of them had he been alive, but it was what could have been expected. It may well be hoped that with time the inner spirit of his satyagraha concept would come to be appreciated and accepted. What is of more importance now is that what could not be imagined

in the forties, became a reality in the sixties with better prospects for the future. This should suffice to show that Gandhiji had a deep and penetrating understanding of the basic problems of our times.

Concluding Remarks

The various ideas of Gandhiji dealt with above are intimately related to each other even though their treatment might have left an impression that they are not interconnected. To site an example, the capability for any civilian defence depends much on the type of economy that prevails in that society. Economic equality, decentralized production, self-sufficient economy, simplicity of life, all these are bound to increase the capability for it. On the contrary, centralized production of basic needs, a very high standard of living, economic and social inequalities resulting in class animosities, are sure to undermine that capability. Satyagraha, too, to be fully effective must be accepted as a way of life rather than as a mere technique of resolving conflicts.

My line of approach in the above essay has been to discuss the important ideas of Gandhiji in the light of some important problems and the various suggestions made by some reputed thinkers to solve them. In this matter their own independent thinking has brought them very close to Gandhiji. It does not matter much if they do not agree in details with him. No two persons think exactly alike, and then one's thinking is always conditioned, to a lesser or greater extent by one's environment, upbringing and the particular problem one's society faces. Hence there is nothing surprising if Gandhiji's ideas too, in their expressions and applications, bear an impress of Indian traditions, outlook, culture and conditions. It is enough if present-day top thinkers, who can never be accused of being out of date, agree basically with his ideas. It is also not at all material if they reject his logic while they agree with his conclusions. Gandhiji had his limitations. His ideas are sometimes couched in a language that does not appeal to most modern minds,

the truth that he sees may also be 'relative', but they do not thereby lose their validity. The prophets and seers of the past had to wait for centuries for the acceptance of their visions, but in the world today the speed of social change is so rapid that what appeared to be out of date in his lifetime, is now being recognized as up to date. His ideas have not only relevance today but would prove even relevant in future, for there is much in them of perennial value.

Footnotes:

1. S. Radhakrishnan (Ed.) : Mahatma Gandhi -100 years PR 266-67.
2. *ibid.*, p. 267
3. *ibid.*, p. 86
4. Religion and Society, p. 18.
5. M.A.Elliot and F.E.Merile, Social Disorganization, p.214
6. The Sane Society, pp. 139-40.
7. Hippies- Hypocrisy and 'Happiness', p.32.
(Ambassador College, Pasadona, California, 1968),
8. *ibid.*, p.11.
9. G.N.Dhawan in J.S.Bains (Ed.), Studies in Political Science, p.253.
10. The Conduct of life, p.11.
11. Principles of Socieal Reconstruction, P43.
12. Truth is God, p.7.
13. *ibid.*, p.10.
14. G.Ramchandra Rao, An Atheist with Gandhi, p.31
The author was more popularly known as 'Goraju'
15. Principles of Social Reconstruction, p.245.
16. Science and the Idea of God, p.69.
17. An Atheist with Gandhi, p44.
18. N. K. Bose : Selection from Gandhi, p. 28.

19. Man for Himself, p. 28
20. The Art of Living, p. 17
21. ibid.
22. N. K. Bose, Op. cit., p. 300
23. The Challenge of Asia, p. 177
24. Sane Sex Order, p. 125
25. ibid, pp. 112-113
26. ibid. p. 113
27. The Art of Loving, p. 68
28. The Long Road, p. 75
29. Folkert Wilken: New Forms of Ownership and Industry, pp. 75-76
30. Pyarelal: The Last Phase, Vol. 1, p. 546
31. M. K. Gandhi : From Yeravada Mandir, pp. 63-64
32. ibid. p. 66
33. The Community of the Future, pp. 52-53
34. Cited in Pyarelal : Towards New Horizons, p. 10
35. J. S. Roucek (Ed.) Twentieth Century Political Thought, pp. 198-202
36. Cited in George Murray in Bhoodan, 14.11.1959, p. 227
37. Search for a Purpose, p. 136
38. Not by Bread Alone, p. 15
39. ibid., p. 21
40. ibid
41. Young India, 30.11.1921
42. Economic Review, 15.8.1953
43. Cited by Shreeram Narayan in 'Principles of Gandhian Planning', p. 325
44. Philosophy of Indian Economic Development, p. 179
45. Harijan, 27.5.1939
46. Young India, 6.8.1925

47. Harijan, 11.1.1936
48. Authority of the Individual, pp. 98-105
49. The Sane Society, p. 341
50. Bhoodan, 20.8.1960, p.142
51. A History of Socialist Thought, Vol. V, p. 337
52. Shriram Narayan in 'Khadi Gramodyog' of March, 1969
53. ibid
54. Foreword to the First British Edition of Civilian Defence (Ed. T. K. Mahadevan, Adam Roberts and Gene Sharp)

PART TWO

GANDHI'S RELEVANCE IN TODAY S WORLD

In the earlier section we have mostly examined the validity of Gandhiji's ideas in the light of what some of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century have to say and we have found great support for them, in principle. As said earlier, all thinkings take place in particular contexts and there can be difference of views on the matter of details which need not be given much importance. Gandhiji himself was aware of it and that is why he did not want to leave any sect after him and said that others were not his followers but fellow workers. His has been experimentation with truth and his own ideas had been evolving with time in a pragmatic manner on the basis of his fundamental approach. Every thinking has its permanent and temporary elements and it is the former which make it last. Dr. J. D. Sethi said in the Patel lectures of 1979: Thirty years after his death and nearly seventy years after he wrote his seminal, though crudely written book, 'Hind Swaraj', Gandhiji is suddenly emerging as a possible answer to the global crisis of human values and numerous unsolved contradictions, such as between affluence and poverty, freedom and repression, technology and human beings, social tension and alienation.⁵⁵

To examine the validity of this claim, Let us examine some of the major problems besetting humankind today.

All these problems are global though their intensity varies from country to country.

The most important of them are poverty, the danger of environmental disaster, the danger of nuclear annihilation and terrorism, both Islamic and Maoist or Naxalite. I take them one by one.

The problem of poverty is chiefly a problem of developing countries though it also exists in the richer countries. If it does not loom large there before the public

mind, it is because they are able to provide relief in various ways to the poorer sections of their countries. This poverty in the developing countries has been traced to three causes: (a) one-third of the world using more than three-fourths of the world resources and the growing gap between the rich and poor countries as a result of it; (b) a built-in structure of demand and policy framework in the developed world to keep the consumption growing to maintain full employment and (c) concentration of economic and political power in the hands of small minorities within the poor countries and their attempts to imitate the standard of living of the developed world. J. D. Sethi rightly observes that there can be no solution of the problems of poverty in these poor countries as long as their ruling elites resort to tyranny and corruption to achieve for themselves a standard of living similar to that of ruling elite of the developed countries.⁵⁶

This is primarily a question of values for which an answer lies in Gandhiji's thinking with its emphasis on consideration for the last human being. To cite Sethi: 'The Gandhian framework is a direct and irrefutable answer to the challenges faced by the third world countries. Their poverty and illiteracy, exploitation and superstition, ethnic, tribal, religious or caste conflicts, the callousness of their ruling elites, authoritarian structures and inhuman tortures of political opponents, development models dependency, etc., defy all prevailing models of change and revolution.' And he also says: "Gandhiji would insist on the first things first: the life-style of the power elite has to be identified with the little man for having a moral right to demand the restructuring of the world order."

This universal urge for a higher and higher standard of living is the primary cause of the increasing danger of environmental disasters. The then U. N. Secretary-General had said in his report to it in 1969 : "For the first time in the history of humankind, there is arising a crisis of worldwide proportion involving developed and developing countries alike - the crisis of human environment."⁵⁹ He attributed it to the explosive growth in populations, the poor integration of a powerful and

efficient technology with environmental requirements, the deterioration of agricultural lands, the unplanned extension of urban areas, the decrease of available space and the growing danger of extinction of many forms of animal and plant life. It is increasingly apparent, he said, that if the current trend continues, the future of life on earth could be endangered.

The seventies of the last century had witnessed a lot of literature on it, both for and against. However, the consensus was that technology is a good servant but a bad master and that the growing morality gap between developing technology and the state of human culture is highly dangerous. Arnold Toynbee had then written : "My hope is that we shall have a period of technological slowing down and a new wave of spiritual advance."⁶⁰ He had also then advocated for "a new philosophical and religious outlook covering the whole of life" and that "it must be such as to change our ideals, bringing with it a change in the order of our priorities."⁶¹

Gandhiji might not have referred to ecological problems in words, but his thinking and some of his statements show his concern for them. For example, he had said that there was enough in the world for everyone's need but not for everyone's greed. However, the lacuna had been further filled by J. C.Kumarappa who had pleaded for an 'economy of permanence'. It may also be remarked here that with times the critics of 'limits to growth' are proving wrong. The growing damage to the ozone layer on the Antarctic, the recent calamities of Tsunami and Katrina are the warning signs of Nature's vengeance at its increasing exploitation and environmental degradation.

To take up the problem of the danger of nuclear annihilation, one may point out to the increasing acceptance of the need of non-violence in the field of international relations. Even a Russian scholar wrote in the later eighties : "There is yet another aspect of Gandhian heritage which invariably draws the attention of Soviet scholars. It is the humanitarian idea of non-violence as adopted in international relations. He (Gandhiji) was an irreconcilable enemy of war.

Hiroshima was for him an event which had confronted humankind with either starting disarmament immediately or perishing."⁶²

The danger of a nuclear war seems to have receded for the time being because of the possession of nuclear bombs by countries at loggerheads, for example India and Pakistan, and the rising feeling that the settlement of disputes through peaceful means is likely to produce better results. However, the use of crude nuclear bombs by the Islamic terrorists cannot be ruled out and they too can cause great havoc, both immediate and lasting. This danger is there because the technology of making nuclear bombs is reported to have passed into their hands. Hence there is an urgent need to tackle that terrorism. It is quite evident that mere use of force cannot achieve that objective. It also needs an analysis of its basic causes and their removal.

Its causes lie in the perceptions of the Muslims with their Pan-Islamic feelings, of their political and economic exploitation along with their *jehadi* conception in its fundamentalist and narrow sense, though they are not in accord with the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. To deal with this terrorism, suppression by the use of force may help to some extent, but it would help more if their economic and political grievances are removed to the extent; they are real. It is something for those western countries to do which attempt to extend their economic imperialism over them, sometimes even in league with their ruling' classes. It is however, for the Muslim intelligentsia to wean them away of their wrong interpretation of Islam. Unfortunately, they are proving equal to the task both because of the dread of the Ulemas with their influence on the Muslim masses and because they themselves are not probably totally free of fundamentalist thinking. Those who are outside the pale of Islam can render help in it by not denouncing Islam for it and thereby confirming their *jehadi_outlook*.

Gandhiji always emphasized the nobler side of Islam and preached the 'equality of all religions'. He did not consider religion to be an opiate and he knew like Erich

Fromm that the need of religion is rooted in the basic conditions of the human species.⁶³ However, instead of laying emphasis on creeds and dogmas, he laid emphasis on their ethical aspects which are common to all higher religions. The same had been the case with Vinobaji who had studied the *Koran* in original and held the Prophet in very high esteem. The Muslim intelligentsia can learn much from them. Another form of prevailing terrorism, though not as serious as the first one is the Maoist or Naxalite terrorism which is a problem in several South-Asian countries, including India. They are the product of various social, economic and political injustices prevailing in those countries. Gandhiji was as keen to cure those ills as he was for country's independence, and he had tried to do it at the same time, though he had to give priority to the latter because he had felt, and rightly so, that the former is essential for it. But unfortunately he was no more when he could have fully attended to it. However, Vinobaji tried for it and had even been able to build up requisite public opinion but the governments failed to use that climate to remove the old prevailing injustices and with time. The well-off people in the country came to be influenced more and more by the western craze for higher and higher standards of living. These terrorists too have to realize that violence can only highlight their grievances and that only non-violent methods of struggle can help them to achieve their goal.

And now, at the end, on the process of change since the problems of today demand a revolution both in values and social structures. In the past, it was the idealist view which predominated. It held that change in ideas is primary and change in society follows it. Then came the Marxist view which accorded primacy to the change of social structure and regarded change of ideas as a consequence of it. However, in the post-Stalin period, the Soviet Marxists had been diluting the orthodox thesis and according greater importance to change in ideas and to the role of individuals in the process of revolution. The Gandhian thinking steers midway between the two. According to Vinobaji, "The importance of changing social structure is not denied. But it should be brought about only through the

development of particular moral attributes... It is no good making a fetish of social reconstruction. After all, it is the people who construct (constitute) a society. Hence a society will be as the individuals making it. Hence, any scheme of change must be not only subject to the preservation -indeed, enhancement - of standards of character and moral values, but the change must be brought about by the means and strength of character and moral values."⁶⁵

Thus while attaching importance to the change of social structure, Vinobaji gives some priority to the building up and strengthening of moral values in the people. In this, he has the support of Sorokin who says : "The transformation should be carried on simultaneously along all the three fronts : personal, cultural and social. The effortful transmutation of the individual may slightly precede the others."⁶⁶

Thus with the passage of time, considering Gandhiji as out of date is on the way out, though there is a greater realization of it in the west than in India, the land of his birth and later activities, to which he attached much importance. He believed that his success in India would have its effect all over the world.

1. Gandhian Values and twentieth Century Challenges (Publication, N. Delhi, 1979)
2. ibid, pp. 31 & 33
3. ibid, p.34
4. ibid, p.35
5. The Summarized version of the report in the Gandhi Marg, July 1972, p. 212
6. Surviving the Future (Oxford University Press, London, 1971) p. 40
7. ibid, p. 43
8. O. Martyshin, Gandhi in the Eyes of Soviet Scholars in Mainstream, 1980 Republic Day Number.
9. To Have or To Be (Bantam Books, 1982), p. 122
10. Introduction to K. G. Mashruwala, Gandhi and Marx (Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1951) p. 11

11. Pitirim Sorokin, *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1958), p. 209

Epigrams From Gandhiji

- *Swadeshism is not a cult of hatred. It is a doctrine of selfless service that has its roots in the purest ahimsa, i.e. love.*
- *Cent per cent swadeshi gives sufficient scope for the most insatiable ambition for service and can satisfy every kind of talent.*
- *My nationalism is as broad as my swadeshi. I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit.*
- *I swear by swadeshi as it affords occasion for an ample exercise of all our faculties and as it tests every one of the millions of men and women, young and old.*
- *Swadeshi is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humanity and love.*
- *I must not serve distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest.*
- *I refuse to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care.*
- *My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that the message of non-co-operation, non-violence and swadeshi is a message to the world.*
- *Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals.*
- *Swaraj, from its very nature, is not in the giving of anybody.*
- *Even swadeshi, like any other good thing, can be ridden to death if it is made a fetish.*
- *Swaraj is a hardy tree of patient growth.*

Is Gandhi out of date?

- *India must protect her primary industries even as a mother protects her children against the whole world without being hostile to it.*