1. Briefly explain the intellectual and historical context of Gandhi's idea of Non-Violence.

**Ans** The ideas that shaped Gandhian nonviolence were drawn both from Western and Indian sources. The trial of Socrates as described in Plato’s Apology had a profound impact on Gandhi. In 1908 he published a paraphrase of this work in English and Gujarati under the title The Story of a Soldier of Truth. Socrates was a model for all those who would resist nonviolently the violence of the state. The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount, as interpreted in Leo Tolstoy's The Kingdom of God Is within You (1893), had a lifelong influence on him. Another of Tolstoy's writings, Letter to a Hindu (1908), made Gandhi rethink the role of violence in Indian society. Tolstoy had argued that the British were able to hold India by violence because Indians themselves believed in violence as the basis of society. That is why they submitted themselves to their rajas and maharajas, and treated the untouchables with extreme cruelty. Under these circumstances, the complaints of Indians against colonial violence seemed to him to resemble the complaints of alcoholics against wine merchants. The removal of colonial violence would not solve India's problems with violence. They would be solved only if Indians made nonviolence the basis of a new India. Gandhi was so persuaded by the Letter that he translated and published it in both English and Gujarati. Gandhi's study of Western jurisprudence made him a lifelong defender of the idea of the rule of law and the legitimacy of the limited, constitutional state. The fight against violence needed such a state as its ally. Here Gandhi departed from Tolstoy's radical pacifism that rejected the state as such.

John Ruskin's Unto This Last (1860) opened Gandhi's eyes to the hidden structures of violence in industrial capitalism. This work, too, Gandhi paraphrased and published in English and Gujarati (1908) under the title Sarvodaya (The welfare of all), a title that he later gave to his own economic philosophy. Finally, there was the question of nationalism and how to free it from ethnic or religious or terrorist violence. Here he found help in the liberal nationalism of Giuseppe Mazzini, whose An Essay on the Duties of Man, published in 1892, became one of the recommended readings for all those who wanted to understand Gandhi's own fundamental work, Hind Swaraj (1909). However, it was Indian philosophical thought that helped Gandhi to integrate the ideas he had absorbed from the West. Here three philosophical traditions were significant. The first was the pacifist tradition of Jainism, as interpreted by Rajchand—businessman, poet and mystic, and a personal friend. His advice was that a nonviolent way of life was possible only if one withdrew from politics and concentrated all one's energies on achieving inner harmony. Gandhi accepted the point about inner harmony but rejected the idea of withdrawing from politics. On the contrary, he sought to link the quest for inner harmony with that for outer harmony in society and polity.

The philosophy of yoga as expounded in the classic text, the Yogasutra of Patanjali, had also impressed Gandhi greatly. Like Jainism, it too believed in the incompatibility between maintaining inner harmony and engaging in active politics. However, it had recommended five moral virtues as being necessary for inner harmony. Nonviolence was one of them; the other four were truthfulness, abstention from theft, celibacy, and moderation in the use of material possessions. Gandhi gladly incorporated nonviolence into his ethical system—with one modification. He modified it from being a moral virtue into a civic virtue, thereby making it appropriate for political action. But the philosophy that influenced him most was that of the Bhagavad Gita. He interpreted it as teaching the negative lesson of the futility of war. On the positive side, he interpreted it as teaching that the good life called for the disinterested service of one's fellow human beings, sustained by a deep love of God. Obstacles to the good life came from violence and the undisciplined state of the passions, notably anger, hatred, greed, and lust. Self-discipline therefore was the psychological key to nonviolence. The philosophical anthropology underlying Gandhi's theory of nonviolence is adapted from that underlying the Bhagavad Gita. Humans are composites of body and soul (atman). As such, body force and soul force were seen as active in human affairs—the first as a fact and the second as a norm. The body was the source of violence and the passion, the soul was the source of sociability and of the knowledge of good and evil. It was because the spiritual soul was a constitutive element of human beings that nonviolence remained the norm of their behavior. A materialistic view of human life, in Gandhi's view, could not justify, much less sustain, a nonviolent way of life.

The philosophical anthropology of the Bhagavad Gita also gave Gandhi's nonviolence its ethical realism. Because humans are composite beings, perfect nonviolence was possible only in the atman's disembodied state, not in its embodied state. In its embodied state, the will to live always brought with it the will to use force in legitimate self-defense. In the embodied state, one must always abstain from culpable violence—that is, offensive violence used for illegitimate gains. Defensive violence used in legitimate self-defense is not judged culpable.

2. Briefly explain Gandhi's critique of modern civilization.

**Ans:** Mahatma Gandhi was an early critic of the dehumanising character of the modern industrial civilisation which he described as "Satanic". He put his ideas in a small booklet called "Hind Swaraj" which he wrote in 1908. "Hind Swaraj" contains the seeds of Gandhian revolution, a "whole theory of life" as he himself characterised it. It has been aptly termed as "seminal" by MahaO.ev Desai, his long time associate and Private Secretary. "Hind Swaraj" is a severe condemnation of modern civilisation. It provides a clue to the diagnosis of the disease that is eating into the vitals of modern civilisation. Gandhi questioned the very nature of life dictated by modern industrialism. He found fault with existing conditionals of industrialism, because it does not conform with mankind's deepest aspirations which answers its spiritual needs. Gandhi clearly analysed that the fault lies with "the stark materialism which transformed the main motive of industry from creative self-expression to profit making, whence men become machines and societies competitive gladiatorial associations whose leaders feed the people with perpetual excitement which they miscall sport." 1 It is ironic