

**BLOCK III**  
**ENGAGEMENT WITH  
TRADITION**

THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY

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## BLOCK III INTRODUCTION

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Through units 4 and 5, this block highlights the spiritual and civilisational approach to modern Indian political thought as manifested in the ideas of Vivekananda and Gandhi. Swami Vivekananda was given the status of a Radical, Patriot-Prophet of modern India. He tried to synthesise ideas from the East and West, religion and science and ancient wisdom and modern efficiency on the basis of practical *Vedanta*. He emphasised on the importance of core Indian traditions and culture. He also believed that no nation can achieve its prowess merely by enacting good laws or economic prosperity. For this the strength and character of countrymen is very much needed and its only *Vedanta* can infuse the strength of character. However, he was also aware that the philosophy of *Vedanta* would hold no meaning for the poor and supported efforts for their betterment. Another thinker who continued Vivekananda's spiritual approach was Gandhi. Gandhi also spoke against atrocious customs, norms, values and social structures that were justified in the name of India's age-old traditions. Gandhi reflected upon a balanced account of the past existence of India's traditions as he appreciated them but criticised the discriminatory practices with respect to issues like gender and caste. Gandhi wanted to restore the past glory of India's civilisation that would be the basis of the future of humanity. His approach to politics was both, moralistic and spiritual in nature and he sought to achieve 'spiritualisation of politics', a phrase that Gandhi borrowed from Gopal Karishna Gokhale, his political *guru*. Gandhi defended Indian traditions by highlighting their positive points but at the same time, he also suggested that they should be reformed to suit the current realities. He argued that India tradition was morally superior to the Western traditions

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## UNIT 4 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (1863-1902) RECLAIMING TRADITION AND THE IDEA OF SELF –NARA NARAYANA\*

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### Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
  - 4.1.1 Early life
  - 4.1.2 His Environment and Influences on Vivekananda
- 4.2 The philosophy of Vivekananda
  - 4.2.1 Religion
  - 4.2.2 Human
  - 4.2.3 Freedom
- 4.3 Reclaiming Tradition
- 4.4 The idea of Self
  - 4.4.1 Idea of Nara Narayana
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 References
- 4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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The main objective of this unit is to familiarize you with amongst the most influential religious thinkers of 19th century i.e. Swami Vivekananda and to provide a general idea about his stream of thought. Swami Vivekananda is known for his patriotism, dynamic philosophy and as a vigorous religious preacher. He finds his place in the history as he was the one who rekindled the spirits of people of India including abroad and infused a new life and spirit in them. He set apart his life for the spiritual union and upliftment of humanity with his deep insights. He tried to unleash people from the bondage of superstition, orthodoxy and dead customs of Hindu society. He drew his inspiration mainly from *Vedantic* philosophy. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

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- To understand the gist of the philosophical thinking of Swami Vivekananda
- His passion for the whole of humanity as one religion
- Restoration of India's lost glory
- To understand the concept of Self –Nara Narayana

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## **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Narendranath Dutta- the original name of Swami Vivekananda- was a magnificent personality. He was educated in Western and Indian philosophy and history and was far more sensitive towards existential problems of society. He was given the status of a Radical, Patriot-Prophet of modern India. He received much public acclaim outside India during the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1893, he appeared on the panorama of world at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago and became a spiritual ambassador of Indian Culture in America. He spoke about combining East and West, religion and science on the basis of practical *Vedanta*. Swami Vivekananda's personified personality and his deep understanding of spirituality, acquaintance with Eastern and Western ideals made an irresistible appeal to the many Americans and Europeans who came in contact with him.

### **4.1.1 Early life**

On 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1863, Swami Vivekananda was born into an aristocratic Kayastha family of Calcutta. His family was known for their affluence and philanthropy, scholarship and independent spirit. Vivekananda's mother, Bhuvanewari Devi, aptly fit in to the old convention of womanhood as portrayed in the Hindu way of life. She was a highly pious woman and observed religious vows. Swami Vivekananda's early education under the care of his mother taught him the virtues of austerity and self-control. She also taught her son the Bengali alphabet and English words, as well as stories from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Therefore, he developed his love for Hindu deities of whom he learnt from his mother. The father, Viswanath Dutta, was an attorney-at-law of the High Court of Calcutta. He was well versed in English and Persian literature. He was a man of diverse interests and especially had taste for cookery. He also upheld the progressive vision regarding social matters. He also had a big heart and often went out of his way to support poor relatives. Thus, Vivekananda's future personality was influenced by his gifted father and his saintly mother, both of whom kept a chastening eye upon him. The father had his own manner of discipline. Therefore, from the very beginning of his life, Swami Vivekananda was given to religious ideas and a humanitarian approach towards life. Years later, during his address to audience he pompously acknowledged his mother and said that, 'I am indebted to my mother for whatever knowledge I have acquired.'

At the age of six he was sent to a primary school and in 1871, at the age of eight, Narendra entered high school and graduated in 1879 in the first division. Almost immediately, his teachers and classmates also recognized his brilliance. While growing up, Swami Vivekananda developed his keen interest in scholarly matters.

He started reading books on literature and history, and also started taking part in public meetings. In 1879, he joined the Presidency College of Calcutta for higher studies. After a year, he had joined the General Assembly's Institution, which was founded by the Scottish General Missionary Board. Later on that institution turned out to be well known Scottish Church College. He studied Western logic for the first two years. Vivekananda's memory was phenomenal. Almost in three days he absorbed Green's *History of the English People*.

For the very first time, Vivekananda learnt about Sri Ramakrishna from Mr. Hastie, who was then the principal of the college and professor of English literature. While lecturing his class on Wordsworth's poem *The Excursion*, Professor Hastie spoke about the trances and remarked that such religious ecstasies happen only because of person's individual purity and concentration. He further argued that in contemporary times, such type of exalted experiences was an atypical phenomenon. 'I have known,' he had said, 'only one person who has realized that blessed state, and he is Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar. You will understand trances if you visit the saint.'

In November of 1881, Vivekananda was invited to the house of Surendranath Mitra to entertain the guests with his melodic music. Surendranath Mitra was devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. There, Vivekananda got a chance to meet Sri Ramakrishna. His sincerity and devotion highly impressed Paramahansa. Therefore, he asked him to visit him at Dakshineswar. To douse his spiritual thirst and to ensure whether Ramakrishna can help him in his spiritual endeavours, he accepted the invitation. At the age of eighteen, he became a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was carried away with the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and lived to continue his Guru's teachings. After the death of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in 1886, Vivekananda made an extensive tour of India like a *sanyasi*. While wandering through India, Vivekananda experienced India's glorious past, art, culture, and religion portrayed in temples and monuments at different historical centers. His wanderings often named as *parivrajya*, the unsettled itinerary of a Hindu ascetic who was allowed to camp at one place for only short periods. In reality, he set out for this journey not for personal salvation, but familiarity with a country and its people with whom he had not been closely acquainted. During these tours, he encountered the cry of humanity because of misery, grinding poverty, social evils and religious practices. Therefore, he decided to uplift the poor masses from their degraded position in all spheres and also to reclaim and restore India's lost glory. The service to mankind as his mission on earth endeared him to the people in West. He toured America and Western Europe in 1893. He attracted large audiences at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago and laid the foundation of Vedanta Society of New York in 1894. During the short life-span of thirty nine years (1863-1902), he left for posterity his four outstanding treaties on Hindu philosophy- *Jnana-Yoga*, *Bhakti-Yoga*, *Karma-Yoga* and *Raja-Yoga*.

The legacy of Swami Vivekananda continues both within in contemporary Indian society and the West. In India he is a source of pride to this day. Therefore, every year *National Youth Day* is observed on his birthday. Furthermore, the

Vivekananda Memorial at Cape Comorin on the southernmost tip of India has become an international centre of pilgrimage. The Ramakrishna Math and Mission founded by Vivekananda in 1897, also remains India's premier charitable organisations. In short, Vivekananda's ideals of religion and social service are working in many ways till date.

#### **4.1.2 His Environment and Influences on Vivekananda**

The rationalist thought of his times influenced the ideas and the thought process of Swami Vivekananda. He was greatly influenced by the political and sociological literature produced in West that laid stress on science and reasoning and talks about liberty and democratic ideals. He read *J.S. Mill, French philosophers, Scottish Common Sense philosophers, Kant, Comte, Spencer and Hegel*. The Indian reformist movements namely the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society also captured his imagination and prompted his thoughts regarding humanism, religion and spirituality. Through the writings of leaders of Brahma Samaj, he learnt about India's religious and philosophical heritage. The Brahma Samaj, refuted ritualistic conventions of Hinduism. The first and foremost agenda of Brahma Samaj was the liberation of women from old dogmas of society, remarriage of widows, abolition of child marriage, women education etc. Furthermore, under the influence of Western ideas, the Brahma Samaj upheld the supremacy of science and reasoning power. Like many other young men of his times, he was carried away by its progressive ideas and became its member. But Brahma Samaj failed to give satisfaction to Vivekananda's spiritual yearnings and his enthusiasm for reason developed an agnostic outlook about life. He had strong desire to find the ultimate goal of human existence. A turning point came in his life when he came in contact with Ramakrishna Paramhansa in 1881. His mentor toned down his aggressive faith in logic and made him understand the value of personal realization than of intellectual conviction. Rest his travels in India, America and Europe left a deep impression upon him. He got acquainted with the achievements of Science, practical values, social awareness of the West. But his second visit to the West in 1899 left him disillusioned in many ways and made him aware of the limitations of Western civilization.

In short, socio-religious or cultural milieu of 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal and the Hindu philosophy of Vedanta played an important role in developing Vivekananda's ideas. It is believed that *Gita* also had a profound impact upon him and he was also influenced by the personality of Swami Dayananda too. It is the fact that, more than anyone else, his mystic guru Ramakrishna Paramhansa made him aware of his mission in life. Sri Ramakrishna also chose Vivekananda only for initiation into the mysteries of *Advaita Vedanta*. It was partly philosophical and mystical point of view that took all differentiation in this universe to be only relatively real. Man, in this view point, was no different from reality or God; it was just his hallucination that did not allow him to gauge this ultimate truth. Later, Swami Vivekananda made an attempt to translate this philosophical monism as a gospel of social egalitarianism and universality.

## Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Swami Vivekananda  
(1863-1902) Reclaiming  
Tradition and the Idea  
of Self: Nar-Narayana

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. Give a brief life sketch of Swami Vivekananda.

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2. Write a short note on Vivekananda's environment and its impact upon him.

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## 4.2 THE PHILOSOPHY OF VIVEKANANDA

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During his extensive journey from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, he accumulated new experiences and learnt about socio-economic and religious conditions of his countrymen. He also realized that religious orthodoxy and superstitions and losing faith in spirituality are responsible for human sufferings, social evils and downfall of India. In spite of his unshakable faith in religion, he did not like any sort of orthodoxy in religious affairs. He also disagreed with those who held religion responsible for the social backwardness and political subjugation of India. He also condemned 'don't touchism'. But he admitted that the rigidity of caste system, its social exclusiveness, the spirit of fatalism, and other factors, which had come to be accepted as essentials of Hinduism, greatly contributed to her decline. He was of the view that it was not the fault of Hinduism, but of the people, who misunderstood it and failed to translate its fine principles into practice. In a sense, Vivekananda had the view that dogmatism in any realm is the surest opponent of growth and development. Therefore, he strongly made an appeal to adopt an open mental framework and rational attitude towards religion.

### 4.2.1 Religion

For Vivekananda, Religion is inevitable and very much needed for the conduct of life. Religion born out of man's urge to experience the phenomenon that is beyond the physical senses and one's own understanding. He opined that each religion usually consists of three parts- its ideals and philosophy, its mythology and its rituals. The last two may differ from one religion to another; but not in

case of its philosophy and ideals and that can bring harmony and unity. In a sense, all religions aimed at the spiritual integration of mankind. Further, he asserted, 'Religion is the idea which is raising the brute unto man, and man unto God.' In other words, for him, religion constitutes man's basic nature and unites him with his fellow beings. Hence, he tried to teach people principles of love and mutual toleration and universal religion of man. The idea of universal religion was born out of his conviction that God manifests Himself through all living beings.

### **4.2.2 Human**

Vivekananda upheld that the ultimate reality of life is to be spiritual. From here, it emerges that man is an organized unity of spiritual and physical realms. It's the existence of spirituality that makes man unique and physically superior. Human soul (*atman*) is indistinguishable from the divine (*Brahman*). For that reason, he emphasized that the Vedantic identification of human and divine is to raise the dignity of human in the world. He said that, 'this human body is the greatest body in the universe, and a human being the greatest being. Man is higher than all animals, than all angels; none is greater than man.' By establishing supremacy of man, he wanted to awaken the spirit in man by proclaiming him as the highest representation of God and to bring about solace to suffering and bewildered humanity.

### **4.2.3 Freedom**

For Vivekananda, freedom is the very essence of the soul. It is imperative to experience the spiritual journey. In the *Parliament of Religions*, he uttered that 'each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserves one's individuality.' Vivekananda wanted to inspire each and one that they must nurture a free body, mind and spirit. To him, freedom was the watchword. If individuals would become perfect by acting freely, in turn, they can build a perfect society. Though, he thought of freedom as an indispensable for the realization of one's inner individuality, he did not ignore its social and material aspects. He also upheld that social uplift of the masses can be possible only with individual freedom and equality. In short, his concept of freedom is all-inclusive and cannot be viewed in isolation in relation to society.

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## **4.3 RECLAIMING TRADITION**

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Swami Vivekananda was never tired of reminding about the core of Indian traditions and culture in his spirited exhortations. Though, he was receptive to science and reason, he also made an attempt to synthesize science and spirituality, ancient wisdom and modern efficiency. In the opinion of former Prime Minister of India *Pandit J.L. Nehru*, though, Swami Vivekananda's philosophy was deeply rooted in India's magnificent past and its prestige, yet he had rational and scientific approach towards the problems of life. Thus, he was an anchor for India's past and it's present.

Swami Vivekananda tried to provide fresh impulse to the philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads. He considered them as a foundation of Hindu religion and



culture. It may be important to mention here that the Vedas are the core scriptures of Hinduism that focus upon knowledge of rituals and liturgical matters. On the other hand, the Upanishads are texts, written between 700 BCE and the early century of the Common Era which form the theological and philosophical essence of the *Vedanta*. The *Vedantic* world-view permeates aspects of Indian body of thought and concepts such as *Brahman* (ultimate reality), *Atman* (self), and *Isvara* (the Lord). This body of thought is referred as *Vedanta* in contemporary times.

During his life he endeavored to interpret the philosophy of Upanishads correctly as they paved the way for the salvation of mankind. The Upanishads can reinstate the lost confidence in man. They can make man conquer his weakness and pessimism towards life and prepare man to face the world with courage. Vivekananda also found that the Upanishads taught the solidarity of this universe-brotherhood of man. Therefore, the humanistic message was always loud and clear in his writings and speeches.

Swami Vivekananda was also overwhelmed by the teachings of *Gautama Buddha*, as Buddha's main concern was removal of sufferings of mankind. Therefore, he renounced everything to find out a way to soothe the miseries of mankind. Swami Vivekananda expressed his regard for the Buddha very movingly: "I would like to see moral men like Gautama Buddha, who did not believe in a personal God or a personal soul, never asked about them, but was a perfect agnostic, and yet was ready to lay down his life for anyone, and worked all his life for the good of all, and thought only of the good of all." Therefore, in a similar vein Vivekananda modeled his ethical activism.

Likewise, the *Vedantic* message he tried disseminating in India and the West has deep philosophical roots in *Sankara*, *Ramanuja*, *Madhva*, *Chaitanya* and other pre-modern thinkers. Contrasting his own mentor Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda did *not* believe that to achieve higher spiritual realm, there is a need to depend upon moral activities. For him, *Vedanta* includes Advaita, Visishtadvaita and the dualist systems of thought. He maintained that there is no incompatibility among the different systems of thought. The dualism usually instigates the human mind, then it rises to a qualified dualism and finally it qualifies for *Advaita*. The *Advaita* or monism decrees the highest truth i.e. *Tat Twam Asi* (Thou Art That). Thus, for Vivekananda through *Vedanta* man can understand the ultimate unity of things. The phrase *Tat Twam Asi* implies that man is not as he appears to be. He is neither the body, nor the mind and intellect. But he is the soul or *Atman*, which is infinite and eternal. Therefore, it is part and parcel of the *Parmaatman* or the Universe Soul. Hence, Vivekananda urged the people to cast off the wrong notion that man is inherently bad or sinner as is taught by religions and to believe that he is pure, divine and *sat-chit-ananda*. This also leads to the concepts of equality of man and the unity of mankind. If the same God is present in all of us, there can be no other relationship between man and man than that of love and service. *Vedanta*, thus, preaches the message of universal love and service. As love and service demand the spirit of sacrifice and renunciation, the message of *Vedanta* also insists upon it. In modern India, Swami Vivekananda is perhaps the first figure to suggest that

a moral life may be successfully detached from any conceptions of god and religion.

With Vivekananda therefore, *Advaita Vedanta* was not simply hoary metaphysics, but a gospel that could be given tangible social meanings. Vivekananda believed that *Vedanta* can breakdown any kind of dichotomies that has weakened human ties. *Vedanta* can keep the human beings or, nations at par. There would be no distinction made on the basis of one is superior and other is not. Thus, *Vedanta* can preach the message of universal love and renunciation. He also believed that no nation can achieve its prowess merely by enacting good laws or economic prosperity. For this, the strength and character of countrymen is very much needed and it is only *Vedanta* that can infuse the strength of character. However, he was enough of a realist to realize that the philosophy of *Vedanta* would hold no meaning for a poor. It could be an insult to discuss the metaphysics with a starving man. Therefore, he dedicated his life to serve the unhappy masses and also tried to seek help from the West in return of Gospel of *Vedanta*.

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. Illustrate Vivekananda's understanding of freedom.

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2. Why did Vivekananda try to reclaim the traditions?

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### **4.4 THE IDEA OF SELF**

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Traditionally, self is considered as that principle which organizes the activities and the experiences of an individual and give them significance different from bodily activities. For Swami Vivekananda, spirituality holds twin goals that of 'realisation of one's own Self and to lend help to attain a similar goal of other humans. At an individual level, such a goal can make people compassionate, divine, pure and selfless beings and pave the way for manifesting love, sacrifice

and service. He tried to show that realisation of oneness of all mankind on the basis of the self was living the life of a practical *vedantin*.

He made it clear that the only way to realize peace and happiness in this world was to convert one's own self into universal love and this is possible if the world is looked upon as one's own body. The understanding of the *Vedanta* philosophy leads to the development of love for all regardless of artificial differences of religions, castes and colour.

Another important character of the self is happiness. According to *Taittiriya* Upanishad, happiness is merely a reflection of the happiness of the Self i.e. *atmananda*. It is the highest degree of contentment in man that can be only experienced through a calm and serene mind. Thus, Vivekananda's understanding of happiness consists of individual freedom. He wanted to make freedom as the natural possession of all individuals. He upheld that the individual freedom was equally indispensable for the realisation of one's personality in the social and economic spheres. Furthermore, he opined that individual freedom should not be viewed in an isolated way, and it must be studied in relation to society. In fact, it bears on the problems of the individual relationship with society. He upheld that by acting freely an individual can become perfect too and that in return makes a perfect society. Therefore, society should not be allowed to encroach upon the individual freedom. In short, Vivekananda presented a very balanced view both for society and individual. For him, there must be a harmony among people in a perfect society. It should also synthesize spiritualism and materialism. In individual life, there must be a balance between the higher and the lower nature of man, again it is a synthesis of the spirited body. In other words, his concept of freedom is all-inclusive that meant for an amalgamation of the individual Self, social freedom, material and spiritual freedom. This adoration of freedom made him an advocate of human equality. His plea for the individual and social equality made him a firm believer in the institution of democracy.

#### 4.4.1 Idea of Nara-Narayana

Conceptually, *Nara* is considered as a human soul which is an eternal companion of the Divine i.e. *Narayana*. In a sense segregation of these two terms makes us clear that *Nara* means human, and *Narayana* refers to the name of the deity. In Hindu mythology, *Nara-Narayana* (Sanskrit: nara-nārāyaṇa) were twin brothers. They were regarded as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The twins lived at Badrika where they performed severe austerities and meditation for the welfare of the world. Another understanding of the concept comes from other the great epic of *Mahabharata*. Here, Sri Krishna has been identified as *Narayana* and Arjuna as *Nara*. It is believed that in the form of *Nara-Narayana*, Lord Vishnu came on earth to preserve righteousness (Dharma). In short, *Nara* is the incarnation of *Narayana* that came on earth to eradicate the miseries of mankind.

Swami Vivekananda envisioned this phrase Nara-Narayana as “*Service to Humanity is Service to God.*” His mentor Sri Ramakrishna taught him to love humans and to serve man as a manifestation of God himself. Further, his master stated that it was not for man to show compassion, he must serve God through

man, in whose heart God resides. Therefore, Swami Vivekananda made this outlook the basis of his life and philosophy.

The study of the Upanishads and the *Vedantin* philosophy enriched Vivekananda's understanding of Self and he realized that the similar Self permeates in all beings and just because of individual's ignorance, they don't see into it. Therefore, there is need to rise above one's Self and realize the universal self. Through the *Vedantin* philosophy, he wanted humans to believe in their innate power in the form of Self and to break down the artificial binaries of religion, caste, colour etc. among mankind. He also argued that true happiness did not lie in material things, but in the Self of man. Anyone can lead a happy life if he/she is conscious of the Self or divinity in him/her and has a firm faith in it.

At the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, while explaining the philosophy of *Vedanta*, Vivekananda expressed, "Love everyman as your own self and not as your brother as in Christianity. Brotherhood should be superseded by universal selfhood". He always emphasized that one must see God in all and in every act of individuals. Therefore, he always urged the people to look for God in fellow individuals. He thus, emphasized practical religion. He asked people to worship and offer the poor what they offered to the image of God in the holy place. Vivekananda was very sensitive by heart. Once he burst into tears just by listening to the plight of poor by one of disciple of Sri Ramakrishna. Thereafter, the disciples had strict instructions to avoid the paraphernalia of worship and were asked to serve the poor- *Daridra-narayana*. Vivekananda's compassion for the downtrodden and plea to help them was seen equivalent to worship of God. This has influenced many people around the globe. For instance, the IT tycoon Bill Gates, after reading Vivekananda's *Karma Yoga* reported to have parted with almost half of his wealth to support the social cause. It shows that even after a lapse of half of a century, people still attach importance to his teachings.

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. Explain the idea of self as Vivekananda perceived.

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2. How does Vivekananda explain the concept of Nara-Narayana?

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## 4.5 LET US SUM UP

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Swami Vivekananda was one of the most influential religious thinkers of 19th century India. He revitalized Indian thought; therefore, he is also regarded as a maker of modern India. He was inspired by his master and the ideals of Upanishads. His writings, letters and speeches are a veritable proof of his earnestness for emancipation, socio-religious reforms. Swami Vivekananda was known for his Practical Vedanta. He identifies his thought with the philosophy of *Advaita* and gives the latter a new form. His writings basically dealt with the freedom of man, its nature, norms, scope, and the idea of equating freedom with equality. He believed that purity of divine is already within the each one in the form of soul. Swami Vivekananda was a sturdy realist. He did not express his concern for spirituality only, but also of material well being of people. He had reverence for India's glorious past. Therefore, he had genuine concern for India's regeneration, but he also spread his message throughout the world.

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## 4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Your answer should highlight following points
  - Swami Vivekananda was born into an aristocratic Kayastha family of Calcutta On 12<sup>th</sup> January, 1863
  - His personality was influenced by his gifted father and his saintly mother

- Because of his keen interest in scholarly matters. He started reading books on literature and history
  - In November of 1881, became disciple of Sri Ramakrishna
  - Toured to India, America and Western Europe
  - Attracted large audiences at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago and laid the foundation of Vedanta Society of New York in 1894.
  - Wrote four outstanding treatises on Hindu philosophy
2. Your answer should highlight following points
    - Influenced by the political and sociological literature produced in West
    - The Indian reformist movements captured his imagination and prompted his thought regarding humanism, religion and spirituality
    - The achievements of Science, practical values, social awareness of the West
    - His mentor made him understand the value of personal realization than of intellectual conviction

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

1. Your answer should highlight following points
  - Freedom is the very essence of the soul
  - There is no antithesis between necessity and freedom
  - He wanted the realisation of free self-consciousness of soul
2. Your answer should highlight following points
  - Tried to provide fresh impulse to the philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads
  - Endeavored to interpret the philosophy of Upanishads correctly
  - To seek help from the West in return of Gospel of *Vedanta*
  - To taught the solidarity of this universe- brotherhood of man

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 3**

1. Your answer should highlight following points
  - Spirituality holds twin goal that of 'realisation of one's own Self and to lend help to attain a similar goal of other humans
  - Self is happiness
  - Happiness consists of individual freedom.
2. Your answer should highlight following points
  - *Nara* is considered as a human soul which is eternal companion of the Divine i.e. *Narayana*
  - Vivekananda envisioned *Nara-Narayana* as "*Service to Humanity is Service to God*"

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## UNIT 5 M K GANDHI: CRITIQUE OF TRADITION & THE IDEA OF SWARAJ\*

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### Structure

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Gandhi and His Philosophy
- 5.3 Gandhi's Critique of Tradition
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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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This unit will introduce and explain the ideas of Gandhi on tradition and *Swaraj*. After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the Gandhian ideas of tradition and *Swaraj*
- Know various facets of *Swaraj*
- Analyze some of the limitations of these ideas.

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### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, also known as '*Bapu*' and '*Mahatma*' continues to evoke interest and is relevant in the contemporary times, decades after his death in 1948. Due to his simple life style, Gandhi belonged to the ascetic tradition of India. Former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela was deeply influenced

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by Gandhi and had once remarked that Gandhi came to South Africa as a lawyer, but returned as the *Mahatma* (Great Soul). Gandhi is known to have given a mass character to India's freedom struggle as he mobilised the masses in far flung areas of India and gave India's freedom struggle a pan-India character through popular campaigns like Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience and Quit India movements. He was able to rise above the various divisions in India's society and effectively engaged with issues that reflected India's socio-economic character at that time. He not only raised his voice against the injustice and atrocities done by the British rule against Indians, but at the same time; Gandhi also spoke against atrocious customs, norms, values and social structures that were justified in the name of India's age-old traditions. Gandhi reflected upon a balanced account of the past existence of India's traditions as he appreciated them, but criticised the discriminatory practices with respect to issues like gender and caste. Gandhi wanted to restore the past glory of India's civilisation that would be the basis of the future of humanity. Gandhi's political thought was multi-dimensional and different from Liberal and Marxist discourses on development as it was derived from India's civilisational resources to restore *Ramrajya* – an imagined idealist concept of society of small traditional peasants in autonomous villages following *Sanatani* ethics and scriptures. Neither did Gandhi follow constitutional loyalism of Moderates, nor did he favour extreme methods of the Extremists. Gandhi was of the view that *Swaraj* for India would not come from British Parliament nor through violent means, but through non-violent direct action, known as *Satyagraha*. Gandhi was a seeker of indigenous roots and wanted to retain India's heritage by modernising whatever was worth salvaging and useful in the Indian civilisation.

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## **5.2 GANDHI AND HIS PHILOSOPHY**

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Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbandar, Gujarat. Gandhi's ideas were a synthesis of diverse sources – different religions, *Bhagvad Gita*, *Upanishads*, *English writer and philosopher John Ruskin*, *Russian writer Leo Tolstoy*, *American philosopher Henry Thoreau* and the *Ancient Greek philosophers (Socrates and Plato)*. With the exception of *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi never wrote a grand philosophical treatise. Gandhi was not a philosopher or an academic intellectual. He had himself declared that, 'I am not built for academic writing and action is my domain'. Thus, his ideas are a practitioner's perspective; that is meant to transform the world around him by taking action against socio-economic and political problems. *Anthony J Parel* in his 2016 book, *Pax Gandhiana: The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* has argued that Gandhi's political philosophy is concerned with a peaceful political order that can be called *Pax Gandhiana* and argues that politics alone by itself cannot achieve peace. Peace can be achieved by combination of *four canonical ends* of life: politics and economics (*artha*), ethics (*dharma*), forms of pleasure (*kama*), and the pursuit of spiritual transcendence (*moksha*). The importance of Gandhi lies in the fact that since modern political philosophy treats politics in isolation from the other three ends, Gandhi *identified* this lapse and *corrected* it. This philosophy is not only



relevant for India, but for the world at large. Gandhi attempted to synthesise material with the spiritual and the individual with the common good. It is because of the simple and comprehensive nature of Gandhi's ideas that he today holds significance for various academic disciplines – political science, history, sociology, economics, conflict resolution, international relations, peace studies and environmental studies. His approach to politics was both, moralistic and spiritual in nature and he sought to achieve 'spiritualisation of politics', a phrase that Gandhi borrowed from *Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, his political guru. *Professor David Hardiman* in his 2003 book, *Gandhi in His Time and Ours* has argued that Gandhi's approach represented a *state of mind* and *not* any theory. Gandhi himself had summarised the central theme of his political philosophy while ending his presidential address at the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Belgaum in 1924. He said, "*Satyagraha* is search for truth; and God is Truth. *Ahimsa* and Nonviolence is the light that reveals that truth to me. *Swaraj* for me is a part of that truth". To sum up, Gandhi's philosophy was political, religious and moral; traditional and modern at the same time. It was a judicious mix of Indian and Western influences, but was rooted in India's civilisational ethos. One may say that there was nothing new in his philosophy and even Gandhi had acknowledged himself, "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and Non-violence are as old as the hills. All I have done is to try experiments in both on as vast a scale as I could." However, importance of Gandhi's philosophy lies in the fact that it became immensely popular and instilled a sense of belief and pride in Indians to take on the British and ultimately achieved freedom for India.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss salient features of Gandhi's philosophy.

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2. According to Gandhi, what are the main characteristics of Indian traditions?

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### 5.3 GANDHI'S CRITIQUE OF TRADITION

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The term tradition has multiple meanings. Tradition (*parampara*) is a process through which culture (beliefs, values and practices) are transmitted from one generation to another. In another sense, tradition is seen as a *generic* term that reflects historical continuity in social, cultural and interpersonal existence. Tradition is sometimes seen in contradiction with modernity. In the view of Gandhi, there had to be a balance between tradition and modernity to move forward. The British rule in India was justified on the basis of cultural superiority of the Western civilisation (White Man's Burden) by many British experts and Gandhi contested this view in his book, *Hind Swaraj* that he wrote in 1909. He tried to bring new patterns of thought and action in Indian traditions. Gandhi defended Indian traditions by highlighting their positive points but at the same time, he also suggested that they should be reformed to suit the current realities. He argued that the Indian tradition was morally superior to the Western traditions and highlighted this through the following points:

(a) **Organic and Living Tradition:** Gandhi argued that India was an ancient civilisation which had survived many challenges while other civilisations perished. He wrote in *Young India* in 1920, "I want India to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world."

(b) **Moral, Non-Violent and Spiritual:** Gandhi highlighted the spiritual nature of Indian traditions in comparison to the materialistic aspects of Western ones. India is being ground down, not under the English heel, but under that of modern civilization, according to Gandhi. He even said that the tendency of the Indian civilisation is to elevate the moral being while that of western civilisation is to propagate immorality. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi described the Western civilisation with attributes like luxury, greed, extravagance, colonialism, material comforts, alienation etc. He also condemned the brute force of the West and use of violence by extremists in India. Gandhi said that *ahimsa* is the soul-force which is superior to brute force and atom bombs of the West.

(c) **Syncretic in Nature:** Gandhi proclaimed that the Indian tradition was a blend of many traditions. Indian culture stands for synthesis of the different cultures that have come to stay in India, that have influenced Indian life, and that, in their turn, have themselves been influence by the spirit of the soil. He wrote in *Young India* in 1920, "This synthesis will naturally be of the spirit of the soil. This synthesis will naturally be of the Swadeshi type, where each culture is assured its legitimate place, and not of the American pattern, where one dominant culture absorbs the rest, and where one dominant culture absorbs the rest, and where the aim is not towards harmony, but towards an artificial and forced unity."

Having defended Indian tradition against the Western claims of cultural superiority, Gandhi made a pitch for reform of Indian tradition by highlighting

problems in it. Gandhi was not the first one to highlight the need for social reform and many others like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidya Sagar and Dayanand Saraswati had openly advocated reform of traditions and practices that were unacceptable like *Sati* and child marriage. The aim of Gandhi's efforts to reform Indian tradition was to achieve moral regeneration in Indian society that was moving towards Western materialism. A new system of ethics was needed, what Gandhi called *Yugadharma*, meaning every age has its own share of problems that need unique solutions to come to terms with them in their own way. Gandhi wanted to build a new *yugadharma* to reform the Hindu traditions which were defined in negative terms and moral insights from different religions and Western philosophers could be helpful in this regard. Gandhi believed that traditions were *not* monolithic in nature, but were loosely held beliefs and practices and some of the unnecessary traditions can be done away with as they are in contradiction with morality. In this sense, Gandhi favoured a dialogue and exchange between different cultures and civilisations and this undermined the European claims of cultural superiority. Gandhi had written in *Young India* in 1921, "I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible." *Bhikhu Parekh* has argued openness and rootedness were two central themes of Gandhi's political ideas.

Traditions were important to Gandhi, but he supported role of reason and irrational practices were to be discarded. He had said, "It is good to swim in the waters of tradition but to sink in them is suicide. No moral progress or reform is possible if one is not prepared to get out of the rut of orthodox tradition." Gandhi also rejected the science-tradition dichotomy and insisted that Indian tradition was based on science. Whenever Indian civilisation faced a crisis, it's most talented men temporarily withdrew from the world and embarked upon rigorous spiritual research and experiments to discover moral principles. It was reflected by authors of *dharmashastras*, ancient sages (*rishis*) and individuals like Nanak, Buddha, Mahavira, Vivekanada and Kabir etc. Gandhi was against dogmatism and rigidity and supported reform in areas like religion, untouchability, gender inequality and education. This was in line with Gandhi's concept of *Sarvodaya* which aimed to achieve mental prosperity (*Abhyudaya*) and spiritual realisation (*Nishreyasa*). *Sarvodaya*, means rise of all or progress of all and it may be argued that this concept is similar to the concept of human security that was later highlighted by the *United Nations Development Program* report in 1994. Gandhi believed in true or a higher religion which was an individual's search for the divine. Higher religion transcended all religions and was above sectarian divides and aimed to achieve self-realisation. He compared untouchability with plague and regarded it as a duty of every Hindu to combat it. Gandhi had also questioned tradition of patriarchy and argued for dignity and personal dignity of women. He also said that the rules of social conduct should be framed in consultation with women and it is immoral to impose them on women. Lastly, Gandhi had also questioned the colonial education system that was detached from the Indian tradition and created

a divide between educated Indians and the masses. The colonial education system did not train the Indian youths in agriculture and handicrafts, according to Gandhi.

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## **5.4 IDEA OF SWARAJ**

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*Swaraj* is a combination of two Hindi words, *swa* (self) and *raj* (rule), meaning rule over oneself. The idea of *Swaraj* or self-rule was popularised by Gandhi with his mass appeal, although this concept had been used by other freedom fighters as well. *Dadabhai Naoroji* in 1906 at the Congress session at Calcutta had declared *Swaraj* as the goal of Indian National Congress. Bal Gangadhar Tilak had also openly declared '*Swaraj* is my birth right and I shall have it'. Tilak along with British rights activist, Annie Besant, had started the All India Home Rule League in 1916 to take forward the demand for self-rule. Due to Tilak's untimely demise in 1920, he could not see India attaining *Swaraj* in 1947 but Gandhi worked on this idea and made sure India gets independence. Gandhi and Tilak were united in their love for India and their quest to seek *Swaraj* for India. Both leaders had immense respect for each other but had differences regarding their methods to achieve *Swaraj*. Unlike the extremists who wanted to retain British institutions once India gained *Swaraj*, Gandhi did *not* support western institutions like parliamentary democracy in India. They also differed in their means to achieve *Swaraj*. Gandhi totally favoured the path of morality and truth to fight the British while Tilak argued that since the British rule in India was immoral by its nature, there was no harm in using immoral means to overthrow it.

### **5.4.1 Meaning and Constituents of *Swaraj***

Instead of using English words like freedom or independence, Gandhi preferred to use *Swaraj*. It reflected his desire to give importance to Indian traditions and moral superiority of Indian civilisation over its western counterpart. Gandhi did not want to retain western institutions as it would amount to 'English rule without the Englishman'. In his book, *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi proclaimed, "You want the tiger's nature, but not the tiger; that is to say, you would make India English. And when it becomes English, it will be called not Hindustan but Englستان. This is not the *Swaraj* that I want." In Gandhi's scheme of things, '*Swaraj*' has a different meaning than the English word, independence. Independence indicates a carefree attitude where individuals may do anything that they desire. On the other hand, *Swaraj* imposes the duty of self-discipline and control on individuals. The idea of *Swaraj* can be traced back to the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* where *Swaraj* means autonomy of the moral self and strict control over senses. The idea of *Swaraj* struck a chord with the masses and became popular with the people across India despite challenges of caste, class, region and religion. Gandhi's vision of *Swaraj* focused on morality and individual at its centre. The individual needed to control his/her senses so that pursuit of wealth and power could be kept away to focus on renunciation and self-realisation. *Swaraj* could be understood with *four* meanings. These four meanings convey four different characteristics of *Swaraj*, but they are complimentary. First three meanings are negative while the fourth

one is positive in character. *Swaraj* as national independence, political and economic freedom requires abolition of alien rule, absence of exploitation and poverty, respectively. Spiritual freedom is positive in character as it is a state of being which everyone wants to achieve once the first three conditions are fulfilled. It means self-rule or spiritual freedom cannot be achieved until the first three negative factors are not done away with. The four meanings of *Swaraj* are explained below.

One, *Swaraj* stood for national independence from the British rule. There was consensus across all leaders and freedom fighters in India that the British rule needs to go and India should get self-rule. As already highlighted, independence did not mean freedom to do anything but self-rule and self-restraint, not freedom from all restraint. *Swaraj* meant human emancipation in the broader sense. In 1937, Gandhi wrote in his English newspaper, *Harijan*, "Let there be no mistake about my conception of *Swaraj*. It is complete economic independence of alien control and complete economic independence. So at one end you have political independence, at the other the economic. It has two other ends. One of them is moral and social; the corresponding end is *Dharam*, i.e. religion in the highest sense of the term. It includes Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., but is superior to them all... You may recognise it by the name of Truth that pervades everything and will survive all destruction and all transformation. Moral and social uplift may be recognised by the term we are used to; i.e. non-violence. Let us call this the square of *Swaraj*, which will be out of shape if any of its angles is untrue." Gandhi argued that *Swaraj* of his conception would come only when all the people would be convinced that it has to be won, worked and maintained through truth and non-violence (*ahinsa*).

Second, *Swaraj* also meant political freedom or independence but it never meant model of Western democracies. Gandhi meant *Ramrajya*, the sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority. In due course of time, people would become self-regulated and would *not* need political representatives. This would lead to *enlightened anarchy* where everyone would be his own ruler and would rule himself in a manner that he would never be a hindrance to his neighbour. In the state of enlightened anarchy, a society functions without the coercive power of the state as individuals have full control over themselves. Gandhi was influenced by *Thoreau's* idea that the best government is the one which governs the least. He did not believe in the doctrine of greatest good of the greatest number, calling it heartless and instead, he advocated greatest good of all that could be achieved self-sacrifice. Gandhi called this concept equal freedom of all as *Sarvodaya*. Gandhi favoured responsible and active citizens who would strengthen democracy. The citizens would not only elect their representatives but also act as a check on any potential abuse of power by them. He believed that *Swaraj* would be obtained by educating the masses about how to regulate and control authority. Gandhi laid more emphasis on duties of citizens instead of rights. Rights of citizenship accrue to only those who serve the state and people obtain rights as a result of performance of their duties. These rights are exercises for the service of

society, never for themselves. Rights come when they are needed for better performance of duties. Overall, Gandhi called for '*Poorna (complete) Swaraj*', which was not isolated independence, but health and dignified independence and all would be able to enjoy it despite distinctions like caste, creed or status.



**Gandhi's Oceanic Circle**

Source: Patel, 2015.

Third, *Swaraj* also had an economic dimension. Gandhi's critique of western civilisation gave way to an alternate model of economic development based on Indian realities. Gandhi argued that *charkha* (spinning wheel) and *khadi* (homespun cotton) would define economic future of India. By emphasising *Swadeshi*, Gandhi also supported revival of *village handicrafts*. Gandhi was against labour saving machinery. Thousands of people end up losing their employment due to machines which further would increase poverty and unemployment in India of that time. Gandhi supported some big inventions like electricity and railways, but they could coexist and sub-serve the village economy and handicrafts. We can say that Gandhi favoured *technology with a human face*. Gandhi had a special focus on village centred economy under *Gram Swaraj*, as he believed that future of India lies in its villages. An ideal village of Gandhi was self-reliant and self-sufficient including aspects like revenue generation, sanitation, local industries, and equal status of women etc. Gandhi's *Swaraj* aimed to provide positive conditions for betterment of all the poor and unprivileged ones. There were *two* main aims of village economy, according to Gandhi. It would provide income and employment to locals while on the other hand, it would also ensure freedom, justice and equality. For regeneration of villages, Gandhi advocated constructive program and the ideal of *Sarvodaya*. His vision for constructive program included *eighteen* subjects like Khadi and other village industries, basic and adult education, health and hygiene, sanitation and issues of peasants, labour and the tribals. Gandhi also advocated his vision of *Oceanic*

Circle for social organization. He believed that a non-violent society can achieve lasting peace through decentralization. He said: “*Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit.*”

Fourth, there was a spiritual dimension to Gandhi’s idea of *Swaraj*, also called self-control or self-regulation. It refers to removal of internal obstacles to achieve real independence. The Western civilisation was a symbol of *maya* (greed, materialism and illusion) which cannot lead to real happiness and independence. It would also act as a hindrance in achievement of self-realisation. Gandhi supported *advaita*, self-rule, non-duality and truth. It meant that all human beings are born equal and they have same soul as one another. Since the individual was at the centre of Gandhi’s concept of *Swaraj*, it was necessary for all the people to exercise self-regulation to attain the true meaning of *Swaraj*.

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## 5.5 GANDHI AND MARX

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M K Gandhi and Karl Marx are two philosophical greats who have a lot in common, but at the same time, they have a lot of differences as well. Both of them argued for emancipation of human beings through establishment of a stateless and classless society. Marx was against Capitalism while Gandhi too criticised it (he called it Western civilisation). However, there were many differences between them on how to achieve the aim of a classless and stateless society. Gandhi favoured non-violence as the main means to achieve this end, while violence was a primary mode for Marx. Compared to Marx who was a materialist; Gandhi was a spiritualist. They also differed on their views on religion. Gandhi saw religion as a moralising force that could lead to self-realisation. Marx, on the other hand, believed that religion was opium for the masses and had no major role in his scheme of things in which he gave prominence to class-conflict perspective. Lastly, Marx believed in use of technology to satisfy human needs while Gandhi had conservative views on use of machines and wanted them to be subservient to village economy and handicrafts.

### Check Your Progress Exercise 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your progress with the model answer given at the end of the unit.

1. Discuss the four dimensions of *Swaraj* as propounded by Gandhi.

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2. What are the differences in philosophies of Gandhi and Marx?

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## **5.6 ASSESSMENT**

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Individual was at the centre of Gandhi's ideas and he believed that each individual had a distinct identity and was a product of specific cultural tradition. That is why, Gandhi defended local traditions where individuals could live and work with dignity and purpose. Unlike the Enlightenment version of individualism that separates human beings from their traditions and vice versa, Gandhi supported individuals as autonomous who should be empowered by their community and traditions. Gandhi's methods were idealistic in nature and Tilak had written a letter to him saying politics was a game of worldly people, not of *sadhus* (saints). In politics, Tilak favoured approach of Lord Krishna than that of Bhddha. Gandhi, however, believed that non-violence and self-suffering are for the worldly people, although he agreed that it was difficult to practice them. Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* was a critique of Western civilisation as it did not allow individuals to know their true self and can be seen as a text for personal action.

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## **5.7 LET US SUM UP**

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Gandhi reflected upon a balanced account of the past existence of India's traditions as he appreciated them, but criticised the discriminatory practices with respect to issues like gender and caste. Gandhi's political thought was multi-dimensional and different from Liberal and Marxist discourses on development as it was derived from India's civilisational resources to restore *Ramrajya*. In views of Gandhi, there had to be a balance between tradition and modernity to move forward. He argued that the Indian tradition was morally superior to the Western tradition. Instead of using English words like freedom or independence, Gandhi preferred to use *Swaraj*. It reflected his desire to give importance to Indian traditions and moral superiority of Indian civilisation over its western counterpart. His idea of *Swaraj* had four dimensions – national independence, political freedom, economic freedom and spiritual realisation through self-control. As Gandhi sought rise and progress of all through his concept of *Sarvodaya*, it may be argued that this concept is similar to the concept of human security that was later highlighted by the United Nations Development Program report in 1994. Despite being idealist in nature, Gandhi's views on *Swaraj* were an attempt to



push human beings towards self-realisation and self-regulation, two aspects which are needed more than ever in highly consumerist societies in contemporary times.

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## 5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress Exercise 1

1. Your answer should highlight following points
  - Gandhi's ideas were a synthesis of diverse sources – *Bhagvad Gita*, *Upanishads*, English writer and philosopher John Ruskin, Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, American philosopher Henry Thoreau and the Ancient Greek philosophers (Socrates and Plato)
  - He gave a practitioner's perspective meant to transform the world by taking action against socio-economic and political problems

- His approach to politics was both, moralistic and spiritual in nature and he sought to achieve ‘spiritualisation of politics’
2. Your answer should highlight following points
    - Organic and living
    - Moral, Non-violent and Spiritual
    - Syncretic

### **Check Your Progress Exercise 2**

1. Your answer should highlight following points
  - National independence
  - Political freedom
  - Economic freedoms
  - Spiritual realisation through self-control
2. Your answer should highlight following points
  - Differences over how to achieve a classless and stateless society
  - Gandhi favoured non-violence as the main means while violence was primary mode for Marx
  - Compared to Marx who was a materialist; Gandhi was a spiritualist
  - Gandhi saw religion as a moralising force that could lead to self-realisation. Marx believed that religion was opium for the masses and had no major role in his scheme of things
  - Marx believed in use of technology to satisfy human needs while Gandhi had conservative views on use of machines and wanted them to be subservient to village economy and handicrafts