

The Gandhian Philosophy

The first principle, which guided Gandhi's thoughts and activities, is the complete unity and integrity of body, mind and soul in the individual human being. He always advocated for the fact that the body should be controlled by the mind and the mind by the soul. "He believed that soul is one for all, and the positive reliable evidence of even one case of successful self-control is decisive" (Dhawan 81). But this mutual control is not achieved by despising or neglecting either the body or the mind. He was convinced that real thought must be organically connected to moral purposes on the one side and useful and right action on the other.

It has been claimed that the greatest achievement of Gandhi was the spiritualization of politics because once he had said; "I am trying to introduce religion into politics" (39). This is undoubtedly true; but he had no faith in spirituality by itself as an abstract virtue. He conceived it as a kind of illumination or fragrance, which should accompany every thought and action. It is difficult to define it, except, perhaps, through the verses of *The Gita*, which constituted his daily prayer. His every attempt was dedicated to the self less service to humanity. He was never inclined to a particular religion obstinately because; "When he began a conscious study of religion, his own as well as other faiths: Christian, Buddhist and Islamic, Gandhi's basic approach of equal reverence for the best in all of them never underwent a change" (Ray-25).

Gandhi was very much concerned with the morality. For him all social action should be governed by the same simple set of moral values, of which the main elements are selflessness, non-attachment and nonviolence. He believed that the growth of a man's personality is proportionate to his faith in and practice of these virtues. This is possible only when he identifies himself more and more with an ever-

increasing circle until it embraces all humanity and even all living beings. He judged the value and vitality of social institutions by their capacity to foster such growth.

Faith in God is, according to Gandhi, the foundation of all moral values. He never defined God and was prepared to allow every person to have his own idea of God for himself. He was inclined to think of Him as the *Upanishadic Brahman*, which is omnipresent and not constrained in particular name, religion or sect. According to Rikveda ‘:aanidabatam swadhaya tadekam’ (10/129/2) or ‘even before the creation of the universe there was the One ,aloof from the veil of *maya*’. However, so long as a person believes in some source of spiritual life and holds it superior to the material universe, he is a believer in God. Gandhi had no objection even to a formal profession of agnosticism, so long as a person demonstrated by his attachment to moral values that this outlook was spiritual in essence.

Gandhi was a tireless crusader of the war against immorality and moral corruption starts from our sense organs because we very often misuse them:

We misuse and corrupt the eyes which God has given us and do not direct them to the right thing. Why should not the mother learn *gayatri* and teach it to the child? She need not trouble with thinner and deeper meaning of the mantra. It is enough for her to understand and explain to the child that it inculcate reverence for the sun .(59)

The entire Gandhian philosophy is derived from the principle of spiritual unity and the starting point of his philosophy is faith in it. Thus, *satya* or truth can be pursued only by non violent means.

The influence of Gandhi in the future will depend more and more on the realization that these fundamental principles constitute the core of his teachings and that all his actions were merely illustrations of their application. He considered his life

as a series of experiments with truth that he assembled in the autobiography of which “every page speaks of experience” (preface). Therefore, it is his conception of truth that is central to his life and work.

Truth

Truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but also the Absolute Truth, the eternal principle, that is God. There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. In his book *Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*, Gopinath Dhawan writes; “In the sense of absolute Truth Gandhiji identifies truth with God. Truth or *satya*, which means real ‘existence’ is the only correct and fully significant name of God”(57).

To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face-to-face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as own self. In addition, a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why Gandhi’s devotion to Truth had drawn him into the field of politics; and he could say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility that; “...he who does not know what patriotism or feeling of one’s country is does not know his true duty or religion” (39).

Man is imperfect is an axiom. Another axiom is perfect cannot flow from imperfect. That can explain any shortcomings in Gandhi. He did not relish for most of the time his epithet ‘*Mahatma*’, given to him by Tagore. In the introduction of his autobiography he has written; “For me they have no much value; and the title of ‘*Mahatma*’ that they have won for me has, therefore, even less” (introduction). He would say shortcomings are his own and not that of his Truth which is absolute and uncompromising. But the wonderful fact is he did scale and surpass such heights,

which very few had done hitherto, in that adventure of human spirit. All that human effort is capable to take a few steps at a time toward that perfection. Perfection is ideal, which appears attainable and never attained. That is its attraction; some would say fatal, as it becomes an all-consuming passion for the practitioner of Truth. Many seekers have ended up paying a price with their life. Gandhi himself has identified three concise principles as cardinal to his conviction: *Satya*, *Ahimsa* and *Tyaga*. For Gandhi truth was the source of bliss because it is replete with divinity. In his book *Satyagraha* he has written about the pyramidal relationship between truth knowledge and bliss:

Where there is Truth, there also is knowledge, which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word *chit* or knowledge is associated with the name of the God. And where there is true knowledge there is always bliss (*Aananda*)(38).

Passive Resistance or *Satyagraha*

In common parlance *satyagraha* is interpreted as non-violent direct action. The literal meaning of *satyagraha* is holding on truth or insistence on truth. That is why Gandhi identified *satyagraha* with love force and soul force. In Gandhi's own words; "The term Satyagraha was coined by me in South Africa to express the force ...in order to distinguish it from the movement then going on in the United Kingdom" (6).

Resistance, in the usual sense, simply means to withstand, oppose, stand firm against something, to block it or push it back. As customarily used, "non-resistance" refers to overt actions. He who practices non-resistance in this sense may very well oppose an adversary in his will and spirit, but does not present any overt obstacle to the action to which resistance would be a possible response.

“Non-resistance” therefore is an ambiguous term, which carries within itself a contradiction of meanings that must be kept in fragile balance. Part of this ambiguity will be resolved at the linguistic level if we observe the force of the prefix “non” as contrasted with “un”. To be non-resistant implies a purposiveness that does not apply to being un-resistant.

As a form of resistance, *satyagrah* is the technique of resisting injustice and settling conflicts. The *Satyagrahi* aims at bringing about a change of heart in the opponent and awakening in him the sense of justice. Gopinath Dhawan evaluates the concept of *Satyagraha* ; “The philosophy of the *satyagraha* is the philosophy of the integral man. To Gandhiji the real being in man is the spirit. The spirit is one in all and service of the community in every sphere of life is the one way to realize this truth” (341).

Non-violence

Non-violence is the basic principal of Gandhian philosophy. As the believer in non-violence, Gandhi shared with many others the goal of a decent, just and equitable society. He wanted to see an end to injustice, tyranny, corruption. Sonia Gandhi in her speech on The Non -Violence Day had said; "At first Gandhi was a *Karmayogi*. On the one side, he was a great thinker and on the other side, he had an immense stock energy. That very energy gave him strength to do away with insult, animosity and hatred" (10).

He was deeply concerned to establish peace in the world, but not a peace purchased at any price. He had known that the only peace that can endure and be worthy of the name was based on justice. According to Shusil Mittal; “Gandhi never preached of ahimsa neither did he called to pray of it. Rather he was involved in the actions related to non violence (67)”

Gandhi rejected violence because of a deeply held conviction that the employment of violence leads men and nations away from the decent society from their goal. As the pacifist, Gandhi had read history and learned that even highly motivated revolutions had more than once eventuated in bloodshed. For him; “ non-violence is a weapon of the strong, with the weak it might easily be hypocrisy” (384).

Application of the nonviolence to social and political fields has been a remedy for all social evils and what makes it a unique method of bringing about the transformation of the opponents into the well-wishers. But for Gandhi nonviolence was not something easily attainable:

Ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear. Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of ahimsa. But it is its least expression. The principle of *ahimsa* is not to hurt by evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. (41,42)

Gandhi’s faith in the practical dimension of non-violence was insurmountably strong. He showed to the world that there is no antidote of hatred like non-violence. His life was surrounded by plethora of innumerable upheavals but his faith on non-violence remained as strong as ever.

Relevance of Gandhi

Gandhi was a perpetual moral rebel who called for organized movement against imperialistic, virulence, social exploitation, economic oppression and slavery to immoral propensities. At a time when thinkers in the realm of philosophies and social sciences are trying to take stock of the Eastern Heritage and Western Thought, Gandhi stands as a symbol of the conjunction of the East and the West. The service of Gandhi in awakening the people of Asia and Africa is of immense importance. Many leaders around the globe have testified to the inspiration from the trials, sufferings and

teachings of the Mahatma. Francesco Ruteli, the Italian cultural minister had written; “...I believe that, Gandhi’s message has been more relevant today”(111).

The world has recognized the moral significance of the work of the Mahatma. Both Einstein and Tagore testified to the spiritual eminence of Gandhi. Gandhian concept of peaceful movement has served as an alternative way of revolution in today’s world. Gopinath Dhawan is true to state that:

For centuries, war and violence have been tried as a means of achieving peace and prosperity. Today they threaten the very existence of the human race, and the conviction has been growing among the saner sections of mankind that non violence is the only way of averting catastrophe.(4)

In the time, when cultural norms are collapsing and structure of civilization is imperiled, the deathless spirit of Gandhi stands as a mighty Himalaya, an immense source of strength to those devoted to the emancipation of mankind.

Now in the twenty first century, Gandhi is a world phenomenon. It means, as if he has been reborn. Strangely enough, people unanimously look to Gandhi and his non-violent action to fight the most fundamental battle of human rights- the right to life.

After almost 60 years of martyrdom, Gandhi is now more relevant on global level than before. He is being recognized as a great leader of action, a liberator and a prophet, all over the universe. What is needed at the hour is to implement his deeds, actions and thoughts into practice and thus, his relevance in different fields is unquestionable and unchallengeable. For the very survival of human being, it is imperative to act upon his advice because only on his relevance the world shall survive together. He is the only hope of the future as he is the only shining star on the

horizon.

We are today passing through an extremely critical and controversial phase of terrorism. The climate of terrorist violence is explosive. Terrorism is being used everywhere, either with enthusiasm or with fear. In recent years, we have witnessed terrorist violence affecting almost all countries. Even the so-called advanced, affluent nations suffer from the menace of terrorist violence. In such adverse time Gandhi has become relevant more than ever. His concepts of truth and non-violence are unsurpassed by spatial-temporal existence. Anuradha Ray is absolutely correct to pronounce “Gandhi was an icon of truth, peace and sacrifice, and perhaps these three will be the final attributes which will keep his memory for a long time in our mind (143).

Karmayoga: The Path of Spiritual Action

Karmayoga is the way by means of which man's will power as expressed in action is utilized for his spiritual development. Etymologically, the word *Karma* is derived from the root *Kri* which means 'doing' or 'affair'. Another word 'yoga' comes from the root *yaj* which means 'to join'. *Amarakosh*, the *sanskrit thesaurus*, has given the meanings of the word yoga in this way: *Yogan sannahanopaya-dhana samgati yuktisu* (3.3.22). Later on, the word *Yoga* also comes to denote 'combination', 'addition', 'means' or 'device'. Therefore, literally, *Karmayoga* means the device of performing action. Philosophically, *Karmayoga* is a path to enlightenment postulated by *The Gita*. *Karmayoga* is a science which teaches to perform action but in disinterested manner. *Karmayoga*, envisioned by *The Gita*, replaces previous concepts of *Yjna*, *Jyanayoga* and *dhyanyoga* as the means of salvation propounded by *Vedic* religion *upanisads* and *puranas* respectively.

A Brief Survey of the Concept of *Karma* in Other Ancient Texts

In *Vedic* period, *karma* or action was only sacrificial ritual aimed to appease different demigods. According to Jaimini, the author of *Jaimini Sutra*, the performance of sacrificial ritual was the principle aim of human being. Every thing one did should have to be done for the purpose of *yjna* or sacrifice. People believed that heaven could be attained by performing sacrificial rituals prescribed by the *Vedas*. In this way, *Karma* and *yjna* were almost synonymous in *Vedic* period.

Later on, in *Upanishadic* period, *jyanamarya* or the path of knowledge was the centrifugal means of spiritual practice. According to *Upanisadas* one had to renounce the world completely and become a mendicant in order to realize the ultimate truth, or the God. It meant that, a householder, however nobler he might be, could never hope to achieve salvation. In *Upanisadas*, *Karmayoga* is considered as

an auxiliary means to *brahma* if *janayoga* is the primary one. In this regard, one point of *Bhrihad-Aranyak Upanishad* is worth-quoting. It says; "His knowledge and his works and his former intelligence lay hold on him" (4.4.2). Here, the interlink between *jana* (knowledge) and *karma* (Action) is clearly depicted. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan interprets the above given lines in this way; "These impression of the past, under the control of knowledge and work, stretch out like a leech from the body and build another body in accordance with past work" (270).

Brinad-Aranyak Upanisad assumes *karma* as the determining factor, which can influence subsequent lives of human being. Similarly, *Svetatvar Upanisad* also gives consent to *Brihad- Aaranyak Upanisad*, regarding the concept of *karma*. *Svetatvar upanisad* states; "According to his deeds (*karma*) the embodied one successively assumes forms in various degrees" (512). Likewise, *Mundakya Upanisad* presumes *karma* as the ultimate thing to be ceased before a *yogi* attains the *Brahma*. It says:

The knot of the heart is loosened

All doubts are cut off.

And ones deeds (Karma) cease

When he is seen both higher and the lower (2.2.8)

Aforementioned *Upanisadas* provide only secondary role to *karma*. These *Upanisadas* believe *karma* to be the imprint of previous birth affecting subsequent new lives. Unlike this, *Isa Upanisad* advocates for relatively higher role of *karma* in attaining the *Brahma*. The second mantra of it is evidence of such fact:

Kurvan eveh karmani

Jijivisec chatam samaha

Evam tvayi nanyatheto sti

Na karma lipyate nare. (2)

(One may aspire to live for hundreds of years. If he continuously goes on working in that way, for that sort of work will not bind him to the laws of *karma*. There is no alternative to this way for man.) Swami Ranganathananda comments that; "Performing action, thus, is not other way can make man free from the taint of action"(81). Similarly, Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, in his commentary of *Isa Upanisad* writes; "... and if he does not act according to his prescribed duties, he transgresses the law of nature and binds himself" (24). In this way, *Isa Upanisad* established the importance of *karma* executed selflessly as the surest path to salvation.

Brahmasutra, which focuses on the knowledge of the one as primary, also imbibes some tenets of *karma*. *Brahmasutra* promulgates that *karma* is nothing more than residue of action performed in previous birth. This sutra substantiates the similar idea; *Karanad iti cen nopalaksanartheti korasna jinih* (III. 1.9) (If it be said that on account of conduct *karma* is not necessary (we say that), it is not so to denote indirectly). According to Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan; "It is said that conduct and residual *karma* determine the new birth" (436).

In *The Bhagabat Puran*, lord Krishna delineates three different points leading to *moksha*. Among them; "*Karmayoga* is for those that are not disgusted with the performance of the Karma but they are attached to it" (SK XI. Ch. 20). However, such attachment should not be worldly. In another place lord Krishna says: "So, when attachment are not completely removed and *Karma* is not counteracted they trouble the imperfect *yogi*" (Sk 11. Ch. 28).

The Concept of *Karmayoga* and Features of *Karmayogi* in *The Gita*

Karmayoga is the ideal state of spirituality, which can be attained only after certain pre-requisites are fulfilled. One becomes a perfect *karmayogi* only after assimilating those pre requisites whole-heartedly. Among those requirements duty is the major one.

The *karmayogi* should perform his duty honestly rising to the higher plain where he is not enslaved by the duty itself. In *The Gita*, lord Krishna, who is known as *yogeshvara*, appeals Arjuna's sense of duty by the following verse:

Svadharmam api ca vekshya

Na vikampitum arhasi

Dharmyad dhi yuddnac chreyo nyat

Kshtriyasya na vidyate. (II 31)

(Further, having regard for their own duty thou should not falter, there exists no greater good for *ksatriya* than a battle enjoined by duty.) In the verse give above, the word, *svadharma* does not denote 'religion' or any other spiritual sect, but the rightful duty of one's own. Paramhansa Yogananda interprets the battle Lord Krishna inspires Arjuna to fight as the battle against momentary pleasurable sense attachments. He says; "A spiritual warrior should not hesitate to accept his supreme duty to strive to route his enemy invaders of ignorance by fighting to acquire wisdom" (31).

According to him, every aspirant *karmayogi* is required to fight fearlessly against material desires his sense organs are tempted to. In another place lord Krishna valorizes pronouncing outrightly that; *Svadharme nidhanam sreyan, paradharmo vayopah* (III35), which means, 'even death in the performance of own duty is better, another's duty is fraught with fear' (own translation).

Unselfishness and love are two inalienable parts of duty. A *karmayogi* should not expect any reward for the duty he performs. His duty should be guided by the principle of love. Swami Vivekananda highlights the importance of altruism in duty:

It is work through the sense of duty that leads as to work without any ideas of duty a stage when work will become worship, the object of the ideal of duty is the attenuation of the lower self, so that real higher self may shine forth (11)

Another major feature of *Karmayoga* is non-attachment, which is also known as self-abnegation. It is this phase *karmayogi* reaches after incessant practice of disinterestedness. When the aspirant *karmayogi* performs action without attachment to the fruit it bears, he cultivates the practice of non-attachment. The binding quality of action lies not in the performance but in the hidden motive, the action prompts. Therefore, in the following verse lord Krishna instigates Arjuna to be involved in the action without expectation of any result:

*Karmany eva dhikaraste
ma phalesu kadachana
ma karmaphala hetur vur
ma te sango str akarmani (II 45).*

(To action alone hast though a right and never at all to its fruits of action be thy motive, neither let there be in thee attachment to inaction.)

It may be postulated that since the results of all actions are attained simply by worshipping the Supreme Lord, what is the use of any other actions other than devotion to Him? To counter this conclusion the Supreme Lord states that all living entities have the right to perform actions but none has the right to claim the results. An aspirant *karmayogi* must know that to hanker or yearn for reward for one's actions

is the cause of bondage in the material existence. Nevertheless, it may be said that all actions produce a result, just as eating satisfies the urge of hunger. Anticipating this question the Supreme Lord states that one should not let the anticipated results of actions be the cause of motivation.

The question may arise that if one seeking liberation from the material existence should instead acquire firmness in spiritual knowledge and then what is the use of actions. To this Lord Krishna instructs that everyone has the right to perform actions in order to purify ones existence and advance in spiritual knowledge because as Paramhansa Yogananda says; “The impersonal or non- karma making fruits of action follow those activities that are performed only to please the God”(286). However, one should not cultivate ones mind to think that by the right to perform actions one receives rewards. This mentality is destructive to spiritual advancement because then one will get attachment to the actions and then subsequently to the rewards. So Lord Krishna emphasizes never to be attached to the rewards of actions or even consider the rewards because this attachment will keep up locked in the material existence. A living entity performing actions without considering the rewards will never develop the fragmentation and indeterminate nature of one whose mentality is attached to the fruits of their actions. It is also important to understand that it is not the person who is performing actions without attachment to the rewards. To the contrary, he will certainly receive rewards as well but the difference is he will not be concerned about the reward. Now in contrast it may be proposed that instead of performing actions without motivation to the rewards perhaps it might be better to perform no actions at all. To this Lord Krishna instructs that one should never be attached to inaction of not performing ones prescribed activities because; ‘*nahī kaschit ksanamāpi jatu tisthati akarmakrit*(III-4), which means, no one can stay a

moment without working. We should not allow our ego to dictate us that we should be inactive because then we incur the sin of non-committance in performing our natural duties. One who is inclined toward spiritual advancement should never perform prohibited actions and should avoid performing frivolous actions but with the understanding of responsibility, one should always perform ones obligatory activities daily and occasionally.

It seems contradictory to remain unattached to the work one is devotedly engaged. In the following verse, Lord Krishna delineates the way of working disinterestedly:

Buddhiyukto jahati ha

Yubhe sukrataduskrite

Tasmat yogaya yuiyasve

Yogah karmasu kausalam (II 50)

(One who has yoked his intelligence with the divine, casts away even here both good and evil. Therefore strive for yoga, yoga is skilled in action). When one is neutral to the outcome of the action, he is on the right track to *Karmayoga*. Mahatma Gandhi, in his commentary of the above given verse; writes; "A person who is firmly yoked to his intellect, and intellect which is resolute who is totally merged in it and who is a yogi, such one renounces the fruit of work" (50). To reach to the state of non-attachment is not easy, though not impossible. It is possible only by restraining sense organs by mind. Lord Krishna says: "*Ya tv indriyani manasa niyamya*" (III 7) which means, 'controlling the sense by mind'. Swami Vivekananda analogies the concept of non-attachment to the role of nurse. He states; "she looks after the children put under her care with all attention but does not hesitate in the least when she has to leave them and go away" (19). Non-attachment is also the device of liberating own self from the

cycle of birth and death. In this direction, Jayadayal Goyandka writes; “Whatever he does, he does only for the good of the world, free from the feeling of the possession and attachment. Hence, all his activities are divine in character and that is why they do not cause him any bondage" (217).

A true *karmayogi* should develop equanimous perception to the world. He should have equal feeling to friends and foes. Vertical relationship between love/hatred, taste/distaste etc. should be horizontalized. Lord Krishna has clearly uttered in *The Gita* that; ‘*Sukhadukhe same Kritva labhalabhau jayajayau*’ or ‘treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat (II 38)’. Lord Krishna extols the virtues of equanimity because it neutralizes all reactions without a doubt, both positive and negative. Therefore, everyone should make a diligent endeavor to achieve this consciousness of equanimity. For one expertly engaged in action, which does not incur reactions on their path to attain liberation from the material existence rather implies the spiritual intelligence is superior. By the grace of the Supreme Lord one acting in this way is relieved of both good actions, which lead to heaven, and evil actions, which lead to hell even in this very life. Therefore, verily one should always engage oneself in the sacred science of one's individual consciousness attaining communion with the Ultimate Consciousness by consecrating all activities into the Supreme Lord. Because this sacred science is the actual skill in performing all activities, is the formula for righteous actions, which turns even ordinary activities that normally lead to bondage into the means of liberation by offering them in righteousness into the Supreme Lord. Paramhansa Yogananda opines *karmanayoga* to be an antidote; “*Yoga* is , thus, spoken of art of preventing past *karma* from overwhelming the soul(292)”

A true *karmayogi* is judged in terms of even-mindedness he has developed.

Lord Krishna describes the state of mind a true *Karmayogi* should have:

Dukhesv anudvighnamanah

Sukhesu vigatasprina

Vitaragavaya krodha

Sthitardhir muniruchyate (II 56)

(The sage, whose mind remains untroubled amid sorrows, whose thirst for pleasure has altogether disappeared, and who is free from passion, fear and anger is called stable mind). The *Karmayogi*, who has realized the God, remains wholly unperturbed in sorrow because "... his intellect having become unshakably fixed in God, even the greatest of sorrows can not more him, he becomes proof against all sorrows"

(Goyandka 119). When the *karmayogi* becomes even- minded he develops undifferentiating attitude towards the world. Prejudices and discrimination regarding cast, class, sex etc. are eradicated. In the fifth chapter of *The Gita* Lord Krishna says; "Sages see with equal eye, a learned and humble Brahmin, a cow, an elephant or even a dog, or an out cast" (V 24). Bal Gangadhar Tilak, in his book *Gita Rahasya* or *Karmayoga*, defines yoga as synonymous to equanimity; "*Yoga* means equability of mind towards success or failure" (78).

A *karmayogi* should be an exemplary figure and usher others to the right way. He should be a role-model to the society. Swami Tapasyanada puts forth three pre-conditions to be an exemplary *karmayogi*: "(i) repeated good action (ii) freedom from personal desire and ambition (iii) philosophical outlook" (32). In chapter three of *The Gita* Lord Krishna illustrates an example of king Janaka who, without abandoning the world and action, had been a *KarmaYogi*. He did not give up the throne but the sensuous desires. Afterwards, Lord Krishna gives example of Himself. The Lord, as

the controller of whole universe, is not required to get involved in any work. But if he ceases to work people would follow him and become lethargic. Therefore, Lord Krishna, who is also called *Yogeshvara*, becomes an epitome of *Karmayogi*.

Sarvapalli Radha Krishnan paraphrases; "There is not for me, O Parth, any work in the three worlds which has to be done, nor anything to be obtained which has not been obtained, yet I'm engaged in work" (140).

Another important constituent of *Karmayoga*, which every *karmayogi* should thoroughly comprehend, is dominance over sense organs. Sensory desires are the arch-enemies of every *Karmayogi*. Lord Krishna appeals to destroy the enemy in the form of desire:

Evam buddhen param buddhva

Smamstabhya tmanam atmanam

Jahi satro mahabaho

Kamarupam durasadam (III 43).

(Thus, Arjuna, knowing that which is higher than the intellect and subduing mind by reason, kill this enemy in the form of desire, that is hard to over come.) The only way of getting hold over sense organs is by using own intellect. When an individual fully controls sense organs then only he can develop even-mindedness as Bahadur Mal clearly states; "He would not unduly elated if he meets with his success not would he be depressed by failure" (266).

Last, but not the least, component of *Karmayoga* is faith in God. This phenomenal world is only the illusive manifestation and doomed to vanish one day. The only eternal is God himself. Therefore, everything one does should be submitted to the God. When a *Karmayogi* is puzzled of duty, he should immediately surrender to

the God as Arjuna does *in The Gita*. At the beginning of the second chapter, Arjuna says:

Karpanyadosopahata Svabhavah

Prachhami tvam dharmasammudha chetah

Yac cheryah syan nischitam bruhi tanme

Sisyas te ham sadhi mam tvam prapanam (II 7)

(With my very being tainted by the vice of faint-heartedness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty. I am asking to You, tell me that which is decidedly good, I'm Thy disciple. Pray, instruct me, who have put myself in to your hands) If we cultivate the propensity of dedication to God, we may engage in action but that does not imprison us. One who acts as well as, surrenders to the God is a perpetual *Karmayogi*; who is finally liberated. Toward the end of *The Gita*, Arjuna admits that his illusion and despondency are finally cleared by the bless of Lard Krishna. He says:

Nasto moha smritir labdha

Tvatprasadan maya chuta

Sthito smi gata sandeha

Karisye bachanam tava (XVIII 73)

(By your grace my delusion has fled and wisdom has been gained by me. I stand shorn of all doubts. I'll do your bidding). Finally, Arjuna had now no doubts left in his mind about virtues, glory and divinity of the God. The position, Arjuna acquired at last, is possible to every individual if he gives himself in to the all-encompassing bosom of the God. Lord Krishna encourages everyone to tread on the footsteps of Arjuna. He has been giving clarion call to human being and saying: "resort to *Karmayoga!* stand up" (IV 42, own translation).

Thus, *Karmayoga* is a path to enlightenment, which encourages self-less action. A *karmayogi* is one who does not presume himself an active agent of the action he does, but a neutral eyewitness. *Karmayoga* inspires individual to be dutiful to own self and faithful to Almighty. It is an optimistic philosophy in the sense that it does not ask people to abandon the world rather motivates to be involved in humanitarian activities. It asks *sadhaka*, the spiritual practitioner, to be unaffected of the world like the lotus leaf in water, because the world itself is a transitory drama performed under the direction of the God.

Influence of the Philosophy of *Karmayoga* of *The Gita* in Gandhi's Life

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who is universally known as Mahatma Gandhi, is synonymous to truth, peace and non-violence. Till now, he is commemorated for his unprecedented contribution to humanity. In today's world, where humanity and moral values are dwindling down and violence is ubiquitous the world has felt the absence of Gandhi more than ever. Throughout his life, Mahatma Gandhi was never distracted from the path of truth and non-violence. No whirlwind of personal desire and public criticism could carry away him from his conviction to truth and non-violence. However, merits of some of his groundbreaking decisions can be debatable but whatever he did was beyond his personal benefits. He invested his whole life in those works, which were directly concerned to the public. Such effulgent light of humanity and self less action in Gandhi's life was kindled by the philosophy of *The Gita*. *The Gita*, which is also known as *Karmayogashastra* or the science of self less action became the compass to guide Gandhi's life in *bhavasagara* or the worldly ocean. *The Gita* purified Gandhi as flame does to gold. He frequently experimented the density of truth in himself and finally became a genuine *karmayogi* for whom the whole world was a plain land devoid of the hills and molehills of discriminations.

Karmayoga is not a god gifted propensity neither is it an *a priori* phenomenon. Rather, it is something, which is attained by continuous practice of self - abnegation. Though no one is born, *karmayogi* but its seeds should be sown in proper time and conducive environment. His heart was tilled and fertilized by family's affiliation to the sect of Vaisnavism, where the small sapling of *Karmayoga* was planted which later on grew to the huge tree to provide the shelter for the shelter-less

and beam of hope in extreme aridity. In Gandhi's life the events that happened during his childhood bore long term effect throughout his life. In the first and second parts of his autobiography, entitled *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, Gandhi has assembled the chronicle of the events where the seed of *Karmayoga* was sown.

In the first part of his autobiography in a chapter entitled 'Stealing and Atonement' Gandhi has confessed that he had attempted to commit suicide and also stolen money from his father's pocket. However, Gandhi could not subdue the guilt for a long time and decided to write a note of confession to his father. This particular juncture happened to be momentum for the commencement of long and adventurous voyage to *Karmayoga*. Since then Gandhi embarked to explore the realm of *Karmayoga*, determined to wade across the ocean of difficulties. Gandhi writes about his decision of writing the confessional note:

I decided at last to write out the confession to submit it to my father and ask his forgiveness. In this note, not only did I confess my guilt, but also I asked for adequate punishments for it, and closed with a request to him not to punish himself for my offence. I also pledged myself never to steal in future.(38, 39)

Confession is the first and foremost step to *Karmayoga*. When one is bewildered and realizes own guilt, then s/he surrenders to the higher authority. Confession is, in a way, to cut down the knot of ego and to offer own self to the lap of the Divine. Confession makes *sadhana* easier and inevitable for it makes the *sadhakas* egoless. In the second chapter of *The Gita*, Arjun confesses his ignorance and submits himself to

the God. Arjun says:

Karpanyadosopahata svabhava

Prachhami tvam dharmasammudhacetah

Yac chreyah Syan nisictam bruhi tan me

Sisyas te ham sadi mam tvam prapannam (II 7)

(My very being is stricken with the weakness of pity. With my mind bewildered about my duty. I ask thee. Tell me, for certain, which is better. I am thy pupil; teach me, who am seeking refuge in Thee.)

Realization of own guilt is also a step toward progress because it is an awareness about own follies. In this regard Servapalli Radnakrishnan writes; "The consciousness of imperfection indicates that soul is alive" (100). Arjuna's confession to Lord Krishna and Gandhi's confession to his father are similar in terms of the result they procure. Arjun's confession rescued him from the ditch of absentmindedness and opened the door of perfection, whereas Gandhi's confession alluded him the track of *Karmayoga*. His confessional note was full of remorse with acknowledgement of inaptitude. He prostrated himself in humble surrender before his father and begged for guidance, which is the primary stage of *Karmayoga*. Before the dawn of self-realization gets broken the soul indulges into the darkness of sensory pleasure only after the cognizance of hazardous nature of such pleasures the golden gate to immortality gets inaugurated. Previously, Gandhi was also no better than any individual of this world. When his father Karamchand Gandhi was inhaling his last breath on the deathbed, Gandhi was having sex with his wife:

It was 10:30 or 11pm. I was giving the massage. My uncle offered to *relieve* me. I was glad and went straight to the bedroom.

My wife, poor thing, was fast asleep. But how could she sleep when I

was there? I woke her up. In five or six minutes however, the servant knocked at the door. I started with alarm. 'Get Up; he said, 'Father is very ill'. I knew, of course, that he was very ill, so I guessed what 'very ill' meant at that moment (42).

Such incidents may occur in everyone's life, but the one who realizes the shame of the guilt is liberated, but who does not is doomed to remain into the dark abyss of this mortal world. Gandhi was seriously disheartened by that incident. He further writes, "I felt deeply ashamed and miserable. I ran to my father's room. I was with him if the animal passion had not blinded me, I should have been spared the torture of separation from my father during his last moment"(42).

In human life, errors are the great tutors. Wise learn lesson from their mistakes, only the fools repeat. By this incident, Gandhi realized the harmful temptation of sensory pleasure. This realization stimulated him to maintain the strong practice of celibacy, i.e. *brahmachary* in later part of his life.

However, Osho and Gandhi are diametrically opposite regarding their philosophy of sex, Osho's notion is somehow applied to Gandhi too. Osho believes that human being experiences the moment of bliss during the sexual intercourse, which is no less heavenly than the bliss of meditation. Being inspired by the sexual pleasure, *vishayananda*, one tends to practice meditation to attain supreme pleasure i.e. *brahmanand*. Osho further says:

At the root to all this is the experience of love making thus human being came to experience the mind can be stilled, that the mind can be free of thoughts without going into sex and that the same bliss that happens in sex can be attained.(21)

That 'shameful' sex disillusioned Gandhi hence his door to super consciousness was opened. '*Yoga*' is not possible without '*bhoga*'. Who knows, whether he would so vehemently be encouraged to practice *brahmacharya* or not had he not been having sex with his wife during his father's last seconds.

In his life Gandhi never preached a 'rudimentary truth'. He experimented with various things in his own life. Therefore, his life was a 'living laboratory' where he tested the density of truth. When he determined to change himself from both sides: internal and external, he decided to experiment in dietetics first. He was fully aware about the effect of food in one's spiritual activities.

Individual character is highly determined by the food eaten. According to Sri Arubindo:

It is no part of this *yoga* to suppress the taste, *rasa*, altogether. What is to be get rid is vital desire and attachment, the greed of food, being overjoyed at getting the food you like, sorry and discontented when you do not have it, giving an undue importance to it. (66)

So, to motivate himself toward the direction of *Karmayoga* Gandhi decided to change his food habit. In the chapter entitled 'Experiments in Dietetics' Gandhi writes:

As I searched myself deeper, the necessity for changes; both internal and external began to grow on me. As soon as, on even before, I made alternation in my expense and my way of living, I began to make changes in my diet. I saw that the writers on vegetarianism had examined the question very minutely, attacking in its religious scientific, practical and medical aspects. (67)

He was inspired from within because

the change preached and prescribed by something extrinsic was short lived.

An appetite for external change caused snowball effect in him.

Therefore, he decided to be a vegetarian. The proper balance of food is

mandatory to every individual aspiring to be a *Karmayogi*. In the seventeenth chapter of *The Gita* it is stated that:

Ayushattvabala rogya

Ssukhapritivinardhna

Rasysh srigdhan sthira hrdys

Aaharab sattvikapriyah (XVII, 8)

(The foods which promote life,

vitality, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are sweet, soft,

nourishing and agreeable are clear to good).

Satvik food is needed for spiritual nourishment. Kathopanisad, also has said,

"*Aaharsuddhau satva suddhi satva suddhau dhruva smriti*" or purity in food purifies the personality and such personality increases memory. Gandhi's decision to be a pure vegetarian became a giant step toward the path of *Karmayoga*.

Gradually Gandhi's journey to *Karmayoga* continued. According to the oriental belief, no knowledge is possible without a perfect *Guru*. Gandhi also had internalized this fact. A *Guru* is one who possesses all possible knowledge in spiritual matter. His yearn for a guru is revealed in the following passage.

I think that there is a great deal of truth in the doctrine that true knowledge is impossible without a *guru*. An imperfect teacher maybe tolerable in mundane matter but not in spiritual matters. Only a perfect *gnani* deserves to be enthroned as *Guru*. There must, therefore,

ceaseless striving after perfection. For one gets the Guru that one deserves: infinite serving after perfection in one's right. It is its own reward . The rest is in the hands of God (99).

Gandhi, being inspired by the lifestyle of Raychandbhai, realized the necessity of a true *Guru* to guide him toward the right path. Though he could not enthrone Raychandbhai in his heart, he got immense impression from him.

Till now Gandhi had become a lawyer and thought to practice law in Bombay. In his early days of profession he vomited his irk against the malpractices prevalent in the field of Indian jurisdiction. He criticized the culture of taking commission, bribery and inhuman manipulation of innocents in the name of legal process. His fee was also cheapest among the contemporary lawyers because he thought that he would not need much more than Rs. 300 a month .He started to help the poor clients in lower fee. About one incident Gandhi writes; "I was adamant. I gave no commission, but got Manilal's case all the same. It was an easy case. I charged Rs. 30 for the fees"(115). Helping others is the main kernel of *Karmayoga*, but a *Karmayogi* always believes that through the help to individual no reward is expected in return. A *Karmayogi* should understand that his selfless help should be stretched to embrace whole humanity. As it is said the journey of thousand miles starts with the single step, Gandhi's such helps were the initial steps to the ocean of compassion he showered to humanity later on. Nonetheless, such help shouldn't increase the ego of the individual. About this swami Vivekananda writes:

Yet we must do good to our fellow beings the desire to do good is the highest motive power we have, if we know at the same time that it is a privilege to help others. The giver should not stand on a higher pedestal than the receiver .It is not the receiver that is blessed but the

giver. (17)

Undoubtedly, Gandhi's life is a saga of selfless action. Hundreds of incidents of selfless help guided him to the path of *Karmayoga*. Gandhi's firm inclination toward unconditional service of humanity was brought to light when he agreed to remain in South Africa only to combat the legal battle for the poor Indian migrants. Though he was a professional lawyer and had a big family to support, he dared to work free of cost for the welfare of poor migrants who had long been parching in the scorching fire of racial injustice. Gandhi recollects the panic:

The mention of fees pained me, and I broke in!" Abdullah Seth, fees are out of question. There can be no fees for public work. I can stay, if at all, as a servant and as you know I am not acquainted with all the friends. But I believe that they will cooperate. I am prepared to stay a month longer.(148)

Such apparently trivial incidents stimulated Gandhi to devote himself to the selfless action. A *Karmayogi* should be involved in disinterested action being aloof from the karmic effect. The action performed with expectation of the fruit of any kind binds the individual in this world itself, but a disinterested action is the lifeguard to rescue from the cycle of birth and death. Had Gandhi asked fees for his help he would not have been a true *Karmayogi*, but mentioning of fee was sufficient to hurt his tender heart. For the *Karmayogi*, such selfless action abridges the gap between the God and own self. Lord Krishna has said in *The Gita*:

Tasmad asaktah staturm

Karyam Karma Samacara

Asakto hy acharn Karma

Param ap aproti purush (III 19)

(Therefore, without attachment, perform always the work that has to be done, for man attains to the highest by doing work without attachment the work done without self-attachment is superior to the work done with selfish motif.)

The work done with selfish motif procures only the ephemeral results.

Paramhansa Yogananda says; "Material actions performed with desire lead only away from God, while spiritual action leads one to God" (20). Therefore, Gandhi, being involved in selfless action was trying to intimate himself to god. Gradually Gandhi's yearning of self-less help grew up to such an extent that he gave up his physical comfort too. Millie Graham Blake's reminiscence draws a crystal clear picture about Gandhi's eagerness to altruistic help; "He seldom got more than four hour sleep, and every minute of his walking was occupied with anxious thought and work"(94).

In South Africa, Gandhi was involved in numerous benevolent activities.

Among them his support to an indenture labor, Balasundarm, became the matter of talk in South Africa and India both. The case of Balasundaram remained an exemplary one throughout his life. In the episode entitled "Balasundarm" he writes:

The heart's earnest and pure desire is always fulfilled. In my own experience, I've seen this rule verified. Service of the poor has been my heart's desire, and it has always thrown me amongst the poor and enabled me to indentify myself with them. (161)

One day, a Tamil indentured worker, on worn out clothes, head geared in hands, trembling and weeping appeared in his office. His mouth was still bleeding with two front teeth broken. He was severely manhandled by his master. Gandhi not only provided Balasundaram. medical treatment, he also helped him legally to get compensation from his master, which was an alien practice during that time. Then onwards Gandhi's' hands were always ready to help indentured Indian migrants in

South Africa.

Gandhi's fervor to *Karmayoga* was further bolstered by such incidents which occurred in South Africa. His zeal to selfless action, equanimous perception, practice of dietetics cumulatively made him a *Karmayogi*. Later on the impetus of selfless action grew into the form of inalienable addiction. About his passion of helping others Gandhi writes:

If I found myself entirely absorbed in to service of the community, the reason behind it was my desire for self-realization. I had made the religion of service of my own, as I felt the God could be realized only through service .I had gone to South Africa for a travel, for finding an escape from Kathiawada intrigues and for gaining my own livelihood. But as I have said I found myself in search of God and striving for self realization. (167)

Karmayaoga lies in performing duties with due regard to one's own status in the society. Such performance of duty should be done renouncing the desires for fruit attachment in respect to all action and worldly objects. The discipline of *Karmayoga* is consummated only when both the fruit and attachment are renounced. Interestingly, disinterestedness toward the world leads one to 'interestednesses' towards the God. Mahadev Desai in his book *The Gita According to Gandhi* writes; “All works, indeed bind, says Lord Krishan; save that done for sacrifice. For sacrifice is the law of life, the law of all creation. God whispered the message of sacrifice when he created him” (62)

Gandhi sacrificed himself on the alter of humanity. Slowly the seed of *Karmayoga* began to sprout into the form of promising sapling in Gandhil's fertile heart, what he himself says "infinite possibility of universal love"167).

Once the *Karmayogi* approaches to the state of equanimous perception, the rough terrace of the world is smoothened. All the barricades of caste class, creed and race are dismantled. The Karmaayogi starts visualizing the God in everyone. Lord Krishna says in The Gita

Vidyavinayasampanne

Brhmane gavi hastini

Suni cai va svapake ca

Panditah samaharsinh (V-18)

(Sages see with an equal eye, a learned and humble Brahmin, a cow, an elephant or even a dog or an outcast.) Gandhi has interpreted this verse in the following way:

Punditas, that is the man of knowledge, see all things with an equal eye. They have the same regard for a Brahmin rich in learning and gentleness, for a cow, an outcast *chandal*, an elephant or a dog. They feel that the *atman* in each of these is identical with the *atman* in themselves. (166)

Equanimity is the prominent prerequisite of *Karmayoga*. Gandhi treated equally to his friends and foes. Once there was an outbreak of plague in Mumbai and Gandhi decided to devote himself in the service of public. He volunteered his service to the state sanitary department and visited latrines of the untouchables. He also discovered an ironic fact that untouchables were much more conscious about cleanliness than the so-called higher caste. He had no hesitation to visit the settlement of untouchable, which was an contemptuous act in the eyes of the others. In the chapter entitled 'In India' Gandhi writes:

The committee had to inspect the untouchables quarters also. Only one member of the committee was ready to accompany me there. To the

rest it was something preposterous to visit those quarters still more so to inspect their latrines. But for me those quarters were an agreeable surprise. That was the first visit in my life to such a locality. The men and women there were surprised to see us. I asked them to let us inspect their latrines. (178)

Gandhi's passion of service to others was directly reinforced by his influence of *The Gita*. *The Gita* always advocates for the action. *Karmayoga* cannot be practiced when the senses have altogether ceased to function. The practice of *Karmayoga* through the organs of perception and action consists in performing all actions. Most of the oriental philosophical schools advise to abandon the action of any kind but *The Gita* says, "*Karmaendaiyah Karmayogi asaktah sa Visisytle*" which means 'one, without attachment, who engages the organs of an action in the path of work, he is superior'. Gandhi's following revelation shows his assimilation of selfless action:

Such service can have no meaning unless one takes pleasure in it. When it is done for show or for fear of public opinion it stunts the man and crushes his spirit. Service, which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy. (183)

At this juncture, the impetus of *Karmayoga* is seen fully grown in Gandhi. Getting pleasure in serving other is not possible without long and firm practice. The events described in his autobiography are in balance continuum, *which* demonstrate the metamorphosis of Gandhi into a perfect *Karmayogi* from a jealous and lusty individual. Service that is performed only to show others has no value at all. Only the

hypocrites tender such service. In *The Gita* Lord Krishan has said that when one is satisfied with own self there remains no worldly work to be done, and such action does not bind the individual. Hence, Gandhi started to experience divine pleasure in the service of others. Therefore, he entertains not even least attraction for any object of this world, and does not indulge in the enjoyments of worldly objects, but remains unshakably established in uniformity with the divine. For this reason, his mind and intellect do not get delighted in worldly objects; they remain naturally engaged in determining and reflecting on the nectar of the divine experience. This is what meant by “service rendered in the spirit of joy”. (167)

Forgiveness is another asset of Gandhi. Gandhi endured all hardships with smiling face and never thought to harm even his enemies. *Karmayogi* is one who possesses a wide heart to forgive even the foes. There are hundreds of incidents in Gandhi's life where his broad heart swallowed the insults easily. Among them, one event is worthy to cite. As soon as Gandhi landed ashore in South Africa, people easily recognized him. White South Africans were disappointed with him for his incessant support to indentured workers. They had alleged Gandhi of tarnishing the image of South African whites in India by public campaign, pamphlet and interviews. Therefore, in no time, a crowd gathered around him yelling and abusing. A shower of stones, brick, bats and rotten eggs fell on Gandhi. His turban was snatched away and he was subjected to blows and kicks.

Meanwhile, the news reached to the police and he was escorted to Rustomji's home where first aid was administered. Later on British secretary of the state for the colonies cabled to natal authority to prosecute the miscreants responsible for the manhandling but Gandhi refused to identify the assailants. Instead, he said:

I do not want to prosecute anyone. It is possible that I may be able to

identify one or two of them but what is the use of getting them punished? Besides, I do not hold the assailants to blame. They were given to understand that I had made exaggerated statements in India about the whites in Natal and calumniated them. (202)

Gandhi did not have the feeling of animosity to his assailant too. He bore no ill will to anyone. There was no distinction between friend and foe in his eyes. He remained equipoid under all circumstances. His nature was corresponding to the following verse of *The Gita*:

Samah satrau ca mitra ca

Tatha manapamanayoo

Sitosnasukhadukhesu

Smah sangavivarjitah (XII 18)

(He who behaves alike to foe and friend, to good and evil repute, who is alike in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and who is free from attachment.) A Karmayogi possesses an infinite stock of forgiveness. After realizing all the multiple manifestations of the same God, he does not, in fact, hold anyone to blame for any incident. That is why; Gandhi did not want to punish his assaulter. Answering the questions that how would he react had the threats been carried out by the whites, Gandhi, replied:

I hope God will give me the courage and sense to forgive them and to refrain from bringing them to law. I have no anger against them. I am only sorry for their ignorance and their narrowness. I know that they sincerely believe that what they are doing today is rightly and proper. I have no reason, to be angry with them (198).

Gandhi's this remark is an echo of the following verse of *The Gita*:

Avesta sarbabhutanam

Maitra Karuna eva ca

Nirmamo nirahamkaro

Samadukha sukha ksami (XII 13)

(He who is free from malice towards all beings, friendly and compassionate, rid of 'I' and 'mine' balanced in joy and sorrow, forgiving by nature.) Forgiveness is such an asset, which is occupied by only a few. Gandhi never resorted to violence to avenge his opponent. He transformed his foes into friends not by weapon but by love. In his own interpretation of *The Gita* Gandhi has written:

Forgiveness lies in not being angry even with a dog which might have bitten us. Tit for that is a wrong principle. It is certainly not based on forgiveness. What can we gain by being wicked with the wicked? The good of both lies only in our showing love and compassion even for such person (250).

Gandhi firmly believed that truth to be inevitable. Truth cannot be misinterpreted and manipulated for a long time. After a time being the black cloud of falsity gets dispersed and truth starts to illuminate. So, truth cannot be suppressed for a long time. He was convinced that those who intended to harm him would realize the truth eventually. He had said; "I am sure that, when the truth becomes known, they will be sorry for their conduct" (202).

Another prominent feature of *Karmayoga* is control over sense organs.

Sensory organs are the sources of nefarious activities, which lead individual to degradation. Gandhi was also well aware about it. Therefore taking consent of his wife Kasturbai Gandhi vowed to observe *brahmacharya* throughout his life.

Anuradah Ray in her biography of Mahatma Gandhi defines *brahmacharya* as; "...

thus includes yet transcends sexual restraint, it embraces restraint in diet, emotion and speech. It rules out hate anger violence and untruth. It creates equability. It is desirelessness"(53). Therefore, *brahmacharya* is the root of control over sense organs.

Brhamacharya is a Sanskrit word, which literally means control over carnal desire. But philosophically, it is the way to realize the *brahma* or the God. It implies control of all senses in thought, word and deed. One who observes *brahmacharya* is a sinless person, hence, very approximate to the God. For Gandhi observation of *brahmacharya* was the process of self transformation. His viewpoint on *brahmacharya* was; "*Brahmacharya* means, control of the senses in thought word and deed . Everyday I've been realizing more and more the necessity for the restraints of the kind I've detailed above. There is no limit of renunciation" (218).

Control over the sense organs is the basic prerequisite of *Karmayoga*. In the 12th chapter of *The Gita* lord Krishna Says; "*samniyamye ndrijovvgramam sarvatra sambuddhayah*" which means: restraining of all senses and evenmindedness are the ways to the god. Who wishes to experience supreme joy of the spirit should renounce the inferior joy of the senses. But *The Gita* does not advise to banish all sensory temptations by continuous escape into sleep or superconsciousness. Nonetheless, at the slightest command of will, the *Karmayogi* should be able to withdraw mind from any of the five senses. By vowing to observe celibacy, Gandhi proved himself a *Karmayogi*, because only a yogi possesses the art of withdrawing mind from procreative nerves. Neither unwanted sexual arousal in the body nor any outside object of sexual temptation can overcome a *yogi*. Psychological sex nerves and mind are inextricably interlinked and only a yogi can separate them. Sexual power, if used positively, can hasten the meditation. Sri Arubindo in his book *Bases of Yoga* writes:

The transformation of sex-centre and its energy is needed for the

physical *siddhi*; for this is the support in the body of all the mental, vital and physical forces of the nature. It has to be changed into a mass and movement of intimate Light creative power, Pure divine *Anand* (72).

Similarly Lord Krishna, giving Arjuna a clarion call, says: "*Jahi sarum mahabaho Kamrupam durasada*" or annihilate to the foe ! hard to conquer wearing the form of (sexual) desire (III 43)

Gandhi visualized God in truth, which was attained by selfless service. He was always ardent to serve but never expected anything in return. About inter-relation between truth and selfless service, he writes:

Thus, service of the Indians in South Africa revealed to me new implications of truth. Truth is like a vast tree, which yields more and more fruits. The more you nurture it the deeper the search in the mine of truth, the richer *the* discovery of the gems buried here, in the shape of openings for an ever greater variety of service (226).

Service gave Gandhi profound happiness for he explored divinity within it. There was no alternative way to approach to the god except selfless service. There was an indelible influence of the concept of non-attachment in Gandhi. *The Gita* upholds the philosophy of non-attachment in full extent and Gandhi subscribed it. Non-attachment is also the basic component of *Karmayoga*. According to *The Gita* actions of body, mind and soul, while performed with egotism, induce one to concentrate on the fruits of actions, these lead to complete *Karmic* reactions, which finally give rise to re-birth. Who lives with mind, body and soul just for others not for his ego is devoid of all re-birth making desires. Gandhi's whole life was devoted for others and he rejected everything given as reward.

Once, in a farewell, many expensive gifts of valuable jewelleries were bestowed upon Gandhi. Those gifts were offered because he had worked for the community. Gandhi was infuriated for those gifts because he had never expected anything for the duty done to the social welfare. He questioned himself; "What right had I to accept all these gifts" (227).

For a *Karmayogi* to perform the rightful action is his duty; procurement of the result is at the had of the God. The Gita Says;

Karmany eva dhikaraste

Ma phausu kadachanar

Ma karmaphalahetur bhū

Ma te sango stv akarmani (II 47)

(To action hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits, let not the fruits of action be the motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment in inaction). Self abnegation is possible only when the *Karmayogi* reaches to the state of perfection. According to swami Vivekanada; "When a man has reached that state, he has attained to the perfection of *Karmayoga*. This is the highest result of good works"(85). Gandhi describes a restless time he underwent with valuable gifts in his room:

The evening I was presented with the bulk of these things. I had sleepless nights. I walked up and down my room deeply agitated but could find no solution. It was difficult for me to forgo gifts worth hundreds. It was more difficult to keep them. And even if I could keep them, what about my children? They were being trained to a life of service and to an understanding that service was its own reward.(227).

Faith in God is another prominent feature of *Karmayoga*. *Karmayogi* should believe that the God is internally active and wakeful. If one believes this ultimate

reality he/she will not be a fanatic or egoist. Other features of *Karmayoga* buttress under the support of faith in god, when the work is prompted neither by fanaticism nor by expectation of reward but out of pure love and humility. Throughout his life, Gandhi remained unshakably faithful to The God. He waded off the ocean of difficulties and illusion in the boat of faith. There are various examples of his steadfast faith on The God. Once, his son Manilal had a severe attack of typhoid along with pneumonia. After examining him, the doctor advised Gandhi that eggs and chicken broth would be more beneficial than medicine. But Gandhi could not let his son eat eggs and chicken broth. So he started his own way of medication: hydropathy. During the process of hydropathy Gandhi did everything very seriously but left the final result in the hands of the God. Everyone was shocked at Gandhi's decision but he was adamant. It was a test case of Gandhi's' faith. Gandhi Prayed to the God; "My honor is in thy keeping, oh lord in this hour of trial," I repeated to myself. Ramanama was on my lips. After a short time I returned, my heart beating within my breast"(255).

His devotion was responded positively by the God because he says in the Gita "*Ye yatha mam prapadyante tams tathin'va bhajamy aham*" or 'as men approach me, so do I accept them (IV 11). Whatever the seed man sows same will reap. Finally Manilal was cured. Gandhi was extremely exalted because his faith was answered rightly. His faith was further fortified after that incident. Gandhi writes;"Let everyone decide according to his own faith. For my part I was sure that God had saved My honor and that belief remains unaltered to this day" (255/56).

Faith is necessary and indispensable. But reliance upon God must not be made an excuse for indolence rather it must go along with untiring aspiration and a persistent rejection of all that comes in the way of *Karmayoga*. Sri Arubindo says;

"The surrender to the Divine must not be turned into an excuse, a cloak or an occasion for surrender to one's own desire" (24).

So, a *Karmayogi* understands the limitation of the worldly affairs and remains calm in most perturbed moments too. Constant faith on The God helps to pacify tumult of the mind and leads one to perfection. *The Gita* says:

Sradhhavan lavate jarnanam

tatparah samyetendriya (IV 39)

(He who has faith, who is absorbed in wisdom and who has subdued his senses gains wisdom) Faith is the natural indication of the heart to turn toward the God. The *Karmayogi* assimilates oneself to The God which helps to ignite the sparkling flame of wisdom in heart extinguishing long embedded ignorance. About faith Jadayal Goyandka in his book '*The Bhagabat Gita*' writes:

It is faith which gives impetus to one's *sadhana* or spiritual practice; and earnestness in the test of faith. Indolence, sloth and other evils make their appearance during the *sadhana* due to lack of faith . That is why one can not push one's *sadhana* with earnestness. (251)

For a *Karmayogi*, action itself is the *sadhana*. Each enterprise, Gandhi, was involved in, was no less spiritual than the *sadhana* performed by a spiritual practitioner. Whatever he did did with devotion faith and earnestness. Therefore, he scaled the summit of *Karmayoga* easily.

Gandhi had overcome the fear of death. Our life is at the hand of the God and we cannot go against his will. He writes; "After all, the real protector was neither I nor my brother but the almighty" (268). He had realized the ultimate truth that life is uncertain and death is inevitable. A *Karmayogi* should not fear of death. Death is not something to lament on rather a moment to cherish. Swami Aananda Arun in his

book, *Santa Darshan* suggests everyone to cherish the moment of death:

When our relative is going for a long journey, we give a farewell party. Death is also a journey to eternity. So we should see off them happily. If we cry the bereaved soul also becomes sad and its journey gets averted (own translation 176).

Gandhi had truly understood immortality of the soul. Body is only the medium of manifestation of the spirit . The body is only the makeshift shelter of the soul, which is frequently changed. His philosophical underpinnings were subscribed from *The Gita*. *The Gita* has been the torch in the dark den of his life. Gandhi has valorized the role of *The Gita* in his life:

What effect this reading of *The Gita* had on my friends only they can say, to me *The Gita* became an infallible guide to conduct. It became dictionary of daily reference. Just as I turn to English dictionary for the meanings of the English words that I didn't understand, I turn to this dictionary of conduct for a ready solution of all my troubles and trials. The words like *aparigraha* and *samabhaaba* gripped me (270).

Generally philosophy is believed to be an impractical stuff easy to talk of but hard to implement in daily life. However, Gandhi exceptionally proved that ideology works in practicality too. Rajmohan Gandhi is absolutely true to utter this remark:

He translated the philosophy of *The Gita* into practice. It hit him with unexpected force. Gripped by Gita's notion of *aparigraha* or non-possession, Gandhi accepted that he could not follow God without giving up all he had. How in practice was this to be done?(104)

Commentator Bal Gangadhar Tilak terms *The Gita* as '*Karmayoga Shhastra*' or the science of self less action. So Gandhi's influence of *The Gita* paved the way to

Karmayoga.

Ahimsa or non-violence is mandatory in any kind of spiritual practice. For Gandhi *ahimsa* was inextricable existence with truth. Generally by the word '*ahimsa*' we believe' withdrawal from using physical force intended to hurt, damage or kill but in *sadhna ahimsa* refers to complete termination from violence in words, deeds and thought too. Egotism is the genesis of violence. About violence J. Krishnamurty in his internationally acclaimed book, *Beyond the Violence* says; "As long as the 'me' survives in any form, very subtly or grossly, there must be violence" (73). Without withering ego *ahimsa* is impossible. Gandhi was confirmed that one could reach to truth through the path of *ahimsa*. In the same line of Krishnamurty Gandhi writes:

This *ahimsa* is the basis of the search for truth. I am *realizing* everyday that, the search is vain unless it is founded on *ahimsa* as the basis. It is quite proper to resist attack a system, but to resist an attack is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. For we are tarred with the same brush, and are children of the same creator, and as such the divine powers within us are infinite. (281)

The Gita also states: *amanitram adambhitram ahimsa Kshanti arjavam*" (XIII 7)

Which means humility (absence of pride) integrity (absence of deceit) and non-violence.

Ahimsas means total abstention from violence or infliction of pain in any form, shape on any creature whoseever through body, speech, or mind. Harboring ill-will towards another, abusing or vilifying another, using harsh language or uttering unpleasant or harmful words. Causing a physical blow and inflicting injury of any form also refers to violence. A *Karmayogi*, who has developed the virtue of *ahimsa* in mind ceases to bear ill will toward anyone therefore, no harm is ever done by him

to any creature. Gandhi also had reached to the summit of *ahimsa* and had no animosity to them who intended to harm him.

The Gita is a peculiar philosophy delivered from the battlefield. Throughout the war of Mahabharata, Krishna remained as the chariot driver of Arjuna but never touched any weapon. Gandhi was highly influenced by Lord Krishna's personality. The First World War broke out two days before Gandhi landed in England from South Africa. He immediately set about the formation of an Indian Ambulance corps for British army. He believed that, because he accepted all the benefits of British rule he had some obligations towards them. The war was inevitable and as an individual Gandhi could do nothing to avert it. So he chose humanitarian service in the war. A votary of *ahimsa* remains true to his faith under any circumstance. Gandhi himself believed that, "*Ahimsa* is a comprehensible principle" (353). About *ahimsa* *The Gita* is very unequivocal:

ahimsa samata tustis

tapo danam yaso yasah (X 5)

(Non-violence, equal - mindedness, contentment, austerity, charity, fame).

Gandhi's conviction on *ahimsa* finally became the impetus of *satyagraha* movement. The *Satyagraha* movement was the quintessence of non-violence. When Gandhi launched the *Satyagraha* movement, world's superpowers were clashing among themselves. The British Raj in India was exclusively erected on the plinth of military power. In such a moment, Gandhi decided to protest peacefully against the world's most powerful Empire. Gandhi's role was similar to the role of Lord Krishna in the war of Mahabharata. The *Satyagraha* movement was the result of Gandhi's relentless conviction in the philosophy of *The Gita*. During the Kheda *Satyagraha* Gandhi had vowed to disobey the despotic government peacefully:

We shall let the Government take whatever legal steps it may think fit and gladly suffer the consequences of our nonpayment. We shall rather let our lands be forfeited by voluntary payment we should allow our case to be considered false or should compromise our self-respect (440).

When violence is countered violently it is resulted in violent bloodshed but when it is reciprocated non-violently, it procures the positive outcome. The Kheda *Satyagraha* was also ended with fulfillment of their demands.

Gandhi used *ahimsa* not only as the means of pressing the authority to bend down, but also as the instrument of self-purification. *Satyagraha* helped them to observe within themselves minutely so that they could discover their own shortcomings. Therefore, Gandhi always valorized *satyaogaha*:

The Idea came to me last night in a dream that we should call upon the country to observe a general *hartal*. *Satyagraha* is a process of self-purification, and ours is a sacred fight, and it seems to me to be in the fitness of things that it should be commenced with an act of purification (466).

Gandhi was unswervingly convinced to the power of non violence because he had tested it in his own life. He never altered his conviction under any pretext for he was indoctrinated in the philosophy that; *svadharme nidhadhnam shreya paradharmo bhayavaha* which means it is better to die in own conviction than surrendering to the others. Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book *The Discovery of India* recollects Gandhi's strict adherence to non-violence:

Gandhi found himself unable to give up his fundamental principle of non-violence in regard to external war. The very meanness of that war

became a challenge to him and test of faith. If he failed at this critical moment, either non-violence was not the all embracing and basic principle and course of action he had believed it to be, or else he was wrong in discarding it or compromising it.(239)

For a *Karmayogi*, the action itself is the great worship. Swami Vivekananda says; "Man must learn to find solititude in the midst of world"(3). The *Karmayogi* masters over the sensory and vital organs which ultimately lead to the path of nonviolence. Many a time in *The Gita*, Lord Krishna has advocated for self-purification:

Sarvani ndriyakarmani

Pranakarmani ca pare

Atmasamyamyogagau

Juhvati jnandipite (IV 27)

(Some again offer all the works their senses and works of the vital force into the fire of yoga of self-control, kindled by knowledge). Hence, Gandhi finally concluded that; 'The people are, not by nature violent but peaceful' (472).

Truth is inseparable with non-violence. All oriental scriptures, from Vedas, *Upanisadas* and *Puranas* stick firmly to truth. In *Upanisada*, it is said '*satya meva Jayate nanritam*' which means 'Truth only wins, not the untruth' (own translation). *The Gita*, being the essence of *Upanisadas*, vehemently advocates for truth. For Gandhi truth and the God were synonymous entities. Gandhi admitted that, God resides in truth itself:

My uniform experience has convinced me that there is no other God than Truth. And if every page of this chapter does not proclaim to the reader that the only means far that realization of truth is *ahimsa*. I shall

deem all my labor in writing these chapters to have been in vain (510). The God is the ultimate truth, which is an immortal existence. Truth has divine power of transcending the world into divinity. In this regard, swami Arubindo writes; “ Divine Truth and Divine Love are inseparable, and first steps towards that are complete self -consecration and self- purification, a complete opening of own self to the Divine.” (28)

Truth is not possible without love. To feel universal warmth of truth one must be able to love all the creations as own self. Truth is immortal, hence, cannot be distorted in any rate. Gandhi’s conviction to truth had begun in his early life. When he was at the high school, he had vowed to speak truth forever. He writes, "I do not remember having ever told a lie" (18). If truth and non-violence are twins, seeds of these had already been sown in his childhood, which reaped to the fullest later on. Finally Gandhi concluded that there was no God except truth and there was no powerful weapon then no-violence. As the concluding remark of his autobiography. Gandhi writes; “In bidding farewell to the reader, for the time being at any rate, I ask him to join with me in prayer to the God of truth that may grant me the boon of *ahimsa* in mind, word and deed”. (511).

Gandhi kept on advocating for peace and non-violence. He organized march past in the places where religious riots had been broken out. He succeeded to pacify, somehow, the tumultuous birth pang of independent India. Everyone, regardless of caste, class and creed, was equal to him. Gandhi never accepted any official position because he had no crave for political power. *Karmayogi* rules over own sense organs but never lets those organs rule over him. However, Gandhi, Played vital role in reconciliation between the leaders. Serving humanity to the full extent, Gandhi took his last breath in 1948.

It was getting late for his evening prayer and he walked, up to the lawn with his two grand daughters. Meanwhile, Nathuram Vinayak Godse, a sturdy young man, knelt before Gandhi as if to pay him homage and fired point blank three shots at Gandhi's chest. Gandhi sank to the ground escaping the sound 'Rama' from his lips. Gandhi left the world creating a huge never fulfilling void on 30th January 1948. Mahatma Gandhi died as a private citizen, without wealth, property, official title, post, academic distinction, scientific achievement or artistic gift. Rammohan Gandhi in his book *Mohandas* recounts this great tragedy:

That Gandhi, the spirit that wanted to bless and forgive assassin, even as it wanted to bless and forgive all the grudge bearing residents of India Pakistan and the world...that Gandhi, bullets did not kill. They only released Gandhi for the ages and the continents.(681)

It was a strange irony that the epitome of non-violence should have met a violent end. But a bullet can kill a person not the vision and idea expounded by him. Gandhi's biographer B.R. Nanda writes: "The bullets which, passed through Gandhi's chest reverberated in millions of hearts" (512). Gandhi had triumphed over the fear of death. Once he had said that he would gladly accept the bullet shot by his own compatriot. As a *Karmayogi*, he had assimilated the ultimate truth postulated by *The Gita*:

Ya enam veti hantaram

Yas cai nam manyate hatamm

Ubhau tau na vijanito

Na yam hanti no hangate (II 19)

(He who thinks that this slays and he who thinks that this is slain, both of them fail to perceive the truth; this one neither slays nor is slain).

Conclusion

Gandhi's entire life was invested in pursuing the God in the form of Truth. His autobiography entitled *The Story of My Experiment with Truth* is an archive of his experience from which human being can discover many useful lessons. Truth and non-violence are twin cardinal principles of Gandhi's philosophy. For Gandhi, truth is the relative truth of truthfulness in word and deed, and the absolute Truth - the Ultimate Reality. *Ahimsa*, far from meaning mere peacefulness or the absence of overt violence, is understood by Gandhi to denote active love - the entity opposite of violence, or *himsa* in every aspect. Truth or *Satya* was the sovereign principle of Mahatma Gandhi's life. His life was an eternal conquest to discover truth and his journey to that end was marked by experiments on himself and learning from his own mistakes. Fittingly his autobiography was titled *My Experiments with Truth*. Gandhi strictly maintained that the concept of truth is above and beyond of all other considerations and one must unflinchingly embrace truth throughout one's life.

Gandhi believed in the self-less action. His whole life was endowed with the vehement thirst to help those who were virtually helpless. Main crux of the philosophy of *The Gita* is to perform the duty without any expectation of the fruit because it is the god to decide the fruit. Throughout the discourse of *The Gita* Lord Krishna enjoins Arjuna to be involved in the action being detached from an expectation of the reward. Being stimulated by this notion of *The Gita* in his life Gandhi declined to avail himself for political power and position

Equanimity is the asset of the *karmayogi*, which Gandhi had unreservedly assimilated. Gandhi was always against of evaluating human being by color, caste,

and creed but by the content of mind. After the continuous practice the *karmayogi* reaches to such a state of mind which knows no artificial precincts. According to *The Gita* everyone is the progeny of the same Almighty so discrimination is a sinful act. Gandhi had learned this fact from *The Gita*. One who has developed equanimity bears no interest in the debate of any kind. Gandhi also never clung to any particular caste, geography and religion. His sympathy to Indian Muslim is still unforgettable because he had known the fact that *yoga karmashu kaushalam* or yoga is the best way to act.

No *sadhana* is possible without control over the sense organs. Sense organs entice individual to be involved in the activities which forebear physical gratification. But *sadhana* requires full grip over the sense organs so as to hasten the *siddhi*. Gandhi had realized the counter productivity of sensory pleasure in his holy mission of *Karmayoga*. Therefore, he observed complete *brahmachary* and vegetarianism in his life.

Principle of nonviolence or *Ahimsa* has been integral to oriental philosophy and Mahatma Gandhi espoused for total nonviolence in his life. He was determined to purge the *Satyagraha* movement of any violent elements and incidents of violence. Therefore, the notion of non-violence can not be separated from Gandhi. Gandhi spearheaded the Indian movement of independence peacefully. He had a conviction that there was nothing which could not be won by truth and non-violence. His concept of *satyagraha* was the result of truth and non-violence.

To sum up, Gandhi was not only an individual made up of flesh and blood, rather he was an epitome of *Karmayoga*. Since his childhood, he was immensely influenced by the philosophy of *Karmayoga* of *The Gita*. He was a *yogi* of peculiar type; with home, wife and hectic daily life. He never made spiritual practice an excuse for the secluded life rather kept on working selflessly for the down trodden people.

Therefore today also, his portrait illuminates in the heart of millions with great reverence.