1. **Discuss the Gandhian critique of social change.**

**Ans:** Gandhi did not construct a theory of social change in the sense that most social analysts do. But scattered through the vast magnitude of his writings are many pointers and indications through which one can delineate his design for social reordering. This design is radically different from that of other social thinkers. It is pertinent to remember that his ideas were partly the result of his interaction with and disapporatory assessment of modern civilization as typified by the rich industrial countries and partly the outcome of his political and social struggles in South Africa and India.

His upbringing and readings also played a major part in his orientation towards man and society. His proposals for social change are different because they are not concerned with the progress of civilization or the historical process; his main concern is the destiny of man, which according to him is self-development, and he judges a civilization according to its capacity to fulfill this purpose. Material well-being is the prime consideration of modern civilization; opposed to this is Gandhi’s view of progress as the movement towards self-discovery or self-realization of man.

Therefore, it is necessary in this context to begin with an examination of Gandhi’s theory of human nature, or his conception of man. He begins with the recognition that in his basic inclinations, man is essentially a brute and easily led towards the gratification of his fundamental brutish nature or lower self. This phenomenal personality of man is subject to the law of nature (or, the egocentric urge to survive and dominate by whatever means) that governs all living beings. However, man is also endowed, unlike the brute, with reason, discrimination and free will, which invest him with the capacity to choose the kind of life he would lead and the kind of relationship he would have with his fellow beings, or the rest of humanity.

As a result, “the law of nature as applied to … [man] is different from the law of nature as applied to the … [brute]”, for these endowments enable him to be aware of the self-destructive consequences of the unfettered expression of his brutish instincts. As Gandhi put it: “If all men were to act according to their lawless law, there would be perfect chaos within 24 hours. Man being by nature more passionate than the brute, the moment all restraint is withdrawn, the lava of unbridled passion would overspread the whole earth and destroy mankind.”

Moreover, man also possessed a moral and spiritual tendency because of the element of divinity present in him. Under his phenomenal exterior, there was an inner, higher core that distinguished him from the rest of creation. This was the real self of man (the ‘self’), which lay unmanifest and unrevealed. The exterior personality of man and his inner self were both socially oriented, as man was a social being by nature as well as the compulsions of survival.

But while the phenomenal exterior tended towards the lower instincts of dominating and exploiting fellow beings, the real self sought fulfillment through the actualization of the moral instinct of fraternity and sympathy. However, the real self remained suppressed as long as the exterior personality held sway over the individual.

Gandhi held that each individual had in him the potential to rise above his natural inclinations, or lower self, and strive to become a total human being, provided he understood the moral and spiritual aspects of his nature and exercised his will for the purpose. The effort to move towards a higher plane of existence initiated the process of the uncovering of the real self – of self-realization.

2. **Examine Gandhi’s views on Varnashrama Dharma.**

**Ans:** Gandhi worked for Hindu-Muslim unity. For building up this unity he supported the Khilafat movement; the rights of minorities, the idea of composite nationalism; and condemned the communal riots. Let us elaborate these:

**Efforts for Communal Unity**

Gandhi said, “I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussalmans that I Love them as well as I love the Hindus” (Young India, 25 September 1924, in Compiled & Edited by Rao, 1963, p.5). He called Ali brothers as blood brothers. Hindu-Muslim unity does not mean unity only between these two communities, but it means unity between all those who believe India to be their home, no matter what faith they belong. This unity will have a message for the world. Like poet Iqbal, Gandhi too believed that the Hindus and the Muslims have lived together long under the shadow of the mighty Himalayas and have drunk the waters of the Ganges and the Yamuna. Despite having different religions, they lived for centuries in peace. In defence, he quotes a line from Iqbal’s famous song: Majhab nain khatkhata apasmen baar rakha, meaning, religion does not teach us to bear ill-will towards one another.

Hindu-Muslim unity was likened by Gandhi as a marriage, where both the Hindus and Muslims should love each other with unconditional love. At another occasion, he called Hindu-Muslim unity as a growing plant in its delicate infancy, requiring special care and attention. Gandhi also advocated inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue for achieving Hindu-Muslim amity.

**Khilafat Movement**

Gandhi supported Khilafat movement to enlist Muslim support for swaraj. In fact, it was Khilafat which introduced Gandhi to Indian Muslims. It led to the use of nonviolent cooperation movement for the first time in India due to Khilafat issue. This led to a new era of Hindu-Muslim cooperation. Slogans of “Hindu-Musulman ki jai” and “Hindu-Musulman ek hai” resounded through the air. Although undoubtedly this was an unprecedented effort for unity, it did not last for long. A detailed study of Khilafat movement was covered in one of the preceding courses. The demise of the Khilafat hastened the breakdown of the precarious balanced harmony between Muslims and Hindus, leading to the eruption of Hindu-Muslim riots. The Mopalla (Muslim) rebellion (against Hindus and Christian landlords) in the Malabar region and the Kohat riots are instances of political agitations degenerating into communal violence owing to the mixing of religion with politics.

**Rights of Minorities**