READING GANDHI IN TWO TONGUES AND OTHER ESSAYS

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Preface

Reading Gandhi for me has been akin to telling the beads; a daily practice, comforting in its repetitiveness, sometimes meditative. Telling beads is necessary for those who have no direct, unmediated access to the light they seek.

The journey of understanding Gandhi for me has been in and through the Gujarati language. Modern Gujarati prose has been chiselled and enriched by some of Gandhi's closest associates and fellow ashramites: Swami Anand, Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Mahadev Desai, Kishorelal Mashruwala and Prabhudas Gandhi. This ashramic tradition, together with Dharmananda Kosambi, Muni Jin Vijayji, Acharya Kripalani, Pandit Sukhlalji at the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya (now Gujarat Vidyapith) crafted the most creative and catholic intellectual tradition of modern Gujarat. Though recessive, it shows its possibility and vitality in the writings of Narayan Desai – perhaps the last bearer of this tradition – and his unique way of *Nama Smaran*, the Gandhi Katha. My own journey to Gandhi has been mediated by this tradition.

Gandhi wrote his key texts in Gujarati. But, Gandhi was not a thinker who thought solely or primarily in and through the semantic universe of the Gujarati language. Gandhi was a bilingual thinker: not in the sense that he wrote arresting prose both in English and Gujarati, but in a more fundamental way. Gandhi's conceptual universe was deeply informed by his reading of European Civilisation and European thinkers. *Hind Swaraj*, his key philosophical work, bears testimony to this bilinguality.

He rendered *Hind Swaraj* into English, while other key texts were translated by his closest associates like Mahadev Desai and Valji Govindji Desai. Gandhi debated, revised and

authenticated these translations. An act of translation, in its deep faithfulness and fidelity, is a creative act; it introduces transpositions in the semantic universe. A simultaneous reading of Gandhi's autobiography in Gujarati and in Mahadev Desai's luminous English translation bears marks of this creativity and transpositions.

Gandhi's own bilinguality and the creative engagement of his translators makes reading Gandhi in two tongues both an enriching and an essential act. There is another kind of unity to which the ashramic intellectual tradition points. This is the centrality of practice as necessary referent to the thought. Gandhi's ashrams were communities of co-religionists. The Satyagrahis, spiritual seekers and constructive workers through their own experiments and strivings, gave meaning to Gandhi's strivings in political, social and spiritual realms. This division itself would have little meaning in that tradition. The ashramic tradition teaches us to look at Gandhi's thought and life practices, his politics and spirituality, his desire for self-realisation and striving for Swaraj as inter-woven texture.

The essays collected here bear indelible marks of this tradition. Prayer, giving himself up to Ramanama, fasting as Upvas (dwelling closer to Him) and brahmacharya inform the reading of Gandhi's key texts. His spiritual strivings, his desire to attain Moksha, to see God face to face inform the reading of the quest for Swaraj as capacity to rule one's self. Swaraj as rule over the self is linked to his desire to be a Sthitapragnya, and his reading of the Gita informs the understanding of Brahmacharya as conduct (Charya) that leads one to Truth (Brahma). His Brahmacharya gave him the capacity to hear a small, still voice, which guided not only his spiritual quest but his political judgement.

These essays go over the same texts, same sets of practices again and again. The act of telling the beads is a repetitive act. Repetition, it is hoped, creates a sense of intimacy, proximity. It might also deepen one's understanding.

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I am deeply grateful to the Indian Institute of Advanced Study and its director Professor Peter Ronald deSouza. For the past few years the Institute has been an anchor, intellectual and personal. It has been a place of repose, of joy, and in that way a home. Manas Ray, Shashi Joshi, Sanjay Palshikar, Vijaya Singh, Sudhir Chandra, Geetanjali Shree, Mohinder Singh, Satya, Shomu, Pramod Kumar, Aditi Nath Sarkar, Gangeya Mukherjee, Kavita Panjabi, Vrinda Dalmiya, Anita Cherian, D L Sheth, Ghanshyam Shah, Madhavan Palat, Chetan Singh and Amit Ranjan Basu have been colleagues at the Institute at various points, and unhurried conversations which are possible only in Simla have enriched me. They have also been a source of immense joy. Thank you, all. The Institute has also made it possible, through its winter school on *The Life and Thought of Gandhi*, to engage with some of the most curious and sharp young scholars and they have helped clarify and deepen my understanding of several themes presented here. I wish to thank them all, especially Harmony, Radha, Paras, Parag, Srotoswini, Chirantana and Anju. All this would not have been possible without the constant support of Peter Ronald deSouza, and the warmth of his friendship. Thank you, Peter. At the Institute I wish to acknowledge the constant help from Ashok Sharma and Dr. Debarshi Sen, who exemplify the best traditions of this Institute. Kasturi Boruah, thank you for the careful reading.

In some ways these essays bring together the threads of a process that began one misty morning in Simla, when Suresh Sharma and I began to read the *Hind Swaraj*. The long apprenticeship to the text and conversations with Suresh

Sahib have informed my thinking about Gandhi. Suresh Sahib, I am deeply grateful.

Binita Desai, Shiv Visvanathan and Amit Bhatt have been friends, colleagues and interlocutors for over a decade now. As I leave behind, not forever I hope, the world of formal academia, I wish to thank them for being the compost heap. The worm has turned, as Shiv would say it. Megha, Katyayani and Suhrud, cherish your presence. Amrut Modi and Kinnari Bhatt at the Ashram have been the finest embodiment of the ashramic tradition.

Some of these essays have been published previously. "Reading Gandhi in Two Tongues" was first published in the *Gandhi Marg*, "Hind Swaraj: A Note", in the journal of Vidya Jyoti, "Ramanama" in *Speaking of Gandhi's Death* and "In Search of Unity" in *Cambridge Companion to Gandhi*. I wish to thank all my editors, especially Anthony Parel and Judith Brown.

1

Reading Gandhi in Two Tongues

Gandhi records the deep embarrassment with which he admitted to his Theosophist friends in London that he had read the *Gita* neither in Sanskrit nor in Gujarati. He said; "They talked to me about the Gita. They were reading Sir Edwin Arnold's translation-*The Song Celestial*-and they invited me to read the original with them. I felt ashamed, as I had read the divine poem neither in Sanskrit nor in Gujarati."[1] He read the Gita first in translation and only then in Sanskrit and Gujarati. His acquaintance with the life of Buddha was also through Sir Edwin's biographical poem, *The Light of Asia*. This experience was not unusual. He was reflecting on what was a common experience of many young men of India in the later half of the nineteenth century. Acquaintance with one's own culture, with tradition, history, and religion through the medium of English language and Western education was a common feature of colonial cultural exchange. It was as if one defined oneself through the English eyes and in the English language. However, we are not concerned here with the impact of colonialism on Gandhi or his responses to it. Our primary concern is with the act of translation. In this, we shall have to deal with Gandhi's reading of Western Civilization.

Gandhi was a serious student of languages. He believed that as a leader he ought to communicate with the people in their own languages. Gandhi read and wrote three languages with a certain degree of ease. Gujarati, his mother tongue, English and Hindustani, which he hoped would

become the national language of India. His lifelong quest was to be able to communicate with the people of India in their own tongues and in their own idioms. He therefore made serious attempts to learn various Indian languages. When he was in South Africa, he tried to learn Tamil and Telugu, two languages from South India. In fact, he published his weekly newspaper *Indian Opinion* in Gujarati and English and it often carried certain pages in Tamil and Urdu. He learnt Hindi, Urdu, and Bangla. Even on the morning of his assassination, he had his Bangla lessons. He could sign his name in fourteen Indian languages.

We must also remember that Gandhi was a translator. He translated Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Plato's *Defence of Socrates* into Gujarati. He also rendered into English his most important philosophical work *Hind Swaraj*. Gandhi is also one of the most translated writers of Gujarat. He commissioned translations of his books and writings into English. He supervised and authenticated most translations of his work. After his death, all his writings, speeches, letters, and conversations have been published in 100 volumes of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (CWMG). The *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*[2] are available in three languages, Gujarati, English, and Hindi. Thus, the process of translation of his works went on much after his death and continues even today.

The attempt here will be to understand how Gandhi translated certain key philosophical concepts. This would allow us to understand not only the conceptual categories but also his understanding of the method of translation, its possibilities, and limitations. We will have to use certain Gujarati terms in the process, which I hope to be able to clarify in the closest English equivalent.

Translation fundamentally is a process of communicating meaning across languages, cultures, intellectual traditions, and time. It was no different for Gandhi.

Let us take one example. He was in South Africa when the Transvaal Government proposed changes in the Asiatic Act. The changes made registration of all Asiatics compulsory and demanded that all Asiatics submit impressions of all their fingers, a clause that was seen as humiliating and degrading. Gandhi was a practising Barrister and a very successful one at that. He was trained in Western Law and Jurisprudence; he used English language in courts and in all public discourses in South Africa. It would have been easy for him to understand the implications of the new law in English. His response is fascinating. Describing the process he says; "I took the Transvaal Government Gazette Extraordinary of August 22, 1906 in which the Ordinance was published, home from the office. I went up a hill near the house in the company of a friend and began to translate the draft Ordinance into Gujarati."[3] This is remarkable. A Britain trained barrister practising law in South African colony translates a legal ordinance into his mother tongue in order to comprehend the true significance of it! What does this signify? He knew that the Ordinance was intended for the Asiatic community, particularly the Indians. Although drafted in legal language its implications were to be deeply cultural. The cultural significance of this document could be grasped only in the language of the people it was aimed at. The humiliation inherent in that cold, bureaucratic document could be internalised fully only in his own language. It was only after its translation not only in a linguistic sense but also in a cultural sense that any effective opposition to it could be thought of. Thus, for him, translation was a process by which alien notions could be grasped, their meanings internalised, and cultural responses to it could be offered.

Let us take another example of this process. This example deals with the question of the literary form of Autobiography. Autobiography in India is essentially a nineteenth century form. Its emergence was linked with two processes. One was

the process of Western education. The second was the movement for social and religious reform that challenged the orthodoxy in the second half of the nineteenth century in various regions of India. Western education brought to young university graduates Western notions of aesthetics, ethics, philosophy, and social organisation. It also introduced them to the practice of writing history in the linear western sense. It brought to them the idea that each person had a unique individual identity. The social and religious reform movement gave them the sense that the old order was changing and a new, modern and more progressive social order was about to emerge. They wanted to capture this process in literary forms. Two very powerful literary forms emerged in the nineteenth century India, the novel and the autobiography. In a culture, which had a long tradition of story telling and story writing, novel as a form, did not pose many cultural problems. It was the autobiography, which was deeply troubling as a literary form. Major Indian philosophical systems had been advocating the self-effacement of individual. It was argued that only by the subjugation of the individual ego that the soul could be sublimated and could eventually be one with the Creator. In such a culture autobiography as a story of the self was seen as introducing major cultural transitions. Therefore, almost all individuals who wrote autobiographies in various Indian languages in the nineteenth century wrote about the difficulty of writing about the self in an alien form. They tried to resolve this tension by claiming that by writing the autobiography in their mother tongue they were modernising the literary tradition of their language.

When Gandhi decided to write his autobiography in 1925, he had to face the same dilemma. How was he to speak about his life in a form that was seen as Western? Would he be endorsing the superiority of Western cultural modes by doing so? He narrates his perplexity; “But a God-fearing

friend had his doubts, which he shared with me on my day of silence. 'What has set you on this adventure?' he asked. 'Writing an autobiography is a practice peculiar to the West. I know of nobody in the East having written one, except amongst those who have come under Western influence... Don't you think it would be better not to write anything like an autobiography, at any rate just as yet?'"[4] Gandhi's unnamed friend is advocating a familiar argument. Autobiography is a form peculiar to the colonisers and those Indians who were colonised. Why should Gandhi the most creative opponent of the colonial culture attempt to write one and in the process endorse a Western practice?

Gandhi's response to this criticism is most creative. He responded; "This argument had some effect on me. But it is not my purpose to attempt a real autobiography. I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with truth... But I should certainly like to narrate my experiments in the spiritual field which are known only to myself, and from which I have derived such powers as I possess for working in the political field. If the experiments are really spiritual, then there can be no room for self-praise. They can only add to my humility."[5]

Gandhi is at his creative best in this passage. He distinguishes between what he calls a real autobiography and an autobiography that he would write. A real autobiography is a Western form, a form that can lead to self-praise. But what he wanted to write was not that. His attempt would be to tell a story of his experiments with truth. These experiments were spiritual and moral. A narration of such experiments can only make him and his readers more aware of his limitations and would make him more humble. He takes the Western form of writing about the self and translates it in his own idiom. The Gujarati word for autobiographical writings is *Atmakatha*. The term *Atmakatha* translates as not autobiography but as 'the story of the soul.'

Gandhi here is translating a literary form. We are aware that autobiography in its origins is a Christian practice. In its original sense, it was a story of a soul in search of God. Gandhi by employing autobiography as *Atmakatha* opens up the possibility of speaking of his striving and pinning for self-realization, to see God face to face and to attain *Moksha*. As *Atmakatha* his story of the self would be authentically Indian, as it would speak of his spiritual and moral quest. No one before him or after him in the autobiographical tradition of India would succeed in writing an *Atmakatha*. There is an interesting transposition that happens in the actual act of translating Gandhi's autobiography from Gujarati into English.[6] In the original Gujarati, the main title of the story is *Satya Na Prayogo*, which literally means experiments with truth. The word *Atmakatha* appears as a subtitle. It signifies two things. One, that it is the story of experiments that is primary. Two, it has an autobiographical context as these experiments were done by an individual. The title thus matches with what Gandhi's original intention was. In the English translation, the process is reversed. *An Autobiography* becomes the main title while *Experiments with Truth* is rendered as a subtitle. It indicates not a failure of translation, but a much deeper cultural failure. It indicates the difficulty of speaking about the soul in an alien tongue.

Gandhi is also doing another act of translation in this process. The first act of translation was the transformation of the literary form itself. The second act of translation is that of the method. Gandhi calls it experiments with truth. Let us focus on the word experiments first. Experiment is a method that is deeply associated with Western science. As a method, experiment presupposes two aspects. One is the distance between the subject and the object or between the observer and the observed. Only when this separation between the subject and the object is attained science emerges. This makes science value free and therefore

universal. The second is dependent upon the first. An experiment, which is value free and where the distance between the subject and the object is attained leads to truth or a fact that can be verified. Thus, an experiment is a method of arriving at truth. Experiments are not about truth, they lead to what we regard as truth.

Gandhi chooses to call his method experiments; even in Gujarati, he uses the term *Prayogo*, which denotes experimentation. This choice of term is very significant. He had another term available from the spiritual tradition. This term is *Sadhana*. Sadhana is a difficult term to translate into English. It has been variously translated as spiritual practices, as penance and as striving. But Gandhi consciously used the term Prayogo, experiments. He explains why the term Prayogo was chosen over Sadhana in the following way. "There are some things which are known only to oneself and one's maker. They are clearly incommunicable. The experiments that I am about to relate are not such."[7] He is saying that if his striving were such that it was communicable only to him and to his God they would be Sadhana. But the experiments that he was referring to were not such. He in fact refers to the scientific method. He says; "I claim from them nothing more than does a scientist who, though he conducts his experiments with the utmost accuracy, forethought, and minuteness, never claims any finality about his conclusions, but keeps an open mind regarding them. I have gone through deep self-introspection, searched myself through and through, and examined and analysed every psychological situation... For me they appear to be absolutely correct, and seem for the time being to be final."[8]

Thus, Gandhi applies the Western scientific methods to his spiritual experiments. But he introduces a major transformation in the method. The scientific method necessarily implies division between the subject and the object to arrive at truth. But what Gandhi requires is the

scientific method without the separation. So he becomes both the subject and the object in search for truth. Thus, he takes the Western scientific method and turns it into a spiritual practice by destroying the opposition between subject and object.

Gandhi, as a translator, appears to be operating at various levels. He is doing translation to derive meaning, to alter a literary form and even to transform a method of inquiry. Now let us take an example where he seems to be suggesting the non-translatability of an intellectual discipline. The case that we shall take is that of history.

While Gandhi was imprisoned at the Yeravda prison, he decided to write a history. This was to be an account of the Satyagraha in South Africa. He wrote this account in Gujarati while in jail and called it *Dakshin Africa Na Satyagraha No Itihas*. Its exact translation in English would have to be "A History of Satyagraha in South Africa." This book was immediately translated into English by his close associate Valji Govindji Desai. This translation was read, verified, and authenticated by Gandhi. The term history itself was omitted from the title of the book. Why? It was clearly not an oversight. It was a deliberate choice. The title of the book in English reads *Satyagraha in South Africa*. To understand the omission of the term history we will have to understand the meaning that he attached to two terms; the Gujarati term *Itihas* and the English term History. Gandhi in fact saw these two as separate. Itihas was not History for him. In his book, the *Hind Swaraj* there is a fascinating discussion about the historical evidence of what he calls soul-force or Satyagraha. His argument was that soul-force was the basis of the world. Brute-force was an aberration and a break in the even flow of soul-force. It is here that he makes a fundamental difference between Itihas and History. He says that Itihas means; "It so happened."[9] On the other hand, for him history means the doings of kings and emperors. He says; "History,

as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world, and so there is a proverb among Englishmen that a nation which has no history, that is no wars, is a happy nation. How kings played, how they became enemies of one another is found accurately recorded in history."[10] Thus, he makes a crucial distinction between Itihas and history. Itihas is for him a record of things as they happened. History, on the other hand, is a record of wars between kings and emperors. He therefore says that it is impossible for history to record instances of the use of Satyagraha or soul-force. He describes it beautifully; he says, "You cannot expect silver-ore in a tin mine."[11] He thus could use the word Itihas in the Gujarati title of the book, but not in English as history was not for him a translation of the term Itihas. Itihas and history were two very different enterprises for him. History could not have recorded the events, which dealt with the advent and the use of soul-force. This shows that for Gandhi translation is a philosophical problem. He was not willing to employ two terms as convertible terms, even if their usage had become customary as for him they represented two divergent traditions.

Let us take another example of this process. If there was a book that altered the course of his life in a definitive way, it was John Ruskin's *Unto This Last*. In the autobiography, he has described how he came under the 'magic spell of the book.' He read this book while on a train journey from Johannesburg to Durban. He has described the impact of the book in the autobiography. "The book was impossible to lay aside, once I had begun to read it. It gripped me. Johannesburg to Durban was a twenty-four hours' journey. The train reached there in the evening. I could not get any sleep that night. I was determined to change my life in accordance with the ideals of the book."[12] This book brought about 'instantaneous and practical' transformations in his life. He decided to move to a farm, establish a community

there, and live by bread-labour. Not everyone would have been similarly influenced. Gandhi admits that the book by Ruskin reflected some of his own deepest convictions and hence it touched him. He has said this beautifully; "A poet is one who can call forth the good latent in the human breast. Poets do not influence all alike, for everyone is not evolved in an equal measure."[13] Gandhi also decided to translate the book into Gujarati. It is not a translation in the usual sense of the term. He rendered into Gujarati a paraphrase of the book. Through the Gujarati paraphrase, he wanted to convey three principles that he had gleaned from the book. These were:

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right to earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.[14]

In the preface of the translation, he clarifies the purpose further. He wished to present a point of view counter to the utilitarian perspective that it was man's duty to promote the happiness of the greatest numbers. Happiness in this context was taken to be material happiness and economic prosperity. It was also held that if in pursuit of this happiness any moral laws were violated, it does not matter much. India too was in grip of such ideas, which according to Gandhi was the cause of its ruin. He says; "We in India are much given nowadays to imitation of the West. We do grant that it is necessary to imitate the West in certain respects. At the same time there is no doubt that many western ideas are wrong."[15] Gandhi wanted to establish with the help of Ruskin's book that quest for material and physical happiness for the majority has no

sanction from the divine law. He agreed with Ruskin that one could not pursue happiness in violation of the moral law. Gandhi said in the preface, "The summary of his work which we offer here is not really a translation. If we translated it, the common reader might be unable to follow some of the Biblical allusions, etc. We present therefore only the substance of Ruskin's work. We do not even explain what the title of the book means, for it be understood only by a person who has read the Bible in English."[16] The title of Ruskin's book, *Unto This Last* is derived from Christ's parable of the Vineyard; where a man paid equal wages to all labourers regardless of the time they had spent working in his vineyard. When he was asked, he replied; "I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.' (Mathew xx.1-14) The meaning that both Ruskin and Gandhi derived from this parable was that the relationship between the employer and the employee should not be one of profit or advantage but of justice. Gandhi's transposition of this principle in Gujarati is a sign of his philosophical depth. The phrase Unto This Last would have been translated in Gujarati as *Antyodaya* or the welfare of the last person. Gandhi does not translate it as Antyodaya but as *Sarvodaya*. Sarvodaya means 'welfare of all.' This was the central idea of Gandhi's economic thinking. He believed that a just social order required that each benefit equally. This was possible, he argued, only when people followed moral laws. Observance of morality in this case meant that human beings limit their material wants. If each were to pursue the path of material gain without the consideration of fellow beings, it could result in exploitation and an unjust system. Gandhi's thinking not only influenced the translation of the title as Sarvodaya but other sections also. Ruskin's first chapter is called the 'Roots of Honour'; Gandhi translated it as the 'Roots of Truth.' This again, is based on his philosophy that truth was the foundation of human life. If the principle quest of a human being were truth, it would automatically lead him to a moral path.

We find a similar pattern in his translation of Plato's *Defence of Socrates*. It is significant that Gandhi was translating Ruskin and the *Defence of Socrates* almost simultaneously.[17] The question that we must ask is, why was he doing these translations in this period? Gandhi was engaged in fighting injustice in South Africa. In September of 1906, he had found a new method of protest. This method was called Satyagraha (we will deal with the history of this word and Gandhi's search for its English equivalent a little later); it involved acceptance of suffering for the sake of truth. Gandhi had to convince the Indian community in South Africa, which consisted largely of traders and indentured labour, that it was their duty to undergo suffering even at the cost of their life for the sake of truth and justice. Gandhi was looking for historical figures that had so sacrificed their lives for the sake of truth. Socrates was a natural choice. Gandhi translated – again it was a paraphrase – of Plato's *Defence of Socrates*- for the readers of the *Indian Opinion*. We find the pattern repeating itself. Gandhi called it 'Story of a Soldier of Truth.' Socrates is presented here as someone who laid down his life for truth. In fact, Gandhi calls him a Satyagrahi. He wrote; "We must learn to live and die like Socrates. He was, moreover, a great Satyagrahi."[18] He believed that if people out of fear of death or dishonour fail to either realize or examine their shortcomings, India and Indians could never be free. India will have to cleanse itself and emerge pure. The only path of purity for Gandhi was to sacrifice the self. He urges the readers to imbibe the deep sacrifice of Socrates. "We argued thus and saw in the words of a great soul like Socrates the qualities of an elixir. We wanted our readers, therefore, to imbibe a deep draught of it, so that they might be able to fight—and to help others fight the disease. It is with this objective in mind that we summarize Socrates' speech."[19]

Thus, Gandhi's translations or paraphrases of Western

texts were largely motivated not by literary but philosophical and pedagogic considerations. It was his way of engaging with those aspects of Western philosophical traditions, which echoed his own thoughts.

But this process was not one sided. He was equally concerned with reaching out to the West. He knew that he was engaged not only in a political dialogue with the West but a cultural and a civilizational dialogue as well. Let us elaborate this point.

Gandhi believed that India was subjugated not by the British political power but primarily by modern Western civilization. The modern Western Civilization was for him characterised by a desire to increase bodily comfort and a search of meaning and fulfilment in physical pursuits. He said; "Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life."[20] This civilization for him was irreligious. He called it a Satanic Civilization and Black Age. A true civilization for him was that mode of conduct, which points to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality were convertible terms. Observance of morality was possible only when we attain mastery over our minds and passions. It is by observing morality that we know our selves. Thus, civilization for him opens up the possibility of knowing ourselves.

The other philosophical notion important to understand Gandhi was what he calls the relationship between the means and the ends. He argued that means and ends were inviolably linked with each other. He also argued that it was not sufficient to have ends that were good and moral; the means to that end had also to be equally moral and pure. His lifelong search was to find such moral means. The question before him was how to attain Swaraj, self-rule and what means to employ for that. Many had argued in favour of armed opposition to the British. This was unacceptable to him. He believed that armed opposition or what he described as brute

force were peculiar to the West. If India were to employ such means, what it would get would be Western civilization without the British. If Indian civilization was moral, the means adopted had to be moral. In South Africa, he invented a method that came to be known as Satyagraha. Before we go on to the history of the term let us consider what it means. Satyagraha is a method of securing rights by self-suffering. When I refuse to do something that is repugnant to my conscience and accept punishment for disobedience I employ Satyagraha.

This was a new method. It required a word or a term that would capture its essence. Gandhi himself could not come up with the name. When he was in South Africa, he announced a competition for the readers of his weekly the *Indian Opinion* and sought suggestions. His close associate and relative Maganlal Gandhi came up with a term *Sadagraha*. This term was composed of two terms *Sad*, meaning good or virtuous and *Agraha*, meaning insistence. Thus, the term Sadagraha meant insistence for the good and the virtuous. Gandhi turned Sadagraha into Satyagraha, combining *Sat*, that is Truth and *Agraha*. In the initial phase, Gandhi appeared uncertain about the efficacy and resonance of the term. He was also concerned about its translatability in English. He used four terms as mutually convertible terms. These were Satyagraha, Atmabal that is soul-force, *Dayabal* that is love-force and the English term passive resistance. Sometimes, he and others also used a term associated with Henry David Thoreau. The most peculiar term here is Dayabal or what he called love-force. He is employing the Christian idea of love and compassion and translating that into Gujarati as Daya. Daya in Gujarati and Sanskrit means compassion, Love would be translated as *Prem*. Gandhi instead of translating love as Prem translates it as Daya and expands the meaning of the Gujarati phrase Daya.

His struggle with the term Passive Resistance is indicative

of his deep philosophical anxiety to communicate the true essence of a term. He and others around him used the term passive resistance to denote Satyagraha in the initial years. In fact, Gandhi himself used the term passive resistance in his English translation of *Hind Swaraj*. But soon, he began to be dissatisfied and disenchanted with the term passive resistance. He believed that passive resistance was both historically and philosophically different from Satyagraha. He became aware of the problem when a newspaper in Johannesburg described passive resistance as a weapon of the weak. The newspaper wrote; "The Transvaal Indians have had recourse to passive resistance when all other means of securing redress proved to be of no avail. They do not enjoy the franchise. Numerically, they are only few. They are weak and have no arms. Therefore they have taken recourse to passive resistance which is a weapon of the weak."[21]

Gandhi says that he was taken by surprise by this description. He soon realised the implications of the term passive resistance. It implied that if the Indians were numerically stronger, had franchise and arms, they would have taken recourse to some other method and not opted for the 'weapon of the weak.' This forced Gandhi to clarify the distinction between passive resistance and soul-force or Satyagraha. As Gandhi went into the historical incidents associated with passive resistance, the difference between Satyagraha and passive resistance became sharper. He realised that, in the English social and political history, passive resistance was associated with the opposition of numerically weaker and disenfranchised people. Gandhi also realised that in the recent past, non-conformist Christians and women as part of the suffragette movement, had employed passive resistance. He also realised that the non-conformists and the suffragists differed on the question of the use of physical force. The non-conformist would eschew the use of force even if it was a practical proposition, while the suffragists

were not averse to the use of certain forms of physical force.

Gandhi was absolutely certain that there was no place for brute force in the movement of the Indian people. No matter how much the Indians suffered, they would never use physical force. Passive resistance implied that when Indians gained in strength and learnt to use arms they would adopt more violent methods of protest. In Gandhi's conception of Satyagraha there was not the slightest possibility of the use of arms. He said; "Satyagraha is soul force pure and simple, and whenever and to whatever extent there is room for the use of arms or physical force or brute force, there and to that extent is there so much less possibility for soul force."[22] Gandhi realised that passive resistance and Satyagraha were antagonistic forces. Passive resistance offered the possibility of the use of arms, it could also be offered along with the use of arms. Satyagraha was an act of love according to Gandhi. It could even be offered against the nearest and the dearest but passive resistance could not. Passive resistance did not preclude the possibility to harassing the other party. "While in Satyagraha there is not the remotest idea of injuring the opponent. Satyagraha postulates the conquest of the adversary by suffering in one's own person."[23] Gandhi was so convinced of the difference between passive resistance and Satyagraha that he challenged the widely held belief that Jesus Christ was the prince of passive resisters. He said; "Jesus Christ indeed has been acclaimed as the prince of passive resisters but I submit in that case passive resistance must mean Satyagraha and Satyagraha alone."[24] Thus, Gandhi decided to use the term Satyagraha both in English and in Gujarati and abandoned the use of the term passive resistance.

Another term that posed such similar philosophical problems was the idea of Swaraj. In the Indian political and social discourse, the term Swaraj was used to denote three overlapping notions. These notions were Home Rule,

Independence, and Freedom. It had been used in this sense before Gandhi and even after Gandhi came to dominate the Indian national movement. For Gandhi, Swaraj was none of these. Home Rule meant that Indians should rule in place of the British. Independence was used in the sense of political transfer of power, while freedom implied freedom from slavery. For Gandhi, Swaraj was a much wider notion. In his conception, it had limited political scope. He defined Swaraj as; "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves."[25] To rule one's self meant to have control over the mind and passions, to lead a moral, duty bound life. Swaraj in this sense was a means of self-realisation. If Swaraj was so understood it was not an event or a fact. Independence and Home Rule were events. Freedom entailed a pre supposition of the state of slavery. It was not political slavery that Gandhi was perturbed by. In his conception, Indian was being ground under not the British rule but the modern Western civilization. Those Indians, who were not influenced by this civilization were free. He said; "The whole of India is not touched. Those alone who have been affected by western civilization have become enslaved."[26] The moment those who have become enslaved become free of the influence of the Western civilization, India would become free. He faced this difficulty while translating the *Hind Swaraj* into English. He translated the title as *Indian Home Rule*. It was a poor substitute for Swaraj. In fact, in the book he had argued against the desire to have mere Home Rule. Gandhi quickly abandoned the idea of Home Rule. Throughout the translation, he stayed with the term Swaraj in English. The fact that independence, freedom and home rule were not Swaraj for him is also borne out by the fact that after India became independent in 1947, Gandhi called upon the people of India to strive towards real Swaraj and advised that the Indian National Congress too strive for Swaraj.

It was not that Gandhi had philosophical dilemmas

translating Indian terms in English. He faced similar difficulties rendering into Gujarati certain key notions of the Western discourse. The following examples illustrate this point. In the *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi had to convey four different notions. These were civilization, modern civilization, reform, and progress. These were notions peculiar to his understanding of the Western civilization. Gandhi found it extremely difficult to convey these notions in Gujarati. In the Gujarati original, he used only one term to convey these separate ideas. The term that he used was *Sudhar* or *Sudharo*. The term Sudhar had two meanings in Gujarati. Sudhar means the good path. Sudharo was also used to denote a process of reform. In this usage also, the idea of adopting the good or the right path were inherent. Despite this, Gandhi used the term Sudharo in all of the above senses. It is in the English translation that the specific sense in which the term Sudhar was used came to be illuminated.

Gandhi had similar difficulty in rendering into English another concept that was central to his life and thought. This was the term *Ahimsa*. Ahimsa is the absence of Himsa, absence of violence and hence Ahimsa was always rendered into English as non-violence. Ahimsa was for Gandhi both a way of life and a means integral to his method of Satyagraha. He had no difficulty in translating Ahimsa as non-violence in the sense of a method. But Ahimsa as a way of life, as a philosophic notion that resonated with the teachings of all major religions of the world, posed certain difficulties. Here Ahimsa could not be used in the narrow sense of non-killing. Ahimsa had to be a positive virtue and not a negative attribute. Gandhi finally resolved the problem by resorting to the Christian term Love. He often translated Ahimsa as love. He used a different approach while dealing with another practice that was central to his life. This was the idea of *brahmacharya*. Brahmacharya has been translated as either celibacy or chastity. We know that celibacy and chastity are

not exact equivalent terms. Gandhi also rendered Brahmacharya in this limited sense of leading a celibate life. Gandhi's own practice and thinking about brahmacharya went beyond the notion of celibacy, albeit he continued to emphasise the aspect of celibacy. He came to regard brahmacharya as a mode of knowing the self or realising the truth. As his own thought about brahmacharya became more nuanced, Gandhi began to find celibacy a very limited term. To resolve this difficulty, Gandhi went to the root of the term brahmacharya. *Charya* means conduct. *Brahma* means the ultimate reality or Truth. In its etymological sense, brahmacharya is the conduct adopted in search of truth. Its philosophical implications were immense. Brahmacharya in the sense of celibacy meant only sexual control and abstinence, while at its root it meant conduct that leads to self-realization.

Thus, Gandhi had a complex relationship with language and translation. Language had to convey the philosophical moorings of notions. If language in the act of translation failed to capture the true essence of thought, Gandhi was quick to modify and even abandon the exercise. In this sense, Gandhi was truly a bilingual thinker. Perhaps the best way to read him is to do so simultaneously in two languages.

2

Reading *Hind Swarajya/Swaraj* in two languages[27]

Hind Swaraj or *Hind Swarajya* as originally titled was written in Gujarati.[28] This was only major work that Gandhi himself chose to translate into English.

Although written in Gujarati it bears marks of a bilingual text. And it is this bilingualism of *Hind Swaraj* that I wish to explore through this essay. Bilingualism is not just the ability to think and express oneself in two languages. The bilingualism that I wish to suggest indicates simultaneity. It suggests a process where an idea is conceived and thought in one language and expressed in another, where it becomes possible to speak of a concept, a notion, alien to one linguistic/semantic universe through another tongue. I propose that *Hind Swaraj* is a bilingual text in this sense.

Let us first consider the curious case of the title itself. Gandhi's handwritten manuscript as also the first *Indian Opinion* edition consistently used the term *Rajya*; it is *Hind Swarajya* and not *Hind Swaraj*. The term *Rajya* is used in the text as well; for example, chapter 4 is *Swarajya te shu?* And not *Swaraj te shu?* But during the English translation done soon after and published on 20 March 1910, the term *Rajya* was substituted by *Raj;* and this usage was standardised in subsequent Gujarati editions; beginning with the 1914 edition.

The reason for this change becomes clear if we examine the English rendering. The English rendering was published under the title *Indian Home Rule.*[29] The term *Swarajya/Swaraj*

was rendered as *Home Rule* in the English edition in the initial chapters. For example, in chapter 1 the term *Swarajya/ Swaraj* occurs twenty times. In every instance save one, the term has been rendered as Home Rule.[30] Once it has been rendered as self-government, while in one instance, it has been rendered as 'Home-or self-rule.' A semantic shift is introduced in chapter 4, where all seven usages of the term *Swarajya/Swaraj* have been rendered as *Swaraj* in the English edition. This shift became necessary, as Gandhi wanted to introduce a basic semantic difference between the term Home Rule and Swaraj as conceived by him. The term Home Rule had both a pre-history and an identifiable political organisation and persons who aspired after Home Rule. *Swaraj,* as Gandhi thought, of it was constituted by a different philosophical ground. This difference was clearly articulated by Gandhi in Chapter 14. He says that hitherto the reader and the editor had been considering the conditions of freeing India 'indirectly', but would now do so 'directly.' The term directly is an inadequate rendering of the Gujarati term *swa-rupe*, in its 'intrinsic form.' The difference between Home Rule and *Swaraj* for Gandhi is of this intrinsic form. Therefore, Gandhi needed two terms Home Rule and *Swaraj* to speak of the basic differences between two visions and two methods of obtaining them.

The term *Swaraj* occurs fifty-six times in the Gujarati text. The English rendering alternates between Home Rule and Swaraj, the choice being guided by the context of usage and the distance or proximity that he wished to suggest with his own vision.[31] He even qualified the usage by introducing terms such as 'true nature' and 'our goal' to mark the distance.

This distance between Home Rule and *Swaraj* is latent in the Gujarati version. Gandhi did not distinguish between Home Rule and Swaraj in such a shared sense wherever he continued to use *Swaraj* to mean both home rule and *Swaraj*

in its 'intrinsic form.' But the difference was present before him even while he wrote the Gujarati *Hind Swaraj*. The change from *Rajya* to *Raj* is indicative of that. The term *Rajya*, both in Sanskrit and in Gujarati, has a sense of territoriality. *Rajya* is rendered as kingdom, country, or realm. *Raj* on the other hand suggests 'to reign,' 'to rule over.' The idea of reigning in the sense to 'rule ourselves' is basic to Gandhi's idea of *Swaraj*. "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves." The change from *Rajya* to *Raj* was necessary. In Gujarati, he needed to distinguish between two notions of rule, one that denoted territoriality and the other, which suggested rule over oneself. The term *Rajya* did not allow the second and more primary sense to be foregrounded. The nature of this imperative becomes clear when we read the two texts together where the idea of self-rule, self-control and possibility of knowing oneself are clearly marked. It is for this reason that he rendered *Swaraj* as 'rule himself.'

The Gujarati text has retained the term *Swarajya* in two instances; both in chapter twenty. In both instances, it occurs with its opposite *Para Rajya*, foreign rule and has been rendered as Home Rule in English.

There is another possibility, however speculative, which should be mentioned. The term *Hindvi Swarajya* is closely identified with the writings of V. D. Savarkar. *Hind Swarajya* was far too close for comfort to Savarkar's notion of a '*Hindu Pad Padshahi*.' *Hind Swaraj* allowed Gandhi to distance himself even more from Savarkar's vision and his usage.[32]

Far more instructive is the notion that forms the core of *Hind Swaraj*, the idea of *Sudhar*. *Sudhar* in Gujarati has a lineage. Before Gandhi, the term *Sudhar* was used largely to indicate the idea and process of social and religious reform. The term *Sudhar* in the sense of reform did include the idea that *Su-dhar* was the good path, the righteous path. And it is in the sense of *Su-dhar* being the good path that

Sudharo could be equated with 'good conduct.' But in the history of the term *Sudharo* was not indicative of 'that mode of conduct that points out to man the path of duty,' where 'performance of duty and observance of morality' become 'convertible terms,' which allow us to 'attain mastery over our mind and passion' and 'so doing, we know ourselves." *Sudharo* that makes possible self-knowledge and self-rule are unique to Gandhi. Even after one century of the publication of *Hind Swaraj,* the term *Sudharo* is used in Gujarati primarily in the 19th Century sense of reform.

Let us examine this usage more closely. The term *Sudhar/ Sudharo* occurs ninety-six times in the Gujarati text[33], in fact more than either the term *Vachak* (reader) or *Adhipati* (editor). It is only when we read the text bilingually that we begin to understand the multiple meanings that Gandhi imbued the term with. In the English rendering *Sudhar/ Sudharo* has been conceived as civilisation, modern civilisation, European civilisation, ancient civilisation, Indian civilisation, reform, progress, and even ephemeral civilisation. The term thus has been conceived and rendered in eight distinct senses. It is clear that Gandhi thought through these distinct terms in English and rendered them into Gujarati through the generic usage *Sudharo.* The choice of the term *Sudharo* is somewhat perplexing. Gandhi at the time of writing *Hind Swaraj* was aware of the 19th century reform movement in Gujarat and Gujarati. He had read the works of Narmad, Manibhai Nabhubhai and Govardhanram Tripathi.[34] He had read Mahipatram Rupram Mehta and Karsandas Mulji's accounts of the English life. He was aware of the contributions of Parsi reformers like Beharamji Malabari. Gandhi of 1909 did not hold either the reformist practices or the lives of the reformers in good esteem; one suspects that it was more the lives of the reformers that perturbed him more than their writings; although his first response when Harilal left home was, "This is the outcome of reading *Sarasvatichandra.*"

He was of course referring to Govardhanram Tripathi's canonical four-part novel where its graduate hero, deeply disappointed with his father, leaves home on a journey of self-discovery.

Gandhi had a choice of two other and more prevalent usages to indicate civilisation. These are *sabhyata* and *sanskriti*. In fact, when Gandhi writes in the English rendering that 'the Gujarati equivalent for civilisation means 'good conduct',' he is referring to *sabhyata* rather than *sudharo*. The Gujarati lexicon *BhagvadGoMandal* in fact says that the equivalent of *sanskriti* means civilisation. Gandhi may not have preferred a notion of civilisation that is intrinsically tied to Sanskrit and all the modes of thought and practices that were articulated through that language. But this still does not explain the choice of the term *Sudhar*.

Gandhi was clearly invoking *Sudhar* in two senses, which have been latent in Gujarati. *Su-dhar* not just as good path, but one that holds, bears; from the Sanskrit root *dhri, dharayati*. One, which holds and bears human society, is *Sudhar* and only such *Sudhar* could point out to man the path of duty and open the possibility of self-knowledge. *Sudhar* is civilisation in this sense. Secondly, *Sudhar* unlike the two other terms has a sense of movement. *Sudhar* according to *BhagvadGoMandal* suggests a movement towards virtue. It entails a choice in favour of the good and active shunning of all that is undesirable. It is this active, choice-enabling, virtue-enhancing possibility of *Sudhar* that Gandhi desired from civilisation.

Moreover, *Sudhar* in the more prevalent usage could also suggest reform, progress, contemporariness, change and influence of the Modern West, all the other senses which are present in the English rendering.

There are instances in the Gujarati text where Gandhi has qualified the term *Sudharo*. The term modern civilisation of the English text occurs in three distinct ways in the

Gujarati text; as *Sudharo*, as *aaj-kal no Sudharo* and as *adhunik Sudharo*. The term *aaj-kal* in Gujarati literally means today and tomorrow. It is used to indicate contemporary and therefore transient nature of things; the term modern lacks this pronounced sense of transience. Interestingly, the term *adhunik* which occurs only twice in the Gujarati text also has a sense of transience, of lack of permanence in Gujarati. Narmad in his *Narma-Kosha* explained *adhunika*, that which is of present moment as *Na Take Tevu* (that which will not last, ephemeral).[35] By describing civilisation as *adhunik Sudharo* Gandhi wished to emphasise not so much its modernity but the transient nature of that passes under the name civilisation. Therefore Gandhi declared that "This civilisation is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed." In the Gujarati text he emphasised the self –destructive nature of modern civilisation by stating that "Te Sudharo nashkarak ane nashvant che." (This civilisation is destructive and certain to be destroyed.) This added emphasis is absent in the English text. In contemporary Gujarati, both *Sudharo* as civilisation and *adhunik* as ephemeral have become recessive, we speak of *adhunik* in the sense of *navin* and hence modern.

In the Gujarati text, the term *Kudhar/Kudharo* (the wrong path) creates a play between *Sudhar* and *Kudhar*. The term occurs nine times in the Gujarati text, which has been rendered in English as 'civilisation only in name,' 'civilisation as a disease,' and 'reverse of civilisation.' In fact, six out of nine times Gandhi did not render the term *Kudhar* in the English text. This is true of many of the idiomatic Gujarati phrases. Gandhi either does not render them in English, or chooses to provide a literal translation. He does not resort to equivalent idiomatic usages in English. For example, the Gujarati idiom "*Miya ne Mahadev ne Na Bane*" (Miya and Mahadev will always quarrel.) is used to frame the argument about Hindu-Muslim relations and the '*had ver*' (inborn

enmity) between the two communities. This idiom is used twice in the Gujarati text. Gandhi chose not to render it in English at all. Once he rendered it as "Our very proverbs prove it," and in the second instance as "The proverbs you have quoted." While in case of '*Jenu man changa che tene gher bethe ganga che*," Gandhi provided a literal translation: "those whose hearts were aglow with righteousness have the Ganges in their own home."[36]

Gandhi does something similar with the English phrases that occur in the Gujarati text.[37] In most instances they are appear in their English usage; but in some crucial cases, Gandhi used the native, vernacular expressions of English terms; like *Korato* (for courts) or *dactaro* (for doctors). This practice was not without intent. Gandhi used these vernacular expressions to distinguish between those institutions and practices, which were rooted in Indian civilisation from those which came as part of the modern West. For instance, in the Gujarati text he consistently used the terms *tabib, hakim* and *vaidya* to distinguish Indian healing systems and practitioners from *dactaro* who were trained in modern European medicine. This difference is obliterated in the English text, except in two cases; once he employed the term *vaidya* in the English text and once he used the expression 'honest physician' to describe English doctors who did not encourage a free play of passions. Similarly, the Gujarati text employs both *adalat* and *Korato*; the former denoting the Indian justice delivery system and the later where Barristers practiced.

In case of the terms 'extremists' and 'moderates', Gandhi chose to explicate the terms in non-political idioms; *dhima* (slow), *utavala* (impatient), *bikan* (timid) and *himatvala* (bold). Curiously, this explanation found its way into the English text as well. Where cultural practices, which could approximate the English phrase, were available, Gandhi used both terms in Gujarati. He explained 'segregation' through

the notion of ritual and in some cases temporary impurity, *sutak*. He invoked the outlaws of Saurahstra to explain Guerrilla warfare: *baharvatiya* (literally, those who walk away). In case of the term 'boycott', he invoked much deeper cultural fears by describing it in terms of untouchability. The term *abhadchet* suggested that British clothe and machine made things had not only to be shunned but they were defiling.

In what would be one of the most creative transpositions, Gandhi coined the phrase *daya bal* in Gujarati to capture the Christian sense of the active and transformative power of love, compassion and pity.

This kind of inter-textuality between Gujarati and the English text is most evident in case of four cognate terms: *daru-golo, hathiyar bal, top bal* and *mara mari*. An entire range of fluid and inter-changeable meanings is attributed to these four terms in the English text. *Daru-golo* is rendered as brute-force, arms and ammunitions, gunpowder and use of force. The term brute-force, a force that is beastly has been employed to denote all those forces that oppose soul-force. Apart from *daru-golo,* the term brute-force has been used for *hathiyar bal* (force of arms), *top bal* (force of canons), *sharir bal* (body-force) and *mara mari* (violence). Both the act of violence and the instrumentality of violence are sought to be conveyed through these terms.

Thus, in many of its central concerns, *Hind Swaraj* is a bilingual text; it was thought simultaneously in two linguistic frames and rendered in two languages. It needs to be read in both the languages as two original texts and not one as original and the other a derivative, translated text.

APPENDIX 1

Swaraj and its location within the text

Chapter		Occurrence of the term	English rendering
I	The Congress and its officials	20	1, self-government 1, Home-or self-rule 18 Home Rule
II	The Partition of Bengal	2	Home Rule
III	Discontent and Unrest	No usage	
IV	What is Swaraj?	7	Swaraj
V	The condition of England	1	Government
VI	Civilisation	No usage	
VII	Why was India lost?	1	True nature of Swaraj
VIII	The condition of India	1	Home Rule
IX	The condition of India (cont.): railways	No usage	
X	The condition of India (cont.): the Hindus and the Mahomedans	No usage	
XI	The condition of India (cont.): lawyers	No usage	
XII	The condition of India (cont.): doctors	No usage	
XIII	What is true civilisation?	2	1, True Home Rule 1, Home Rule
XIV	How can India become free?	6	Swaraj
XV	Italy and India	1	Rule himself

XVI	Brute Force	No usage	
XVII	Passive resistance	3	1, Self-rule or Home-rule 1, real home-rule 1, not rendered in English
XVIII	Education	No usage	
XIX	Machinery	No usage	
XX	Conclusion	12	5, Home-rule 1, It 1, True nature of Home-rule 1, our goal 1, Indian Home-rule of my conception 2, Swaraj1, self-rule or self-control

APPENDIX 2

SUDHAR/SUDHARO

Chapter	usage of the term	English rendering
Introduction	*Sudhara Ni Dhun*	civilisation
I The Congress and its officials	No usage	
II The Partition of Bengal	No usage	
III Discontent and Unrest	No usage	
IV What is Swaraj?	No usage	
V The condition of England	*Aaj kal no sudharo*	Modern civilisation
	Te sudharo kudharo che.	Civilisation only in name
VI Civilisation	*Sudhara nu darshan*	Civilisation
	Sudhara ni vat	Civilisation
	Sudharo te kudharo che.	Not rendered.
	Sudhara ni same thava na mandalo	Societies to cure civilisation
	Sudharo: Tena karan ane teni dava	Civilisation: Its cause and cure
	Sudharo	It
	Sudhara ma mohai padela manaso	Intoxicated by modern civilisation
	Sudharavash manas ni dasha	Labouring under the bane of civilisation
	Sudhara na himayati	Defenders of modern civilisation
	Sudharo	Civilisation
	Sudhara nikhari olakh	Civilisation
	Sudhara ni nishani	Its true test
	Sudhara ni nishani	Its true test
	Sudhareli dasha	Emblem of civilisation
	Sudhara ni nishani	Not rendered
	Sudhara ni nishani	Civilisation
	Sudhara ni toch	Height of civilisation
	Sudhara ni toch	Not rendered
	Sudharo vadhato jaya	As men progress
	Sudhara ni nishani	This is civilisation
	Sudhara ni nishani	This is civilisation
	Sudhara ni nishani	This is civilisation

	Sudhara ni khari nishani	Test of Civilisation
	Sudharo	Not rendered
	Sudhara na himayati	*Its votaries*
	Sudharo shodhe che	Civilisation
	Sudharo avo che	Civilisation
	Sudhara ni hadfet	Civilisation
	Sudharo adharma che	Civilisation is irreligious
	Sudhara no abehub chitar	Adequate conception of it
	Sudhara thi Angrez praja ma sado	It is eating into vitals
	Sudharo Nashkarak ane nashvant	Not rendered
	Sudharo asadhya rog nathi	Civilisation is not an incurable diesase
VII Why was India lost?	*Sudhara vishe bolya*	About civilisation
	Sudharo e kudharo che, rog che	Civilisation is a disease
	Sudhara ma padela	If it has attacked
VIII The condition of India	*Aaj-kal na Sudhara*	modern civilisation
	Sudhara na dukh	hardships of civilisation
	Sudhara ni holi	Fire of civilisation
	Sudharo te under ni gem foli khy che	Civilisation is like a mouse
IX The condition of India (cont.): railways	*Sudhara nu samajavu*	Civilisation is a disease
X The condition of India (cont.): the Hindus and the Mahomedans	No Usage	
XI The condition of India (cont.): lawyers	No Usage	
XII The condition of India (cont.): doctors	*Paschim na Sudharako*	Western Writers

XIII What is true civilisation?	*Kharo Sudharo shu?*	What is true civilisation?
	Sudharo kone kahevo?	Civilisation
	Je sudharo Hindustane batavyo	Civilisation India has shown
	Sudharo e vartan	Civilisation is that mode of conduct
	Su atele saro dharo	Good conduct
	Sudhara nu Lakshan	Symbol of civilisation
	Sudharo	Ancient civilisation
	Sudhara chata	In spite of it
	Adhunik sudhara ni Nishani	Emblems of modern civilisation
	Sudhara Na Himayati	Its votaries
	Hind no Sudharo	Indian civilisation
	Koi pan Sudhara niche	Under no civilisation
	Hindi Sudhara	Indian civilisation
	Paschim Na Sudhara	Western civilisation
	Paschim Na Sudhara	The later
	Hindi Sudhara	The former
	Hindi Sudhara	Indian civilisation
XIV How can India become free?	*Sudhara vishe*	About civilisation
	Hind no Sudhara	Indian civilisation
	Sudharo	Civilisation
	Sudharo	Civilisation
	Sudharo	Civilisation
	Sudharo	Civilisation
	Paschim ni Kelavani	Affected by western civilisation
	Sudhara Sahit	Along with their civilisation
	Bija Sudhara	Other civilisation
	Hindi Sudhara	Indian civilisation
	Temno sudharo	Their civilisation
	Teona sudhara	Their civilisation
XV Italy and India	*Sudhara behd*	Same civilisation
	Je Sudhara Arthe	The reforms
	Te sudhara	They (In the sense of reform)
	Europe No Sudharo	European civilisation
	Te sudhara	In that civilisation
	Adham Sudhara rupi	Wretched modern civilisation

XVI Brute Force	No Usage	
XVII Passive resistance	*Saghala Sudhara*	All reforms
XVIII Education	*Aapno Sudharo*	Our civilisation
	Apane darad ma ava gharai gaya chaiya	Disease of civilisation
	Angrez potana sudhara thi	With their own
	Sudhara, bigada, vadhara	Progress, retrogression, reforms and reactions
	Paschim Na Sudhara	Western civilisation
XIX Machinery	*Paschim Na Sudhara*	Western civilisation
	Adhunik Sudhara	Modern civilisation
XX Conclusion	*udhara*	Civilisation
	Amara Sudhara	Our Civilisation
	Sudharo te Kudharo che	So-called civilisation
	Europee Sudharo	European civilisation
	Hindi civilisation	Indian civilisation
	Europee Sudharo	European civilisation
	Eva Sudhara	Ephemeral civilisation
	Temna Sudhara	Their civilisation

APPENDIX 3

Gujarati idioms and their English rendering

Sr. Number	Gujarati Idiom	English rendering
1	*Utavale Amba Na Pake*	Tree does not grow in one day.
2	*Jya Suraj hoy tya andharu rahelu j che.*	Where there is light, there is also shadow.
3	*Nathi raheta din na ke nathi raheta duniya na.*	derive little advantage from the world
4	*Sangh Dwarika e jashe.*	We are not likely to agree at all.
5	*Jenu man changa che tene gher bethe ganga che.*	Those whose hearts were aglow with righteousness hand the Ganges in their own home.
6	*Miyane ne Mahadev ne na bane.*	Our very proverbs prove it.
7	*Miyane ne Mahadev ne na bane.*	The proverbs you have quoted
8	*Paradhin Sapne such nahi.*	Slaves cannot even dream of happiness.
9	*Jaise ko Taisa*	Matter of tit for tat.
10	*Jeva dev tevi puja.*	As is the god, so is the votary.
11	*Ek nanno chatris rog ne hane.*	One negative cures thirty-six diseases.
12	*Jeo Talwar chalave che tenu mot talwar thi thay che.*	Those who wield the sword shall die by the sword.
13	*Tara nu mot pani ma che.*	Professional swimmers will find a watery grave.
14	*Apane bandare pahuchiye nahi.*	We shall never come to an agreement.
15	*Aap Apani fodiyo me meri samalta hun.*	Not rendered.

APPENDIX 4

List of English phrases in the Gujarati text

1. Congress
2. National
3. Professor
4. Moderate
5. Extremist
6. Unrest
7. Discontent
8. Parliament
9. Member
10. Baby
11. Voter
12. Button
13. Suffragette
14. Company
15. Segregation
16. Railway
17. Penny
18. Guerrilla
19. Vote
20. History
21. Passive Resistance
22. M.A.
23. Barrister
24. Degree
25. Boycott
26. Mill
27. Tram
28. Soldier

Hind Swaraj: A Note

1. Gandhi wrote *Hind Swaraj* in 1909 notwithstanding his tendency to put the year as 1908. How should one read a book that was written a hundred years ago? Should one read it as the first of the seven books that Gandhi would write?[38] Should one read it as a key text of Gandhi? A book that he dedicated himself to? Should one read it as a critique of the Empire? As a denouement of modern civilization? As a Luddite text? Or as a harbinger of post-colonial, post-modern concerns that occupy much of our culture of academics?
2. I propose to read *Hind Swaraj* as a text that is deeply embedded in its time. This embedding or rootedness does not deny the universality of the text or its capacity to go beyond its specific context. When we claim that a text is embedded in its times, one is not alluding exclusively to the specific historicity of events but to the philosophical ground from which a dialogue like *Hind Swaraj* can emerge. This is not to deny the salience of the dialogues that Gandhi had with votaries of armed resistance to the Empire, or the impetus that reading of Ruskin, Thoreau, Carpenter, Anna Kingsford, and Tolstoy had on his thinking and practice. This is also not to deny the significance of the struggle of the Indian community South Africa as also in India.
3. What is the philosophical ground within which this text is rooted? This ground can best be characterized as a moment of transition. The image before me is that of dusk. The Gujarati and Hindi word *Godhuli* is very evocative. It is the moment when cows come home and

the dust raised by their feet that cover the sky and blur the vision. Dusk is a fleeting, transient moment. It is a moment between day and night, between sunlight and moonlight. However, dusk signifies the presence of both and denial of neither. Dusk is evocative because of this simultaneity.

4. What is the dusk like moment in which *Hind Swaraj* is written? This is a moment of historical time, something that is no longer available to many of us in any substantial measure, except either as longing or memory. In this moment, two modes of life and thought are present simultaneously. A mode of life that we call a-modern. A-modern is not anti-modern. It is not non-modern in the sense that it signifies absence of modernity. It is something that lies outside the modern realm and has to be conceptualized without a necessary and inevitable referent to the modern. The other mode of life and thought that is present is modern civilization. It is my plea that the *Hind Swaraj* should be read as a text that was written at a moment in history where both the a-modern and modern universe existed simultaneously as large facts, however fleeting that moment might have been.
5. Let us examine this more carefully with evidence from the text of *Hind Swaraj*. In chapter XII, 'What is True Civilisation?' Gandhi draws a picture of India untouched and unsullied by modern civilization and its emblems, the railway, doctors and the lawyers. It is this India that Gandhi often characterized as 'ancient civilisation' and even as 'real civilisation.' Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, China, and Japan provide referents to this Indian civilization. This India that lies outside modern Western civilization is real. It does not reside either in memory or in imagination.
6. Modern civilization, however ephemeral, transitory, and

self-destructive for Gandhi, it is what necessitates *Hind Swaraj*. In fact, *Hind Swaraj* cannot be conceived outside the modern universe. It is not only present as the Empire or its emblems, the railways, doctors and lawyers but it is present as the *Kildonan Castle* that took him from England to South Africa, from the seat of the Empire to a colony. The forty year old author of the *Hind Swaraj* is also a modern migrant, a *girmitiya*. The fact of modern civilization forms the basic ground of *Hind Swaraj*. It is thus possible to read *Hind Swaraj* as a dialogue anchored in this transition – where a-modern civilization though recessive, is present; and where modern civilization though dominant is not a universal, permanent fact. It is in fact seen as both ephemeral and self-destructive. *Hind Swaraj* read like this does not remain only a dialogue between a reader and an editor. It represents multiple dialogues; between a-modern and modern civilization, between India and the Empire, between ancient civilizations of India, Greece, Rome and Egypt; between subjugated India and modern Europe, as also between those seeking Home Rule and those striving for Swaraj, between those who saw means and ends as distinct and those who saw means and ends as inviolably related. *Hind Swaraj* is thus polyphony, not a dialogue, and certainly not a monologue.

7. For Gandhi, the essential character of modern civilization is not represented by either the Empire, or the speed of railways, the contractual nature of society brought about by western law, nor by the vivisection of modern western medicine. It is also not represented by the use of violence as a legitimate means of expressing political dissent and obtaining political goals. Albeit, all these are significant markers of this modern civilization. The essential character of modern civilization is represented by the denial of a fundamental possibility. This denial is the

possibility of knowing oneself. In Chapter VI, 'Civilisation', Gandhi describing modern civilization says, "Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life."[39] This is an inadequate rendering of the original Gujarati, which could be rendered as "Its true identity is in the fact that people seek to find in engagement with the material world and bodily comfort meaning and human worth."[40] When the principal *Purushartha* becomes search for meaning and fulfilment in the material world and bodily comfort, it shifts the ground of judgement about human worth. The locus of judgement shifts fundamentally. It shifts from the human person to the body and the material world. It is for this reason that Gandhi characterised modern civilisation as 'irreligion', a 'Satanic Civilisation' and the 'Black Age.' This shift of locus of judgement is for Gandhi of a basic order. It violates the basic feature of a 'true civilisation.' Gandhi defines such a civilisation; "Civilisation is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves."[41] Thus, civilisation creates the possibility of knowing ourselves. A mode of life that does not allow for this self-knowledge both for the individual and society has to be shunned. Modern civilisation by making a material world and bodily welfare the principal referent of human and social worth renders the inward gaze impossible because the object of the search lies outside and so does the orientation of that gaze. Such a civilisation for Gandhi is irreligious. Religion for Gandhi is not denominational; it is that which underlies all religions, which alone is, that which is Truth.

8. A true civilisation not only creates the possibility of knowing ourselves, it thereby makes Swaraj possible. "It

is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves."[42] This Swaraj that Gandhi speaks of is contingent upon self-knowledge. Only those who know themselves are capable of learning to rule them. It is not rule of one's own kind, but rule over oneself. Gandhi argued that only those who have attained mastery over their mind and passions and in so doing attained self-knowledge are capable of Swaraj. Swaraj, Gandhi says, is unlike Home Rule or independence, not a fact. It is an experience that has to be realised. He says, "Do not consider this Swaraj to be like a dream. Here there is no idea of sitting still. The Swaraj that I wish to picture before you and me is such that, after we have one realised it, we will endeavour to the end of our lifetime to persuade others to do likewise. But such Swaraj has to be experienced by each one for himself."[43] This is one of the crucial differences between Home Rule and Swaraj. Home Rule suggests absence of political slavery and once that is obtained, all citizens are free, conceptually at least, in equal measure. But Swaraj goes beyond Home Rule; one could be subjugated and still experience Swaraj. Once having realised it one has to strive to keep that experience alive.[44] Therefore, it would be pretentious to claim to give others the experience of Swaraj, it is something each one has to experience.

9. The crucial difference between Home Rule and Swaraj is not only of a political kind, or a question of method, but a question of civilisation. Those seeking Home Rule argued that the British and their arms and ammunition subjugated Indians. Hence, their goal was to throw out the British but retain their laws, railways, and knowledge systems. As Gandhi said, they wanted the tiger's nature but not the tiger. Swaraj lays emphasis on the civilisation question. India was not taken; we gave ourselves to British subjugation and were lured by their modern civilisation.

Therefore, once we cure ourselves of this fatal attraction and shun it, we are free.

10. But Swaraj is not *Moksha* in the sense of personal deliverance. It is societal and civilisational. The method of obtaining Swaraj is Satyagraha. Satyagraha is posited on the theory of means and ends. In fact, *Hind Swaraj* is a meditation on the question of means and ends. Gandhi decries the argument that means justify the ends. He says, "'As is the God, so is the votary' is a maxim worth considering."[45] He likens means to a seed and ends to a tree, "and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."[46] Not only is the relationship between means and ends inviolable, Gandhi argues for purity of both the means and the ends. One cannot worship God by the means of Satan, argues Gandhi. This emphasis on the purity of means and ends and the inviolable relationship between them is a unique contribution of Gandhi. Violence has to be shunned because it is impure means. What is obtained through fear and violence can last only so far as fear lasts. Violence also allows us to forget who we are. Gandhi used to say that the more one takes to violence, the more one recedes from oneself. Thus, violence leads to amnesia. Amnesia is a condition of modern civilisation and contrary to Swaraj. Satyagraha is recognition of both these propositions.
11. Satyagraha is not only a theory and practice of means and ends. Means and ends are mediate through the practitioner. Thus, if we were to ask a question as to what are pure means the answer would have to be that pure means are those, which are employed by a pure person. Satyagraha thus requires the practitioner to be cleansed through a constant process of self-examination and self-purification. Gandhi alludes to this by suggesting that a Satyagrahi would have to observe *brahmacharya*, be fearless, and adopt poverty.

12. In fact, the debate about means and ends, the practice of Satyagraha, become clear when placed within the context of the Ashram. It was through the life of an ashramite that this might be understood. In a sense the *Swa*, the self of Swaraj was conceptualized and lived at Gandhi's Ashrams in Ahmedabad and Wardha. What remained unsaid in *Hind Swaraj* was thought about and lived in the ashram. In the absence of the Ashram and the ashramites, the life that Gandhi led, his constant striving to be a Satyagrahi and a Sthitpragnya, and Gandhi's claim in the *Hind Swaraj* that "my conscience testifies that my life henceforth is dedicated to its (Swaraj) attainment"[47] would have remained a statement of intent if not a rhetorical device. Therefore, one way of reading *Hind Swaraj* is to read it along with Ashram observances.
13. The *Hind Swaraj* should also to be read along with Gandhi's autobiography. It is through the autobiography we learn Gandhi's striving and pining to attain self-realization. It tells us what it is to live, move, and have one's entire being in pursuit of that goal. The autobiography in fact provides us with an understanding of not only Gandhi's experiments with the self but also the proposition that civilization as a mode of conduct points out the path of duty, where performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms and so doing we know ourselves as also learn to rule oneself.
14. Thus, *Hind Swaraj* in fact provides for a personal basis of political action. This is not to suggest that the political or the societal is secondary for Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*. But it provides a theory and practice of individual conduct and responsibility. Let us remind ourselves that Swaraj cannot be obtained by one on behalf of others; it is something that each one has to experience. No other contemporary thought laid such primacy on the link between the personal and the political, without making personal the

political, or subjugating the individual will to the collective.

15. The *Hind Swaraj* is a severe denouement of modern civilization. Gandhi not only characterizes it as irreligious, as a Black Age and a Satanic Civilisation but also claims that this civilization is such that it is certain to be destroyed and is self-destructive. Anything that leads one away from oneself cannot be permanent for Gandhi. Despite decrying the modern civilization and its emblems, *Hind Swaraj* is not a text of hatred. In fact, it is moved by deep love and empathy for those caught in the fire of modern civilization. In fact, *Hind Swaraj* is a theory of salvation, not only for India but also for Britain. Therefore, Gandhi is at pains to point out that India's struggle cannot be against the British but against the civilization that they represent. He reminds the British that they are religious people, that their basic constitution as a people and a society is not flawed. Gandhi's plea is that Britain be Christian in the true sense, and if they become moral and know that their pursuit is both irreligious and destructive; the English can stay in India. They can stay in India as moral people, but not as votaries of modern civilization and the Empire that this civilization creates. *Hind Swaraj* is a rare document of contemporary thought that does not seek annihilation of the oppressor, but in fact seeks their salvation. The duty of India for Gandhi is unique; it must not only realize Swaraj for itself but also free the British from the fires of modern civilization. Thus, *Hind Swaraj* has to be read as a *Practice of Love.*
16. Satyagraha is also a practice of love, because it is based on the recognition of humanity of others, including that of the oppressor. It is based on a fundamental admission that all human beings are, in the final analysis, capable of recognizing the pain of others and be moved by it to do the right thing. Gandhi says; "there is something good

in every man."[48] Satyagraha is a dialogue, not only between those who oppress and those who are oppressed, but between the humanity of both. When both recognize and act on the basis of this that Satyagraha becomes possible.

17. *Hind Swaraj* is also a major intervention in the theory of justice. Gandhi argues that it is just to disobey a law that is repugnant to one's conscience. Injustice thus lies not only in the structure, purpose, and intent of law but also on the act of obedience to an unjust law. It is by abiding to an unjust law that we perpetuate it. Gandhi says that no law, however unjust, says that we must abide by it. It can only say that an act of disobedience would invite punishment. The space for resistance is available in the structure of law itself. Those who are willing to undergo punishment as an act of conscientious disobedience have a right to resist unjust law. Gandhi, thus, makes justice an act of individual action. He also argues that it is a folly to consider that a 'third party' because he/she is uninvolved could do justice. Justice and truth are recognized by the two involved parties as well and they must acquire the capacity and fitness to act on basis of this judgment.
18. Gandhi says; "Formerly, men travelled in wagons; now they fly through the air in trains at the rate of four hundred and more miles per day."[49] This idea of flying through the air at four hundred miles per day gives *Hind Swaraj* its roots in its specific times. Despite the universality of the argument and its ability to communicate to the future, the text is replete with references which are peculiar to its times. The chapter on Italy and India, the discussion on the Maharaja Gaikwad of Baroda, the Surat Congress, the reference to President Kruger of South Africa or the invocation of the fate of Japan are some such references which make

the text of *Hind Swaraj* also rooted in its times.

19. *Hind Swaraj* has to be read in two languages: Gujarati and English. It was written in Gujarati and this is the only book of Gandhi that he himself translated. There are significant variations between the two renderings and the full intent of the argument and semantic become apparent only when they are read as two original texts simultaneously.
20. Finally, *Hind Swaraj* is what one does and not only what one thinks. It is a text deeply embedded in practice. In the absence of the practice – Gandhi's and our own – perhaps the true significance of *Hind Swaraj* cannot be grasped.

3

Between Experiment and Sadhana: Towards an Understanding of Gandhi's Observances

"After all, does one express, can one express, all one's thoughts to others?"[50]

I

In 1925, Gandhi agreed to write his autobiography at the instance of Swami Anand. He, like others before him, was plagued by deep doubts about the form and the aesthetics of the autobiographical narrative. He was conscious that the autobiography was essentially a Western form; its roots were in early Christianity.

In one of the most creative transpositions in history of literary forms in Gujarati, Gandhi differentiated between a 'real autobiography' and the story that he would write.

Gandhi claimed that he had experimented with Truth; it was to be his 'beacon, shield, and buckler,' that would lead him on the 'straight, narrow, and sharp' path. He hoped to attain through these experiments true knowledge, self-realisation.

Despite the obvious spiritual nature of the quest, he insisted on calling his method experimental. It was not experimental in the sense that it lacked finality, infallibility, or absoluteness but that his experiment could be replicated. He said that he wanted to give an account of "practical applications of these experiments."[51] He regarded the

experiment as a narration "in light of which everyone may carry his own experiments according to his own inclination and capacity."[52]

Gandhi was aware that he was speaking of a kind of knowledge about the self which, though deeply spiritual, was communicable and replicable. It was communicable not only in terms of external principles but 'practical applications.'

Therefore, he was aware that there was a realm of self-knowledge that was clearly incommunicable. He said; "There are some things which are known only to oneself and one's Maker."[53] Gandhi's philosophical sensitivity is evident in this formulation. He created two distinct realms of spiritual knowledge; one though spiritual, religious, and moral was not only communicable, it was capable of emulation and replication. This was the scientific realm of the experiment.

There was yet another realm of his striving, which was known only to himself and his Maker. This was the realm of Sadhana.

It is possible and necessary to understand Gandhi's observances through these two categories, experiment and sadhana.

II

Ashram or "a community of men of religions"[54] is central to Gandhi's striving. He was to later claim; "ashram was a necessity of life for me."[55] What is an Ashram? For Gandhi ashram is a community of co-religionists, bound together not only by a common quest but by a set of obligatory observances that make them the ashramites. Ashram, therefore is where there are ashramites. Thus, Yeravda prison-mandir or temple as he called it-the Aga Khan Palace Prison were as much an ashram as the Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati and Sevagram at Wardha. Thus, the ashram went

with him on his lonely pilgrim to Noakhali and to Bihar that was his Karbala.

Before establishing the Satyagraha Ashram at Kochrab on May 25, 1915, Gandhi had established two ashram-like communities in South Africa. Ashram like, as he steadfastly refused to describe them as ashram or math. One was merely a settlement – the Phoenix Settlement – while the other a farm, the Tolstoy Farm. Phoenix was established in 1904 under the 'magic spell' of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* but acquired an ashram-like character only after 1906. It was in 1906 that Gandhi took a vow of brahmacharya, initially in the limited sense of chastity and celibacy. Gandhi says; "From this time onward I looked upon Phoenix deliberately as a religious institution."[56] Thus, observance of Vrata, which often, inadequately translated as vows,[57] is the defining characteristic of the ashram. It is only through the observances that a community becomes a community of co-religionists and a settlement becomes a place for experiments with truth.

The same year saw the advent of Satyagraha. Its origin was in a pledge, a pledge was different from a normal, deliberate oath; as the pledge was taken in the name of God and with God as witness; it was based on religion and implied an unshakable faith in the *Satya Narayan*, the God of Truth. Moreover, such a pledge was not externally administered. It was a promise made to one by oneself.

Phoenix and later Tolstoy Farm established in 1911 became places where personal spiritual quest and community search for dignity and self-respect were combined in and through Satyagraha.

It was therefore, natural when Gandhi established his community at Kochrab, a village near Ahmedabad, he decided to call it an ashram; the Satyagraha Ashram.

Satyagraha was to be the chosen method of experiments with Truth. Satyagraha is not only a method based upon the

moral superiority of self-suffering; but is a mode of conduct that leads to self-knowledge. Without self-knowledge, satyagraha is not possible, as it is based on the inviolable relationship between the means and ends, and its essence is in the purity of means. Pure means are not only non-violent means but means adopted by a pure person; a person who through a constant process of self-search cleanses and purifies the self; whose only true aim is to be a seeker after Truth. Thus, Gandhi posits an immutable relationship between satyagraha, pure means and purity of the practitioner. In absence of the later two satyagraha is not possible. Satyagraha is fundamentally an experiment with Truth in the sense that it allows those who practice it to know themselves.

Satyagraha as a mode of self-recognition is directly linked to swaraj. "It is swaraj, when we learn to rule ourselves."[58] This idea of ruling the self was fundamentally different from self-rule or Home Rule. To rule ourselves means to be moral, to be religious, and to have control over our sense. His idea of true civilisation is also based in this self-recognition. Satanic civilization or modern civilization is one where the search is external and so are the measures of men. True civilization must lead to self-knowledge. He says, "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves."[59]

In this, we have an understanding of Gandhi's experiment and his quest. His quest is to know himself, to attain Moksha that is to see God (Truth) face to face. In order to fulfil his quest, he must be an ashramite, a satyagrahi and a seeker after swaraj.

Experiment with Truth in this sense is an experiment with self-knowledge, with attaining mastery over himself, with performance of duty and observance of morality, with

satyagraha, with swaraj, with true civilization and with brahmacharya.

Since he never claimed to have attained it, truth had to be practised everyday, every moment of wakefulness and sleep.

This quest is made possible by the means of ashram and its observances. Satyagraha and swaraj as modes of self-realisation are based on Truth because without Truth there can be no knowledge. That is why the word *chit*, or knowledge is associated with *sat*. Hence, Truth becomes a primary observance; it constitutes the root of the ashram. What can be known by Truth is knowledge, what is excluded from it is not Truth, not true knowledge. Steadfastness to Truth, even unto death, requires immense and inexhaustible faith in God of Truth. Yet, Gandhi would confess that such perfect self-knowledge, realisation of perfect Truth might not be possible so long as we are imprisoned in a mortal body.

This impossibility leads the seeker to ahimsa or love. Violence and quest for truth cannot exist together; as Truth is not outside but within and as Gandhi said; "Hence, the more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth."[60] If violence makes a person recede from truth, it also makes a person recede from self. Thus, violence leads to self-forgetfulness, therefore neither satyagraha nor swaraj, which are based on self-realisation, are possible with violence. Thus, Truth is the end and Ahimsa the means to it.

A man whose only object is Truth, his method satyagraha, cannot be faithful to anything but Truth. "The man, who is wedded to Truth and worships faith alone, proves unfaithful to her, if he applies his talents to anything else."[61]

This leads us to brahmacharya. For Gandhi, realisation of Truth and self- gratification appear contradictions in terms. From this emanate not only brahmacharya but also three other observances; control of the palate, *aparigraha* (non-possession), and *asteya* (non-stealing).

Brahmacharya, described as a *Mahavrata*, came to Gandhi as a necessary observance at a time when he had organised an ambulance corps during the Zulu rebellion in South Africa. He realised that service of the community was not possible without observance of brahmacharya. At the age of 37, in 1906 Gandhi took the vow of brahmacharya.

He had begun experimenting with food and diet as a student in England. It was much later that he was to comprehend the relationship between brahmacharya and control of the palate.

These observances and strivings of self-purification were not without a purpose. He was later to feel that they were secretly preparing him for satyagraha.[62] It would take him several decades, but through his observances, his experiments, Gandhi developed insights into the interrelatedness of Truth, Ahimsa, and Brahmacharya. He came to regard practice of brahmacharya in thought, word, and deed as essential for the search for Truth and the practice of Ahimsa. Gandhi, by making observance of brahmacharya essential for truth and ahimsa, made it central to the practice of satyagraha and quest for swaraj. Satyagraha involves recognition of truth and steadfast adherence to it. It requires self-sacrifice or self-suffering and use of pure, that is, non-violent means by a person who is cleansed through self-purification. Satyagraha and swaraj are both modes of self-recognition. This understanding allowed Gandhi to expand the conception of brahmacharya itself. He began with a popular and restricted notion in the sense of chastity and celibacy, including celibacy in marriage. He expanded this notion to mean observance in thought, word, and deed. However, it is only when he began to recognise the deeper and fundamental relationship that brahmacharya shared with satyagraha, ahimsa and swaraj that Gandhi could go to the root of the term brahmacharya. Charya or conduct adopted in search of Brahma, that is Truth is brahmacharya.

In this sense, brahmacharya is not denial or control over one sense, but it is an attempt to bring all senses in harmony with each other. Brahmacharya so conceived and practised becomes that mode of conduct that leads to Truth, knowledge and hence Moksha.

Thus, one could argue that an experiment in Truth is an experiment in brahmacharya.

If brahmacharya is an experiment and an experiment in Truth, it cannot have any possibility of secrecy. As an experiment, it was important to record the unusual, uncontrolled occurrences. It was essential to speak of the failures.

To speak of failures and shortcomings of the self required a sense of detachment and equanimity with regard to the self. This sense occupies a ground philosophically different from objectivity or distance. Gandhi used two terms from the *Gita* to describe this way of looking at oneself, *sthitpragnya* (or a person whose intelligence is secure) and non-attachment, or *nishkama*. It is therefore not surprising that Gandhi's lifelong quest was to attain the state of sthitpragnya. Eighteen verses from the second discourse of the *Gita*, which describe the characteristics of a sthitpragnya, became an essential part of his daily prayers.

Experiment with Truth thus essentially means recognition of Truth as God. This recognition is possible when one practices ahimsa, observes brahmacharya and recognises swaraj as self-knowledge. These practices are sustained by attitude of a sthitpragnya.

III

Does this mean that it was possible for Gandhi to communicate all aspects of his self-practices to others? Were there no aspects that were known only to him and his Maker?

On 30, April 1933, Gandhi decided to undertake a twenty-

one day fast for self-purification as a prisoner in the Yeravda jail. Just seven months ago, he had undergone a fiery ordeal. He had fasted against the Communal Award from September 20, 1932 to September 26, 1932. This fast that lasted merely six days had brought him close to death. So precarious was his condition that Poet Rabindranath had gone to Yeravda prison to see Gandhi.[63]

He could not, and more importantly did not want to discuss or reveal his reasons for undergoing this fiery ordeal. He said to Sardar Patel, his fellow prisoner; "After all, does one express, can one express, all one's thoughts to others?"[64] Gandhi invokes the Inner Voice. If we understand the working of the inner voice, his need to hear the voice, submit to it and follow its directions, we would grasp something of the dialogue that Gandhi had with his Maker.

He described to Sardar his sudden resolve to fast. He said that he had been feeling restless for the past three days. He could not sleep nor did he feel tired as a result of lack of sleep. This unease of the spirit had gone unnoticed by his fellow prisoner Sardar and even Mahadev Desai, a man who could anticipate many of Gandhi's spiritual crises. Gandhi said; "As if for the last three days I were preparing myself for the great deluge!"[65] He did not know what agitated his mind and when the 'excitement' started. However, the thought of fast came to him repeatedly, a thought that he tried to drive away and shut out. He described the moment of when he heard the voice; "In the night when I retired I had no idea that something was coming up today. But after eleven I woke up, I watched the stars, repeated Ramanama but the same thought would persistently come to my mind: 'If you have grown so restless, why don't you undertake the fast? Do it.' The inner dialogue went on for quite some time. At half past twelve came the clear, unmistakable voice: 'You must undertake the fast.' That was all."[66]

In a public statement issued on the same day, he spoke of

the unease and his struggle against the persistent voice that told him to fast. The struggle was in vain and he had resolved to go on an unconditional and irrevocable fast for twenty-one days.

Gandhi gave some very vital clues to the working of his soul. Gandhi would often describe the state before the communion with the inner voice as a state of darkness, of groping.

In 1918 between 15 and 18 March, Gandhi undertook his first public fast since his return to India in 1915. In the *Autobiography,* he has described his groping and sudden light that came to him. "One morning-it was at the mill-hands' meeting- while I was still groping and unable to see my way clearly, the light came to me. Unbidden and all by themselves the words came to my lips: 'Unless the strikers rally,' I declared to the meeting, 'and continue the strike till a settlement is reached, or till they leave the mills altogether, I will not touch any food."[67]

Similarly, on 12 January 1948, Gandhi in his prayer speech that was read out by Sushila Nayar – it was Monday, his day of silence – he announced a fast in almost similar terms. He spoke of his agony, his brooding, and the persistent thought of a fast that he tried to shut out and the final moment of clarity, of a flash, a moment of enlightenment.[68]

Gandhi was often asked as to what enabled him to hear his conscience? He described a conscientious man, as a man who hesitated to assert himself, was humble, never boisterous, always ready to listen, ever willing and anxious to admit his mistakes.[69] Therein, Gandhi described conscience as something acquired after strictest training. He said; "Wilfulness is not conscience; conscience is the ripe fruit of strictest discipline."[70] It was not possible to hear the inner voice without the necessary effort and training. This effort and training was in self-restraint, in other words in brahmacharya. He described training in following terms; "a

conscious practice of self-restraint and an ever-increasing effort implicitly to obey the will of God speaking within and then known as the inner voice."[71] Gandhi clearly claimed that it were his observances in truth, non-violence, and brahmacharya along with asteya and aparigraha that allowed him to know his conscience and hear the unmistakable inner voice.

This clear voice that he heard did not go unchallenged. When he announced the fast in April 1933, even his closest associates like C. Rajagopalachari and his youngest son Devadas did not believe that he had been prompted by God to fast. Let us not make a mistake; they did not doubt the sincerity of his claim, but they doubted the very basis of the fast. Gandhi dealt with this publicly; "They believe me to be under self-delusion- a prey to my own heated imagination made hotter by the suffocation produced by the cramping walls of a prison."[72] The voice of the conscience that he had heard was so direct and powerful that he was not swayed in the least by the doubts of a scholar of Rajaji's calibre. Gandhi argued that his claim to hear the voice of God was not a new claim. The voice had been increasingly audible to him. However, he could not give proof. The inability to give proof was not a result of his own failing, but as a human being, he could not prove the existence of God. The only way he knew of proving his claim-not of the existence of God-was the outcome of his fast. If survived the ordeal he would be right in claiming that he had been prompted by his inner voice. He said; "God will not be God if He allowed Himself to be an object of proof by His creatures. But He does give His willing slave the power to pass through the fiercest of ordeals."[73] Gandhi said that his submission to God had been so total that, "He had left me not a vestige of independence."[74] Gandhi described himself as a willing servant of the most exacting Master. He further said; "I saw no form. I have never tried, for I have always believed God

to be without form."[75] Gandhi clarified that he had not seen God face to face, that he had not obtained perfect knowledge or attained self-realisation. He knew what that state of self-realisation could be like; "One who realised God is freed from sin for ever. He has no desire to be fulfilled. Not even in his thoughts will he suffer from faults, imperfections, or impurities. Whatever he does will be perfect because he does nothing himself but the God within him does everything."[76]

Gandhi had no doubt that such a state could be achieved. But the inner voice that had spoken to him was not this. It was not self-realisation. The Voice had come upon him as a result of a sadhana. So deep was his conviction, that unanimous verdict of the whole world could not shake him from his belief.

Gandhi often claimed that he had prepared himself to be the willing instrument of God through self-purification. God required the purest instrument to speak through, as a human being Gandhi could only make an approach to perfection without ever attaining it. His claim was neither unique nor exclusive. He was a student of Gita and knew that God spoke through those who had acquired complete detachment.

To acquire this detachment and purification Gandhi developed another practise, that of prayer. Prayer had to be offered in a spirit of strict non-attachment. A prayer offered for reward cannot possibly be beneficial either to the atman or to the world. Therefore, for Gandhi prayer produced effect only on the one who prayed. He said that prayer awakened the Indwelling Spirit; the more it was awakened the wider its area of influence became. Prayer allowed for the observance of the cardinal vows.

Gandhi saw a deep relationship between prayer and fasting. The root meaning of the Sanskrit term *Upavas*, is to dwell closer to Him. Thus, prayer and fasting shared an

inviolable relationship and were complementary means to attain Truth. There is a difference between denial of food to oneself, a hunger strike, mortification of the flesh, *anshan* or *langhan* and a fast as *Upavas*. The defining difference between the two is an act of prayer. Mortification of flesh, according to Gandhi does some good from the medical point of view; apart from it, it produced no particular spiritual effect. Fast on the other hand is a supplication to God or a prayer, coming from the depth of the heart. Fasting in this sense related not only to the palate, but to all the senses and organs. Gandhi said; "I believe that there is no prayer without fasting and there is no real fast without prayer."[77] Gandhi posits a relationship between fast and prayer in the following terms. "Complete absorption in prayer must mean complete exclusion of physical activities till prayer possesses the whole of our being and we rise superior to, and are completely detached from, all physical functions. That state can only be reached after continual and voluntary crucifixion[78] of the flesh. Thus all fasting, if it is a spiritual act, is an intense prayer or preparation for it."[79]

The only real sustenance that Gandhi had during his fast was the spiritual sustenance of prayer. During his Calcutta fast[80] he was challenged once again by Rajaji. Gandhi due to his repeated fasts had developed a strange allergy to plain water. It developed nausea in him. Therefore, he always gave himself the liberty to add a fixed amount of sour limejuice to the warm water that he drank. Rajaji, having failed to persuade him to give up the idea of the fast, challenged Gandhi to fast without adding the customary sour limejuice. Rajaji asked; "Why add sour lime juice to water if you are to put yourself entirely in God's hands?"

Gandhi replied; "You are right. I allowed it out of weakness. It jarred on me even as I wrote it. A Satyagrahi must hope to survive his conditional fast only by the timely fulfilment of the terms of his fast."[81] Ramanama was his only sustenance.

IV

The experiment created for him a real possibility for self-purification, to be a vehicle through which God acted. Simultaneously, they created theory and practice of satyagraha and swaraj, his more obvious interventions in the realm of the political. His politics was deeply imbued by the spiritual quest, as neither satyagraha nor swaraj were really possible without the quest for Truth.

The fullness of this quest becomes evident when we consider what he regarded as experiment and sadhana as inseparable. Sadhana, his ability to reach within the depths of his soul and be in communion with the inner voice could not be possible without the steadfast observance of truth, ahimsa, and quest for brahmacharya. Together they form, what must be regarded as one the most enduring and extraordinary quest to attain self-realisation, to attain Truth, to see God face to face.

4

A Small, Still Voice

The more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth.[82]

Gandhi described *ahimsa,*[83] non-violence or more accurately love as the 'supreme duty.' This essay seeks to understand the necessity of non-violence in Gandhi's life and thought. In order to do so it is necessary to meditate upon the categories, the terms through which Gandhi sought to understand and describe the nature of violence and non-violence, as also the opposition between the two.

Gandhi described violence as 'brute-force' (*sharir bal* or *top bal* in Gujarati) and non-violence as 'soul-force' (*atma bal* or *daya bal*, in Gujarati).[84] The distance between the two, between the beastly and the human, is marked by non-violence. The idea of brute-force locates violence in the body[85] and the instruments that the body can command to cause injury or to inflict death. It connotes pure instrumentality. By locating violence within the realm of the beastly, Gandhi clearly points out the absence of the conscience, of the normative. He wrote; "Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law- to the strength of the spirit."[86] The term soul-force is indicative of the working of the conscience, of the human ability to discern the path of rectitude and act upon this judgement. In a speech given before the members of the Gandhi Seva Sangh in 1938, he

brought this distinction sharply in focus: "Physical strength is called brute force. We are born with such strength. . . But we are born as human beings in order that we may realize God who dwells within our hearts. This is the basic distinction between us and the beasts. . . Along with the human form, we also have human power – that is the power of non-violence. We can have an insight into the mystery of the soul-force. In that consists our humanity."[87] Gandhi clearly indicates two aspects: one, that non-violence is a unique human capacity. It is because we are capable of restrain, of non-aggression, of ahimsa that we are human; two, to be human is to fulfil the human vocation, which is to realize the God that dwells in our hearts. This was Gandhi's principle quest. In his *Autobiography*, Gandhi clarified the nature of his pursuit. He wrote, "What I want to achieve-what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years-is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal."[88] He worshipped *Satya Narayan*, God as Truth. He did not ever claim that he had indeed found Him, or seen Him face to face. But, Gandhi was seeking this Absolute Truth and was "prepared to sacrifice the things dearest to me in pursuit of this quest."[89] Although Gandhi never claimed to have seen God face to face he could imagine that state; "One who has realized God is freed from sin forever. He has no desire to be fulfilled. Not even in his thoughts will he suffer from faults, imperfections, or impurities. Whatever he does will be perfect because he does nothing himself but the God within him does everything. He is completely merged in Him."[90]

This state was for Gandhi, the state of perfect self-realization, of perfect self-knowledge. It was a moment of revelation, a moment when the self was revealed to him. Although he believed that such perfect knowledge may elude him so long as he was imprisoned in the mortal body, he did

make an extraordinary claim. This was his claim to hear what he described as a 'small, still voice,' or the 'inner voice.' He used various terms such as, the voice of God, of conscience, the inner voice, the voice of Truth or the small, still voice.[91] He made this claim often and declared that he was powerless before the irresistible voice, that his conduct was guided by his voice. The nature of this inner voice and Gandhi's need and ability to listen to the voice becomes apparent when we examine his invocation of it.

The first time he invoked the authority of this inner voice in India was at a public meeting in Ahmedabad, where he suddenly declared his resolve to fast. This day was 15 February 1918. Twenty-two days prior to this date, Gandhi had been leading the strike of the workers of the textiles mills of Ahmedabad. The mill workers had taken a pledge to strike work until their demands were met. They appeared to be going back upon their pledge. Gandhi was groping, not being able to see clearly the way forward. He described his sudden resolve thus: "One morning – it was at a mill-hands' meeting– while I was groping and unable to see my way clearly, the light came to me. Unbidden and all by themselves the words came to my lips: 'unless the strikers rally,' I declared to the meeting, 'and continue to strike till a settlement is reached or till they leave the mills altogether, I will not touch any food.'"[92]

He was to repeatedly speak of the inner voice in similar metaphors; of darkness that enveloped him, his groping, churning, wanting to find a way forward and the moment of light, of knowledge when the voice spoke to him. Gandhi sought the guidance of his inner voice not only in the spiritual realm, a realm that was incommunicable and known only to him and his Maker, but also in the political realm. He called off the non-cooperation movement against the British in February 1922 in response to the prompting of his inner voice. His famous Dandi March also came to him

through the voice speaking from within. Gandhi's search for moral and spiritual basis for political action was anchored in his claim that one could and ought to be guided by the Voice of Truth speaking from within. This made his politics deeply spiritual. Gandhi expanded the scope of the inner voice to include the political realm. Gandhi's ideas of civilization and *Swaraj*[93] were rooted in this possibility of knowing oneself. In 1909, Gandhi wrote his most important philosophical work, the *Hind Swaraj*.[94] Gandhi argued in the *Hind Swaraj*, that modern Western civilization in fact de-civilizes[95] and characterised it as a black-age or Satanic civilization. Gandhi argued that civilization in the modern sense had no place for either religion or morality. He wrote; "Its true test lies in the fact that people living under it make bodily welfare the object of life."[96] By making bodily welfare the object of life, modern civilization had shifted the locus of judgement outside the human being. It had made not right conduct but objects the measure of human worth. In so doing, it had closed the possibility of knowing oneself. True civilization on the other hand was rooted in this very possibility. He wrote; "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and passions. So doing, we know ourselves."[97] This act of knowing oneself is not only the basis of spiritual life but also of political life. He defined *Swaraj* thus; "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves."[98] This act of ruling oneself meant the control of mind and passions, of observance of morality and of knowing the right and the true path. Gandhi's idea and practice of *Satyagraha* with its invocation of the soul-force is based on this. Satyagraha requires not only the purity of means and ends but also the purity of the practitioner. Satyagraha in the final instance is based on the recognition of one's own conscience, on one's ability to listen to one's inner voice and submit to it.

Perhaps the most contentious invocation of the inner voice occurred in 1933. In 1932, Gandhi had undergone a fast from September 20 to September 25 as a prisoner of the Yeravda Central Prison. This fast, done in opposition to the decision of the British Government to conduct elections in India on the basis of communal representation. This fast had proved dangerous for his already frail body and brought him precariously close to death.

Even before he had fully regained his strength, he shocked the nation by announcing his irrevocable decision to undergo a twenty-one day fast in May 1933. On 30 April 1933, he made a public announcement to go on an unconditional and irrevocable fast for self-purification. The fast was to commence on Monday noon of 8th May and end on Monday noon of 29th May.[99] He declared that this resolution was made in submission of his inner voice. He stated that he had tried in vain to resist the call. This announcement caught even his closest associates and fellow prisoners unaware; they did not know that a tempest had been raging within him. He described this act of listening to his fellow prisoner Vallabhbhai Patel. Gandhi said to Patel, "as if for the last three days I were preparing myself for the great deluge! On many occasions, however, the thought of a fast would come repeatedly to my mind and I would drive it away...but the same thought would persistently come to my mind: 'If you have grown so restless, why don't you undertake the fast? Do it.' The inner dialogue went on for quite sometime. At half past twelve came the clear, unmistakable voice, 'You must undertake the fast.' That was all."[100] Gandhi knew that his invocation of the inner voice beyond comprehension and beyond his capacity to explain. He asked; "After all, does one express, can one express, all one's thoughts to others?"[101] Many tried to dissuade him from the fast, which they feared would result in his death. Not all were convinced of his claim to hear the inner voice. It was argued that what he heard was not the voice of God, but it was hallucination, that Gandhi

was deluding himself and that his imagination had become over-heated by the cramped prison walls.

Gandhi remained steadfast and refuted the charge of self-delusion or hallucination. He said, "not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God."[102] Gandhi undertook the fast and of course survived it. Subsequently he explained the nature of divine inspiration. "The night I got the inspiration, I had a terrible inner struggle. My mind was restless. I could see no way. The burden of my responsibility was crushing me. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time when I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the Voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm."[103] He argued that his claim was beyond both proof and reason. The only proof he could probably provide was the fact that he had survived the fiery ordeal. It was a moment that he had been preparing himself for. He felt that his submission to God as Truth was so complete, at least in that particular instance of fasting, that he had no autonomy left. All his acts were prompted by the inner voice. It was a moment of perfect surrender. Such a moment of total submission transcends reason. He wrote in a letter; "Of course, for me personally it transcends reason, because I feel it to be a clear will from God. My position is that there is nothing just now that I am doing of my own accord. He guides me from moment to moment."[104]

This extraordinary confession of perfect surrender perturbed many. The source of this discomfort is clear. Gandhi's claim to hear the inner voice was neither unique nor exclusive. The validity and legitimacy of such claim was recognised in the spiritual realm. The idea of perfect

surrender was integral to and consistent with ideals of religious life. Although Gandhi never made the claim of having seen God face to face, having attained self-realization, the inner voice was for him the voice of God. He said; "The inner voice is the voice of the Lord."[105] But it was not a voice that came from a force outside of him. Gandhi made a distinction between an outer force and a power beyond us. A power beyond us has its locus within us. It is superior to us, not subject to our command or wilful action but it is still located within us. He explained the nature of this power. 'Beyond us' means a "power which is beyond our ego."[106] According to Gandhi, one acquires the capacity to hear this voice when the "ego is reduced to zero."[107] Reducing the ego to zero for Gandhi meant an act of total surrender to *Satya Narayan*. This surrender required subjugation of human will, of individual autonomy. It is when a person loses autonomy that conscience emerges. Conscience is an act of obedience not wilfulness. He said; "Wilfulness is not conscience…Conscience is the ripe fruit of strictest discipline...Conscience can reside only in a delicately tuned breast."[108] He knew what a person with conscience could be like. "A conscientious man hesitates to assert himself, he is always humble, never boisterous, always compromising, always ready to listen, ever willing, even anxious to admit mistakes."[109] A person without this tender breast delicately tuned to the working of the conscience cannot hear the inner voice, or more dangerously may in fact hear the voice of the ego. This capacity did not belong to everyone as a natural gift or a right available in equal measure. What one required was a cultivated capacity to discern the inner voice as distinct from the voice of the ego. As, "one cannot always recognise whether it is the voice of Rama or Ravana."[110]

What was this ever wakefulness that allowed him to hear the call of truth as distinct from voice of untruth? How does one acquire the fitness to wait upon God? He had likened

this preparation to an attempt to empty the sea with a drainer small as a point of a blade of grass. Yet, it had to be as natural as life itself. He created a regime of spiritual discipline that enabled him to search himself through and through. As part of his spiritual training, he formulated what he called the *Ekadash Vrata*.[111] The *ashram* or a community of co-religionists was constituted by their abiding faith in these *vrata* and by their act of prayer. Prayer was the very core of his life. Medieval devotional poetry sung by Pandit Narayan Moreshwar Khare moved him. He drew sustenance from Mira and Charlie Andrews' rendition of "When I survey the wondrous cross," while young Olive Doke healed him with "Lead Kindly Light." He recited the *Gita* everyday. What was this intense need for prayer? What allowed him to claim that he was not a man of learning but a man of prayer? He knew that mere repetition of the Ramanama was futile if it did not stir his soul. A prayer for him had to be a clear response to the hunger of the soul. What was the hunger that moved his being?

His was a passionate cry of the soul hungering for union with the divine. He saw his communion with God as that of a master and a slave in perpetual bondage, prayer was the expression of the intense yearning to merge in the Master. Prayer was the expression of the definitive and conscious longing of the soul; it was his act of waiting upon Him for guidance. His want was to feel the utterly pure presence of the divine within. Only a heart purified and cleansed by prayer could be filled with the presence of God, where life became one long continuous prayer, an act of worship. Prayer was for him, the final reliance upon God to the exclusion of all else. He knew that only when a person lives constantly in the sight of God, when he or she regards each thought with God as witness and its Master, could one feel Rama dwelling in the heart every moment. Such a prayer could only be offered in the spirit of non-attachment, *anasakti*. Moreover,

when the God that he sought to realise is Truth, prayer though externalised, was in essence directed inwards. Because Truth is not merely that, which we are expected to speak. It is That, which alone is, it is That of which all things are made, it is That which subsists by its own power, which alone is eternal. Gandhi's intense yearning was that such Truth should illuminate his heart. Prayer was a plea, a preparation, a cleansing that enabled him to hear his inner voice. The *Ekadash Vrata* allowed for this waiting upon God. The act of waiting meant to perform one's actions in a desireless or detached manner. The *Gita* describes this state as a state of *sthitpragnya*. The state of *sthitpragnya* was for Gandhi not only a philosophical ideal but a personal aspiration. The Gita describes this state as a condition of sthitpragnya. A sthitpragnya is one who puts away "all the cravings that arise in the mind and finds comfort for himself only from the *Atman*,"[112] and one, "whose sense are reined in on all sides from their objects,"[113] so that the mind is "untroubled in sorrows and longeth not for joys, who is free from passion, fear and wrath;"[114] who knows attachment no where; only such a brahmachari can be in the world "moving among sense objects with the sense weaned from likes and dislikes and brought under the control of the atman."[115] This detachment or self-effacement allowed Gandhi to dwell closer to Him. It made possible an act of surrender and allowed him to claim; "I have been a willing slave to this most exacting master for more than half a century. His voice has been increasingly audible as years have rolled by. He has never forsaken me even in my darkest hour. He has saved me often against myself and left me not a vestige of independence. The greater the surrender to Him, the greater has been my joy."[116] What he craved was this absence of independence, lack of autonomy, because that would finally allow him to see God face to face. He knew that he had not attained this state and perhaps would never attain

it so long as his body remained, as "no one can be called a *mukta* while he is alive."[117]

In this, we have an understanding of Gandhi's experiment and his quest. His quest is to know himself, to attain Moksha that is to see God (Truth) face to face. In order to fulfil his quest, he must be an ashramite, a satyagrahi and a seeker after swaraj. He added two other practises to this search. One was fasting, the other brahmacharya. Fasting in its original sense is not mortification of flesh, but it is *Upvas*, to dwell closer to Him. In this sense, there could be no fast without a prayer and indeed no prayer without a fast. Such a fast was both penance and self-purification.

The ultimate practice of self-purification is the practice of brahmacharya. For Gandhi, realisation of Truth and self-gratification appears a contradiction in terms. From this emanate not only brahmacharya but also three other observances, control of the palate, aparigraha and asteya.

Brahmacharya, described as a Mahavrata, came to Gandhi as a necessary observance at a time when he had organised an ambulance corps during the Zulu rebellion in South Africa. He realised that service of the community was not possible without observance of brahmacharya. At the age of 37, in 1906 Gandhi took the vow of brahmacharya.

He had begun experimenting with food and diet as a student in England. It was much later that he was to comprehend the relationship between brahmacharya and the control of the palate.

These observances and strivings of self-purification were not without a purpose. He was later to feel that they were secretly preparing him for satyagraha.[118] It would take him several decades, but through his observances, his experiments, Gandhi developed insights into the interrelatedness of Truth, Ahimsa, and Brahmacharya. He came to regard practice of brahmacharya in thought, word, and deed as essential for the search for Truth and the

practice of Ahimsa. Gandhi, by making observance of brahmacharya essential for truth and ahimsa, made it central to the practice of satyagraha and quest for swaraj. Satyagraha involves recognition of truth and steadfast adherence to it. It requires self-sacrifice or self-suffering and use of pure, and that is non-violent means by a person who is cleansed through self-purification. Satyagraha and swaraj are both modes of self-recognition. This understanding allowed Gandhi to expand the conception of brahmacharya itself. He began with a popular and restricted notion in the sense of chastity and celibacy, including celibacy in marriage. He expanded this notion to mean observance in thought, word, and deed. However, it is only when he began to recognise the deeper and fundamental relationship that brahmacharya shared with satyagraha, ahimsa and swaraj that, Gandhi could go to the root of the term brahmacharya. Charya or conduct adopted in search of Brahma, that is Truth is brahmacharya. In this sense brahmacharya is not denial or control over one sense, but it is an attempt to bring all senses in harmony with each other. Brahmacharya so conceived and practised becomes that mode of conduct that leads to Truth, knowledge and hence Moksha. Thus, the ability to hear the inner voice, a voice that is "perfect knowledge or realization of Truth"[119] is an experiment in brahmacharya.

Gandhi was acutely and painfully aware of the fact that "it is impossible for us to realize perfect Truth so long as we are imprisoned in this mortal frame."[120] If perfect Truth was an unattainable quest, so was the attainment of perfect brahmacharya. What was given to us, Gandhi argued, was to perfect the means to Truth or brahmacharya. This means for him was the practice of ahimsa or love. Gandhi asserted that ahimsa to be regarded as means has to be within our grasp. "Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahimsa* is our supreme duty."[121]

It is the capacity to hear the inner voice that, for Gandhi

reveals the distance he has traversed in his quest. Each invocation of the inner voice indicated to him his submission to God. This listening required proximity with oneself. This proximity could be attained through the practice of ahimsa. Violence on the other hand increased the distance in this quest for self-realization. Violence is to be abjured for this reason. Gandhi clearly stated this aspect of violence; "the more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth."[122] Ahimsa is a necessity and a supreme duty for Gandhi in this sense. It made possible the realization of God, if not face-to-face, then through the mediation of the small, still voice speaking from within and pointing out to him the path of duty.

5

Truth Called Them Differently

"It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity. Though we cannot anticipate what effect it may have upon our rulers, who may not understand its immense importance for our people, we feel certain that the supreme appeal of such self offering to the conscience of our own countrymen will not be in vain. I fervently hope that we will not callously allow such national tragedy to reach its extreme length. Our sorrowing hearts will follow your sublime penance with reverence and love."[123]

"You have no right to say that this process of penance can only be efficacious through your own individual endeavour and for others it has no meaning. If that were true, you ought to have performed it in absolute secrecy as a special mystic rite which only claims its one sacrifice beginning and ending in yourself."[124]

This essay seeks to explore a dialogue of immense philosophical significance between Rabindranath Tagore and Mohandas Gandhi on the nature of Gandhi's self-practice of fasting. Gandhi in his autobiography clarified the nature of his pursuit. He wrote, "What I want to achieve-what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years-is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha* . I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal."[125] Although Gandhi never claimed to have seen God face to face he could imagine that state; "One who has realized God is freed from sin forever. He has no desire to be fulfilled. Not even in his thoughts will he suffer from

faults, imperfections, or impurities. Whatever he does will be perfect because he does nothing himself but the God within him does everything. He is completely merged in Him."[126]

This state was for Gandhi the state of perfect self-realization, of perfect self-knowledge. It was a moment of revelation, a moment when the self was revealed to him. Although he believed that such perfect knowledge may elude him so long as he was imprisoned in the mortal body, he did make an extraordinary claim. This was his claim to hear what he described as a 'small, still voice,' or the 'inner voice.' He used various terms such as, the voice of God, of conscience, the inner voice, and the voice of Truth or the small, still voice.[127] He made this claim often and declared that he was powerless before the irresistible voice, that his conduct was guided by his voice. The first time, he invoked the authority of this inner voice in India, was at a public meeting in Ahmedabad, where he suddenly declared his resolve to fast. This day was 15 February 1918. Twenty-two days prior to this date, Gandhi had been leading the strike of the workers of the textiles mills of Ahmedabad. The mill workers had taken a pledge to strike work until their demands were met. They appeared to be going back upon their pledge. Gandhi was groping, not being able to see clearly the way forward. He described his sudden resolve thus: "One morning-it was at a mill-hands' meeting-while I was groping and unable to see my way clearly, the light came to me. Unbidden and all by themselves the words came to my lips: 'unless the strikers rally,' I declared to the meeting, 'and continue to strike till a settlement is reached or till they leave the mills altogether, I will not touch any food.'"[128]

He was to repeatedly speak of the inner voice in similar metaphors, of darkness that enveloped him, his groping, churning, wanting to find a way forward and the moment of light, of knowledge when the voice spoke to him. Gandhi

sought the guidance of his inner voice not only in the spiritual realm, a realm that was incommunicable and known only to him and his Maker, but also in the political realm. He called off the non-cooperation movement against the British in February 1922 in response to the prompting of his inner voice. His famous Dandi March also came to him through the voice speaking from within. Gandhi's search for a moral and spiritual basis for political action was anchored in his claim that one could and ought to be guided by the Voice of Truth speaking from within. This made his politics deeply spiritual. The validity and legitimacy of such claim was recognised in the spiritual realm. The idea of perfect surrender was integral to and consistent with the ideals of religious life. But Gandhi expanded the scope of the inner voice to include the political realm. Gandhi's ideas of civilization and *Swaraj* were rooted in this possibility of knowing oneself. In 1909, Gandhi wrote his most important philosophical work, the *Hind Swaraj*.[129] Gandhi argued in the *Hind Swaraj*, that modern Western civilization in fact de-civilizes[130] and characterised it as black-age or Satanic civilization. Gandhi argued that civilization in the modern sense had no place for either religion or morality. He wrote; "Its true test lies in the fact that people living under it make bodily welfare the object of life."[131] By making bodily welfare the object of life, modern civilization had shifted the locus of judgement outside the human being. It had made not right conduct but objects the measure of human worth. In so doing, it had closed the possibility of knowing oneself. True civilization on the other hand was rooted in this very possibility. He wrote; "Civilization is that mode of conduct which points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and passions. So doing, we know ourselves."[132] This act of knowing oneself is not only the basis of spiritual life but also

of political life. He defined *Swaraj* thus; "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves."[133] This act of ruling oneself meant the control of mind and passions, of observance of morality and of knowing the right and the true path. Gandhi's idea and practice of *Satyagraha* with its invocation of the soul-force is based on this. Satyagraha requires not only the purity of means and ends, but also the purity of the practitioner. Satyagraha in the final instance is based on the recognition of one's own conscience, on one's ability to listen to one's inner voice and submit to it.

All of Gandhi's self-practices, fasting or *Upvas* (to dwell closer to Him) combined the spiritual and the political in an inextricable way. This becomes apparent when we examine Gandhi's thirty 'public' fasts during his life in India from 1915 to 1948.

The dialogue between Tagore and Gandhi on the practice of fasting centres around two of Gandhi's most debated and contentious fasts in 1932 and 1933. Gandhi fasted from September 20 to 25, 1932 as a prisoner at the Yervada Central Prison, Pune against the 'communal award' of the British Government.[134] This 'fast unto death' was necessitated by the failure of the Gandhi-Samuel Hoare and Ramsay Macdonald dialogue on the question of creation of separate electorates on communal lines and specifically on the inclusion of the 'depressed classes' as a separate communal category. Gandhi commenced this fast at the noon of 20 September 1932. Early that morning at 3 am he wrote to Tagore in his own hand: "I enter the fiery gate at noon. If you can bless the effort, I want it. You have been to me a true friend because you have been a candid friend often speaking your thoughts aloud. I had looked forward to a firm opinion from you, one way or the other. But you have refused to criticise. Though it can now only be during my fast, I will yet prize your criticism, if your heart condemns my action... If your heart approves of the action I want your

blessing. It will sustain me."[135] This was for the first time ever that Gandhi had sought Tagore's or for that matter anyone's blessings and approval before commencing his fast. Gandhi need not have worried. Tagore had already sent his blessings and approval the previous day by a telegram in which he said that it was worth sacrificing Gandhi's life for the sake of India's unity and social integrity. He characterised Gandhi's fast as a "sublime penance." The Jail superintendent brought this 'loving and magnificent' telegram to Gandhi just as he was about to hand over the letter for Tagore. Gandhi felt that Guurdev's blessings would sustain him through the storm he was about to enter.

On the same day Tagore spelled out the message of Gandhi's fast in an address to the staff and students of Shantiniketan and Sriniketan. He said; "A shadow is darkening to-day over India like a shadow cast by an eclipsed sun. The people of a whole country is suffering from a poignant pain of anxiety the universality of which carries in it a great degree of consolation. Mahatmaji who through his life of dedication has made India his own in truth has commenced his vow of extreme self-sacrifice."[136] Tagore invoked the inner geography of a country where her spirit dwells, where physical force can never gain an inch of ground; a ground where the foreign rulers with their stupendous trappings of power must always remain outsiders at its gate. This inner dwelling geography can be made one's own by the power of truth. The one who attains mastery over this domain, Tagore assured, would continue to rule even when that person was no longer physically present. This bearer of Truth was Gandhi. Tagore said, "And we all know that such achievement belongs to Mahatmaji. And that he has staked his life for a further and final realization of his hope fills us with awe and makes us think."[137] Tagore warned about the danger of misreading Gandhi's sacrifice. He knew that the country was given to reducing inner realization of

truth to signs and observances that are external and at best cheap and passing. Tagore warned against such imitation or sympathetic fast along with Gandhi. He had issued a similar warning about blind and unquestioning acceptance of the 'Cult of the Charkha'. No ceremonial expression can ever come close to Gandhi's 'heroic expression of truth' and such homage can only reduce its everlasting value. What is that one thought that the people of the country should reflect upon? Tagore gave Gandhi's fast universality. He declared the message of the fast to be, "No civilized society can thrive upon victims whose humanity has been permanently mutilated, whose minds have been compelled to dwell in the dark."[138] This was denial of humanity of the oppressed and the oppressor alike. Gandhi by his fast had, said the Poet, pronounced his ultimatum against the deep-seated moral lack in our society. Even if the country were to lose him in this battle, the fight would be passed on to every person in the country. He called on to the people to accept this gift of fight in the true spirit. "The gift of sacrifice has to be received in the spirit of sacrifice."[139] People were required to accept this gift of fight humbly but in proud determination and not cheaply dismiss it with ceremonials. He called on to the West as well. He knew that the West was incapable of understanding Gandhi's sacrifice, accustomed as it was to resorting to violence in moments of great crisis and calamity. "They confess that they fail to understand it. I believe that the reason of their failure is mainly owing to the fact that the language of Mahatmaji is fundamentally different from their own."[140] Gandhi had found the final expression of non-violence in and through his sacrifice. "The message of non-violence so often expressed by him in words and in deeds finds to-day its final exposition in a great language which should be easiest to understand."[141]

As an increasingly feeble Gandhi watched and participated in protracted and contentious negotiations with

the leaders of the depressed classes and the caste Hindus, it became Tagore's responsibility to explain to the country the spiritual significance of Gandhi's fast. In an appeal to the country, Tagore exhorted people to eradicate all manners of untouchability in all its ramifications. Failing to do so would invite a grave tragedy, he warned. "Whoever of us fails in this time of grave crisis to try his utmost to avert the calamity facing India would be held responsible for one of the saddest tragedies that could happen to us and the world."[142] As the fast moved in its third day, Tagore's anxiety regarding Gandhi's health grew, so did his conviction regarding the truth of Gandhi's calling. He wished to be near Gandhi and sought his permission to travel to Poona. He wrote to Mahadev Desai; "I try my hardest to keep my faith firm in the ultimate victory of truth as expressed in a great life to be sacrificed for its cause, but my heart bleeds to think what it would cost our country and I struggle with all my power to convince myself that India can afford it in her present time of crisis."[143] Tagore's message put fresh heart in Gandhi. On 24 September 1932, Tagore left for Poona accompanied by Surendranath Kar and Amiya Chakravarty. During this long and tiring journey, his companions bought newspapers at every major railway station. On 26th September, Tagore reached Poona on the crest of good news. The Poona Pact had been reached and the final acceptance of it by the British government was awaited. Tagore reached the Yeravada prison, his first time inside the gates of a prison. Gandhi drew him near to himself and kept him there for sometime, expressing great joy at seeing the Poet. Gandhi's body was frail and emaciated, his voice barely audible, but Tagore saw in it the profound manifestation of Gandhi's indomitable soul. "Yet his inner vigour was undiminished, intellectual flow active, his radiant personality as ever tireless... Not a sign, however, of mental fatigue, not the slightest shadow was there to obscure the lucid language of his thoughts.

Transcending the extreme rigours of his body, this great manifestation of his invincible soul was before us moving us to profound admiration. I could hardly have fully realized how great is the strength of this frail man had I not come near to him like this."[144] As they anxiously awaited the British Premier's decision, Tagore surveyed the men and women who were Gandhi's closest companions and associates. Their dignity, the strength of their character and disciplined calm affected him. He realised that they were worthy Satyagrahis. "One can easily understand that they fully deserve the responsibility which rests on them to establish India's Swaraj on unflinching service of Truth."[145] Finally, Gandhi broke his fast as the Poet recited in an improvised tune "when the heart is dried and parched up..." Henceforth, this song of Tagore's was to accompany each of Gandhi's subsequent fasts. The significance of this *Jajna* inside the walls of a prison was not lost on Tagore. He later remarked; "Never has happened such an event in human history. The *Jajna* (the sacrificial rite) was begun inside the prison and here too is reached its great fulfilment."[146] Gandhi issued a press statement that very evening in which he warned the countrymen and especially caste Hindus of the possible breach of trust. He said; "I should be guilty of a breach of trust, if I do not warn the fellow reformers and Caste Hindus in general that the breaking of the fast carried with it a sure promise of its resumption, if this is not relentlessly pursued and achieved within a measurable period."[147] Tagore heartily endorsed this statement.

The following day, Tagore's address to a large crowd that had gathered to pay homage to their master and celebrate his birthday was read out by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya's son Govind Malaviya. Tagore spoke of the spiritual intimacy with all humans that a figure like Gandhi makes possible. Gandhi and persons such as him, Tagore declared, extend the range of our personal self, giving it a significance of

eternal humanity. Gandhi was the spiritual force that bound each Indian to one another and to the motherland. Tagore likened Gandhi to the Upanishadic soul that resides in the hearts of all men. "We know in the Upanishads, God who ever dwells in the hearts of all men has been mentioned as Mahatma. The epithet is rightly given to the man of God whom we are honouring today, for his dwelling is not within the narrow enclosure of individual consciousness, his dwelling is in the heart of untold multitudes who are born today in India and who are yet to come."[148] Gandhi was the proof, if needed, that India was not merely a geographic entity but a living truth. Tagore expressed deep gratitude to the nation that it had not rejected the bearer of Truth. "What is still rarer that we have not repudiated him as we have so often done with the messengers of freedom and truth."[149] Having paid the most magnificent tribute to Gandhi, Tagore returned to Shantiniketan. Soon after returning to Shantiniketan, Tagore advised to Gandhi, as only he could, that he should now rouse the Hindu sentiment and make a desperate bid to win over the Muslims to the common cause; a challenge that he regarded as more difficult than the battle against untouchability.

On 3 November 1932, the Government of India lifted restrictions on prisoner Gandhi and allowed him to give interviews and carry on propaganda in connection with the anti-untouchability work. On November 4, Gandhi issued his first statement on Untouchability in which he took up the question of the fast and its possible resumption. He reminded the country that the last fast was broken on the clearest possible notice that the fast would be resumed in case of breach of faith by caste Hindus. The fast, he declared, would come not for the coercion of those who are opponents of reform but to sting into action those who were his comrades and those who had taken pledges for the removal of untouchability. Such a fast in his opinion had religious

sanction. "In my opinion, fasting for purification of self and others is an age-long institution and it will subsist so long as man believes in God. It is the prayer to the Almighty from an anguished heart."[150] He also wrote about the impending fast on the question of the temple entry at the Guruvayur Temple. He was honour bound to fast along with Kelappan if the temple was not opened to the untouchables precisely on the same terms as touchables.

Gandhi again wrote to Tagore seeking his blessings and whole hearted co-operation on the impending fast. "I do not know whether you feel that this effort is, if possible, purer than before."[151] The last fast, the critics claimed and Gandhi recognised, had a political tinge to it and that it was in some measure aimed at the British Government. The impending fast, Gandhi asserted would be purer as "it will not be possible to give any political colour to it."[152]

Tagore was unable to give either his blessings or his whole hearted cooperation to Gandhi's proposed new fast. He conceded that no one from the outside could criticise any of Gandhi's actions, which were guided by his own direct revelation of truth. Tagore wrote that the tremendous and sublime impact of Gandhi's last fast was still working on the consciousness of the country. A repetition of that would be too much psychologically for the country to evaluate and utilise for the uplift of humanity. If the movement had suffered abatement, Tagore would have welcomed the sacrifice of Gandhi's life. "Were I convinced that the movement has suffered any abatement or in any way shows signs of lacunae, I would welcome even the highest sacrifice, which humanity today is capable of making, the sacrifice of your life in penance for our sins."[153] Tagore promised to follow the events with his thoughts and prayers and "fervently hope that those who now stand in the way of truth will be converted to it."[154]

The proposed fast did not take place. However, even

before he had fully regained his strength he shocked the nation by announcing his irrevocable decision to undergo a twenty-one day fast in May 1933. On 30 April 1933, he made a public announcement to go on an unconditional and irrevocable fast for self-purification. The fast was to commence on Monday noon of 8th May and end on Monday noon of 29th May.[155] He declared that this resolution was made in submission of his inner voice. He stated that he had tried in vain to resist the call. This announcement caught even his closest associates and fellow prisoners unaware; they did not know that a tempest had been raging within him. He described this act of listening to his fellow prisoner Vallabhbhai Patel. Gandhi said to Patel, "as if for the last three days I were preparing myself for the great deluge! On many occasions, however, the thought of a fast would come repeatedly to my mind and I would drive it away...but the same thought would persistently come to my mind: 'If you have grown so restless, why don't you undertake the fast? Do it.' The inner dialogue went on for quite sometime. At half past twelve came the clear, unmistakable voice, 'You must undertake the fast.' That was all."[156] Gandhi knew that his invocation of the inner voice was beyond comprehension and beyond his capacity to explain. He asked; "After all, does one express, can one express, all one's thoughts to others?"[157] Many tried to dissuade him from the fast, which they feared would result in his death. Not all were convinced of his claim to hear the inner voice. It was argued that what he heard was not the voice of God, but it was hallucination, that Gandhi was deluding himself and that his imagination had become over-heated by the cramped prison walls.

Gandhi remained steadfast and refuted the charge of self-delusion or hallucination. He said, "not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God."[158] Gandhi undertook the fast and of course survived it.

Subsequently, he explained the nature of the divine inspiration. "The night I got the inspiration, I had a terrible inner struggle. My mind was restless. I could see no way. The burden of my responsibility was crushing me. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time when I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the Voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm."[159] He argued that his claim was beyond both proof and reason. The only proof he could probably provide was the fact that he had survived the fiery ordeal. It was a moment that he had been preparing himself for. He felt that his submission to God as Truth was so complete, at least in that particular instance of fasting, that he had no autonomy left. All his acts were prompted by the inner voice. It was a moment of perfect surrender. Such a moment of total submission transcends reason. He wrote in a letter; "Of course, for me personally it transcends reason, because I feel it to be a clear will from God. My position is that there is nothing just now that I am doing of my own accord. He guides me from moment to moment."[160]

Gandhi once again made bold and sought Tagore's blessings; "If your heart endorses the contemplated fast, I want your blessings again."[161] Tagore wrote back a day after the fast had commenced. He could not agree with Gandhi's submission to the inner voice. "You must not blame me if I cannot feel a complete agreement with you at the immense responsibility you incur by the step you have taken."[162] He asserted that Gandhi as a messenger of truth had a larger responsibility and calling, and to that extent, he had no right over his life and death. "...ideals which are positive and eternal ever wait to be represented by messengers of truth who never have a right to leave the field of their work in

despair or disgust because of the impurities or imperfections in their surroundings."[163] Presumptuous though it was, Tagore reminded Gandhi of Lord Buddha, who when he woke up to the multitude of miseries, he went on preaching the path of liberation until the last day of his earthly life. He beseeched Gandhi to do like wise and suggested that Gandhi was perhaps mistaken about the imperative necessity of his vow. He was still willing to grant Gandhi the validity of his calling and the truth of his inner voice. "I shall try to believe that you are right in your resolve and that my misgivings may be the outcome of a timidity of ignorance."[164] Tagore had greater misgivings about Gandhi's self-purificatory fast, which he expressed two days later. On May 11 1933, he again wrote to Gandhi reminding him of the duty of love preached by Buddha and Christ. He challenged Gandhi's mode of expiation. He said that self-mortification was wrong and unacceptable. The only path available to those who seek true expiation is to strive truly and heroically everyday on behalf of those who do not know what they do. Tagore then challenged the very idea of non-directed fast, or a fast that had no intended outcome except self-purification or purification of co-workers. "The fasting which has no direct action upon the conduct of misdoers and which may abruptly terminate one's power further to serve those who need help, cannot be universally accepted and therefore it is all the more unacceptable for any individual who has the responsibility to represent humanity."[165] Such action on part of the good persons can only leave the multitude of downtrodden to sink further into fathomless depth of ignorance and inequity. Gandhi had claimed that it was his unique duty and responsibility to fast for self-purification in answer to a call from within. Tagore challenged the very essence of Gandhi's self-practice. "You have no right to say that this process of penance can only be efficacious through your own individual endeavour and for others has no

meaning."[166] He was willing to accept fast as a purely and intensely private act, but not as a public act. "If that were true, you ought to have performed it in absolute secrecy as a special mystic rite which only claims its one sacrifice beginning and ending in yourself."[167] Gandhi, Tagore claimed, had a right to Sadhana but if that Sadhana had no universality, it was without any philosophical justification. Challenging Gandhi's statement to Vallabhbhai about the intensely private and incommunicable reasons for the fast wherein he had asked: ""After all, does one express, can one express, all one's thoughts to others?" Tagore stated that matters that are so intensely incommunicable where language itself fails should never be expressed. "All messages must be universal in their application, and if not, they should never be expressed at all."[168] He made a final appeal to Gandhi to abandon his fast for the sake of the dignity of the country and in the name of millions who need his living touch and "desist from any act that you think is good only for you and not for the rest of humanity."[169]

After this, Tagore had a serious re-think about the political implications of the Poona pact which was arrived at by the leaders of the depressed classes and the caste Hindus and subsequently endorsed by the British Government. Under the scheme of the pact out of total 148 seats to be reserved for the Depressed classes out of the general electorate 30 seats were reserved in the Provincial Legislature of Bengal. On July 24, 1933, Tagore sent a telegram to Sir Nripendranath Sircar that was made public. In this telegram, Tagore denounced the Poona Pact as being unjust to Bengal. He said that he had at the time of Gandhi's fast, sent a telegram to the British Prime Minister to accept without any delay. Tagore stated that at that point, the situation was extremely painful and the anxiety did not allow for the "peace of mind to think quietly on the possible consequences of the Poona Pact, which had already been arrived at and in

the conference, of which no responsible representative of Bengal took part."[170] Tagore now regarded his commitment to the Pact as "a mistake from the point of view of our country's permanent interest."[171] Tagore also claimed that he was motivated by a great love for Mr. Gandhi as also by his complete faith in the political wisdom of Gandhi. He regretted this faith and called it unfortunate, "as justice has certainly been sacrificed in the case of Bengal."[172] Gandhi wrote to Tagore that he was pained that Gurudev was "misled by very deep affection for me and by your confidence in my judgement into approving of a Pact which was discovered to have done a grave injustice to Bengal."[173] Gandhi said he knew that Tagore had ample opportunity to come to an independent judgment but given his generosity towards Gandhi, Tagore could not have acted otherwise. Gandhi challenged Tagore's assertion that grave and permanent injustice had been done to Bengal. He also said that it was futile to appeal to the British because only the parties that had originally consented to it could amend the Pact. Gandhi also assured Tagore that if he were convinced that a wrong was done unto Bengal, "I would strain every nerve to see that the error was rectified."[174] Tagore closed the argument by stating that despite Gandhi's assurance he remained unconvinced. "I wish I could accept your words and remain silently contended about it but it has become impossible for me knowing for certain that the communal award advocated by the Pact, if it remains unaltered will inflict serious injury upon the social and political life in Bengal. Justice is an important aspect of truth and if it is allowed to be violated...will claim a very heavy price for the concession cheaply gained."[175]

Tagore closed the debate and the correspondence on the issue by clearly stating; "I give you this letter only for my own considered opinion and do not desire any answer for it."[176]

6

Satyagrahi as Sthitpragnya: Gandhi's Reading of the Gita

> *I exercise my judgement about every scripture, including the Gita. I cannot let a scriptural text supersede my reason. Whilst I believe that the principal books are inspired…Nothing in them comes from God directly…I cannot surrender my reason whilst I subscribe to Divine revelation.*[177]

Gandhi records the deep embarrassment with which he admitted to his Theosophist friends in London that he had read the Gita neither in Sanskrit nor in Gujarati. He said; "They talked to me about the Gita. They were reading Sir Edwin Arnold's translation-*The Song Celestial*- and they invited me to read the original with them. I felt ashamed, as I had read the divine poem neither in Samskrit nor in Gujarati."[178] These Theosophist friends induced him to read the Gita. The poem struck him as one of 'priceless worth.' The verses 62 and 63 of the second discourse

If one
Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
Recklessness; then the memory—all betrayed—
Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,
Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone.[179]

made a deep impression and more than thirty years later at

the time of writing the Autobiography rang through his ears. It was perhaps not accidental that what captivated his mind and soul were the two verses, which describe the implications of allowing the senses and desires that the senses give rise to and seek their fulfilment remain unchecked. These verses claim that those – both individuals and Gandhi would argue civilisations – that make bodily welfare their object and measure human worth in and through them are certain to be ruined. The verses describe a state that is opposed to that of *brahmacharya*. The year was 1888-89 and Gandhi was far from making brahmacharya, even in the limited sense of chastity and celibacy, a central quest of his life. But what awakened in young Gandhi a religious quest and longing that was to govern his entire life henceforth was the message contained in these two verses, that the only way to *be* in the world was to strive to reach the state of brahmacharya.

This reading produced in Gandhi, a keen desire to read Gujarati translations of the Gita and read as many translations as he could lay his hands on. The Gita henceforth became his lifelong companion, he rarely travelled without a copy, and it invariably went with him to prison both in South Africa and India. The engagement was deep and continued to deepen over the years. He translated the Gita as *Anasakti Yoga* in Gujarati.[180] Before he attempted the translation, Gandhi during his imprisonment in 1922 wrote a lexicographic commentary that explained each term of the Gita and its various meanings in the poem. This was published only in 1936 as *Gitapadarthkosha*. During his yearlong stay at the Satyagraha Ashram in Ahmedabad, he gave between February 24, 1926 and November 27, 1926 two hundred and eighteen discourses on the Gita. The imprisonments in 1930 and 1932 provided another occasion to discourse on the Gita, when he wrote a series of letters, called "Letters on The Gita" to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram, which were read out during the morning prayer. He also composed a primer on the Gita, popularly called

Ram-Gita as it was composed for his son Ramdas Gandhi. By all measures, it was a remarkable engagement.

It was during the non-cooperation movement that this engagement came to be recognised by his closest associates. It was also for the first time that he used the idiom of the Gita in his public speeches and writings for a mass movement. He repeatedly argued that his ahimsa was derived from the Gita and that non-cooperation was a duty enjoined on all by the scripture. He said during a debate with the liberals led by Sir Narayan Chandavarkar, "I venture to submit that the *Bhagvad Gita* is a gospel of non-cooperation between forces of darkness and those of light."[181] He argued that Duryodhana had good people on his side, as evil by itself cannot flourish in the world. It can do so only if allied with some good. He said; "This was the principal underlying non-co-operation, that evil system which the Government represents, and which has endured only because of the support it receives from good people, cannot survive if the support is withdrawn."[182] Gandhi also had to counter the dominant interpretation that the Gita sanctioned war in cause of justice. Gandhi maintained that the Gita was pre-eminently a description of the duel that goes on in the heart between the powers of light and darkness, and it enjoined on each one to do one's duty even at the peril of one's life, while cultivating an attitude of detachment to the fruits of one's actions. The debate about scriptural injunctions to violence was old. It dated back to 1909. The revolutionaries including Shyamji Krishnavarma and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar had challenged his interpretation of the Gita and the Ramayana in a debate[183], conducted in the shadow of Sir William Curzon-Wyllie's assassination[184]. Gandhi was deeply perturbed by the repeated invocation of the Gita to justify the acts of violence. He felt that the sage Vyasa had erred in choosing the metaphor of physical war to inculcate spiritual truth and that he should have chosen another more

effective metaphor. Gandhi felt that it was his duty to state that the divine sage had erred. He said; "It was impertinent on my part. But what should one seeking to serve truth do? What one must do if one sees an error? It is not wrong to draw attention, in all humility, to what one feels to be an error."[185] His interpretation that the Gita was a poem that enjoined the duty of non-violence, led to criticism that he not only distorted the meaning of the divine song but that he was a Christian in disguise. He replied to the charge; "My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of Hindu population. I do, however suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions."[186]

This perturbed many. Swami Anand, who had induced him to write the Autobiography, also forcefully argued for a need of Gandhi's own translation and interpretation. He said; "We shall be able to appreciate your meaning of the message of the *Gita,* only when we are able to study a translation of the whole text by yourself, with the addition of such notes as you may deem unnecessary. I do not think it is just on your part to deduce *ahimsa* etc. from stray verses."[187] The force of the remark stayed with Gandhi for almost a decade when he finally translated the Gita with his own commentary.

Before we examine the ground from which this engagement stems, it is necessary to examine the question of *Adhikar*, authority or qualification. Gandhi was deeply aware of this question of authority. In 1920, during the non-cooperation movement he established a University, which then was called Gujarat Mahavidyalaya.[188] Gandhi was appointed its Chancellor for life. In his inaugural address as a Chancellor, he raised the question of Adhikar, of authority. "I fulfilled a function of a *rishi*, if a Vanik's son can do it."[189] The question of authority was more acute in case of a translation of the Gita. He was by his own admission a Vanik's

son, had very limited knowledge of Sanskrit and his Gujarati was by his own admission "in no way scholarly."[190]

He had accepted the demand for his own translation with some hesitation. He had prepared himself for the task by preparing a lexicographic text and by addressing the ashramites for two hundred and eighteen days. He addressed the question of authority and the legitimacy of his act of reading meanings into the text by a complex set of arguments.

The first was a philosophical argument. He refused to consider the Gita a divinely inspired scripture. He steadfastly refused to believe in the historicity of the Mahabharat. More significantly, he did not consider the Krishna of the Gita as a historical person. He did not say that the Krishna as adored by the people never lived, but the Krishna of the Gita was an incarnation, in a sense contrary to Hindu belief. Incarnation for Gandhi was an act of perfect and pure imagination. He wrote; "Krishna of the *Gita* is perfection and right knowledge personified; but the picture is imaginary."[191] Krishna was perfect imagination, as Gandhi could not reconcile with him doing many of the acts that the various Krishna Charitra attributed to him. Gandhi rejected them in no uncertain terms. "I have no knowledge that the Krishna of the *Mahabharata* ever lived. My Krishna has nothing to do with any historical person. I would refuse to bow my head to the Krishna who would kill because his pride is hurt, or the Krishna whom non-Hindus portray as dissolute youth. I believe in the Krishna of my imagination as perfect incarnation, spotless in every sense of the word, the inspirer of the *Gita* and the inspirer of the lives of millions of human beings. But, if it was proved to me that the *Mahabharata* is a history in the sense that the modern historical books are, that every word of the *Mahabharata* is authentic and that Krishna of the *Mahabharata* actually did some of the acts attributed to him, even at the cost of being banished from

the Hindu fold, I should not hesitate to reject that Krishna as God incarnate."[192]

Thus, Gita for him was a depiction of a spiritual struggle between the forces of darkness and light within the human heart and Krishna dwelled in each human heart. Krishna as imagined by Gandhi represented Truth; he was the conscience in each human being, he was the God of Truth, the Satya Narayan. Thus conceived the Gita was subject to reason. He could reject what was inconsistent with his deeply felt convictions and attribute meanings to the poem. His attitude to all scriptures was rooted in a similar ground. He rejected the historical Christ, but was deeply moved by the Christ of the Sermons on the Mount and felt the passions of Christ on the Cross. Similarly, he felt that the Buddha had erred in making contemplation the only path of self-realisation. He would have liked the Buddha to have given equal importance to bodily labour as selfless service.

The scriptures according to him had to confirm to what he described as 'first principles' of moral conduct. Anything that was inconsistent with the first principles of morality could not have for him the authority of the *Shastra*. Shastra, he said, "are designed not to supersede, but to sustain the first principles."[193] This opened up the scriptures to reason. A Christian visitor asked him, "Where do you find the seat of authority?" Pointing to his breast Gandhi said; "It lies here. I exercise my judgement about every scripture, including the *Gita*. I cannot let scriptural text supersede my reason. Whilst I believe that the principal books are inspired...Nothing in them comes from God directly...I cannot surrender my reason whilst I subscribe to Divine revelation."[194]

But this was not said as a non-believer. Gandhi claimed that he had earned the authority to interpret the scriptures by his faith and incessant striving to feel the presence of God that is Truth, in every moment of wakefulness and even

sleep. This ever-present sense of being in His midst that gave Gandhi his loving devotion to God, his humility and a sense of the spirit of dharma, or rectitude and righteousness within him, guiding his path.

The second ground stemmed from a literary argument. He said; "A poet's meaning is limitless."[195] When a poet composes his work in a moment of inspiration, he does not have a clear conception of all its possible implications. He argued that the beauty of a great poem is that it is greater than the poet. Gandhi gave the example of the author of the Gita. He argued that the Gita had given new meanings to both philosophical reflections and social practices. He cited the example of the idea of *Sannyasa* or renunciation. The Sannyasa of the Gita would not tolerate complete cessation of all activity. As he put it; "The *Sannyasa* of the *Gita* is all work and yet no work."[196] He argued that the author of the Gita by extending the meaning of words taught us to do that. Yet, this was not to be construed as a free licence; it was not a pure hermeneutic exercise. The act of interpretation required two other qualifications.

He wrote, "The truth which the poet utters in a moment of his inspiration, we do not often see him following in his own life."[197] Gandhi opened up a new ground. He claimed that those wanting to interpret the Shastras must practise its truth in their own life. The practice of truth required a deep moral sense. He said; "For understanding the meaning of the Shastras, one must have a well-cultivated moral sensibility and experience in the practice of their truths...Hence anyone who offers to interpret the Shastras must have observed the prescribed practice in his life...Those, however, are devoid of this spirit and lack even faith, are not qualified to explain the meaning of the Shastras. Learned men may please themselves and draw seemingly profound meanings from the Shastras, but what they offer is not the real sense of these. Only those who have the experience in the practice

of their truths can explain the real meaning of the Shastras."[198] This was his real point of departure with the tradition of scholastic interpretation of the Shastras. He made faith, a moral sense, and incessant practice of the truths of the Shastras central to the act of interpretation.

It was on this claim of practice that he based his translation and interpretation. He was aware, he said, in his introduction of the many translations and commentaries available of the sacred book. But no author had hitherto made a claim of practice. He in fact described the literary output in Gujarati as 'unclean' and of 'questionable character.' It was unclean as it had not been a result of an incessant striving for purity in thought and conduct. He described the Gita as a 'spiritual reference book' for him and his companions.

It was their attempt to lead their lives in accordance with the teaching of the Gita. He did not wish to suggest any disrespect for other renderings, they had their own place; but he boldly declared; "But I am not aware of the claim made by the translators of enforcing the meaning of the *Gita* in their own lives. At the back of my reading, there is the claim of an endeavour to enforce the meaning in my own conduct for an unbroken period of forty years. For this reason I do harbour the wish that all Gujarati men and women wishing to shape their conduct according to their own faith, should digest and derive strength from the translation here presented."[199]

Gandhi was to use this claim that the truth of the scriptures is revealed not through mere contemplation on the meanings of the words, but primarily through a steadfast observance of the truth of contained therein most effectively in his political debates with Lokmanya Tilak. Tilak was apart from being the most important political leader of India in the second decade of the 20th Century; he was the celebrated commentator on the Gita. His *Gitarahasya* composed during his six years of imprisonment at the Mandalay Prison in the

Andaman remains a seminal work until date.

From 15th to the 18th March 1918, Gandhi observed a fast. This was his first public fast after returning to India from South Africa in 1915. The fast was intended at one level to remind the mill-hands of their pledge. But through the fast Gandhi wanted to demonstrate the moral power of suffering. For him the nation was predicated upon the moral character of the people. People who did not have faith in God, did not have the capacity to under go suffering for the sake of truth could not constitute themselves as a nation. Nation for him thus became a moral category. The fast at one level was intended to awaken the morality that lay dormant in his countrymen.

It was this 'great idea' that he wished to share with the countrymen through the fast. On March 17, 1918, he spoke to the Ashramites, who were his closest associates and people he had the greatest faith in. The occasion was one of the most sacred rituals of the Ashram life- the Morning Prayer. Like many other occasions, he opened his heart before the Ashramites. The prayer discourse he said; "is indeed the best occasion for me to unburden my soul to you." The decision to fast, he said, was a grave one but behind it stood a great idea. The fast was a means of conveying this beautiful idea; an opportunity he could not miss. This beautiful idea was the truth that he had gleaned from the ancient culture of India, which even if mastered by a few he felt, would give them the mastery over the world.

The fast according to him was not just aimed at the mill-hands of Ahmedabad; the fast was an occasion for a dialogue with the people of India through a conversation with two of her finest leaders.

One of them was Tilak Maharaj, according to Gandhi, "whom millions are crazy, for whom millions of our countrymen would lay down their lives."[200] The other leader was Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, a man Gandhi described

as possessing "the holiest character."[201] The fast, Gandhi said was an attempt to converse with these two great leaders and through them with the country.

Tilak Maharaj had written on the inner meaning of the Gita. But, despite this he had not understood India and her people. Gandhi said, "But I have always felt that he has not understood the age-old spirit of India, has not understood her soul and that is the reason why the nation has come to this pass."[202] At the root of this failure was Tilak's desire that India should be like Europe. Gandhi said that Tilak Maharaj had undergone six years of internment to "to display a courage of the European variety."[203] He likened Tilak Maharaj's internment to the great men of Russia who were wasting their whole lives in Siberia. Gandhi was saddened that our greatest treasure was expended to no purpose. He felt that if Tilak Maharaj's imprisonment had spiritual promptings and spiritual motives its results would have been far different.

It was this absence of spiritual motive that Gandhi wanted to convey to Tilak Maharaj. Gandhi had written and spoken about this to him with the greatest of respect. But it was not something that could be captured in a few words, though Gandhi was certain that with his sharp intellect Tilak Maharaj had understood Gandhi's criticism. Gandhi wanted to convey the true meaning of the soul of India and of spiritual suffering to him. Gandhi said; "This is, however, no matter to be explained orally or in writing. To give him first-hand experience of it, I must furnish a living example. Indirectly, I have spoken to him often enough but, should I get an opportunity of providing a direct demonstration, I should not miss it, and here is one."[204]

Pandit Malaviya was of holy character, learned and well informed on points of dharma. But, he too had failed to understand the spiritual basis of India. Gandhi said of him, "he has not, it seems to me, properly understood the soul of

India in all its grandeur."[205] Gandhi felt that Pandit Malaviya with whom he was tied with bonds of affection and had for that reason frequent wranglings with him might get very angry with him and consider him swollen-headed for having said so. But it had to be said because what he had said was quite true. The fast was an opportunity to convince Pandit Malaviya regarding the truth of India. "I have this opportunity to provide him, too, with a direct demonstration. I owe it to both to show now what India's soul is."[206]

The second debate arose in 1920, during the non-co-operation movement. Tilak despaired at Gandhi's insistence on non-violence both as a strategy and as a moral frame. He argued for a policy of *shatham prati shathyam* (wickedness to the wicked). He wrote; "Politics is a game of worldly people and not of sadhus, and instead of the maxim *Akodhen Jine Krodha* (anger is vanquished by non-anger, compassion) as preached by Buddha, I prefer to rely on the maxim of Shri Krishna."[207] Gandhi replied that he was diffident about joining issues with Lokmanya Tilak on the question involving the interpretation of religious work, but in some cases instinct must rise superior to interpretation. He argued that there was no conflict between the two authorities quoted by Tilak. He wrote; "The Buddhist text lays down an eternal principle. The text from the *Bhagavad Gita* shows to me how the principle of conquering hate by love, untruth by truth, can and must be applied."[208] He contested the charge of Tilak that politics was not for sadhus. He said that the Gita was a guide essentially for the worldly and not the unworldly. He charged Tilak with mental laziness, he said; "With deference to the Lokamanya, I venture to say that it betrays mental laziness to think that the world is not for sadhus. The epitome of all religions is to promote purushartha, and purushartha is nothing but a desperate attempt to become sadhu, i.e., to become a gentleman in every sense of the term."[209] In conclusion, he said that the true law was and will ever remain

shatham prati satyam (Truth even unto the wicked).

He argued that, "Only he can interpret the *Gita* who tries to follow its teaching in practice and the correctness of his interpretation will be in proportion to his success in living according to its teaching."[210]

Therefore, in order to understand the true meaning of the Gita according to Gandhi, one has to understand what does living according to the teaching entailed.

Ashram, or 'community of men of religion' was essential to Gandhi's strivings in spiritual and political realms. The Gita was central to the life of the Ashram. Gandhi emphasised that, "The *Gita* has for years been an authoritative guide to belief and conduct for the Satyagraha Ashram. It has provided us with a test with which to determine the correctness or otherwise of our conduct in question."[211] It was for the only true measure of the truth of his actions. "The *Gita* for me is a perennial guide to conduct. From it I seek support for all my actions and, if, in a particular case, I do not find the needed support, I would refrain from the proposed action or at any rate feel uncertain about it."[212] In order that the Gita becomes the spiritual guidebook for the ashramites it was necessary that the Gita was ever present as an object of contemplation. Each ashramite was urged to commit the Gita to memory. It became an essential part of the ashram prayers; both in the morning and the evening. The day at the ashram began with the congregational morning worship at 4.15 am to 4.45 am[213]; and closed with the evening prayer at 7 pm to 7.30 pm. So central was this worship to the life of the community that Gandhi could claim; "Ever since the Ashram was founded, not a single day has passed to my knowledge without this worship."[214] During the morning prayers the recitation of the Gita was so arranged that the entire Gita was recited every fourteen days, later this was changed so that the recitation was completed in seven days.[215] The 19 verses of the Discourse II of the Gita

that describe the characteristics of a sthitpragnya became part of the evening prayers.

But recitation of the Gita and committing it to memory hardly constitutes following the truth of the Gita. The framework for conduct was provided by the ashram vows, a set of obligatory observances. These eleven observances drew their philosophical core from the Gita, the idea of selfless, detached action. Gandhi said; "The Ashram life is conceived in the light of comprehensive and non-formal sannyasa of the *Bhagvad Gita*."[216] The sannyasa of the Gita, where there is work and action and yet no action, was to be attained through the daily practice of truth, non-violence and brahmacharya.

Truth as God was the root of the ashram, its primary observance; Ahimsa or love was the means to Truth. Violence and practice of Truth are opposites of each other and cannot co-exist; "the more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth."[217]

But it was the practice of brahmacharya that gave the ashram its character as a 'community of co-religionists.' The idea of brahmacharya as understood and practised by Gandhi and the ashramites was derived from the Gita, more specifically the 19 verses of IInd Discourse that describe the characteristics of a sthitpragnya; a person whose understanding is secure. Brahmacharya in its limited and restricted sense constitutes observance of chastity and celibacy, including celibacy in marriage. The true meaning of brahmacharya is conduct in quest of Brahman, Truth. The Gita describes this state as a condition of sthitpragnya. A sthitpragnya is one who puts away, "all the cravings that arise in the mind and finds comfort for himself only from the *Atman*,"[218] and one "whose sense are reined in on all sides from their objects,"[219] so that the mind is "untroubled in sorrows and longeth not for joys, who is free from passion, fear and wrath;"[220] who knows attachment no where; only

such a brahmachari can be in the world "moving among sense objects with the sense weaned from likes and dislikes and brought under the control of the atman."[221]

The state of sthitpragnya, Gandhi would confess, is impossible to attain so long as one is imprisoned in a mortal frame, as our pleasures in the objects do not disappear so long as the body persists. He argued that it was impossible to attain deliverance so long as one lived in the body. The need for deliverance remains so long as the connection with the body remains. Thus, "no one can be called a *mukta* while he is alive."[222] And yet, it was enjoined upon everyone as a duty to strive for this state as it was possible to become fit for moksha; in the sense that one would attain deliverance after death and one would not be born again. Therefore, Gandhi made this quest central to his life. He said, "What I want to achieve – what I have been striving and pinning to achieve these thirty years – is self-realisation, to see God face to face, to attain *moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal."[223] The path shown to him by the Gita to attain moksha consisted of unattached, selfless action; control over the senses, faith, devotion, and constant vigil.

Gandhi knew that according to the Gita, "when a man starves his senses, the objects of those senses disappear for him, but not the yearning for them."[224] The yearning disappears when one has a vision of the Supreme Truth. Gandhi argued that this verse in fact advocated fasting for self-purification. Fast as self-purification is Upvas (to dwell closer to Him), upvas can be done only when fasting of senses is accompanied by a desire to see God; as "there is no prayer without fasting and there is no real fast without prayer."[225]

The path of Gita was neither contemplation, nor devotion; the ideal was a sthitpragnya, a yogi, who acts without attachment either to the action or the fruits thereof. Gandhi adopted two modes of self-practice to attain this state where

one acts, and yet does not act. These two modes were yajna (sacrifice) and satyagraha.

The Gita declared that; "Together with the sacrifice did the Lord of beings create,"[226] and the world would sustain so long as there was sacrifice, as "sacrifice produced rain."[227]

Gandhi found the word yajna full of beauty and power. He interpreted the word to mean sacrifice, an act of service. He saw this idea of sacrifice as the basis of all religions. His ideal was of course Jesus Christ. It was he, who had shown the path, Gandhi said that the word yajna had to be understood in the way Jesus lived and died. It was not sacrifice when other lives were destroyed; the best sacrifice was giving up one's own life. He wrote; "Jesus put on a crown of thorns to win salvation for his people, allowed his hands and feet to be nailed and suffered agonies before he gave up the ghost. This has been the law of *yajna* from immemorial times, without *yajna* the earth cannot exist even for a moment."[228] Clearly, Gandhi's interpretation of the word yajna was radically different from all previous interpretations that had emphasised the aspect of worship and ritualistic performances. Yajna for Gandhi was service to others and in the ultimate sense sacrifice of self. He said; "This body has been given to us only in order that we may serve all creation with it. And therefore, says the *Gita*, he who eats without offering *yajna* eats stolen food. Every single act of one who would lead a life of purity should be in the nature of *yajna*."[229]

But how does one perform such a sacrifice in daily life? Gandhi's response was two fold; for one, he turned once again to the Bible and the other was uniquely his own.

"Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow," says the Bible. Gandhi made this central to the life of the ashram and borrowed a term 'bread labour' from Tolstoy to describe the nature of work. This was an eternal principal; it was

dharma, duty, to perform bread labour, as those who did not perform this form of yajna ate stolen food according to the Gita. The other form of yajna was according to Gandhi peculiar to his times, as every age may and should have its own particular yajna, this was the yuga-dharma. Gandhi said that the yajna of his times was spinning; it was the yuga-dharma. Spinning was an obligatory ashram observance; each member was required to spin 140 threads daily, each thread measuring 4 feet.[230] This spinning was called sutra-yajna, sacrificial spinning.

Gandhi's characterisation of spinning as obligatory yuga-dharma deeply perturbed Poet Rabindranath Tagore. In a series of memorable essays, the Poet and the Mahatma debated the significance of this 'Cult of the Charkha' as the Poet called it. Gandhi responded with an essay called the 'Charkha in the Gita.' He asserted, that his belief in the spinning wheel had come to him from the Gita. He knew that the author of the Gita did not have the spinning wheel in mind while enjoining upon all the duty of yajna, but the Gita had laid down a fundamental principal of conduct; "and reading in applying it to India, I can only think of spinning as the fittest and most acceptable sacrificial body labour."[231] He clarified further; "I know full well that the meaning I have read into them will not be found in any of the commentaries of the book, interpreted literally...If here we understand the meaning of *yajna* rightly, there will be no difficulty in accepting the interpretation I have put upon it...Spinning is a true *yajna.*"[232]

As his conviction that sacrificial spinning was the only true yajna for his times deepened, he along with the ashramites resolved to change the name of the Ashram itself. Ashram, hitherto called Satyagraha Ashram was re-named Udyog Mandir (literally, Temple of Industry); explaining the term Udyog Gandhi said; "Udyog has to be read in the light of the *Bhagvad Gita.*"[233] Spinning came to occupy for him the

place of the Gita; he was convinced that for the millions the only true way of following the truth of the Gita was to practice sacrificial spinning. In 1932-33, while he was at the Yeravda prison, Mirabehn asked him for an English translation of his commentaries on the Gita. Earlier he had translated the entire *Ashram Bhajanavali* for her, so the demand was not out of place. Gandhi wrote to her that he would like to do that and the prison was the most appropriate place to undertake such a task; but if he were to do it, it would take him away from spinning. He wrote; "For the spinning is the applied translation of the *Gita*; if one may coin that expression."[234]

If Gita and the state of sthitpragnya informed and guided his spiritual quest to attain self-realisation, to see God face to face, to attain moksha, satyagraha was his chosen means to attain swaraj.

The origins of satyagraha were in a pledge, a pledge made to oneself with God as witness. Gandhi believed that the true ideal of a satyagrahi is a sthitpragnya; who performs all actions with purity of heart and mind, unattached to both the actions and fruits thereof. He claimed that the first glimpses of satyagraha had come to him not on 11 September 1906, in that fateful meeting at the Empire theatre in Johannesburg, but way back in 1899 when he read the Gita for the first time with his Theosophist friends. He wrote; "It is certainly the *Bhagvad Gita's* intention that one should go on working without the attachment to the fruits of work. I deduced the principal of satyagraha from this. He who is free from such attachment will not kill the enemy but rather sacrifice himself...As far back as 1889, when I had my first contact with the *Gita*, it gave me a hint of satyagraha, and as I read more and more, the hint developed into a full revelation of satyagraha."[235]

The condition of sthitpragnya and the ideal of satyagrahi were the same. The quest of a satyagrahi like that of the

sthitpragnya is to know oneself. Satyagraha is not only a method based on the moral superiority of self-suffering; but it is a mode of conduct that leads to self-knowledge. Without self-knowledge, satyagraha is not possible, as it is based on the inviolable relationship between means and ends, and its essence is in the purity of means. Pure means are not only non-violent means but means adopted by a pure person; a person who through a constant process of self-search cleanses and purifies the self; whose only true aim is to be a seeker after Truth. Thus, satyagraha, pure means and purity of the practitioner share an immutable relationship. In absence of the later two, satyagraha is not possible. Satyagraha is fundamentally an experiment in Truth in the sense that it allows those who practice it to know themselves. Satyagraha as a mode of self-recognition is directly linked to swaraj. "It is swaraj, when we learn to rule ourselves."[236] The idea of ruling the self is fundamentally different from self-rule or Home-Rule. To rule ourselves means to be moral, to be religious, and to have control over our senses. Gandhi's idea of true civilisation is based on this self-recognition. True civilisation must lead to self-knowledge. He says; "Civilisation is that mode of conduct that points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves."[237]

In this, we have a measure of Gandhi's quest. His quest is to know himself, to attain moksha, to see God face to face. In order to fulfil this quest he must strive to be sthitpragnya, he must be an ashramite, a satyagrahi and a seeker after swaraj. He said; "If we can achieve self-realization through fasting and spinning, then self-realization necessarily implies swaraj."[238]

This, he hoped would allow him and his fellow ashramites to attain the perfect ideal of sthitpragnya because, "when it

is night for all other beings, the disciplined soul is awake."[239] This was the ideal for himself and the ashram. He said; "Let us prey that we shall see light when all around us there is darkness...we should thus be ready to take upon ourselves the burden of the whole world, but we can bear that burden only if we mean by it doing *tapascharya* on behalf of the whole world, we shall then see light where others see nothing but darkness."[240]

7

Brahmacharya as Art

"Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist."[241]

I

It was through this beautiful and yet enigmatic statement that Gandhi wanted to convey his understanding of art to a young student of Santiniketan, an institution that strove for national re-generation through literature, art, music: the aesthetic experience.

During Gandhi's lifetime itself, it was a widely shared belief that art, literature, or music had no place in his ascetic life. It was also argued that heightened aesthetic sensibility had no place in his idea of national regeneration. There were those who argued that his theory of aesthetics was inhered in his khadi, the sparse architecture of his ashrams, his ever-changing dress was a testimony to his mastery over symbolic aspects of public life, and that his life itself was a beautiful work of art.

He was aware of this charge, if it is indeed a charge to not have a theory of art. He was not averse to declaring that, "If you go to the Satyagraha Ashram, you will find the walls bare. And my friends object to this. I admit I don't have paintings on the walls my Ashram. But that is because I think that the walls are meant for sheltering us, and not because I am opposed to art as such."[242] And he dispensed with the roof and the shelter of the walls whenever possible, preferring to sleep under the open skies so that he may "gaze out upon

the starry heavens overhead that stretch in an unending expanse of beauty."[243]

What is this quest for "unending expanse of beauty" that he invokes? Clearly, he was attracted to and sought the grandeur of nature. Could he then remain totally untouched and unaffected by the beauty that we, humans create, however limited, singular, and finite its expanse might be? But as one looks closely, a different picture begins to emerge; that of a man who was willing to allow a play to have a lasting influence on his life, of a man who sought healing properties of music and of a man who found the image of Christ on Cross arresting.

His earliest childhood memories are of two plays: *Shravan Pitribhakti Nataka* (a play about Shravana's devotion to his parents) and *Harischandra*. The agonised lament of the parents over Sharavana's death moved him deeply and he played the melting tune on a concertina that his father had purchased for him. He acted *Harischandra* to himself countless times. Writing some fifty years after he recorded, "Still both Harshchandra and Shravana are living realities for me."[244]

Gandhi had a profound and abiding association with two of the finest literary figures of his times: Poet Rabindranath Tagore and Romain Rolland. This was rooted, among other things, in his deep appreciation of their multifaceted creativity. He considered Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Poet Rajchandra exemplars that shaped his life and practices. Literature and in particular devotional/*bhakti* literature attracted him. The *Ashram Bhajvavali*, a collection of 253 devotional hymns remains till today one of the finest anthologies of bhakti poetry. Gandhi was also a fine translator. He translated Tolstoy and Plato's *Defence of Socrates,* and Ruskin's *Unto This Last* as *Sarvodaya* in Gujarati. He translated the *Bhagavat Gita* as *Anasakti Yoga* in Gujarati and did a prose translation of the *Ashram Bhajnavali* in English. He remained a lifelong student of languages.

When Dilip Kumar Roy, an exponent of Indian music and an inmate of the Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry suggested to Gandhi that he believed Gandhi to be against all arts such as music, an aghast Gandhi exclaimed; "I, opposed to arts like music! Why, I cannot even conceive of an evolution of religious life in India without music."[245] Music was an integral part of the congregational life of his ashrams. Pandit Narayan Moreshwar Khare, a disciple of Pandit Vishnu Digambar led the congregational singing at Gandhi's ashram, and walked with Gandhi with his Tanpura on the epic Salt March to Dandi. If medieval devotional poetry sung by Pandit Khare moved him, he drew sustenance from Mira (Madeline Slade) and Charlie Andrews' rendition of "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." Young Olive Doke, daughter of his first biographer and missionary Rev. Joseph Doke healed him with "Lead Kindly Night," as he lay recovering in their house in Johannesburg from blows inflicted on him by Mir Alam. Ever since Poet Rabindranath Tagore sang, "When heart is hard and parched up" during his epic fast in 1932, Gandhi wanted it sung during many of his subsequent fasts, when prayer was his only sustenance.

In 1931, on his way back from the Second Round Table conference, Gandhi visited Rome. Mira, who accompanied him on the tour, describes the visit to the museums of Vatican. "In Vatican, Bapu's eye fell on a very striking life-size crucifix. He immediately went up to it and stood there in deep contemplation. Then he moved a little this way and that way, so as to see it from various angles, and finally went around behind it and the wall, where there was hardly room to go, and looked up at it from the back. He remained perfectly silent, and it was only when we left that he spoke, and then as if still in contemplation-"That was a very wonderful crucifix"- and again silence."[246] He wrote about the Rome visit, "If I could spend two or three months there, I would go and see the paintings and sculptures everyday and study them attentively."[247]

But this does not explain as to why he described Jesus as the supreme artist. In order to understand the significance of this we need to understand the principle quest of Gandhi's life.

II

In the autobiography, Gandhi articulated his vocation and calling. He wrote: "What I want to achieve – what I have been striving and pining to achieve these thirty years – is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my entire being in pursuit of this goal."[248] He emphasised that all his actions, including those in the political realm, were directed to this end.

This remarkable desire to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*, is predicated upon one possibility: that it is possible for us to know our self, to attain self-realization. Without this possibility of self-realization God would remain ever elusive.

Two questions arise: One, how is one to acquire this knowledge? What are its modes and methods? And two, what does this knowledge of the self entail? How shall we recognise the self-realized?

Gandhi would like us to read his autobiography as one possible response to these questions. He says that it is possible to conduct one's life in the open, subjecting oneself to deep introspection as also interrogation. He called his method experimental in his autobiography 'experiments with Truth.' This method allowed one to be a scientist of the self.

He was equally aware that not all that the self experienced was not fully comprehensible and even less communicable. He said, "There are some things which are known only to oneself and one's Maker."[249] It is in this realm that language fails.

Gandhi's quest to know himself involved both these

realms; a public realm of experiments and a private, intensely personal realm of *sadhana* that was known only to him and his Maker. Both these realms are spiritual, moral, and religious in the sense that religion is morality. It is a realm where the seeker and his quest are one.

The implications of this quest become apparent when we situate it in the site of the experiments, that is the Ashram; the modes of experiment, which are truth, ahimsa (non-violence or love) and Brahmacharya (chastity, celibacy and more accurately conduct that leads one to truth) and its manifestation in Swaraj.

III

What then is the relationship between the state of sthitpragnya, the attainment of brahmacharya and pursuit of the aesthetic? Gandhi's initial attraction for the *Gita* emanated from the verses 62 and 63 of the second discourse. They read:

If one
Ponders on the objects of the sense, there springs
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
Recklessness; then memory´all betrayed"
Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,
Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone.[250]

Is it possible, Gandhi would ask, to have an experience of art that does not 'ponder on the objects of the sense?' Is it possible to have a non-sensuous experience of art or beauty?

For Gandhi, art consisted in "learning from nature without struggling against it."[251] That is, art is that mode which allows us to be in harmony with nature. It is this harmony that allows

us to see the "hidden beauty of moral acts."[252] Just as brahmacharya, which is the harmony of all senses, is a result of self-restraint, art and aesthetic pleasure is attained through self-restraint. He in fact speaks of art in the language of celibacy. "His artistic and creative nature at its best taught him to see art in self-restraint and ugliness in uncreative union."[253] There is art, he would argue, wherever harmony prevails with regards the time, the place and the occasion.

He, therefore, classified paintings as either divine or demonic, *sattvik* or *rajasik*, moral and immoral. He believed that art unsullied by passions had the same power as prayer, that of cleansing the soul. "We can see from our experiences of paintings which excite passions that, if a painter painted pictures which would purify us of passions, their power would be felt even by the coarsest of men."[254] He is saying that a work of art has to aid the attainment of brahmacharya.

But the question is whether what is experienced, represented and grasped by the senses can remain unsullied by the sense? Can art be devoid of sensuality? He believed that such a thing was not only possible but also desirable. The artist as the seeker after truth has to attain the state of sthitpragnya. "These arts are alluring. The world itself is alluring, and it is no wonder that the arts of an alluring world should be equally alluring. But just as the world, though it is alluring to the sense, can be a field for attaining *moksha*, can be a manifestation of the glory of God, so can be art."[255] Thus for Gandhi, art and religion are 'natural allies' as both belong to the domain of our relationship with God and serve the "identical aims of moral and spiritual elevation."[256] To him art that has no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest has no appeal. Art is one mode, one language that helps the soul realize its inner self. "All true art is thus the expression of the soul."[257] It follows that for art to be purifying and elevating it must have a relationship with truth, as nothing but truth can for him be pure and beautiful. In fact, the

highest form of beauty is truth. There can be no beauty apart from truth. He said that mere outward form might not make a thing beautiful, which shines with the truth within the soul. "I have always held the opinion that there is no contradiction between real beauty and truth. Therefore, truth is always beautiful. Truth, therefore, in my opinion, is the whole of art. Art divorced from truth is no art, and beauty divorced from truth is utter ugliness."[258] But these moments are rare in life and so in art.

IV

If indeed, Gandhi believed that art could aid the journey of the soul towards self-realization, why were the walls of his house, *Hriday Kunj*, so bare, completely bereft of any mark, artistic or otherwise? He responded, "There are two aspects of things-the outward and the inward. It is purely a matter of emphasis with me. The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward."[259] Gandhi argued that there are moments, however rare, when one's communion with oneself is so complete that one feels no need for any outward expression, including art. He asserted, "There comes a time when he supersedes art that depends for its appreciation on sense perception."[260] Gandhi described this beautiful moment of communion with oneself as a moment when one acquires the capacity to hear that 'small, still voice within,' what he often described as 'the inner voice.' He often invoked the inner voice, most famously during his fasts. He spoke of it in terms of light, illumination, of piercing of darkness. He claimed that it was a result of a conscious practice of self-restraint that allowed him to hear the unmistakable voice from within. Having once heard the inner voice, he could dispense with all reliance upon the external forms. "In my own case, I find that I can do entirely without external forms in my soul's realization. I can claim, therefore,

that there is truly sufficient Art in my life, though you may not see what you call works of Art about me."[261]

The greatest form of art for Gandhi was asceticism. He said, "I say that he is the greatest artist who leads the best life."[262] Jesus therefore was the supreme artist as he saw and expressed truth. Gandhi craved for himself such art. "That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for."[263]

8

Ramanama

In his foreword to a biography of Harilal Gandhi, Ramachandra Gandhi wrote of his grandfather and uncle: "Harilal gave himself up to alcohol, even as Gandhi gave himself up to Ramanama. The son suffered privations, the father won martyrdom and, possibly, Moksha."[264] This essay is an attempt to understand what Ramachandra Gandhi described as Gandhi's "rambling wisdom... suggestive of an inebriation which is greater than sanity and worldly wisdom of teetotallers."[265]

On 30th January 1948, as he stopped three bullets in their path of hate,[266] Gandhi uttered the name of Rama. It was *iccha mrityu*, a death that he had desired and willed. For months before that day, Gandhi had imagined this death: a violent death at the hands of an assassin and at that moment his ability to face the bullets on his chest without any trace of hatred for the assassin and to meet his maker with the name of Rama on his lips. Such a death, he hoped, would show that he had been a true devotee of god as Truth, Satya Narayana. Speaking to those who had come to listen to his prayer discourse, and also to those who sought to prevent him from taking the name of Rahim in his prayers as also his would be assassins, Gandhi said; " I shall have won if I am granted a death whereby I can demonstrate the strength of truth and non-violence...Yes, if I have been sincere in my pursuit of truth, non-violence, non-stealing, *brahmacharya* and so on and if I have done all this with God as my witness, I shall certainly be granted the kind of death that I seek. I

have expressed my wish at the prayer meeting also that should someone kill me I may have no anger against the killer in my heart and I may die with Ramanama on my lips."[267] In private, he has expressed his desire to give one final proof, one definitive demonstration of his faith, of his striving to see God face to face. He said to Manu Gandhi, his constant companion and partner in *yajna* that he no longer desired to live for 125 years and that his striving was to meet death with the name of Rama on his lips. He believed his striving to be incomplete but hoped that death would be his witness. He said to Manu, "If I should die of lingering illness, it would be your duty to proclaim to the whole world that I was not a man of God but an impostor and a fraud... But if I die taking God's name with my last breath, it will be a sign that I was what I strove for and claimed to be."[268]

Why would he want a demonstration of his faith with such finality? For at least a few years before his assassination, that country and its leadership had turned away from him. As he sought to heal himself and the country in Noakhali, Bihar, Calcutta, and Delhi, he had seen both the efficacy of his ahimsa as also its frailty. Despite his 'Miracle of Calcutta' and barefoot march through the ravaged villages of Noakhali, the country was in the grips of an unprecedented orgy of violence. A final demonstration of ahimsa, of total submission to Rama he hoped would cure the country of this disease.

This desire of surrender, of submission was not new to him. Ramanama was ever-present in his life ever since Rambha *dai* gave it to him as a remedy for his fears. He was convinced that on three occasions when he was about to surrender to his lust and be with 'public women', he was saved by the presence of Rama dwelling within his heart. He was to later claim that he really became aware of the existence of god on that terrible night of May 5, 1891 at Portsmouth. He said, "seeking pleasure I learnt self-restraint. On the path to forsake Rama's name, I had his *darshan*. A

miracle indeed."[269] To be sure, the name of Rama was not on his lips at that hour; on his lips was the language of lust. Gandhi believed that Rama came to him in the form of a friend who warned him "'Whence this devil in you, my boy? Be off, quick!'"[270] He faintly understood the meaning of the term 'God saved me.' At the time of writing the autobiography, he was still grappling with the deeper meaning of what it meant to be saved by God. He was convinced that if he had submitted to his lust that night, he would have been rendered totally incapable of waging Satyagraha, of taking vow and remaining steadfast to it, of washing away the 'filth of untouchability', of repeating the sacred name of Charkha and would have been unfit to be blessed by the *darshan* of millions of women who came to him without a trace of fear.[271] Ramanama was on his lips when he fell to the blows of Mir Alam and his associates in Johannesburg in 1908.

Who was this Rama that he invoked? Gandhi was no image worshipper. He in fact liked to think of himself as a destroyer of idols, in so far as they represented subjugation to tradition, to textual authority invoked to show the untrue as true and as justification for injustice. And yet he understood the symbolic power of idols. Gandhi's Rama, as his Krishna and Jesus, was a composite of four aspects. One was the historic Rama: the Rama of the various *Ramayanas*, the son of Dasharatha, the husband of Sita, the slayer of Ravana as also of Vali, the king of Ayodhaya who also banished Sita. The second was Rama as an exemplar, regarded by millions as an incarnation and worshipped as Shri Ramachnadra Prabhu. This Rama was, for Gandhi, the Rama of Tulsidas, not so much of Valmiki and much less that of Kalidasa and Bhavbhuti. The third Rama was the symbolic Rama. Rama who stood for Satya Narayan and Daridra Narayan; for conscience, for the inner voice to which he sought to surrender himself and whose guidance he sought. The

fourth was Rama as Name; Name that stands for itself and not as a symbol for a reality for which it stands.

The historic Rama did not move Gandhi. While introducing his translation of the *Gita* as *Anasaktiyoga,* Gandhi had claimed that he was not interested in the historicity of either the *Mahabharata* or the *Gita*. He preferred to read it allegorically. He wrote; " Even in 1888-89, when I first became acquainted with the *Gita,* I felt that it was not a historical work... This preliminary intuition became more confirmed on a closer study of religion and the *Gita*...I do not regard the *Mahabharata* as a historical work in the accepted sense."[272] Gandhi did not worship or invoke the historical Rama. The Rama of history was far too imperfect. That Rama was not an infallible person. That Rama had killed Vali and also banished Sita. But even if the historical Rama had not committed any of these acts, the mere fact of him having lived in a body made him imperfect. For Gandhi, any embodied person, even an *avatar,* could not escape the limitations that the body imposes. "The man called Rama who lived in the past was subject to limitations. His body was perishable."[273] The body is the root of ego and hence sin for Gandhi. In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi quoted Tulsidas, but in a significant transposition he chose to alter the saying to indicate his conviction that body was the site of sin. He wrote; 'Of religion, pity or love is the root, as egotism of the body."[274] The embodied, historical Rama was hence imperfect and subject to sin. "The timeless body in Rama is sinless. The physical Rama, is of course subject to sin."[275] And the one who is subject to sin, not necessarily because of a particular moral failing or due to lack of virtue, but by mere fact of having been in a body cannot save one. He cannot be the one to whom one sings "*Nirbal ke bala Rama.*"[276] Gandhi wrote to son Manilal and daughter-in-law Sushila that, "the Rama of history, who is qualified by attributes, good or bad, would not have the strength to save us."[277]

In any case, he preferred myth and legend over history. "According to me, imagination is superior to historical fact."[278] Gandhi preferred Tulsidas's *Ramacharit Manas* over any other rendering of the life of Rama, including that of Valmiki. He was willing to grant Valmiki's *Ramayana* superior artistic merit but Tulsidas was for him unrivalled in his spirit of devotion. Whenever he invoked the *Ramayana*, it was Tulsidas's *Ramacharit Manas* that he spoke of.[279] But even a work that he considered as an unrivalled spiritual text was not without its flaws. It certainly was no historical work, nor was Tulsidas beyond the failings of his times as also his own failings. He said that "literal application of the lines attributed to Rama by Tulsidas will land the doer in trouble if not send him to the gallows."[280] Tulsidas had composed a poem as an act of devotion to the Rama of his imagination. "Tulsidas had nothing to do with Rama of history. Judged by historical test, his *Ramayana* would be fit for the scrap heap."[281] He believed that he and we have little to learn from Rama if we regard him as a historical figure that had waged a war against another historical figure, Ravana. As Gandhi's invocation of Ramanama grew in intensity, more and more people questioned him on his devotion to *Ramayana* and to Rama who had killed Vali by deception and banished Sita. Gandhi remained unperturbed by these searching questions as he was concerned with neither the Rama of history nor did he regard Tulsidas as infallible and sacrosanct.[282] Gandhi insisted on reading the life of Rama in the image that he held dear. He argued, like he did with all religious texts and texts that had validity as *shastras*, that "nothing contrary to truth and ahimsa need to be condoned."[283] Of course, it would be perverse to argue that since Rama practised deception, we could do like wise. The proper thing would be to believe that Rama was incapable of practising deception.

Gandhi had a deeper reason to not regard the Rama of

Tulsi as infallible. Was it given to the fallible to have a full conception of the infallible? Commenting upon the fallibility of the composers of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* (and by implication figures of Rama and Krishna that emerge from them) Gandhi said; "Only an infallible person could do justice to the lives of infallible beings. One can therefore only take the spirit of the great works for guidance, the letter would smother one and stop all growth."[284]

Gandhi was sympathetic to the idea of *avatara*, incarnation. The avatara does not deny the historicity of a figure. It does not mean that Rama or Krishna as adored by people never lived, but the idea of perfection is an after growth. In his introductory remarks to the translation of the *Gita* Gandhi said; "Krishna of the *Gita* is perfection and right knowledge personified; but the picture is imaginary... perfection is imagined."[285] All embodied life is an incarnation of god for the believer, but avatara for Gandhi, is a homage paid by people to someone who had lead an exemplary life and rendered extraordinary service. Gandhi saw nothing wrong in such homage, as it took nothing away from God's greatness. Rama or Krishna in this sense are imbued with divinity.[286] Rama as a historical figure no longer lives, and it is not that Rama that we worship. Gandhi said; "We do not worship the historical Rama or *Gita*. The Rama of history is no more now. But Rama to whom we attribute perfect divinity, who is god directly perceived, lives to this day."[287] The timeless Rama as an exemplar is sinless. When he invoked Rama and Sita, he often invoked them as exemplars, as those who show the path of rectitude. Rama's victory over Ravana, aided by an army of monkeys, exemplified for him the conquest of physical might by spiritual strength. Gandhi invoked Rama's steadfast adherence to a vow, his *tapascharya*, his willingness to undergo suffering so that he could demonstrate the superiority of soul-force and eradicate evil, *adharma*. The Modern West, with its civilisation that made

bodily welfare the object of life had ensnared and enslaved India according to Gandhi. The colonial power of England was the new Ravana, which could be defeated only by his eleven vows, his Satyagraha, and the willingness to undergo lifelong suffering. The struggle for freedom for him was a struggle among two dwellers within our hearts, modern west (Ravana) and real civilisation (Rama). "The one binds us to make us really free, the other only appears to free us as to bind us tight within his grip."[288] Sita exemplified for him non-cooperation with evil. We cannot kill the one who performs *adharma* but it is our duty to refuse co-operation with *adhrama*. He repeatedly invoked Sita's conduct in Ashok Vatika and her refusal to be enticed by Ravana to explain his idea of non-cooperation. Lakshman and Urmila exemplified self-denial and ever wakefulness essential for a satyagrahi. Rama as an exemplar could embody Daridranarayan, the god as embodied in the poor and the suffering. He said; "I take Rama to mean Daridranarayan and it is our duty to forsake the company of the one who does not serve the daridranarayana."[289] He could in the same way claim that Rama resides in the charkha and that sacrificial spinning (sutra-yajna) would bring merit equal to the recitation of Ramanama. It was for this reason he could suggest to the priest of the Rama Janmabhoomi temple that the idols of Rama and Sita should be in dressed in khadi, request needless to say, was disregarded. In this denial and his acceptance of this refusal, he saw his own failing. He invoked Tulsidas. Tulsi had insisted that Krishna appear before him as Rama and Krishna took the desired form. Gandhi said that if his devotion to khadi equalled that of Tulsi to his Rama, the priest would not have refused that our gods must be in swadeshi clothes. The necessity of effort, of national service and identification with the poorest took precedence over mere recitation of Ramanama for the sake of self-realisation. Gandhi believed that self-realisation cannot

be in absence of Swaraj. Ramanama could provide the self-purification required in a satyagrahi seeking swaraj. In response to a query regarding the possibility of attaining self-realisation without participation in the national service, he said that he could never appreciate teaching of the philosophy of inaction; "..effort is necessary for one's own growth. It has to be irrespective of results. Ramanama or some equivalent is necessary not for the sake of repetition, but for the sake of purification, as an aid to effort, for direct guidance from above. It is, therefore, never a substitute for effort... Ramanama gives one detachment and ballast and never throws one off one's balance at critical moments. Self-realisation I hold to be impossible without service of and identification with the poorest."[290]

Rama as an exemplar allowed Gandhi to extend the symbolic power of the avatara. But what was central to Gandhi was the Rama of his imagination, Rama who symbolised god, His presence, His compassion and mercy. He said, "There was a time when I knew Rama as Shri Ramachandra. But that time has now passed. Rama has now come into my home."[291] Before Rama came to dwell within him, there was a possibility of amnesia, of forgetting Rama. He recalled how he had come to forget the teaching of Rambha *dai* in his conceit and how his fears had revived. "As I grew old, the faith weakened. My mentor, the nurse, was dead. I ceased to take the name of Rama, and my fears revived."[292] Only the one who believes can feel the power of Rama and his glory. It is in fact the believer, who gives resonance to the name. In absence of faith, Rama has no power. Gandhi gave an analogy of the quinine tablet to illustrate this. "Ramanama has no independent power. It is not a quinine pill, which has a power of its own... It destroys malaria germs wherever they may be. Ramanama has no such independent power. A mantra acquires power through devotion."[293] The power that a devotee bestows on the name of Rama has to be done in

the spirit of detachment, of selflessness. Gandhi said that if the first devotee who took the name Rama had done so to acquire pleasures of heaven, Rama would have been no more than one of 33 crore gods. "But the devotee of Rama linked the name with *moksha*, and the result has been that a good many people have attained *Moksha* by uttering Rama's name in prayer."[294] Gandhi wished to be one such devotee.

On 30 March 1928, on Ramanavmi day he addressed the ashramites. He said that the Rama of whom they sang was not the Rama of Valmiki, nor even the Rama of Tulsi, because here was not the Rama whose name we may recite to cross to the other shore or whose name we may repeat in moments of despair. This Rama was not the embodied Rama, he could not have a physical form. Hence, "the Rama whom one wishes to remember, and to whom one should remember, is the Rama of one's own imagination, not the Rama of someone else's imagination."[295] Because this Rama of Gandhi's imagination was the Perfect One, He was the one who saved and purified even those who had fallen and committed sin, He was *patit pavan*. It is such Rama that he sought to worship. "We should worship Him, the Inner Ruler, who dwells in the hearts of all, yet transcends all, and is the Lord of all. It is He of whom we sing: *Nirbalke bal Rama*."[296] It was this formless and flawless Rama that Gandhi wished to see face to face. The Rama that he referred to and the name that he repeated all his life and at the moment of his death was not that Rama who we know as Dashrath's son.[297] It was that Rama whose name Dashratha gave to his son. That Rama was *Atmarama*, it was Truth. Truth is not merely that which we are expected to speak. It is That which alone is, it is That of which all things are made, it is That which subsists by its own power, which alone is eternal. Gandhi's intense yearning was that such Truth should illuminate his heart. He lived, moved, and had his entire being in pursuit of this desire. His intense longing and desire

was to attain self-realisation, to see God face to face, to attain Moksha. Despite his awareness that Rama had come 'home' to him, He was not near enough, and hence he needed to keep the recitation of the name. He spoke of this distance and his need for utterance; "Even now, although Rama is near, He is not near enough to me; hence the need to address Him at all. When He is with me all the twenty-four hours, there will be no need to address Him even in the singular."[298]

With the disappearance of the form, what remains is the Name. The absence of the form does envelop the disciples with darkness. But this darkness is the result of longing, an intense desire to feel the presence of the body. But this darkness can only be temporary, as what is permanent is not the body but the thought. And that is why Tulsidasji sang the glory of *namasmaran*. Name, that is pure thought, is higher than the form. Because thought does not disappear with the death of the form, it in fact it shines forth more clearly. The name Rama was more potent than the person or the exemplar. Gandhi believed that it was given to him to utter the Name, to speak of Truth. The Name was the saviour, it was pure devotion. Gandhi liked to describe himself not as a man of learning but as a man of prayer. Prayer was the very core of his life. He had an intense need for prayer. Prayer was not just repetition of the Ramanama. Prayer was the expression of the definitive and conscious longing of the soul; it was his act of waiting upon Him for guidance. His want was to feel the utterly pure presence of the divine within. Only a heart purified and cleansed by prayer could be filled with the presence of God, where life became one long continuous prayer, an act of worship. Prayer was for him the final reliance upon God to the exclusion of all else. He knew that only when a person lives constantly in the sight of God, when he or she regards each thought with God as witness and its Master, could one feel Rama dwelling in the

heart every moment. Such a prayer could only be offered in the spirit of non-attachment, *anasakti*. Gandhi spoke beautifully of the power of *namasmaran*. "You must learn to repeat the blessed name of Rama with such sweetness and such devotion that the birds will pause in their singing to listen to you – that the very trees will bend their leaves towards you, stirred by the divine melody of that Name."[299]

In the final years of his life, Gandhi gave himself up to the Ramanama. He was surrounded by failure and a raging fire. It was at once a sign of Gandhi's deep faith and his utter despondency and loneliness. Ramanama became the cure and perhaps the only form of cure that he came to rely upon. In the midst of an intense debate about the nature of India's independence Gandhi often retreated to Uruli-Kanchan, to a naturopathy clinic. The retreat was a mode of finding a cure, a healing, not only for the diseased body of patients that he treated but also for the disease of India.[300] To one and all he said, recite the Ramanama with a pure heart. The cure for the disease, both of the body and the body-politic of India, lay in the Ramanama. He spoke of Ramanama as infallible remedy, as he put it in Gujarati *ramban*.[301] Ramanama was no longer a symbol, nor was it a metaphor. Ramanama had become the thing itself. Ramanama alluded to no reality or presence outside of itself. It had become for Gandhi, Real. It was incumbent upon him to prove this reality. He was convinced that the violence that surrounded him was due to his own failing, his imperfect ahimsa, and imperfect *brahmacharya*. As he walked through the ravaged villages of Noakhali and Bihar, sleep eluded him. Even the chanting of Ramanama failed to bring repose. He lamented; "Why can't I, who preach all healing virtues of Ramanama to others, be content to rely on it exclusively myself?"[302] This was true of India as also of his own body and that of Manu Gandhi's. Manu had become the partner in his *yajna*. Her frail health, her illness, which finally required her to be

operated upon plunged Gandhi into deep crises. He was convinced that if Ramanama had actually taken firm root in his heart, Manu would not have suffered any physical ailment. "After all I have made her my partner in this *yajna*. If Ramanama is firmly rooted in my heart, this girl should be free from her ailments."[303] He shared his despondency with Manu. "Since I sent you to the hospital, I have been constantly thinking where I stand, what God demands of me, where He will ultimately lead me...I know my striving is incomplete; your operation is a proof."[304] Manu's ailment and surgery became the metaphor for the partitioned India. If he could attain perfect brahmacharya (charya or conduct that leads to Brahman that is Truth), and unsullied ahimsa, the flames raging around him would subside. His quest in the final years of his life was to attain this perfect brahmacharya as embodiment of Truth. This could be attained only if his heart was filled with the presence of Rama. He confessed, "I am no where near realising Rama yet, but I am striving. When I have the realisation, the glow of my ahimsa will spread all around."[305] He must discover the full potency of Ramanama or perish in the attempt. And perish he did. But in that final act of *iccha mrityu* he attained his Rama. The raging fires subsided and the country was stunned into silence only when he gave himself up to Ramanama.[306]

9

Exiled At Home: The Burden That Is Gandhi

I

At 6.30 am, on March 12, 1930 M K Gandhi, accompanied by seventy-eight[307] marchers left the Sabarmati Ashram for Dandi, a coastal village in South Gujarat. He did not ever return to live in the Ashram that he had created and nurtured since 1917.[308] It is evident that the self-imposed exile applied not only to the Ashram but also increasingly to the city of Ahmedabad and Gujarat itself. In the remaining eighteen years of his life, Gandhi was to spend some three hundred and one days in Gujarat.[309] His last visit to Ahmedabad was on November 2, 1936. His exile from Ahmedabad is reminiscent of a *tap*.[310] He did not visit Gujarat after January 1942.

If we understand something of this obvious turning away from Gujarat on the part of Gandhi, we might be able to capture something of the relationship that present-day Gujarat has with him.

II

Gandhi chose to establish his Ashram in Gujarat, and specifically in Ahmedabad on his return from South Africa. He hoped to render service to the country through Gujarati language. He had hoped that Ahmedabad, an ancient

centre of handloom weaving would be the most favourable site for its revival, not just as craft but as a way of living. Gandhi also had hoped that the wealthy merchant – capitalists of Gujarat would extend monetary help to his Ashram and its activities. About twenty-five men and women became the first inhabitants of the Satyagraha Ashram at Kochrab. They lived in a hired bungalow, unsuitable for the Ashramic life. Gandhi and his ashram were soon put on the anvil with the first 'untouchable' family of Dudabhai, Danibehn and their (and soon Gandhi's) daughter Lakshmi joined the Ashram community. His closest associates, including Maganlal Gandhi, a man described as the 'soul of the ashram', were deeply distressed by this. All monetary help from the Jain and Vaishnav *Mahajan* of Ahmedabad ceased and just when Gandhi was to move the ashram to the 'untouchables' quarters', monetary help from Sheth Ambalal Sarabhai saved the ashram. But, the internal rumblings in the ashram did not stop, nor did the opposition from the citizens from Ahmedabad. In 1917, the ashram shifted further away from the city, to the banks of river Sabarmati. A plague in Kocharb was the immediate reason for the hasty move to a barren piece of land, bereft of tress, where the inhabitants lived under canvas tents and cooked in a tin shed for a kitchen. The fact was that Kochrab had become inhospitable after Danibehn's family moved in the ashram. Search for a more suitable site, away from the inhospitable neighbours, had commenced in 1916 and the purchase of thirty-six acres of land was completed during the plague. The ashram community could not have been sustained without the ashramites contributing their body-labour. Gandhi was attracted to the site because of its proximity to the Sabarmati Central Jail. He wrote in his autobiography; "Its vicinity to the Sabarmati Central Jail was for me a special attraction. As jail-going was understood to be the normal lot of *Satyagrahis*, I liked this position. And I knew that the sites selected for

jails have clean surroundings."[311] What Gandhi did not mention was that the site had a far deeper symbolic resonance. The site was close to the ancient ashram of Sage Dadhichi, known for his sacrifice.[312] It was an ever-present reminder of the mythical sacrifice for the ashram community. Further, what he chose not to disclose was that the site was situated in close proximity to a *smashan*,[313] a crematorium; ritually one of the most impure locations for a Hindu. The only two communities that traditionally lived in proximity to the smasahn were the *doms*, who cremated the dead and a community of 'transgressive' renunciates known as *Aghoris*, who seek sublimation through internalizing the impure. Gandhi could not but have grasped what it meant for a Hindu to live in the proximity of a smashan. It was not just a constant reminder of mortality and the precariousness of human existence, but it was also a reminder of what it meant to live as an 'out-caste', outside the pale of city and *civitas*. It also signified the liminal position that Gandhi and his followers had come to occupy in the caste hierarchy of Ahmedabad.

Notwithstanding its liminality, the Ashram soon became the centre of the city's political-economy with Gandhi's arbitration and subsequent fast in the dispute involving the mill-owners and mill-hands of Ahmedabad.[314] Gandhi was required to oppose Ambalal Sarabhai, the same man whose gift had saved the Ashram from certain financial ruin. The dispute resulted in creation of a permanent intuitional arrangement; the Textile Labour Association, that sought to arbiter disputes between the workers and the mill-owners through the principles of truth and non-violence.[315]

While Gandhi was still negotiating the labour dispute in Ahmedabad, he was called by the peasants of the neighbouring Kheda district to lead their struggle against the British on the question of payment of land-revenue. It was the success of the two local agitations in Gujarat, besides his success in the struggle of indigo growers of the

Champaran region which paved the way for Gandhi's first nation-wide, non-cooperation movement in 1919.

Gandhi's stated objective in selecting Gujarat to establish his Ashram was that he would be able to serve the nation through Gujarati language. In 1909, Gandhi had written a philosophical dialogue *Hind Swaraj* and published it in his journal *Indian Opinion*.[316] A century later *Hind Swaraj* remains not only a key text of Gandhi's but also perhaps the most salient philosophical work in modern Gujarati language. Gujarati language scholarship has shown remarkable indifference to this work.[317] He wished to reach out to the weaver and the farmer and to the women through his writings. The vehicle chosen was *Navajivan*, which commenced publication as a weekly under Gandhi's editorship on September 7, 1919 and continued publication until January 10, 1932. In his first editorial, Gandhi made a remark about the Gujarati language that his journal would adopt. "India lives in farmers' huts. The weaver's skill is a reminder of India's glory, and so I feel proud in describing myself as a farmer and a weaver. I wish to see *Navajivan* reach the farmers and weavers in their huts and dwellings. I want it to be in their language."[318] He was to repeat this idea that writing must be such that it can be understood by the farmer and the weaver with much greater force in his Presidential Address to the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad in 1936. But in 1919, an event took place that remains unexplained and largely erased from official histories. On August 22, 1919, Gandhi was defeated in an election for the position of President of the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad. This body created in 1905 is an autonomous body of *litterateurs*. The man who defeated Gandhi in this election was Hargovind Kantawala.[319] This clearly shows that the educated and literary classes of Gujarat felt a deep ambivalence towards Gandhi as also his claims to serve the nation through Gujarati language.[320] It is true that Gandhi's national prominence was yet some years

away and so were his celebrated books in Gujarati, *Dakshin Africa Na Satyagraha No Itihas*[321] and *Satya Na Prayogo.*[322] The mode adopted to deal with this ambivalence and even embarrassment – as the same body repeatedly invited him to be its President, which he accepted in 1936 – was silence and erasure. With the sole exception of the extraordinary chronology of Gandhi's day-to-day life done by C B Dalal[323] no other history, including the one published by the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad even mentions this fact.[324] This curious omission is more startling because the person who wrote the chapter on Gandhi in the Parishad's history was C N Patel, who along with Prof. K. Swaminathan edited the hundred volumes of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.*

The deep ambivalence becomes more pronounced because the same volume of Parishad's history the editors – Umashankar Joshi, Anantrai Raval and Yashwant Shukla- decided to name the period of Gujarati writing between 1915 and 1948 as Gandhi *Yug* (The Age of Gandhi). Anantrai Raval in his over-view of the volume gave justification for this naming. He wrote; "After the arrival of the British, the other most significant development in the period under consideration is the advent of Gandhi in the universe of thought and action of India. The period of over three decades, after his triumphant Satyagraha in South Africa- which enhanced India's prestige- and his subsequent return to India in 1915 till the time of his death in 1948, is filled with the influence of his ideas, especially Satyagraha movements for national independence of 1920-22, 1930-32 and 1942 that people fought under his leadership and resultant attainment of freedom. This period, therefore, can without hesitation be called Gandhi *Yug,* both in history as in literature. It is a matter of joy and pride for Gujarat that most of Gandhi's work was done in Gujarat and through Gujarati language."[325] He does mention Gandhi's 'straight, simple, unadorned, sparse and yet direct' prose and his

contribution to Gujarati discourse through his *Dakshin Africa Na Satyagraha No Itihas* and *Satya Na Prayogo*. Raval concedes that these two works 'have luminous creative sections.' He takes note of his discursive essays and letters, without mentioning any specific details. The one contribution that is specifically mentioned is Gandhi's contribution to the standardization of Gujarati orthography. Clearly, for Raval and his fellow editors, Gandhi's Gujarati-ness and his politics are far more salient than his contribution to Gujarati language and literature.

III

Rajkot was home for Gandhi. He came to Rajkot at the age of seven or eight, when his father Kaba Gandhi became first a member of the Rajasthanik Court and later the Dewan of the Rajkot State. Gandhi's formal schooling was in Rajkot at the Rajkot English School, which later came to be called the Alfred High School.[326] It was in Rajkot that Gandhi learnt to 'play husband' to Kasturba. It was in Rajkot that Gandhi learnt to smoke, steal, eat non-vegetarian food in the company of Sheik Mehtab as part of the 'reform' process and visited a brothel, albeit he was "saved by the skin of my teeth."[327] Rajkot was also associated in his memory with a deep sense of shame about his own sexuality. If there was any place that Gandhi could call home outside his ashrams it was Rajkot.

The State of Rajkot, compared to other princely States of Saurashtra, was quite small. Its importance was relatively greater because the city of Rajkot was also the seat of the Kathiawar Political Agency, which was presided over by the Political Agent as the representative of the Paramount Power. The British also established the Rajkumar College at Rajkot to train the young princes of the Saurahstra principalities. The State of Rajkot was ruled by Thakore

Saheb Dharmendrasinh from 1930 till 1940, educated first at Rajkumar College and later in England, Dharmendrasinh was guided entirely by his Diwan Durbar Virawala, a Talukdar of the principality of Natwarnagar. Within a short time, Dharmendrasinh and Virawala squandered the personal savings of the family and the State Treasury. The State increased its taxes and handed out monopolies on essential items such as matches, sugar, rice, cinemas and gambling. A strike by the mill workers of the State-owned cotton textile mill became the issue around which the people of Rajkot organized resistance to the rule of the Thakore Saheb and his Dewan. After a series of repressive measures, the people of Rajkot under the leadership of U N Debhar decided to call a Rajkot State People's Conference on 5 September 1938. Durbar Virawala organized a counter campaign and sent out large numbers of telegrams to Gandhi and Sardar Patel signed by citizens of the State and powerful Garasias to inform them that there was peace and quiet in the State and conference was uncalled for. The conference was held on the appointed day, attended by Sardar Patel. Durbar Virawala invited Sardar to tea, held long negotiations and on the same day he wrote to Virawala setting out the gist of what was discussed. He wrote; "I am glad that my mediation has reduced the tension that had developed between the ruler and the people. You were apprehensive that my visit would excite the people and lead to violence, but, as you see, nothing of the kind has happened."[328] Sardar listed a series of demands which sought to establish responsible rule in the State, including setting up of a House of Representatives, curbing the financial powers of the ruler and a reduction in the land revenue rates by 15 per cent. Sardar told the people of Rajkot that this had to be their struggle and not that of the Congress.

While Durbar Virawala was negotiating with Sardar, he plotted to secure the support of the Resident Mr. E C Gibson

and the Viceroy. This he did by getting the Thakore Saheb to recommend his removal as the Diwan. On 25 August 1938, Dharmendrasinh wrote to the Resident that; "My Diwan D. S. Virawala has been ill and confined to bed for more than a year. You are also aware that an unhappy situation has arisen in my State due to the machinations of a few malcontents who are determined to stir up trouble for their own ulterior motives. The object of these activities is to stir up trouble in Kathiawar States as a whole, and they have unfortunately chosen my State on this occasion as it is certainly situated near and closely connected with the Agency. The issue at stake concerns not only Rajkot State but also the other States of Kathiawar as the ringleaders have themselves openly declared. I feel therefore I must enlist the services and support of an able and trusted official in whom I can place my fullest confidence for this purpose. I have chosen Sir Patrick Cadell[329], an officer of the greatest ability and confidence. As I have requested Sir Patrick Cadell to leave England by Air at once, which he is prepared to do....I beg of you to be so good as to obtain telegraphically the necessary sanction of the Government of India..."[330] Sir Patrick's appointment was approved on 30th August 1938 and he assumed charge as Diwan on 12th September. Durbar Virawala assumed the office of the Private Advisor of to The Thakore Saheb, leaving him free to intrigue without any responsibility and accountability. The relations of the new Diwan and the Thakore Saheb soured within a fortnight and the Thakore Saheb sought his removal one month and four days after Sir Patrick assumed office.[331] The Resident and the office of the Viceroy prevailed upon him to retain the services of Sir Patrick, which the Thakore Saheb did while maintaining, "the constitutional aspect of this question is in my favour."[332] Sir Patrick accepted to stay on provided Durbar Virawala was banned from entering the boundaries of the State, which was accepted.

Meanwhile, the Praja Parishad began a satyagraha by picketing the establishments of the monopoly traders. The leaders were promptly arrested. Sardar Patel's daughter Manibehn went to join the struggle on the 11th November 1938. She was arrested on 5th December and so was Mirudula Sarabhai who had gone there contending that her mother Sarala Devi was a former Rajkot citizen and she had a right to join the struggle.

Durbar Virawala thought that the struggle would end with Gandhi's intervention if the State made certain formal, procedural concessions. He enlisted the support of Anantrai Pattani, the Dewan of Bhavnagar and a close family friend of Gandhi. Hitherto, Gandhi had refrained from making any public statement save one in connection with the movement for internal reform in the State of Mysore. He said that partial success of Mysore struggle had instead of liberating other states stiffened them against the movement for responsible government. He made a specific mention of Rajkot; "And then comes the erstwhile progressive Rajkot. Only the other day it had a representative Assembly elected under universal suffrage, and it had complete liberty of speech under its late lamented ruler. One may hope that after the recent display (so far as I can see, wholly uncalled for) of force, the political organization of Rajkot will not only be permitted to function undisturbed but that its demands will be met in a spirit of justice."[333] Vallabhbhai and other leaders from Kathiawar had kept him informed and he and Katsturba were deeply concerned about the fate of the struggle and its Ruler. In fact, Kasturba wished to travel to Rajkot, but was prevailed over by Sardar.

The Diwan of Bhavnagar met Gandhi in Wardha and sought his help in drafting a statement that the Thakore Saheb could issue, which would end the conflict. Gandhi drafted a statement before 19 November 1938. This statement has six salient points.

1. The present struggle and suffering of the people should end immediately.
2. The State would appoint a ten member committee, who should be either subjects or servants of the State, of which seven members to be nominated by Sardar Patel, and three would be officials of the State. The President of the committee to be appointed by the Thakore Saheb.
3. The committee to recommend by the end of January 1939, a report recommending a scheme of reform which would give 'widest possible powers to our people' consistent with obligation of the State to the Paramount Power and with the prerogatives of the ruling chief.
4. The Privy Purse to be regulated in a manner laid down in a circular of the Chamber of Princes.
5. The Ruler to give assurance to the people that he intended to consider and give effect to the scheme.
6. All unconstitutional agitation to immediately cease, all prisoners to be released, all repressive measures to be withdrawn and all fines to be remitted.[334]

Gandhi sent a copy of the draft to Sardar and wrote; "If you approve of it, the Thakore Saheb may act accordingly and satyagraha should be withdrawn. Decide the names of the members of the Committee in consultation with Bhai Anantrai. The people's representatives should be in a majority in the Committee. If this is accepted, I think we should be satisfied. There is no mention of responsible government in my draft, but I think it is clearly implied."[335] The Thakore Saheb and Durbar Virawala approved of the draft and a meeting between Sardar Patel and Sir Patrick Cadell was scheduled for 29th November in Mumbai, in the presence of Anantrai Pattani. Gandhi sensed that a settlement was at hand and the conduct of the satyagrahis should not be such that it should cause any impediment to the settlement. On the 29th he wrote to Sardar that the plan

of sending batches of protestors from outside the State was against the ideals of satyagraha. "Participation by students in this manner seems to be altogether improper. It also does not seem proper that subjects from other States should send batches from places outside Rajkot. This is completely contrary to our policy. That batch does not want and will not get swaraj. Its going to Rajkot will increase ill will and cover up the weaknesses of Rajkot people if there are any. What will we gain by their weaknesses being covered up? The mettle of the people of Rajkot will shine only as much as it is worth. We may help it to shine brighter, but that can be done only by promoting growth among the Rajkot people themselves. If you agree with this, stop all batches from outside and stop all students from joining."[336] Not satisfied with this personal communication he also issued a public caution. "It is the essence of Satyagraha that those who are suffering should alone suffer it. Cases can be conceived when what may be termed sympathetic Satyagraha may be legitimately applied. But so far as I can see there is nothing in the Rajkot or Hyderabad Satyagraha to warrant outside participation... If the people in either case are not ready to suffer for their cause, no outside help in the shape of Satyagraha can bring true deliverance."[337]

The British Resident and Sir Patrick saw the intervention of Sardar as interference by the Congress and were concerned about the ramifications of such a settlement on other princely states. They decided to sabotage the settlement. Sir Patrick issued a statement under his signature on 9th December, which extended the application of the section 144 for a further period of two months. In yet another statement, he regretted the continuance of the struggle despite the fact that the Thakore Saheb had reduced land revenue and cancelled several monopolies. While this controversy was in progress, Durbar Virawala tried to bring about a settlement. He sought intervention of the

Raja Saheb of Dhangadhra and through his emissary invited Sardar to Rajkot. Sardar reached Rajkot on Christmas day of 1938 and wrote to the Thakore Saheb that it was possible for them to remove all misunderstanding and arrive at a lasting settlement. The Thakore Saheb invited him to tea the same day. His council was also present at the meeting, which lasted for eight hours after which the Thakore Saheb agreed to issue the statement that was drafted by Gandhi without any change in it. He signed the statement at 1.45 am and was published the very next day in the State Gazette. The struggle in Rajkot seemed to have ended.

Gandhi broke his silence on the movement on 2nd January 1939. He wrote; "Hitherto I have said hardly anything about the Rajkot struggle which has just ended as brilliantly as it began. My silence was not due to lack of interest. That was impossible owing to my intimate connections with the place. Apart from my father having been the Dewan of the State, the late Thakore Saheb looked up to me as to a father. My silence was due to the fact that Sardar Vallabhbhai was the soul of the movement. To praise him or his work would be like self-praise."[338] In this moment of success, Gandhi was aware that the people of Rajkot had not achieved anything extraordinary. The people of Rajkot he said had neither shown nor developed "the rare type of non-violence that would stand true in the face of all odds."[339] However, what they had shown was what ordinary non-violence could do. Something told Gandhi that the struggle might be over, the victory seemingly within grasp, but Kathiawar was capable of throwing up surprises. He cautioned people that the real test was yet to come. He asked; "Will the people exhibit the requisite selflessness and self-denial? Will they resist the temptation to serve themselves and their dependents?... Kathiawar is noted for its intrigues. It contains a race of politicals whose one aim in life is self-advancement, if it is also known to contain stuff of which heroes are made. If the

politicals gain the upper hand, there will be no *Ramraj* in Rajkot... Let the victory, therefore, be a time of humility, heart-search and prayer instead of self-satisfaction and vain rejoicing. I shall watch, wait and pray."[340]

The British Resident was anxious not to allow the agreement to have an effect. He called a meeting at the Residency on 28th December, where the Thakore Saheb and his council were present. Gibson said of Sardar in the meeting; "Well, he is a very unreliable man. You know that the Government of India was opposed to outside interference. By settling with him, you have lost the sympathies of your brother princes and the Government. Although the Government of India does not mind what you do, you have erred in settling through Patel. Even amongst the Congress workers, Mr Patel is regarded as most untrustworthy."[341] He also said that the agreement was not bad, except the expression "widest possible powers," which could be interpreted to reduce the Ruler to a mere figurehead. This meeting gave the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Virawala the sense that the British would stand by them if they went back on their promise. The immediate impediment was Sir Patrick Cadell. If he could be removed, Virawala could once again assume the charge, appoint a council of his choice and take the fight back to Sardar and the Praja Parishad of Rajkot. Thakore Saheb once again wrote to Sir Patrick on 31st December enquiring when he intended to send in his resignation. The Resident also realised that his interests would be best served with Virawala as the Dewan. He advised Sir Patrick to leave, which he did on 7th January 1939. Durbar Virawala retuned as the Diwan and immediately reconstituted the Council with the Additional Police Superintendent of the Agency Khan Saheb Fateh Muhammad Khan and his own nephew Kumar Valerawala as the members. The entire State administration was brought under Durbar Virawala's control.

Sardar, under the terms of the settlement, was to recommend seven persons to represent the people. Accordingly, he submitted on 4th January 1939, a list of seven names after consultation with the Praja Mandal.[342] The State chose to reply after Sir Patrick had resigned. Sardar received a reply on 12th January under the signature of Council member Maneklal Patel stating that the Thakore Saheb was disappointed that the names had been made public before the letter was received by him. He raised specific objection to three names on the ground that they were not subjects of the State. He also suggested that the Thakore Saheb wanted a more representative committee that included the Bhayats, two members of the Muslim community, and provide adequate representation to the depressed classes. Sardar replied that he regretted the publication of names, which he asserted was not done at his instance. On the specific issue of the Thakore Saheb constituting the committee, Sardar held that it would cause a breach of the settlement and hence was unacceptable. "I am afraid I cannot accept your recommendation regarding the names of Bhayats and Mussalmans on the Committee. There was a definite intelligible object behind the settlement entitling me to suggest the names. That object would be frustrated if I were to accept your recommendation."[343] Sardar also realised that the Thakore Saheb was likely to appoint Durbar Virawala as a Chairman of the Committee. He cautioned against such a move. "I must say that Durbar Virawala may not be appointed chairman. He has sent me word that he does not intend to hold any office, but in order to avoid any possible accident I have thought it proper to mention this."[344] The State disregarded this caution and on 21st January announced the formation of a committee with much diluted terms of reference. The committee also included four members not suggested by Sardar. The settlement broke down. Sardar called it a "Cold-Blooded Breach of a Solemn Covenant." In

his statement he said; "It is with deepest regret that I have to announce resumption of the struggle in Rajkot which seemed to have ended so happily. Resumption has become a duty in order to vindicate the honour of the State and the self-respect of the people of Rajkot."[345] He squarely blamed Durbar Virawala for this breach.[346] "I must state with the greatest reluctance that Thakore Saheb has been ill served by those who have eaten his salt. Among the worst of these advisers has been Durbar Virawala who has ruined the State and drained it empty by his hopeless mismanagement. He has cast a spell over Thakore Saheb which the latter cannot resist even if he would." Sardar described him as the 'evil genius of the State.' Gandhi reacted to this news with pain but not surprise. In his first statement, he said, "The advisers of The Thakore Saheb of Rajkot think nothing of making him eat his own words and commit a breach of his promise solemnly made to his people. The Resident of the Western States is party to this breach... Ground is being prepared in Rajkot for fomenting quarrels between Hindus and Muslims and the people in general and the Bhayats."[347]

The State responded to the resumption of the struggle with a series of ordinances, which gave extraordinary powers of punishment, including confiscation of property, to the State to deal with the agitators. The State also banned the entry of a number of newspapers in the State and banned all public gatherings. It also took all the leaders into preventive custody. On 30th January, Gandhi wrote about the breach of trust and announced that Kastrurba was on her way to Rajkot to participate in the struggle. "The struggle in Rajkot has a personal touch about it for me. It was the place where I received all my education up to the matriculation examination and where my father was Dewan for many years. My wife feels so much about the sufferings of the people that though she is as old as I am and much less able than myself to brave such hardships as may be attendant

upon jail life, she feels she must go to Rajkot."[348] Kasturba Gandhi accompanied by Manibehn Patel reached Rajkot on 3rd February; she was met at the railway station by Durbar Virawala, and served them with a notice not to enter Rajkot State for two months. As they declined to comply, they were arrested and confined to a Government House some sixteen miles away from Rajkot. Some days later, the State decided to move Manibehn Patel to a prison, leaving Kasturba alone. Manibehn went on a fast in which other prisoners joined her. Two days later she was taken to the Government House at Tramba where Kasturba had been shifted, they were joined by another prisoner, Mriduala Sarabhai. A few days later, the First Member of the Council Fatheh Muhammad Khan visited them with the news that Gandhi had taken unwell and they were free to leave for Wardha by the evening train. The information proved to be false and they continued to remain in prison. In a statement to the press issued on 3rd February, Gandhi charged the State and the Agency and said that they had resorted to "organised *goondaism*."[349] Kasturba's participation in the struggle was criticised by some in the State as a vile move by Gandhi. He was forced to offer an explanation. "I had not intended to say anything about my wife having joined the Rajkot struggle. But some cruel criticism I have seen about her intervention prompts an explanation. It had never occurred to me that she should join it. For one thing she is too old for such hardships as are involved in being in civil disobedience struggles... When she heard of Manibehn's arrest, she could not restrain herself and asked me to let her go. I said she was too weak. She had just then fainted in her bathroom in Delhi and might have died but for Devdas's presence of mind. She said she did not mind. I then referred her to Sardar. He would not here of it either. But this time he melted...The reader must realize my ancestral connection with Rajkot and the intimate personal relations I had with the present Ruler's father.

Kasturba is a daughter of Rajkot. She felt a personal call. She could not sit still whilst the other daughters of Rajkot were suffering for the freedom of men and women of the State. Rajkot is no doubt an insignificant place on the map of India. But it is not insignificant for me and my wife. As a child she was brought up in Rajkot though born in Porbandar. And, after all, neither she nor I can be unconcerned in a struggle which is based on non-violence and in which so many reliable co-workers are involved."[350] Gandhi and the First Member of the Council exchanged a series of telegrams between 20th and 25th February. The State refuted all allegations of ill-treatment and suppression and claimed that they were nothing but fabrication. Gandhi responded by saying that "If all reports are fabrication, it is serious for me and co-workers."[351] Gandhi informed the State that he proposed to reach Rajkot. "I come in search of truth and as peacemaker. Have no desire to court arrest."[352] He also proposed that the agitation would be suspended to give the State and him to open up a dialogue and repair the breach of faith. The State responded tersely, "His Highness feels sure that... you will appreciate that no useful purpose could be served by you coming here now."[353] Gandhi decided to leave for Rajkot on 26th February and informed the State. He was anxious about the possible outcome of his intervention, but hoped that Rajkot would not blast his faith. He wrote to Mahadev Desai, "Within me is joy, hope. Who knows if the prospect is no more than a mirage?"[354] The next day again he expressed his desire to submit to God in a letter to Mahadev. "How mysterious are the ways of God! This journey to Rajkot is a wonder even to me. Why am I going, wither am I going? What for? I have thought nothing of these things. And if God guides me, what should I think, why should I think? Even thought may be an obstacle in the way of His guidance."[355]

Gandhi reached Rajkot on 27th February and began his

discussions with the State represented by Durbar Virawala and Fatheh Muhammad Khan. He was allowed to see prisoners and held talks with the Resident and the representatives of the Muslim council and the Garasia Mandal on the 28th. Gandhi was due to attend the crucial Tripuri Session of the Congress in the coming days. He suggested that his mission in Rajkot would take priority over the Congress session. In three days, Gandhi's patience wore thin. He realised that Durbar Virawala would not allow any constructive talks to go on. On 2nd March, he wrote directly to the Thakore Saheb Dharmendrasinh. "I write this letter not without hesitation, but duty compels it. You know the reasons for my coming here. For three days I had conversation with Durbar Virawala. He gave me cause for intense dissatisfaction. He seems incapable of keeping his resolution from moment to moment. Such is my opinion based upon my three days' contact with him. In my opinion, his guidance has harmed the State…My patience is exhausted. I should hasten to Tripuri if it is at all possible."[356] In the letter, Gandhi outlined the steps that were required to be taken by the State to restore faith and bring about a peaceful transition. His principle demand was that the Thakore Saheb should announce that the notification issued on 26th December 1938 stands and that Sardar would have the right to nominate seven members to the reforms committee, which would pave the way for the participation of people in the State's administration. Gandhi also informed the Thakore Saheb that he had an assurance from the Resident that he would not interfere if the notification of 26th December were re-instated. Gandhi issued an ultimatum. "If you cannot see your way to accept my suggestion before noon tomorrow, my fast will commence from that time and will continue till after acceptance."[357] Gandhi tried to invoke personal bonds. "I trust that you will not regard the language of my letter to be stiff. And if I do

use stiff language or my action appears to be such, I claim that right in connection with you. My father had the privilege of serving the State when your grandfather was the Chief. Your father regarded me as a father to him. Indeed at a public meeting he called me even his guru, but I have been guru to no one; therefore, I have never regarded him as a disciple. You are therefore as a son to me. It is possible that you do not regard me as a father. If you do, you will accept joyfully my submission in a moment and, in addition, you will express your regret for what has befallen your people after 26th December. You will please not consider me your or the State's enemy. I can never be anybody's enemy and have never been one."[358] On the same day, he wrote a letter to Durbar Virawala, it is a rare letter in which, Gandhi expressed his deep bitterness and admits the limits of his own ahimsa. "What am I to do? I am writing this after having remained awake half the night. During the last three days, you have made me pass through a very bitter experience. I could see no desire on your part to adhere to any statement you made. All the time you appeared anxious to get out of every commitment. Last night's talk was the culmination, and I am now able to understand why it is that the citizens of Rajkot stand in terror of you. You have invited me to study your whole career. I accepted that invitation. But you have really not left very much for me to investigate. God has not given me that much strength, that much purity and that much non-violence for, otherwise I would have been able to enter your heart. I feel ashamed and sad that I have been unable to win you over. I believe that the influence you have over the Thakore Saheb is not an influence for his good. My heart wept night before last when I saw his mental helplessness and I hold you responsible for it...I would still request you to advise the Thakore Saheb to accept my suggestions. May God enter your heart."[359] He sent a copy of his letter to the Thakore Saheb to the Resident. The Thakore

Saheb replied on the 3rd; "In the best interests of my State and my people it is impossible for me to allow anyone else to have the final decision in a matter of such vital importance."[360] Gandhi's indefinite and conditional fast commenced on 3rd March. On 2nd March, he spoke to the press and claimed his fitness for undertaking an act of fasting. "The weapon of fasting, I know, cannot be lightly wielded. It can easily savour of violence unless it is used by one skilled in the art. I claim to be such an artist in this subject. It should be remembered that I am intimately connected with Rajkot and its Rulers. Regarding the Thakore Saheb as my own son, I have every right to invoke the best in his nature by means of self-suffering. If my fast, which I hope will be avoided, is to be interpreted as pressure, I can only say that such moral pressure should be welcomed by all concerned."[361] On the day that he commenced his fast, Gandhi forbade any sympathetic fasts, use of bitter speeches or writings against the Thakore Saheb, Durbar Virawala and the Resident. Gandhi spoke of his deep unease, cultural unease, with Kathiawar. This might explain his reluctance to make Kathiawar his home after his return from South Africa. He said; "Although I have been in exile from Kathiawar for more than a generation and a half, I know how turbid Kathiawar politics is. This unfortunate sub-province is notorious for its intrigues. I have felt its deadly influence even during these four days. How I wish that my fast may contribute, be it ever so little, to the purification of Kathiawar politics. I therefore invite the Princes and politicians of Kathiawar to use my fast to rid Kathiawar of the deadening influence of the poisonous atmosphere that makes healthy living in Kathiawar so difficult."[362] He also wrote to the Thakore Saheb reminding him of princely attributes. "Your letter is painful. You seem to attach no value to a promise. You are acting like a man who promises donation and then goes back upon his promise. Have you not given much by your notification of 26th

December? Donations are but one of the attributes of princeship as they are also its ornament. By that notification you promised a big donation. Its very core includes surrender of the right of making choice of names of members of the Reforms Committee."[363] On 4th March, Gandhi wrote to E C Gibson, the Resident with a request to pass on his views to the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow. He said that his chief difficulty was the interpretation of the notification of 26th December and the consequent breach of promise. "I cannot recall a parallel to such a chaos as exists in Rajkot. I do feel that this is a case for the immediate intervention of the Paramount Power so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Saheb."[364] Gibson wrote back on the 6th which included a response from the Viceroy, in which he stated, "I will readily arrange, and it will, I take it, meet what I have no doubt is your chief anxiety, viz., to ensure fair play in the fulfilment of the Thakore Saheb's Notification of December 26th."[365] Gandhi replied to the Viceroy through the Resident. "My actions especially my fasts are never taken mechanically. They are promptings of the inner call. The call to fast came to deal with an emergency...As to the police excesses, my observations so far have led me to think that they have been far in excess of my fears... But they did not cause the fast. Breach of promise is the determining factor. If I get your clear assurance that the substance of the terms of my letter to the Thakore Saheb of 3rd instant will be satisfied, I shall gladly break the fast."[366] The Viceroy replied the next day with a proposal. "It is clear from what you tell me that what counts with you essentially in this matter is your feeling that there has been a breach of faith. I realize that doubts may be entertained as to the meaning which should be attached to the Thakore Saheb's Notification, as amplified by his subsequent letter to Sardar Patel, and it seems to me the best way in which these doubts can be resolved is to refer their interpretation to the highest judicial authority in the

land, that is to say, the Chief Justice of India. I would, therefore, propose with the consent of the Thakore Saheb, which I understand is forthcoming, to consult this high authority as to the manner in which the Committee should be composed in accordance with the terms of the Notification and the Thakore Saheb's letter referred to above."[367] The Viceroy also gave assurance that he would exert his personal influence and hold the Thakore Saheb to the judgement of the Chief Justice. Gandhi agreed to break his fast on the assurance of the Viceroy and the promise of the State that they would approach Sir Maurice Gwyer, the Chief Justice for arbitration. Gandhi left Rajkot for Delhi on the 14th March and on the 15th met the Viceroy. The proceedings before the Chief Justice were held up because no statement or submission was received from the State of Rajkot. Finally, on March 26th Durbar Virawala made a representation before the Chief Justice. The submission covering forty typed pages was full of vituperation against Sardar Patel. It alleged that Thakore Saheb's Notification of 26th December was obtained 'under duress' and by 'fraudulent means.' Chief Justice Sir Maurice Gwyer gave his award on 3rd April, which was without any reservation a complete endorsement of the view held by Sardar and Gandhi. "I pause here to observe that the suggestion was madeÖthat this letter had been obtained from the Thakore Saheb by some form of duress... . I see no evidence for it, and in the letters written subsequently to Mr Patel by the Thakore Saheb, there is a good deal of evidence to the contrary.."[368] The real point of contention was whether the Thakore Saheb had a right to modify or reject the names suggested by Sardar. The Chief Justice ruled; "In my opinion, the true construction of each document is that the Thakore Saheb undertakes to appoint the persons whom Mr Vallabhbhai Patel may recommend, and that he does not reserve for himself any discretion to reject those whom he

does not approve."[369] On 7 April 1939, the Viceroy gave personal guarantee to get the award implemented. "I have undertaken to be responsible for the actions of the Thakore Saheb on this whole case, I will implement that promise to the full through my Resident, and that you need have no doubts on that point and that in my judgement all arrangements should be made in Rajkot."[370] Gandhi left that night for Rajkot. On the 9th he sent a letter to the Thakore Saheb, that if the Thakore Saheb wished to retain the four members he had already notified, in addition to the three official members that he had the right to nominate, Sardar will have to nominate eight members, or else the Thakore Saheb could withdraw the four names he had notified. The Thakore Saheb replied the next day and clearly stated that he wished to continue the four members that he had earlier nominated as they represented the Muslims, the Bhyats and the Depressed Classes. He said that he was not in favour of the enlargement of the committee as a committee of ten was envisaged and agreed upon. Further, he suggested one name that Sardar should include in the list that he was to submit. Thus, it meant that the committee would have effectively eight members chosen by the State and only two by Sardar to represent the people, while the notification had given Sardar the right to recommend seven members. This was also against the award of the Chief Justice. Representatives of the Muslims, the Bhayats and the Depressed Classes, including Dr. Ambedkar who met Gandhi on 19th April, met Gandhi with their list of demands. On 14th April, Gandhi sent names of the seven members on behalf of the Praja Parishad. The Jam Saheb of Navanagar, Ranjitsinh also got involved in the dispute at this stage and demanded official representation of the Bhayats and Garasias in the committee in addition to the members already suggested by the Thakore Saheb. It was obvious to Gandhi that the Thakore Saheb had no intention of fulfilling his

obligations under the Chief Justice's award. On 16th April, the Muslim and Bhayat associations threatened to disrupt Gandhi's evening prayer meeting and present him with a garland of shoes. Gandhi walked into the crowd of protestors and asked one of them to protect him if he so desired, as he would not seek any other protection. Gandhi issued a public statement soon after the incident. "What has hurt me most about this evening's demonstration is that the demonstrators chose what was for me a solemn hour of the day. For years all India knows I have offered without practically a breach of evening prayers in open congregation. Why did they seek my prayer time to molest me, and what had the numerous men, women and children, who at the end of the day come to offer their humble prayers to the one and only God for us all, done to deserve such interference? ...They continued vigorously to shout their slogans throughout the prayers. And they were all my countrymen. Their crises pierced me like arrows whilst I was trying to concentrate my mind on the words of the prayers."[371] Meanwhile, the Thakore Saheb rejected six of the seven names proposed on the ground that they were in his opinion not subjects of the State. Gandhi kept the Resident informed of all the exchanges he had with the State and various officials. He had anticipated that after the Chief Justice's award and the assurance of the Viceroy he would be required to spend just one day in Rakjot, while he had already spend ten days with no resolution in sight. On 20th April, Gandhi met Resident Gibson and made the most honourable offer available to him. He said; "The offer is that Parishad should withdraw from the proposed Committee altogether and that the Thakore Saheb should nominate his own Committee in terms of the Notification, that this Committee should be formed at once and should present its report to the Thakore Saheb within one month and four days from its formation. If the Constitution that will be framed by the Committee is not in terms of the

Notification, the Rajkot Rajya Praja Parishad, represented by the seven nominees, should have a right to dissent from it and the Committee's report and the dissenting report should be submitted to the Chief Justice of India as if the Parishad was represented on the Committee in terms of the Award."[372] Gandhi said that the Parishad had a right to have the Chief Justice's award through the Paramount Power but was willing to forgo that. Gandhi met Durbar Virawala on 22nd April for five hours with this proposal. Durbar Virawala did not agree to the arbitration clause and the binding nature of the Chief Justice's award. Gandhi had failed. He had only two options, one to resume the fast or to withdraw. On 23rd April, he spoke to the workers of the Parishad. He admitted failure. "I am sorry to have to confess to you that in this I have failed."[373] He said that there was a legitimate course open to him, which was to hold the Paramount Power responsible for implementation of the award; instead, he had done the most desirable thing of putting his head in the lap of the enemy. He spoke at length about his inability to enter Durbar Virawala's heart. Finally, he asked the people to relive him, Sardar and the British of all responsibility in the matter and deal with Durbar Virawala through the highest form of non-violence that they were capable of. On 24th April, Gandhi left Rajkot. In a public statement, he admitted not only his defeat, but the limits of his Ahimsa. He said; "And so I have left empty-handed, with body shattered, hope cremated. Rajkot has been for me a priceless laboratory. My patience has been sorely tried by the tortuous politics of Kathiawar. I have asked the workers to confer with Durbar Shri Virawla, to forget me and Sardar Patel, and if they get enough to satisfy their least wants, they may accept the offer without reference to either of us. I have told Durbar Shri Virawala, 'I am defeated. May you win'."[374] Gandhi had hoped that he would not have to return to further humiliation. The Praja Parishad requested his guidance in

their negotiations with the State and reminded him that he was duty bound to do so. Gandhi agreed to come back to Rajkot on 12th May. On May 5, Durbar Virawala told him that he was not welcome in the State. "My personal view and appeal to you... is that... you should come to Rajkot only when invited by His Highness and not before. Your coming now will prejudice direct settlement. Let Sir Maurice Gwyer's Award have its natural course without any outside interference including yours if settlement fails."[375] Gandhi informed him that he could not desert his co-workers and intended to reach Rajkot on the 12th May. During this period of absence from Rajkot Gandhi had done some hard thinking. As expected, he found fault with himself. He had come to believe that the Award of Sir Maurice Gwyer was a mistake. It was coercive on the State. That if he was to approach Durbar Virawala and the Thakore Saheb without the threat of the award and the intervention of the Paramount Power hanging over their heads, their response might have been different. He held detailed consultations with his co-workers and Durbar Virawala. His conviction grew that the Award must be renounced. "There is no doubt in my mind that the Award must be renounced. How can I woo Durbar Virawala and also keep the sword of the Award hanging over his head? But where is the courage?"[376] By 17th May, he declared; "Only trust can beget trust. I lacked it myself. But at last I have regained my lost courage. My faith in the sovereign efficacy of ahimsa burns brighter for my confession and repentance."[377] He announced that he and the co-workers had resolved to renounce the advantages accruing from the Award of the Chief Justice. He tendered a public apology to the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Virawala. "I recognize my error. At the end of my fast I had permitted myself to say that it had succeeded as no previous fast had done. I now see that it was tainted with *himsa*. In taking the fast I sought immediate intervention of the Paramount Power

so as to induce fulfilment of the promise made by the Thakore Saheb. This was not the way of Ahimsa or conversion. It was the way of *himsa* or coercion... My eyes would not have been opened if I had not found unexpected difficulties in my way. Durbar Shri Virawala was no willing party to the Award.... I owe an apology to the Viceroy for the unnecessary strain I have put upon him in my weakness. I apologize to the Chief Justice for having been cause of putting him to the labour which, had I known better, he need not have gone through. Above all, I apologize to the Thakore Saheb and Durbar Shri Virawala. So far as the latter is concerned, I must also own that, in common with my co-workers, I have harboured evil thought about him. I do not here pause to consider whether the charges made against him were true or not. This is not the place to discuss them... Having now freed the Thakore Saheb and his advisors from the oppression of the Award, I have no hesitation in appealing to them to appease the people of Rajkot by fulfilling their expectations and dispelling their misgivings."[378]

On 20th May, the Thakore Saheb in a formal Durbar announced his committee. Gandhi attended the Durbar as a goodwill gesture.

Despite his public apology and his admission of coercion, Gandhi's sense of loss was deep. When he had left Rajkot on April 24th he had said; "Rajkot seemed to have robbed me of my youth. I never knew that I was old. Now I am weighed down by the knowledge of decrepitude. I never knew what it was to lose hope. But it seems to have been cremated in Rajkot. My ahimsa has been put to a test such as it has never been subjected before."[379] He left Rajkot on 1st June never to return.

10

Thinking of Gandhi's Absence

I

Six weeks after Gandhi's assassination, some men, and five women came together at Sevagram, Wardha. It was a meeting that Gandhi had planned. India, though divided and engulfed by frenzied self-destructive violence, was free. Gandhi wished for an open discussion on the nature of Swaraj, swaraj that was constituted by a different ground than political independence. It was Swaraj that he had envisioned in 1909, by then forgotten *Hind Swaraj*. He had made an attempt in October 1945 to draw Pandit Nehru in what he hoped would be an open, serious debate on the nature of Swaraj. Nehru's response to this long letter composed in Gandhi's Hindustani was one of impatient dismissal. Gandhi at that point in nation's march towards freedom retreated, preferring to be the lone witness to truth as he had envisioned it. Perhaps, the meeting scheduled for 2 February 1948 was his attempt to re-open the debate; but this time a more inclusive one as he had called those who had or were asked to enter public office and those among his co-workers who had chosen to do 'constructive work.'

On 30 January 1948, he – as Ramachandra Gandhi so evocatively described – stopped three bullets in their path of hate. It was *iccha mrityu*; a death that he had hoped and willed for in the last years of his life. It stunned the new nation into silence. That silence was deep and heavy as it contained not only the collective guilt of so many of his

countrymen, but also the violence that had so perturbed a lonely Gandhi. That martyrdom allowed – howsoever momentarily – violence to be contained; it in some strange ways gave permanence to partition. His often-repeated remark that partition would be accomplished over his dead body came to be true, by a strange act of fate.

When Vinoba Bhave, Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru, Acharya Kripalani, Jayaprakash Narayan, Kishorelal Mashruwala, Kaka Saheb Kalelkar and Mridula Sarabhai among others came together at Sevagarm from 11-15 March 1948, they spoke with hearts heavy with sorrow and yet luminous as if sharing in the light of that bearer of truth. Each of them spoke of Gandhi's absence in a deeply personal way. It was Pandit Nehru who argued for the inevitable necessity and imperative of the realm of the political, while Vinoba spoke glowingly of the need for constructive work.

More than six decades later when constructive work has all but made way for rural employment guarantee scheme that bears Gandhi's name, how does one speak of Gandhi's absence? Is it meaningful at all to speak of it?

II

The distance is manifold. It is at one level generational, biographical, while at another it is that of our times. It was possible then to speak of Gandhi's absence and presence as deeply entrenched, intimate, and personal. It was possible for Mohan Singh Uberoi Dewana, to remind us in 1969 – the year of Gandhi's birth centenary - that every possible traditional Sanskrit adjective had been applied to Gandhi: a *brahmacarin*, a *tapasavin,* a, *mumukshu,* a *jivan mukta,* a *vairagyavan*, an *ahimsaka,* a *vratin* or *vratacari,* a *bhakta*, a *samkritanacarya,* a *sannyasin,* a *parivrajka*, a *sanatana dharmavalambin*, a *Mahatma*, a *yuga purusa,* an *avatara.* In

the same year, it was possible for Nirmal Kumar Bose to speak of Gandhi not in the past sense but as a living presence from whom one could learn ways of being non-violent, dialogic and deeply democratic.

For those who came together at Sevagram, Gandhi was not a deeply fractured, divisive, and divided presence as he is today. His absence was spoken not of as longing, memory, or history but as a challenge, a constant reminder of what could be. He was the measure. He was for them a referent – and for some of them the most definitive referent- on the fundamentals of politics, of society, of economy, of civilization and of life itself. It was this ability and availability of Gandhi – the person, his institutions, ideas, and associates – to be the measure of things that made him a deeply entrenched presence, personal, societal, and political. It is due to this proximity that they spoke of Gandhi critically. The presence of Kishorelal Mashruwala, one can imagine, would have acted as a constant reminder for the need to retain autonomous judgment. His presence, as also that of Jayaprakash Narayan and Vinoba Bhave, would also have made available to the country ways of being critical while retaining deep affection and reverence for the man because, it was they who embodied the age-old idea that it is in the act of submission that one acquires the capacity, the *adhikar* to have fundamental disagreement. Hermann Kallenbach, Kishorelal Mashruwala, Swami Anand and even perhaps Harilal Gandhi showed that it was possible and necessary to have fundamental disagreements with Gandhi and yet not lose sight of the significance of the man and his experiments.

III

As I write this, little over six decades after his assassination, the distance could not have been greater. This distance is about the nature of Gandhi's presence and absence, as also

our modes of remembering him. It is still possible for some of us to speak of the moving presence of *Bapu Kuti* as Rajni Bakshi did. It is possible for us to seek solace and comfort in Hriday Kunj as blood flows in the river Sabarmati where he bathed for so many years. It is given to us to search for our personal Gandhi. But the nature of distance is defined by the signs of our times. In 1969 Gandhi was at his worst was a commemorative stamp, a first-day cover. Today, he is a floating sign appropriated to sell Apple Computers, a gymnasium in New York, Monte Blanc fountain pens and even political parties. His sparse, meagre artefacts are sold and bought in the international auctions and we have the hubris to argue that even he sold his autograph for five rupees to collect funds for his activities! The Sanskrit adjectives that Mohan Singh Uberoi Dewana invoked have all but lapsed from our vocabulary. His *brahmacharya* is a matter for salacious gossip. His spirituality a justification for communal politics; his fasts have been reduced to a mockery. He is the cause of all that ails us; partition, appeasement of minorities, legitimacy for religious idiom in politics, he is also the cause of persistence of caste oppression, he is a *Manu vadi*. His deep and abiding concern for the poor and the disposed has been called a charade. And yet, we do remember him. Not only at the time when the Indian State decides to observe his birth and death anniversaries or when we decided to imitate his act by walking to Dandi. He is remembered when his Gujarat turns against itself in an orgy of macabre violence. We ask what has happened to Gandhi's Gujarat. We remember him as walls come up between two communities and ask what he would have done, how he would have re-established dialogue and trust. We invoke him through our social movements: Chipko, Narmada. Despite our invocation, in spite of our turning to him in moments of our crises, there is a fundamental lack.

This lack is not that of the frayed symbolism of our

invocations. It is not also due to the ruptures in the national conscience regarding the significance of his experiments. This lack is caused in large measure by the marginal presence that his economic ideas have come to occupy in our times. In 1969, in the year of his birth centenary, the Gandhi faithful – and there were still a large number of them – argued that the country had failed to follow the Gandhian model of economy of permanence. The reason for it was not the intrinsic failure of the model, but the leadership was not intelligent or wilful enough to steer the country on that path. Gandhi's economic ideas – which go beyond Khadi, Swadeshi and trusteeship – belong to the realm of normative economics, which proposes ideal economic order. Gandhi's economic ideas were primarily governed by non-economic values. He was not concerned with essentially economic values such as high rate of growth, full employment, economic efficiency, stability, and equality. Gandhi placed a demand on us, almost as an imperative, that we should adjust our economic behaviour in accordance with non-economic values and to the extent, we are capable of, the ideal would become real. Gandhi's economics proposes seven ideas: limitation of wants, limitation on large-scale technology with emphasis on small-scale technology and handicrafts, limits on large scale production, limited state ownership with widespread village ownership and trusteeship, self-governing, self-sufficient villages, equality of wages and universal physical labour. Even a superficial study of history of economic behaviour shows that in normal times, mass of people show a scant regard for normative economic values. It was economist Raj Krishna who pointed out this. "Most people are not interested in believing in any general normative economic model at all. And few who do, take care not to allow their beliefs to interfere with their normal economic acquisitiveness. That is why in recent history no ideal model whatever, Communist, Cooperative, or Gandhian, has

materialised anywhere on a large scale. The perennial power of ordinary human acquisitiveness and the attractions and compulsions of modern technology, have combined to endow the economic process with an autonomous dynamic which is largely independent of ideal models, and has a high degree of universality." Everywhere there is an irresistible urge for consumption goods, which can only be met with large-scale industrialized production, and notwithstanding the institutional arrangements of ownership, the technology for producing these goods is essentially the same.

But, we need to ask a few questions: Does any normative economic thought have any future? Does it survive even as a residue? These questions have acquired a salience, which they perhaps lacked then. This is, in large measure, due to our urgent search for what Joseph Cornelius Kumarappa called the "Economy of Permanence" and what we call "Sustainable Development." As we mark the tenth anniversary of the Earth Charter, our search for normative behaviour has become evermore urgent. But even within this discourse the primary emphasis has so far been on finding technological solutions to a technological problem. In our search, the ethical dimension has not been primary as sustainability is seen as an economic value and not a normative one. But as more and more communities rise in protest- often violent- the question of community ownership and rights over natural resources have come to predominate the debates on ecology, industrialization and survival of both tangible and intangible heritage that communities embody. In this search, the ethical dimension has re-emerged and search for an ethical economics has re-acquired legitimacy. In this search, Gandhi's ideas about the limitation of wants, decentralized local production using locally available resources and skills; his concern for the well-being of the human person and emphasis on the uplift and dignity of the weak, the meek, the exploited, and the underprivileged

will find a locus. Thus, Gandhian proposal for economic organization may not have a future, the search for ethical, sustainable economics that recognizes the rights of the earth, of other living beings, of communities disadvantaged by modernity will find resonance as the future might belong to normative considerations in the economic realm.

IV

This longing for Gandhi is best epitomised in Gujarat today by Narayan Desai. Deeply perturbed by the violence of Gujarati society and moved by a sense of having become a party to this violence, Narayan Desai decided to reclaim Gandhi for himself and us. His chosen mode has been the Gandhi Katha. He moves around Gujarat tirelessly narrating the story of Gandhi's quest. In so doing, he has also retrieved the beauty of the ancient form of Katha by making it a narration of truth, both personal and societal. His is perhaps the most creative response to the people of Gujarat as it engages with them and believes that all of us are capable of recognising truth within us and following it. He also illustrates the duties of a witness. These recitations have bestowed upon Gandhi the orality that was robbed by our textbooks and political discourse, which rendered him either as a young boy who could not spell kettle or as an enigmatic Mahatma who had to be killed both metaphorically and literally.

The Katha seeks to reaffirm faith in the quest for Truth, for non-violence, for the essential sameness of all religions and in the primacy of dialogue as a means of resolving conflict in modern civil society. Narayan Desai brings to his Katha deep scholarship about the life, thought and times of Gandhi. But more than scholarship he brings to his audiences his abiding faith in Gandhi. Faith in Gandhi for him is faith in eternal values of Truth and Non-Violence. But this quest for Truth is not only for self-realisation in a spiritual sense

but in a politically transformative sense of a Satyagraha. Narayan Desai's Gandhi Katha is simultaneously an act of atonement and an act of Satyagraha. And yet, the Gandhi that he invokes is an intensely personal Gandhi.

V

Narayan Desai's Katha and the biography of Gandhi – *My Life Is My Message*- confirms one fact, to borrow Ramchandra Gandhi's phrase, the fact of 'availability' of Gandhi. One emerges from it with a vision that is intensely personal. Despite its power, it raises a troubling question.

Is Gandhi available only as a personal vision, as an exemplar? Because this Gandhi has been available to us. What we mourn is the loss of a societal Gandhi, the political Gandhi. Also when we raise doubts about Gandhi's relevance it is the relevance of a moral polity that we question. To find an answer to this dilemma we have to go back to that debate of March 1948. None of them had the slightest doubt that Gandhi would continue to illuminate their personal lives. Their concern was whether the dream of a just and equal society attained by means of truth and non-violence by practitioners whose personal striving was to be pure was any longer possible; then and now. Vinoba said that a personal Gandhi is available through *tapasya*, but he agreed with Kumarappa that a societal Gandhi was possible only when we understand pain and suffering. Pain and suffering for them were not political categories of victim-hood. This pain they argued could be alleviated by engaging with society through constructive programmes and as Nehru said then, by continuing to regard politics as a moral space. The answer for us may not lie in the Sarva Seva Sangh, nor in being rigidly faithful to the list of twenty-one constructive programmes that it agreed on. The challenge for us is to re-imagine constructive programmes for our times, just as we re-imagine a personal Gandhi.

This would require that we give less primacy to the political realm. We need to free many categories like pain, suffering, loss, justice, forgiveness, and even truth from the tyranny of the political. This might allow us to think about our present through non-political metaphors. It might also unburden the political realm, free it from the desire to provide all answers. This could be our *Lokniti*.

11

In Search of Unity

I

M K Gandhi in his autobiography wrote movingly of his quest; "What I want to achieve – what I have been striving and pinning to achieve these thirty years – is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. I live and move and have my being in pursuit of this goal."[380] Gandhi asserted that all his speaking, writing, political work, and experiments in the spiritual realm were directed towards the attainment of this desire. This desire became more acute with passing years as he increasingly gave himself up to Ramanama. In the weeks preceding his assassination, Gandhi repeatedly spoke of his desire to submit and surrender to Ramanama and have His name on the lips at the moment of death.[381]

If this was his principal quest, we must ask how this quest informs his seven books?[382] There is no apparent thematic unity among these works. *Hind Swaraj* is a dialogue between Indian civilization and modern western civilization, between civilization and its reverse (*kudharo)*, between those who see ends as justification of means and those who see means and ends as inviolably related. *Satyagraha in South Africa* is an account of the struggle for dignity and equality of the Indian people in South Africa. The autobiography is the story of a soul in quest of Truth. *From Yeravda Mandir* and *Ashram Observances in Action* are a reflection on Ashram vows and the experiences of the ashram community in leading a life

committed to these vows. *On Constructive Programme* is best described as a handbook, a guide to action meant for those seeking a non-violent, non-exploitative society for India. *Key to Health* is a reflection on the nature of the body, disease and healing; while *Anaskati Yoga* is a translation of the *Bhagvad Gita*.

Thematic unities and disjunctions become apparent only when we examine each work separately and discern an underlying concern, which unites them.

II

Hind Swaraj or *Hind Swarajya* was written aboard the *Kildonan Castle* in 1909. It was originally written in Gujarati and published in two instalments in the Gujarati section of *Indian Opinion*.[383] It was soon banned in India not because it advocated revolt or the use of physical force against the British Government in India, but because it advocated a 'dangerous thought,' that of passive resistance or Satyagraha. In March 1910, Gandhi published English rendering – 'hurriedly dictated' to a European friend, Hermann Kallenbach – as *Indian Home Rule*.[384] *Hind Swaraj* is philosophically located at a fleeting, tantalizing moment in human history. It is located at a moment where it is still possible to conceive of life outside the realm of the modern universe. In this moment, two modes of life and thought are present simultaneously. A mode of life, that we call a-modern. A-modern is not anti-modern. It is not non-modern in the sense that it signifies absence of modernity. It is something that lies outside the modern realm and has to be conceptualized without a necessary and inevitable referent to the modern. The other mode of life and thought that is present is modern civilization. *Hind Swaraj* should be read as a text that was written at a moment in history where both the a-modern and modern universe exist simultaneously as

large facts; however fleeting that moment might have been.[385]

Gandhi's deep unease with modern civilization stems from his argument that the purpose of a civilization is to make possible for those who live under it to know themselves. It is this capacity for self-understanding that defines civilization for Gandhi. "Civilisation is that mode of conduct that points out to man the path of duty. Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible terms. To observe morality is to attain mastery over our mind and our passions. So doing, we know ourselves."[386] A civilization that makes possible knowledge of oneself is *Sudhar* and one that precludes that possibility is *Kudhar* or 'reverse of civilization.'[387] Gandhi was clearly invoking *Sudhar* in two senses, which have been latent in Gujarati. *Su-dhar* not just as good path, but one that holds, bears; from the Sanskrit root *dhri*. One, which holds and bears human society is *Sudhar* and only such *Sudhar* could point out to man the path of duty and open the possibility of self-knowledge. *Sudhar* is civilisation in this sense. Secondly, *Sudhar* suggests a movement towards virtue. It entails a choice in favour of the good and active shunning of all that is undesirable. It is this active, choice-enabling, virtue-enhancing possibility of *Sudhar* that Gandhi desired from civilisation.

For Gandhi, the essential character of modern civilization – *Kudharo* - is not represented by either the Empire, or the speed of railways, the contractual nature of society brought about by western law, nor by the vivisection of modern western medicine. It is also not represented by the use of violence as a legitimate means of expressing political dissent and obtaining political goals. Albeit, all these are significant markers of this modern civilization. The essential character of modern civilization is represented by denial of a fundamental possibility. This denial is of the possibility of knowing oneself. Describing modern civilization Gandhi says,

"Its true test lies in the fact that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life."[388] This is an inadequate rendering of the original Gujarati, which could be rendered as "Its true identity is in the fact that people seek to find in engagement with the material world and bodily comfort meaning and human worth." When the principal *Purushartha* becomes search for meaning and fulfilment in the material world and bodily comfort, it shifts the ground of judgement about human worth. The locus of judgement shifts fundamentally. It shifts from the human person to the body and the material world. It is for this reason that Gandhi characterised modern civilisation as 'irreligion', a 'Satanic Civilisation' and the 'Black Age.' By shifting the locus of human endeavour outside the human person – to objects of bodily welfare – modern civilisation also precludes the possibility of Swaraj. "It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves."[389] This capacity to rule oneself is different from Home Rule or political freedom.[390] Swaraj is predicated upon *Sudharo*, a civilization that makes self-understanding its central concern.

Gandhi argues that Swaraj cannot be obtained so long as Indians as also the British remain in the vice like grip of modern civilisation. The *Hind Swaraj* claims that this civilization is such that it is certain to be destroyed and is self-destructive. Anything that leads one away from oneself cannot be permanent for Gandhi. Despite decrying the modern civilization and its emblems, *Hind Swaraj* is not a text of hatred. In fact, it is moved by deep love and empathy for those caught in the fire of modern civilization. *Hind Swaraj* is a theory of salvation, not only for India but also for Britain. Gandhi is at pains to point out that India's struggle cannot be against the British but against the civilization that they represent. He reminds the British that they are religious people, that their basic constitution as a people and a society is not flawed. Gandhi's plea is that Britain be Christian in

the true sense, and if they become moral and know that, their pursuit is both irreligious and destructive; the English can stay in India. They can stay in India as moral people, but not as votaries of modern civilization and the Empire that this civilization creates. *Hind Swaraj* is a rare document of contemporary thought that does not seek annihilation of the oppressor, but in fact seeks their salvation. The duty of India for Gandhi is unique; it must not only realize Swaraj for itself but also free the British from the fires of modern civilization.

Hind Swaraj is also a meditation upon the question of means and ends. Violence for Gandhi is indelibly linked to modern civilization. Violence has to be shunned not only because *Ahimsa* (non-violence, love, non-injury, non-killing) is superior morality, but also because violence creates a distance between self and pursuit of Truth. "The more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth."[391] Violence for Gandhi makes the possibility of knowing oneself even fainter. He, therefore decries the argument that ends justify the means. He says, "'As is the God, so is the votary' is a maxim worth considering."[392] He likens means to a seed and ends to a tree, "and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."[393] Not only is the relationship between means and ends inviolable, Gandhi argues for purity of both the means and the ends. One cannot worship God by the means of Satan. This emphasis on the purity of means and ends and their inviolable relationship between them is a unique contribution of *Hind Swaraj*.

III

The means are mediated through the human agency; in the final analysis, the pure means are those, which are wielded by a pure person. It was this relationship between objects of

senses and the attachment for them that attracted Gandhi to the *Bhagvad Gita*. He read the *Gita* first in Sir Edwin Arnold's verse translation – *The Song Celestial* – with Theosophist friends in England. The poem struck him as one of 'priceless worth.' The verses 62 and 63 of the second discourse

If one
Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
Recklessness; then the memory—all betrayed—
Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,
Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone.[394]

made a deep impression and more than thirty years later at the time of writing the Autobiography rang through his ears. These verses claim that those-both individuals and Gandhi would argue civilisations- that make bodily welfare their object and measure human worth in and through them are certain to be ruined. The verses describe a state that is opposed to that of *brahmacharya*. The year was 1888-89 and Gandhi was far from making *brahmacharya*, even in the limited sense of chastity and celibacy, a central quest of his life. But what awakened in young Gandhi was a religious quest and longing that was to govern his entire life henceforth. The *Gita* became his life-long companion. He translated the *Gita* as *Anasakti Yoga* in Gujarati.[395] Gandhi's engagement with the *Gita* though deep, was in no way singularly unique. India's national movement displayed a marked preference for the *Gita*.[396]

This translation posed the question of *adhikar*, of authority or qualification before Gandhi.[397] The question of authority was acute in the case of the translation of the *Gita*, revered by many as a sacred book and with a long history of scholastic

commentaries and translation. He was by his own admission a Vanik's son, had very limited knowledge of Sanskrit and his Gujarati was "in no way scholarly."[398] He made a unique claim; he and his associates at the Satyagraha Ashram had made an attempt to lead their lives in accordance with the teachings of the *Gita*, which he described as their 'spiritual guide book.' Gandhi invoked his *adhikar* in the following terms: "But I am not aware of the claim made by the translators of enforcing the meaning of the *Gita* in their own lives. At the back of my reading there is the claim of an endeavour to enforce the meaning in my own conduct for an unbroken period of forty years. For this reason I do harbour the wish that all Gujarati men and women wishing to shape their conduct according to their own faith, should digest and derive strength from the translation here presented."[399]

The path of the *Gita* for Gandhi was neither that of contemplation nor of devotion but that of *anasakta* (desire less, unattached) action. This idea is embodied in the *Gita* in the image of the *sthitpragnya* (one whose intellect is secure); who acts without attachment either to the action or fruits thereof.[400] Gandhi adopted two modes of self-practice to attain the state where one acts and yet does not act. These two modes were *yajna* (sacrifice) and Satyagraha; both deeply personal and simultaneously political.

The *Gita* declared that; "Together with the sacrifice did the Lord of beings create."[401] Gandhi saw this idea of sacrifice – of the self and not a symbolic, ritualistic sacrifice – as the basis of all religions. The ideal, of course, was Jesus; Gandhi said that the word *yajna* had to be understood in the way Jesus lived and died. "Jesus put on a crown of thorns to win salvation for his people, allowed his hands and feet to be nailed and suffered agonies before he gave up the ghost. This has been the law of *yajna* from immemorial times, without *yajna* the earth cannot exist even for a moment."[402]

But how is one to perform such sacrifice in daily life? Gandhi's response was two fold; for one he turned to the Bible and the other was uniquely his own. 'Earn thy bread by the sweat of thy brow,' says the Bible. Gandhi made this central to the life at the ashram and borrowed the term 'bread labour' to describe it. The other form of *yajna* was peculiar to his times, spinning. Spinning was an obligatory ashram observance, each member required to spin 140 threads daily, each thread measuring four feet.[403] This spinning was called *sutra-yajna* (sacrificial spinning). During his public debate with Poet Rabindranath Tagore, Gandhi responded to the poet's criticism of the 'cult of the charkha' by an essay called 'Charkha in the *Gita*.' He asserted that in the context of his India "I can only think of spinning as the fittest and most acceptable sacrificial body labour."[404] He further clarified, "If here we understand the meaning of *yajna* rightly, there will be no difficulty in accepting the interpretation I have put upon it...Spinning is a true *yajna*."[405] As his conviction regarding spinning as the true *yajna* deepened his ashram, hitherto called Satyagraha Ashram was re-named Udyog Mandir (literally, temple of industry); explaining the term *Udyog* Gandhi said; "Udyog has to be read in the light of the *Bhagvad Gita*."[406] Spinning even came to occupy the place of the *Gita*. During his imprisonment at the Yeravda prison in 1932-33, his close associate and disciple Mirabehn sought an English translation of his commentaries on the *Gita*. Gandhi agreed that prison would be the most appropriate place for such a task, but if he were to do it, he would be required to give up spinning, a more sacrosanct activity. He wrote; "For the spinning is the applied translation of the *Gita*; if one may coin that expression."[407]

If *Gita* and the state of *sthitpragnya* informed and guided his spiritual quest to attain self-realisation, satyagraha was his chosen means to attain swaraj.

Gandhi believed that the true ideal of a satyagrahi is a *sthitpragnya*; who performs all actions with purity of heart and mind, unattached to both the actions and fruits thereof. He claimed that the first glimpses of satyagraha had come to him not on 11 September 1906 in that fateful meeting at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg but way back in 1899 when he read the *Gita* for the first time with his Theosophist friends. He wrote; "It is certainly the *Bhagvad Gita's* intention that one should go on working without the attachment to the fruits of work. I deduced the principal of satyagraha from this. He who is free from such attachment will not kill the enemy but rather sacrifice himself...As far back as 1889, when I had my first contact with the *Gita*, it gave me a hint of satyagraha, and as I read more and more, the hint developed into a full revelation of satyagraha."[408] Satyagrahi like the *sthitpragnya* has to know the self as satyagraha is not only a method based on the moral superiority of self-suffering; but it is also a mode of conduct that leads to self-knowledge. In the absence of a quest to know oneself, satyagraha is not possible as it is based on the inviolable relationship between means and ends, and its essence is in the purity of both. Pure means are means adopted by a person who through a process of constant self-search cleanses and purifies the self; who's only true aim is to be a seeker after truth and swaraj. Thus, satyagrahi, pure means, and the purity of the practitioner share an immutable relationship.

IV

The *Hind Swaraj* only suggests and alludes to the idea of a satyagrahi and the practice of satyagraha. Gandhi wrote an account of the struggle of the Indian people in South Africa as *Dakshin Africa Na Satyagraha No Itihas*.[409] Gandhi was faced with a peculiar problem. How does one write a 'history' of satyagraha? It was not a methodological problem but a

philosophical one. It is best captured by the titles of the book in Gujarati and in English. The Gujarati title would have to be translated as 'A History of Satyagraha In South Africa.' The title of the book in English reads *Satyagraha in South Africa*. To understand the omission of the term history we will have to understand the meaning that he attached to two terms; the Gujarati term *Itihas* and the English term History. Gandhi in fact saw these two as separate. In the *Hind Swaraj* there is a discussion about the historical evidence of Satyagraha. His argument was that soul-force was the basis of the world. Brute-force was an aberration and a break in the even flow of soul-force. It is here that he makes a fundamental difference between *Itihas* and History. He says that *Itihas* means; "It so happened."[410] On the other hand for him history means the doings of kings and emperors. He says; "History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world, and so there is a proverb among Englishmen that a nation which has no history, that is no wars, is a happy nation. How kings played, how they became enemies of one another is found accurately recorded in history."[411] Thus, he makes a crucial distinction between *Itihas* and history. He argued that it is impossible for history to record instances of the use of Satyagraha. He describes it beautifully; he says, "You cannot expect silver-ore in a tin mine."[412] He thus could use the word *Itihas* in the Gujarati title of the book, but not in English as history was not for him a translation of the term *Itihas*. He was not willing to employ two terms as convertible terms, even if their usage had become customary if they for him represented two divergent traditions.[413]

Gandhi wanted *Satyagraha In South Africa* to be read alongside his autobiography, almost as a companion volume. He wrote; "I need hardly mention that those who are following the weekly chapters of *My Experiments with Truth* cannot afford to miss these chapters on Satyagraha, if they would follow in all details the working out of the search after

Truth."[414] Gandhi clearly saw his spiritual quest and political striving as enjoined and stemming from the same root. Satyagraha has its roots in a pledge, a pledge taken in the name of God and with God as witness.[415] Satyagraha as a philosophy and a practice is recognition of the humanity of others. In the *Hind Swaraj*, while making a severe denouement of lawyers, Gandhi stated; "there is something good in everyone."[416] Satyagraha is recognition of this universality of the possibility of goodness, of virtue.

Gandhi increasingly came to believe that a person who wields such a pure means had to be pure. In the *Hind Swaraj* and the *Satyagraha in South Africa,* this aspect is recessive; though he does mention the need for voluntary poverty, *brahmacharya* and fearlessness. The reason for this recessive presence lies in the fact that during his South African years his understanding of the ashram and ashram observances had not fully matured. He had established two 'ashram-like' communities in South Africa, but one was a 'settlement' (Phoenix Settlement) while the other was a 'farm' (Tolstoy Farm). Ruskin's *Unto This Last* provided the initial impulse for Phoenix. Though it had a religious basis, "the visible object was purity of body and mind as well as economic equality."[417] Celibacy was not regarded as essential, in fact, co-workers were expected to live as family men and have children. Gandhi began to look upon Phoenix deliberately as a religious institution after 1906 when he took the vow of *brahmacharya* and celibacy that became an imperative for a life devoted to service. In 1911, the establishment of Tolstoy Farm was recognition that Satyagraha required a community where the families of Satyagrahis could live and lead a religious life.

Gandhi as a satyagrahi is understood only when we understand him as an ashramite. Gandhi wrote two works *Satyagraha Ashram No Itihas* (*Ashram Observances in Action*) and *Mangal Prabhat* (*From Yeravda Mandir*)[418] to explain the

philosophy and practice of ashram life. On his return to India, Gandhi established an ashram at Kochrab in Ahmedabad on May 25, 1915. It later shifted to the banks of Sabarmati River in Ahmedabad in 1917. It was called Satyagraha Ashram, as it owed its very existence to the "pursuit and attempted practice of Truth."[419] Gandhi described the ashram as a community of men of religion. The emphasis was both on community and religious life. The word religion indicated a non-denominational idea of *dharma*.[420] What gave the inhabitants an idea of being part of a religious community were a set of eleven vows (*ekadash vrata*)[421] of which, three were Gandhi's response to his times and context (removal of untouchability, equality of all religions and Swadeshi), while the inclusion of bread labour was an innovation in the Indian context where notions of social and ritual purity and impurity are determined also by the materials that one deals with. The other seven were part of many Indic traditions. Gandhi's originality lay in the fact that he made them central to political realm. Ashram observances were essential for those who wished to wield the pure means of Satyagraha.

Thus, Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, *Satyagraha In South Africa* and his autobiography make sense only when read along with the ashram observances. In the last lines of *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi made an assertion and a dedication: "In my opinion, we have used the term 'Swaraj' without understanding its real significance. I have endeavoured to explain it as I understand it, and my conscience testifies that my life henceforth is dedicated to its attainment."[422] The true meaning and significance of a life dedicated to attainment of Swaraj can be understood only when one understands Gandhi as an ashramite.

Gandhi had elevated bread labour to an ashram observance and spinning was a sacrifice, but for the Congress and large part of the country the relationship between attainment of *Poorna Swaraj* (total or complete

independence) and sacrificial work remained obscure. The relationship between Swadeshi and Swaraj, between freedom and creation of a non-violent social order and between sacrifice and Swaraj become clear when we read a small tract *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place.*[423] After 1932, Gandhi came to regard constructive programme as central to his quest for Swaraj. The salience of this increased overtime as he came to view civil disobedience as an aid to constructive work and not as a primary means for the attainment of Swaraj. He used the analogy of paralysis; "For my handling of civil disobedience without the constructive programme will be like a paralyzed hand attempting to lift a spoon."[424] Gandhi rooted his vision of *Poorna Swaraj* in the idea of non-violent society, where every unit – even the most humble – was independent. He was convinced that violence could not lead to even an imaginary independence nor could it create equality. A movement for freedom, in absence of a programme that would enable each Indian to be free was inconceivable for him. The eighteen point constructive programme was that attempt. He had said in *Hind Swaraj* that Swaraj had to be experienced by each one for himself or herself, there was no question of Swaraj being obtained by some on behalf of others.

V

What could be the relationship of Swaraj, *sthitpragnya*, Swadeshi to mud poultice, hipbath, and exhortations to eat food without condiments? Long before he became a Satyagrahi, sought Swaraj and aspired to be a *brahmachari,* Gandhi began to experiment with food, diet, and naturopathy. It much later that he was to realise the importance of control over the palate to the practice of *brahmacharya.* "Control of the palate is the first essential in the observance of the vow. I found that complete control of

the palate made the observance very easy, and so I now pursued my dietetic experiments not merely from the vegetarian's but also from the brahmachari's point of view."[425] Brahmacharya was also a necessary observance for a Satyagrahi and the one seeking the state of *sthitpragnya*. Thus, the experiments in dietetics and more fundamentally the conception of body were related to the three principal quests.

Gandhi saw the body both enabling and an impediment. The body allowed one to serve the others. Service to others and through them of God was reason for human existence. In his widely read *Key to Health*[426] Gandhi said; "Man came into the world in order to pay off debt owed by him to it, that is to say, in order to serve God and (or through) His creation."[427] Hence, he argued one has to act as a guardian of the body, exercise self-restraint and serve the world. Indulgence, on the contrary, harms not only self but others also. Gandhi's *Key to Health* is a primer on the body and healing, written for those who wish to serve through a body trained in self-restraint. Health for Gandhi is not a state free of disease but it is a relationship between the mind and the body. It is a state of harmony. He characterised a healthy person thus: "His mind and senses are in a state of harmony and poise."[428] During the last years of his life, Gandhi came to be convinced that disease originates in the mind and not the body. During his experiments in naturopathy at a clinic in the village of Uruli-Kanchan, Gandhi prescribed *Ramanama* – the recitation of the name of Rama as Truth – as the only infallible remedy. His conviction grew to the extent that he came to believe that if his own recitation of the Ramanama were pure and perfect and if he had succeeded in installing Rama in his heart, even those around him would be free of disease and passions. During the last two years of his life, Manu Gandhi had become his constant companion and a partner in his *yajna*. Her frail health, her

illness, which finally required her to be operated upon plunged Gandhi into a deep crisis. He took Manu's illness as a sign that Ramanama had not yet taken root in his heart. He shared his despondency with Manu and others. Her appendicitis operation was for him a proof of his own incompleteness. "After all I have made her my partner in this *yajna*. If Ramanama is firmly rooted in my heart, this girl should be free from her ailments."[429] He told Manu; "Since I sent you to the hospital, I have been constantly thinking where I stand, what God demands of me, where He will ultimately lead me... I know my striving is incomplete; your operation is a proof."[430]

Body, though it allowed for service, was an impediment in the larger quest to attain perfect *brahmacharya* and to see God face to face. He was painfully aware that one could not be regarded as truly free – a *jeevan mukta* – so long as one lives in the body. In his autobiography, Gandhi spoke of the 'unbroken torture' that the separation from Truth as God caused him. This desire to be close to God governed every breath of his life but "I know that it is the evil passions within that keep me so far from Him, and yet I cannot get away from them."[431] It was this idea of the body as the root of passion that made Gandhi transpose a saying of Tulsidas in the *Hind Swaraj*. Gandhi wrote; "Of religion, pity or love is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive."[432] The more widely prevalent rendering of it is, "Of religion, pity or love is the root, as egotism of the sin."[433] This introduction of the term body in place of sin was not an error. It was a deliberate choice, which encapsulated Gandhi's own unease with the passions of the body, which in turn lead to sin and hence away from God. His *Key To Health* is informed by this unease with the body as also its undeniable need for service.

VI

Autobiography in India is essentially a nineteenth century form. Its emergence was linked with two processes. One was the process of colonial, western education. The second was the movement for social and religious reform in the second half of the nineteenth century in various regions of India. Two very powerful literary forms emerged in nineteenth century India, the novel, and the autobiography. In a culture that had a long tradition of story telling, novel as a form did not pose many cultural problems. It was the autobiography, which was deeply troubling as a literary form. Major Indian philosophical systems had advocated the self-effacement of individual. It was argued that only by the subjugation of the individual ego that the soul could be sublimated and could eventually be one with the Creator. In such a culture, autobiography as a story of the self was seen as introducing major cultural transitions. Therefore, almost all individuals who wrote autobiographies in various Indian languages in the nineteenth century wrote about the difficulty of writing about the self in an alien form.[434]

When Gandhi decided to write his autobiography in 1925 at the instance of Swami Anand, he had to face the same dilemma. How was he to speak about his life in a form that was seen as Western? He narrates his perplexity; "But a God-fearing friend had his doubts, which he shared with me on my day of silence. 'What has set you on this adventure?' he asked. 'Writing an autobiography is a practice peculiar to the West. I know of nobody in the East having written one, except amongst those who have come under Western influence...Don't you think it would be better not to write anything like an autobiography, at any rate just as yet?'"[435]

Gandhi's response to this criticism is most creative. He responded; "This argument had some effect on me. But it is not my purpose to attempt a real autobiography. I simply want to tell the story of my numerous experiments with

truth...But I should certainly like to narrate my experiments in the spiritual field which are known only to myself, and from which I have derived such powers as I possess for working in the political field. If the experiments are really spiritual, then there can be no room for self-praise. They can only add to my humility."[436]

He distinguishes between what he calls a real autobiography and an autobiography that he would write. A real autobiography is a Western form, a form that can lead to self-praise. But what he wanted to write was not that. A narration of spiritual and moral experiments can only make him and his readers more aware of his limitations and make him humble.

The Gujarati word for autobiographical writings is *Atmakatha*. The term *Atmakatha* translates as not autobiography but as 'the story of the soul.' In its original Christian sense, autobiography was a story of a soul in search of God. Gandhi by employing autobiography as *Atmakatha* opens up the possibility of speaking of his striving and pinning for self-realization. As *Atmakatha* he could speak of his spiritual and moral quest. There is an interesting transposition that happens in the actual act of translating Gandhi's autobiography from Gujarati into English.[437] In the original Gujarati, the main title of the story is *Satya Na Prayogo*, which literally means experiments with truth. The word *Atmakatha* appears as a subtitle. It signifies two things. One, that it is the story of experiments that is primary. Two, it has autobiographical context. The title thus matches with Gandhi's original intention. In the English translation, the process is reversed. *An Autobiography* becomes the main title while *Experiments with Truth* is rendered as a subtitle. It indicates not a failure of translation, but a much deeper cultural failure. It indicates the difficulty of speaking about the soul in an alien tongue.

Gandhi chooses to call his method experiments; in

Gujarati, he uses the term *Prayogo*. This choice of term is very significant. He had another term available from the spiritual tradition. This term is *Sadhana*. *Sadhana* is a difficult term to translate into English. It has been translated as spiritual practices, as penance and as striving. He indicates why the term experiment was chosen over *Sadhana* in the following way. "There are some things which are known only to oneself and one's maker. They are clearly incommunicable. The experiments that I am about to relate are not such."[438] He is saying that if his striving were such that it was communicable only to him and to his God they would be *Sadhana*. He in fact refers to the scientific method. He says; "I claim for them nothing more than does a scientist who, though he conducts his experiments with the utmost accuracy, forethought, and minuteness, never claims any finality about his conclusions, but keeps an open mind regarding them. I have gone through deep self-introspection, searched myself through and through, and examined and analysed every psychological situation...For me they appear to be absolutely correct, and seem for the time being to be final."[439]

As experiment, his quest for truth could be taken as a guide, as an illustration by other seekers. He urges us to read the autobiography not as a personal history but as a story of a soul in quest of truth.

It is important to ask if Gandhi's autobiography or his other experiments, not narrated in the text, give us a glimpse of what his *Sadhana* could have been like, because this *Sadhana* is the un-stated part of the *Atmakatha*. In fact, it provides the basis to his claim that his principle quest was to see God face to face, to attain self-realisation. He worshipped *Satya Narayan*, God as Truth. He did not ever claim that he had indeed found Him, or seen Him face to face. But, could imagine that state; "One who has realized God is freed from sin forever. He has no desire to be fulfilled. Not even in his

thoughts will he suffer from faults, imperfections, or impurities. Whatever he does will be perfect because he does nothing himself but the God within him does everything. He is completely merged in Him."[440] This state for Gandhi was the state of perfect self-realization, of perfect self-knowledge. Although he believed that such perfect knowledge may elude him so long as he was imprisoned in the mortal body, he did make an extraordinary claim. This was his claim to hear what he described as a 'small, still voice,' or the 'inner voice.' He used various terms such as, the voice of God, of conscience, the inner voice, voice of Truth or the small, still voice.[441] He made this claim often and declared that he was powerless before the irresistible voice, that his conduct was guided by this voice. The nature of this inner voice and Gandhi's need and ability to listen to the voice becomes apparent when we examine his invocation of it.

The first time he invoked the authority of this inner voice in India was at a public meeting in Ahmedabad, where he suddenly declared his resolve to fast. This day was 15 February 1918. Twenty-two days prior to this date, Gandhi had been leading the strike of the workers of the textiles mills of Ahmedabad. The mill workers had taken a pledge to strike work until their demands were met. They appeared to be going back upon their pledge. Gandhi was groping, not being able to see clearly the way forward. He described his sudden resolve thus: "One morning-it was at a mill-hands' meeting-while I was groping and unable to see my way clearly, the light came to me. Unbidden and all by themselves the words came to my lips: 'unless the strikers rally,' I declared to the meeting, 'and continue to strike till a settlement is reached, or till they leave the mills altogether, I will not touch any food.'"[442]

He repeatedly spoke of the inner voice in similar metaphors, of darkness that enveloped him, his groping, churning, wanting to find a way forward and the moment of

light, of knowledge when the voice spoke to him. Gandhi sought the guidance of his inner voice not only in the spiritual realm, but also in the political realm. His famous Dandi March came to him through the voice speaking from within. Gandhi's search for moral and spiritual basis for political action was anchored in his claim that one could and ought to be guided by the Voice of Truth speaking from within. This made his politics deeply spiritual.

Perhaps the most contentious invocation of the inner voice occurred in 1933. In 1932, Gandhi had undergone a fast from September 20 to September 25 as a prisoner of the Yeravda Central Prison. This fast, done in opposition to the decision of the British Government to conduct elections in India on basis of communal representation had proved dangerous for his already frail body and brought him precariously close to death.

Even before he had fully regained his strength, he shocked the nation by announcing a twenty-one day fast in May 1933. On 30 April 1933, he made a public announcement to go on an unconditional and irrevocable fast for self-purification. The fast was to commence on Monday noon of 8th May and end on Monday noon of 29th May.[443] He declared that this resolution was made in submission to an irresistible call of the inner voice. This announcement caught even his closest associates and fellow prisoners unaware; they did not know that a tempest had been raging within him. He described this act of listening to his fellow prisoner Vallabhbhai Patel. Gandhi said to Patel, "as if for the last three days I were preparing myself for the great deluge! On many occasions, however, the thought of a fast would come repeatedly to my mind and I would drive it away... but the same thought would persistently come to my mind: 'If you have grown so restless, why don't you undertake the fast? Do it.' The inner dialogue went on for quite sometime. At half past twelve came the clear, unmistakable voice, 'You must undertake the fast.'

That was all."[444] Gandhi knew that his invocation of the inner voice beyond comprehension and beyond his capacity to explain. He asked; "After all, does one express, can one express, all one's thoughts to others?"[445] Not all were convinced of his claim to hear the inner voice. It was argued that what he heard was not the voice of God, but a hallucination, that Gandhi was deluding himself and that his imagination had become over-heated by the cramped prison walls.

Gandhi remained steadfast and refuted the charge of self-delusion or hallucination. He said, "not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God."[446] After the fast, he explained the nature of divine inspiration. "The night I got the inspiration, I had a terrible inner struggle. My mind was restless. I could see no way. The burden of my responsibility was crushing me. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time when I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the Voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm."[447] He argued that his claim was beyond both proof and reason; the fact that he had survived the fiery ordeal was the proof. It was a moment that he had been preparing himself for. He felt that his submission to God as Truth was so complete, at least in that particular instance of fasting, that he had no autonomy left. Such a moment of total submission transcends reason. He wrote in a letter; "Of course, for me personally it transcends reason, because I feel it to be a clear will from God. My position is that there is nothing just now that I am doing of my own accord. He guides me from moment to moment."[448]

Gandhi's claim to hear the inner voice was neither unique

nor exclusive. The validity and legitimacy of such a claim was recognised in the spiritual realm. The idea of perfect surrender was integral to and consistent with the ideals of religious life. Although Gandhi never made the claim of having seen God face to face, the inner voice was for him the voice of God. He said; "The inner voice is the voice of the Lord."[449] But it was not a voice that came from a force outside of him. Gandhi made a distinction between an outer force and a power beyond us. A power beyond us has its locus within us. It is superior to us, not subject to our command or wilful action but it is still located within us. He explained the nature of this power. 'Beyond us' means a "power which is beyond our ego."[450] According to Gandhi, one acquires the capacity to hear this voice when the "ego is reduced to zero."[451] Reducing the ego to zero for Gandhi meant an act of total surrender to *Satya Narayan*. This surrender required subjugation of human will, of individual autonomy. It is when a person losses autonomy that conscience emerges. Conscience is an act of obedience not wilfulness. He said; "Willfullness is not conscience... Conscience is the ripe fruit of strictest discipline... Conscience can reside only in a delicately tuned breast."[452] This capacity did not belong to everyone as a natural gift or a right available in equal measure. What one required was a cultivated capacity to discern the inner voice as distinct from the voice of the ego. As, "one cannot always recognise whether it is the voice of Rama or Ravana."[453]

What was this ever wakefulness that allowed him to hear the call of truth as distinct from the voice of untruth? How does one acquire the fitness to wait upon God? He had likened this preparation to an attempt to empty the sea with a drainer small as a point of a blade of grass. And yet, it had to be as natural as life itself. He created a regime of spiritual discipline that enabled him to search himself through and through. As part of his spiritual training, he formulated the

Ekadash Vrata. The ashram was constituted by their abiding faith in these *vrata* and by their act of prayer.

Prayer was the expression of the definitive and conscious longing of the soul; it was his act of waiting upon Him for guidance. His want was to feel the utterly pure presence of the divine within. Only a heart purified and cleansed by prayer could be filled with the presence of God, where life becomes one long continuous prayer, an act of worship. Prayer was for him the final reliance upon God to the exclusion of all else. Such a prayer could only be offered in the spirit of non-attachment, *anasakti*. Moreover, when the God that he sought to realise is Truth, prayer though externalised, was in essence directed inwards. Because Truth is not merely, what we are expected to speak, it is That which alone is, it is That of which all things are made, it is That which subsists by its own power, which alone is eternal. Gandhi's intense yearning was that such Truth should illuminate his heart. Prayer was a plea, a preparation, a cleansing that enabled him to hear his inner voice. The *Ekadash Vrata* allowed for this waiting upon God. The act of waiting meant to perform one's actions in a desire less or detached manner.

VII

In this, we have an understanding of Gandhi's experiment and his quest. His quest is to know himself, to attain *Moksha* that is to see God (Truth) face to face. In order to fulfil his quest, he must be an ashramite, a satyagrahi and a seeker after swaraj. He added two other practises to this search. One was fasting, the other *brahmacharya*. Fasting in its original sense is not mortification of flesh, but it is *Upvas*, to dwell closer to Him. In this sense, there could be no fast without a prayer and indeed no prayer without a fast. Such a fast was both penance and self-purification.

The ultimate practice of self-purification is the practice of brahmacharya. For Gandhi, realisation of Truth and self-gratification appears a contradiction in terms. From this emanate not only brahmacharya but also three other observances, control of the palate, poverty and non-stealing.

Brahmacharya came to Gandhi as a necessary observance at a time when he had organised an ambulance corps during the Zulu rebellion in South Africa. He realised that service of the community was not possible without observance of brahmacharya. At the age of 37, in 1906 Gandhi took the vow of brahmacharya.

This was not without a purpose. He was later to feel that it was secretly preparing him for satyagraha.[454] It would take him several decades, but through his observances, his experiments, Gandhi developed insights into the interrelatedness of Truth, Ahimsa, and Brahmacharya. He came to regard practice of brahmacharya in thought, word, and deed as essential for the search for Truth and the practice of Ahimsa. Gandhi, by making observance of brahmacharya essential for truth and ahimsa, made it central to the practice of satyagraha and quest for swaraj. This understanding allowed Gandhi to expand the conception of brahmacharya itself. He began with a popular and restricted notion in the sense of chastity and celibacy, including celibacy in marriage. He expanded this notion to mean observance in thought, word, and deed. But it is only when he began to recognise the deeper and fundamental relationship that brahmacharya shared with satyagraha, ahimsa and swaraj that Gandhi could go to the root of the term brahmacharya. *Charya* or conduct adopted in search of *Brahma*, that is Truth is brahmacharya. In this sense, brahmacharya is not denial or control over one sense, but it is an attempt to bring all senses in harmony with each other. Brahmacharya so conceived and practised becomes that mode of conduct that leads to Truth, knowledge and hence

Moksha. Thus, the ability to hear the inner voice, a voice that is "perfect knowledge or realization of Truth"[455] is an experiment in brahmacharya.

It is therefore possible to seek a unity in what appear to be variegated writings. This unity exists not for an apparent theoretical continuity but because Gandhi's life and his strivings – political and spiritual – are moved by a desire for Truth as God, as Satyagraha, as Swadeshi and as Swaraj.

Endnotes

1. Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography Or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, 1999 reprint), p. 57
2. The CWMG has 100 volumes, the Sampoorna Gandhi Vangmaya has 97 volumes and Gandhi No Akshar Deha has 81 volumes.
3. Gandhi, M.K.; *Satyagraha In South Africa*, Translated From The Gujarati by Valji Govindji Desai, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 2003 reprint), p. 91.
4. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography*, p. ix
5. *Ibid*, pp. ix-x
6. For a history of the text and its English translation, see Tridip Suhrud, *An Autobiography: Or The Story of my Experiments with Truth: A Table of Concordance* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010).
7. Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography*, p. x
8. *Ibid*, pp. x-xi
9. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, annotated, translated and edited, Suresh Sharma, Tridip Suhrud, (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010), pp. 72-73.
10. *Ibid*, p. 73
11. *Ibid*
12. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography*, p. 249
13. *Ibid*, p. 250
14. *Ibid*
15. *CWMG*, Vol. 8, p. 317, 'Sarvodaya-1'
16. *Ibid*, pp. 317-318
17. The first part of his translation of the *Defence of Socrates* appeared in the *Indian Opinion* of 4.4.1908, while the first part of *Sarvodaya* was published in the *Indian Opinion* of 16.5.1908.
18. *CWMG*, Vol. 8, p. 247, ' Story of a Soldier of Truth-1'
19. *Ibid*, p. 248
20. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 30
21. Gandhi, M.K.; *Satyagraha In South Africa*, p. 103
22. *Ibid*, p. 105
23. *Ibid*, p. 107
24. *Ibid*
25. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, pp. 59-60
26. *Ibid*, p. 59

27. This essay is a result of long and sustained conversations with Suresh Sharma on Gandhi and *Hind Swaraj*. I draw upon our work on the critical edition of *Hind Swaraj*. My deep gratitude for Suresh Sharma who initiated me in the hermunatics of a text.
28. *Hind Swarajya* was written in Gujarati between 13 and 22 November 1909 on board *Kildonan Castle* and was published in two installments in the Gujarati section of *Indian Opinion* (11 and 19 December, 1909). The original handwritten manuscript runs into 276 pages (275+5 pages of introduction). It has 88 questions posed by Vachak Varg (a group of readers, literally) and 88 responses by the editor. The entire manuscript 228 marks of erasure or correction; of which 21 belong to the section of the reader while the remaining 207 to the part of the editor. This may have been for two reasons: one of length and the other of clarity. It is tempting to think that Gandhi had more clarity regarding the questions and showed more tentativeness in his formulations in the editor's voice.
29. The title of the English edition was changed to *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* in 1921, all subsequent editions of the English text appear under this combined title, except the 1924 American edition edited by Haridas T Majumdar which was titled *Sermon on the Sea*.
30. Appendix 1 provides a complete list of the usage of the term *Swaraj* and its English rendering.
31. Out of 56 occurrences of the term *Swaraj* in Gujarati it has been rendered as *Home Rule* in 28 instances.
32. I am grateful to Ganesh Devy for this.
33. Appendix 2 provides a complete list of the usage *Sudhar/Sudharo*.
34. The identification of reformers with the act of writing is very strong in Gandhi. In fact he rendered *Paschim Na Sudharako* (Western Reformers) as Western Writers.
35. The first part of *Narma-Kosha* was published in November 1861, the second in December 1862, the third in September 1864 and the fourth part in August 1866. The complete *Narma-Kosha* was published in 1873. The term *adhunik* is described on page 58.
36. Appendix 3 provides a complete list of Gujarti idioms and proverbs and their English rendering.
37. Appendix 4 provides a complete list of English phrases that are in the Gujarati text.
38. These are *Hind Swaraj* (translated from the original Gujarti by M K Gandhi), *Satyagraha in South Africa* (translated from the original Gujarti by Valji Govondji Desai), *An Autobiography Or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (translated from the original Gujarti by Mahadev Desai), *Anasakti Yoga* (translated from the original Gujarti by Mahadev Desai), *Ashram Observances in Action* (translated from the original Gujarti by Valji Govindji Desai) and *Key To Health* (translated from the original

Gujarti by Dr. Sushila Nayyar); while *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Action* was written in English and later translated in Gujarati. Prior to writing the *Hind Swaraj* Gandhi had written *Guide To London*, which was never published as an independent book.

39. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 30.
40. The term 'human worth' translates *Purushartha*.
41. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 56. It is for this reason that Gandhi decries doctors as propagators of vice. Gandhi has the verse from the second discourse of the *Gita* in mind when he wrote that. That verse in Edwin Arnold's translation reads:

    " If one
    Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs
    Attraction; from attraction grows desire,
    Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds
    Recklessness; then the memory – all betrayed –
    Less noble purpose go, and saps the mind,
    Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone."
    The doctors, according to Gandhi allow us to ponder on the objects of senses and thus forget who we are.

42. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 59-60.
43. *Ibid*, p. 60.
44. It is for this reason that in the English rendering Gandhi continued to use two different terms: Home Rule and Swaraj.
45. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 66.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid*, p. 98.
48. *Ibid*, p. 50.
49. *Ibid*, p. 31.
50. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 76, " Discussion With Sardar Patel, *Harijan Bandhu*, 7. 5. 1933."
51. *Ibid*, p. XI.
52. *Ibid*, p. XII.
53. *Ibid*, p. X.
54. Gandhi, M. K.; *Ashram Observations In Action*, translated from Original Gujarati by Valiji Govindji Desai, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1955, 1998), p. v.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid*, pp. v-vi.
57. On 31 October 1930 Gandhi explained the inadequacy to J C Kumarappa, "The word 'vow' is also an unsuitable equivalent for the original 'vrata'." *CWMG*, vol. 44, p. 264.

58. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 59-60.
59. *Ibid*, p. 56.
60. Gandhi, M. K.; *From Yeravda Mandir*, translated from original Gujarati by Valiji Govindji Desai, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1932, 2003), p.5.
61. *Ibid*, p. 8.
62. Gandhi, M. K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, p. 266.
63. Tagore, Rabindranath; "With Mahatmaji In Poona," in (ed.) Sisir Kumar Das, *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore: A Miscellany*, vol. III, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996, 2002), pp. 330-332
64. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 76, " Discussion With Sardar Patel, *Harijan Bandhu*, 7. 5. 1933."
65. *Ibid.*
66. *Ibid.*
67. Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography*, p. 359
68. *CWMG*, vol. 90, p. 408, " Speech At Prayer Meeting, January 12, 1948."
69. *Ibid*, vol. 25, pp. 23-24, " Under Conscience's Cover, *Young India*, 21. 8. 1924."
70. *Ibid.*
71. *Ibid*, vol. 54,p. 114, " The Danger of Imitation, 18. 3. 1933."
72. *Ibid*, vol. 55, p. 120, " His Will Be Done, *Harijan*, 6. 5. 1933."
73. *Ibid*, p. 121.
74. *Ibid.*
75. *Ibid*, p. 255, " All About The Fast, *Harijan*, 8. 7. 1933."
76. *Ibid.*
77. *CWMG*, vol. 53, p. 259, "Its Implications, *Harijan*, 11. 2. 1933."
78. The image of Christ on the Cross was one of the most enduring images from which Gandhi drew sustenance during his fasts. His fasts always commenced and ended with a prayer, one of which invariably was "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross," this was often sung by Mirabehn and Charlie Andrews. Ever since Poet Rabindranath sang the song from Gitanjali at the conclusion of his 1932 fast it came to be included in the ritual. The Poet sang, "When the heart is hard and parched up, come upon me with a shower of mercy. When the grace is lost from life, come with a burst of song. When tumultuous work raises its din on all sides shutting me out from beyond, come to me, my lord of silence, with thy peace and rest." Tagore, Rabindranath; *Gitanjali*, in *The Collected English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 1, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1194/2001), p. 54.
79. *WMG*, vol. 55, p. 257, "All About The Fast, *Harijan*, 8. 7. 1933."
80. This fast was undertaken at the Haidari Mansion in Beliaghata, Calcutta from 2 September 1947 to 4 September 1947. The fast lasted 73 hours. See Gandhi, Manu; *The Miracle of Calcutta*, translated from original

Gujarati by Gopalrao Kulkarni, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1959).

81. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Part II, Vol. X, p.408.
82. Gandhi, M. K.; *From Yeravda Mandir*, Translated from the original Gujarati by Valji Govindji Desai. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1932/ 2003), p. 5.
83. Ahimsa is usually translated as non-violence or non-killing, but Gandhi was aware that these were inadequate translations of the term. He believed that the Christian idea of love best captured the various meanings that he attributed to the term ahimsa. Hence, in his *From Yeravda Mandir*, term Ahimsa has been translated as Love.
84. The most systematic exposition of these two terms occurs for the first time in Gandhi's 1909 text *Hind Swaraj*.
85. Gandhi located the ego in the body. He changed Tulsidasji's couplet, *Daya dharma ka mool hai, pap mool abhiman / Tulsi daya na chandiye, jab lag ghatmen pran* (of dharma pity is the root, as egotism is of sin. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive.) to *Daya dharma ka mool hai, pap mool abhiman* (Of religion, pity or love is the root, as egotism of the body).
86. *CWMG*, vol. 18, p. 133.
87. *CWMG*, vol. 66, pp. 420-421.
88. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1927/1999), p. x.
89. *Ibid*, p. xi.
90. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 255.
91. *Ibid.*
92. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 359.
93. There is no English substitute that captures the full range of meanings that the word *Swaraj* invokes. It has been loosely translated as freedom (which presupposes slavery) and self or home-rule (which presupposes political subjugation.) Gandhi himself preferred to use the term *Swaraj*.
94. Gandhi, M.K.; *Hind Swaraj*, 1909. He translated it in English, which was published in 1911. All the references are from the critical edition published in 2010.Hereafter, *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*.
95. The Gujarati term that he used was *Kudhar*, literally the wrong way.
96. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 30.
97. *Ibid*, p. 56.
98. *Ibid*, p. 59-60.
99. For the statement on the fast see, *CWMG*, vol. 55, pp. 74-75.
100. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 76.
101. *Ibid.*
102. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 256.
103. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 255.

104. *CWMG*, vol. 52, p. 244.
105. *Ibid*, vol. 53, p. 483.
106. *Ibid.*
107. *Ibid.*
108. *Ibid*, vol. 25, pp. 23-24.
109. *Ibid*
110. *Ibid*, vol. 52, p. 130.
111. These eleven vows are; Truth, Ahimsa or love (also called non-violence), brahmacharya or chastity, control of the palate, non-stealing, non-possession or poverty, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, tolerance or equality of all religions and swadeshi or promotion of native goods.
112. II:55.
113. *Gita*, II:68.
114. II:56.
115. *Gita*, II:64.
116. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 121
117. *Ibid*, vol. 37, p. 116.
118. Gandhi, M. K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, p. 266.
119. *CWMG*, vol. 56, p. 182.
120. Gandhi, M. K.; *From Yeravda Mandir*, p. 5
121. *Ibid*, p. 7
122. *Ibid*, p. 5
123. Rabindranath Tagore's telegram to M K Gandhi, 19.9.1932, *The Poet and the Mahatma* complied and edited by Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1997)., pp. 133-134.
124. Rabindranath Tagore's letter to M K Gandhi, 11.5.1933, *ibid*, p. 142.
125. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1927/1999), p. x.
126. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 255.
127. *Ibid.*
128. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 359.
129. Gandhi, M.K.; *Hind Swaraj*, 1909. He translated it in English, which was published in 1911. All the references are from *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*. Hereafter, *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*.
130. The Gujarati term that he used was *Kudhar*, literally the wrong way.
131. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 30.
132. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 56.
133. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 59-60.
134. For a detailed account of this fast see, Pyarelal, *The Epic Fast*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1932, 2007).

135. M K Gandhi to Tagore, Letter of 20.9.1932 *The Poet and the Mahatma* complied and edited by Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1997). P. 134.
136. *The English Writings Of Tagore*, vol. 3; edited by Sisir Kumar Das, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996, 2002), p. 326.
137. *Ibid.*
138. *Ibid.*
139. *Ibid.*
140. *Ibid*, p. 327.
141. *Ibid*, p. 328.
142. Rabindranath Tagore's appeal to countrymen, 22.9.1932; *Ibid.*
143. Rabindranath Tagore's telegram to Mahadev Desai, 23.9.1932; *ibid*, p. 329.
144. "With Mahatmaji In Poona,"; *Ibid*, p. 331.
145. *Ibid*, p. 332.
146. *Ibid.*
147. Mahatmaji's statement on breaking fast, issued on 26 September 1932, *Ibid*, p. 338.
148. On Mahatmaji's Birthday, *Ibid*, p. 335.
149. *Ibid.*
150. *CWMG*, vol. 51, p. 343.
151. Letter to Rabindranath Tagore, *Ibid*, p. 395.
152. *Ibid.*
153. Letter to Gandhi, 15.11.1932, *The Mahatma and The Poet*, p. 137.
154. *Ibid*, p. 138.
155. For the statement on the fast see, *CWMG*, vol. 55, pp. 74-75.
156. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 76.
157. *Ibid.*
158. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 256.
159. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 255.
160. *CWMG*, vol. 52, p. 244.
161. *The Mahatma and The Poet*, p. 140.
162. *Ibid*, p. 141.
163. *Ibid.*
164. *Ibid*, pp. 141-142.
165. *Ibid*, p. 142.
166. *Ibid.*
167. *Ibid.*
168. *Ibid*, p. 143.
169. *Ibid.*
170. *Ibid.* pp. 199-200.
171. *Ibid*, p. 200.
172. *Ibid.*

173. *Ibid*, p. 146.
174. *Ibid*. p. 147.
175. *Ibid*, p. 149.
176. *Ibid*.
177. *CWMG*, vol. 70, p. 117.
178. Gandhi, M.K., *An Autobiography Or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Press, 1999 reprint), p. 57
179. Sir Edwin Arnold's translation. Gandhi's own rendering reads: "In a man brooding on objects of the senses, attachment to them spring up; attachment begat craving and craving begets wrath. Wrath breeds stupefaction, stupefaction leads to loss of memory, loss of memory ruins reason, and the ruin of reason spells utter destruction." Discourse II: 62,63. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1946, 2004), p. 163.
180. The translation was done in 1926-1927, he wrote the introduction to the translation two years later at Kosani in Almora. The introduction was finished on 24 June, 1929. The Anasakti Yoga was published on 12 March 1930, the day he left the Ashram at Sabarmati on his historic march to Dandi. It was translated in Hindi, Bengali and Marathi almost immediately. Mahadev Desai translated the Anaskti Yoga as The Gospel of Selfless Action in English. This translation was done during his imprisonment in 1933-1934. The translation could not be published till January 1946, as Gandhi could not read the translation. Mahadev Desai died as a prisoner in the Aga Khan Palace prison on 15 August 1942, and as a tribute to his memory Gandhi hastened the publication soon after his release from prison.
181. *CWMG*, vol. 21, p. 116.
182. *Ibid*, vol. 37, p. 77.
183. This debate took place on 24 October 1909 on the Dussehra day in the Nizamuddin Restaurant in London.
184. On 1 July 1909, Madanlal Dhingra assassinated Sir William Curzon-Wyllie, political aide-de-camp to Lord Morley, Secretary of State for India, while he was at the reception hosted by the National Indian Association at the Imperial Institute in South Kensington, London.
185. *CWMG*, vol. 37, p. 82.
186. *Ibid*, vol. 28, p. 47.
187. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, p. 125.
188. The Gujarat Mahavidyalaya was established on 18 October 1920 and functions till date. It is now called Gujarat Vidyapith, which in 1963 was notified as a Deemed University, by the University Grants Commission of India.

189. *CWMG*, vol. 21, p. 482.
190. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, p. 126.
191. *Ibid*, p. 128.
192. *CWMG*, vol. 33, p. 32.
193. *Ibid*, vol. 58, p. 9.
194. *Ibid*, vol. 70, p. 116.
195. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, p. 133.
196. *Ibid.*
197. *CWMG*, vol. 33, p. 87.
198. *Ibid*, p. 85.
199. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, p. 127.
200. *CWMG,* vol. 16, p. 339.
201. *Ibid.*
202. *Ibid*, p. 340.
203. *Ibid.*
204. *Ibid.*
205. *Ibid.*
206. *Ibid*, p. 341.
207. *CWMG*, vol. 19, p. 331, fn. 1.
208. *Ibid*, p. 331.
209. *Ibid.*
210. *Ibid*, vol. 39, p. 142.
211. *Ibid*, vol. 56, p. 156.
212. *Ibid*, vol. 32, p. 71.
213. The time of the morning prayer was subject to much experimentation and change but was finally fixed at 4.20 am, a time when the tiller of the soil and a true devotee of God woke up.
214. *CWMG*, vol. 56, p. 152.
215. The recitation of the various discourses of the Gita was distributed among the days as follows: Friday, 1 and 2; Saturday, 3, 4 and 5; Sunday, 6, 7 and 8; Monday, 9, 10, 11 and 12; Tuesday, 13, 14 and 15; Wednesday, 16 and 17; Thursday, 18.
216. *CWMG*, vol. 42, p. 110.
217. Gandhi, M. K.; *From Yeravda Mandir*, translated from original Gujarati by Valji Govindji Desai, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1932, 2005), p. 5.
218. II:55.
219. II:68.
220. II:56.
221. II:64.
222. *CWMG*, vol. 37, p. 116.

223. *Ibid*, vol. 44, p. 90.
224. II:59.
225. *CWMG*, vol. 53, p. 259.
226. III:10.
227. III:14
228. *CWMG*, vol. 20, p. 404.
229. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, p. 177.
230. Initially spinning was time bound, half an hour; later the measure was changed to threads spun.
231. *CWMG*, vol. 24, p. 435.
232. *Ibid*, pp. 464-465.
233. *Ibid*, vol. 43, p. 203.
234. *Ibid*, vol. 49, p. 357.
235. *Ibid*, vol. 18, pp. 50-51.
236. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 59-60.
237. *Ibid*, p. 56.
238. *CWMG*, vol. 37, p. 122.
239. II: 69.
240. *CWMG*, vol. 37, p. 122.
241. *CWMG*, vol. 25, p. 255
242. *Ibid*, vol. 23, p. 193
243. *Ibid*, vol. 25, p. 249
244. Gandhi, M. K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 6 Gandhi remained fond of watching plays. During his 1901 visit to Calcutta he purchased a dress circle ticket for Rs. 4 and watched a play. He, albeit, never watched a film.
245. *CWMG*, vol. 23, p. 193
246. Mirabehn, *The Spirit's Pilgrimage*, pp. 150-151
247. *CWMG*, vol. 49, p. 37
248. Gandhi, M. K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. X
249. *Ibid.*
250. Sir Edwin Arnold's translation. See, Gandhi, M. K. *An Autobiography*, p. 57
251. *CWMG*, vol. 26, p. 41
252. *Ibid*, vol. 36, p. 305
253. *Ibid*, vol. 62, pp. 310-311
254. *Ibid*, vol. 54, p. 243
255. *Ibid*, p. 244
256. *Ibid*, vol. 48, p. 149
257. *Ibid*, vol. 25, p. 248
258. *Ibid*, vol. 59, p. 328

259. *Ibid*, vol. 25, p. 248
260. *Ibid*, vol. 29, p. 397
261. *Ibid*, vol. 25, p. 249
262. *Ibid*, vol. 23, pp. 193-194
263. *Ibid*, vol. 25, p. 255.
264. Ramachandra Gandhi, foreword, in Dalal, C. B. *Harilal Gandhi: A Life* edited and translated by Tridip Suhrud (Chennai: Orient Longman, 2007), p. xi.
265. *Ibid;* p. xii. I also hope that this captures something of Ramachandra Gandhi's own invocation of and submission to 'the messianic magnet' of Arunachala, Sri Ramana Maharshi.
266. This is also Ramachandra Gandhi's formulation.
267. *CWMG*, vol. 90, p. 489.
268. *CWMG*, vol. 86, pp. 521-522.
269. *CWMG,* vol. 27, p. 110
270. Gandhi, M. K.; *An Autobiography Or the Story of My Experiments with Truth*, translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1939, 1999), p. 60.
271. The fact of keeping a vow was of great significance to Gandhi's self-understanding. Erik Erickson has observed; "That young Gandhi left England with his vow intact was a matter of enormous importance, not only in his own eyes, but later also for his ethical stature among his people." Erickson, Erik ; *Gandhi's Truth: On the origins of militant non-violence.* (New York: W. W. Norton & co.; 1970, 1993), p. 152.
272. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1946, 2007), p. 127.
273. *CWMG*, vol. 57, p. 197.
274. *CWMG*, vol. 10, p. 47. The couplet attributed to Tulsidas reads:
"*Daya dharma ka mool hain, pap mool abhiman*
*Tulsi d*aya na *chandiye, jab lag ghatmen pran.*" Gandhi replaced *pap*(sin) with *deha* (body).
275. *CWMG*, vol. 32, p. 284.
276. Refrain from Surdas' hymn, 'He is the help of the helpless, the strength of the weak.'
277. *CWMG*, vol. 40, p. 405.
278. *CWMG*, vol. 50, p. 359.
279. Gandhi was partial to *Ayodhya Kand*, which deals with banishment of Rama. "It is enough to make anyone rejoice in suffering," he claimed. See, *CWMG*, vol. 32, p. 77.
280. *CWMG*, vol. 26, p. 335.
281. *CWMG*, vol. 28, p. 111.
282. Of Tulsidas's saying that women along with Shudra and the drum deserve beating, Gandhi said; "May be Tulsidas himself, following the

practice of his time, used to beat up his wife; what even then? The practice does not cease to be reprehensible." See, *CWMG*, vol. 28, p. 318.

283. *CWMG*, vol. 41, p. 543.
284. *CWMG*, vol. 26, p. 335.
285. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1946, 2007), p. 128.
286. Ramachandra Gandhi spoke of the necessity of Sri Krsna for the truth of India. He asked; "Who is Krsna? Did he actually live in historical time? Most emphatically yes, a single visit even to modern touristy traffic-ridden Vrndavana convinces the open-minded and faithful to the indubitability of Govinda's physical existence not only in the past but timelessly in the present also." See, *I am Thou: Meditations on The Truth of India.* (Pune: Indian Philosophical Quarterly, 1984), p. 52.
287. *CWMG*, vol. 40, p. 405. This divinity of Krishna and Rama were crucial to Ramachandra's Gandhi's understanding of India's spirituality as well. He wrote; "The divinity at least of Rama and Krsna and their historicity alone can account for the undefeatedness of Indian spirituality." See, *I am Thou: Meditations on The Truth of India*, p. 53.
288. *CWMG*, vol. 44, p. 264.
289. *CWMG*, vol. 45, p. 6.
290. *CWMG*, vol. 31, p. 511.
291. *CWMG*, vol. 24, p. 196.
292. *CWMG*, vol. 23, p. 302.
293. *CWMG*, vol. 69, p. 415.
294. *CWMG*, vol. 32, p. 112.
295. *CWMG*, vol. 36, p. 164.
296. *Ibid.*
297. The idea of Rama being a son of Dasharatha also grew with time. If Rama is merely Dasharath's son he could not be all-pervasive, but if a devotee were to think of Rama as all-pervasive then his Dasharath too becomes all-pervasive. See, *CWMG*, vol. 85, pp.331-332.
298. *CWMG*, vol. 24, p. 197.
299. *CWMG*, vol. 57, p. 446.
300. The metaphor of the diseased India had stayed with him since the time that he wrote the *Hind Swaraj*; wherein he spoke of the need to find a physician for diseased India.
301. Literally, the arrow of Rama, as infallible as the arrow.
302. *CWMG*, vol. 86, p. 218.
303. *CWMG*, vol. 86, p. 486.
304. *CWMG*, vol. 86, pp. 521-522. This sense deepened with his own fast. The last fast affected both his kidneys and lever, a sure sign that the purity that he had wished and prayed for still alluded him.

305. *CWMG*, vol. 90, p. 350.
306. Ramachandra Gandhi captured this invocation thus: "'He Rama!' is a consummatory extreme thanksgiving invocation of Rama who is God, a rare and holy final accomplishment. Only the rarest bhakta of Rama invokes Rama undespairingly and unpetitionarily as death suddenly and unexpectedly takes him. All of Gandhi's life was an immersion in Rama Nama, vehicle and sakti of the whole man and his civilization, metaphysical Indian civilization, spiritual Hinduism, which the satyagrahi was pitting against the anti-metaphysical, unspiritual, gasping bullying unbelieving modern times, also against cowardly decaying Indian society and hard-heated privileged Indian individuals and classes unmoved by the plight of starving millions." See, *I am Thou: Meditations on The Truth of India*, p. 13.
307. The figures vary between seventy-eight and eighty. Thomas Weber adds Kharag Bhadur Singh Giri and Satish Kalekar to the 'official' list of seventy-eight marchers. But, they joined the march on 14 March 1930. See, Weber, Thomas; *On The Salt March*, (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 1997), p. 495.
308. He visited the Ashram on 31 July 1931 and again on 19, 20, 21 August 1933. On neither visit did he stay the night at the Ashram.
309. Eighty-eight days in 1931, thirteen days in 1933, seven days in 1934, ten days in 1935, forty-one days in 1936, thirty-one days in 1937, eighty-one days in 1939 and thirty days in 1942.
310. I owe this formulation to Achyut Yagnik in a personal conversation.
311. Gandhi, M K; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1940, 1999), p. 357.
312. It is said that Sage Dadhichi gave up his life so that Indra could fashion infallible weapon – the *Vajra Ayudha*– from the spinal bone of the sage. The area around the present-day Sabarmati Ashram is called Dudheshwara, indicating that the memory of this myth is alive even today.
313. This *smashan* is operative today as well.
314. The economy of Ahmedabad in 1918 revolved around textile mills. Of the estimated total population of 250,000 nearly 100,000 comprised of textile labour and their dependents. The mills had roughly 100,000 spindles and 20,000 looms. Mahadev Desai's account of the strike and the fast remains most authoritative chronicle. See, Desai, Mahadev, *A Righteous Struggle*, translated from the original Gujarati by Somnath Dave, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1951). Erik Erikson based his psychoanalytical study of Gandhi on this event. See, Erikson, Erik; *Gandhi's Truth: On The Origins of Militant Nonviolence* (New York: W W Norton & Co.; 1969).

315. The salience of Gandhi's intervention can be judged by the fact that after Gandhi's assassination in the year 1951 a trust was formed to preserve his memory and the buildings of his Ashram. The corpus fund for this trust was created by the mill-workers and mill-owners of Ahmedabad. The mill-workers donated their one day's earning amounting total of 2.3 million Indian rupees to the Trust. The mill-owners association made a matching donation.
316. This work written on board the *Kildonan Castle* between 13 November and 22 November and was published in two installments (11 and 19 December) in the *Indian Opinion*. It was rendered in English by Gandhi as *Indian Home Rule* and published in South Africa by the International Printing Press.
317. Kishorelal Mashruwala's *Gandhi Vichar Dohan* is imbued with the presence of *Hind Swaraj*, but there are only two book-length studies or commentaries on the text in Gujarati. They are, Shah, Kanti; *Hind Swaraj: Ek Adhyayan*, (Vadodara: Yajna Prakasahn, 2007), Suhrud, Tridip, *Hind Swarajya Vishe*, (Vadodara: Purva Prakash, 2008).
318. *CWMG*, vol. 16, p. 94.
319. Hargovind Kantawala (1849-1931) was the Director of Public Instruction, Baroda State.
320. One of the persons who voted against him was Narhari Parikh, who was to become an ashramite and a close associate.
321. He began to dictate this account to his fellow prisoner Indulal Yagnik in the Yeravda Central Prison on November 26, 1923. By the time he was released- due to ill-health- on February 5, 1924 earlier than his stipulated term of six years he had completed thirty chapters, which appeared serially in *Navajivan* from April 13, 1924 to November 22, 1925. The rest of the remaining twenty chapters were written after his release. They appeared in a book form in two parts, in 1924 and 1925. The English translation as *Satyagraha In South Africa*, done by Valji Govindji Desai, which was seen and approved by Gandhi was published in 1928 by S. Ganesan, Madras. A second revised edition of it was published by Navajivan Press in December 1950.
322. The autobiography appeared serially in the issues of *Navajivan*, beginning on November 29, 1925 and ending on February 3, 1929. English translation of these chapters done by Mahadev Desai appeared simultaneously in the issues of *Young India*. The first English edition of the *Autobiography* came out in two volumes. The first containing three parts was issued in 1927 and the second, containing parts IV and V, in 1929. The second revised edition, in one volume, was released in 1940. For a history of the revised edition and a concordances of changes between the first and the second edition see, Suhrud, Tridip; *An Autobiography Or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*: *A Table of*

Concordance (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009).

323. Dalal, C. B.; *Gandhi Ni Dinwari*, (Gandhinagar: Government of Gujarat, 1990, 2nd revised edition), p. 85.
324. The volume IV of *Gujarati Sahitya No Itihas* published by the Gujarati Sahitya Parishad has a large chapter on Gandhi but no mention is made of this event. See, Joshi, Umashankar, Raval, Anantrai and Shukla, Vishnu (eds.), *Gujarati Sahitya No Itihas*, (Ahmedabad: Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, 1981). Specifically, Chapter 6, "Gandhi" by C N Patel, pp. 257-308.
325. Raval, Anantrai; "Bhumika", p. 4 in Joshi, Umashankar, Raval, Anantrai and Shukla, Vishnu (eds.), *Gujarati Sahitya No Itihas*, (Ahmedabad: Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, 1981).
326. This school was constructed during British Rule in India by political agent Kernel Singh. This was the first English school in the Saurashtra region which was originally called Rajkot English School was founded on October 17, 1853. It later became a full fledged high school By 1868 AD. It came to be known as the Rajkot High School in 1886. It was named Alfred High School in the late 1907. The present buildings of the Alfred High School were built for Kathiawar by HH Nawab Of Junagadh in memory of Prince Alfred , the Duke of Edinburgh . This School was opened in January, 1875 by H.E. Sir Phillip Wodehouse KCB & GCSI, Governor of Bombay. The name Alfred High School was changed to "Mohandas Gandhi High School" after independence.
327. Gandhi, M K; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 20.
328. Parikh, Narhari D.; *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,* vol. 2, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1956), p. 312
329. This seventy –two years old officer had previously worked as the Diwan of Junagadh State for a number of years.
330. Parikh, Narhari D.; *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. 2, p. 313.
331. On 16th October 1938 Thakore Saheb wrote to Sir Patrick, "My people feel and are led to believe that you have been sent by the Government and that I have lost the position which I had hitherto enjoyed. They now refuse to extend to me the same love and loyalty which they used to extend to me before your arrival. Nay they even seem to think and carry the impression that not I but you are the RulerÖIt is my definite desire to myself settle the domestic dispute between my State and its subjects as early as possible and before Diwali holidays. This would not, in my view, be possible unless we part at the earliest. This is a very unfortunate position and no one would be more sorry than myself, but it could not be helped as the interests of myself and my State are at Stake." *CWMG*, vol. 68, Appendix 1, p. 475.
332. *Ibid*, p. 477.

333. *CWMG*, vol. 67, p. 351.
334. For the full text of the draft see, *CWMG*, vol. 68, p. 135.
335. *Ibid*, pp. 136-137.
336. *Ibid*, p. 156.
337. *Ibid*, pp. 163, 164.
338. *Ibid*, p. 274.
339. *Ibid,* p. 275.
340. *Ibid*, pp. 275-276.
341. Parikh, Narhari D.; *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. 2, p. 329.
342. The Sardar's list was as follows:
    1. Popatlal Dhanjibhai Malaviya
    2. Popatlal Purushottam Anada
    3. Mulla Waliji Abdulali
    4. Dr. D J Gajjar
    5. Jamnadas Khushaldas Gandhi
    6. Vrajlal Mayashankar Shukla
    7. Uchhangrai Navalshankar Dhebar.
343. Parikh, Narhari D.; *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. 2, pp. 331-332.
344. *Ibid*, p. 332.
345. *CWMG*, vol. 68, Appendix I, p. 469.
346. *Ibid.*
347. *Ibid*, p. 319.
348. *Ibid*, p. 346.
349. *Ibid*, p. 366.
350. *Ibid*. p. 387.
351. *Ibid*, p. 449.
352. *Ibid.*
353. *Ibid*, p. 450.
354. *Ibid*, p. 460. Letter of 26 February 1939.
355. *Ibid*, p. 461.
356. *CWMG*, vol. 69, pp.2-3.
357. *Ibid*, p. 4.
358. *Ibid.*
359. *Ibid*, pp. 5-6.
360. *Ibid*, p. 443. (Appendix I).
361. *Ibid*, p. 9.
362. *Ibid*, p. 13.
363. *Ibid*, pp. 17-18.
364. *Ibid*, p. 22.
365. *Ibid*, p. 444. (Appendix II).
366. *Ibid*, p. 29.
367. *Ibid*, p. 445 (Appendix III).
368. Parikh, Narhari D.; *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. 2, p. 356.

369. *Ibid*, p. 357.
370. *CWMG*, vol. 69, p. 114-115, fn. 4.
371. *Ibid*, pp. 142-143.
372. *Ibid*, p. 158.
373. *Ibid*, p. 162.
374. *Ibid*, p. 171.
375. *Ibid*, p. 244, fn. 2.
376. *Ibid*, pp. 259-260.
377. *Ibid*, p. 271.
378. *Ibid*, pp. 271-272.
379. *Ibid*, pp. 168-169.
380. Gandhi, M K; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai), first published in 1927, 1929, second revised edition 1940. (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1999), p. x.
381. He said; "I have expressed my wish at the prayer meeting also that should someone kill me I may have no anger against the killer in my heart and I may die with Ramanama on my lips." Vol. 40, p. 489.
382. The seven books under consideration are: *Hind Swaraj, Satyagraha In South Africa, An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth, From Yeravda Mandir, Ashram Observances in Action, Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place,* and *Key To Health.* We shall also consider his translation of the *Bhagvad Gita* as *Anasakti Yoga* in the essay. The term 'book' has to be understood in a broad sense in the context of Gandhi's writings. *From Yeravda Mandir* are a set of letters. Large parts of *Satyagraha in South Africa* were dictated to a fellow prisoner and serialised in his journal *Navajivan.* His autobiography also appeared first in a serialised form both in Gujarati and its English translation.
383. For a note on the history of the text see, Parel, Anthony (edited), *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (New Delhi: Foundation Books, 1997), pp. lxiii-lxiv.
384. Of all the principal works under consideration with the sole exception of *Constructive Programme* all other works were originally written in Gujarati. *Hind Swaraj* is the only work that Gandhi translated into English. All his other works were translated by his close associates and co-workers under his watchful eye and bear his testimony to the translation's proximity and faithfulness to the original. Albeit, *Ashram Observances in Action* was originally published and translated after his death.
385. In chapter XII, 'What is True Civilisation?' Gandhi draws a picture of India untouched and unsullied by modern civilization and its emblems; the railway, doctors and the lawyers. It is this India that Gandhi often characterized as 'ancient civilisation' and even as 'real civilisation.'

Ancient Greece, Rome, Egypt, China and Japan provide referents to this Indian civilization. This India that lies outside the modern Western civilization is real. It does not reside either in memory or in imagination. Modern civilization, however ephemeral, transitory and self-destructive it might have been for Gandhi is what necessitates *Hind Swaraj*. In fact, *Hind Swaraj* cannot be conceived outside the modern universe. It is not only present as the Empire or its emblems the railways, doctors and lawyers but it is present as the *Kildonan Castle* that took him from England to South Africa, from the seat of the Empire to a colony. Forty year old author of the *Hind Swaraj* is also a modern migrant, a *girmitiya*. The fact of modern civilization forms the basic ground of *Hind Swaraj*. It is thus possible to read *Hind Swaraj* as a dialogue anchored in this transition – where a-modern civilization though recessive is present; and where modern civilization though dominant is not a universal, permanent fact.

386. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 56.
387. *Sudhar* in Gujarati has a lineage. Before Gandhi the term *Sudhar* was used largely to indicate the idea and process of social and religious reform. The term *Sudhar* in the sense of reform did include the idea that *Su-dhar* was the good path, the righteous path. And it is in the sense of *Su-dhar* being the good path that *Sudharo* could be equated with 'good conduct.' *Sudharo* that makes possible self-knowledge and self-rule are unique to Gandhi. Even after one century of the publication of *Hind Swaraj* the term *Sudharo* is used in Gujarati primarily in the nineteenth century sense of reform. In the Gujarti text the term *Kudhar/Kudharo* (the wrong path) creates a play between *Sudhar* and *Kudhar*. The term occurs nine times in the Gujarti text, which has been rendered in English as 'civilisation only in name,' 'civilisation as a disease,' and 'reverse of civilisation.' In fact, six out of nine times Gandhi did not render the term *Kudhar* in the English text.
388. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj* p. 30.
389. *Ibid*, pp.59-60.
390. The term *Swaraj* occurs fifty-six times in the Gujarati text. The English rendering alternates between Home Rule and Swaraj, the choice being guided by the context of usage and the distance or proximity that he wished to suggest with his own vision. Out of fifty-six occurrences of the term *Swaraj* in Gujarati it has been rendered as *Home Rule* in twenty-eight instances.
391. Ganhdi, M K; *From Yeravda Mandir*, (translated from the original Gujarati by Valji Govindji Desai), (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1932, 2005), p. 5.
392. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 81
393. *Ibid.*

394. Sir Edwin Arnold's translation. Gandhi's own rendering reads: " In a man brooding on objects of the senses, attachment to them spring up; attachment begat craving and craving begets wrath. Wrath breeds stupefaction, stupefaction leads to loss of memory, loss of memory ruins reason, and the ruin of reason spells utter destruction." Discourse II: 62,63. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1946, 2004), p. 163.
395. The translation was done in 1926-1927, he wrote the introduction to the translation two years later at Kosani in Almora. The introduction was finished on 24 June, 1929. The *Anasakti Yoga* was published on 12 March 1930, the day he left the Ashram at Sabarmati on his historic march to Dandi. It was translated in Hindi, Bengali and Marathi almost immediately. Mahadev Desai translated the *Anaskti Yoga* as *The Gospel of Selfless Action* in English. This translation was done during his imprisonment in 1933-1934. The translation could not be published till January 1946, as Gandhi could not read the translation. Mahadev Desai died as a prisoner in the Aga Khan Palace prison on 15 August 1942, and as a tribute to his memory Gandhi hastened the publication soon after his release from prison. Before he attempted the translation Gandhi during his imprisonment in 1922 wrote a lexicographic commentary that explained each term of the Gita and its various meanings in the poem. This was published only in 1936 as *Gitapadarthkosha*. During his yearlong stay at the Satyagraha Ashram in Ahmedabad he gave between February 24, 1926 and November 27, 1926 two hundred and eighteen discourses on the Gita. The imprisonments in 1930 and 1932 provided another occasion to discourse on the Gita, when he wrote a series of letters, called Letters on The Gita to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram, which were read out during the morning prayer. He also composed a primer on the Gita, popularly called *Ram-Gita* as it was composed for his son Ramdas Gandhi.
396. Among the major commentators, translators of the *Gita* were Sister Nivedita, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Anne Beasant, Sri Aurobindo, Bal Gangadhar Tilak,. The tradition continued up to Vinoba Bhave.
397. Gandhi was keenly aware of the question of *adhikar*. In 1920, during the non-cooperation movement, he established a university which was then called the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya. Gandhi was appointed its chancellor for life. In his inaugural address Gandhi raised the question of *adhikar*. " I fulfilled a function of a *rishi*, if a Vanik's son can do it." *CWMG*, vol. 21, p. 482.
398. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*, p. 126.
399. Desai, Mahadev; *The Gospel of Selfless Action or The Gita According to Gandhi*,

p. 127.

400. Verses fifty-four to seventy-two of the second discourse of the *Gita* deal with the characteristics of a *sthitpragnya*. The *Gita* was recited daily in the ashram prayers. During the morning prayers the recitation of the *Gita* was so arranged that the entire *Gita* was recited every fourteen days, later this was changed so that the recitation was completed in seven days. The recitation of the various discourses of the Gita was distributed among the days as follows: Friday, 1 and 2; Saturday, 3, 4 and 5; Sunday, 6, 7 and 8; Monday, 9, 10, 11 and 12; Tuesday, 13, 14 and 15; Wednesday, 16 and 17; Thursday, 18. The 19 verses of the Discourse II of the *Gita* that describe the characteristics of a *sthitpragnya* became part of the daily evening prayers.
401. *Gita,* III:10.
402. *CWMG*, vol. 20, p. 404.
403. Initially spinning was time bound, half an hour; later the measure was changed to threads spun
404. *CWMG*, vol. 24, p. 435.
405. *Ibid*, pp. 464-465.
406. *Ibid*, vol. 43, p. 203.
407. *Ibid*, vol. 49, p. 357.
408. *Ibid*, vol. 18, pp. 50-51.
409. The word written is an inexact description. He began to dictate this account to his fellow prisoner Indulal Yagnik in the Yeravda Central Prison on November 26, 1923. By the time he was released- due to ill-health- on February 5, 1924 earlier than his stipulated term of six years he had completed thirty chapters, which appeared serially in *Navajivan* from April 13, 1924 to November 22, 1925. The rest of the remaining twenty chapters were written after his release. They appeared in a book form in two parts, in 1924 and 1925. The English translation as *Satyagraha In South Africa*, done by Valji Govindji Desai, which was seen and approved by Gandhi was published in 1928 by S. Ganesan, Madras. A second revised edition of it was published by Navajivan Press in December 1950.
410. Gandhi, M.K.; *Hind Swaraj and other writings*, (ed.) Anthony Parel, (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 89
411. *Ibid*
412. *Ibid*
413. This distinction was carried into other translations as well. He wrote an *Itihas* of the Satyagraha Ashram as *Satyagraha Ashram No Itihas*. It was rendered into English by Valji Govindji Desai as *Ashram Observances In Action*. This distinction became part of the Gandhian thought. Mahadev Desai write an *Itihas* of the Satyagraha in Bardoli as *Bardoli Satyagraha No Itihas*, which he rendered in English as *The Story Of Bardoli*.

414. Gandhi, M K; *Satyagraha In South Africa*, (translated from the original Gujarati by Valji Govindji Desai), (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1950, 2003), p. vii.
415. *Ibid*, p. 97.
416. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 50.
417. *CWMG*, vol. 50, p. 189.
418. Gandhi commenced writing the *Itihas* of the Satyagraha Ashram in Yeravda Central Prison on April 5, 1932. This work was written intermittently and the last installment was written on July 11, 1932. It was never completed. It was published after his death in May 1948, and the English translation by Valji Govindji Desai was published in 1955. *Mangal Prabhat* was written as weekly letters to the Satyagraha Ashram during his imprisonment in 1930. It was translated in English by Valji Govindji Desai and published in 1932. The last chapter in this work on Swadeshi was written after his release from prison. He did not write it in jail as he felt that he could not do justice to the politics of Swadeshi without encroaching upon his limits as a prisoner.
419. Gandhi, M K; *From Yeravda Mandir* (translated from the original Gujarati by Valji Govindji Desai), (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1932, 2005), p. 3.
420. In the *Hind Swaraj* also, Gandhi had this non-denominational idea of religion. He wrote; "Here I am not thinking of the Hindu, the Mahomedan, or the Zoroastrian religion, but of that religion which underlies all religions." *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 30.
421. They are *Satya* (Truth), *Ahimsa* (non-violence or love), *Brahmacharya* (chastity), *Asvad* (control of the palate), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Aparigraha* (non-possession or poverty), *Abhaya* (fearlessness), *Ashprushyata Nivaran* (removal of untouchability), *Sharer Shrama* (bread labour), *Sarva Dharma Samabhav* (tolerance or equality of religions), *Swadeshi.*
422. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 98.
423. This was the only work under consideration that Gandhi wrote in English. It was written in 1941 and revised and enlarged in 1945. Gandhi, M K; *Constructive Programme: Its Meaning and Place* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1945, 2006).
424. *Ibid*, p. 29.
425. Gandhi, M K, *An Autobiography or The story of My Experiments with Truth* (translated from the original Gujarati by Mahadev Desai), (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1940, 1999), p. 175.
426. Gandhi, M K: *Key to Health* (translated from the original Gujarati by Dr. Sushila Nayyar), see *CWMG*, vol. 77, pp. 1-48.
427. *Ibid*, p. 3.
428. *Ibid.*
429. *CWMG*, vol. 86, p. 486.

430. *CWMG*, vol. 86, pp. 521-522. This sense deepened with his own fast. The last fast affected both his kidneys and lever, a sure sign that the purity that he had wished and prayed for still alluded him.
431. Gandhi, M K, *An Autobiography or The story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. xii.
432. *M K Gandhi's Hind Swaraj*, p. 72.
433. In Hindi it reads:
"*Daya dharma ka mool hain, pap mool abhiman*
Tulsi daya na chandiya, jab lag ghatmen pran.' In Gandhi's rendering word *deha* (body) was introduced in place of *pap* (sin).
434. For the relation between social reform and the emergence of autobiographical writing, the novel and history see, Suhrud, Tridip; *Writing Life: Three Gujarati Thinkers*, (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2008).
435. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography*, p. ix
436. *Ibid*, pp. ix-x
437. For a history of the translation and a comparison of the two editions of the English translation see, Suhrud, Tridip; *An Autobiography or The story of my experiments with Truth: A Table of Concordance* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009).
438. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography*, p. x
439. *Ibid*, pp. x-xi
440. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 255.
441. *Ibid.*
442. Gandhi, M.K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, p. 359.
443. For the statement on the fast see, *CWMG*, vol. 55, pp. 74-75.
444. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 76.
445. *Ibid.*
446. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 256.
447. *CWMG*, vol. 55, p. 255.
448. *CWMG*, vol. 52, p. 244.
449. *Ibid*, vol. 53, p. 483.
450. *Ibid.*
451. *Ibid.*
452. *Ibid*, vol. 25, pp. 23-24.
453. *Ibid*, vol. 52, p. 130.
454. Gandhi, M. K.; *An Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments With Truth*, p. 266.
455. *CWMG*, vol. 56, p. 182.