Every great thinker, more so an active thinker presents and works out his ideas at two levels. At one level, being hedged by his spatial-temporal environment, he grapples with the problems of his times, which have accumulated in the course of historical development. He attempts to find and offer appropriate solutions for them. In the process, he makes valuable contributions in the environment of his life and times. But he does not stop at that level. To leave his perennial footprints at the sands of the time, he has to work simultaneously at an entirely different level. He has to go much beyond his *yugdharma* and contribute something to *shashwat dharma*. Thus, his thoughts and actions remain relevant both for his *yugdharma* as well as for *shashwat dharma*. The best example of such a thinker is Krishna of the *Mahabharata* fame. He plays a crucial role in the course of the *Mahabharata* war (his *yugdharma*) and at the same time, he makes everlasting contributions in the form of the perennial philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

Both as a teacher and as a scholar I have spent many years in delving deep in Gandhi’s life, thoughts and actions. I am aware that Gandhiana is no longer a virgin field for research and writings. There are books galore apart from Gandhi’s own voluminous writings dealing with diverse themes ranging from sexuality to spirituality.

In view of the above, scholars of Gandhian thought have tried to find an easy way out. They have tried to put Gandhi’s life and thought within the narrow confines of their respective academic disciplines. Thus, political scientists have concentrated on his political ideas, whereas economists have been dealing with his economic thought. Sociologists have tried to project him as a social theorist and the philosopher are ever engaged in dealing with his philosophic ideas. Scholars of comparative religion have been quibbling whether his primary source of inspiration was constituted by the *Bhagavad-Gita* or the *New Testament*. Environmentalists have found in him their putative progenitor and psychologists have gone on debating about the foundation of his personality and psychic life. So on and so forth. All these and similar other studies in different disciplines have been quite germane to their respective disciplines. But they fail to present a holistic picture of his life and thought. And the need for presenting a holistic account of his life, thought and actions still remains a challenging task.

However, the primary purpose and focus of the present paper is very limited. All that it attempts to do is to trace out the perennial elements in Gandhi’s thought. As such, some of the questions the present paper seeks to attend are. One, are there some ever-lasting elements in Gandhi’s thought, which could constitute an integral part of the perennial philosophy? Two, do they have the potentialities to offer an alternative way of organizing society? Three, do they go beyond the arena of moral preaching’s - a favourite area of the saints and sages from time immemorial? Or do they fulfill the Confusian criteria of being a gentleman who never preaches what he has been practicing till he has practiced what he has been preaching? In what follows, I
would attempt to take an overview of Gandhi’s thought in the light of the above questions. The paper would be divided in three parts. The first part would deal with how Gandhi dealt with the dominant ideologies of his times including the major contours of liberalism and Marxism. How did he try to bring the major tenets of the prevailing cultural tradition of India nearer to the tunes of his times? The second part of the paper would attempt to make a quintessential presentation on some of his key concepts, which, to our mind, go a long way to constitute his core philosophy. In the last part, I would examine the primary question whether his ideas could really constitute a part of the perennial philosophy.

It goes without saying that during the time when Gandhi lived and worked, liberalism and Marxism had emerged as the two dominant ideologies. In fact, they continue to dominate the world of ideologies even now with their variant forms. He was also confronted with some of the excretions and excrescences in the Indian cultural tradition, which had accumulated in the course of its historical developments. In the pages that follow, I would take a synoptic view of all these problems. It is true that a number of scholars have tried to trace out the common ground between his thought and perspective of liberalism in their attempt to bring him within the ken of liberalism. His concern for the autonomy, freedom and integrity of the individual has been emphasized to put him in the category of a liberal thinker. Strangely enough, his concern for daridranarayan, his idea of the state of the enlightened anarchy and other similar ideas have been cited to take him nearer to the ideas of Karl Marx. Thus, several attempts have been to make him as a protagonist of either liberalism or Marxism depending on the orientations and proclivities of a particular scholar. These studies have completely ignored some of the key concepts of Gandhi, which are totally against the common run ideas of both liberalism and Marxism. For instance, Gandhi’s concept of ‘cosmocentric’ man and his symbiotic relationship with his fellow being and the entire cosmic order marked by a deep sense of inter-dependence totally takes him out from the ken of the kind of humanism, which has gripped the western mind in the post-renaissance period. There are a number of specific points on which Gandhi differed from the basic tenets of liberalism. One, that man is moved by his ‘enlightened self-interest’; hence he must have freedom to pursue it. And whenever such pursuit of self-interest would come into conflict with others, the institution of state would arbitrate or might even work as its final arbiter. Two, that the man has a special and privileged place in the cosmic order and as such he has the inherent right to use its resources for his comforts and conveniences. Three, that the institution of private property with some minor limitations provides a congenial environment to the man to enjoy his freedom and meet his desire for ‘territorial imperative’. Four, liberalism pleads and works for an economic order based on ever spiraling human ‘wants’, maximum exploitation of the bounties of the nature through the use of science and technology and through the process of urbanization and industrialization. These were some of the key ideas, which provided the intellectual foundation of liberalism. One does not have to go in details to show how Gandhi had rejected and transcended some of these liberal formulations. Suffice it to say at this stage that Gandhi’s idea of divinity in man and his advaitic vision of the cosmic order totally go against the above liberal perspective. Strangely enough, some of these liberal formulations about the nature of the man and the cosmic order were not totally controverted and rejected by Marxism. For instance, basic capitalist system of production was not rejected by Marxism except that it over-emphasized the fact of the ‘expropriation of the expropriators’ and as such it made the institution of the private property as the main villain of the piece. Hence, it lays emphasis on its socialisation. Marxism-Leninist movement turned out to be a vanguardist movement to be led by the Communist Party with a clarion call to suppress and eliminate all those who differed from it. So far its ultimate destination of classless and stateless society was concerned, it was to be preceded by virtually a permanent stage of the ‘dictatorship of proletariat’. Thus there was a great disconnect between its intermediate and final stage. Gandhi’s ideas of ‘autonomy and integrity of the individual, his distrust of the institution of the state at
every stage, his theory of Swaraj and trusteeship had hardly any common ground with Marxist perspective. Besides, his idea of constructive programmes, satyagraha, his creedal commitment to truth and non-violence, his firm assertion on the symbiotic relationship between the ends and means hardly leave ground for commonality of perspective with Marxism and its major formulations. In a word, Gandhi has rejected dominant perspectives projected by both liberalism and Marxism.

Gandhi and Indian religion-cultural tradition

Apart from liberalism and Marxism, Gandhi also took stock of the prevailing trends in the religio-cultural tradition of India. He expressed his strong reservations about some of these trends and tried to present his own perspective on them in his attempt to bring them to the tune of his times. Some of the areas where he made significant contributions were as follows:

One, Gandhi was fully aware that on the account of Brahminic domination of the Indian cultural tradition, dignity of labours (sharir-shram) has not been given its due place. Mental and manual-menial works have been compartmentalised on the basis of caste: mental work being assigned to Brahamins and the manual-menial work to the shudras. Gandhi totally rejected such perspective and found it totally against the true cultural tradition of India. He looked at every kind of manual work including scavenging as an ennobling work. He not only himself took up scavenging work, but also made *sharir shram* as an integral of his *ekadasha vrata*. It was in this context that he totally rejected the idea of untouchability and waged a lifelong battle against it.

He also found two major limitations in lives of our people particularly in respect of our public life. Strict accounting was missing both from our private and public life. He insisted on strict accounting of the public fund and even suggested to his followers to introduce it in their household affairs. Such a strict accounting has several social implications. In the first place, a culture of strict accounting of public fund greatly contributed to a deep sense of integrity and transparency in public life of the country. Besides, a number of public workers started keeping an eye on their day-to-day expenses. That led to their frugal living with more spare time and energy left to be devoted to the cause of the nation. Time management was another innovation he introduced in our public life. Political leaders of free Gandhian era were not very strict of their prior appointment. Gandhi introduced the system meeting the people by fixing up the prior appointment. He worked as an exemplar to assign every minute of his time to a particular work and that was the reason for his enormous productivity. He maintained the same strictness in respect of public meetings and organizational works of the Congress. Thus strict punctuality and time management was introduced at his initiative and insistence in our public life.

Apart from dealing with some of these problems of our public life, he also made certain contributions in the realm of ideas so far our cultural tradition was concerned. Three of them are being underlined here.

In the first place, prior to his entry into politics, there was no clarity about the actual relationship between religion and politics. They were two views about it. The dominant view was that religion is meant for *Shadhus* and politics entirely belongs to the secular field. Even Tilak was of the same view. On the other hand, people like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya and Swami Dyanand wanted religion to be used for political ends. Gandhi introduced a fine balance between the two. In the process, he worked out new definitions of both religion and politics. His concept of religion went beyond the organized religions and underlined their ethical and moral bases. Similarly, for him politics was far away from power game and it was to be an instrument of service to the people. Such a new perspective on religion and politics had several implications for our public life. One, even the people primarily with spiritual bent of mind could participate in the public life of the country. In the process, he solved the age-old problem of our cultural life, which was compartmentalized in the form of *pravriti* and *nivriti* margs. He successfully bridges the gulf between these diametrically opposite ways of life.
Another area of the Indian cultural tradition was wherein Gandhi made significant contribution was in respect of the *Karma sidhant*. In plain language, theory of *Karma* with its concomitant principle of rebirth means: as you sow so, you reap. In other words, every human action bears its own fruits - good or bad depending on its nature. This chain of action and its fruit is not even broken by the intervention of death. It follows the man like his shadows even in his next life. Gandhi believed in the theory of rebirth unless one had attained *moksha* at the end of his life. It is to be noted that one baneful effect of such a view was that it had led to a kind of fatalism in our public life. Thus suffering of the fellow beings was none of the relieve concern of even our enlightened souls. Thus, human intervention was ruled out to relieve others from their sufferings. Gandhi contested such a mechanistic application of *Karma-sidhant*. Rather he went to the extent of saying that *Karma-sidhant*, loving, and serving the poor and the downtrodden was quite compatible with each other. He found the support for such a path-breaking formulation in the Bhagavad-Gita's theory of *Lokshanraha*. Following in the steps of the teacher of the Gita, Gandhi asserted that the actions taken in the interests of others and being presented as an offering to God would lose its binding force. He further argued that despite the *Sunskars* of his past life, man is also endowed with his 'free will'. Hence, the present good actions apart from workings as the fixed deposit for next life would also go a long way to lessen the burden of his past life. He was in full agreement with the Gita's assertion that the man could ultimately become what he wanted to become (XVIII-3).

The last but not the least contributions that Gandhi made were in the form of making reconciliation between 'reason', revelation and intuition. He did accept that every religion was based on revelation. But he hastened to add that all religions had been communicated through human agencies. Hence, they are bound to suffer from infirmities. Besides, in the course of historical development, they have gathered some accretions and excrescences, which would be quite external to pure and pristine forms. On all these counts, there is a need to test them on the touchstone of human rationality. But he was against the idea of making a 'fetish' of human rationality. He further asserted that apart from human reason, these are equally valid epistemological tools of knowledge viz. intuition, inner voice and the experiential truths of sages and scriptures. This was another major contribution of Gandhi to our cultural tradition.

**Gandhi's Alternative Civilisational Framework**

It is in the light of the above discussion that Gandhi's attempt to provide an alternative civilisational framework should be viewed and assessed. It is true he never made any systematic presentation of his ideas to constitute a coherent philosophical framework. But there are various fragments of his idea which could be put together for a coherent systemic presentation. To my mind, some of his core ideas are regarding (a) man, world and God; (b) Trusteeship and (c) Swaraj leading ultimately to the emergence of a non-violent Sarvodaya Samaj. Along with them, he also offered three major instruments, which could be used to bring about such a social change. They are *Ekadash Varata*, (Eleven vows), constructive programmes and satyagraha. In the following pages, I would offer some reflections on all these concepts of Gandhi.

**1: Gandhi's Concept of Man, World and God**

The entire ideational superstructure of Gandhi was built on his basic understanding of the man, the world and the God. Being rooted in the *advaitee* vision, Gandhi firmly asserted that every man carries a speck of divinity within himself. Hence, every man within his own personality possesses immense potentiality and even practical possibility for attaining spiritual growth and enlightenment. In other words, Gandhi strongly believed in the idea of human perfectibility. True, the veil of *avidya* (false knowledge) comes in the way of self-disclosure of the man. But that could be overcome by going through the process of personal *sadhana*. In the process, Gandhi rejects the concept of man being afflicted by the 'original sin' as well as that of the
economic man quite popular in the modern intellectual tradition. In other words, Gandhi rejects both these Western concepts of ‘fallen’ and economic man.

Gandhi did not believe in an anthropomorphic and *avatāravadi* vision of God. As an *advaitvadi*, he has faith in an attributeless and formless God. He strongly believed that God was not there outside of ourselves, rather he pervades everything and is imminent in all beings. Ultimately, he even transcended even the vedantic vision of God when he came to look at ‘truth as God’ instead of ‘God as truth’. However, as a concession to the spiritual need of the common man, he was willing to accept the concept of God with form and attribute.

So far, his views on the phenomenal world as concerned, he transcended the age-old debate whether the world is real or unreal. He rejected both the extreme of an egocentric man totally immersed in the phenomenal world and the life of sanyasi only working for his personal *moksha* far away from the *vagaries* of the world. He embraced the idea of a cosmic order marked by inter-dependence. Thus, a man is not only responsible for his own action but also for the actions of his fellow beings. Thus taking the world as being manifested and pervaded by God, and taking himself as a microcosm of the divinity, man has to ceaselessly work to realize his true self, on the one hand, and also to continuously engage in the task of making the world a more livable place. Only way he could it is to love and serve his fellow beings. He need not endlessly engage himself in the debate whether the God is with form and attributes (sagun) or without them and whether the phenomenal world is real or unreal.

2: Swaraj

*Based on the above foundation, Gandhi built up his own concept of Swaraj.* It was in the *Hind Swaraj* that he first delineated his concept of *Swaraj*. However, he refused to offer any hackneyed definition. He rejected the prevailing notion of *Swaraj* – freedom from the British while retaining both intellectual and institutional set up provided by them. In such a situation, he further averred, *India would become ‘Englistan’* and not ‘Hindustan’. Then he took up the question how India could be really freed. In the process, he asserted that if individuals could become free by attaining self-rule India could not lag behind attaining ‘self-government’. Thus, he established a close relationship between inner *Swaraj* and outer *Swaraj* – making the former as the foundation for the latter. He offered ‘passive resistance’ as the most effective means to free India from the British clutches. Subsequently he came back to India and by 1920 he took over the leadership of the Indian national movement. He found out that the people at large and even the leaders were primarily interested in the idea of external *Swaraj*. He, therefore, made it clear in his Foreword to ‘*Hind Swaraj*’ in 1921 that in view of the people’s unpreparedness for his own ideas of *Swaraj*, he would essentially work for parliamentary democracy. In the subsequent period, he dilated up the idea of such external *Swaraj* through resolution on *Pooran Swaraj* and those of the Karachi Congress. Thus he integrated new dimensions of political, social, economic freedom to his idea of *Swaraj* particularly in respect of the poor and the downtrodden. He also played a crucial role in elections of 1937 and 1946 and even in the formation of the Congress Government on both the occasions.

However, theoretically he remained critical of the kind of representative government, which was the mainstay of Western democracy, as people hardly matter in the entire process. He even tried to offer an alternative system of truly democratic governance through his idea of ‘oceanic circle’, *Gram Swaraj* and ‘*Panchayati Raj*’. Through his idea of the ‘oceanic circle’, he tried to establish a close linkage between the individual and local, regional, national and international communities. For him, the integrity, freedom of the individual remained basic principles behind the political structure of his own conception. Any violation of his integrity and individuality in the name of commonweal would amount to nothing less than violence. But that did not mean that the interests of the community was of no consequence. Each unit in such a political structure would be fully of the inter-dependent nature of the entire structure. It is also to
be noted that Gandhi did not look at the political process purely from the viewpoint of the right of the individuals. He laid equal emphasis on his duties. Moreover, being aware of the limitations of the Western concept of representative government and its top-heavy and top-down approach, he offered the ‘bottom up’ approach in the form of Gram Swaraj and Panchayati raj. He also called it Ramrajya, which stood for equity, justice and self-abnegation. This was his concept of the ideal society. Starting with maximum emphasis on the freedom of the individual and minimal state, it would ultimately lead to a state of an ‘enlightened anarchy’ – a truly non-violent society marked by equity, justice and freedom. In such a system, self-ruling individuals would provide the fulcrum of the society.

3: Trusteeship

Gandhi's economic ideas in general and his principle of trusteeship in particular were rooted in his rejection of both capitalist and Marxist systems and his vision of a desirable society. He was fully convinced that the existing system have promoted the culture of consumerism, exploitation and domination. Not only that, in every society, there has emerged a powerful group which taking control over the societal resources, has succeeded in imposing his will on the hapless majority. In the process, all moral and ethical values have been subordinated to human avarice and material progress. Gandhi rejected such an approach to human life and the bounties of the Nature. He emphasized the need for the fulfillment of the basic needs so that the man is left with enough energy and time to pursue his higher goal of human redemption. That was also the reason for his insistence on some of his key economic concepts like ‘bread labour’, distinction between ‘need’ and ‘want’ and his ever emphasis on the reduction of human need.

It was in the above perspective that Gandhi has propounded his idea of trusteeship – as an essential foundation for his non-violent and desirable society. But he was clear in his mind that such a society would be marked by equity and not by mechanistic equality. That was for two reasons. One, he was aware that the capability quotient might differ from individual to individual. Hence, it has to be given its due consideration in any system of production. Otherwise society would lose by underutilization of capabilities of its more talented people was found to emerge in such a society. But once the capability quotient of such people is allowed a role in the productive system, inequality in terms of income and wealth is found to come up in the society. The moot question is how any given society should tackle the problem of such emerging inequality. What is more, neither liberalism nor Marxism has succeeded in offering a foolproof solution for it. Hence, a new solution was needed to be offer. There was another reason, which prompted Gandhi to come out with his idea of trusteeship for managing the institution of private property. He has firm faith in the freedom and integrity of the individual, which he was not willing to sacrifice at any cost. So the question before him was how to yoke individual’s capability and initiative with the commonweal of the society. His idea of trusteeship perfected fitted the fill. It was for these two reasons, which prompted Gandhi to the idea of trusteeship.

The basic idea behind trusteeship was that the man should own and use all his resources including his property taking himself as a trustee on behalf of the society. In such a perspective, the owners of the properties would not be divested of their proprietary rights. Thus, their skill, capability and initiative would be utilized to create wealth for primarily serving the interest of the society. In the process, their lives and livings would be marked by self-restraint and self-abnegation. In other words, the wealth and resources generated by such would be used for the commonweal of the society rather than entirely for their own comforts and conveniences. His idea of trusteeship took a definite form when a final document on trusteeship was drafted by M.L. Dantwala in consultation with Narhari Parekh and Kisorelal Mashrawala. The draft was finally approved by Gandhiji. Lest the idea remains at ephemeral and ethereal level, the document envisaged a crucial role for the state in the entire process including in regulating the
right to inheritance, in fixing the minimum and maximum wages with minimal difference. Incessant efforts even obliterate would be made to such minimal difference ultimately leading to a truly non-violent society.

**Instruments of Social Change**

Transition towards a new and a desirable society has been one of the major problems faced by all the great thinkers. Marxism-Leninism tried to bring about such change through the vanguardist movement led by a closed cadre based Communist Party with its primary emphasis on the capture of the State Power through violent means, establishment of the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ in the intermediate stage, finally leading to state of ‘classless and stateless society. Liberalism believed in gradualism, finally leading to a just and equitable society of its own conception. Gandhi was aware of all these ideological orientations and of their pitfalls. Hence, he was quite keen to provide concrete, effective and viable means, which would lead the people to the final stage of his desirable, non-violent society. He also wanted to transcend the debate whether such a journey should start from the level of the individual or the community. Broadly speaking, Marxism favoured the first step at the systemic level and had disfavoured all reformist agenda. Hence, they showered all their venomous contempt on all ‘reformist’ and ‘renegades’. Gandhi tried to transcend all these fruitless ideological debates. He offered, three major instruments of change to tackle the entire problem from individual to the societal level. These three major instruments of change as suggested by him were: *Ekadash vrata* (Eleven vows), constructive programmes and satyagraha. A brief discussion on all three instruments of change would be quite expedient to our study.

1. **Ekadasha vrata:** It comprised of eleven vows: five yama (truth, non-violence), non-stealing, Brahmacharya and non-Possession) from Patanjali yoga sutra and added six of his own *niyarnas* control of palate, fearlessness, bread labour, swadeshi, elimination of untouchability and *sarva dharma samabhava* (equal respect for all religions). It is clear that Gandhi was convinced that all systems are ultimately run by the individuals. Hence, their inner purity as well as its application at the level of the society alone could lead to a better society. He was firmly of the opinion that unless a regimen of self-restraint is built up at the level of the people in general and at the level of the wielders of power at the societal level, no system could successfully work for the betterment of the common masses. That was the real idea behind the *Ekadash vrata*. He was more than ever convinced that the practice of *Ekadasha vrata* would also work as a training regimen for satyagrahis who, in any case would play the pivotal role in leading society to its ideal stage.

2. **Constructive Programmes:** Two malignant consequences have emerged from the Marxist insistence on the capture of the State Power and their opposition to all reformist agenda. First, the state goes on acquiring power and functions, which it could not handle effectively and equitably. What is more, people lose their basic freedom in the ever blowing tornado of the State power which inescapably moves towards a totalitarian stage. The second consequences of such perspective is that the sinews of the civil society is loosened and atrophied giving wielders of the state power total freedom to do what they wish to do. In the liberal democratic society, all attempts to tame and control the state power by reducing its arena of operation had hardly improved the situation. The market forces primarily work within the confines of the privileged sections of any society. Hence, the millions of the marginalized are forced to eke out their miserable lives.

It goes to the credit of Gandhi that he had anticipated some of these problems and had even suggested a remedial measure in the form of his constructive programme. He had pleaded for a minimal state and a strong and vibrant civil society. He even set up several single aim organization like All India Village Industries Association, Harijan Sevak Sangh, All India Village Industries Association and similar other organization to carry on the specific
programmes of his eighteen point constructive programmes. He had also encouraged and inspired his followers to establish hundreds of the ashrams to carry on different constructive programmes. There ashrams also work as the centre for popular mobilization at the time of national struggle. They also contributed to the uplift of the weaker sections of the society. In fact, through his constructive programmes Gandhi attempted to work out a plan of total regeneration of India even without having the state power in our hands.

(3) Satyagraha: Satyagraha was designed as a sovereign weapon against all kinds of injustice, be it political, social, economic or even spiritual. It remains as the most seminal contribution of Gandhi in the realm of social action. The idea of Satyagraha emerged in South Africa in the face of the problem of racial discrimination faced by the people of the Indian origins there. Subsequently, Gandhi successfully applied it in the course of the India's struggle for independence in the post war period. It has been applied as an effective weapon against all kinds of injustices including civil rights struggle of the American Blacks led by Dr. Martin Luther King and South African struggle against the policy of apartheid led by Nelson Mandela. It has been also for protecting the basic right of the people and, regime change in several countries.

The philosophical roots of Satyagraha could be located in some of the major formulations of Gandhi. One, that the truth exists at two levels of relative and absolute. Since absolute truth is beyond the ordinary reach of the man, he has to act on the basics of his relative truth. Thus, Satyagraha was nothing but insistence on the relative truth whether by an individual or community. The second philosophical formulation was that in an advaitic vision of the world, there is no other. Hence, there is no question of launching a fight to finish. No search of truth, even of the relative truth, could conceive of a violent struggle as both parties could be ultimately persuaded to join the search for the truth involved in the struggle. It was also based on third major philosophical formulation of Gandhi that the man is endowed with divine qualities. Hence, one could not think of any human being totally devoid of these qualities. He might go stray for a while but ultimately would come back to realize his true nature. In such a situation, he was bound to listen to sane and sincere plea of a genuine satyagrahi. It is not for nothing that Satyagraha has assumed a universal character. It has become the brahmastra of all those who might be physically and materially weak but strong and invincible morally and spiritually.

Towards a New Integration

The preceding discussions could be summed up in the form of two questions and their respective answers. One, what are the basic grievances of Gandhi against the modern western industrial civilization? Two, what kind of alternative civilizational framework is provided by him. It is not difficult to answer the first question. Gandhi has several basic grievances against the modernity. He had a plethora of them such as: a soulless, atomized individual pursuing his self interest devoid of the warmth and love of the community; the demon of materialism eating into the spiritual vitals of the man; singular pursuit of secular success at the cost of the ultimate meaning of human existence; violation of basic, intricate balance of cosmic order posing a serious threat to the humankind. Gandhi has been proved right by the subsequent historical development. So far so good.

But scholars find it more difficult to answer the second question whether he successfully provided the contours of a new civilization. However, the basic contention of the present paper is that he did provide a broad framework to that end. His basic ideas, as discussed above, do present such a framework. It should be clearly understood that Gandhi was not for small tinkering with the fabric of modern civilization. He wanted it to be replaced by a new perspective on human civilization. In that respect, he was a true revolutionary. On the basic of some of his key ideas as discussed above, a number of new organizing principles of society with new philosophical foundation could be easily deduced. Some of them are:
First, man is of transcendental nature. He has to work both for his secular and spiritual redemption. Being imbued with the ideas of inter-dependence, he has to work as the moral custodian for other species of the cosmos. Based on such a perspective, the human society would be organized in such a way that the man does not develop an arrogant gumption to work as a "tearaway" for the rest of the creation. Thus, harmony and finely tuned ecological balance would work as the guiding principles of new social order.

The second organizing principle behind new society would be the spirit of cooperation in place of the present system of cutthroat competition; equity and freedom in place of explanation and domination. Moral imperative of such a society would demand equitable distribution and use of natural resources including control over the means production and not their concentration in few hands.

The third organizing principle of such society would be the minimum control over the lives of the people by any external agency including the institution of state. Thus, more than self-government self-ruling individuals would provide the hallmark of new society. What is more, such self-ruling individuals would not only work for the protection and promotion of their own integrity and autonomy but would also take care of those of their fellow beings and indeed of the entire cosmic order.

The fourth organizing principle would be that the entire lever of power would be in the hands of the common man to whom it really belonged. All this would be provided through the new institutions of Gram-Swaraj, Panchayati Raj and similar other institutions of decentralized polity. This would be further backed up by introduction of the production by masses in place of mass production. The system would be further embellished by introduction of other Gandhian principles like "bread labour", symbiotic relationship between the end and the means the idea of trusteeship in respect of all the human resources. These Gandhian ideas could not be fitted in the existing social order. They require a different kind of perspective and initiative. Therein lies both their strengths and weaknesses.

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