

CHAPTER- III

NON-VIOLENCE IN CLASSICAL INDIAN THOUGHT

In course of our discussion, we should not lose the track. We are in search of a society that can be built upon the foundation of non-violence (*ahimsā*). In the previous chapter, viz., *Non-violence: The Demand of Society*, we have searched for the very foundation of society. Society, in our opinion, must be based on *ahimsā*, because it demands the sacrifice of individual instinct or interest, whatever small the amount may be. The history of genesis of society is lost in the antiquity, because it is unrecorded and we can only make some inferences about it. But after thought and language of human beings have taken shape, they have reflected upon the events of entire universe including human events. Importantly, a great deal of reflections has been recorded. For our purpose we will inquire into the history of human thought to see what clue the great thinkers have left that would lead to our desire goal, that is, a non-violent society.

Indian philosophical tradition would be our present field of inquiry. Before studying Indian thought we must keep in our mind that neither Western nor Indian tradition is wholly homogeneous. That is, it cannot be said that all the Indian philosophers have taught to neglect earthly life and to put emphasis on after life, *bairagya*, *mokṣa*, *ahimsā*, non-resistance etc. Moreover, the terms are not used synonymously by different philosophers. Thus, the word '*ahimsā*' might have different significances and connotations in the writings of different thinkers. It may not be possible for us to look into all the schools of Indian thought; however, we would base our search mainly into Jaina, Buddhist and Yoga school of thought. Our field of inquiry also includes the *Bhagavat Gītā*, as the background of Indian philosophical tradition.

To discuss the very notion of non-violence, it is important to locate the theory of violence and non-violence in Indian thought. The basic philosophies of violence and non-violence in the Indian tradition come from the Vedic sources and from Jainism and Buddhism. Previously we have mentioned that our discussion of the notion of non-

violence in classical Indian thought will be based on the schools of Jainism, Buddhism and Yoga Sutras. But before examining the crucial notion of non-violence in Jainism or Buddhism, it is very important to inquire into the Vedic and *Upaniṣadic* conception of violence and non-violence because Vedic literature is the seed of almost all Indian schools of thought. So our primary attempt is the references of non-violence in Vedic literature. However, not only Veda, our quest also includes *Manusmṛti*, *Bhāgvat Pūrāṇas*, and great epics like *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata (Bhagavat Gītā)* as source material.

Non-violence in Vedic Literature: The word ‘Veda’ is derived from *Vid*, to know and it means knowledge. The Vedas have been traditionally associated with the path of knowledge and looked upon as the repositories of the light, truth of life. “There are four Vedas, *Ṛgveda*, *Sāmaveda*, *Yojurveda* and *Atharvaveda*. The *Ṛgveda*, *Sāmaveda* and *Yojurveda* are the original Vedas and the last one, *Atharvaveda* is a later addition¹.” The Vedas can be looked upon as the being related to knowledge for the moral spiritual and physical guidance and uplift of humanity. The Vedas may be assigned latest to about 1500 B.C.

The Indian Philosophical Schools can be divided into two: the orthodox school and the heterodox school. The former believed in the authority of Vedas, but the later rejected the authority of Vedas. In Indian philosophy, the *Upaniṣads* contain the germs of the orthodox school as well as heterodox school. The *Upaniṣads* are the part of the Vedas. The four Vedas are divided into three categories, viz., the *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas*. The *Upaniṣads* are mostly parts of the *Āraṇyakas*.

There are two kinds of duties (*dharma*) prescribed by Vedas: *pravṛtti* (*kāmyakarma* or *sakāma*) and *nivṛtti* (*niṣkāma*). Duties prompted by desire for fruit constituted *pravṛtti karma* and the later duties free from desire for fruits constitute *nivṛtti karma*. The first one is prudential duties and the second are rational duties. The common duties of four castes are harmlessness, truthfulness, non-stealing, purity and sense-restraint. “Harmlessness is primary duty. Non-injury to preceptor, the spiritual guide, the expounder of the Vedas, father, mother, *Brāhmaṇas*, hermits and cows is especially

obligatory. Unbelief or disbelief in after life, cavilling of the Vedas and reviling gods should be avoided. Hatred, boastfulness, pride, wrath and cruelty should be eschewed.”ⁱⁱ One should always perform one’s own specific duties prescribed by the Vedas, the duties of *Brāhmaṇas*, the duties of *Kṣatriyas*, *Vaiśyas* and *Sūdras*.

In the context of Vedic literature, the ancient sage like Manu said, “All knowledge flows from the Vedas and the Veda is the source of all Dharma” (*Manusmṛti* 2-6) i.e., religion, morality, righteousness and conduct. Manu enjoys purity of mind and purity of overt actions. He is taking about mental verbal bodily sins. The three kinds of mental immoral actions are intention to steal others’ wealth, harbouring thought of injury to others and disbelief in the next world. Manu mentioned four kinds of immoral verbal actions. These are speaking harsh words, speaking falsehood, speaking ill of others behind their back, irrelevant talk and idle gossip. Finally Manu speaks on three immortal bodily actions, stealing others’ wealth killing animal forbidden by the scriptures and adultery Truth should be subordinated to humanitarian consideration.

Harmlessness is a common duty of all. This is prescribed by the Vedas that killing animals (*himsā*) in sacrifices should be considered as non-killing (*ahimsā*). “Manu, like many others, uses the word *himsā* sometimes in the sense of ‘killing’ and the term *himsra* sometimes as killer.ⁱⁱⁱ The popular meaning of *himsā* is killing a living being. “A commentator upon *Manusmṛti* refers to the depredations and other violent activities of the wild animals as killing (*himsā*) which causes the separation of life from the body of others.”^{iv}

If the popular meaning of *himsā* is ‘killing’, we may say that the popular meaning of *ahimsā* is non-killing. It appears however, that in the *Dharmasāstras* and *Pūrāṇas*, the word *himsā* is more often used in the sense of ‘killing’ than *ahimsā* in the sense of ‘non-killing’. Therefore, the relative frequency of *himsā* in the sense of ‘killing’ does not establish that *ahimsā* I equally often used in the popular sense of ‘non-killing’.

Besides ‘killing’ *himsā* have many other meanings. We may note that “Manu uses it in the specific sense of ‘cutting down medical trees’, which is one of the minor

crimes”.^vIn another context “*himsā* is referred to as ‘destroying knowingly or unknowingly the properties of another’, which requires a compensation to be paid to the owner of the property as well as the payment of a fine to the king.”^{vi} “*Himsā* means also injury to other harmless beings, just for the sake of one’s own pleasure.”^{vii} According to the *Jālāladarśana-Upaniṣad* “real *himsā* is *himsā* committed physically (*kāya*), mentally (*maṇas*) or vocally (*vāc*), which is against the Vedic injunctions.”^{viii}

A modern Sanskrit dictionary, which has orthodox leanings, describes *himsā* as beating (*ghāta*), stealing (*caurya*) tying up (*bandhana*), destruction of livelihood (*vṛttnāśa*), intimidation (*trasa*) and killing (*vadha*). “But if one kills a being who intends to kill, there is no sin (*doṣa*).”^{ix} The above references demonstrate that the term ‘*himsā*’ has been used by Manu and other writers in various meanings.

In the Vedas ‘*himsā*’ is a part of the concept of *ahimsā*. Manu thus holds that *himsā* prescribed in the Vedas should be construed to mean *ahimsā* because moral duties spring out from the Vedas. One who kills animal for his own pleasure does not attain happiness here or hereafter. Non-injury to animals in the form of avoidance of oppression, causing pain to animals, and killing them leads to supreme happiness “Delight in truth (*satya*), virtue (*dharma*), good conduct worthy of a *Ārya* or a cultured person (*āryavṛtta*), and purity (*śauca*) should be practiced.”^x

In the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* we find an important Vedic statement regarding the meaning of *ahimsā*. “He, who practices *ahimsā* towards all creatures, except at holy places (*tirtha*), does not return to this world again.”^{xi} The ‘Holy place’ refers to the place of animal sacrifice. Thus killing for sacrificial purposes was not considered to be morally wrong.

Moreover, “killing of animal has a Vedic sanction in the preparation of madhuparka (a mixture of honey, curd and meat) in Vedic sacrifices (*yājñā*) and in offering made to one’s forefathers as well as gods.”^{xii} This inclusion of Vedic *himsā* into the notion of non-violence may be explained by the idea that “if God directed man to do good-evil (*sādhu-asādhu*), the moral responsibility for the result goes to God.”^{xiii} If for

example, a man cuts off a tree, the possible sin would be considered to be committed by the man and not by the axe.

Several highly authoritative scriptures bar violence against domestic animals except in the case of ritual sacrifice. This view is expressed in *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhāgvat Pūrānas*(11.15.13-14) and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (8.15.11). It is also reflected in the *Manusmṛti* (5.27-44), a particular renowned traditional Hindu law book (*Dharmaśāstra*). These texts strongly condemn the slaughter of animal and meat eating. The *Mahābhārata* permits hunting by warriors (*Kṣatriyas*), but opposes it in the case of hermits who must be strictly non-violent.

Nevertheless, the sources show that this compromise between supporters of *ahimsā* and meat eaters was shaky and hotly disputed. Even the loopholes – ritual slaughter and hunting – were challenged by advocates of *ahimsā*. The *Mahābhārata* and *Manusmṛti* (5.27-55) contain lengthy discussions about the legitimacy of ritual slaughter.

Most of the arguments opposed in favour of non-violence to animals refer to rewards it entails before or after death and to horrible karmic consequences of violence. In particular, it is pointed out that he who deliberately kills an animal will on his part be eaten by an animal in a future existence due to karmic retribution. *Ahimsā* is described as a prerequisite for acquiring supernatural faculties, highest bliss and ultimate salvation. Moreover, it is said to protect against all kinds of dangers. The *Manusmṛti* (10.63), *Koutilya's Arthasāstra* (1.3.13) and the *Vasishtha Dharmasūtra* (4.4) point out that *ahimsā* is a duty for all the four classes (*varnas*) of society. The texts declare that *ahimsā* should be extended to all forms of life. They also give attention to the protection of plants.

Under these circumstances the defenders of hunting and ritual slaughter had to deny the violent nature of these activities. They asserted that lawful violence is in fact non-violence; according to them sacrificial killing is not killing, but is meant for the welfare for the whole world. They also suggested that such killing is in fact a benevolent act, because the slaughtered animal will attain a high rebirth in the circle of reincarnation.

Moreover, they argued that some species have been created for the purpose of being sacrificed and eaten by humans, that it is normal for animals to kill and eat other animals, that agriculture too, inevitably leads to the death of many animals, that plants are living beings as well and must still be destroyed, that we unintentionally and unknowingly destroy life forms of all time and that a hunted animal has a fair chance to survive by killing the hunter.

The Vedic (*Hindu*) philosophy which directs day-to-day practices of most Indians on the basis of guidelines of Vedas, especially the *R̥gveda*, considers *ahimsā* to be an evil free *dharma*. Of course, this *dharma* establishes itself in the form of duty as well as goodness. Therefore, along with not harming anyone by thought, speech and deed and depriving someone of life relying for support of violence to maintain order and to accord justice is the basis of Vedic *ahimsā*. Vedic *ahimsā* is more the passive non-injury. It involves relieving pain as much as abstaining from giving pain. Manu has praised *ahimsā*. It is the highest virtue. *Dharma* is non-injury to all creatures. “When one does harm to another person, the injured person does harm to the injurer. Similarly, when one does well to another person, the benefited person does well to him in return. One becomes guilty of injury through thoughts, words and deeds. One should discard injury mentally at first, then through words and acts.”^{xiv} Non-injury is the highest virtue, the highest penance and highest truth, from which all duties spring. Actions, which are not conducive to the good of others, should not be done. “One should always think of the good of humanity. One should civilize non-injury to all creature and compassion for all and do well to all. One should cultivate forgiveness, good will for friends and foe, friendship for all, and equality in treatment with all. One should not cause fear and anxiety to anybody, even if one is frightened by him. One should not do injury to another, even if one is injured by him. One should good for evil. One is virtuous, who does good to mankind without attachment and aversion. Endurance is necessary for doing well for humanity.”^{xv}

The Vedic philosophers have suggested that to avoid the path of evil, one must first desist from it and then should follow the path of goodness. “Leave here those ‘who are opposed to goodness’ or those ‘who are evil minded’ and ‘let us cross over to powers that are beneficent.’”^{xvi} Again, “Good existence implies goodness and bliss and many Vedic hymns contain a prayer for this. The term good heartedness, good mindedness, imply the spirit of friendship and love for fellow-beings e.g. in the prayer ‘May we be good-hearted all our days.’”^{xvii}

Aśmanvatirīyatanrabhadvamuttiṣṭhataprataratasakhāyah

AtrājahīmayaasannaśivāŚivānvayamuttaramābhivājān. (Ṛgveda 10/53/8)

Viśvadānimsumanasahsyāmapaśyema nu sūryamuccarantam

Tathākaradvasupatirvasūnāmdevāṇohānovasāgamiṣṭhah. (Ṛgveda 6/52/5)

Truth, non-violence, austerity, brotherhood or universal friendship, security, peace, fearlessness and dedication are necessarily some of the prime ethical values of life, which find mention in innumerable prayer in the Vedas through which God is invoked for such blessing. In *Yojurveda* universal friendship is mentioned as:

Drtedrmha ma mitrasyamacakshusasarvanibhutanisamiksantam.

Mitrayahamcaksusasarvanibhutanisamikse mitrasyacaksusamiksamahe
(*Yojurveda*xxxxvi. 18)

‘O Lord, make me firm in times of distress. May all the beings regard me with the eye of a friend. May I regard all beings with friend eye. Thus, may we all be looked at with a friendly eye.’

This is enough to show that while the Vedic people fully enjoyed the physical and mental pleasures of life, they were never lost or fallen in mental stature and ethical character as the very basis of their view of life was positive and optimistic. That is why ‘a sage in the third *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda* prays the almighty to transform the entire world into a truthful place.’

Prasū ta Indrapravatāharibhyāmpratevajrahpramṛṣannetuśatruū

Tathākaradvasupatirvassūnāmdevāṇohānovasāgamiṣṭhah (Ṛgveada 3/30/6)

This is once brings us to the Vedic idea of collective ethics or the corporate living in a society. The Veda inculcates the idea of civil society through mutual love and collective livings. It propagates social concord and upholds social virtues like fidelity and friendship. It is in the happy and harmonious blending of the individual and social objectives wherein ties the excellence of Vedic philosophy. An ideal society is where the unity is united.

Emphasizing the Vedic conception of the unity of all life, Srila Prabhupada then stated, “Everyone is God’s creatures, although in different bodies or dresses. God is considered the one supreme father. A father may have many children and some may be intelligent and other no very intelligent, but if an intelligent son tells his father, ‘My brother is not very intelligent; let me kill him,’ will the father agree? Similarly, if God is the supreme father, why should He sanction the killing of animals who are also his sons?”

The famous *Samjñāna hymn* of *Ṛgveda* which presents a picture of social concord and gives the secret of united social life in the following words-

“Let you aims be common
And your hearts of one concord
And all of you be of one mind
So you may live well together.”

It means that the integration of aims and of intellectual and emotional life leads to a well-integrated social life.

It is clear from the above that the Vedic view of life and civil society presents an integral and harmonious picture where everybody is free from bonds but ties to the collective interests, and all are equally important for the welfare of the society.

The Vedic religion (*Hindu* religion or the *Sanātana dharma*) revolves round the axis of non-violence. *Dharma* has been declared for the sake of non-injury (*ahimsā*) of beings. People well versed in the Vedic lore say that ‘non-violence is the very essence of religion (*ahimsā-lakṣaṇa dharma*).^{xviii} The term ‘*lakṣaṇa*’ here means that either *ahimsā* is an inherent characteristic of *dharma* or that *ahimsā* is identical with *dharma*. Non-violence is the supreme religion is the motto of Vedic philosophy. Holy Vedas do not approve of violence. Sacrifice of human beings and animals at the altar or in the fire is abhorrent and abominable in Vedic religion. Vedic philosophy is based on compassion and kindness, service and sympathy. The heart of Vedic devotee always throbs with warmth of selfless love and compassion for all fellow-creatures. It is said that he/she cannot dream of killing anyone, whether man or animal, as an offering at the altar of God. Vedic God is too compassionate to accept human sacrifice or offering of animals. True prayer lies in love for all fellow-beings, whether man or birds or beasts. He, who loves and serves in his fellow creatures, serves God, because God dwells in the hearts of all creatures.

To live is to give. Give what? Love; to live is to love. To love man is to love God. Where there is love and compassion, there God dwells. If you accept mercy and love from God, love his human beings whether they are theists or atheists, black or brown, rich or poor. The mystic poet William Blake expresses the same idea one of his poem, ‘*The Divine Image*’ which runs as: And all must love the human form/ In heathen, Turk or Jew/ Where mercy, Love and Pity/ There God is dwelling too.

According to Vedic philosophy, neither violence nor personal welfare, but welfare of mankind is the ultimate goal of religion. That is, a *Hindu* (should) pray to providence for the well-being of all man. Nevertheless, non-violence towards non-human creatures is also recommended:

“If thou slyest
Our cows, horses and man,
Will shall kill thee

With bullet of lead
 So that thou shouldst not be
 Slayer of our heroes.” – *Atharveda* 1/16/4

The term *ahimsā* appears in the *Taittiriya Saṁhitā* of the *Yojurveda* (TS 5.2.2.7), where it refers to non-injury to the sacrifice himself. The *ahimsā* doctrine is comparatively a late development of Brahmanical culture. The earliest references to the idea of non-violence to animals (*pashu-ahimsā*), apparently in a moral sense, are in the *Kapisthala Kathā Saṁhita* of the *Yojurveda* (Kap. S 31.11), which may have been written in about the 8th century BCE. The word scarcely appears in the principal *Upaniṣads*. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, dated to the 8th to 7th century BCE, one of the oldest *Upaniṣads*, has the earliest evidence for the use of the word *ahimsā* in the sense familiar in *Hinduism* (a code of conduct). It bars violence against all creatures and the practitioner of *ahimsā* is said to escape from the cycle of reincarnation. It also names *ahimsā* a one of five essential virtues.

The doctrine of *ahimsā* was the essence of the *vārnaprastha* ideal in Hinduism. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (III.xvii.4) refers to *ahimsā*. Sage *Vyāśa* says that the central theme of the eighteen Purina’s is that helping others in cause of merit and injuring other cases sin. The *Hindu* concept of *ahimsā* as explained by social philosophy is relative in its application. Non-violence probably gained its superiority by a slow and gradual process. It was evidently incorporated into the *Hindu* social philosophy by virtue of the pressure exerted by the ascetic traditions. Yet it has been reinterpreted in social thought. “All living beings (*sarva-bhūta*) do not have the same inclusive meaning that it has for the ascetics. We may remember that it excludes criminals, enemies, attacking beasts and all other harmful beings. It excludes, moreover, those beings who can be usefully explained in sacrifices for the good of sacrifice and the sacrificed animals.”^{xix}

The lists of virtues mentioned are often very long, and *ahimsā* is sometimes one of twenty or thirty virtues. “The *Pūrāṇas* mention *ahimsā* as one of the twelve moral restraints (*yamas*).”^{xx} A devotee is required to practice “*ahimsā*, truthfulness (*satya*), non-

stealing (*asteya*), acceptance of what is necessary (*yāvat-artha-paragraha*), celibacy (*brahmacārya*), penance (*tapas*), purity (*śauca*), study of Vedas (*svadhyāya*), and worship of *Puruṣa* (Lord *Viṣṇu*).”^{xxi} Beside the above, also “compassion (*dayā*), forbearance (*titikṣā*), control of mind (*śāma*), control of senses (*dama*), renunciation (*tyāga*), simplicity (*ārjava*), satisfaction (*santoṣa*), looking equally upon all creatures (*samadṛk*), service (*sevā*)^{xxii} etc. are considered as virtues pleasing to God. The *Bhāgvat Pūrāṇa* includes *ahiṃsā* into the characteristics of the *dharma* common to all members of society that fills human beings with *dayā* and *karuṇā*, that is, compassion and sympathy imbued with love and the whole of mankind.

Saint Tulsidasa in his epic ‘*Rāmcarita mānasa*’ has stressed on importance of *ahiṃsā* at many places. He states that there is no religious duty higher than benevolence, helping others and no sin worse than causing pain to others.

*Parahitasarisa dharma nahibhae/
parapèãásamanahidharmáè//*

From the above, we can conclude that many gems from Vedic ethics and values are lying untapped and unutilized by us. In the present times, when the whole world seems to be in turmoil with fabric of social life being gradually shattered with the degradation of human values and moral ethics, it has become necessary to seriously consider this enormous problem, to ensure the survival of the humanity at large.

To conclude, the Vedic philosophy, which directs day to day practices of most Indians on the basis of guidelines, decided by the Vedas, especially the *R̥gveda* itself considers *ahiṃsā* to be an evil free *dharma*. Of course, this *dharma* establishes itself in the form of duty as well as goodness. Therefore, along with not harming anyone by thought, speech and deed, and not depriving someone of life, relying for support of violence to maintain order and to accord justice is the basis of Vedic *ahiṃsā*.

Non-violence in the great epics of *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*

The *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata* have exerted the most paramount influence on the minds of the Hindus in India for centuries and mauled their character. They have common ethical concepts and common philosophical ideas based on the teachings of the *Upaniṣads*.

The *Rāmāyana* refers to the Vedas, the *Vedāṅgas*, Manu, the *Pūrāṇas* and the Vedanta. Its philosophical speculations are scanty in comparison with those of the *Mahābhārata*. It mentions the duties of the Vedas and the *Pūrāṇas*.

Happiness (*Kāma*), wealth (*artha*), virtue (*dharma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*) are four ends of human life. Subordinate to virtue are happiness and wealth. Rama sacrifices them for virtue. The cardinal virtues are non-injury, truthfulness, sex-restraint and benevolence. A person should not do injury to others without their hostility. Even a *Kṣatriya* should not do harm to others, unless they are hostile to him. One should not hate another person. Forgiveness, compassion for all, kindness and devotion to the welfare of mankind are the altruistic virtues. Truthfulness is a basic virtue. That is no *dharma* that does not contain truth. Breaking a promise is a sin. One who breaks a promise made to a benefactor is vile. Rama is established virtue and truth. Truth is ever dear to him. It is dearer to him than life. He always speaks the truth and never tells a lie. He should rather renounce his life than break a promise. He embraces exile for fourteen years to fulfil his father's promise.

War in the *Rāmāyana* (like battles in other epics or apocalyptic stories and myths) is symbolic of the struggle between the forces of good and evil. Thus striving to satisfy the thirst for rationality and meaning in life. Rama's rivals are less clearly men and then they are mythical titans, demons, or a Jungian collective unconscious. Consequently, the viewpoint of reforming a moral theory about warfare or homicide from the *Rāmāyana* is faint from the start. Individual comments about moral ends and means in war may have no literal meaning apart from their intent to interest or from the general belief or hope that evil is overcome by good. But the comments may be enlightening, just as slips of the

tongue or blocked memories can sometimes assist speakers to determine what they really wished to say.

Rama's overt motivations for killing are the rescue of Sita, the preservation of royal honour and of the caste system, punishment for incest and the protection of hermits in the forest. On the last score he is challenged by Sita. The basic premise of her argument does not involve unqualified *ahimsā* (non-violence), but the opinion that war will become Rama's moral (caste) duty only after he clearly resumed the duties of warrior Varna or class. Rama feels bound by both his caste *dharma* and by his promise to protect the ascetics: "Even had I not promised them anything, *O Vaidehi* (Sita), it is my bounden duty to protect the sages; how much more so now!"^{xxiii}

In the *anuśāsana Parva* of *Mahābhārata*, non-violence is described in a long chain of superlatives. There appears the well-known statement "*ahimsā paramo dharmah*, non-violence is the highest religion. It is also said to be the highest self-control (*dama*), the highest gift (*dāna*) and the highest penance (*tapas*)."^{xxiv} In another context this praise is reiterated, with the addition that non-violence is the highest truth from which all *dharma* springs forth. This implies that, in the case of conflict, non-violence (probably in the Vedic sense) has heretically higher value than truth and any form of religion.

In *Mahābhārata Vyāsa* mentions non-violence is an important virtue for a self-restrained persons. He proclaims, "*Ahimsā* is the best practice."*Ahimsā* is the highest *dharma*. *Ahimsā* is the best *tapas*. *Ahimsā* is the greatest gift. *Ahimsā* is the highest self-control. *Ahimsā* is the highest sacrifice. *Ahimsā* is the highest power. *Ahimsā* is the highest friend. *Ahimsā* is the highest truth. *Ahimsā* is the highest teaching."^{xxv} In the *Śānti-Parva*, too, it is said that "there is no other *dharma* superior to *ahimsā* with respect to living beings. *Ahimsā* towards all living beings is regarded more highly than all other virtues."

Are both violence and its contrary *ahimsā*, taught in the Epics? If even Gandhian idealism would same day propose both choices at different levels, why not here? An

alternate, if less likely, resolution of the dilemma can be built on the assumption that the *Rāmāyana*'s author(s) deliberately chose to demonstrate their oscillation on the issue. Like some would be pacifists on the contemporary scene who have vacillated between non-violent strategies and deployment of demolitions, the *Vālmīkian* contributors could not make up their minds. A less speculative generalization can sum up the quandary: in the measure to which the *Vālmīki Rāmāyana* divulges ancient and popular beliefs; a strong and definite tendency to non-violence was one of them. No straight “just-war theory” here”^{xxvi} In the *Rāmāyana*, the main offspring of the duel of *Ikṣvāku* are said to be lovers of non-violence (*ahimsā-rati*). This seems to refer to *ahimsā* as a preferably virtue rather than as a necessary duty.

Non-violence in the *Bhagavat Gītā*

“The Vedas, the *Upaniṣads*, the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Pūrāṇas* are the foundation of Hinduism. The *Bhagavat Gītā*, which is a part of the *Bhīṣmasparva* of the *Mahābhārata*, is the most important of them. It is the most popular and authoritative work, and have several commentaries written by the Vedantists of different schools. It is called the *Gītā* by Hindus.”^{xxvii} The glory of *Srimad Bhagavat Gītā* is unfathomable and illimitable. This holly book, the *Bhagavat Gītā*, is counted among the scriptural trio, the ‘*prasthāna Traya*’. The three royal ways of welfare of mankind, are known by the name of *Prasthāna Traya*. One is the ‘Vedic *Prasthāna*’ called the *Upaniṣad*; the second is metaphysical or ‘philosophical *Prasthāna*’ called *Brahma Sūtra*; and the third is ‘*Smārtha Prasthāna*’ called the *Bhagavat Gītā*. The *Upaniṣads* are the use and value for the deserving only, and the *Brahma Sutra* are of use and importance for man of erudition and learning, but the *Bhagavat Gītā* is for, one and all.

In the first chapter of the *Gītā*’ *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* said to Sanjaya, the commentator,

*Dharmakṣetre kurukṣetresamavetāyuyutsavah
māmakāhpāṇḍavāścaivakimakurvatasanjaya*

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said: “O, Sanjaya, assembled at the holly field of *Kuruṣketra*, eager to fight, what did my sons and the sons the Pāṇdu do?”

Though the word ‘*Kuruṣketra*’ is fair and justified, because the land belongs to both the cousins groups, yet Indian culture, is no unique that righteousness is given to priority in it. Therefore, even an action such as war, is performed on the field of righteousness--a land of pilgrimage, so that the warriors may attain salvation. Therefore, the word ‘*Dharmaṣketra*’ has been used along with ‘*Kuruṣketra*’ here. But it is the most important thing that Duryadhana and the members of his groups were to fight for usurping the kingdom, while the Pāṇdavas, were compelled to fight for righteousness.

Moreover, the word ‘*dharma*’ plays a very important role in the *Mahābhārata* war and it is also pointed out that doing war through the path of *dharma* is not violence as it is mentioned previously the Vedas, where sacrificial killing is considered as non-killing, i.e., non-violence.

In the first chapter of *Gītā*, Arjuna was perplexed and feels anxiety. He is emotionally mislead and unable to decide what he ought to do or not. In 34 and 35 *ślokas* of the *Gītā*, mentioned that friendship and love are greater than killing someone or slay anyone in his own

ācāryāhpitarahputrāstathaivacapitāmahā
mātulāhśvaśurāhpautrāhśyālāhsambandhinasta
Etānnahantumicchāmighnato ’pimadhusūdana
apitrailokyarājyasyahetohkim nu mahīkṛte-35

“Teachers, uncles, fathers sons as well as grand-uncles, material-uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law and other relatives, though they kill me, I would not seek to slay them, even for the sovereignty of the three worlds; and least for this earth?” If our kith and kin, being prompted by greed and anger want to slay me, I do not seek to kill them, out of anger and greed”.

Here the word ‘*Api*’ has been used, two times by Arjuna. It means, first why should they kill me when I do not create any obstacle to their selfish motive? Even then suppose, they slay me by thinking that I worked as an obstacle to their selfish motive, I do not seek to slay them. Secondly, though there is no possibility for the sovereignty of the three worlds coming to me by killing them, yet, if I get it, I do not seek to slay them.

In the scriptures, it is mentioned that there is no sin in killing a desperado (*Manusmṛiti* 8/ 351). But it is also mentioned in the scriptures that non-violence is of great virtue. Therefore why should we slay our kith and kin, out of anger and greed?

Though Duryodhana etc. being desperadoes deserve to be killed, yet sin will accrue to us as a result of such action, because they are our kith and kin. It is also mentioned in the scriptures, that one who kills his kith and kin, is a great sinner. So how can we kill them? Therefore, it is better to break off our relationship with them, rather than to kill them. In the same way, as relationship could be cut off from a son, but he cannot be slain.

Worldly people will support the argument adduces by Arjuna, and will not agree with Kṛṣṇa, who will justify war latter. The reason is that as Arjuna is full of attachment and love, the worldly people are also belongs to the same class. So they cannot understand the point of view, expressed by Kṛṣṇa, who always thinks about welfare of benediction of beings. They will say that Arjuna wanted to escape the sin, by not waging war, but it was Kṛṣṇa, who inspired him to wage war. So, it was not proper on His part to do so.

The fact is that Kṛṣṇa did not make Arjuna wage war. He reminded of his duty only. Actually, violence is not Kṛṣṇa’s primary teaching to Arjuna. It was Arjuna, who had invited Kṛṣṇa to the war front. But seeing his kinsmen on the hostile side, he was turning away from his duty. So Kṛṣṇa reminded him not to neglect his duty, out of delusion but to wage war, because there was nothing more welcome to a member of the warrior-class then a righteous war.

The *Bhāgbat Pūrāṇa* declares that ‘life lives upon life’ (*Bhāgbat Pūrāṇa* - 1, 13-46). We maintain our life by destroying other organisms. There is nothing exclusively good or exclusive evil. Both good and evil are seen in all activities. The same action is regarded as *dharma* as well as *adharma* according to the differences in the time and place. “Even stealing (*adāna*), falsehood (*anṛta*) and *himsā* are to be regarded as *dharma* in particular situations.”^{xxviii} This type of relativistic approach is rare in other texts, yet it expresses in the popular idea of the *Mahābhārata*.

Discussing the implication of *Bhagavat Gītā*, Surendranath Dasgupta explains that “it is impossible for a man to practice non-injury in any extreme degrees. So it has to be practiced in moderation in accordance with common sense. If a beast enters into a cattle-shed, one’s duty is to kill the beasts; otherwise valuable cows will be killed. The principal object is to maintain social order and the well-being of the people.”^{xxix}

However, we should remember that the *Gītā* is not a text containing injunctions against violence. The word “*ahimsā*” occurs at only four places in the *Gītā* (x 5, xii, xvi 2, and xvii 14) and there too it is used as a description of ethical virtues. In the *Bhagavat Gītā*, a philosophy has been propounded which strengthens the foundation of non-violence more than in the narrow sense of non-killing or literal *ahimsā*. In its positive form, non-violence means an absence of hatred, ill-will and even the “largest love”. In order to be stable and enduring, non-violence must be come from a purging of all causes of violence in the soul and this kind of attempt leads to non-violence in the positive sense. It is to non-violence thus understood that the *Gītā* seems to make a definite contribution.

There are two kinds of duty (*dharma*) prescribed by the *Gītā*: *niṣkāma* karma and *sakāma* karma. Duty prompted by desire for fruits is *sakāma* and duty free from desire for fruits is *niṣkāma* karma. The *Bhagavat Gītā* puts forth a new ethical message of a synthesis between action and renunciation that of action without attachment, i.e., *niṣkāma* karma. This state of moral upliftment is to be achieved and worked for by steadying the mind and feeling it from selfish emotions. The *Gītā* repeated by stresses the purging of

desire, anger, and aversion and so on. These emotions are to be transcended and replaced by other directed emotions like compassion, kindness and calmness.

Thus, in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, Shri *Kṛṣṇa* speaks of desire as the cause of sin and urges that it should be overcome: “In him whose mind dwells on the objects of senses with absorbing interest, attachment to them is formed; from attachment arises desire, from desire anger comes forth. Anger leads to bewilderment, from bewilderment comes loss of memory; by loss of memory the intelligence is destroyed; and by the destruction of intelligence he perishes.”^{xxx}

While explaining discrimination between discharging one’s duty and abandoning it, *Kṛṣṇa* said “There is nothing more welcome for a man of the warrior class, than a righteous war, which is an open gateway to heaven; if you do not wage it, you will incur sin”. But you fight treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, alike, you will not incur sin. Your right is to perform your duty, but never to its fruits. Let not the fruit of action, be your object, nor let your attachment be, to inaction. Therefore perform your duty be fixed in Yoga, because equanimity consist in remaining even- minded in success and failure. A person ought to perform his appointed duties for the sake of the duty without attachment and any desire for enjoying their fruits and thus becomes free from virtues and vice in his lifetime. *Kṛṣṇa* never favours the war and He tried his best to persuade them. But everyone has to get results of their actions and the *Kouravas* got the same. Even if Arjuna has decided not to fight they all would have been killed by someone else. That’s why *Kṛṣṇa* tells that, the *Ātmā* is neither killed nor kills, so why is he running away from his duty.

The fact is that war was inevitable, i.e. the destruction of human being was inevitable, even if Arjuna did not fight. A man cannot control the happenings that are predestined. By discharging his duty one can attain salvation, but by neglecting it, he can degrade himself. It means that man is free to attain, either desirable or undesirable results. Therefore Lord *Kṛṣṇa* by reminding Arjuna of his duty has preached to human beings

that they should always discharge their duty, by following the ordinance of scriptures and never turn away from these.

Non-violence in Jainism, Buddhism and Yoga philosophy

We have discussed so far the concept of non-violence as it has been found in Vedic literature and the epics. We have also said that the concept of non-violence as it is found there has some space for violence. In Vedic ritual or in *Kurusketra* war we saw that violence is also unavoidable part of this sanction. However, it is non-violence and not violence which has been considered as an ideal trait. *Ahimsā* is considered as an essential *dharma*. Nevertheless, *ahimsā*, in its more unmixed form is found in other literatures of Indian tradition and culture.

The richness of Indian culture is chiefly the result of its three ancient systems of religion and philosophy, namely, the Vedas, the Jaina and the Buddhist. After discussion the Vedic literature, let us move to Jainism and Buddhism and also to Yoga philosophy.

Non-violence in Jaina philosophy

The word ‘Jainism’ is derived from ‘Jina’ which means ‘conqueror’, one who has conquered his passions and desires. The Jaina believes in 24 *Tīrthaṅkaras*. According to Jaina tradition Rṣabhadeva was the first and Mahāvīra was the last prophet, was a contemporary of Buddha. He was born in 599 B. C. and died in 527 B. C. “Mahāvīra, the last prophet, cannot be regarded as the founder of Jainism, because even before him, Jaina teachings were existent. But Mahāvīra gave a new orientation to that faith and for all practical purposes, modern Jainism may be rightly regarded as a result of his teachings. His predecessor, the 23rd *Tīrthaṅkaras*, *Pārśhanātha* is also a historical personage who lived in the eighth or ninth century B. C.”^{xxxix}

The word *ahimsā* has been translated into English by various writers as non-killing, non-injury, non-hatred, harmless, inoffensiveness, non-cruelty, non-aggression, tenderness, innocence, good will and love. In Indian context also, “*ahimsā*” has been used in many different senses. A few samples may be noted. In Jainism for

instance, *ahimsā* is frequently used as a technical term, hence there is hardly sufficient reason to refer to a number of non-technical affiliated terms. Jainism assigns the greatest importance to the principle of *ahimsā* in life. The doctrine of *ahimsā* is not explained in other religion as systematically and comprehensively as in Jainism.

Although is *ahimsā* referred to in almost all the religions of the world, we find unchallenged acceptance of *ahimsā* only in Jainism. In fact *ahimsā* forms the bedrock of the entire system of Jaina philosophy. It is the supreme ethical principal (*parama dharma*) and the foremost virtue. The whole matrix of Jaina conduct is woven around this noble principle. It is the basis of existence of life as well as sanity on this earth.

Manu, the law giver of Hindus, justifies slaughtering of animals, which were said to have been created for the sake of sacrifice and teaches the duty of eating meat in the sacrifice. He however prohibits meat eating in all other occasions, as he seems to be convinced about the superiority of vegetarianism. The *Srimad Bhāgvat Pūrāṇa* states that there is great truth in the saying that “life lives upon life (*jivojivasya jeevanām*).”^{xxxii} However the *Mahābhārata*, which has witnessed one of the most devastating wars in human history, in many places praises non-violence to the extent of describing “*Ahimsā* as the highest religion or supreme duty, the highest restraint, the highest friend, the highest happiness, the highest truth, the eternal law, beneficial to all etc.”^{xxxiii} The *Gītā* nowhere associated *yājñā* with animal sacrifice and contain several passages showering encomiums on *ahimsā*, yet it on emphasizes the *Kṣatriya*'s duty to fight and to kill and the glorification of war is repeated therein (*Gītā*2.37). Thus two distinct currents can be seen in the literature of the Hindus. If the virtue of non-violence came to the stressed in Hinduism, it seems to have been influenced mainly by Jainism.

The doctrine of *ahimsā*, is central to Jainism, no religion has laid greater emphasis on it than this creed. The most important contribution of Jainism in the socio-cultural field is the doctrine of *ahimsā*. Jainism preached the doctrine of *ahimsā* in a more extreme from than Buddhism, but it produced no emasculating effects upon its followers.

According to Jainism, the highest good of the society is the highest good of individual. It stands for absolute and eternal happiness for all living beings. Jainism interprets non-violence in an extremely comprehensive sense. It attributes soul to all sentient creatures. It holds that plants, air, water and minerals, too have soul. Jainism believes that, non-violence means abstaining from all thought, speech and action that can provoke discord and conflict. *Ahimsā* is the principal religious idea of Jainism. The ethics of this religion is based on the doctrine of non-violence. *Ahimsā* in Jainism is a fundamental principle forming the cornerstone of its ethics and doctrine. The term '*ahimsā*' means non-violence, non-injury, or absence of desire to harm any life forms. The Jaina concept of *ahimsā* is quite different from the concept of non-violence found in other philosophies. In other religious traditions violence is usually associated with causing harm to others. On the other hand, in Jainism violence refers primarily to injuring one's own self-behaviour which inhibits the souls own ability to attain *mokṣa* or liberation. At the same time it also means violence to others because it is this tendency to harm others that ultimately harms own soul. Furthermore, the Jaina have extended the concept of *ahimsā* not only to human but also animals, plants, micro-organisms and all beings having live or live potential. All life is sacred and everyone has a right to live fearlessly to its maximum potential. The living beings do not have any fear from those who have taken the vow of *ahimsā*. According to Jainism, protection of life, also known as *abhayadānam* is the supreme charity that a person can make.

The fundamental creed of Jainism is non-violence as the highest ethical virtue. In order to understand this fully, it is necessary to take note of the metaphysical aspect of the system. According to Jainism the universe consist of two ultimate realities, namely the living and the non-living. Each living organism, of which there exists an infinite number in the universe, possesses a soul which is eternal and retains its individuality forever.

Ethics of non-violence is based upon a fundamental position. All souls are potentially same and they are struggling for evolution towards a goal of perfection,

according to the circumstances and opportunities imposed upon them partly by the forces of nature and partly by their own previous activities. Violence of any kind, in deed, word, or thought is a hindrance to oneself as well as others. Hence, it must carefully be abjured, in order that there may be peace in society and progress in the individual promoting happiness which is sought by all. Mahāvīra's teachings, however, reach their pinnacle of glory in his message of *ahimsā*, as the supreme ethical and moral virtue. All living beings are fellow travellers on the path of salvation. As such no one has a right to come in the path of another, or cause any hindrance by any kind of violence or injury. A gentleman has been defined as one who has no tendency to do violence to others. "The moral principle of *ahimsā* applied judiciously would purify all fields of human activity including social, political and economic spheres. 'Live and let live' is the sum and substance of *ahimsā*. Peaceful co-existence in individual as well as national and international spheres is a message of hope to humanity held out by this principle of *ahimsā*."^{xxxiv}

As a practical religion Jainism has laid stress on the observance of five main and seven supplementary vows by its followers in all stages of life. The five vows of Jainas correspond to the five restraints (*yama*) of the Yoga system. These vows have broadly been divided into two groups: some vows are meant for the lay-man or householders called small vows or *aṇuvrata*, the others, for the ascetics or the homeless mendicants called great vows or *mahāvratā*. In another words there are two classes: house holders and monks. "House-holder should observe small vows (*aṇuvrata*) and monks should observe great vows (*mahāvratā*). Great vows are total abstention from sins."^{xxxv} "A lay-man is required to observe twelve vows, namely, five *aṇuvratas*, three *guṇavratas* and four *śikṣāvratas*. Of them the *aṇuvratas*, are the fundamental or the primary vows, while the *guṇavratas* and *śikṣāvratas* are the supplementary to the *aṇuvratas*,"^{xxxvi} The five vows are non-injury (*ahimsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), sex-restraint (*brahmachārya*) and non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts (*aparigraha*).

The vows of *ahimsā* and it has been convincingly shown that the remaining four main vows, abstention from falsehood, abstention from stealing, abstention from unchastely and abstention from worldly attachment, are nothing but the details of the vows of *ahimsā* and seven *śilavratas*, i.e., supplementary vows consisting of three *guṇavratas* i.e., multiplicative vows and four *sikṣā-vratas* i.e., disciplinary vows are more manifestations of the vows of *ahimsā* in one form or another. Further, with a view of giving strength to the practice of the vow of *ahimsā*, the followers are recommended: (i) to cultivate ten kinds of dharma i.e., noble virtues, (ii) to contemplate on the twelve kinds of *anupekṣā*, i.e., meditations, (iii) to attempt of conquering twenty two kinds of *parishahas* i.e., sufferings and (iv) to observe the six kinds of *bahyatapa* i.e., external austerities and the six kinds of *abhyantara tapa* i.e., internal austerities. Furthermore, along with making the vow of *ahimsā* very comprehensive and all inclusive in character and scope, extreme carefulness in the actual practice of *ahimsā* has also been strongly advocated and with this end in view the Jaina scriptures have particularly laid down the five kinds of *aticharas* i.e., transgressions, of each of the twelve vows and have specifically enjoined upon the house-holders to avoid these *aticharas* so as to make the practice of *ahimsā* as faultless as possible. Now, it is not possible for the house-holders to observe these vows completely or perfectly. A Jaina layman, on account of his household and occupational compulsions, is unable to adhere to the five major vows of ascetics. He observes *anuvratas* or minor vows which although are similar to the major vows of the ascetics are observed with a lesser severity. It is difficult to avoid some violence by the lay person to a single sensed immobile being in the process of occupation, cooking, self-defence etc. That is why vows not to kill without a necessary purpose and determined intention, a moving sentient being, when it is innocent. Tying up injury, mutilating, burdening with heavy load and depriving from food and drinks any animals or human being with mind polluted by anger and other passions are the five *aticāra* or transgressions of the vow of *ahimsā*. However, it is to be understood that ultimately, there is limited spiritual progress and not emancipation unless the major vows are adhered to.

“*Ahimsā* as an *aṇuvrata* means abstention from gross violence. Violence or *himsā* means any injury committed through speech or body or mind to any being or to cause others to commit such injuries, or to approve of the commitment of such injuries by others. Non-violence to any animal- higher or lower- is always commendable. But as total non-violence is not possible for the house holders, they are all advised to refrain from gross violence or *sthūlahimsā*, which means taking the life of higher animals or committing any injury to them, or causing other to do so or to approve of such injuries committed by others. This is to be distinguished from *sūkṣma himsā* or subtle violence- which means taking the life of lower animals also or committing any injury to them, or to cause others to do so, or do approve of such acts. By ‘higher animals’ the Jaina understand being endowed with more than one sense-organ. A layman is for bidden to take the life of such beings or to commit any injury to them. Accordingly, meat eating is strictly prohibited, as it is involves the killing of higher animals.”^{xxxvii}

It is held that each of these vows is to be observed with great purity, care and zeal. House-holders should not kill animals. They should not tell agreeable lies under the influences of affections, infatuation and other emotions. They should not make use of others’ property without permission, even when it is deserted by the owner. They should not commit adultery. They should be chaste in their married life. They should put a voluntary limit upon their possessions. These are the five small vows or *aṇuvratas*.

On another side, *ahimsā* is formalized into Jaina doctrine as the major vows or *mahāvratas* of the ascetics. The ascetics are required to perform the five *mahāvratas* or great vows by complete abstention from five sins of violence, falsehood, stealing, copulation and possession, through the three-fold ways of action, commanding and consenting to, by the triple agency of the mind, body and speech. “Monks should not kill or injure any kind of life. They should not indulge in falsehood in thought, word and deed. They should not covet others’ possessions under any circumstances. They should completely extirpate their attachments to object of enjoyment. They should totally abstain from indulgence in sex-thoughts, sex-words and sex-acts. They should not possess any

property, and accept any gift except what is absolutely necessary for bare subsistence. They should observe the vows with the utmost rigor and vigilance.”^{xxxviii} Jain monks or nuns must rank among the most ‘non-violent’ people in the world. A Jain ascetic is expected to uphold the vow of *mahāvratā* to the highest standard, even at the cost of his own life. The other four major vows - truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy - are in fact extension of the first vow of complete non-violence. According to Amṛtacandra Sūri:

“All sins like falsehood, theft, attachment and immorality are forms of violence, which destroy the purity of the soul. They have been separately enumerated only to facilitate their understanding.” (*Puruṣārthasiddhyupāya* 4.42)

Ahimsā is the most important of all the vows. By it, the killings of all kinds of animals- mobile and immobile, gross and subtle and giving pain to them are totally prohibited for the ascetics. In reality, the Jainas say that passion is the real cause of sin and that even without killing an animal or giving pains to it, one may accumulate sin by mere possessing a passionate attitude.

In order that this vow is properly observed a monk is required to be cautious in his movement, speech and thought and in handling things, food and drink. As a part of this vow, a Jaina ascetic is to follow the vow of *rātri-bhajana-viramaṇa* or abstinence from taking food at night. It is argued that there are innumerable small creatures that are invisible at night even when there is light and that such creatures may be killed in the act of cooking and taking food, which is an act of violence.

For the maintenance of these *mahāvratā*, equanimity of the mind is regarded as highly essential. And as an aid to equanimity, the Jain ascetics are to cultivate *maitrī* or friendship for all living beings, *pramoda* or appreciation for the superiors, *karuṇā* or compassion for the afflicted and *madhyastha* or indifference for the unruly.”^{xxxix}

The practices of *ahimsā* are not possible without the cultivation of certain other allied virtues cultivated to remove or at least reduce the causes of strife and consequent

destruction. Malevolent speech, greed, for property and undesirable sex relations are the most outstanding and patent causes of enmity amongst men. Hence, “the spirit of *ahimsā* has to be reinforced by sincerity, charity and truthfulness in speech (*Satya*), non-stealing (*Achaurya*), chastity (*Brahmacharya*) and limitations of one’s worldly belonging strictly in accordance with one’s own essential requirements (*Apigraha*). These four along with *ahimsā* constitute the vows of Jaina layman as well as Jaina monk- for the monk in their relaxed or modified form so as to make them consistent with his other duties.”^{x1}

While Jainism enjoins observance of total non-violence by the ascetics, it is often argued that the man is constantly obliged to engage in destructive activities of eating, drinking, breathing and surviving in order to support his body. According to Jainism, life is omnipresent with infinite beings including micro-organisms pervading each and every part of universe. Hence, it may still be possible to avoid killing of gross animals, but it is impossible to avoid killing of subtle micro-organisms in air and water, plant life and various types of insects that may be crushed by walking. It would thus appear that the continual livelihood of destroying living organisms would create an inexcusable burden on the ascetics trying to follow the Jaina path of total renunciation and non-violence.

At this juncture, it will be appropriate to see how Jainism has incorporated the doctrine of *ahimsā* into philosophy and made a unique gift to the world. The philosophical concept of *anekāntavāda* is closely associated to the concept of *ahimsā*. *Anekāntavāda* constitutes the philosophical idea of Jainism which means the reality should be looked at from many points of view. Peace and tolerance are, thus, inherent in Jainism. Under such circumstances, Mahāvīra’s teachings, and in particular two of its core elements, the principle of *ahimsā* and philosophy of *anekānta*, appear to have universal relevance as well as great practical significance. *Anekāntavāda* or *Syādvāda* also called *Saptabhāṅgè-naya* is the theory of relativity of knowledge. Reality has infinite aspects. They are all relative and no one can claim that he knows all the aspects. One can know only some of these aspects, the partial truth. The theory of *Syādvāda* made people aware that their judgments are relative, conditional and limited. This theory allows others

right to hold a different view than our own. The Jainas narrate the old story of the six blind men and the elephant. The blind who touched the different parts of the elephant tries to describe the elephant on the basis of the part touched by each one of them. Thus the man who caught hold of the ear said that elephant was like a country-made fan; the person touched the leg felt that the elephant was like a pillar; one who touched the tail said, it was like a rope; the person who touched the side and said, the elephant was like wall, so and so forth. Thus, the man who judges anything without considering different aspect of reality can claim only partial truth. This view makes Jainism open minded in its attitude towards other faiths, philosophies and living beings. To me, this is the highest form of *ahimsā*.

While the Jaina ascetics observe non-violence, it is not possible to avoid violence completely. Violence is described as a fact of life in some *Dharmaśāstras*. There is no being in the world who is purely non-violent. “The god Prajāpati created all creatures in two categories: some are violent (*himsra*) others, non-violent (*ahimsra*); some are gentle (*mṛdu*), others cruel (*krūra*); some follow dharma and other *adharma*; some follow truth (*ṛta*), others falsehood (*anyta*).”^{xli}

Absolute abstention from injury to all forms of life is not possible. So Jainism distinguishes various kinds of injury according to the mental attitude of the person committing it; for it is the intention that causes sin. It is conceded that a good deal of injury to life is involved even in the daily duties of an ordinary man, such as walking, cooking, washing and similar pursuits. The various operations of agriculture and industry also cause the destruction of life. The use of violence is not forbidden and in fact, justified in the case of the householder leading a worldly life in the defence of one’s life honour or country.

In Jaina religious books, violence (*himsā*) has been classified as follows:

- (i) Intentional violence (*sankalpinī himsā*), which is intentional killing or hurting of self and of others. Intentional violence, knowingly done, is the

worst form of violence and is a transgression of the lay-persons vow of violence. This type of *himsā* has to be totally renounced by a house-holder.

- (ii) Adversary-related violence (*vivodhini himsā*): It is committed for self-defence of self, property, family or countries against violent attackers, robbers or dacoits. A house holder tries to avoid *himsā* at all cost, but in such cases like above, it may be unavoidable and hence should be non-vindictive and kept to barest minimum.
- (iii) Domestic or house-hold violence (*ārambhini himsā*): This violence is unavoidable, committed in the course of preparing food, house-hold cleanliness, washing construction of houses, walls etc.
- (iv) Occupational violence (*udyogini himsā*): This is committed to occupational undertaking like agriculture, building and operating industries etc.

While intentional has to be avoided at all costs, should not exceed the strict requirements of fulfilling the duties of a house-holder. Furthermore, they should not be influenced by passions like anger, greed, pride and deceit or they take the character of intentional *himsā*. The avoidance of each kind of violence leads to the corresponding non-violence.

Besides avoiding *himsā*, we should look inward and imbibe the virtues of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, chastity and non-possessiveness in one's daily activities. One should minimize one's passions and desires. One should give up egoism, greed and selfishness, have contentment and practice equanimity. To quote from *Uttaraadhyayan Sūtra* (Chap-20, verse-60):

A person who is free from delusion (who understands things as they are),
 who has good qualities, who has good thought, speech and deeds,
 and who avoid violence of body, speech and mind,
 enjoys free from like a bird, while living on this earth.

Jainas whether monks, nuns or house-holders, therefore, affirm prayerfully and sincerely, that their heart is filled with forgiveness for all living beings and that they have sought

and received the forgiveness of all beings that they crave the friendship of all beings, that the beings give them their friendship and that there is not the slightest feeling of alienation or enmity in their heart of anyone or anything. They also pray that the forgiveness and friendliness may reign throughout the world and that all living beings may cherish each other.

The practice of Jaina *vows* could lead some to speculation that Jainism is a form of extremism that bears little or no relevance to contemporary ethical concerns. Is there too much obsession with maintaining one's purity by not killing any living beings? Is the thorough description of the world as being fraught with potential violence that must be avoided accurate? How can one be successful in respecting other beings in light of always watching out for one's own behaviour?

One thing that must be remembered regarding the Jaina tradition is that the taking on of the many vows and practices listed above is voluntary. For lay-people these vows are also largely temporary. Even the degree of one's vegetarianism is negotiable, subject to an escalation of one's observance on a periodic cycle. Hence "...though the tradition has developed numerous texts, manuals and guides for how best to practice the cardinal virtue of non-violence, this does not constitute a universal social code to be followed by all Jainas at all times. Nor is there an expectation that all of humanity should follow the most rarefied practices."^{xlii}

Non-violence in Buddhist philosophy

Like Jainism, Buddhism has also put great emphasis on the concept of non-violence. Though the concept of non-violence as well as violence are closely associated with the Vedic literature or *Upaniṣads*, *Mahābhārata (Gītā)*, Jainism, Buddhism and Yoga system; Buddhist concept of non-violence differs from the others on some important points. Earlier we discussed about Vedic rituals that included animal sacrifices for the sake of supreme goal. But Buddha rejected the Vedic rituals and preaches his philosophy of non-violence. So "Buddhism is a revolt against ritualism and ceremonialism. It

preaches the religion of *ahimsā* and universal love and good will. It indicates the purity of the heart, ethical purity and intuitions.”^{xliii} In *Dhammapada* (129-130), Buddha says, ‘all beings fear death and pain, life is dear to all; therefore the wise man will not kill or cause anything to be killed’.

The Vedic literature also teaches non-violence, but Buddha taught the people who used the Vedas for improper purposes to give them up and simply follow him. Thus he saved the animals from being killed and saved the people from being further misled by the current priests. However, he did not teach the Vedas but taught his own philosophy. On the other hand, the Buddhist non-violence is not as categorical as that in Jainism. However, in Buddhism, non-violence is an essential practice. It is closely linked to the fundamental concepts and practice of Buddhism.

Buddhism was founded by Goutama Buddha in 5th or 6th century B.C.E. in India. Based upon the enlightened experience of Goutama Buddha, the teachings were spread throughout India, then China and then other Asian countries and now all over the world. Buddha had observed in his regency, that the attitude of man is to grab power. Although a crown prince, as he was, he to get himself and the society rid of all such types of evil, because the evil in men is inhuman. Goutama revolted against those contemporary tendencies, detrimental to the social ethics and presented rational religion of *dhamma*, practical ethics of *ahimsā* and simple principle of life, based on trust and tolerance. He gave a vibrant thought to the Indian society, which was based on *sheel*, *Samādhi* and *prajñā*, being the three pillars of developing *ahimsā* within self. He preached that good conduct is not possible without real knowledge; on the other hand, perfection of knowledge, too, is not possible without right conduct. Besides preaching about these three principles to be adopted for living a positive and perfect life, his main emphasis was on *ahimsā*.

The people would understand the meaning of *ahimsā*, as it was a word of common dialect of the masses. In the practical pattern of life, *ahimsā* means to be friendly with every one, sympathy towards the sufferers, love for humanity. Buddha gave

a very positive meaning of the word, in the social perspective. It was applied with the broad sense of the term of *ahimsā*, which is still relevant and probably more needed in the 21st century.

Buddhism also put emphasis and importance on the life of house-holder's and the monk's. A definite distinction can be drawn between the non-violence of a monk and that of a house-holder. House-hold life is full of hindrances and it is difficult for a man who dwells at home to live the higher life in full. As free as the air, so is the life of him who has renounced all worldly things. A house-holder is bound to destroy other living beings sometimes, but a monk practicing self-restraint protects living beings. "A Buddhist should at any rate avoid the practice of tormenting others (*para-paritāpara*) and not earn his livelihood as a cattle-butcher, a pig-killer, fowler, deer-stalker, hunter, fisherman, thief, executioner, jailer or through any other cruel occupation (*kurūrakammanta*)."^{xliv}

Buddha prefers a monk's life to a house-holder's life. Buddha goes forth from a household life into the homeless state. "Social intercourse interferes with one's freedom. It gives rise to affections. Pain arises from affections. Compassions for friends and companions fetter the mind. Affections for children give rise to pain. Separation from them is painful. So social intercourse should be cut off, and friendship with individual persons should not be cultivated. Love of the Law (*Dharma*) is supreme. Narrow selfish love should be consumed by universal selfless love. One, who is at home in the world, not hostile to anybody, is contented."^{xlv}

Moreover, "a man who is not hostile (*aviruddha*) among the hostile (*viruddha*), who is peaceful (*nibbuta*) among the armed man (*atta-daṇḍa*), is called a *brāhmaṇa*. Others may be harmful (*vihimsaka*), but monks are not harmful (*avihimsaka*). Others slay creatures, but monks will not kill."^{xlvi} A monk should be as calm as the depth of the ocean unruffled by wings of desire. He should not desire anything in the world. This is the note of asceticism in Buddhism. But a house-holder also can attain *nirvāṇa* by strenuously cultivating truth, justice, firmness and liberality. His life should be discipline by the Law (*Dharma*).

The *Dharmapada* teaches the philosophy of Dharma. Buddha has preached in his sermons: ‘*Ahiṃsā-parmo-dharma*’ - it means that *ahiṃsā* is the highest form of *dharma*. Anyone who gets involved in the anti-social activities, become the victim of eroding his own personality. *Dhamma*, as Buddha used to say can loosely be translated into religion, but *Dharma* in Hinduism and Buddhism means the way of life to be lived in its integrated form. To live a meaningful life with dignity and honour is what the rational mind expects any time. “According to Pali text there are four basic moral qualities (dhamma): (1) dispassionate thinking (*nekkhamma-vitakka* = *niṣkarma-vitarka*), (2) non-ill-will-thinking (*a-byāpāda-vitakka*), (3) non-violent thinking (*avihiṃsā-vitakka*) and (4) right view (*samnnā-diṭṭhi*).^{xlvii}

The external aspect of non-killing, although essential, is not of much spiritual importance. The emphasis lies on the purity of one’s thought because it is thought that causes development either in the right or wrong direction.

The Buddhist notion of *ahiṃsā* is closely associated with eight fold noble truth and *brahmabihāra* of Buddhism. It is also necessary to follow the eight-fold path to attain *nirvāṇa*. These paths are- (1) right view (*samyak dṛṣṭi*), (2) right aspiration (*samyak saṃkalpa*), (3) right speech (*samyak vāk*) (4) right conduct (*samyak karmānta*), (5) right mode of livelihood (*samyak ājīvaka*), (6) right effort (*samyak vyāyāma*), (7) right mindfulness (*samyak smṛti*) and (8) right concentration (*samyak samādhi*).

Right view consists in right knowledge of the four noble truths, which leads to *nirvāṇa*. Right resolve is aspiration towards renunciation, benevolence and compassion. Right speech is an outward expression of right resolve. It consists in abstention from lying, slander, abuse, harsh words and frivolous talk. One should speak what is right (*dharma*), not what is unrighteous (*adharmā*). Right conduct consists in abstention from the destruction of life, theft, sex-indulgence, lying, the use of intoxicating liquors, eating between meals etc. Right livelihood consists in earning livings by honest means. Right effort consists in constant vigilance, effort and activity which are necessary for self-control, sense-restraint, and arrest of evil thoughts and concentration of mind on universal

good will. Right mindfulness consists in recollection of the impurity of the body, the nature of feeling, pleasure, pain and neutral feeling etc. And the last, right concentrations consist of meditation.

Above all, “Buddhism stresses right conduct (*sīla*) right concentration (*samādhi*) and right insight (*prajñā*). *Sīla* and *samādhi* lead to insight. Right insight purges the mind of lust (*kāmāsava*), becoming (*bhavasava*) and ignorance (*avidyāsava*). All should meditate on love and friendship (*maitrī*) for all creatures, compassion (*karuṇā*) for distressed creatures, joy (*muditā*) for virtuous persons and indifference to all vicious persons. These are called the four sublime meditations (*brahmavihāra*)”^{xlviii}

Men are intertwined both inside and outside by the tangles of desire (*taṇhā*) and the only way by which these may be loosened in by the practice of right discipline (*sīla*), concentration (*samādhi*) and knowledge (*prajñā*). *Sīla* means desisting from committing all sinful deeds. This is the first step since it ceases to do all actions of bad desires and thus removes the in ruche of dangers and disturbances. It, therefore, paves the way for attaining sainthood, because in our domestic life, we are all tied down with all sorts of desires (good or bad both). *Samādhi* is more advanced effort, for by it all the roots of desire are destroyed and removed, and thus it leads to one step further for purifying one’s inner self. It directly brings in *prajñā* (true wisdom) and by *prajñā* the saint achieves final emancipation and becomes an *arhat*. The practice of *sīla* helps the person to adopt the course of *samādhi* which means concentration of mind, bent on right endeavours on particular object, so that they may completely cease to shift and change. If practiced thoroughly, this has great effect on our mind, which leads to *prajñā*.

After *sīla*, *samādhi* and *prajñā* comes the *brahmavihāra*. Buddhist teachings of *brahmavihāra* and the five precepts (*pancasīla* i.e. killing, stealing, lying, adultery and intoxication and gambling) are ways of peace. The word *brahmavihāra* means sublime on divine state of mind. The four *brahmavihāra* remain in the cultivation of four feelings that is *maitrī* (loving kindness or universal friendship), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (happiness in the prosperity and happiness for all) and *upekshā* (indifference to any kind

of preferment of oneself, his friend, and his enemy or a third party). If the term *upekshā* is analysed in the Buddhist context, it does not mean actually indifference, as it is in Hindu context. *Upekshā* is equanimity; it is something positive and not negative in its import. The person who practices the four divine states of mind, acquire the internal peace and wishes the welfare of all beings. Like Gandhi's *ahimsā*, the Buddhist loving kindness and altruistic practice should be cultivated internally. *Ahimsā* does not consist in white or yellow clothing, a smiling face and so on. It is essentially the sincerity and purity of a person's heart. It cannot exist without a peaceful mind. A peaceful mind yields wisdom and all virtues. Thus, in Buddhism, meditation is a crucial means to attain a peaceful mind. The principle of meditation is a training of mindfulness. In Buddhism, the meditation practice is beneficial to all, even to non-Buddhists. It is the universal way of peace.

The first sublime state *maitrī* is not only meant for mankind but for whole of animate creation. *Maitrī* is the most powerful force in the world but it is neutral force. If all war like nations could be prevailed upon to substitute the spiritual '*maitrī*' for the destruction weapons of materialism and govern the world not with might and force but with right and love, then only real peace and happiness will be ensured in the world. *Karuṇā* is relieving suffering and danger to others. It is compassion that compels one to serve others with altruism. A true compassionate person lives not for himself but for others. He seeks to opportunities to serve others expecting nothing in return not even gratitude. The feeling of violence disappears when the feeling of compassion arises. Like *maitrī*, *karuṇā* should also be extended without limit towards all suffering and helpless creatures including dumb animals.

In order to be a perfectly non-violent person man should conquer the *ṣadaripūs* i.e., *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *mada* and *mātsarya*. Love everybody and that will pave the path of attaining *nirvāṇa*. Everything is momentary, so we should be friendly to everybody in the short span of our life. Simultaneously *karuṇā* means one should sympathize with the sorrows of his friends and foes alike. Among the positive virtues,

friendliness (*maitrī*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) are sometimes said to be must akin to *ahiṃsā*. A Pali Buddhist description of friendliness is given in the *Mettasutta*: “As a mother all her life watches over her only child, so should everyone cultivate a measureless (*appamañña*) friendly minds towards all beings.”^{xlix} One who cultivates a friendly mind and who is sympathetic to the welfare of all beings purifies his mind from the taint of ill-will.

Muditā is the third sublime virtue. It means not only sympathetic appreciation or appreciative joy which tends to destroy jealousy, its direct enemy. One religion is jealous of another, one part of grove is jealous of another part, one institution and so on. This is the very reason why individual and groups should practice *muditā* if they wish to sublimate themselves and became truly happy.

And finally, in the stage of *upekṣā*, one should have equal attitude to everybody. Here attachment is totally stopped. It is the stage of supreme and absolute stage of equanimity. And herein comes the stage of absolute cessation of all sorrows and sufferings.

Buddhism has a great force for peace in the world. The great minds of ancient and modern India have been guided by Buddhist’s teachings. In ancient time, Asoka was completely influenced by Buddhist’s teaching. Asoka is rightly looked upon as the first royal patron of Buddhism. After the famous ‘Kalinga war’, Asoka embraced Buddhism to serve and uplift the humanity. In the Kalinga war the tremendous loss of life proved to be turning point in the life of Asoka. He repented and decided to undertake no further military campaigns. Instead he began to think of religious conquest (*dharmavijaya*) that is not meant the conquest of a particular religion or creed or seed, but triumph of universal love (*mahā-maitrī*), universal compassion (*mahā-karuṇā*) and tolerance. Universal love or *maitrī* is the life or soul of Buddhism. Universal love always accompanies by tolerance. Tolerance is the special characteristics of universal love. Asoka was greatly influenced by Buddha’s teachings and he succeeded to established peace in India and outside of India.

In this context, it is worth to discuss violence and its avoidance. A non-violent society cannot be built upon if we don't learn how to avoid violence. The Buddha's attitude to violence, either physical or psychological, is illustrated in the following saying:

“All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death; remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter.’

‘All men tremble at punishment. All men love life; remember that thou art like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter. He who seeking his own happiness punishes or kills beings, who also long for happiness, will not find happiness after death.’”¹

Even in speech, one is cautioned not to hurt others. Violence in word, thought and action is to be eschewed. The reason is that, while it hurts the victim, it does not bring any happiness to the person who becomes violent. One important result is the sufferings that come in the wake of the violent act for the door of the violent act itself.

Violence is always created. There should be a congenial basis for the rise of violence. Such causes have to be carefully understood by whosoever in determined to deal with violence. The immediate push for violence in such a congenial environment is the direct intervention of someone often with a personal grouse.

An individual, institution or a state practicing violence creates a basis and an environment for the rise of further violence among the people. Violence practiced by state, by punishing so-called criminals is referred in a Buddhist discourse. The people noticing how the king (or state) cut people's hand and feet began emulating the example themselves. Under what condition do individuals become violent in behaviour? Buddhist teachings reveal how social and psychological factors contribute to the creation of violent tendencies in people. Angulimāla, as a young man was a disciplined and intelligent student. His co-students got jealous of him and concocted the rumour that he was having a sexual relationship with the teacher's wife. The enraged teacher thought of a ruse to get

rid of him. He told Angulimāla to collect thousands human fingers in order to successfully complete his course of studies. It was the practice during this time for a teacher to give an assignment to a pupil at the end of his period of study in order to test him. On the fulfilment of this assignment his studies are considered as successfully completed. Angulimāla, in order to fulfil the obligation of his teacher began to kill people and collect human fingers. Angulimāla first killed one person and collected ten fingers. When he killed second person, and then the third person, it was quite possible that his personality began to undergo a change. The very violent act committed by him transformed his character and personality. His physical demeanour too changed. The innocent-looking young man now appeared as a demon with his eerie garland of human fingers round his neck. He would not have hesitated even to kill his own mother in order to fulfil his teacher's assignment. Such was the tremendous change of heart violence and cruel acts could bring out in a person. The change thus effected, frightened the king and his men who ran away seeing him even after he became a devotee of the Buddha.

It is interesting to examine how the Buddha brought Angulimāla back from his brutal violent behaviour and transformed him to a normal human being. Angulimāla was an intelligent young man. The Buddha, understanding this, adopted the intelligent method to deal with him. "Stop," Angulimāla shouted when he saw the Buddha. The Buddha continued to move on the way. "I stopped; it is for you to stop now," said the Buddha. Angulimāla was puzzled. "You monks don't utter falsehood. But now you do so. While walking you say that you have stopped. How could this be so?" It was at this point that Buddha explained his position to him. Intellectual curiosity was again brought back to Angulimāla instead of violent thoughts. The Buddha's appeal to the intellect had its intended result.

"The best antidote for violence and terrorism is seen in this commitment to Dharma (Law and justice) by the rulers of a country. Perhaps it was the socio-political implication of the Buddhist saying: "*Dhammo have rakkhatidhammacāri*" (Law or

Dharma itself protects the person who practices it) that motivated this commitment to Dharma or the Law.”^{li}

The gospel of the Buddha is sometimes said to be summarized in the following verse of the Dharmmapadapāli: “Not to commit any sin, to do good, and to purify one’s mind, that is the teaching of (all) the Awakened.”^{lii} This refers to fact that for every negative virtue there is a corresponding positive one. The term can be arranged in a negative is a positive form, i.e. one may conquer anger by love (*akkodha*), but conquer evil (*asādhu*) by good (*sādhu*). Hence an act which is to be opposite to the evil or *himsā* has to be, in part at least, positive by nature.

Ahimsā is not confined to abstention from injury etc. to others. It involves positive philosophy that is the practice of friendliness, helping all living beings and being kind to them. Such compassion or friendliness begins with oneself, and then extended to others. In thought, word and deed, this friendliness; this compassion, finds expression and is gradually increased. *Ahimsā* is thus a total way of life, practical in all aspects. It recognizes reality and attempts to arrive at realistic solutions and not ideal solutions that cannot be put into practice. In this positive aspect, *ahimsā* transcends individual boundary to social realm.

Violence is potential in almost all situations in human life. It could be avoided by developing alternatives to such violence. In an advanced society disciplined, knowledgeable, skilful and wise individuals may invent and resort to numerous alternatives to avoid violence. The Buddhist way of life emphasizes the provision of sufficient room for such alternatives in practical life instead of encouraging the selection of violence which brings with it a train of consequences causing the destruction of both oneself and others. As a matter of simple morality (*sīlamattaka*) the Buddha urges to abstain from killing living beings (*pānātipātāpahāya or paṭivirata*). One who lays the cudgel and weapon aside is full of mercy and compassionate (*anukampī*) to living beings. In a post-canonical work it is mentioned that being non-violent, one is full of love (*piya*)

and affectionate (*māmaka*) towards others. A Buddhist Sanskrit text even defines *avihiṃsā* as *karuṇā* or compassion.^{liii}

These references are sufficient to point out that non-violence in Buddhism is also to be understood as a positive norm. A modern commentator says that *alobha* does not merely mean non-attachment, but also generosity. *Adosa* does not merely mean non-anger but also good will or loving *ahiṃsā* kindness (*mettā*). *Amoha* does not merely mean non-delusion, but also wisdom or knowledge. Thus Buddhist non-violence is a positive antidote to violence. The motivation of a non-violent action includes compassion, and non-violent action is also by nature positive.

Non-violence in Yoga Philosophy

In Indian philosophy, Yoga is the name of the sixth orthodox philosophical school. Before discussing non-violence in the light of Yoga system, it is essential to discuss *Sāṃkhya* system in brief, because the *Yoga* philosophical system is closely allied with the *Sāṃkhya* school of thought. The *Yoga* school expounded by the sage Patañjali accepts the *Sāṃkhya* psychology and metaphysics, but it is more theistic than the *Sāṃkhya*, as evidenced by the addition of the divine entity to the *Sāṃkhya*'s twenty five elements of reality. The *Yoga* assumes the reality of twenty five principles such as *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *mahat*, *manas* etc. and adds the principle of God to them. So *Yoga* recognizes the reality of twenty six principles. Thus, the *Yoga* adopts the *Sāṃkhya* ontology with slight variations. It agrees with the *Sāṃkhya* in holding that bondage is due to non-discrimination (*aviveka*) between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, and liberation is due to discrimination (*viveka*) between them. But it lays stress on the practice of *yoga* as an indispensable means to discriminative knowledge (*vivekakhyāti*). This is the special feature of the *Yoga* system.

As noted, *Yoga* is not to be considered as a school distinct from *Sāṃkhya* until well after Patañjali's time, but rather as a different approach or method towards enlightenment, although there are minor differences. *Sāṃkhya* provides the metaphysical or theoretical basis for the realization of *puruṣa* and *Yoga* the technique or practice for

that purpose. Although the Yoga tradition does not agree with *Sāṃkhya* view that metaphysical analysis constitutes a sufficient path towards enlightenment in end, it presupposes the metaphysics of *Sāṃkhya* as its foundation.

Patañjali, the founder of *Yoga Sūtra* systematized the Yoga school of thought in it. It is the first work in the system. However, it is doubtful whether Patañjali, the author of *Yoga Sūtra*, was the famous grammarian, the author of the *Mahābhāṣya*, who flourished in the second century B. C. Vyāsa's commentary on the *Yoga Sūtra*, called *Yoga-Bhāṣya* or *Vyāsa*.

The Sanskrit word “yoga” has many meanings, and it is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘yuj’, meaning ‘to control’, ‘to yoke’ or ‘to unite’. Translation includes joining, uniting, conjunction and means. An alternate root from which the word yoga may be derived is ‘yujir samadhau’, which means contemplation or absorption. This translation fits better with the dualist *Rāja Yoga* because it is through contemplation that discrimination between *prakṛti* (nature) and *puruṣa* (pure consciousness) occurs.

Patañjali defines Yoga as “*cittavṛttinirodha*” (YS 1.2), the stilling of all states of *citta*, that is, complete suppression of all mental modes or processes. There are five *vṛttis*, a term used frequently throughout the *Yoga Sūtra* to essentially refer to any sensual impression, thought, ideas or cognition, psychic activity or conscious mental state whatsoever. The five *vṛttis* are: right knowledge, error, metaphor, deep sleep and memory (YS 1.5-11).

Yoga system is very diligently allied with spiritual aspects of human life. Yoga system holds that liberation is to be attained by means of spiritual insight into the reality of the self as the pure immortal spirit which is quite distinct from the body and the mind. But spiritual insight can be had only when the mind is purged of all impurities and tendered perfectly calm and serene. For the purification and enlightenment of *citta* or the mind, the Yoga gives us the eightfold means which consists of the disciplines of (1) *Yama* (practice of restraints), (2) *Niyama* (observance), (3) *Āsana* (bodily posture), (4) *Prāṇāyāma* (breath control), (5) *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the sense-organs), (6)

Dhāraṇā (fixation of attention), (7) *Dhyāna* (meditation) and (8) *Samādhi* (absorptive concentration). These are known as aids to yoga (*yogāṅga*).

The first two limbs are the main ones, which bring the aspirants to an understanding of the ethics and morals of Yoga. *Yama* contains five sub-steps, which need to be practiced in the domains of thought, speech and action.

- (a) Non-violence (*ahimsā*)
- (b) Truthfulness (*satya*)
- (c) Non-stealing (*asteya*)
- (d) Sexual restraint (*brāhmacārya*) and
- (e) Non-acceptance (*aparigraha*)

Niyama also contains five sub-steps, which need to be practiced in the domains of thought, speech and action.

- (a) Cleanliness (*śauca*)
- (b) Contentment (*santoṣa*)
- (c) Austerity (*tapas*)
- (d) Scriptural study (*svādhyāya*) and
- (e) Surrender to God (*īśvarapraṇidhāna*).

These two steps when practiced fully provide the seeker with the self-control and disciplines which becomes the preparation to the other steps also.

Though all of the limbs or *yogāṅga* deserve discussion, non-violence (*ahimsā*) is our primary concern. But before to discuss non-violence in *Yoga Sūtras* it must be remembered that if there be any obstruction to the practice of *yamas* and *niyamas* brought about by the distraction of discursive thought in the form of contrary ideas, such as violence or harming and so on, the *yogin* must be devoted to the cultivation of their opposite. For as Patañjali warns:

“Discursive thoughts like violence and the others, done or caused to be done or approved of, preceded by greed, anger and delusion [whether] mild, medium or

intense- all result in endless dissatisfaction/sorrow and ignorance; thus the cultivation of their opposites [is prescribed].”^{liv}

The first discipline of *yama* or its sub-steps are negative virtues. Non-injury (*ahimsā*) consists in the absence of cruelty to all creatures in all possible ways and all times. It is tenderness, good will and kindness for all living beings. “Non-injury is the root of all other negative (*yama*) and positive (*niyama*) virtues. So, absolute non-injury is prescribed by *Yoga* system. ‘Thou shalt not kill’, animal sacrifices for a religious purpose is forbidden. The *Sāṃkhya*, the *Yoga*, Buddhism and Jainism agree on this point.

Truthfulness consists in the harmony between true thoughts and words in conformity with the good for all creatures. The words must be spoken for the good of all creatures. They must be spoken for doing harm to others. If they are spoken for the purpose of doing harm to others, they cannot be regarded as the true and righteous. Truthfulness involves harmony of thoughts with facts which must be guaranteed by the speaker. A truthful person must be vouch for the truth of his words. A truthful person must have valid thoughts in his mind, speak them out correctly, excite similar thoughts in the hearer’s mind and his words must be conducive to the welfare of all creatures. “The *Yoga* gives a strict but humanitarian conception of truthfulness. Hypocrisy, flattery, deceit and truthful words injurious to society are falsehood. ‘Thou shalt not lie in thought, word and deed. Theft in immortal misappropriation of others possessions,”^{lv}

Yama and *Niyama*, the ethical disciplines and moral backbones, serve as the aspirants, guidelines for right in life. *Ahimsā*, which non-violence in thought, word and action, is the foundation of all the other moral precept because harming is the source of all suffering. The practice of universal love is the highest practice for success in *Yoga* and the ideal of which the yogi ceaselessly strives. “*Yoga* is rooted in virtue and there is no higher virtue than the abandoning of cruelty and harming. The yogi must respect all life. The greatest need in this ephemeral material realm is the message of love. You will soon be rooted in true *ahimsā*.”^{lvi} Desire is the true enemy of peace, for desires can never be fully satisfied. Strive for true, abiding happiness that can only be obtained by realizing

God alone through constant practice, self-control, purity, concentration, meditation and above all- observance of practice of *Yama* and *Niyama*. The *Yamas* and *Niyamas* give us infinite opportunities to truly transform of our life.

Patañjali doesn't tell us how specifically to "do" the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* - that's up to us. But if you align your life with them, they will lead us to our highest aspiration: peace, truth, abundance, harmonious relationships, contentment, love, and meaningful connection to the Divine--the essence of happiness.

So *Yama* and *Niyama* are the most essential ethical part of Yoga philosophy. And *ahimsā* in Yoga philosophy often translated as 'non-violence' or 'non-harming'- is the opportunity to relinquish hostility and irritability, and instead make space within your consciousness for peace.

The Yoga concept of nonviolence is closely associated with that of Buddhism. *Yoga* ethics of non-violence (*ahimsā*), truthfulness, non-stealing, sex-restraint and non-covetousness which are universal and unconditional duties (*sārvabhauma mahāvratā*) obligatory at all times, in all places, under all circumstance corresponds closely to the Buddhist ethics. "The *Yoga* ethics of friendship (*maitrī*) for all creatures, joy (*muditā*) for all virtuous, compassion (*karuṇā*) for all distressed and indifference to all equanimity (*upekṣā*) exactly corresponds to the Buddhist ethics of sublime meditation (*brahmavihāra*)."^{lvii} This is the common features of Jainism, Buddhism and the *Yoga*. But *Yoga* ethics is ascetic, while the Buddhist ethics advocate the morality of the middle path between asceticism and hedonism, self-denial and self-indulgence.

As like Jainism, *Yoga* counts *ahimsā* as the only moral ideal; all external conduct and all the other virtues are sub-ordinate to it in the sense that *ahimsā* includes them all. These virtues are: (1) *satya*, which consists in word and thought being accord with facts, (2) abstinence from theft, which consists not only in not taking the things of others unlawfully, but in removing even the desire thereof (*asteya*), (3) continence and (4) absence of avariciousness, the non-appropriation of things not one's own, consequent upon seeing the defects of attachment and of miseries caused by accumulation,

preservation etc. (*aparigraha*). A *Yogin* must observe these duties universally and unconditionally. The maxims of moral conduct then are, ‘Thou shalt not injure any being, thou shalt not speak an untruth, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not be avaricious.’ But the last three maxims can be brought under the one grand maxim, ‘thou shalt not injure any being on any condition whatsoever.’ Thus in the case of a conflict of duties, say for example, between truthfulness and non-injury, it is the latter which is to be followed and not the former.^{lviii} The fulfilment of these laws is technically called in *Yoga - yama*. According to variety of circumstances, persons and conditions, the vices such *ahimsā*, etc., may be of infinite kinds, but in every case it brings to us sorrow and takes us down the path of ignorance and hence away from self-realization.

Yoga philosophy has great stress on non-violence (*ahimsā*). The right observances serve to make the mind pure, remove desires, and tend to strengthen the will and prepare it for the great *Yoga* meditation. But still it may be said that until the mind is at peace with the world, the great duty of *ahimsā* cannot be performed merely by thinking. “It is therefore necessary that the mind should be at perfect peace with the world by a willing culture of the emotion of the friendliness (*maitrī*) towards all those who are leading a life of pleasure, of compassion towards those who are virtuous, and indifference towards the vicious. Whoever shows friendliness towards the happy is purged of the dirt of envy; whoever wishes to remove the miseries of others through compassion (*karuṇā*) is purged of the propensity of doing mischief to others. Complacency (*muditā*) removes jealousy, and indifference towards sinners, removes impatience and anger.”^{lix} Thus by the culture of these positive emotions the mind becomes inclined to the side of mental restraint. When the mind is thus purged of its dross, the *yogin* takes his *Yoga* practice for the ultimate realization of his purpose.

On the surface, the word ‘*ahimsā*’ may read like any other generic religious precept that instructs us not to hurt or kill our fellow man, but going deeper it is really a thought process, one that may take a life time to cultivate. How often do we catch ourselves entertaining hateful thoughts about someone, if only for a second, wishing them

harm or hardship based on a very tiny grudge that we will probably get over in a matter of day? This type of mental violence is much more difficult to bring under control than physical violence, but is of the utmost importance, because if we can bring our thoughts under control then our actions are more likely to live up our values.

In conclusion to the present discussion, it can be said that *ahimsā* must had been a demand of society in response to which Buddha and Mahāvīra, two contemporary thinkers preached non-violence. However, the non-violence they taught is not categorical for all. They have understood that some amount of violence is unavoidable in leading day to day life and therefore did not prescribe rigorism for common people. Ancient India in the time of Buddha and Mahāvīra has made the ideal of non-violent society possible.

ⁱ J. N. Sinha, *Indian Philosophy* (vol1), Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 2006. p 1

ⁱⁱ *Indian Philosophy* (vol1), p 115

ⁱⁱⁱ Unto Tähtinen, *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, (chap 1), Rider and Company, London, 1976. p 3, As it is found in *Manusmṛtti*, 8.293; 8.297; 9.310

^{iv} Ibid, and also found in *Medhātithi* on Manu. 1.29

^v Ibid, p 3, also found in *Manusmṛtti*, 11.63 and 8.285

^{vi} Ibid, p 4, also found in *Manusmṛtti*, 8.288

^{vii} Ibid, also found in *Manusmṛtti*, 5.45 and *Anuśāsan Parva*, 113.5

^{viii} Ibid, also found in J. U.- 1.7

^{ix} Ibid, also found in *Śabdakalpadruma* on the word *ahimsā*

^x Ibid, p 117

^{xi} *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, (chap-1), p 4-5 as it is found in *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8.15.1

^{xii} Ibid, p 5, as it is found in *Manusmṛtti*- 5.41

^{xiii} Ibid, as it is found in *Sānti Parva*- 32.13

^{xiv} *Indian Philosophy*, (vol1), p 137

^{xv} Ibid. p 137

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- ^{xvi} Dr. Sashi Prabha Kumar, *Facts of Indian Philosophical Thought*, (chap 1), Vidyanidhi Prakashan, Delhi, 1999, p 3
- ^{xvii} Ibid, p 4, as it is found in *Rgveda*
- ^{xviii} *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, (chap v), p 88
- ^{xix} Ibid, (chap v), p 90
- ^{xx} *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, (chap v), p 70, as it is found in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 11.19.33
- ^{xxi} Ibid, also in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* -2.28.4
- ^{xxii} Ibid, and also in *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*-7.11.7-12
- ^{xxiii} Roderick Hindery, *Comparative Ethics in Hindu and Buddhist Traditions*, (chap v), Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi 2004, p 119
- ^{xxiv} Ibid, (chap v), P-89, as it is found in *Anuśāsana Parva* 116.38
- ^{xxv} Mahābhārata xviii: 116. 37-41
- ^{xxvi} Ibid, p 119
- ^{xxvii} *Indian Philosophy*, p 206
- ^{xxviii} *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, (chap iv), p 60, as it is found in the *Bhāgavata Pūrāna* – 36.11
- ^{xxix} S. N. Dasgupta, *The History of Indian Philosophy*, (vol2), At the University Press, Cambridge, 1963, p 508-509
- ^{xxx} Parmeshwari Prasad Khetan (editor), *The Bhagavad Gita With Text and Translation*, Commentary in the words of Sri Aurobindo, Sri Aurobindo Divine Life Trust, Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, 2006, p 70-71
- ^{xxxi} Chandradhar Sharma, *A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy*, (chap iv), Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi, 1991, p 48
- ^{xxxii} Ibid. p 147, as found in *Srmaḍ Bhagvat Pūrāna*, 1.14-46
- ^{xxxiii} Ibid. *Anushashana Parva* of Mahābhārata, 116.38-39, see also S. R. Banerjee, *In Introducing Jainism*, Calcutta, 2000, p 70
- ^{xxxiv} *Jaina Tradition in Indian Thought*, p 292
- ^{xxxv} *Indian Philosophy*, p 253
- ^{xxxvi} Dr. K. P. Sinha, *The Philosophy of Jainism*, (chap v), Punthi Pustak, Calcutta, 1990, p 104
- ^{xxxvii} Ibid. p 105-106

xxxviii Ibid. p 253

xxxix Ibid. p 113

xl *Jaina Tradition in Indian Thought*, p 334

xli *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, p 50

xlii Edited by Joseph Runzo and Nancy M. Martin, *Ethics in World Religion*, Aneworld oxford publication, 2001, p 212

xliii *Indian Philosophy*, p 333-334

xliv *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, p 29

xlvi *Indian Philosophy*, p 327

xlvii *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, p 51, as it is found in Majjhima p 56

xlviii Ibid, p 90

xlix Ibid. p 322

l *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, p 77, as it is found in Suttanipāta 148

l F. Maxmuller and V. Fausboll (trans.), *Dhammapadapāli*, (chapter- ten-“Punishment”), Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi, 2004, p 44-45

li Nandasena Ratnapala, *Buddhist Sociology*, Indian Books Centre, Delhi, 1993, p 166

lii *Dhammapadapāli*, (Chapter fourteen), p 62

liii *AHIMSA Non-violence in Indian Tradition*, P 59

liv Ian Whicher, *The Integrity of Yoga Darśana- A Reconsideration of Classical Yoga*, D. K. Print world (p) Ltd. New Delhi, 2000, p 191, also found in Yoga Sūtras II 34, p 106

lv Ibid, p 152

lvi Dharma Mitra, *The Ethics and the Morals of Yoga*, New York Yoga Magazine, New York, USA, June, 2008

lvii Ibid. p 336-337

lviii S. N. Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy, In Relation to other systems of Indian Thought*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, (pvt), Delhi, March, 2007, p 302-303

lix S. N. Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy, In Relation to other systems of Indian Thought*, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, (pvt), Delhi, March, 2007, p 305-306