

Vivekananda himself ~~continues by then moves to~~ acknowledging the link between unselfish action and fanaticism as a common concern of the Gita's critics; 'many have said that without motives you cannot work. They have never seen unselfish work except under the influence of fanaticism, and, therefore, they speak in that way-' (Johnson, 1994, 4-13).

Another modernist Hindu, whose ideas were met with hostility as well as admiration, was Mahatma Gandhi. ~~Gandhi was a~~ very prominent social activist, who used his philosophy to campaign for India's freedom from British rule; 'It was as the architect of India's campaign of non-violent protest that Gandhi achieved international fame-' (*Hinduism Study Guide*, 2005, 110).

Mohandas Karmchand Gandhi was born in Gujarat in 1869 into the relatively high bania caste.

Hinduism's caste or jati 'is a system of social divisions organised according to relative purity, with brahmins at one extreme and low caste and 'untouchable' people at the other-' (Knott, 1998, 22).

During his upbringing, Gandhi was exposed to a variety of religious sources such as Islam, Jainism, and Christianity, all of which would serve in part to influence his ways of thinking. Eventually

Gandhi chose to leave India and travel to London to study as a barrister. ~~He had not studied the 'Song of the Lord' prior to his move to London. Here, through chance~~ ~~Having not studied the Song of the Lord until chance~~ associations with British groups such as the Theosophical Society, ~~It was here that~~ Gandhi 'in a very real sense 'discovered' the Bhagavad-Gita'-' (*Hinduism Study Guide*, 2005, 109).

~~Following Building on from~~ Vivekananda's understanding of the Bhagavad Gita and karmayoga, Gandhi was able to interpret ~~this his readings~~ into a philosophy of non violent action and his principle of satyagraha; 'The one truth which lay at the heart of everything, issued forth in an ethical and non-violent force for good-' (Knott, 1998, 79). Gandhi believed that truth (liberation from samsara through karmayoga) and non violent action (ahimsa) were intimately connected and argued that the ~~direct~~ ~~opposite~~ ~~to~~ ~~of~~ this path would be untruth with violence (selfish actions obtained through himsa); 'one is bound to follow Truth and ahimsa. When there is no desire for fruit, there is no temptation for untruth or himsa. Take any instance of untruth or violence, and it will be found that at its back was the desire to attain the cherished end-' (Desai, 1946, 121-31).

However, ~~the concepts that form the basis of Gandhi's philosophy~~ ~~Gandhi's philosophy is based on concepts that~~ have met much criticism. The most striking of which is that Krishna's

revealing of karmayoga in the Bhagavad Gita, is detailed through a story that urges a young warrior to obey the social obligations of his caste (dharma) and engage his enemies in war; 'Recognising your inherent duty, you must not shrink from it. For there is nothing better for a warrior than a duty-bound war' (Johnson, 1994, 4-13). Critics of Gandhi have questioned how a philosophy of non violence can be interpreted from such a seemingly violent teaching.² Gandhi ~~responds to this criticism through~~ ~~is able to combat this with~~ multiple arguments.

Gandhi tells us that ~~whilst~~ ~~though~~ the meanings of texts remain eternal, the context of where they are placed changes. What was acceptable at one time is not acceptable now and will be different from what ~~will be~~ known as acceptable ~~in the future~~. Gandhi argues that the Gita was written in a time when war was not taboo; '[ahimsa] was an accepted and primary duty even before the Gita age' (Desai, 1946, 121-31). ~~Furthermore, Another argument that~~ Gandhi ~~argues~~ ~~uses~~ ~~is~~ that Arjuna's war is an analogy in which to explain the concepts of karmayoga, and actually refers to the internal struggle of the self between good and evil action; 'under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind' (Desai, 1946, 121-31). The final and perhaps most convincing argument that Gandhi uses to defend his interpretation of the Gita, is the argument that the Song of the Lord is but one part of the Mahabharata Epic, where it is detailed ~~that~~ there are no true victors in war; 'Gandhi's main argument for holding that the Gita was a treatise on non-violence was the assertion that it constituted a central episode in the great anti-war epic' (Jordens, 1986, 98-100).

Modernist Hindus such as Gandhi, expressed ideas that were largely removed from that of conservative, traditionalist Hindus. Gandhi can be considered as a practitioner of neo-Hinduism for many reasons. Gandhi crossed the 'black waters' of India to study in Britain and work in South Africa. This departing from 'mother India' was considered ~~to be an~~ ~~unpure~~ ~~impure~~ act by traditional Hindus. Gandhi expressed a rejection of the use of deity images as focal points for Hinduistic devotion. However for many traditional Hindus, this forms a central part of their faith. Finally Gandhi was committed to social reform, including the rejection of the concept of the untouchables of the Hindu caste system.