

# Contemporary Perspectives on Peace and Non-violence



**Edited by**

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## **INSTITUTE OF GANDHIAN STUDIES**

The Institute of Gandhian Studies (Gandhi Vichar Parishad) is an educational and public charitable institution that has been set-up as one of the commemorative projects of the Jamnalal Bajaj Centenary Year. It was established at Wardha in October 7, 1987. The object of the Institute is to promote, organize, sponsor, undertake the study of the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi as well as the predecessors of Gandhi and contemporary thinkers and social revolutionaries who have drawn inspiration from Gandhi, or arrived at similar views as a result of their own experience and reflections, as also, to undertake comparative studies of the philosophy and methodology of Gandhiji and other thinkers and social revolutionaries. It offers courses of study of different durations oriented towards the academic community including the Departments of Gandhian Studies in universities, thinkers, religious groups, activists, trade unionists, panchayat leaders, workers among unorganized labour, workers of voluntary/grass root organisations, women, youth, students and similar other groups. The Institute is also the venue of district level Renewable Energy Education Park.

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## **GANDHI INTERNATIONAL**

Gandhi International is a French N.G.O. which brings together motivated individuals and various non-violent organisations working for social change in the cause of justice and peace. The main partners of this organisation are: Lanza del Vasto's Communities of the Ark, *Université Terre du ciel*, Pax Christi International, the association *Shanti*, Church and Peace, *Femmes Internationales – Murs Brisés*, *Génération Non-violente*, the *Colibri* network of Pierre Rabhi. It is also supported by the Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development (C.C.F.D.) and Survival International. Its aim is to promote renewed interest in Gandhian thought and action throughout Europe and other continents, by organising cultural events, conferences and symbolic acts. Gandhi International was awarded the 2008 Maja Koene prize from the CESC Foundation (India & Switzerland) for the dissemination of peace and non-violence.

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## PREFACE

With the proliferation of regional, ethnic, religious and communal conflicts and terrorism all around the world, humanity, more than at any time in the past, is witnessing the futility of war and violence as a means to achieve the goal of peace. The forms of warfare had undergone drastic changes in the past century, endangering the very survival of our planet. The casualties of war are no longer limited to the combatants. The worst victims are now civilians including children, women, aged and sick. The need for a global transition from a culture of war to a culture of peace has been emphasized by concerned individuals including Nobel Laureates, NGOs and the United Nations. This growing concern has been reflected in the UN declaration of the year 2000 as the **International Year for the Culture of Peace** and subsequently, the first ten years of the new millennium as the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010) and October 2<sup>nd</sup> the birthday of Gandhi as the International Day of Non-violence. The transition of the concept of peace from absence of war and violence to a dynamic, positive vision of peace incorporating structural and cultural violence has broadened the scope of peace movements from being focused on single issues to a wide range of issues including human rights, gender equality, democracy, social justice, sustainable development and so on. Peace researchers are now focusing on conflict transformation practices including forgiveness, reconciliation, building bridges and cultivating peace through solidarity action. The

contribution of Gandhi in developing the contemporary perspectives on the concept of peace and non-violence has been acknowledged by well known peace researchers like Johan Galtung. Gandhi has been looked upon as source of guidance to overcome the present riddles.

It was in this context that, on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gandhi's martyrdom, Gandhi International in collaboration with the Institute of Gandhian Studies organised the International Congress on Peace and Non-violence at Sewagram /Wardha from 29-31 January 2008. The Congress brought together scholars and practitioners from 16 countries to examine a number of key questions relating to the past, present and future of non-violent action. This volume is a collection of selected papers presented at the International Congress.

The first article by Narayan Desai examines Gandhi's concept of non-violence as a force for radical change. He says that today's world is divided between the forces of love and forces of death. He emphasizes the need for strengthening the forces of love to change the present scenario. He argues that, by and large, people of West and even many Indians look upon the Gandhian method of non-violence as a mere technique. But to Gandhi non-violence was a technique as well as a way of life. According to him, there are three essential elements in Gandhi's *Satyagraha*. They are firm faith in truth, overflowing love for the adversary and the capacity to undergo any amount of suffering. Organisation is the test of non-violence. Gandhi's method postulated

simultaneous engagement in struggle and constructive activities. These two are inseparable.

In the next article C.S. Dharmadhikari argues that Gandhi, Peace and Non-violence are crucial for the survival of humanity. He reminds us the importance of the Gandhian approach to sustainable living. He calls for civil society initiatives to challenge threats of war and violence. We have to identify the roots of violence and to address them, instead of declaring global war against violence and terrorism. Often, in the name of caste, creed, religion, language and even state or nation we are harbouring a form of mental terrorism. Education is an important tool for promoting peace and non-violence.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel recollects how he was introduced to Gandhi's life and non-violence throughout his life and struggle in Latin America. He says that in the troubled and violent world in which we live today, it is a great challenge to change the spiral of violence that involves the lives of millions of people worldwide. Humanity is passing through roads plagued by wars, conflicts, hunger, environmental destruction and loss of natural resources. We must restore the balance between man and nature before it is too late. Gandhi converted non-violence into a comprehensive transformation of life reinforcing the relationship between human beings and Mother Nature.

Jean-Marie Muller points out that Gandhi's non-violence is both a wisdom founded on a spiritual demand

and a strategy founded on political realism. Muller argues that what divides men are not conflict or struggle, but injustice and indifference. The function of conflict is to create the conditions of justice, which only can re-unite men. Gandhi's genius lay in his ability to reconcile the demands of spiritual life with the constraints of political action. Non-violence offers us practical means to struggle efficiently against injustice. Gandhi was striving to demolish the prevailing ideology of violence through his speeches and writings. Violence is unable to shape history; it can often only serve to destroy it. In that sense it is indeed violence, and not non-violence, which is utopia. Our challenge is to cultivate the culture of non-violence.

In the examination of Gandhi's life, Louis Campana indicates those points which are common to the different spiritual traditions in the East and the West, not only in terms of their values and principles, but also in terms of their respective internal contradictions. The article examines how the common challenges can be met by following the example of Gandhi, rooted in mutual knowledge and co-operation between the different traditions, by changing values. He argues that Tolstoy gave Gandhi the keys to spiritual resistance, civil disobedience and strict and fearless adherence to the spirit of the Beatitudes, which was profoundly in tune with the fundamental principles of his own Jainist culture.

M. J Lunine places a Gandhi Paradigm to explain Gandhi's theory and practice of Non-violence. This

paradigm consists of five concepts viz. *Ahimsa*, *Brahmacharya*, *Satyagraha*, *Sarvodaya* and *Swaraj*. If one understands the meaning and the functional inter-relatedness of these five concepts, it will serve as a useful basis and frame of reference for understanding and practising and thereby increasing one's understanding of Gandhi's theory and practice of Non-violence. He also emphasizes the need for building a global network of institutionally autonomous but philosophically compatible and operationally collaborative National Gandhi Peace Centres and, in the process, to give a new meaning to Globalization.

Ignatius Jesudasan examines violence veiled in the metaphorical structure of the Judeo-Christian sacred literary and interpretative traditions. He considers metaphor as the master key to religious violence. The author discusses the basis for the making of metaphors, its connection to myth, history and scriptures, violence in metaphors of faith, religion as a metaphor of ethno-cultural identity, violence in Bible and biblical prophecy as theocratic metaphor, and violence veiled in core Semitic rituals and metaphors. Finally, the author says that if we want to avoid or overcome violence, we must do without metaphors. The real implication of doing without metaphors is to teach and preach by action and example rather than by dogmatically threatening verbal commands.

M. P. Mathai looks at the Gandhian concept of *Sarvadharmā Samābhava* - equality of religions and equal

respect for religions as a useful frame work for a healthy and mutually enriching relation between religions. He argues that *Sarvadharmā Samābhava* was not merely a theoretical proposition for Gandhi. For him, it was a vow, an observance and an act of faith. He practised it assiduously in his life and thus obliterated the demarcating line between religions. Gandhi showed us how to live a creative religious life which, in fact, was a translation of the spirit of *Sarvadharmā Samābhava*. The significance of this way of living one's faith in the multi-religious context of the contemporary world cannot be overemphasized.

Siby K. Joseph says that Gandhi changed the very meaning of peace and non-violence, which remains his major contribution. In other words, Gandhi revolutionized these concepts and practically demonstrated their use on a massive scale. He argues that Gandhi's concept of peace and non-violence is integrally related to his world view. Gandhi wanted that all struggles and conflicts should be approached as a contestation between the notions of relative truth held by the conflicting parties. His concept of peace is a broad one and is intimately linked up with justice, development and environment.

Siddhartha's paper, "Gandhi- the role of consciousness in creating a sustainable future" explores the reasons why we are undergoing a perilous ostrich-syndrome of keeping our heads away from seeing the truth and remain largely unconnected with the major problems that the country is facing. The author feels that a horizontal spirituality, such as the one Gandhi practised,

may be of vital importance to deal with the ostrich-syndrome. We need to develop a consciousness and vision that is different from what consumer society offers us. Hope was an integral part of Gandhi's philosophy and Gandhi was wedded to the notion of *nishkama karma*, action without attachment to the fruits of one's action.

Veronique Dudouet focuses mainly on the application of Gandhian non-violence as a technique of cross-border intervention by third parties to bring about constructive social change in acute conflict situations. It analyses the role of third-party (or external) advocacy in local or national non-violent liberation/resistance campaigns, and defines more closely the concept and boundaries of 'cross-border non-violent advocacy'. The author categorises non-violent advocacy into several types of off-site and on-site interventions and examines the application of these concepts and typology of non-violent intervention to one specific case study: the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) in Palestine. It assesses the organisation's stance towards non-violence, the relationship between internal activism and external advocacy, the principle of 'local ownership', and the relative effectiveness of the various activities carried out by its volunteers since its establishment in 2001.

John Moolakkattu looks at forgiveness and related concepts like apology as key ingredients in conflict resolution, particularly in conflicts that have been characterized by genocidal acts involving communities. In a globalised world, the importance of apologies and

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forgiveness for addressing past wrongs and resolving conflicts is greater than at any point in time. The ultimate purpose of forgiveness is restoration of relationships and the reestablishment of connections with the community. His conclusion is that a culture of forgiveness or the development of habits of heart should also constitute an essential element of a culture of peace and one of the goals of peace education. The recent shift in emphasis from conflict resolution to conflict transformation is certainly a welcome development in that it seeks to incorporate forgiveness and apology as key elements of reconciliation.

J. M. Kaul argues that a number of developments that have taken place today have finally created a situation where the stark alternative before the people of the world is non-violence - a total rejection of war and violence - or the extinction of the human race. He feels that as more and more people become convinced that the choice really is between non-violence and non-survival, there is little doubt of what the ultimate choice will be. The task before the peace movement is to make the overwhelming majority of the people who long for peace aware of this and to frustrate the efforts of those few who have a vested interest in promoting the cult of violence.

Molenat looks upon the nuclear tests carried out by India and Pakistan in May 1998 as a chain reaction to the nuclear test carried out by France on the islands of Mururoa and Fangataufa three years earlier. Nuclear

ideology is totally misleading. The expenditure on maintaining and perfecting all our weapons is one of the main sources of our budgetary deficit and prevents us from having a true social welfare policy based on solidarity. The author argues that France could open the way toward disarmament by taking a courageous decision to dismantle its nuclear weapons under UN supervision.

Bernard Dangeard talks about the relevance of the choice of simplicity. He says that the Community of Ark, France, has kept alive this idea and the commitment to a simple way of life. Simple life is a choice within which we recognize other riches. Dangeard feels that there is a deep perversity in the belief that scaling down our wants or voluntary simplicity is synonymous with abject poverty. For those who wish to follow the path of Gandhi, voluntary simplicity is a necessary act, a personal choice which brings us closer to those for whom frugality is neither voluntary nor accepted.

Sandip Das examines the origin and development of the concept of civil society .He says that in the late twentieth century it was used as a strategy to transform dictatorial regimes and to serve as a vigil to safeguard and enhance democratic rights of the citizens of the states who profess to be democratic. As empirical evidence, he cites the example of Nandigram in West Bengal (where peoples' movement protested against the atrocities of the police and the principal ruling party against the forcible occupation of fertile land in the area) and other

instances of civil society interventions. The paper also discusses the concept of peace in relation to civil society.

Paula Eager describes the experience of Human Rights Education organized by the Amnesty International teachers' group in Catania, Sicily, in the 90's. In the first phase, teachers were introduced to basics of human rights education through a short term course. The second phase of the project was teaching through encounters of two hours each in selected classes. The third phase of the project was creative activity on the theme. The same type of approach was also used in the Amnesty Indonesia Campaign at the Secondary School level. The Human Rights education experience is now coming to fruit in the Peace/Non-violent Education in the Catanese schools.

This volume brings together 17 scholars and practitioners of repute from different cultural backgrounds to reflect on the contemporary perspectives on peace and non-violence. It is a modest attempt on the part of the Institute of Gandhian Studies and Gandhi International to disseminate research and practitioner experience to a wider audience. We are sure that this volume will kindle the interest of scholars and practitioners to undertake research and action on similar lines.

We are indebted to many in the publication of this volume. C.S.Dharmadhikari, Chairman of the Institute of Gandhian Studies and Louis Campana, President, Gandhi International deserve our special mention for the initiative and institutional support that they provided in the process of bringing out this volume. Christophe Grigri of Gandhi International deserves our appreciation for his painstaking efforts and effective co-ordination of the project. We are indebted to John Moolakkattu, the inaugural Gandhi-Luthuli Chair in Peace Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, for his valuable guidance and useful insights. Arunima Maitra spared enough time to assist us with the editing work. We also acknowledge the support received from Shrikant Kulkarni of the Institute in many ways. Finally, Manohar Mahajan's neat word processing of the manuscript lessened our editorial burden considerably.

**Institute of Gandhian Studies,  
Wardha**

*Siby K. Joseph*

# 1

## Non-violence: A Force for Radical Change

*Narayan Desai*

The days that have been chosen for this International Congress on Peace and Non-violence are more significant than probably what we think about it. 30th January is the death anniversary of Gandhi. But I consider 29<sup>th</sup> January also to be important. It was on this day, Gandhi mentioned about his own death. It seems that he foresaw his death. During the year 1947 he repeated the vision thrice. He said to his grand-niece one day before his death. 'If I die of any common disease, please announce to the world that Gandhi was not a Mahatma. But if I would be going for my prayers, and somebody comes and shoots at me, and I receive the bullets on my open chest, and have the name of God on my lips without having any ill will or hatred in my heart, then tell the world that I was an humble servant of God'. He was also foreseeing and describing which was going happen the next day.

Many of us use peace and non-violence as synonyms. But during the last few decades these words have transformed their meanings. Peace no longer means the absence of war. The Peace conveys the meaning of Peace with justice. Non-violence is no longer passive. It is a radical force. But these ideas have transformed and we now have different meanings of these terms. While Innumerable

people have contributed in changing the concept of peace, Gandhi, perhaps was the only person who changed the concept of non-violence. Ahimsa, the Indian word for non-violence is commonly understood as doing no harm or injury to other people. But Gandhi visualised it as a radical force. Even during the initial stages he explained the idea of positive non-violence. It was such an original idea that he had to coin a new term to explain that idea, that term was *Satyagraha*. He gave three synonymous words for *Satyagraha*. First one was truth-force. He also called it love-force and he continued to call *Satyagraha* as soul force. Truth force is based on the principle of justice. He looked upon the whole concept of non-violence as a force for radical change. In Sanskrit language the word for truth is *Satya* and the root is 'Sat'. *Sat* means one that exists. For many who understand these two concepts, there is no difference in truth and existence. Love force can move mountains. Soul force envisages the unity of soul of all people. *Satyagraha* is the philosophy based on voluntary suffering. I will give you an example. Many of you must have read the beautiful description of Gandhi's first confession before his father. Gandhi's father was almost on his death bed. Gandhi had lied and stole, and even cut a piece of gold from an ornament of his elder brother. He could not orally make the confession. So he wrote a note and confessed before his father. He asked for punishment. He did not know how his father would react. His father read the note and kept silent for a while. Tears were rolling down his cheeks. He did not utter a single word. Gandhi said it was the first experience in non-violence. Self suffering became a tool of *Satyagrahi* which could transfer one's own suffering even to the adversary.

We are all here with a lot of experience and lot of concern

about what is happening in today's world. We want to pool our experience and draw out strategies to change the world into a world with peace and justice. I am sure that, we will contemplate about our world today and how to change it to a better world. To me world today seems to be divided between two forces, one the force of love and two the forces of death. The forces of death are highly centralised and connected with each other. The forces of life do not seem to be well organized. They are scattered and they do not manifest clearly. We have to find out how the forces of life can change the situation today. When I was reading one of the African friend's papers for this Congress, I found that more than 70 percent of what he said applied to the Indian situation. It is not merely an African question. It is question of North versus the South.

Globalisation instead of creating a global family has created a global market. The market is bargaining hard. There is no trust on the other side. Liberalization of the poor world means the liberty to die. Economic forces have joined hands with military forces and they control the political power. All this together means forces of death. We have gathered here because all of us want to live. The human kind does not want to commit suicide. We do not want to find the way to death. I am trying to explain the Gandhian method of solving these problems. The essential point of Gandhian method is to conscientize the people. By and large people of West and even many Indians look upon the Gandhian method as a mere technique. But to Gandhi non-violence was a technique as well as a way of life. You can not just use non-violence without loving the adversary. Non hyphen violent action is action without anger and hatred within oneself. Gandhi described *Satyagraha* as love force. The three essential elements in *Satyagraha*

are, one - firm faith in truth, two- overflowing love for the adversary and three - the capacity to undergo any amount of suffering. I am conscious that in the West the word suffering has a negative meaning. But conscious voluntary self suffering was important for Gandhi. It communicates your ideas and emotions to the world.

Second aspect is organization. We see around the world centralised organization, we can never cope with that. We have to find new ways of organization; building from below, moving from centralization to de-centralisation and networking of human values in our organisation. Organisation is the test of non-violence. We may slip down to coercion and compulsion and repression, if we organise without love. How can we organise non-violence with love? This is the problem we should address during the Congress.

Never forget the fact that truth force applies to us too. We do not have complete truth in our pocket and teach others about it. Till the last date Gandhi declared to the world that he was not a Mahatma. He was a seeker of truth. He was holding fast to truth as he saw it, but he was open enough to see the other side.

It seems that there is a conspiracy. The State versus the people, in this conspiracy the people are the final sufferers. The State usually stands for selfish interest. How can we strengthen the people is an important question?

Gandhi's method was struggling and constructing. It should be the subject of our contemplation. Struggle and construction are two sides of the same coin. Inside jail, Gandhi used to spin. He combined

struggle and construction. These two should go together. I am here not to say that we consider only the Gandhian methods for solving the problems. He was ever learning. We should try to solve the problem drawing on knowledge from all over the world.

I am also sure that no international conference can solve the problems confronted by the humanity. They can only give us solidarity, some clear idea about the problems. This is only the beginning of solving problems. I hope we will be able to make a good strong beginning.

## Gandhi, Peace and Non-violence for Survival of Humanity

*C. S. Dharmadhikari*

It was on 30<sup>th</sup> January 1948; Mahatma Gandhi fell to the bullet of an assassin. This International Congress is organised in commemoration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi. This month also marks the centenary of Gandhi's first imprisonment. It was on 10<sup>th</sup> January 1908 he was prosecuted for defying anti Asiatic law known as Black Act, and for disobeying an order to leave the Transvaal within 48 hours. This was his first imprisonment for challenging the racist rule in South Africa through non-violent means. Therefore, it is appropriate that we have assembled here in the month of January to discuss about peace and non-violence in the historic Sevagram Ashram where Gandhi lived and worked for many years. I think, Sevagram is the best place in the world to discuss about peace and non-violence. Gandhi dedicated his life in championing the cause of peace and non-violence and Sevagram was his *Karmabhoomi* and a broadcasting station.

This Congress will examine a number of key questions relating to the past, present and future of non-violent action. Many

conferences have been organised throughout the world on questions relating to justice, peace and non-violence. Such conferences are small but significant steps contributing to the global effort to create a more peaceful and just society by serving as an experience sharing forum and the development of useful global non-violent networks. They also add to the morale of persons engaged in peace activism. It is hoped that the key issues we will discuss in this Congress will be brought to the notice of international community and international organisations including the United Nations. This conference is the result of concrete efforts of people who are engaged in non-violent action and working for peaceful and just society. This conference is not merely an experience sharing forum. It is hoped that the Congress will herald the beginning of a global movement for non-violence with strong Gandhian orientation.

The issues taken up for discussion in the Congress are crucial for the survival of humanity. The several problems which we are facing today were not in existence when Gandhi was alive. Therefore, we can not have any ready made solutions for the problems which we are facing today. We have to find our own solutions. I hope the deliberations in the Congress will help us to understand the problems in the right perspective. Understanding the problem is beginning of the solution. We have to take a holistic approach in analysing the problems in order to find the solutions.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth. This declaration is basically to increase awareness of the importance of earth sciences for the achievement of sustainable development. We have to respect the

mother Earth. Community control over livelihood resources is essential for sustainable living. In the globalised patent regime, the farmer lost control over seeds. It will not be an exaggeration, if I say that farmer lost control over agriculture itself. In fact, we have to develop strategies for restoration of people's control over their lives in this globalised world.

I need not have to emphasize the importance of Gandhian approach to sustainable living. Gandhi said, life should be need based, not greed based. Gandhi wanted that a person who needs the thing should get it, not the person who can purchase it. Initially when the civilization first started, it was the big fish which was surviving by eating the small fish. The second stage was live and let others to live. Gandhi's idea of non-violence was to live and help others to live. Helping others to live and mutual respect should become foundation of our life.

We are living in a society, where violence and terrorism have become the order of the day. Weapons of mass destruction stockpiled by many countries place a real threat to the survival of humanity. America realized the importance of non-violence only when the world trade centre was demolished. On 9/11, the then American President George Bush remembered Gandhi. The paradox is that America advises others about the non-violence but never follows it. A question was asked to Martin Luther King Jr. 'What do you expect from the white man to solve the problems of black men'? His reply was 'give a white man a white heart'. Therefore, a bright and white thought is the necessity of the day.

Civil society initiatives to challenge threats of war and violence need to be emphasized. Building and strengthening of civil societies to work for peace and justice is an important activity that peace lovers should take up. We have to find out ways and means by which civil

society interventions can be carried out in different contexts and issues including war and terrorism. I am sure that civil society actors can play the role of countervailing forces to predatory states and transnational corporations.

We have to identify the roots of violence and to address them instead of declaring global war against violence and terrorism. The futility of this war is evident from the statistics of increased violence in the countries where it is going on. We have to learn from the experience of non-violent actions/resistance from a global perspective. I want to ask a question to myself, and to everybody, that, in a corner of our heart are we not, harbouring terrorism in the name of caste, creed, religion, language and even in the name of states or nation? If that is so then can we say that we are absolutely, violence free people? In my view much depends upon our attitude and behaviour towards the problem.

Education is an important tool for promoting peace and non-violence. We have to recast the curriculum of present education in order to incorporate peace education and conflict resolution practices. Non-violent parenting is another important area. The institutions of higher education can play an important role in training the youth for non-violent action and conflict transformation.

I'm not elaborating much on questions relating to peace and non-violence because in our midst there are lot of personalities who have dedicated their lives for the cause of peace. The spirit of Gandhi will guide us in our deliberations.

## Some Reflections on Gandhi and Non-violence

*Adolfo Pérez Esquivel*

The testimony of the life of Mahatma Gandhi illuminates humanity. He discovered the path of non-violence in the old sacred books, and decided to take on the challenges of the struggle for the liberation of his people and the country, India.

At that moment, many young people were impressed by this man, who decided to strip himself of all worldly goods, in order to be free and to dedicate his life to his neighbour.

I would like to share a small story of my life, when I was young, how he touched my life? My father was a fisherman who, as many other immigrants did, immigrated to Argentina. He had to work and survive in an unknown environment. He knew of ships and fishes, of nets and winds, of stillness and tempests. But, everything that was from the past. He had to survive in poverty. Some people can find the beauty in life, while others are broken by it; but life goes on and the present and the future are influenced by these things.

I had to start working when I was 10 years old, selling newspapers on the streets, trams and street corners. I used to do it joyfully, and it was fun to have my little profit. At that time, in the "Plaza de Mayo" there were places where used books were sold, and I liked visiting them and sometimes buying a book to read with my friends in Parque Lezama.

There was a bookseller – I never knew his name and he never

knew mine either -- we communicated using "Don" and the "pibe" (kid). One day this man said to me: "Pibe, I have two books for you, one of them is a gift for you and for the other one, you can pay me as you can". These books were: "The Story of My Experiments With Truth," the Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi and the other one "The Seven Storey Mountain," by Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk of the Abbey of Our Lady of Gethsemani.

I had read news about Gandhi and his struggle in India. The bookseller "Don" told me who Gandhi was and his non-violent struggle for the liberation of India under British rule. He told me that Gandhi had to suffer imprisonment and abuse for defending his people. I was impressed by the history and life of this Hindu.

I read Gandhi's book several times. It was like discovering a new dimension between spirituality, social and political action. The thing that impressed me most was his humility. A man who could have used his ability as a lawyer to live comfortably, chose to refuse that, and chose to live only with the most basic necessities and nothing more. This man not only struggled against British domination in India; he also was aware of the need for a deeper change of heart and conscience of his people, in communities and at work, in non-violent education. He worked for unity between Hindus and Muslims

But non-violence was beyond a simple tactic against the empire, it was a way of life for Gandhi, and according to him one must practice non-violence in all relationships, not only between individuals but also between peoples.

The mystique of prayer and spirituality, his commitment to the people and his courage and decision touched me throughout my life

and struggle in Latin America.

The second book, "The Seven Storey Mountain" by Thomas Merton helped me to understand the meaning of spirituality and oration. He was a monk who extensively studied non-violence and relationships with other forms of spirituality.

Other people whom I knew personally and gave me their friendship were Lanza del Vasto, Jean and Hildegard Goss Goss-Mayr, also apostles of non-violence who preached the power of the Gospel of non-violence.

I met Lanza del Vasto in Buenos Aires, when he came to give a series of lectures on non-violence. We established a close relationship and began to participate together in a group called "Friends of Ark". It was an extension of the European community where the Gandhian message had rang true. The community life and prayer; artisan work, solidarity and non-violent struggles accompanied the actions of other peoples in France as well. Lanza was touring Latin America and raising awareness about non-violence. For several years I was part of the group of Friends of the Ark in Argentina.

During the military dictatorship, I was in exile with my whole family and spent a few days in the community of Ark in Montpellier. Then we decided to return to Latin America, because we believed that working together with the people was very important.

When I was arrested by the military dictatorship, on 4th April 1977, Lanza del Vasto was in Buenos Aires. The night before my arrest, he had been in my house. When he knew what had

happened, he protested against the military dictatorship, demanding my release. He was the first person to do so.

Jean and Hildegard Goss Goss- Mayr began their work in Latin America in the 60s, in Mexico, motivating bishops, pastors, communities and unions through the preaching of non-violence. They visited many countries and met with persons who have touched the lives of their peoples and the path of the churches. Among them were Don Helder Camera, Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns, Sao Paulo; Don Antonio Fragoso, Bishop of Cateús, among many others, such as Msgr. Samuel Ruiz, Bishop of San Cristobal de las Casas in Chiapas; Bishops of Evangelical Churches, which included Bishop Federico Pagura of the Methodist Church, and Argentine Mortimer Arias of Bolivia.

Jean Goss held a meeting in Colombia with the priest Camilo Torres, who had taken up armed struggle. They established a dialogue between the right to just war, armed struggle and the need to seek liberation, and non-violence as a force of liberation. This meeting demonstrated the meaning and understanding of life choices and paths chosen to achieve the liberation of peoples.

Jean Goss and Hildegard were promoters of what is now the 'Service for Peace and Justice' in Latin America. It was in the year 1974, in Medellin, Colombia, where he assumed responsibility for organizing the work across the continent.

In a troubled and violent world, in which we live today, it is a great challenge to change the spiral of violence that involves the lives of millions of people worldwide. At this 60th anniversary of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, we must remember his struggle

and we must intensify our efforts and think of specific options and opportunities to build a more just and humane society.

Many years of resistance and struggle through non-violent means, have built roads for social participation, where human rights and non-violence values are indivisible.

The people of Latin America have a long experience of nonviolent struggle. Indigenous people, peasants, trade unions, and social organizations have developed forms of nonviolent resistance. This same resistance is also in other continents and peoples, as in Myanmar, with Aun San Suu Kyi, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, and Buddhist monks, who are opposed to the military dictatorship that oppresses the people. This fight is similar to our fight against military dictatorships in Latin America and especially in Argentina.

In the twentieth century it is necessary to build spaces of resistance, and social, cultural, spiritual and political life, and it is only possible to transform this reality through the generation of a critical conscience and the upholding of values of the Gospel of non-violence as a force of liberation. Every religion, every people must find their understanding and sense of life.

I think it is necessary to delve into the political dimension of non-violence and the social and structural changes that must be achieved. Gandhi was very clear about the objectives of the struggle for liberation.

Humanity is passing through roads plagued by wars, conflicts, hunger and environmental destruction and loss of natural resources. We must restore the balance between individuals, people and nature

before it is too late and non-violence has much to contribute.

Gandhi converted non-violence into a comprehensive transformation of life reinforcing the relationship between human beings and Mother Nature. The struggle was ethical, spiritual and political. His goal was the liberation of all persons and peoples.

At 60 years from his departure, there is still a long way to go. A drop of the sea is also the whole ocean as the ocean is contained in every single drop of the sea.

## **Gandhi and the Beatitudes or Meeting of Spiritualities and Transformation of Values**

*Louis Campana*

On the occasion of the International Congress at Wardha, it is good to point out that the UN declaring 2001 to 2010 as the *International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World* was the result of the proposal of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, who were clearly inspired by the message of Gandhi.

Gandhi's action was not only vis-à-vis the British Empire, which he had to “fight” for the liberation of India, but also especially in the face of the passivity of his fellow citizens on political and social matters, partly due to the fact that religious observance was spoiled by tradition and no longer fulfilled its role of promoting awareness and self-awareness based on the *Ahimsa* (Sanskrit equivalent of the word non-violence) and the *Satyagraha* (insistence on truth), which are the watchwords of this reconquest of the human. It was this meeting between two different forms of spirituality which had an explosive effect on Gandhi’s internal conversion and on his life.

In this examination of Gandhi’s life, I will indicate, on the one

hand, those points which are common to the different spiritual traditions in the West and the East, not only in terms of their values and principles but also in terms of their respective internal contradictions and, on the other hand, to show how the common challenges can be met by following the example of Gandhi, rooted in mutual knowledge and co-operation between the different traditions, by changing values.

## **Cultural Shock**

It is true that the liberation of India from British domination was the element which triggered the country's spiritual, social and political renewal. The young Gandhi, whose traditional culture was close to the Jainism of his native Gujarat, took a drastic step at the age of 18 by breaking that tradition. The break was not only temporary, but also real because his very personal decision to leave for England was an act of freedom which already showed the young man's personality. His Jainist traditions came to the young Gandhi's aid when, alone with his conscience, he had to face the temptations of his London adventure and avoid any reckless approach to the customs and habits of a world in which he was afraid of losing himself. Strengthened by this return to his Jainist conscience, he was able to pursue the path of becoming a lawyer and meet enlightened pastors who introduced him to Christianity and the Gospels. A new culture was then revealed to him. As a close observer of human nature, he distinguished between the reality and quality of the Christian message, in which he saw links with his Indian tradition, and the way that message was put into practice by men who were torn between the excellence of the Good News and their manner of living in a state of constant compromise, if not downright contradiction. Thus he

became aware that a contradiction exists both in the West and in the East between spiritual beliefs and their practical application in the lives of individuals and in society.

South Africa experiences enabled him to better acquaint with human reality. Gandhi did not become an exceptional being overnight. He had always been ready to accept the consequences of his action. (May this remark stimulate each of us to discover our own unique nature and to foster it in our daily struggles for the truth of our being; because the core nature of peace and self-awareness fashion us from within). Thus, when he was violently thrown away to the railway platform by a civil servant who was obeying the rules in force, he asked a question to himself what must be done to combat that injustice effectively, without unleashing a cycle of violence from which he knew he would not emerge the victor.

### **Meeting between Different Spiritualities**

It was then that he contacted Tolstoy, who had a certain prestige in the alternative circles of that time. Tolstoy was a universal conscience on behalf of a humanity mistreated by an equally universal violence. His work *The Kingdom of God is Within You* was a real revelation for Gandhi. This is what he writes: " It was forty years back, when I was passing through a severe crisis of scepticism and doubt that I came across Tolstoy's book *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, and was deeply impressed by it. I was at that time a believer in violence. Its reading cured me of my scepticism and made me a firm believer in

Ahimsa. What has appealed to me most in Tolstoy's life is that he practised what he preached and reckoned no cost too great in his pursuit of truth. Take the simplicity of his life, it was wonderful. Born and brought up in the midst of luxury and comfort in a rich aristocratic family, blessed in an abundant measure with all the stores of the earth that desire can covet, this man who had fully known all the joys and pleasures of life turned his back upon them in the prime of his youth and afterwards never once looked back.

He was the most truthful man of this age... He was the greatest apostle of non-violence that the present age has produced. No one in the West, before him or since, has written and spoken on non-violence so fully or insistently and with such penetration and insight as he..."[1]

Out of this empathy between Tolstoy and Gandhi sprang the correspondence between these two luminaries. It is clear that the transfer of the strength of the spirit of the Beatitudes from Tolstoy to Gandhi dates from this period.[2] There is no doubt that Gandhi had already had access, in his discussions with his pastor friends in London, to Chapters 5 to 7 of the *Gospel of Matthew*. But Tolstoy, through his witness and determination, through his radical opposition to the combined powers of the Russian State and the Russian Orthodox Church, gave Gandhi the keys to spiritual resistance, civil disobedience and strict and fearless adherence to the spirit of the Beatitudes, which was profoundly in tune with the fundamental principles of his own Jainist culture. In refusing power, Gandhi underlined the split between the excellence of the Beatitudes and the impossibility of a political authority achieving that excellence, because the excellence of the Beatitudes, just like the principles of *Ahimsa* in Hindu tradition, is a transformation of values.

Thus, Gandhi arrived in India “armed” with this strength. For almost ten years he was like so many other Indians who were in search of “cultural rehabilitation”, because of the extent to which his long alliance with the West had distanced him from his country of origin, but also with this new vision of the universality of human experience and this “happy knowledge” that meeting a human being from within and with respect for him is an essential asset for conquering fears together. His *Experiments with Truth* were all signs of his inner transformation, the maturing of his soul which happily links the fundamental aspects of the man, i.e. self-awareness (internal conversion), his public role and action (politics), his relations with others (social) and his link to the universal and the divine (religious, spiritual).

### **Consistency between spiritual values and putting into practice**

Gandhi was not content with half-measures. He got into grips with this twofold transformation: an internal transformation at the level of his individual being and a contribution to a collective transformation in his social and political action.

In the image of his poor people, impoverished by the occupier, without any drive and neutralized by the British Administration which divided and conquered, he identified with the poor, dressed in a loincloth, living in a mud hut, available to everyone, initiating Ashram activities of service to everyone, eating little and only what was accessible to everyone, keeping for himself the task of emptying the latrines as a normal job, though his authority was acknowledged by

all. In Beatitudes, true happiness although truly ascetic was not by seeking happiness for its own sake. It corresponded to the truth he discovered day after day as the spiritual foundation for human dignity. The main thing, for him, was none other than to realise the purpose of man's existence: a path of love, truth and inner happiness. All his political, social and inner or spiritual struggles were imbued with this essential purpose.

On the occasion of his journey to India in 1937, Lanza del Vasto, an enlightened philosopher and keen observer, recognized Gandhi without any hesitation, the green oasis in a world which had become a desert of insanity. Following the catastrophe of the First World War and its millions of deaths in vain, Christian Europe, or at least land of Christianity, was preparing to repeat events. Hitler was seizing power in Germany, Mussolini in Italy; one was threatening to invade Europe, the other was conquering colonies in Africa in order not to be left out; Spain for its part was preparing for its civil war. ““Here he is before my eyes, the one who alone in the desert of this century has shown a touch of greenness. The one who knows the hard law of love, hard and clear as a diamond. The defender of the defenceless, the father of the pariahs, the one who reigns by divine right of godliness. He has come to show us the power, on this earth, of absolute Innocence” [3].

In *L'Homme libre et les ânes sauvages* ( The free man and the wild donkeys), *Les Sept Hommes et les Trois Morales* (The Seven Men and the Three Moral Codes), Lanza del Vasto, founder of the Gandhian Communities of the Ark, showed Gandhi as a Wise Man, a Holy Man and a Hero simultaneously. This presentation of the character, based on Plato's philosophy and adopted by Christian tradition, was intended

to show the single nature of the person through the spirit, the soul and the body and his development in terms of spirituality and of public and social action:

- the Wise Man lives by the spirit and his action is mainly made up of reflection, meditation and speech which raise awareness. He is a Thinking Man.
- the Holy Man lives by love and his soul turns to social action and compassion for his neighbour. He is a Man of the Heart.
- The Hero participates with his whole body, like the heroes in legends, in the defence of people confronted by tyranny or injustice, or in the gaining of independence. He is a Man of the Body.

There are numerous wise men who have guided people and consciences, numerous holy men who have defended causes by their example, numerous heroes who have put their courage at the service of their community. What is added to that is they are honoured in all the traditions and those who have benefited from their actions are indebted and proud. But Gandhi, in Lanza del Vasto's view, combines the three aspects of the triptych. In fact, Gandhi's thinking was centred completely on these "experiments with truth" which would make him accept options not on the basis of advice or a personal opinion but on the basis of the result of an experience.

In that, Gandhi was a practical and pragmatic person, never dogmatic, doctrinaire or prone to nostalgia.

If he opted for poverty, it was not primarily because the others

around him were poor but because he found personal liberation there and an intense communion with God. If he invited the rich to give up their belongings, it was to make them benefit from the same liberation. He did not reproach them for being rich – although to be rich, you have to benefit a great deal from the work of others – but proposed that they had a taste of his own way of life.

If he decided to work at his own self-sufficiency through his daily manual labours, if he chose a common task of emptying the latrines, it was so as not to be a burden on anyone, it was to do his share of the collective tasks and, with everyone's eyes on him, to take part happily in the tasks traditionally conferred in India on the pariahs. All men are brothers and living in this brotherhood imposes some obligations.

If each day he spun the cotton from the fields of the Ashram, it was out of concern for India's economic independence, it was a free and time-honoured act, but it was also to raise the awareness of his fellow citizens who had become passive and cowardly; spinning provided time for meditation and prayer, spinning together would be a special time when you become a living body and an entrepreneurial community.

When he undertook to initiate the young people, who came to him freely, into their own search, he asked them to make sure they developed their spiritual acuteness as a major factor before taking charge of the villages to which they would be sent. Let us listen to him:

“I am sending you into your villages where our brothers fighting against the occupier await you. Let each of you be self-sufficient, let each of you think first of himself and his neighbours and is not a burden on anyone: this is well-ordered charity. There where a man cannot manage, let the family come to his aid, there where a family cannot manage, let the village help out, there where a village cannot manage, let the region help out.

Always try to produce on the spot and avoid any unnecessary movement of produce since this constitutes wastage and it is the brokers, the speculators, the national or foreign politicians who have a claim over the produce on which the life of the people depends.

You will support or reintroduce the old village industries, you will create new ones. Introduce cotton spinning everywhere and this will reduce our level of unemployment, tools cost very little and there is an abundant supply of cotton: we should no longer need to buy our cloth from the English who take the cotton from our countryside far away, to their country, to their spinning mills.

Make sure that the roads and water are kept clean everywhere; you will prevent epidemics, you will distribute simple medicines and you will keep an eye on your diet made up of food produced on the spot and accessible to everyone; you will protect children and all animals, not only cows and snakes.

Make preparations for national independence through economic independence: and I would remind you all that the unique importance of the economy does not mean economic development but the development of man, his inner peace, the lifting of his soul, his liberation.

My children, may man always be greater than what he does, more precious than what he has. Go forth ! Abolish misery and cultivate sobriety!" [\[4\]](#)

### **Taking up the challenge of today's world: transforming values now**

These recommendations are highly significant in taking up the challenge of the economic and moral crises which are symptomatic of the confusion of values prevailing in our societies. Whereas the politicians and businessmen of today keep talking in terms of "gross national product" or "gross domestic product" as the sole credo of economic expansion, and hence of growth without end, as early as 1936 Gandhi posited what was to be the real economic rationale: "The whole point of the economy is the development of the human being, his internal peace, the elevation of his soul, his liberation." That is far from being the case as we now commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of his martyrdom. We are urged to transform our values in their entirety; we see, with sorrow, that for a very long time the Beatitudes have ( for Christians) been no more than pious words, whereas they were supposed to turn our lives and certainties upside down to make of them messengers of peace, strength and joy. It will be suffice, if we look at US President, Ronald Reagan, who baptised the MX nuclear

missiles "Peacemakers" - peaceful missiles packing the destructive power of 175 Hiroshima's.

In a book entitled "The Beatitudes - the absolute weapon" by Frantz Alt (O.E.I.L.), the author adduces proof of a radical overthrow:

"If you want peace, prepare for war". History teaches us that such preparations have always led to war. Those who sow war, reap war. What counts is not good intentions, only deeds. In the whole of the Sermon on the Mount, there is not a single passage justifying any distinction between public morals and private morals. The justice of Jesus is indivisible. The perfection to which we are called takes account of Jesus criticism of love which is directed only to friends. According to Jesus, it is not enough to love thy neighbour. True love embraces enemies. That is a political bomb, and yet up to now it has virtually never been used in politics. Gandhi is the great exception... Anyone who in his personal life has never experienced the healing power of the Sermon on the Mount will be unable to use it in the political sphere."

### **Work in prospect for this Congress: a call to action**

That is why, on the sixtieth anniversary of Gandhi's martyrdom, we proposed this Congress on his thinking and economic tenets. The subjects addressed at this International Congress on Peace and Non-Violence will provide an opportunity for exchanging and sharing experiences. The main lines of action are set out below in the order of urgency:

- The food sovereignty of people - control of seeds by farmers - combating GMOs and the patent of the living organism - rights to drinking water, pure air and unpolluted soil.
- Civil intervention for peace in various contexts, including war and terrorism. Non-violent management of interpersonal, social and international conflicts.
- The importance of individual action and collective action. The role of civil society.
- Education for peace and non-violence. Education for self-confidence, autonomy and responsibility. Education for resistance and civil disobedience, if necessary.
- Respect of fundamental rights, freedom of conscience and religious practice with due respect for others, and freedom of expression. Protection of the weakest (children, women, the disabled, etc.). Empowerment of women. Participatory democracy.
- Promotion of simple life-style.

Fortunately, there is an increasing number of voices, from all quarters, be they political or religious leaders, UN officials, businessmen or those committed to humanitarian action, calling for Gandhi's philosophy and example to be taken seriously in human history and for the future of the world. We come from different religious traditions and cultures whose paths crossed at some point, with differing life-styles, sometimes chosen, sometimes imposed by the vagaries of existence. However, our common approach is one of

hope as embodied by the hero, saint and sage that was Gandhi - a being that all our traditions can recognise as universal and deeply rooted in humanity.

Gandhi's life was profoundly characterised by the meeting of spiritualities; let that be our guide and let us leave this Congress with the deep desire and stated intention of developing his legacy.

We are then faced with the following questions:

How to turn to best use the last years of the decade at world level?

How to strengthen, in this very place, the links between all participants in order to act more effectively together in the future?

How to redouble our efforts to develop awareness measures and non-violent practice , by making an appeal to everyone, at individual level, and organisations, institutions and governments at global level . The aim would be to lay down the foundations for contributing to that internal transformation in each of us and around us and to a collective transformation in the organisation and structures of our societies, taking Gandhi as our guide towards justice and truth.

How to form reflection and action groups, networks in all areas, in order to propagate and put into practice non-violence and thereby create links between individuals, collective bodies and countries to

ensure that spirituality gradually evolves towards societies and thereby enjoying genuine peace?

The reply is in your hands; it is in our hands, and we are here together to create our co-operation.

## References

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[1]. M. K. Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers*, (Ahmedabad: Navajivan, 1992) p. 223.

[2]. "At that time, that is to say at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, the glory of Tolstoy, the universal genius, radiated into the four corners of the globe. All those who shared his views regarded him as their centre of Light. Writers and thinkers in Europe, Asia and America sent him their works. He corresponded with them. It was, nevertheless, the East which particularly commanded his attention and won his sympathy", wrote an intimate friend of Tolstoy. See Paul Birukoff, *Tolstoy and Gandhi*, (Paris: Denoël, 1958), p.59.

[3]. See the Chapter "Wardha or three months in Gandhi's home " in Lanza del Vasto, *Le Pèlerinage aux sources* (Pilgrimage to the Sources), ( Paris :Denoël, 1943)

[4] *Ibid.*

## **A Gandhi Paradigm for the Design and Development of a Global Network of National Gandhi Centres**

*M. J. Lunine*

### **Civilization as Conversation**

We all are part of, and partners in, an ancient and continuing global conversation. I have come to believe that civilization is conversation and that our species has been participating in this conversation for thousands of years across geographical divides, territorial boundaries, cultural differences, and political and ideological systems.

Actually, we have been talking about rather few things that matter: What it means to be human, what it means to be free, and are these two questions different ways of asking the same question? What are our obligations and responsibilities to our fellow humans and the rest of life, to our ancestors, to those who will follow us, to Nature, and to Truth? And, intimately interrelated with these questions is this question: Is it possible, and if so by what means is it possible, to move beyond the prescriptive forces of history, the constraining influences of structures of power, and a conditioned spirit of cynicism or pessimism or fatalism, and work nonviolently toward social structures and systems appropriate to our best possibilities?

I first began to appreciate this notion of civilization as conversation when I heard Martin Luther King Jr. speak in India in early 1959 about his recent efforts at employing the theory and practice of Gandhian nonviolence in Montgomery, Alabama. King's speaking to a

mainly Indian audience, including many people who had worked closely with Gandhi, provides a vivid example of the interdependent and mutually beneficial movement of ideas across time and space. [Figure A] After all, here was the African-American Martin Luther King, himself profoundly influenced by Gandhi, bringing these ideas of nonviolent self-sacrificial action back to India. And it was from India that Gandhi's ideas had gone to the United States. And it was from the United States that the ideas and values of the Transcendental philosophers Ralph Waldo Emerson and especially Henry David Thoreau had flowed into Gandhi's theory and practice. And it was from India that the teachings of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, and especially the *Bhagavad Gita* had opened the imaginations of Emerson and Thoreau to new ways of thinking and seeing and understanding.

I think our meetings and activities in Sevagram and Wardha can turn out to be a pivotal chapter in not just the continuing conversation but in the crucially important action that will be informed and directed by our conversation.

### **Gandhi's Gentle "System" of Five Powerful Ideas to be Tested in Action**

In this civilized and civilizing conversation about human responsibilities and possibilities and about the necessary and desirable environments for their realization, no fellow human of ours has been more involved, more receptive to the words, thoughts, and

deeds of ancient and modern, Eastern and Western individuals and cultures, and more consequential in his active integration and application of these influences than Gandhi. From Gandhi's historically unique reception, integration, and adaptation of these sources would come a revolutionary way of seeing, thinking, acting, and living and dying. [Figure B]

Over the years as a student and teacher and activist, I have developed a model that attempts to explain Gandhi's theory and practice of Nonviolence. This model [Figure C] consists of five concepts that also are hypotheses. If one understands the meanings and the functional inter-relatedness of these five concepts, I think one has a useful basis and frame of reference for understanding and practicing and thereby increasing one's understanding of Gandhi's theory and practice of Nonviolence.

*Ahimsa* is Gandhi's conviction/faith/hypothesis that there is a Law of Love governing all things. It is at once an ontological word meaning Being; a metaphysical word meaning Reality; a psychological word meaning Equanimity; an ethically behavioral word meaning loving, non-violent attentiveness to all living things.

*Brahmacharya*, meaning living in accordance with the putative nature of Brahma, represents the necessary, unceasing effort to conquer one's appetites, desires, attachments, and vulnerability, then, to envy, anger, and violence. It hypothesizes that by striving for spiritual purity one will gain, on the one hand, ever-clearer insight into *Ahimsa* and, on the other hand, the will and strength to carry on nonviolent action.

*Satyagraha*, Truth or Soul Force, is the generic term for nonviolent action. It can take the specific forms of direct action, boycotts, strikes, letter writing, mass protests, prayerful fasting, etc. In all cases it tests the hypothesis that all humans, whatever their differential stakes in hierarchical power structures, share a common core of humanity which can be reached, educated, and liberated by nonviolent and, if necessary, self-sacrificial action.

*Sarvodaya*, meaning the rise and well being of all, represents Gandhi's social, economic, and political programs and policies that formed his Constructive Programme. *Sarvodaya* is the hypothesis that an ecologically-enlightened, tradition-respecting, labor-intensive, decentralized system of village economies with cottage industries can come about by the tireless application of disciplined human intelligence, imagination, and sheer hard work by methods and institutions morally identical to the ends envisioned.

At the middle of these four cornerstone concepts is the idea of *Swaraj*. This literally means Self-Rule. But it is necessary to examine what each of the two parts means. What *self* is Gandhi talking about? The individual person's self with our attachment to ego, the material, the here and now only? The self of Hinduism and of that holistic culture to which 80 percent of Gandhi's fellow South Asians before Independence belonged? The self that might refer to the Indian social order and its various institutions, factions, linguistic cultures, racial and religious and ethnic groups, and economic interests? The self that might refer to a political culture of 565 governmental units, two-thirds under the direct control of Great Britain, and the coexistence of an increasingly sophisticated and privileged Indian political elite with 99 percent of the rest of the people politically inexperienced and in need

of a growing sense of their own potency and possibility?

The second part of the expression, *rule*, is sometimes translated “freedom” or “independence.” For Gandhi, freedom or independence is essentially a matter and a manner of being liberated *from* rather than being free *to do*. This is to say that the self at the innermost concentric circle [Figure D], the individual arena, achieves freedom to the extent that he or she becomes free from those attachments and distractions presented by selfish desire and possessiveness; that Hinduism becomes free when it liberates itself from the worst excesses of the caste system and especially from the malignancy of Untouchability; that Indian society moves toward true freedom only to the extent that it frees itself from what Gandhi called “communalism,” the societal pathology of various kinds of divisions—religious, social, economic, gender, generational, ideological—each arrogating to itself purity and thereby acting toward others as not simply different but as evil; that a proper Indian economic system will free India and her people only to the extent that it resists the temptation of a culturally suicidal, environmentally destructive, humanly degrading, socially divisive Western scientific-technological culture of industrialization-commercialization-consumerism; that the self of an emerging, sovereign state’s political culture will be free only to the extent that it avoids the Scylla of corrupting, centralized power and the Charybdis of selfish and heartless anarchy.

Permit me, at this point, to summarize and perhaps clarify the argument I have been presenting, namely, that these five concepts summarize Gandhi’s theory and practice and provide five interrelated guiding principles to be tested. *Ahimsa* is the hypothesis that there is a Law of Love governing all things. *Brahmacharya* is the hypothesis

that if one conquers appetite, desire, attachment, illusion, one at once achieves a greater ability to apprehend Truth and to practice *Satyagraha*. *Satyagraha* is the hypothesis that human nature can respond positively to self-sacrificial, loving, non-violent action. *Sarvodaya* is the hypothesis that it is possible to plan and build a society in terms of enlightened social policy and nonviolent economic and political systems. And, finally, *Swaraj* is the hypothesis that individuals and societies move toward Self-Rule in the process and to the extent that each and all of the other four hypotheses are tested and therefore practiced.

This system of Gandhi's five key concepts puts into dynamically interactive processes the yearning and striving for the unitive knowledge of a transcendental standard of justice [*Ahimsa*]; the necessity of disciplining one's body and thereby freeing one's spirit to enable one's gaining such wisdom and also, controlling one's emotions and passions [*Brahmacharya*]; the methodology of nonviolent action, itself at once dependent on the previously stated process of qualification and leading to the only sound way of gaining greater insight into that transcendental Truth, namely through action in the service of other [*Satyagraha*]; the practical vision of a decent society whose economic system, social institutions, and ways of governance all are intended, through nonviolent institutional change, to provide a culture of distributive economic justice and structures and processes of governance inoculated against the seduction of power and its perquisites [*Sarvodaya*]; and an ethos that encourages and benefits from cooperation, collaboration, and a felt, practiced sense of interdependence [*Swaraj*].

## **From Practiced Philosophy to Gandhi's Paradigmatic Hand**

Fortunately for Indian unification and Indian independence and for us descendants and beneficiaries of Gandhi, Gandhi was not as abstruse and abstract as I have been. Most of his efforts did not go into theorizing or constructing systems and models. Rather, his genius and great contribution was in actively demonstrating that the loftiest of visions and the loveliest of values make sense and come true only within society and in the course of lived lives.

Gandhi spent much of his time and energy throughout his work in India speaking to countless people in all parts of the subcontinent. He would hold up his hand and tell them simply and directly that each finger represented a task they would all have to work on together. [Figure E] The first finger, he said, stood for *untouchability*. Unless and until we abolish this practice and the habit of mind that sustains it we will not be qualified or deserving of independence. We would be the leper of the world, he said, were we to become a sovereign state with such a malignancy. The second finger stands for *communalism*. Unless and until we can see and act upon our commonalties and shared interests and interdependence, we will not be ready, qualified, or deserving of political independence. The third finger, he said, *is the suppression and exclusion of women*. Unless and until we can establish the dignity and parity of women, we are not ready or qualified or deserving of political independence. Can we expect to be respected by others and by ourselves if we continue with the more obvious sins of child marriage, the humanly degrading and familialy bankrupting dowry system, *suttee*, and the insidious and pervasive exclusion of women from all areas of opportunity, participation, and fulfillment?

The fourth finger stands for the terrible effects of *drugs and alcohol* on

India and her people. Unless and until we rid ourselves of the affliction of the addiction to drugs and alcohol we will not be able to be free. Drugs and alcohol, Gandhi said, are ruining the lives of their users and abusers. They are tearing apart families and thus ripping the social fabric. They are keeping men from working and holding their jobs and thus affecting livelihoods and local economies. And, in transcendental terms, they are defiling the very soul of the individual and his community.

The final finger, in positive terms this time, is the necessity for India *to develop a social order, an economic system, and a political culture appropriate to India's tradition and civilization*. So, he urged, we must resist the temptation and indeed the seduction of Western modernization with its emphasis on centralized, industrialized, capital-- intensive formation and its production of wants, not its fulfillment of needs, at the price of a sustainable environment, cultural identity and social unity.

This was Gandhi's agenda, his set of objectives, his cautionary text of the central lesson that freedom must be deserved and earned. I have come to believe that Gandhi's Hand was not only an agenda and an exhortation for divided, British-ruled South Asia. It is also a model and a mode of analysis for understanding the causes of violence, a paradigm that applies to our world--everywhere--with increasing validity, utility, and urgency.

Surely each of Gandhi's fingers points at each of our societies. Every society has its form of untouchability--one or more arbitrarily designated, marginalized populations, and systemically suppressed and excluded from all arenas of opportunity, participation, and due

process. Every society has its form of what Gandhi called communalism--the self-righteous and often violent preoccupation with non-essential differences that lead to a fractured social order and body politic. Every society has its traditional and insidious system of degrading women, if not through laws then more intractably through custom, habits of mind, and a malignantly successful gender imperialism. Every society is suffering from the multiple, catastrophic effects of drugs and alcohol. Every society--whether it is over-developed or under-developed economically--must heed that finger of Gandhi that declared the need to develop a economic system that is respectful of humans, of the earth and its riches, of the sky and water and their purity, and of a social order whose groupings must have less space and distance and difference among them.

### **From Paradigm to Proposal**

During the past 50 years I have been fortunate to have been able to study, teach, and try to put into action Gandhi's theory and practice of Nonviolence [as discussed and depicted above]

During these past 50 years we have seen national and global structures of violent power become ever-more concentrated, interlocking, anonymous, and irresponsible.

At the same time, the mood and movement for Gandhian-informed and inspired peace [and justice] actions, projects, centres, institutions, foundations, and educational programs has grown within and across borders all over the world.

But, as I have observed and experienced at universities, centres, conferences, and conventions, as well as, in the field in the United

States, Central America, Turkey, and India, two troubling factors stand out: (1) these proliferating efforts [and achievements] at nonviolent personal and social change are growing arithmetically—not exponentially, as is the case with the violent explosion of structures of power; (2) the various and numerous nonviolent organizations, programs, and projects—both within countries and internationally—are struggling often independently of each other; frequently in competition with each other for public interest, media attention, and financial support; and with only an episodic process and ad hoc framework for communication, cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.

Given the universality of Gandhi's system of ideas and hypotheses, and given the paradigmatic utility and applicability of Gandhi's Hand to analyzing and attacking [non-violently] the causes of violence as the necessary first step to creating a nonviolent world, I have tried to argue that Gandhi's gentle system of powerful ideas/hypotheses creates a Hand that points to the whole world and provides a global paradigm.

I am proposing to this International Congress here at Sevagram, the most appropriate place and idea in the world, on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the assassination of Gandhi, that we get busy building a global network of institutionally autonomous but philosophically compatible and operationally collaborative National Gandhi Peace Centres.

**The model centre would have:**

- (1) an in-country and international-comparative research and publications wing;

- (2) an educational wing (in collaboration with schools and universities within the country and, through student and faculty exchange programs, with universities in other countries) for developing and offering courses and degree programs;
- (3) a training wing providing short courses on mediation, nonviolent resolution of conflict, nonviolent civil disobedience, nonviolent police action;
- (4) a wing engaged in creating audio-visual materials and in planning public exhibitions and cultural events;
- (5) a wing for planning both domestic and international alternative, sustainable projects and, possibly, nonviolent direct actions.

Obviously, each country's centre [or centres] could not and should not conform to all particulars of a single model and will perforce be the creature and creator of its own culture. And yet, surely, we in the Global Gandhi Community can reach a consensual commitment to beginning—here, now—this crucially necessary effort to build a Global Network of National Gandhi Centers – and, in the process, to give a new meaning to Globalization.

It is a privilege to participate in this International Congress on Peace and Nonviolence in Sevagram on this sombre and hopeful occasion. We all are partners in an ancient and continuing global conversation. I hope this paper gives us something to talk about and act upon.

## "A Gandhi Paradigm ... A Global Network ... "

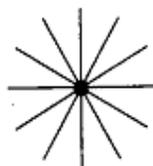
*M. J. Lunine*

FIGURE A



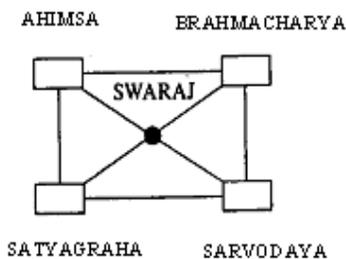
Civilization as Conversation in Action

FIGURE B



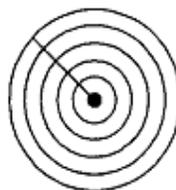
Gandhi's Ideational Ecumenicity

FIGURE C



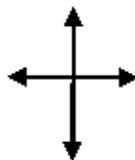
The Experimental Model

FIGURE D



What Swa? What is Raj?

FIGURE E



Gandhi's Hand



## **Violence veiled in Religious Metaphors**

*Ignatius Jesudasan*

We are not sensitive enough to the nature of the language we use whenever we are talking about our own identities. Religion is one of the major metaphorical modes of collective identity affirmation. If language as such is a metaphorical signifier of realities, which are distinct from the language itself, religious language must be doubly or more than doubly metaphorical. But the literalizing of the metaphor is all too common an act of forgetfulness and reduction of the infinite distance between reality and language, which confuses the word with reality or deed performed.

The presupposition of such an understanding of language is that of an imperative of God himself. Such had been the claim of ancient charismatic leaders. Their communities accepted and esteemed them as their founding patriarchal priests or prophets, and treated the laws they laid down in their own words as the words of God himself. Theology was the ultimate metaphor, which the ancient societies could think of for legitimizing their right to exist and exert their power over and against all their opponents. This is where and how religious metaphor at once veils and justifies collective violence against its own dissenting individuals as well as rivals from outside its ranks.

We are able to recognize violence when the World Trade Centre collapses, the London metro explodes, and serial bombs burst in the busy Delhi market place or packed places of worship in Iraq. We are also uncritically ready to suspect the Muslims as terrorists. We are not conscious enough to detect or critical enough to suspect that, if Islam as an ethnic reality induced violence, our own religions could be and have really been forces of public and private violence too.

I have made an exposition of this problem with reference to Judeo-Christian metaphors in a recently published book of mine, titled *Roots of Religious Violence: A Critique of Ethnic Metaphors*.<sup>[1]</sup> This article reflects the main thesis of that book. In his *Terror in the Mind of God*, Mark Juergensmeyer argues to violence as fundamental to the structures of the belief system of all major religions, which underscore some humans as being able to read the mind of God. I confine my focus to the metaphorical structure of the Judeo-Christian sacred literary and interpretative traditions. Since I see metaphor as the master key to religious violence, I start by focusing attention on the basis for the making of metaphors.

## **The Making of Metaphors**

Metaphors are made on the basis of the analogy, which consists in the similarity within the difference between two or more species or objects. Metaphors therefore are also analogical and not undifferentiatedly univocal in meaning. Hence they cannot be reduced to univocal literal meaning. But with the repeated use of the same metaphors, people tend to take them in a literally unique meaning. In themselves, metaphors are acts of renaming one object with the

name or quality of another, performed in order to make the one functionally synonymous with the other. It is in such synonymously renaming metaphorical process that the literalist reduction of one thing to identity with the other takes place.

Such metaphorical renaming acts are performed in order either to glorify or demean the person or object renamed. They are expressions of subjective approval or disapproval on the basis of pre-suppositions about ethno-ethical values under the dualistic categorization of good and evil. Metaphors are made and maintained in order to perpetuate the same value perceptions and judgments for all times to come as it was in its past beginning. In serving such a purpose or function, metaphors can be classified as manipulative propaganda,<sup>[2]</sup> unless and until people begin to recognize and offer resistance<sup>[3]</sup> and alternatives to them. As the alternatives are also metaphors, which are modeled on imitation or mimesis, metaphors are constitutive of mimetic rivalry between ethnic identities.

### **Metaphor's Connection to Myth, History and Scriptures**

The gap between metaphor, myth, history and scriptures is small.<sup>[4]</sup> It can be easily filled in by any person of genius, who is endowed with a creative imagination. That imagination works on the proximity, similarity or interaction between any two persons or things to create a common identity between them. As such, metaphor is a conscious or sub-conscious act of falsification, which assumes and asserts its tentatively playful construct as the reality itself. It engages in such falsification for a variety of reasons. They could be its love and admiration of one and fear or hatred of another. Both of them are pre-

existing or presupposed emotions, which are not freshly or critically examined in the light of any change in the present context or with reference to the thoughts and motives of the persons spoken of. Instead the past is used to interpret the present, or else the latest situation or report is used to reinforce the past image and impression. When this whole operation is performed through the medium of the metaphor, we hardly have or dare to take the time to question it, but simply believe it all because the report sounds so aesthetically and movingly convincing.

The metaphorical, mythical and historical and scriptural imagination builds itself on human credulity, which it feeds and caters to abundantly. Like the metaphor, the myth is also a story with a design on its hearers. This design or purpose is what the narrator has intended. The narrator wants to carry the audience along his or her own line of thought and belief. The narration seeks to turn the audience for or against the subject of the narration. It seeks to inculcate in its audience the same attitude as the narrator's, so as either to repeat or perpetuate history as unchangingly and oppressively as it has been going on, or else to change it towards new paradigms of openness to grace, truth and freedom for all. This is the usually unstated purpose of the origin-myths of ethnic identities.

These assertions are as true and applicable to the Bible and New Testament as of sacred lore of other ancient peoples vis-à-vis their ethno-cultural successors. The New Testament has used the older Bible as the myth shaping the pattern of the life of Jesus and the new community of a multi-ethnic church which he founded. So Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Elijah,

Elisha, Jeremiah and John the Baptist have been reduced to shadowy forerunners of Jesus and his church. This was the way the evangelists turned the Jewish rejection of Jesus into the basis of their claim to Jesus' believers becoming the people of God, inheriting through their belief all that God had, biblically speaking, promised to Abraham and David. Thus through the play of allusive ethno-religious imagination Jesus and every true Christian became the new Adam, the new Abel, the new son of man and the new messianic son of Abraham, David and of God. Does this not make clear that Christianity arose in the ideological violence of mimetic rivalry with Judaism in retaliation for the physical violence, which the latter inflicted on Jesus and his believers? This brings us to the next theme of the religious connection to violence.

### **The Religious Connection to Violence**

Connecting religion to violence would indeed shock the naive religious believers, because they are more steeped in pious platitudes than factual religious history. Religion has historically worked through violence also. Violence is the implicit or explicit display of a threat, intended to frighten the viewer or force the hearer into submission to its pedagogical purpose. Religion pushes into its pedagogical service the dogmatic notions of heaven as other-worldly reward and hell as other-worldly penalty, only to ensuring conformity to the empirically established this-worldly order. Dogmatic notions are projective constructs of the religious imagination, which try to replace actual ignorance about the future with the simulacrum or semblance of knowledge. Religion therefore is merely the metaphorical band wagon and second fiddle of the socio-cultural political establishment. It uses the non-empirical dogmas only to reinforce the empirically known

present order of things. Religious socialization[5] therefore becomes a pedagogy in fear and ignorance rather than in total knowledge and freedom.

While thus under-writing the established or establishing of a socio-political order[6], with its other-worldly reward or sanctions, religion also implicitly justifies the violence of that earthly order. Creedal or dogmatic knowledge becomes the invisible power of the hand that rocks both the cradle and the throne. Therefore political systems would back up those religions or other-worldly dogmatic ideas, which would go to backing them up in their own mystifyingly ideological fashion. On their reverse gear, they would oppose all religious or other-worldly ideologies, which are likely to shake them up. As backing or shaking up one or other of the this-worldly establishments, religions are not wholly a-political, but very much this-worldly forces with claims of other-worldly knowledge. Religion therefore is an other-worldly metaphor of the this-worldly order itself. Let us now turn to the violence in this metaphor itself.

### **Violence in the Metaphors of Faith**

Faith is presumptive knowledge or revelation of the invisible world. All the same, it is described in terms of visions or visible realities. Making out the invisible to be visible is to construct a metaphor and engage in poetry. It is, at once, to claim objectivity to the construct of the subjective imaginative faculty. In staking such a claim, the claimants reduce its subjective metaphorical quality to its literalized objectivity, which is an open violation and contradiction of the poetic metaphor-making process itself. But poetic metaphors are

produced with such speed and fascination that their consumers hardly have the time or rational motivation to digest them. Instead they avidly swallow and believe them as objective, unmindful of the logical contradictions involved. They do so, because they identify blind faith in their symbols and metaphors with total love of and hope for and commitment to their ethnic identity.

There are also many other ways in which metaphors are and turn their literal believers violent.<sup>[7]</sup> 1. As the compressed contraction of a whole event or reality in a word or phrase, metaphor is not only forcible but also forced language. 2. As working on fears and desires rather than concrete facts, metaphors are ideologies of socially exploitative and explosive potency. 3. The metaphor shrewdly hides rather than unveiling its ideological intent on its creedal consumers, thereby leaving them sub-conscious of its explosively exploitative potency. 4. To compress so much in so little and yet to expect all to believe, understand and assent to everything as literally true is psychological violence on the hearers and readers of the message. It is in defensively veiling it all from critical view that the poetically metaphorical narratives turn their believers into violent warriors against every opposition. 5. The metaphor makes a part the representative of the whole. Though every part belongs to its whole class or body, no individual part is or can be a realistic substitute for the whole class or body. 6. Every metaphor has had its birth and roots in its own ethno-historical context. Imposing faith in that metaphor as the condition of the salvation of all ethnic groups and histories is a veiled form of one ethnic group's imperialism on others. 7. Finally we come to the metaphorical claim of the words of the prophets as the words of God. Its probable origin was the original wonder at the

power of the metaphor-making poets. Starting with the humble attribution of the metaphorical poetic inspiration to God, it was eventually reduced to the literal identification of the ancient written words with those of God himself. This belief has been forcibly maintained, because it empowered official interpreters of scriptures to exercise dominance over their hearers. The foundational reason for the whole social process was that religion itself is a metaphor of ethno-cultural identity.

### **Religions as Metaphors of Ethnic Identities**

If scriptures were composed of ethno-poetic metaphorically made-up myths, it was because religions themselves were metaphorical synonyms for ethnic identities. If this is not transparent to us today, it is because we have moved into the post-modernist ethos with its separation of the secular state from the sacred religious domain. If we read the origins of any religion, which is older than a thousand years, we are most likely to discover their non-distinction from their ethno-political identity. Ancient religions and societies were identical with and non-distinct from each other. Religion was society and social life was religious life. The difference is that while secular history is told in prosaically literal discourse, religion clothes and covers it in poetically metaphorical rituals. The latter not merely narrate old histories, but also seek to continue and make new histories in the imitative pattern of the old by making new metaphors to build on and reinforce the old. Even so, new metaphors are resisted as sowing division among the ethnic identities, which seek to subsist only on the older metaphors.

As hearers assume the poetically metaphorical narrations about their ethnic founders as literally true, the metaphors become the relatively stable emotive-rational foundations of these ethnic identities. The latter make the ethics and theology of their founders the unquestionable authority-base of their own ethics and theology. Anyone questioning or qualifying the founder's ethics and its theological base would be classified as an enemy of the group and its founder. Thus rational challenge and questions get suppressed through the fear of penal actions that the collective group or its official representatives might take on those who bring such challenges to public consciousness. Since rational cognitive openness is perceived as a potential threat of ethno-religious polarization, faith in the ethno-religious founders and their scriptures are also turned into effective acts of cognitive closure[8] on other ethnic groups and their cognitive metaphors. The radical problem with it is that it negates the analogy of being and of knowledge, on which all metaphors of faith are built. On the pragmatic side it leads to battles of ethnically rivaling metaphors. Biblical narrations can be cited as instances verifying these assertions.[9]

### **Adamic Myth as Biblical Example of violent Cognitive Closure**

Cognitive closure is the metaphorical sign of the closed group's desire to exclude others from its ranks. It arises from its feeling of theologized superiority to the ethnic identities built up by other metaphors. Its sure assumption is that the superior may not mingle with the lower. Not so sure is its readiness to absorb and upgrade the lower to its own ranks. Superiority and inferiority negate equality and assert hierarchy. Hierarchy and equality are mutually contradictory. We see such contradiction metaphorically represented as typological

of all humans with a concrete version of Israeli history. I read the Adamic narrative in Genesis 2-3 as a mythologized version of Israeli history up to the end of its monarchic period.

The founding metaphor of Israel as an ethnic nationality was its faith in all humans as equal and analogously made images of God. This faith was born of its early historical experience of its negation in its slavery to the Pharaoh of Egypt. But that very experience eventually veered its democratically equalitarian faith to monarchic hierarchy. While hating the monarchies, which had enslaved them, the Israelis irrationally sought to imitate and rival them through their elimination or subordination. This self-contradictory tendency was strongly built into the whole Law of Moses. The Adamic myth metaphorically represented this contradiction as the ever besetting temptation of Israel, pulling it between the tree of life and the tree of death, renamed as the tree of forbidden knowledge of good and evil. If slavery was a theological sin and evil, mastery or monarchy could not be a theological virtue or good. Anyone who hated slavery should not aspire to be king or master. But neither Israel nor humanity has learnt the historic lesson. And so the story of Adam repeats itself in individual and collective histories.

The author of the myth dramatizes the temptation directly through the serpent's approach to Eve and indirectly through Eve's approach to Adam. Adam in the Garden of Eden was the metaphorical substitute for Israel's idea of social law and order. Eve was a metaphorical fruit of a tree from outside the garden of Israel. She represented the Pharaoh's daughter, whom Solomon married. The serpent was the metaphor of the alien Egyptian law and order, which

was the continuous seduction, through which Israel lost the purity of its ethno-cultural and theological identity. In attributing the eventual political death of Israel at its Babylonian captivity to its mimetic rivalry with Egypt, the authors of the myth uphold the old world's practice of cognitive closure as a valid ethnic ideal for their times.<sup>[10]</sup> But they did so by imputing the closure to their God himself.

### **Is the God of the Bible a violent one?**

Under this title I explore the anthropological reflections of Rene Girard<sup>[11]</sup> and his commentator, particularly Raymund Schwager<sup>[12]</sup>, on violence in the Bible. According to him, Girard's view of the Old Testament is as a long and laborious exodus out of the world of violence and sacred projections, which does not reach its goal. His explanation for it is that the mechanisms of violence and projection remained hidden.<sup>[13]</sup>

Historical, prophetic and sapiential writings in the Old Testament abound with the talk of individual and collective violence against other individuals or whole cities that are killed or decimated. Whether they were historically exact or exaggerated narrations, and written with relish or disgust, approval or disapproval, they stand together for all to read. Schwager counts as many as 600 passages, which explicitly talk about nations, kings or individuals attacking, destroying and killing others, and authors not hesitating to speak of the unrestrained violence. But the biblical meaning of violence comes to the fore with focus on its quality rather than quantity. The Bible's qualitative definition of violence is as sin. Since so much of this violence is spoken of as divine retaliation for human violence, the

question arises whether the god of the Bible is also a violent god.<sup>[14]</sup>

Although the prophetic writings speak of God in his anger destroying human beings, the stories are direct narrations about the invasion of one nation by another. The anger of God is the old prophet's metaphorical interpretation of the foreign invasion. It is human violence which is spoken as the divine. Hence whether the texts speak of Yahweh's direct or indirect intervention makes no factual difference.<sup>[15]</sup> God talk in these contexts was but a metaphorical attribution of human actions and motives to God. There are also other texts and contexts in which the notion of a merciless punishment persists. Yet it is neither Yahweh himself nor other humans who punish the guilty. But the guilty become the victims of their own crimes. They are self-punished. Such ideas find repeated expression in Isaiah 50:11, Jeremiah 44:8, Psalm 7:13-17 and Proverbs 8:36 and 26: 27. We may interpret this phase of thought as secular discourse without theological metaphors. But Schwager cites several other texts to show that self-punishment and punishment at God's hands need not be two distinct experiences. "Whenever divine anger and divine vengeance are mentioned, one has in mind concrete deeds of human beings through which the perpetrators punish themselves."<sup>[16]</sup>

Girard, therefore, may be throwing some valuable light on theological language when he says that sacred conceptions are nothing other than projections of aggressive fantasies upon a scapegoat. Such projections could even make God a scapegoat, who embodies all evil and is at the same time the bringer of salvation. By being transferred to him, aggression can be diverted from the

community to the outside. But even while diverting the violence, its participants remain unaware of the mechanism of projection and transfer. When the true God begins to reveal himself, the unconscious process, which produces the false ideas of God, will be gradually exposed. Then humans will begin to recognize how they had falsely attributed to God the revenge, which they themselves had wanted to take on their fellow humans.<sup>[17]</sup> This is how and where the Gospels turn into ironic correctives, which venture to move beyond biblical prophecy.

### **Biblical Prophecy as Theocratic Metaphor**

We are only accustomed to seeing metaphor as a single word or phrase with a dual or more than dual meaning. Since I am speaking of whole systems like religion, prophecy and whole corpus of literature as metaphors, this is likely to take the conventional readers by surprise. Hence I need to justify my interpretation with reference to the substantive content and conventional metaphorical manner in the religious realm of prophetic literature. The Hebrew prophets and other biblical authors conceptualized their ethnic history in terms of their faith in the God of their fathers. Their history therefore was a theological metaphor, which legitimized theocracy in its republican, prophetic and monarchic phases of leadership. After the abolition of monarchy, in the absence of recognizable prophecy, it turned in the direction of theocratic priesthood. Christianity identified itself with the whole history of Israel, when it summed up all these successive phases of that history simultaneously in the historic person of Jesus.

To accept prophecy as metaphor of collective subjective faith is

not to equate or confuse it with it with objective truth as universally verifiable knowledge. The role, which any metaphor performs, is only to convince the hearers to believe the content of the allegation without any direct proof or evidence to establish it. Truth and metaphor then are not synonymous terms. Hence metaphor plays the dubious role of substituting the proof and evidence for the truth of its allegation. In this sense, metaphor becomes a rational-seeming ideology, which veils and justifies its own propaganda as the self-fulfilling prophetic truth.[\[18\]](#)

All the same, biblical prophecy has decisively influenced the distinctive Semitic faiths of the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Yet, the Bible reveals its prophecy to have arisen and functioned as the theologized political opposition to all other ruling hierarchies down the ages. The biblical authors predominantly interpreted their ethnic history along the prophetic rather than the monarchic or priestly perspective. They represent the prophets as the critically exclusive seers or hearers and speakers of God's word to monarchic or priestly rulers. This was due to their nomadic history as a distinct ethnic identity having begun with non-monarchic and non-priestly charismatic patriarch like Abraham. Even when these institutions had developed later, the literate writers of the history identified themselves with the critical prophetic rather than the royal or priestly roles. Prophecy had become a personally distanced and collectively detached way of interpretatively making and influencing future history.

The root metaphors made by the founding prophets became the self-definitions of the respective ethnic creedal groups in their

own historical space-time. This spatio-temporal generation gap has made for acute ideological conflicts between the ethnic groups of the same origin. Thus the metaphors of the Semitic religions have turned out to be a source of more acute ideological conflict among them than the metaphors of non-Semitic religions.<sup>[19]</sup> As they were vying with one another with their metaphors, they judged the orthodoxy of one group as the heterodoxy of another. Each made its own metaphor the dogmatic criterion to judge the subscribers of other metaphors. Though it looked like the big fish trying to swallow the small, the battle of metaphors had spiritually opened ethnic groups to one another without limiting ethnic belonging to bodily birth in it. Even so, this was a unilateral perspective of ideological superiority. Saul of Tarsus, with his experiential reflection-based abundance of biblical metaphors, turned out to be a convincing second founder of Christianity in the cultural melting pot of the early Roman Empire. But the founding metaphor of the promised land of the children of Abraham has continued to make a competitively violent history among the bodily and spiritual descendants of Abraham. This violence is reflected even in the core rituals of the Semitic religions.

### **Violence veiled in the core Semitic Rituals<sup>[20]</sup>**

Religions began revolving around their ritual core before they moved on metaphorically to narrate their violent ethnic origins as distinct identities. I would illustrate this thesis with a pair of mutually corresponding and reminiscent rituals from Jewish and Christian histories. The two selected rituals are the Jewish Passover and the Christian observance of the Lord's Supper. Both rituals are memorial celebrations of the birth of new ethnic identities in the metaphorical labour of the body and the spiritual pains of the

parenting individual or collective identity. Let me briefly describe each of these memorials one after the other

The Jewish ritual observance of the Passover relates to the liberation of the innumerable descendants of the twelve sons of Israel from slavery to the Pharaoh of Egypt. The biblical book of Exodus narrates the liberation as an act of powerful divine intervention in their history, involving the mediation of Moses and Aaron. The intervention is described in terms of variously painful signs, performed by Moses, which the Pharaoh did not heed, until the final striking dead of all the first-born of Egypt. Immediately after this, the Pharaoh relented and permitted Moses to lead the children of Israel away from Egypt. This is the narrated paschal or Passover event. But the biblical text locates this final event of the striking dead within the context of a ritual.

The ritual was to be a meal made of unleavened bread and the roasted meat of an adult male sheep or goat, which had to be killed and its blood smeared on the doorposts of the houses of the enslaved children of Israel in Egypt. The secret of the blood smear was as a sign for Yahweh to pass over the houses of Israel, to strike only the first-born of the children of the Egyptian households in the dead of that very night. God could not really need any such signs to differentiate the Egyptian households from those of the Israelis. Hence the Lord's passing over the houses of Israel most probably signifies a conspiratorial deed of terror, secretly hatched by the Israelis under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. The precedence of the bloody ritual, giving clear symbolic indication of the violence which was to follow on the Egyptians, confirms the theory of the Israeli conspiracy. The

significant message of the paschal ritual, then, was that the birth of Israel as a free nation was achieved by shedding the blood of the non-Israeli aliens and that it could only be maintained at the same cost. Therefore the annual observance of the paschal festival, which Moses commanded in God's name, must signify Israel's collective faith in and commitment to human violence as God's own deed of revenge on their national enemies.

The Christian observance of the Lord's Supper, on its part, has been located within the ritual context of the Jewish Passover. Yet it marks a further advance on and a reversal of the meaning of the principal Jewish ritual. The significant parallel advance is in its marking the exodus-birth of the Christian identity from its parental Jewish community. The equally significant reversal is along two or even three directions. The first reversal is that the birth of Christianity did not implicate the death or destruction of Judaism, but only its inward conversion in repentance for the death it had inflicted on Jesus. It was the Jews who persecuted and killed the founder and followers of Christianity. Unlike Judaism, Christianity was born in violence endured without retaliation. Jewish history had been made with the maximal violent use and need for the innocent scapegoat mechanism.

Secondly, the Lord's Supper narratively reversed the need for such violence as was inculcated by the ritual of the Jewish Passover. The reversal positively consisted in its inculcation of forgiveness and reconciliation. This was the meaning and purpose of the ritual-meal commemoration of the violent death of Jesus at the hands of his fellow Jews. We saw that uncompromising hatred and destruction of the enemy were the implicit message of Moses' command to keep the

Paschal ritual in perpetuity. The purpose of the new commandment of Jesus to remember his death in a parallel ritual meal was to reverse that violence and inculcate in his disciples his own mindset and disposition of love, forgiveness and reconciliation to enemies and persecutors in non-retaliation. Rather than repeating his parental Jewish history, Jesus reversed it by identifying himself with the first-born of the Egyptians, whose victimal scapegoat-like sacrificial death won Israel's birth into a free nation. The third level of reversal of and violence-reduction from the Jewish Passover in the ritual of the Lord's Supper consisted in substituting vegetarian food products of bread and wine to symbolize the victimized human scapegoat. But Christian history has not remained true to the mind and heart of Jesus.

### **The Metaphor of the Little Flock turned into Kingdom<sup>[21]</sup>**

In 12: 32 of his gospel, Luke reports Jesus conferring on the church he had founded a new metaphorical identity. The cited text first comparatively identifies the church with a little flock, but moves on immediately to change it into a kingdom, which it qualifies with the definite article. I think that the significance of this twofold metaphorical transformation is in terms of the continuity of the church with the history of Israel. But in the first place the dual metaphor succinctly recalls the history of Israel as a nomadic pastoral people turning into a settled kingdom. If the metaphor pointed to Israel's historical continuity in the church, the allusively implied prophetic irony of that continuity is that the church could also face the same tragic fate as Israel eventually did.

If the saying of Jesus in the gospel was a promise or midrashic

prophecy, which awaited its realization, *the Acts of the Apostles* serves as the demonstration of its fulfillment. Luke's *Acts* depicts this growth of the sect into a church and virtual kingdom through a well-blended narrative array of facts and imaginative metaphors. The latter include the implicit Pentecostal metaphor of the abundant harvest from the one seed sown,[\[22\]](#) and the mixed metaphor of the stone rejected by the builders becoming the corner stone of the edifice under construction,[\[23\]](#) which is indicative of the conflict in which Christianity was born. The arrayed facts on the other hand are: the idealistically rigorous communist life-style of the first Christians,[\[24\]](#) the signs and wonders which accompanied the apostles' teaching,[\[25\]](#) the atmosphere of prayer[\[26\]](#) of faith, in which the gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured out[\[27\]](#) and the workings of angels witnessed to[\[28\]](#) and persecutions endured[\[29\]](#) and contextually appropriate missionary strategies evolved.[\[30\]](#)

Our examination of the metaphor of the little flock becoming kingdom, together with the accompanying subsidiary metaphors in the *Acts*, exposes the violently closed and subjective nature of identity-language,[\[31\]](#) which mirrors and is relative to its time and context. It indicates that the truth, which the language bears, is also relative to the space and time of its expressive origin. The language of a threatened minority becomes different when it feels itself growing into a progressively self-confident majority. But neither as minority nor as majority are ethnic identities explicitly conscious of the ideology veiled in their speech acts. Hence they tend to negate it even when it is pointed out. Therefore we find this problem afflicting every ethnic theology.

## **Theologies as Metaphors of Conflicting Ethnic Identities**

In their implicit narrative reference to their originating contexts, ethnic metaphors cannot help moving in their vicious circles. The circles turn more mystifyingly dark when invisible God is ushered into them. But this is what every ethno-religious theology does. It is subjectively particularistic and exclusive in making its claims on God. It is not satisfied unless and until it can negate about others what it affirms its God as doing to its unique ethnic self. The jealousy between man and wife within the marital institution is extended to God and ethnic groups, who are mimetically jealous rivals to one another. Since they proudly look upon themselves as the faithfully adoring partners of God, they cannot help seeing the others as the worshipping partners of Satan. As they use God to affirm their own identity, they have to invent a dualistically opposite principle to nickname the others. Theology therefore ends up by becoming a competing ethno-political ideology rather than the universal queen of all sciences.

Thus animism, pantheism, polytheism, monotheism and incarnationism are not merely diversified theologies. They are also metaphorical mirrors of conflicting ideological states of the respective society's political belief, practice or evolution.[32] Trinity and Christology also are metaphorical mirrors of politicized religiosity with a difference. The difference is that they work in favor of equalitarianism in every form of human essence, power and freedom. It was probably such a state of things, which Jesus renamed as the kingdom, which it had pleased the Father to give unto the little flock of his disciples.[33]

The conflict of theologized metaphors might get resolved if we learnt, instead of blindly swearing by them, rationally to relate them to their originating cultural-historical contexts. The rational experiential ground for such a suggestion is that all contexts share something analogically in common, which makes it possible to translate one cultural metaphor in terms of another. In such a perspective, the dogmatic Christian metaphor of the bodily resurrection, for instance, can be tolerantly and more widely understood as an analogue of what other faiths refer to as the spiritual immortality of the soul, because analogues are mere contraries, without being contradictory. Another culture may represent it with a different metaphor or analogy like rebirth in a new body. Some cultures have tended dogmatically to close such metaphors to their contraries, because of their ulterior intensions of domination over them.[\[34\]](#)

In this light, it is possible empirically to see the church as the analogous Christian metaphor for the ubiquitous community of love, in which all humans are to find their salvation. The locus of salvation therefore cannot be confined to the limits of the institutional church. But the church has historically tended to claim itself as the solitary locus of salvation. Such other-negating thought-pattern is a methodological time bomb, which in due course loses its metaphorical sense and takes literally to eliminating other metaphors as heresies. Such is the violence of sacralised dualism, which has no scope for third alternatives.

### **The Violent Dualism of Saints and Sinners [\[35\]](#)**

Unmediated dualism is a sign of loss of the sense of analogy in language and reality. One clear manifestation of it in ethno-religious circles is the dualistic categorization of people into saints and sinners. The point I wish to drive home is that such dualisms involve conceptual violence, which manifests itself in self-righteously exaggerated attitudes and behavior patterns towards the two opposite categories. It may be pointed out for Christian readers that, as the gospels reveal him, Jesus did not make such a division of people in his life time, but mingled equally among the reputedly holy and the infamously sinful alike.

But who are the saints and sinners, anyway? Sociologically speaking, saints are those of its members, whom their society honors and is proud to own as holy role models for the rest of its members. Conversely, sinners are those members, whom their society tends to disown or disapprove as offenders against its code of honor. Honoring some as saints and dishonoring others as sinners thus become two mutually opposite ways of continuous social legitimizing of the group's honor code. The socially constructed honor code or law then becomes the mediating criterion to separate the saints from sinners.

Dogmatic teacher-dominant religions socialize their individual believers through such desire of honor or fear of dishonor in this world and the next. Civil societies perform the same tasks in terms of legally ordained earthly rights and sanctions. Projected security and self-interest in time and beyond, then, serve as the motivation for the presumed medial right conduct. It is therefore questionable if acts based on such self-interested desire or fear can be judged morally free. Besides, as saints and sinners are relative to perspective-based

judgments of the time and society, total consensus is rarely possible. A person condemned as a sinner by one societal reference could be judged a saint by another. Even Moses and Jesus were ambiguous in this status. Moses was a rebel to the Pharaoh and a hero to the later Israelis. Jesus likewise was a blasphemer to the orthodox Jews and the begotten son of God to orthodox Christians. Something analogous could be said about the founder of every great religion of the world. To every self-perpetuating social system, conformists are saints and dissenters are sinners. And the law of the system becomes the form of its structural violence. But it goes undetected because religion is daintily robed in the charming metaphors of metaphysical poetry.

### **Can we do without Religious Metaphors?**

Cannot history be made without mimetic repetition?[36] On the one hand, an end to other-imitative rivalry seems to demand an end to remembrance and repeated narrations. On the other hand, in so far as metaphors are congealed memories of the past, they seem to render narration and imitative repetition inevitable to history-making. As metaphor is inseparable from the narrative-descriptive structure of communicative language, mimetic violence seems inevitable to history-making.[37] If we must avoid or overcome such violence, it seems that we must do without metaphors, which effective narration demands. To complicate the problem, it logically implies that, as religion is the metaphorically mythologized narration of history, religion as such must cease to exist.[38] Is this not shocking? What is the really implied meaning and solution?

In the dogmatic way in which they are taught or preached, religions

seem to be no more nor less than the authority of the preachers and teachers, imposed in psychic violation of individual members' freedom of thought, belief and their on-going test in behavior patterns. On the basis of beliefs or values, formed from their past, religions close access to new knowledge and values, which could be arrived at through suitable tests. To do so effectively, they impose in God's name social closure on or exclusion of people of different patterns of ethno-ethical belief and conduct. In other words, old metaphors of knowledge oppose and exclude the new. Those who exercise authority in the name of the old metaphors oppose the new as shaking the base of their power. They forget that their own religions were experientially experimental at their very origin.

In any case, the real implication of doing without metaphors is, as his disciples tell Jesus in John 16:25-29, to teach and preach by action and example rather than with dogmatically threatening verbal commands. That was the exemplarily loving, forgiving and reconciling way and authority of Jesus' teaching. When so practiced, religion would not be seen in opposition to the so-called secular State or culture, but as identical with the observance of all those civil laws, in which the free will and enlightened knowledge of the people rather than the proverbial wisdom of any tyrant decide upon the common good. It is curiously significant that, while describing the New Jerusalem descending from heaven, John states in Rev. 21: 22 that he found in it no temple. The explanatory reason he gives for it is that God and the Lamb are its temple. This probably means that the new secular city, in which voluntary personal sacrifices are joyfully and lovingly made for the common good, is already the substantive city and temple of God, which therefore need symbolic or metaphorical temples no more.

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## **Sarvadharmā Samābhava (Gandhian Approach to Inter-religious Relations)**

*M. P. Mathai*

Contrary to the expectations and predictions of many, religion has staged a decisive resurgence in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This resurgence has manifested itself as a rise in religious nationalism and also as a threatening rise in religious fundamentalism resulting in terrorism and the war on terrorism. It gave rise to the formulation of the theory of the clash of religiously defined civilizations. The encounter of religions or inter-religious relations has, thus, acquired a new significance in the current international scenario because it can prove fatal to human existence. So it is necessary to have a proper model for inter-religious relations. Gandhi had developed a model for such an encounter in his attempt to create a healthy way for the major religions of the world to encounter and relate to one another. Gandhi called this *Sarvadharmā Samābhava* - equality of religions and equal respect for religions. This paper proposes to present this Gandhian concept as a desirable model for a creative encounter between religions.

Gandhi considered himself to be a religious person. He was born in a family with a strong tradition of religious devotion and, therefore, it may be said that he inherited his religiosity from his family. Gandhi's house was a kind of rendezvous of religious people from different

religious traditions, as his father invited them to talk about the basic principles of their religions. Thus, Gandhi grew up in an atmosphere of inter-religious dialogue and encounter, which not only kindled his intellectual and spiritual curiosity but inculcated in him a deep sense of toleration and respect for all religions. Later in life he made religion the main subject of his study. He studied reverentially the scriptures of the major religions of the world- Christianity, Islam, Jainism, Buddhism and the Parsi faith along with those of his own religion, Hinduism. It must be mentioned here that Gandhi's study of world religions was not academic but existential; his objective was not gaining an intellectual understanding of the principles of those religions; what he tried to do was to assimilate their moral and spiritual principles and synthesise them into his own religiosity.

Gandhi's concept of religion was typically his own and therefore, a word about what Gandhi really meant by religion may be in order at this point.

- By religion Gandhi did not mean customary or sectarian religion, but what he termed as the Religion was that underlay all religions and which brought us face to face with our Maker. Gandhi wrote: "It means a belief in the ordered moral governance of the universe..... This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity etc. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality.[\[1\]](#)
- For Gandhi, there was no religion higher than truth and righteousness[\[2\]](#) and he identified one's religiosity or religious spirit as that "permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul

utterly restless until it has found itself, known its Maker and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself".[3]

- For Gandhi religion to be called religion should help one to solve the existential problems of life. So he said: "Religion which takes no count of practical affairs and doesn't help solve them, is no religion".

[4]

- Gandhi also believed and stated repeatedly that as religion was an overarching influence on life, the spirit of one's religion should pervade all her/his activities. He stated that all his activities were a practical application of his religious convictions and faith. He went to the extent of saying that even his politics were derived from his religion. He wrote: "politics bereft of religion are absolute dirt, ever to be shunned. Politics concern nations and that which concerns the welfare of nations must be one of the concerns of a man who is religiously inclined, in other words, a seeker after God and Truth..... Therefore, in politics also we have to establish the Kingdom of Heaven." [5]

- Gandhi considered morality to be the essence of religions and stated that true religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other. He wrote: "as soon as we lose our moral basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion overriding morality. Man, for instance cannot be untruthful, cruel and incontinent and claim to have God on his side". [6]

- Gandhi's religion was a synthesis of the best in all major religions. To a question; "would you say, then, that your religion is a synthesis of all religions?" he answered, "yes, if you will". But he hastened to add that he would call that synthesis his Hinduism, and for a true Christian, that

synthesis was Christianity and for a Muslim that was Islam. [7]

After a reverential study of the major world religions Gandhi came to the conclusion that *all religions were fundamentally equal*. [8] He understood that all religions arose as answers to the fundamental and perennial human quest for the meaning and purpose of existence. This is described in common religious parlance as: ‘they seek the same God and proceed from the same God’. For Gandhi, as religions sought the same Truth, there was truth in all of them. But as religions came down to us through the instrumentality of human beings, (notwithstanding the claim of some of the adherents that they were God-given) they shared the inevitable imperfections that go with human instruments. So, all religions have some error in them, argued Gandhi. He stated further that as all religions were true yet imperfect, the question of comparative merit or superiority did not arise. All religions were equal and therefore, there was no need or justification for changing one’s religion and getting converted to another. As the ultimate goal of all religions was to guide the believer or the faithful to his/her deliverance it was possible to attempt it through the religion into which one was born. So if what you seek is salvation or deliverance there is no need to change your religion, argued Gandhi. He rejected the claim of any religion to be superior to the others and also the practice of proselytisation as totally unjustified and unwarranted.

The question naturally comes up: If God is one, and belief in one God is the corner-stone of all religions why are there many religions instead of one religion- the Religion that Gandhi claimed to be his? Gandhi answered this question thus: “belief in one God is the corner-

stone of all religions. But I do not foresee a time when there would be only one religion on earth in practice. In theory, since there is one God, there can be only one religion. But in practice, no two persons I have known have had the same and identical conception of God. Therefore, there will, perhaps, always be different religions answering to different temperaments and climatic conditions.”<sup>[9]</sup> People in various parts of the world conceived and organized their own religions because they were necessary for the people to whom they were revealed. But Gandhi proceeded to add that he could foresee a time when “people belonging to different faiths will have the same regard for other faiths that they have for their own. I think that we have to find unity in diversity..... We are all children of one and the same God and therefore, absolutely equal.” <sup>[10]</sup>

As all religions owe their original inspiration to one and the same God, all religions were fundamentally equal, according to Gandhi. So he believed in the essential truths of all religions of the world and insisted that we respect others religions as we respect our own. He also pointed out that “if we are to respect others’ religions as we would have them to respect our own, a friendly study of the world’s religions is a sacred duty”.<sup>[11]</sup> Therefore, Gandhi called upon every one of us to do ‘a reverential and sympathetic study’ of the scriptures of other religions. He said that it was the duty of every cultured man and woman to do so. Such a study, he believed, would certainly create an atmosphere of mutual understanding, tolerance and respect.

In this context Gandhi introduced another significant idea concerning inter- religious encounter. We know and admit that there are certain ideas, customs and practices in all religions that are not universally

acceptable. Some of them have been described as even repugnant to human reason and morality. Difference of opinion and even conflicts arise when such ideas and practices are brought to the fore and criticised as they are related to one's religious sensitivity. It was in this context that Gandhi introduced an idea relating to the right of a person to point out and criticize such defects. Gandhi drew a fine but crucial distinction between one's right to criticise one's own religion and other religions. While it was the right and perhaps even the duty of a person to point out the defects in one's own religion with a view to purify it and improve it, his duty in terms of other religions must be of unreserved reverence, insisted Gandhi. The responsibility of pointing out and correcting the defects in other religions must be left to the followers of those religions. One must try to set one's own house in order rather than attempting to set the others' right. Let charity begin at home. Gandhi wrote: "But it is no business of mine to criticise the scriptures of other faiths or point out their defects. It is and should be, however, my privilege to proclaim and practice the truths that may be in them. I may not, therefore, criticise or condemn the things in the Koran or the life of the Prophet that I cannot understand....."[12] The advice of Gandhi is to do a reverential study of the scriptures of other faiths with a view to imbibing what is good in them so that we may improve ourselves as a true believer of our own faith and thus make it better and nobler.

*Sarvasharma Samābhava* was not merely a theoretical proposition for Gandhi. For him it was a vow, an observance and an act of faith. He practised it assiduously in his life and thus obliterated the demarcating line between religions. Gandhi showed us how to live a creative religious life which, in fact, was a translation of the spirit of

*Sarvadharmā Samābhava* into demonstrable practice. The significance of this way of living one's faith in the multi-religious context of the contemporary world cannot be overemphasized

It may be appropriate to conclude by quoting another significant statement of Gandhi: "The need of the moment is not one religion but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of different religions. We want to reach not the dead level but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail but is a sacrilege. The soul of religion is one but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. Wise men will ignore the outward crust and see the same soul living under a variety of crusts". [\[13\]](#)

An objective examination of this approach would convince one that it can provide a useful frame work for a healthy and mutually enriching relation between religions.

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## **Gandhian Approach to Peace and Non-violence**

*Siby K. Joseph*

The UN's International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World will end by 2010 and efforts have been made on a global scale to carry out the agenda set in the declaration for a culture of peace. It is to be noted that the significant decision was taken during the year in which we commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the martyrdom of Gandhi. This historic declaration placed before humanity the great challenge of transforming the institutional structures and factors contributing to the escalation of violence into non-violent ones. The strategies aimed at realizing the goals of the declaration are yet to produce significant results. The efforts undertaken so far have been inadequate to transform the culture of war and violence into a culture of peace and non-violence. There is now increasing realization that peace is not merely the absence of overt forms of violence, but is intimately linked up with questions of justice, as reflected in the several struggles for justice waged in different parts of the world, often by adopting violent methods. The challenge is to transform violent struggles into non-violent actions aimed at stirring society wide dialogue on fundamental and ethical questions; there is no doubt about the democratic credentials of such attempts.

Although there has been a rethinking in different parts of the world about the use of violent methods to achieve social and political goals, it has not reached a critical mass capable of capturing the imagination of policy makers and civil society. Concerted efforts are needed on the part of international agencies, educators, academicians, activists, civil society actors and policy makers to take the non-violent agenda forward. It is necessary that we not only examine the instances of successful application of non-violence to learn lessons from them for future practices, but also analyse conflicts in terms of their potential for applicability of non-violent methods as well as evolve suitable strategies for transforming violent conflicts into non-violent ones. These are tasks that need to be undertaken on a continual basis at different levels.

Humanity is passing through a very difficult period. Violence and terrorism have become the catch words of international politics. After the 9/11 attacks on World Trade centre and Pentagon, there is increasing realization that existing military solutions are inadequate to provide security to the people concerned. People all over the world are living in constant fear and insecurity. This precarious situation and the futility of the weapons of mass destruction in ensuring peace prompt one to think about non-violent methods.

The growing concern of international community has been reflected in the declarations and decisions of international organizations including the United Nations. The United Nations in its 61<sup>st</sup> General Assembly declared October 2, the birthday of Gandhi, as

the International Non-violence Day. The wide co-sponsorship of the draft resolution reflected the universal acceptance of the non-violent method successfully employed by Gandhi in South Africa and later in India. Gandhi has now become a synonym for non-violence and peace.

The contribution of Gandhi is that he changed the very meaning of peace and non-violence. In other words, he has revolutionized these concepts and practically demonstrated its use on a massive scale. Although, Gandhi has not used terms like conflict resolution, conflict transformation and so on, he is acknowledged as one of the precursors of conflict resolution techniques.

His concept of peace and non-violence is integrally related to his world view. Gandhi evolved his world view from a concept of 'self' and human nature. Acknowledging the inherent goodness of human beings, Gandhi emphasized the capacity of all human beings to develop their full potential of non-violence. The path of violence was seen by him as a downward path away from our humanity and closer to that of brute while the path of Non-violence was closer to humanness. He believed in the unity and oneness of all including the sentient and non-sentient beings. He believed that all human beings are part of the divine and they are interdependent and interrelated. If one person gains in Non-violence, the entire humanity gains with him and vice versa. In such an interrelated and relational framework, Non-violence becomes the cardinal principle governing human relations.

Gandhi's concept of non-violence is closely linked with his understanding of the above interrelatedness. Truth was fundamental

in his philosophy of life. He also wanted to make truth discovery as the principle around which the differences among human beings could be sorted out. Throughout his life he was experimenting and perfecting his notion of truth. For him Truth was a sovereign principle and it includes numerous other principles. Gandhi called Truth realization as the realization of the God. This quest for truth can be carried out not through any means. Violence is based on a notion that the person who employs it has the sole possession of Truth. Gandhi was of the view that the Truth known to human beings is never absolute but relative. Therefore a seeker of Truth has to adhere to the path of non-violence because unless he uses the method of Non-violence, he will not be able to be receptive to the notions of Truth held by others. Gandhi wanted that all struggles and conflicts should be approached as a contestation between the notions of relative truth held by the conflicting parties. Only through a non-violent method you will be able to pursue a struggle of this kind because in it truth contestation becomes a joint effort of both conflicting parties. In other words it becomes a joint search for Truth by the conflicting parties. There is no imposition of your notion of Truth. Just as you envisage the possibility of the conversion of other side to your position, the reverse possibility also cannot be ruled out.

For Gandhi, non-violence was a creed or an article of faith. He subscribed to non-violence on the basis of a deep faith in it. His complete adherence to non-violence was based on principles rather than opportunism or purely based on cost benefit considerations, although he was not unaware of its strategic value. For Gandhi, it was not a weapon of expediency. It was a spiritual weapon and he successfully employed it at the mundane level. He made it clear that it

is not a weapon of the weak and the coward. The application of this principle needs greater courage and moral strength. He believed that Ahimsa or Love has a universal application and it can be employed in one's own family, society and the world at the larger level. Through the technique of non-violence a seeker of Truth tries to convert his opponent by the force of moral character and self suffering. A practitioner of non-violence has to undergo suffering to penetrate into the heart of the opponent. Gandhi looked upon self-less suffering as the law of human beings and war as the law of jungle. How you can avoid pain and suffering is based on a utilitarian thinking, which is the basis of the much of the liberal thinking of the West. Suffering for a worthy cause in non-Western cultures is often seen as liberative, even if it emerged as the result of the application of violence against an oppressor. The redemptive character of self-suffering was emphasized by Gandhi and it constituted a key element of his Satyagraha technique. Gandhi's commitment to Non-violence evolved also from a careful reading of history and its interpretation. He came to the conclusion that it is Non-violence that has sustained the world so far and will sustain it in future too.

Gandhian non-violence challenges the notion that the principle is applicable in interpersonal relations and has no value in the public world. Gandhi emphasized that the law of love operates at all levels, and for him public life and values should be an echo of private life.

Gandhi's concept of peace is also a broad one. For him peace emerged from a way of life. Therefore peace is intimately linked up with justice, development and environment. It may be noted that the well known peace researcher Johan Galtung acknowledged his debt to

Gandhi in the evolution of his concept of structural and cultural violence. His advocacy of ideas such as self-reliance and models of development focused on basic needs also have a strong Gandhian imprint. Gandhi's influence could also be found in the ideas of Bjorn Hettne who has tried to focus on the relationship between models of development and peace. Similarly, Arne Naess who coined the term, deep ecology has acknowledged his indebtedness in the formulation of the term.

A search for the philosophical basis of Gandhian concept of peace should begin with a careful reading of his seminal work *Hind Swaraj* which he wrote in 1909, where he criticized the modern model of development as inherently violent. One who scrutinises Gandhi's speeches, writings and actions will understand his deep commitment for the cause of peace and non-violence which was apart of his philosophy of life and his world view. In the ideal society of Gandhi's vision the organisation and relationship of the members of the society must be based on the law of non-violence or love. The real task before those who dream a peaceful and non-violent society is to practice the ideals of peace and non-violence, Gandhi placed before humanity and contributes towards transformation of the existing society into a peaceful non-violent one. This task is a challenging one, but it is worth pursuing.

## **Gandhi- the Role of Consciousness in Creating A Sustainable Future**

*Siddhartha*

We are at the most important cross-roads in our history. If we do not change quickly and radically much of humanity runs the risk of perishing by the end of this century.

In this paper, I propose to explore the reasons why we are undergoing a perilous ostrich-syndrome, burying our heads in the sand and pretending to take an attitude of ‘business as usual’ in the face of unprecedented crises. Personal and collective amnesia has become such a fine art that they have been faultlessly integrated into our psyche.

I will also attempt to show what Gandhi has to offer us in terms of arriving at a new consciousness. But let me hasten to add that this paper is not going to put an excessive burden on Gandhi, since some of the problems we face today had not been the foci of concern in his day.

But let us begin with the crisis in this part of the world.

## **Global Warming: The Melting of the Himalayan Glaciers**

In Gandhi's time, there was no awareness at all that we would one day come to face a very serious ecological crisis. The Gandhian model of development would not have led us to this impasse. Today, we see that the Himalayan glaciers seem to be melting faster than most others. Except for the polar ice caps the Himalayan glaciers are the storehouses for the largest amount of water.

Seven of our great Asian rivers are dependent on these glaciers. These are the Ganges, the Indus, the Brahmaputra, the Mekong, the Thanlwin, the Yangtze and the Yellow river. The glaciers feeding these rivers are retreating at a rate of about 10-15 m (33-49 ft) each year, according to the WWF. India's Gangotri glacier is moving back by 23m (75ft) each year. Hundreds of millions of people in India, China and Nepal will be affected by floods followed by droughts in the coming decades.

Temperatures would rise by several degrees in India, making many places unlivable. Mass migrations would be a normal fact of life, making the expression 'environmental refugees' a commonly used term.

## **Poverty in India**

Despite high growth rates no country in the world has as many poor people as India does. The number of those living below the poverty

line is estimated to be 350-400 million. Most of these people, about 75 per cent, live in rural areas. About 40 per cent of the population is illiterate, mainly representing women, tribals and scheduled castes. The gap between the rich and the poor is growing at an alarming rate. Farmers are led to commit suicide when their crops fail and they are unable to pay off their debts. The Gandhian notion that there is enough for everybody's need but not for everybody's greed is played out on a regular basis when the poor are being disenfranchised by the new SEZ's and industrial projects.

### **The Ostrich-syndrome**

Gandhi believed in truth force. He was guided by what could be called 'relative' truth since 'absolute' truth could not be attained by any human being. The quest for truthful reflection and action was central to his philosophy, unlike the ostrich-syndrome that we are witnessing today, where we bury our head in the sand to avoid seeing the truth.

In countries like India (and in many parts of the world) the ostrich-syndrome is evident in our page three media culture, which is all about film stars, cricket, shopping, eating out and celebrities. The ostrich-syndrome leads to a depoliticisation of daily life, where we do not take responsibility for what is happening around us, where we are unable to become engaged citizens. This is happening to large number of the middle classes who are largely unconnected with the major problems that the country is facing.

Of course there is the well meaning minority of people who feel that we have gone too far down the road to perdition to reverse the trend

of ecological catastrophe and social chaos. There are other small sections that believe they have to oppose the present form of globalization, and in small ways they are creating an awareness of issues, even if they have not thrown up a sufficient range of workable alternatives. Yet, it is they that matter, for as the crisis deepens the alternatives they are grappling with will come under sympathetic scrutiny and serve as the cornerstones for new directions in our social, political and economic life.

But let us dwell a little more on the ostrich-syndrome and the culture of indifference that it spawns.

### **Mutation of Human consciousness**

A few days after the twin towers of the World Trade Centre were demolished President Bush famously said: “We can’t let the terrorists stop us from shopping.”

Nine-Eleven was a great human tragedy, but that should not prevent human beings from shopping. The system depends on shopping. So put aside your grief and return to the shopping mall. Of course, a part of you must keep your anger on a slow boil... and keep supporting President Bush.

Shopping is a form of amnesia. The practice of citizenship is consumed by the consumer. You no longer take your social and political responsibilities seriously. In India the middle classes do not go and vote. Consumerism has deformed human consciousness; some might

argue that a mutation has already taken place. If a mutation has already happened, then the ostrich is not even capable of knowing that it has buried its head in the sand, and that it has a distorted view of reality.

Consumerism is not about fulfilling human wants, but the attempt to satisfy 'created' needs. New desires are invented and a feeling of inadequacy haunts a person unless he tries to gratify these desires. Individual material satisfaction overtakes social responsibility and political action. Everything may be going wrong in the world from a social and ecological perspective, but the consumer is cocooned in his world of material gratification.

For the middle and upper classes particularly, the shopping mall has become the new temple. This might sound like a cliché, but its underlying truth is being further consolidated day by day.

Most types of modern employment end up being alienating. The production process itself has not become less mechanical. Most people feel alienated in their work situations. Consumerism steps in to create a world of fantasy and lessen your alienation. But it cannot lessen your alienation since it is based on the creation of inadequacies. The moment you buy something you feel it is insufficient and the feeling of inadequacy returns. Not only does consumer society produce human needs, it produces the consumer itself. We experience our identity as consumers over and above all other forms of identities.

The possibility of personal choice is offered so that the human being is better integrated in the system. You may buy a particular brand of cell phone, thus personalizing your purchase. But in the end, objects and beliefs are personalized so that you may get better integrated in the system.

Commodification has desacralised the world. Nothing is sacred anymore. We are free to destroy forests if we find minerals there. We will pollute earth, sea and air because consumerism is the new ideal of society. We do not read much poetry anymore, not because we do not have time, but because dwelling on intimate feelings and sensibilities that do not contribute to the consumer *weltanschauung* is a waste of time.

One reaction to this situation of the wasteland of the soul is the emergence of religious fundamentalism. Another form of reaction is joining charismatic religious movements which can compensate for the appearance of meaninglessness through the forgetfulness that chanting, singing, dancing and spiritual euphoria brings. For some, particularly in the west, drugs like ecstasy help tide through the drudgery of social life.

### **Rediscovering fulfillment and celebration**

When I was traveling in Brazil a few years ago I was told by the great humanist and civil society activist Betinho that Brazilians had a memory of fifteen days. He could have said the same thing of much of the world. We move on to new pastures and new experiences every day. There is little time to remember and savour anything valuable for

the human spirit.

Human beings have lived on the planet for thousands of years, and we can learn much from the past, even if there is a lot that we have to discard. Socrates was right when he said: “Learning consists of remembering knowledge that has lived in the soul of human beings for many generations.”

There is an awareness that comes from the sages of the past that has to do with a better understanding of the human self. The inward journey enriches the outward one, and the other way around. Today there is only an outward journey with little or no inner ones. And that may be a central reason why we find ourselves in a ‘civilisational’ crisis of such enormous magnitude.

Indigenous societies speak of the inter-connectedness of all things. We are connected with water, mountains, animals and each other. In a somewhat similar vein Buddhism talks about dependent-origination. Nothing is autonomous in itself. All things are dependent on other things. The story of Indra’s net bears witness to this. There is a net where each of the knots is a sparkling diamond. A superficial observance may conclude that the thousands of diamonds in the net are showing off their individual dazzle. But on closer examination we realize that each diamond represents the reflection of the reflection of all the other diamonds in the net. The individual origin of the glitter was only an illusion. Hinduism talks about love of the personal God overflowing into love for all human beings. Gandhi was influenced by this strain of spirituality. Hinduism also talks about the oneness of

human reality with cosmic reality. 'All the world is one human family', is an ancient Indian expression that emphasises the unity of humankind.

### **The role of spirituality in Gandhi's social praxis**

It would be impossible to visualize Gandhi without spirituality. As he himself put it:

“There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses.”

To begin with Gandhi saw God as Truth. He was to later change that to “Truth is God”. For Gandhi the spiritual dimension was a horizontal one where he discovered God in suffering people. It was not a vertical escape to a God out there, in the heavens, who was unconcerned with the plight of the poor and the oppressed peoples on the planet. As he wrote:

“I am endeavoring to see God through service of humanity, for I know that God is neither in heaven, nor in down below, but in every one.

“I am a part and parcel of the whole, and I cannot find Him apart from the rest of humanity. My countrymen are my nearest neighbours. They have become so helpless, so resourceless, so inert that I must concentrate on serving them. If I could persuade myself that I should find Him in a Himalayan cave, I would proceed there immediately. But I know that I cannot find Him apart from humanity.”

I am led to conclude that a horizontal spirituality, such as the one Gandhi practiced, may be of vital importance to deal with the ostrich-syndrome that we discussed earlier. We need to develop a consciousness and vision that is different from what consumer society offers us. As long as the ostrich-syndrome persists the 'malling of the world' will continue with its dreadful social and ecological consequences.

### **Hope as the basis of continuing with alternatives**

I have always felt that it is easy to be pessimistic in today's world. One has only to look at the figures on social exclusion and ecological damage, not to mention personal stress and lack of meaning in the lives of millions of people. But to be hopeful is a personal discipline, and a spiritual exercise. One has to work at it every day.

Many may be tempted to throw up their hands in despair and give up the quest with the exclamation "What's the use! We are doomed anyway! Everything we do is too little, too late."

From a Christian perspective Jurgen Moltmann insists that Christianity is all about hope for the future. The resurrection of Christ means just this. This hope also stands for an alternative future for oppressed peoples.

Likewise Gandhi was a 'prisoner of hope', to use the title of Judith Brown's book on him. Hope was an integral part of Gandhi's philosophy and is contained in the different meanings he ascribed to

the word 'Swaraj': freedom, liberation, self-determination, Hindu-Muslim unity and the removal of untouchability.

For Gandhi, there was little cause of despair since he was wedded to the notion of *nishkama karma*. (*karma* -action-, *nis* -without-, *kama* -desire). The sage Karunakara Guru, from Kerala, described this notion in the following terms: "You must never be attached to action itself. Detachment means non-ego involvement, freedom from the bonds of desire. Actions must be performed in a state of perfect detachment and consecrating their fruit to the Almighty. This means that you must abandon yourself to the Will of God. However you should never be conformist, always try to do your best in order to attain success in everything you do, want or need in life, but at all times try to accept your destiny as part of God's Will."

But *nishkama karma* has a long history. In the *Bhagvad Gita* , Krishna tells Arjuna:

Therefore, without being attached to the fruits of activities, one should act as a matter of duty, for by working without attachment one attains the Supreme.

We act because it is right to act, not because we may live to see the fruits of our actions. Changing the world is an ongoing process and involves the efforts of millions and millions of people all over the world. It would really be an act of arrogance to expect to see instant results. This arrogance ultimately leads to despair, as we find that so little of what we wanted to achieve has been achieved. But if the end result is in the hands of the supreme we only need to act and reflect

and act again. The well-known intellectual-activist Paulo Freire referred to this praxis as action that is enriched by reflection, that in turn leads to further action, that in turn leads to reflection, and so on.

It is true that as human beings we may sometimes find this philosophy insufficient and we get close to despair. Gandhi himself went through his bouts of near despair. But his spiritual strength was further bolstered by his understanding of *nishkama karma*, 'action without attachment to the fruits of one's action'. It took him back to his activities with renewed vigor.

## Third-party Non-violent Intervention in Conflict Areas: from Gandhi's Shanti Sena to the International Solidarity Movement in Palestine

*Veronique Dudouet*

### **Introduction**

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948) is best known and celebrated for his articulation of the philosophical and strategic principles of non-violence, or non-violent action, as well as their application to the struggle against British imperialism and for Indian sovereignty and self-sustainability. These principles have been emulated by many contemporary movements of liberation against external occupation or oppressive regimes across the world. This paper is mostly concerned, however, with the application of Gandhian non-violence as a technique of cross-border intervention by third parties to bring about constructive social change in acute conflict situations.

The paper starts with a brief summary of Gandhi's thinking and strategy for non-violent intervention. The section two analyses the role of third-party (or external) advocacy in local or national non-violent liberation/resistance campaigns, and define more closely the concept and boundaries of 'cross-border non-violent advocacy'.

Section three offers a categorisation of non-violent advocacy into several types of off-site and on-site intervention (e.g. mobilisation, accompaniment, solidarity, interposition, etc), illustrated by recent or contemporary examples of their use. Finally, section four applies these concepts and typology of non-violent intervention to one specific case study: the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) in Palestine. It assesses the organisation's stance towards non-violence, the relationship between internal activism and external advocacy and the principle of 'local ownership', and the relative effectiveness of the various on-site and off-site activities carried out by its volunteers since its establishment in 2001.

## 1. Satyagraha and Shanti Sena: the Gandhian legacy

Non-violence rests on a commitment to oppose violence in all its forms, whether physical, psychological or structural. Hence, it encompasses not only an abstention from the use of physical force to achieve an aim, but also a full engagement in resisting oppression, domination and any other forms of injustice. Gandhi, whose actions and ideas have most crucially influenced the development of non-violent action in the twentieth century, coined the word *Satyagraha* to describe the theory of conflict intervention which could best accommodate his moral philosophy. It is made up of an amalgamation of two Sanskrit words, *Satya* (truth) and *Agraha* (firmness), and has been most commonly translated in English as 'truth-force'<sup>[1]</sup>. Gandhi also strongly insisted upon the unity of means and ends, advising *Satyagrahis* (practitioners of *Satyagraha*) to act in a goal-consistent manner; non-violence is the means by which *satya*, the end, can be reached. *Satyagraha* is indeed closely tied to the religious precept of *ahimsa*, which means in Sanskrit the complete renunciation of

violence in thought and action.

Employed as an instrument to effect social or political change, a *Satyagraha* campaign might involve the use of multiple non-violent resistance techniques. For instance, non-cooperation (e.g. boycott, strikes, tax resistance) implies holding on to truth by withdrawing support of what is wrong: if enough people do it, or even if one person does it to a great enough depth, evil has to collapse from lack of support. Its inspiration stems from European and American traditions (e.g. Quakers, Thoreau, Tolstoy) based on the 'theory of consent'[2], in which civil resistance was understood primarily in terms of individual civil disobedience to unjust laws. Applying these concepts to the level of collective action, Gandhi sought to build mass protest movements (with the exception of fasts and the so-called "individual *Satyagraha*" campaigns of 1940-1), relying on a movement of well-trained, pure hearted soldiers of non-violence who thoroughly understood the strict conditions of *Satyagraha*.

Concerning the use of such techniques for purposes of defense against external aggressions (as a 'living wall'), or as an interpositionary force in international disputes, Gandhi was referring to his *Satyagrahis* as an army of peace (*Shanti Sena*), and in the 1920s he explored some detailed ideas for regional or neighbourhood peace armies, a concept which he continued to develop until the end of his life[3]. After India gained independence, he started to advocate some version of organised non-violent peacekeeping forces, to be used for example during the Kashmir dispute. In fact, he was about to establish a formal *Shanti Sena* when he was assassinated[4]. His proposal was taken on by his followers and formally implemented in 1957 under the

leadership of Vinoba Bhave, but has mostly been employed for peacekeeping purposes within India, as opposed to the international arena (with a few notable exceptions, see below).

Over the following decades, several proposals for setting up international non-violent interpositionary forces (e.g. World Peace Brigade, World Peace Guard, etc.) were formulated, but none of them has been taken up by the UN or any other intergovernmental institutions. Instead, such large-scale non-violent peacekeeping projects have been replaced by an array of smaller initiatives, less ambitious but more practical<sup>[5]</sup>. The next sections explore the conceptualisation and application of such projects by various scholars and practitioners.

## **2. Conceptualisation of cross-border non-violent advocacy**

There is a growing body of literature dealing specifically with the phenomenon of cross-border non-violent advocacy, attempting to analyse, conceptualise or classify past and ongoing examples of its use.

In the theory of non-violence (or non-violent action), third parties are called in support of local non-violent movements for human rights, democracy or self-determination. Their intervention is especially crucial in case where the power differential or 'social distance' between the activists (or the "oppressed" social/ethnic/national group) and the pro-status-quo forces (e.g. repressive regime, or external occupiers) is too big, or where the 'consent theory of power' does not apply. For instance, the Kosovo or Palestinian independence

movements during the 1980s and 1990s were not able to use Gandhian strategies of non-cooperation and civil disobedience vis-à-vis the Serbian and Israeli regimes, because these were (and still are) less interested in the compliance of the Albanian and Palestinian population with their policies than in possessing and controlling their land. Therefore, non-violent resisters were unable to raise the costs of continued occupation to a level necessary to cause their occupier to withdraw[6] .

One remedy for such situations, according to the peace researcher Johan Galtung[7], consists in creating a dependency relationship between the oppressive regime and oppressed population through a 'great chain of non-violence'. He argues that non-violence works better the shorter the social distance between the conflict parties, and that when it is too great (e.g. activists being regarded as "nonhumans" by their opponents), "third-party intervention (or better, intercession) from somebody closer to the oppressor can stay the hand of the violent oppressor better than can the non-violence of the oppressed themselves". For instance, in the case of the Indian independence movement, opposition groups within Britain played a crucial role in relaying the cause of the Indian masses to their government. In the above-mentioned cases of Palestinian and Kosovo Albanian non-violent liberation movements, a similar role was played by Israeli and Serbian opposition and human rights groups. This paper, however, rather concentrates on the functions which might be performed by grassroots international (mostly Western) initiatives.

The concept of third-party (or cross-border) non-violent advocacy will be defined here, with Burrowes[8] , as an "action that is: 1) carried

out, or has impact, across a national border, 2) by grassroots activists, 3) with the aim of preventing or halting violence, or facilitating social change for the benefit of ordinary people or the environment, 4) by applying the principles of non-violence”.

It should be distinguished from other modes of third-party intervention in emerging or violent conflicts or post-conflict societies, such as preventive diplomacy, mediation or facilitation of peace negotiations, humanitarian intervention, development cooperation, dialogue and reconciliation promotion, etc.

One of the main differences between classical conflict resolution activities and non-violent advocacy lie in their ethical stance vis a vis the conflict parties. Whereas the former always emphasises the need for impartiality on the part of external interveners, most advocacy groups deliberately work on the sides of the victims or the low-power group, to assist them towards empowerment and the reduction of imbalance in the conflict, even if some non-violent organisations (e.g. Peace Brigades International) insist on non-interventionist and non-partisan approaches. Laue and Cormick [9] defined the principle of empowerment by an ethical question which should, according to them, dominate every third-party action in a conflict: “does the intervention contribute to the ability of the relatively powerless individuals and groups in the situation to determine their own destinies to the greatest extent consistent with the common good?”

Although practitioners in conflict resolution and non-violent advocacy share a common goal of achieving peace by peaceful means,

the former tend to emphasise the reduction of polarisation and tensions in a conflict, facilitating cooperative relationships between opponents, while the latter are primarily concerned with the removal of the structural sources of injustice, inequality and oppression[10]. They also give greater attention to the principles and techniques of non-violent action as defined by Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Gene Sharp and others. In this paper, a cross-border intervention will be considered as non-violent only if it involves a challenge to established methods of exerting social change. It is “sometimes illegal ... and is often carried out in life-threatening circumstances”[11].

Cross-border non-violent advocates also place an important emphasis on the concept of ‘local ownership’ in effecting social and political change. Whereas external third-party opinion and action can act as a powerful supporting force, they cannot represent a substitute for the mobilised capacity for non-violent struggle by the grievance group itself. The primacy of action belongs to internal civil society activists. For example, although Gandhi did not rule out outside intervention on behalf of the Indian liberation movement, he insisted strongly on total identification, to the point of immersion in and with the oppressed, as a condition for such action[12]. The International Centre on Non-violent Conflict (ICNC), one of the main agencies currently offering this type of third-party assistance, insists that “In no historical instance [of political change brought about by non-violent movements] has external support or assistance been pivotal. That is because only indigenous causes and strategies can be successful in mobilizing discontented majorities[13].” For this reason, most authors reject the terminology of ‘assistance’ (which might be connotated with a victimisation of local populations), referring instead to cross-border

support or accompaniment[14].

### **3. Types and examples of third-party support to indigenous non-violent resistance/liberation movements**

Bearing these considerations in mind, there is a great range of tools available to outside parties to encourage the development of non-violent dynamics for positive change, in situations of potential or actual conflict. This paper will only consider forms of intervention relevant for grassroots non-governmental organisations, as opposed to state or intergovernmental initiatives.

A number of typologies of cross-border non-violent intervention have been proposed. For instance, Rigby[15] classifies various strategies according to their on-site or off-site location. The most comprehensive typology so far is offered by Burrowes[16], who identifies nine forms of non-violent intervention by trans-national groups, on behalf of low-power groups in conflicts that are national or international in scope. Combining and adapting these two models, this paper will now present some illustrations of various forms of action which can be implied by the generic terminology of cross-border non-violent advocacy.

‘Off-site intervention’ refers to “efforts which do not involve the physical presence of the interventionists in the zone of conflict itself”[17]. The first form of intervention identified by Burrowes, local non-violent campaigns, consists in taking non-violent initiatives in support of a struggle in another country. The logic behind these initiatives is to try to either prevent or halt violence or injustice

directly by launching sanctions of their own against violent or and repressive regimes, or, indirectly, to exert pressure on their elites (e.g. Western governments) to reverse policies that support these regimes. This function is performed, for instance, by international organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch or the recent online petition resource Avaaz.com, through diplomatic action, protest or 'public shaming' strategies. When international indignation is turned into more substantial forms of action, such as the imposition of economic sanctions (withdrawal of credit, severance of supplies, boycott), it becomes much more difficult to ignore by the pro-status quo forces. For instance, between the 1950s and 1990s many groups and individuals across the world conducted campaigns designed to put pressure on the South African government to end apartheid, by organising consumer boycotts of South African exports, and campaigns to persuade governments and corporations to stop supplying finance, oil and weapons to the apartheid regime.

Such initiatives are also geared towards drawing international attention to acts of violence and injustice and mobilising people to act in response to that concern, which Burrows refers to as mobilisation actions. For instance, he cites the case of the 1992 voyage of the Lusitania Expresso from Darwin to Dili, East Timor, to lay wreaths at the scene of the 1991 Dili massacre and to mobilise support for East Timorese independence, by engaging in active mediatisation around this event. Many other grassroots campaigns have been persistently combining efforts to mobilise international public opinion and exert cross-border pressure for change in highly repressive societies (either directly or by lobbying foreign governments and international institutions), such as the UK-based Guatemala Solidarity Network or

Colombia Solidarity Campaign, the Free Burma Coalition, the International Nepal Solidarity Network, etc. Diasporas often play a crucial leading role in organising such campaigns. As their names indicate, such organisations also embody another type of third-party advocacy, namely ‘non-violent solidarity’, which will be reviewed more thoroughly further below (as a form of on-site intervention).

Outsiders might also support pro-change activists by providing resources to local organisations, in the form of financial, technical or strategic support. In his latest book, Sharp[18] explores professional forms of external assistance to local non-violent activists, such as the supply of literature and handbooks about non-violent struggle[19]; offering generic advice on how to conduct strategic planning for non-violent action; providing printing facilities or services; making available radio broadcasting facilities and equipment; and providing bases and centres for study and training in this type of struggle. The production and dissemination of films documenting the successful application of non-violent struggle in various contexts[20] is another tool which can be used as ‘teaching’ material for third-party trainers. An example of organisation which offers capacity-building training for leaders of non-violent movements across the globe is the Serbian-led Centre for Applied Non-violent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), a team of consultants with first-hand experience of successful civil resistance campaigns in their home countries[21]. For instance, I took part, in November 2007, to a training workshop in Spain convened by CANVAS and the ICNC, who had invited a group of non-violent activists from over fifteen countries, in order to impart them with specific mobilisation and campaigning skills, based on lessons-learnt from their own experience in Serbia and South Africa. Having conducted

such programmes for over four years, they have developed a comprehensive training curriculum; this workshop was recorded on camera and will be the subject of a film to be disseminated for further training purposes. Their argument is that although only local movements can decide which methods and tactics fit best within their own cultural and geopolitical situation, there is a generic set of analytical and strategic tools which can be transferred from other contexts. Such activities can be both carried out off-site (by inviting local activists to programs conducted overseas), or on-site (external consultants travelling to conflict areas in order to reach a wider audience).

When it comes to ‘on-site intervention’, defined as “actions which involve the physical presence of the actionists in the zone of conflict”[\[22\]](#), four interrelated forms of non-violent advocacy can be distinguished.

First, non-violent accompaniment refers to activities carried out in a conflict area in order to create a safe, localised political space so that activists can engage in non-violent activity. Organisations such as Peace Brigades International (in Guatemala, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Mexico, West Timor, Aceh), Christian Peacemakers Team (in Haiti, Palestine, Colombia, Iraq), the Balkan Peace Team (in former Yugoslavia), Non-violent Peaceforce (in Sri Lanka) accompany threatened local human rights activists in their daily work to protect them from being killed or ‘disappeared’. The presence of these unarmed ‘bodyguards’ - especially if they come from ‘powerful’ countries - can discourage the recourse to violence by soldiers and combatants of the warring parties and help to limit human rights violation. Their effectiveness, in fact, is partly due to the reluctance of

armed forces or paramilitary groups to risk upsetting Western governments by attacking foreign volunteers during their protection or 'human shield' mission. Moreover, protective accompaniment also encourages civil society activism, by allowing threatened organisations more space and confidence to operate in repressive situations[23].

Secondly, external non-violent advocates might perform acts of non-violent solidarity through their presence in a zone of military violence, to share the danger with local people and highlight the suffering that violence is causing. In this case, the purpose of their activities is not so much to prevent violent attacks against local activists, but rather to convey messages of solidarity and publicise their plight to external audiences, including the constituency of the authoritarian regime or occupying forces. For instance, the Iraq Peace Team has sent delegations of volunteers to Iraq since 2002, ahead of the US attack, to live and experience the war with Iraqi people, and expose their situation to the outside world[24].

The two remaining forms of on-site non-violent advocacy suggested by Burrowes are more ambitious and should be applied on a larger scale, as their success is partly conditioned by the number of trained volunteers involved. The first one, non-violent interposition, is performed by unarmed activists placing themselves as a 'buffer' force between conflicting parties (or between a military force and its civilian target), to help prevent or halt war. An early attempt at civilian interposition was the proposal by the Gandhian leader Jayaprakash Narayan in 1962 to lead a contingent of the *Shanti Sena* (see above) between the warring armies of China and India, which never materialised[25]. In 1990-1, the Gulf Peace Team organised an

international peace camp at the border between Iraq and Kuwait, as part of the struggle to prevent a war in the Persian Gulf, but the limited number of activists (they were 73 altogether) was obviously insufficient to resist physically or politically the violence of two military forces totalling a million combat personnel. On a more modest scale, non-violent interposition might be aiming to stop the fighting temporarily (such as the symbolic peace caravan to Sarajevo, in December 1992, by 500 Italian peace activists) or to protect a village from external attacks (such as the International Service for Peace - SIPAZ in Chiapas). The Christian organisation Witness for Peace claims that its interposition activities in Nicaragua during the 1980s, by sending 4,000 US activists to live in war zones across the country, significantly reduced the number of attacks on the Nicaraguan people by the US-sponsored Contras[26]. These examples show that non-violent interposition is easy to organise on a small scale, but it is very hard to succeed in mass interposition actions when the unbalance between the non-violent 'troops' and warring armies is too strong. When a war is on, non-violent attempts to stop the fighting requires a flexible strategy, a spread of micro-initiatives, and a gradual and step-by-step programme of actions in close coordination with local communities[27].

Finally, non-violent invasion is the most disruptive and daring form of cross-border intervention. It refers to the act of invading and occupation of a violent or potentially violent space to expedite social change. Originally conceived by Gandhi in a national context, as a method to reoccupy one's land or claim ownership over one's resources (e.g. attempts to take over salts works during the 1930-31 Salt *Satyagraha*), it has very rarely been applied across national

borders. Burrowes cites one single example of such cross-border intervention, namely, the invasion of Portuguese Goa by several thousand Indian *Satyagrahis* in 1955, in support of a local nationalist movement, which was violently repressed.

I will now illustrate these principles and typology of cross-border non-violent intervention through one specific case of advocacy organisation. The International Solidarity Movement has been applying most of these various strategies while working with Palestinian grassroots activists to empower them in their non-violent struggle against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip: what assessment can be offered on its work so far?

#### **4. Case study: the International Solidarity Movement (ISM) in the Palestinian occupied territories**

In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, since the outbreak of the second intifada (September 2000), there have been several inter-governmental attempts to deploy an international force of unarmed observers to interpose themselves between the Israeli army and Palestinian civilians during outbreaks of violence[28], but they have been relentlessly vetoed at the Security Council by the United States. In the absence of inter-state initiative[29], the ‘transnational civil society’ has filled in the gap by sending delegations of international volunteers to the region.

Among the different organisations which are explicitly committed to non-violent forms of intervention[30], I will mostly concentrate on the International Solidarity Movement (ISM), because it “has emerged

as the most visible face of international activism in Palestine”, “sufficiently effective to be the object of stepped up Israeli pressures”[31]. According to its own definition [32],

The ISM is a Palestinian-led movement committed to resisting the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land using non-violent, direct-action methods and principles. Founded by a small group of [foreign and Palestinian] activists in August 2001, ISM aims to support and strengthen the Palestinian popular resistance by providing the Palestinian people with two resources, international protection and a voice with which to non-violently resist an overwhelming military occupation force.

This description clarifies the organisations’ principles and methods of engagement (non-violent direct action), the links between foreign volunteers and the local population (international advocacy at the service of Palestinian activists), and some of the roles it aims to perform on the ground (protective accompaniment, raising awareness globally, and ending the occupation locally). These three elements will now be reviewed in the light of my own experience with the ISM in 2003[33], complemented by more recent interviews with its co-founders, and some electronic documents retrieved from the organisation’s website.

#### **4.1: Commitment to non-violence and its limits**

According to the original ISM mission statement, “As enshrined in international law and UN resolutions, we recognise the Palestinian right to resist Israeli violence and occupation via legitimate armed struggle. However, we believe that non-violence can be a powerful

weapon in fighting oppression and we are committed to the principles of non-violent resistance.” This sentence, which has raised a lot of controversy[34], was later withdrawn and replaced by a more principled statement: “The ISM maintains that all military tactics should be stopped by all sides in favour of non-violent alternatives”. It also justifies its reliance on non-violent methods by using the strategic argument relative to its efficiency:

The ISM seeks to bring about an end to violence by actively resisting the occupation through non-violent means. The Israeli government has long worked to crush peaceful resistance, making it very difficult for Palestinians to act non-violently on a large scale. We’re working to develop an alternate way of resisting – non-violently - that can be effective[35].

In an interview, two of the co-founders of the movement define non-violence both in its negative and positive connotations: it excludes the use of verbal and physical abuse, but it also implies respect for everyone, including the opponent [36]. Another co-founder adds the dimension of “standing up for the powerless but not against the powerful”, and the importance of establishing links with the opponent[37]. These statements reflect very closely the Gandhian principles of *ahimsa* and *Satyagraha* outlined above.

As a condition for joining the ISM in Palestine, all new volunteers are required to commit to supporting only non-violent resistance. During the two-day intensive training that they have to take on their arrival, a number of related rules are spelt out, such as the interdiction to touch or verbally abuse soldiers or settlers, or to use anything that could be considered as a weapon. A strong focus on communication is another

essential element of non-violence, and the ISM trainers insist on the necessity to do everything openly, and with respect for all people. However, considering that most training programmes only last for one weekend, they do not allow sufficient time to delve into the principles and strategy of non-violent resistance or third-party intervention, and cannot be compared with the professional training offered to by CANVAS (see above) or even less with Gandhi's teachings and *satyagrahi* schools. Instead, they mostly focus on role-plays and practical exercises preparing volunteers with legal, media and security issues they might come across during their support activities.

The few weeks I spent with the ISM enabled me to verify that the principles of non-violent intervention are clearly followed on the ground. One example demonstrates the impact that non-violent action makes in the mind of the Israeli occupation forces. When 41 internationals within the ISM (including myself) were arrested on August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2003 for "obstructing the army" by refusing to leave a "closed military area" in the village of Mas'ha[38], we were all released the following day and praised for our "passive resistance", except for one Italian volunteer who was expelled from the country for having resisted her arrest "violently".

The most challenging debates concerning the respect for non-violent rules of engagement concern the ISM's position on Palestinian stone throwing. While most other international solidarity groups have firmly ruled out the option of taking part in any activity which would involve such symbolically violent acts, ISM volunteers have been caught several times in the middle of a demonstration where children started throwing stones towards Israeli military jeeps, provoking the army's

violent reaction, and the group was divided regarding the appropriate response. Some maintained that the action should be called off immediately, while others decided that their role was to stay and protect Palestinians from Israeli retaliation. I witnessed a confrontational demonstration against the wall near Tulkarem where six internationals were injured by rubber bullets while protecting stone-throwing teenagers, and at the time of my leaving the country, the debate was still continuing on this issue.

#### 4.2. International advocacy at the service of Palestinian non-violent activism

What measures are implemented to ensure that external and internal groups work on the base of equality rather than subordination, so that foreign presence does not compete or replace local action?

The founders of the ISM insist on defining it as a joint “Palestinian-international movement with a Palestinian leadership”[\[39\]](#). The decision to be a joint movement has several implications. In terms of decision-making, the highly decentralised ISM relies on working groups in each area of operation, which are coordinated by a mix of local and foreign volunteers selected and trained by the central staff. In addition, to insure that the movement does not compete with or replace internal initiatives, all activities are jointly organised with civil society NGOs or political parties, invited to take part in direct action as equal partners. The ISM is open to collaboration with every local organisation which agrees to abide by the non-violent rules of engagement. In order to maintain this inclusive line of operation, it has turned down offers of financial assistance from the Palestinian Authority or any political party.

During their orientation and training weekend, ISM newcomers are repeatedly instructed to avoid making cultural, political or strategic judgements, or creating the impression that they are dictating Palestinians what to do. A ground rule of engagement is the interdiction to interfere in Palestinian domestic issues, no matter what the outsiders feel about who is right or wrong. All work must be done within the norms and traditions of Palestinian society[40]. If the movement trains its activists, it avoids using the term 'training' in the community, because it would sound insulting to Palestinians. On the contrary, foreigners are 'here to learn, not to teach'. When interviewed on this issue, the then ISM coordinator, the Palestinian Ghassan Andoni, also added: "we don't need people making proposals from abroad about how we should organise resistance. In a way, this is like colonialism. The Palestinian people can only accept those who are engaged in the resistance themselves and those who support approaches already existent in the society".

How these principles are understood by foreign activists, and are they applied on the ground? All activities organised during my observation time were preceded by some kind of consultation with the locals, even for such routine actions as checkpoint watch. However, I noticed some variations in the way relationships were built between a regional ISM team and the local population, according to the style of intervention of each team. Moreover, my overall impression of the dynamics of international-Palestinian relationships in summer 2003 was that rather than simply assisting local non-violent activists, the ISM was often taking over the planning and handling of activities, without waiting for Palestinian spontaneous initiatives. The timing of activism was also indicative of the relative dependency on

foreigners: the peak period of proactive popular protest in the West Bank is located around Christmas and summer holidays, when more foreign volunteers are able to travel to Palestine.

At the time of my visit, Andoni also expressed his wish that in the near future, the definition and functionality of the ISM would be able to shift, from initiating action to supporting locally-initiated mass-based popular resistance. “When Palestinians start participating en masse, they will be able to take real ownership of the ISM, but at present, it is still a joint movement, and the moment you talk about joint international-Palestinian action, foreigners are always tempted to take the lead”. He also added that it was all the more important for the ISM to support local action rather than initiate it, for “international activists come and go, but indigenous people have to live through the consequences of the actions, and especially they are the ones to suffer retaliation from the Israeli army or administration”.

Five years later, it can be observed that Palestinians have taken the lead in several sustained non-violent campaigns against the wall. In the village of Budrus, for instance, the strategy chosen by local leaders has turned over the dynamics of relationships between local activists and external advocates. In an interview, a local resident recalled that “in the north, from Jenin until Budrus, there were Israeli and international demonstrators, supported by Palestinians. But here we think that it is our problem and that we have to defend our land and do something, and the Israeli and international protestors are only supporting us. We are very grateful for [their] support, but the Palestinians have to make a stand”[\[41\]](#) . Despite these encouraging signs of popular mobilisation (another example is the recent legal

victory in Bi'in after three years of intense non-violent activism), on a national scale, this dream of a mass-based movement is yet to be attained.

#### 4.3: On-site and off-site intervention: Assessing the effectiveness of the ISM in Palestine and abroad

The various forms of activities which have been carried out by the ISM since its inception in 2001 embody all of the categories of cross-border non-violent intervention defined in section 3.

Starting with on-site intervention, the functions of non-violent accompaniment and interposition represent a crucial part of ISM's activities. The organisation does not distinguish between these two forms of intervention, and indeed they are very closely connected, so they will be treated here as one single category under the encompassing function of protection. ISM volunteers offer protective accompaniment to Palestinians endangered by frequent attacks from soldiers or settlers (including children on their way to school), or by acting as human-shields<sup>[42]</sup> during demonstrations. This international presence often prevents local activists from being injured when they engage in direct action on their own, such as removing a roadblock or attacking the separation barrier. One activist from Jenin recalls a July 2003 demonstration in Anin where a soldier shouted at him: "But for those [foreigners] who are with you, we would have shot all of you!" <sup>[43]</sup> .

Additional activities carried out by ISM volunteers which embody the function of protection include for instance 'home stays', which consists

in sleeping in houses threatened by Israeli demolition warrants, because they have been built without permit, are located too close to a settlement, or belong to the family of a suicide bomber.

Negatively, it needs to be acknowledged that there have been a few cases when the intervention of ISM volunteers has made things worse for the Palestinians they were trying to protect. For example, an activity like ambulance accompaniment, which was practised a lot during the Spring 2002 campaign, was later discontinued because Palestinians felt that the response of the army was worse when internationals were present. The tragic events of Spring 2003, when two ISM volunteers were killed during their protection or interposition mission[44], have also proved that the function of human shields has become less relevant once soldiers stopped being afraid of shooting at internationals, even at the expense of bad media publicity outside Israel. While such tragic incidents should have forced the coordinators to rethink the movement's strategies at the time, several interviewees felt that this had not been the case.

The ISM has also been carrying out actions embodying the function of non-violent solidarity by bringing both symbolic and material support to Palestinian communities engaged in unarmed resistance to the Israeli occupation. For instance, they have visited houses occupied by the army to deliver food and medicine to families detained in their own houses. ISM volunteers were also the first foreigners to enter the massively bombarded Jenin refugee camp during the Israeli 'Operation Defensive Shield', and it is also widely known across the occupied Palestinian territories for its forced marches through the sieges of Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah or Bethlehem's Church of Nativity in 2002.

International volunteers are also acting as “witnesses of occupation” by reporting publicly the actions of the occupant, and documenting human rights abuses by the army and settlers. In an interview, a local village leader was asked whether in his opinion the popular struggle was reaching its goals. He remarked that “In the end, Israel still building the wall. But this will not happen without a price; the world and Israelis are starting to realise the oppression of this wall”[\[45\]](#). And this is where the ISM can bring its greatest contribution to the movement, by tapping into the resource that internationals can provide: global attention [\[46\]](#). One of the most important successes claimed by the organisation concerns indeed the relative success of its media section in bringing the world’s attention to its activities, by attracting journalists to its demonstrations or sending reports to a worldwide audience. Volunteers proudly cite the fact that the issue of the wall became more prominent in the Israeli and international public arena after the ‘2003 freedom summer’ intensive campaign by the ISM and other groups on this issue[\[47\]](#).

The most confrontational form of intervention, non-violent invasion, has been employed by ISMers while attempting to tear down the separation barrier/wall, and helping Palestinians to reclaim their confiscated land by forcing their ways into fields or olive groves trapped on the Western side of the wall. Beyond these sporadic actions, a more ambitious project of non-violent cross-border invasion is being planned by the Free Gaza Campaign, led by ISM volunteers formerly denied entry into Israel-Palestine. In spring 2008, around forty international activists will attempt to enter the Gaza strip from the sea (sailing from Cyprus), at the invitation of Palestinian NGOs but without Israeli authorisation, thereby recognising Palestinian control

over their own borders. This campaign aims “1) To open Gaza to unrestricted international access; 2) To demonstrate that Israel still occupies Gaza, despite its claims to the contrary; 3) To show international solidarity with the people of Gaza and the rest of Palestine; and 4) To demonstrate the potential of non-violent resistance methods.”<sup>[48]</sup> If it succeeds, it will indeed finally break the isolation of the Gaza strip, where the ISM has not been able to send any team since 2003.

“Militant tourism” in Palestine is only one facet of the work carried out by the ISM, and in fact, at least half of its activities take place outside the ‘holy land’, in the volunteers’ own countries. Therefore, both categories of off-site intervention explored in section 3, local non-violent campaigns and mobilisation actions, also form important part of the organisation’s mandate. For instance, the success of their informational campaigns in Palestine is partly due to the relentless effort of the media and campaigning work performed by the ISM regional teams overseas, mainly in North America and Western Europe. ISM support groups have been created in several dozen countries, by veterans of the movement, in order to establish media contacts to relay field information, organise speaking tours for returning activists or visiting Palestinians, and fundraise for sending more volunteers. The organisation estimates that half of its several thousand volunteers have come from the United States, ¼ of whom are of Jewish origin<sup>[49]</sup> (although these figures are only approximate as the ISM lost its statistics database after an Israeli raid of its media office in May 2003). Therefore, they are in good position for lobbying the most influential of Israel’s allies, especially by acting as a powerful alternative Jewish voice - as a counter-power to the pro-Israel lobbies such as AIPAC - within the United States. Judging by the persistent pro-

Israel stance of the Bush administration and US Congress, it seems that the ISM and other Jewish anti-occupation groups still represent a silenced dissident voice, and local campaigns to claim justice for the murdered US-citizen Rachel Corrie have not met the same success as the family and friends of the fellow-ISM member Tom Hurndall in the UK (who obtained the legal pursuit and prosecution of the IDF soldier who had shot him to death).

Recently, ISM members have been forcefully engaging the debate in favour of international sanctions against Israeli occupation policies, through an economic, sportive or cultural boycott. According to one of the co-founders of the movement, the promotion of ‘boycott, divestments and sanctions’ (BDS), called for by many Palestinian civil society groups, is in fact one of their main current strategies of intervention. Her argument is that “when we can isolate Israel economically, politically, socially, the way that Apartheid South Africa was isolated, perhaps only then will the occupation become costly enough for Israel to want to do something about it” [50].

## **Conclusion**

This paper has shown that Gandhi, by developing the moral philosophy and practical application of non-violent resistance or *Satyagraha*, has set an example which has inspired many contemporary campaigns. Whereas his vision of a highly-trained and disciplined ‘peace army’, able both to defend Indian communities against external aggression, and to intervene abroad in other conflicts, failed to become a reality, numerous groups have applied Gandhian techniques and principles to the field of third-party intervention, with various degrees of success. The International Solidarity Movement is one among many examples of such groups.

One of the most crucial questions which arise in the Palestinian context, generated by the growth of militant violence since the outbreak of the second *intifada*, is relative to the role of cross-border non-violent intervention in contexts where there is not (yet) a meaningful internal non-violent movement. Besides protection and solidarity activities, it then becomes the task of foreign interveners to encourage and inspire local civil society activists to actively resist the occupation by non-violent means, without running the risk of being perceived as imposing external models or trying to ‘pacify’ Palestinians. Since my last visit to the occupied territories, there has been a dramatic increase in ‘popular [meaning unarmed] resistance’ in Palestinian villages, illustrated especially by the so-called ‘third *intifada* against the apartheid wall’<sup>[51]</sup>. Several of these grassroots campaigns have also claimed a few legal victories, the Israeli Supreme Court ruling against the planned route of the security barrier in cases where the expropriation of Palestinian land could not be justified by the security needs of Israeli citizens and settlers. Local developments on the ground in the coming few weeks and months will decisively influence the future expansion of this grassroots movement, and eventually the acknowledgement of its efficiency by both West Bank and Gaza Palestinian leaderships.

## Notes and References

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[1]. M. K. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, (Ahmedabad:

Navajivan, 1928)

[2]. According to this theory, first formulated by the French philosopher Etienne La Boetie, the authority of any ruler or regime rests on the continued voluntary consent, obedience or cooperation of its subjects. Therefore, the essence of non-violent struggle rests on the withdrawal of this consent, so that governments can no longer operate. See G. Sharp, *The Politics of Non-violent Action*. (Boston: Porter Sargent. 1973).

[3]. M. N. Nagler, "Peacemaking through non-violence", *Peace and Conflict Studies* 4(2), (1997), pp. 56-63.

[4]. T. Weber, "From Maude Royden's peace army to the Gulf Peace Team: an assessment of unarmed interpositional peace forces", *Journal of Peace Research* 30(1), (1993), pp 45-64.

[5]. *Ibid.*

[6]. A. Rigby, *Living the Intifada* (London : Zed Books, 1991); H. Clark, *Civil Resistance in Kosovo* (London: Pluto Press, 2000).

[7]. J. Galtung, *Non-violence and Israel/Palestine* (Honolulu: University of Hawai Press, 1989), p.20.

[8]. R. Burrowes, "Cross-border non-violent intervention: a typology", In Y. Moser-Puangsuwan and T. Weber (eds), *Nonviolent intervention across borders: a recurrent vision* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), p.50.

[9]. J. Laue, and G. Cormick, "The ethics of intervention in community disputes", in G. Bermant, H. C. Kelman and D. P. Warwick (eds.). *The Ethics of Social Intervention* (Washington: Halsted 1978), pp. 217-218.

[10]. D.Francis, *People, Peace and Power: Conflict Transformation in Action* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

[11]. R. Burrowes, "Cross-border non-violent intervention: a typology"op. cit., p.50.

[12]. J. Galtung, *Non-violence and Israel/Palestine*, *op. cit.* p.28.

[13]. See [http://www.non-violentconflict.org/resources\\_MacKinnon.shtml](http://www.non-violentconflict.org/resources_MacKinnon.shtml)

[14]. J. M. Muller, *Principes et Méthodes de l'Intervention Civile* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1997), p.74.

[15]. A. Rigby, "Unofficial non-violent intervention: examples from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict", *Journal of Peace Research* 32(4), (1995), pp. 453-467.

[16]. R. Burrowes, "Cross-border non-violent intervention: a typology" *op. cit.*

[17]. A. Rigby, "Unofficial non-violent intervention: examples from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" *op. cit.*, p.454.

[18]. G. Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (Boston, MA: Porter Sargent, 2005).

[19]. For example, translated and/or edited versions of his seminal 1973 book *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* have been read and used by movements for democracy and human rights in Mexico, Chile, Serbia, Eritrea, Burma, Tibet, Venezuela, Palestine, Belarus, Russia, etc. G. Sharp, "The politics of non-violent action and the spread of ideas about civil resistance", Paper presented at the *Conference on Civil Resistance and Power Politics*, (Oxford University, March 15-18, 2007).

[20]. The US filmmaker Steve York, for instance, has directed the production of numerous documentaries about non-violent struggles in India, the US, South Africa, Chile, Serbia, Ukraine, etc. He has even co-produced an interactive computer game on non-violent strategy to teach leaders of opposition movements the methods of influencing or changing the political environment using non-violent methods (see

www.yorkzim.com).

[21]. See [www.canvasopedia.org](http://www.canvasopedia.org)

[22]. A. Rigby, "Unofficial non-violent intervention: examples from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" *op. cit.*, p.454.

[23]. L. Mahony, *Side by side. Protecting and encouraging threatened activists with unarmed international accompaniment* ( Minneapolis, MA: Center for Victims of Torture, 2004), p.6.

[24]. See <http://vitw.org/ipt/>

[25]. T. Weber, "From Maude Royden's peace army to the Gulf Peace Team: an assessment of unarmed interpositionary peace forces" *op. cit.*

[26]. R. Burrowes, "Cross-border non-violent intervention: a typology" *op. cit.*, p.64.

[27]. J. M. Muller, *Principes et Méthodes de l'Intervention Civile*, *op. cit.*; B. Müller, *The Balkan Peace Team 1994-2001: Non-violent Intervention in Crisis Area with the Deployment of Volunteer Teams*, (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2006).

[28]. See for instance the European campaign led since 2004 by the French organization Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-violente (MAN) calling for the deployment of an international peace force (*force internationale d'intervention civile de paix*) in Israel/Palestine.

[29]. There is one exception to this rule of non-intervention by foreign states: since 1994, a 'Temporary International Presence' operates in the highly divided city of Hebron in the West Bank. Composed of civil-military delegates from six European countries, this mission is very limited as it only has an observation mandate, reporting back to the delegates' respective countries and Israel on human rights and security issues ([www.tiph.org](http://www.tiph.org)).

[30]. There are other such organisations currently active in the region, such as the Christian Peacemakers Team (in Hebron), the International Women's Peace Service (in Salfit) or the French *Campagne Civile Internationale pour la Protection du Peuple Palestinien*.

[31]. C. Seitz, "ISM at the Crossroads: the Evolution of the International Solidarity Movement". *Journal of Palestine Studies*. 32(4), (2003). p.50.

[32]. Retrieved from <http://www.palsolidarity.org/main/about-ism/>

[33]. In Summer 2003, I spent several weeks as a participant observer with ISM, in the context of a PhD research fieldwork, following volunteers in their different areas of operation within the West Bank (Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilia, Nablus districts).

[34]. This statement has generated an intense debate in the US press following the killing of the volunteer Rachel Corrie, and has often been misused or misquoted by hostile journalists trying to depict the ISM as supporting Palestinian armed resistance.

[35]. Retrieved from <http://www.palsolidarity.org/main/about-ism/tough-questions/>

[36]. H. Arraf, and Shapiro A. "Why non-violent resistance is important for the Palestinian intifada: a response to Ramzy Baroud", *Palestine Chronicle*.. Accessed online on <http://www.palestinechronicle.com/story.php?sid=20020129050221695>, (January 29, 2002).

[37]. G. Andoni, Rachel, *The Electronic Intifada*, Accessed online on <http://www.electronicintifada.net>, (March 25, 2003).

[38]. In a collective effort of international (ISM and IWPS), Israeli (Anarchists Against the Wall and *Gush Shalom*) and Palestinian activists (local grassroots committee against the wall and local ISM coordinators), the group was attempting (unsuccessfully) to prevent the demolition of the segment of a house which stood in the way of the

separation wall under construction. When released the next day (on bail signed by an Israeli guarantor), we were forbidden from re-entering any Palestinian area for the rest of our stay in the country.

[39]. Interview with G. Andoni, Beit Sahour, July 2003.

[40]. This means, for example, that female volunteers need to abide by the local customs when it comes to the role of women in the public domain. In a predominantly Muslim society, it is also forbidden to consume alcohol.

[41]. G. Levy, "The peaceful way works best". *Ha'aretz*. Accessed online on <http://www.haaretzdaily.com>, (February 11, 2004).

[42]. It should be noted that the ISM officially rejects the term 'human shield' to describe its function, because its leaders associate it with "a special reference to civilians used by military or armed personnel for protection" (ISM press conference statement, May 5, 2003).

[43]. O. Mansour, "Palestine: Constructing power from within". Paper presented at the Conference *Unarmed Resistance: The Transnational Factor*, Coventry, (July 13-17, 2006).

[44]. On March 16, 2003, Rachel Corrie was fatally run over by a bulldozer while attempting to protect the home of a Palestinian physician from demolition. One month later, April 11, Tom Hurndall was shot in the back of the head by an Israeli military guard tower while he was escorting Palestinian children out of the line of Israeli fire. He died nine months later of his injuries. The two incidents took place in the border town of Rafah in the Gaza strip.

[45]. M. Daraghmeh, "The new Gandhists - Belaten: non-violent successful experience" *CGNews*, Accessed online on <http://www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?mode=8&id=794>. (2005).

[46]. H. Arraf, and Shapiro A. “Why non-violent resistance is important for the Palestinian intifada: a response to Ramzy Baroud”, *op. cit.*,p.74

[47]. The demonstrations which I witnessed in Summer 2003 were for example reported in such prominent newspapers as the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Guardian, Le Monde, etc.

[48]. See <http://www.freegaza.org/>

[49]. The rest of the contingent mainly comes from Canada and the United Kingdom, though an increasing number of ISM volunteers travel from mainland Europe and Asia (mainly Japan). The ISM attracts mostly native English speakers because it is the working language of the movement, and French or Italian speaking volunteers, for example (the two non-English speaking nationalities most represented in the non-violent movement in Palestine), prefer to work with their own networks, such as *Campagne Civile Internationale pour la Protection du Peuple Palestinien (CCIPPP)*.

[50]. Email correspondence with Huwaida Harraf, 18.06.2007.

[51]. For an account of these three-headed campaigns by Palestinian, Israeli and international anti-occupation activists, see for instance V. Dudouet, Heading in the right direction. Peace News, Issue 2454, (2004) pp.12-14, 21. Can be accessed online at

<http://www.peacenews.info/issues/2454/2454122.html>.

## **Forgiveness and Conflict Resolution**

*John Moolakkattu*

### **Introduction**

Scott Appleby, who has done extensive research on religion and politics, concludes that “a new form of conflict transformation —‘religious peace building’—is taking shape on the ground, in and across local communities plagued by violence.”<sup>[1]</sup> Since the end of the Cold War, there has been growing co-operation between nations and peoples in the Western hemisphere, and increasing number of apologies and acts of forgiveness throughout the world. This has prompted scholars of conflict resolution to shift their focus from “conflict resolution” to concepts such as “reconciliation” and “forgiveness”, concepts that reflect more correctly the spirit and practice of the “new age.” The power of forgiveness as a means of conflict resolution or transformation was emphasized by thinkers like Hannah Arendt as it allows human beings to come to terms with their undesirable past, thereby changing the rule that governs the power relationship between the former victimizer and his or her victim. The application of ideas and beliefs that are relevant in the personal and religious realm into politics is however a project that many political

realists would find difficult to agree. Forgiveness, in short, seems to represent the personal, the private, the spiritual. Torpey says that the influence of holocaust consciousness is a factor contributing to the forgiveness discourse.<sup>[2]</sup> One can also see the direct influence of restorative justice practices such as criminal justice innovations and victim-offender mediation, often drawing on aboriginal justice. However, it is the encouraging results from the experience of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the revival of the Christian idea of forgiveness that also finds reflection in most religions in one form or the other, which made the concept popular in recent years. Some even see this as a sort of opportunity for national self-reflexivity and social healing. In other words, forgiveness, once dismissed as irrelevant in the field of conflict resolution during its technical phase of rational problem solving, has now become a theme of considerable import.

Conflict resolution deals with how people resolve their disagreements, often emanating from mutually incompatible goals. Such disagreements entail not only fights, but also negative emotions that persist. The resolution of conflicts through various rational strategies such as negotiations, mediation and facilitation might yield positive outcomes. But conflict resolution focused on the issues that give rise to conflict cannot often address the rupture in human relations that takes place. Failure to deal with this rupture might increase the likelihood of future conflict. Hence forgiveness can play a role in conflict resolution when the parties accept that the conflict is “a relational phenomenon and is the result of failed interaction”, that “both sides have a role in reconstructing the relationships, and in so doing, reconstructing their identities”, which results in the “restoration

of humanity” of both.[3] At an interpersonal level forgiveness is seen as a very useful virtue and it has led to the resolution of conflicts between those in intimate relationships such as married couples. But many would have reservations when this idea is applied to address group conflict.

In this paper I shall look at forgiveness and related concepts like apology as means to or key ingredients in conflict resolution, particularly in conflicts that have been characterized by genocidal acts involving communities. As the world becomes almost like a global village, the importance of apologies and forgiveness for addressing past wrongs and resolving conflicts is greater than at any point in time.

### **Towards Forgiveness**

Early post-Second World War peace models were more often built around visionary schemes, which did not seek to revive memories of an ugly past. Instead they started from the present and imagined about the future. The future was focused and the present was seen only in terms of a tool to move forward to a future. While forgiveness focuses on the future, it connects itself equally with the past and the present. The literature on conflict resolution also is largely focused on the ways by which settlement of conflicts could be reached without laying much stress on restoration of ruptured relationships. Memories of past wounds are presumed to disappear once the underlying issues are resolved. It is now widely recognized that communities that have experienced violence of serious proportions either from different identity groups or from an ethnicised state cannot achieve sustainable peace without a process of social

healing.

Joseph Montville says that “healing and reconciliation in violent ethnic and religious conflicts depend on a process of transactional contrition and forgiveness between aggressor and victims”.<sup>[4]</sup> Psychological research also supports the role of forgiveness in trauma recovery and social healing. Montville adds that ‘even the most brilliant negotiator can at best make a temporary deal between adversaries, unless he or she advances a genuine process of healing the wounds of history.’<sup>[5]</sup>

Although it is not easy to let the past behind us, human beings have the capacity to do so. Andrew Rigby says that it is this “capacity to let go of the past, to forego the quest for revenge”, which is at the heart of forgiveness.<sup>[6]</sup> Hatred and the search for vengeance can consume people and unless people manage to forsake their determination to ‘get even’, there can be no new beginning, no transformation of relationships, no possibility for a shared future.

Donald Shriver thinks that process of asking for and giving forgiveness presupposes the recognition of “commission of an evil act by one agent against another”, “the willingness of offenders to acknowledge their offenses”, continued “memory of immorality”, “the hope of relation repair”, “forbearance, a step back from revenge” and “some degree of empathy with the one who has committed the wrong.”<sup>[7]</sup> Many nations have difficulty in coming to terms with the traumatic loss that they have experienced in history. Montville thinks that, “It is these losses, these wounds that constitute the burdens of history and

the enduring sense of injustice that makes peace building so difficult for traditional diplomats and political leaders.”[\[8\]](#)

### **Centrality of Relationships in Conflict Resolution**

A focus on restoration of ruptured relationships has been a lesser consideration in conflict resolution given its obsession with reaching seemingly win-win agreements. John Paul Lederach says:

In my estimation the starting point for understanding and supporting reconciliation process is a reorientation toward the centrality of relationships. It is in the ebb and low, the quality of interdependence of relationships that we find the birthplace and home of reconciliation. This is quite different than a focus on ‘issues’, the shaping of substantive agreements, or cognitive and rational analytic-based approaches to conflict resolution. In these latter approaches attention is placed on the external, often symptomatic expressions of how the relationship is negotiated. But they often remain just that, external and symptomatic. To enter reconciliation process is to enter the domain of the internal world, the inner understandings, fears and hopes, perceptions and interpretations of the relationship itself.[\[9\]](#)

Relationships remain central to peace building because it provides the template in which cycles of violence happen and the means to transcend them, “for it brings people into the pregnant moments of the moral imagination: the space of recognition that ultimately the quality of our life is dependent on the quality of life of others”.[\[10\]](#) Lederach also thinks that humility as a quality of

practice. For him the balance that we achieve between goals such as truth (past), justice (present) and the future (mercy and peace) is particularly crucial. This balance cannot be achieved in technical conflict resolution.

## **A New Form of Justice**

Although punishment for past wrongs may not take place, the acknowledgement of guilt, naming and shaming the culprits who abused their fellow beings contains a form of justice. Every wronged person or community's initial reaction is that the offender should be punished for the offence. Here justice traditionally understood in a retributive sense may have to give way to the creation of an atmosphere for the rebuilding of community peace, as Mahmood Mamdani suggests.<sup>[11]</sup> It is in this context that the role of restorative justice as a means to address the problem through measures such as truth recovery, reparation, restitution and so on becomes important. At the same time it creates a space within which the perpetrators of crimes might rejoin the community; they can be helped to regain something of their lost humanity and re-establish their connectedness. In allowing victims to come forward without fear of retribution to tell the often grim details of how various family members have disappeared, raped or murdered, for example, the pattern of abuses from community to community becomes apparent and this allows a process of social introspection, mourning and healing to take place. The testimony of perpetrators allows us to have a clearer picture of the events even as their actions are exposed. By bringing these events out into the open, the power of the perpetrators over their victims is finally severed.

## **Forgive and Forget?**

One of the themes in the discourse on forgiveness relates to whether one should adopt the attitude of forgive and forget as in Eastern Europe or incorporate memory as a key element of forgiveness. It is said that only those who remember can forgive and that memory and not forgetting is the necessary condition of forgiveness. A forgetful person cannot forgive because he or she cannot remember. Without remembering, forgiveness as a conscious act is impossible. The slogan, therefore, is no longer 'forgive and forget', but 'remember and forgive'. Collective turning from the past does not mean ignoring or forgetting the misdeed, but recognizing the humanity of the commissioning agent. Forgiveness is on when that comes from the victim. Whether forgiveness or apology is genuine is also a matter of importance. President Nelson Mandela said, "South African people must remember their dreadful past in order to be able to deal with it, to forgive when it is necessary, but never to forget". In the same vein, Archbishop Desmond Tutu asserted: "There is no future without forgiveness, but to forgive, one must know what happened. In order not to repeat what happened to others, we must remember".<sup>[12]</sup>

Genuine forgiveness is voluntary and unconditional as Gopin concludes since "it is not motivated by pressure from a third party, nor is it dependent on the apology or recognition of wrongdoing on the part of the offender."<sup>[13]</sup> Such unilateral measures, which have a strong Gandhian tenor about them, are based on a deep belief in the goodness of human beings and a notion of self that embraces the 'other'. It is more through an internal process that the forgiver is transformed, so also the forgiven, if he or she is able to receive the gift

of forgiveness. The philosopher Trudy Govier has suggested, 'no-one is absolutely unforgivable, whatever he or she may have done in the world', because to deem unforgivable the perpetrator even of heinous and repeated atrocity 'is to ignore his human capacity for moral choice and change, which is the very foundation of human worth and dignity'.[\[14\]](#)

### **Separating Doers from Deeds**

In *Forgiveness and Revenge* Trudy Govier argues, 'We do not forgive deeds; we forgive people who have committed deeds. When we forgive, it is another person we forgive'. From Govier's perspective, it is unnecessary to talk about forgiving deeds as such, because only persons can be forgiven. In support of this position, she argues that 'No deed ever expressed remorse, apologized, asked for forgiveness or faced the challenge of moral transformation. . . . it is persons who are the subjects and objects of forgiveness; persons who forgive or do not forgive'[\[15\]](#). According to Govier, because people are capable of a moral transformation that distances them from their deeds, doers and deeds are separable in a significant way. Forgiveness acknowledges this separation. Here also it works like Gandhian non-violence and the general principles of conflict resolution theory.

Forgiveness is emphasised as needing greater courage, one that empowers the victims and sets into motion a dynamics similar to non-violent action. It also provides an opportunity to the offender to overcome the guilt. Hannah Arendt says: "Forgiving, in other words, is the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly, unconditioned by the act which provoked it. ...Without

being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever..."[16]

Studies on trust conducted in Northern Ireland showed that interaction with peers from the outgroup had led to higher trust in that outgroup and a greater willingness to forgive it for any past misdeeds[17]. Such willingness to forgive a perpetrator rests on a belief that the perpetrator will reciprocate positively and will not exploit such a move as a sign of weakness. Hence increasing the opportunity for intense contact between members of conflicting groups paves the way for ideas like forgiveness to take root. In a study of intergroup forgiveness among Bosnian Muslims and Serbs, it was found that "Given the beneficial effects of intergroup contact via empathy and trust, one way of restoring intergroup relations by promoting forgiveness would be increasing the opportunity for engaged, structured, and good quality contact between members of conflicting groups." [18]

## **Relational World View**

Despite its described shortcomings, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) opened the floor to victims of each side and gave them a chance to 'tell their story' in the hope that the very process of talking would somehow alleviate the sufferings endured in silence for so long. In this case the victims' Christian upbringing converged with the already existing tendency toward compassion and harmony that was found in the African *ubuntu*

*weltanschauung*, a point repeatedly emphasized by Bishop Tutu. This cultural-religious infrastructure has, arguably, played a significant role in the prevention of bloodshed and vengeance following the ascendance to power of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1994.

## **Forgiveness and Conflict Resolution**

We now have several examples to show that forgiveness can “play a crucial role in conflict resolution . . . when it is placed in the context of individual cultures.” When the sides to the conflict share similar attitudes regarding the value, importance, shape, and contents of forgiveness, they are ready to embark on the long and difficult journey toward forgiveness that culminates in reconciliation. The greater the cultural-religious gap between the groups, the smaller their chances to reach this goal according to Gopin. Despite such caveats, one can say that the timing of the act of forgiveness or apology-seeking, the intention and will of the parties offering or seeking it and the extent to which a personal touch has been brought into the whole process can have positive implications for conflict resolution and reconciliation. Offering and seeking forgiveness can take place on the part of individuals as well as collectivities. For example, the statement of forgiveness by archbishop of Canterbury and Cardinal Cahal Daly former Archbishop of Armagh, Northern Ireland, played a key role in the reconciliation process in Northern Ireland.

Forgiveness is often a sub process of conflict resolution and reconciliation and should and can be intentionally integrated into the resolution process of deep-rooted conflicts. It is not a one shot

process or act. It could be part of an ongoing process or the culmination of a process of previous attempts at reconciliation. Its value to break the cycle of violence, hate and despair is particularly pronounced in protracted conflicts.

Forgiveness can work not only towards conflict resolution, but also for post-settlement peace building. It plays a connecting role in transforming transitional societies emerging from conflict. Resentment is also one way of recovering one's own self-respect. Tutu says "Forgiving means abandoning your right to pay back the perpetrator in his own coin, but it is a loss that liberates the victim." The plea for forgiveness may be perceived as an act of humiliation and subsequently hurt the pleading party's status. On the other hand, the victim who is asked to grant forgiveness may feel that "to forgive is to relinquish the victim role and the rewards that go with it" such as "the power to induce guilt, to demand apologies and reparations or to seek punishment of the perpetrator."[19]

Often, however, victims and their families are forced to carry on with the tasks of everyday living without benefit of reflection on the past. These people may consciously remember nothing of past events, because the daily trauma they continue to experience may simply have become normalized; or else they have made a conscious decision to reject the truth surrounding the past, as witnessed in denial and revisionism. I understand from recent research that most people who experienced the partition riots in the Indian subcontinent often wanted not to revive memories of such trauma and created a form of forgetfulness as a defensive strategy.

## **Conclusion**

The ultimate purpose of forgiveness is restoration of relationships and the reestablishment of connections with the community. Public apologies and seeking and granting of forgiveness create a new dimension to repairing fractured relationships. In places like Gujarat where the communal passions have been raised for political advantage, and past violence of genocide proportions have ruptured communal relations, it is only through a process of collective contrition that reconciliation will be possible. It would be appropriate for a person like Narendra Modi, who is now on a politically strong position, to apologise for the state-directed violence that took place in 2002. More recently, there was widespread condemnation of the Sri Lankan Government on the excesses committed by it on the civilian Tamil population in its final battle against the Tigers, one that legitimately demanded an apology. Apologies when carried out at the appropriate time are useful. The sincerity of such apologies also should be felt by the victims. Forgiveness remains the only hope in situations where traditional conflict resolution ideas mainly built on rational choice assumptions are insufficient guides to reconciliation. We need to stir the conscience of the people through reviving their stories and go through a process of social healing.

In sum, the centering of a politics of memory, regret, apology, forgiveness, and reparation has deeper implications for conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building. This does not mean that forgiveness and acts of contrition in themselves can serve as substitutes for real negotiations or dialogue. Instead, they can provide an ideal setting in which negotiations can take place devoid of power considerations, devoid of bargaining, where the power of reason is

supplemented by the power of heart or compassion. The manner in which these less utilized human faculties are allowed to exercise in individual cultural contexts may certainly vary. I would like to end by saying that a culture of forgiveness or the development of habits of heart should also constitute an essential element of a culture of peace and one of the goals of peace education. The recent shift in emphasis from conflict resolution to conflict transformation is certainly a welcome development in that it seeks to incorporate forgiveness and apology as key elements of reconciliation. However, forgiveness and associated values cannot be foisted on societies from elsewhere. As Lederach says, “understanding conflict and developing appropriate models of handling it will necessarily be rooted in, and must respect and draw from, the cultural knowledge of a people”[\[20\]](#)

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## **The Choice before Humankind: Non-violence or Non-survival**

*J. M. Kaul*

The urge for peace has always been there since the dawn of civilization. Even some of the recent wars have been fought with the declared aim of being wars to end all wars. The formation of the League of Nations after World War I and of the United Nations after World War II are witness to the fact that people all over the world have desperately been seeking to devise instruments that will make wars impossible. It is another matter that the instruments were devised by those at the helm of affairs in the victorious countries. Unfortunately, but not surprisingly they were more interested in using the post-war situations to consolidate their domination of the world than in ushering in an era of permanent peace on earth.

The purpose of this paper is to show that a number of developments that have taken place today have finally created a situation where the stark alternative before the people of the world is non-violence - a total rejection of war and violence - or the extinction

of the human race. It is argued that as more and more people become convinced that the choice really is between non-violence and non-survival there is little doubt of what the choice will be. It follows that the task before the world peace movement is to make the overwhelming majority of the people who long for peace aware of this and to frustrate the efforts of those few who have a vested interest in promoting the cult of violence.

The odds, today, seem to be against the survival of the human race. This assertion may sound like coming from a doomsday prophet but, I think, I am in good company. Sir Martin Rees, Astronomer Royal and President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science once staked a thousand pounds sterling on a bet that “by the year 2020 an instance of bio-error or bio-terror will have killed a million people. His new book “Our Final Century” has this forecast: “... the odds are no better than fifty-fifty that our present civilisation on Earth will survive to the end of the present century”.

First there is violence of man on man and then there is violence of man on nature, which makes for a very lethal combination. As of October 6, the world has moved into a state of “ecological debt”, where the environment’s carrying capacity is clearly being overburdened. So is the state of the economic burden that the global system has to bear: the debilitating power of poverty and want amidst enormous plenty and waste. Adding its muscle to the forces of destruction are actual weapons of mass destruction.

## **Nuclear weapons**

Despite attempts to the contrary nuclear weapons proliferate and will continue to do. As long back as in 1955, a decade after the atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki with all their horrendous consequences, the philosopher Bertrand Russell and the scientist Albert Einstein, along with nine other scientists, issued a manifesto stating: “There lies before us, if we choose, continual progress in happiness, knowledge, and wisdom. Shall we, instead, choose death because we cannot forget our quarrels? We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity and forget the rest. If you can do so, the way lies open to a new Paradise; if you cannot, there lies before you the risk of universal death”. Einstein, one of those who paved the way for the creation of the bomb, was himself shocked to see its awesome destructive power and had cried out: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.”

The history of the years since those fateful days of August 1945 is witness to several occasions when the possibility of nuclear conflict loomed large. The first was the stand off in 1962 between the Soviet Union and the USA over the deployment of nuclear missiles in Cuba. The world was then really on the brink of a nuclear conflict, which could have wrought destruction on a scale undreamt of. Almost miraculously, both withdrew from the brink realising perhaps that neither country would survive such a conflict.

The optimism that the end of the Cold War would avert the danger of a nuclear conflagration faded away as the armies of India

and Pakistan afresh with nuclear weapons repeatedly faced each other in an eye ball to eye ball confrontation on the line of control between the countries in Kashmir. Describing the situation an Indian historian writes: “In the spring of 2002 exchanges between Indian and Pakistani troops became more frequent. As spring turned into summer and the troop build-up intensified, the concerns of 1998 returned – would the sub-continent be witness to the first ever nuclear exchange?” A respected Nepali monthly thought that the region was ‘poised on the cusp of war once again’. A leading American analyst believed that the ‘crisis between India and Pakistan is the most dangerous confrontation since Soviet ships steamed towards the U.S. naval blockade of Cuba in 1962”.

The intervening years have seen credible reports of depleted uranium weapons having been used by the NATO forces in Europe in the operations in Serbia. The Iraq-Iran war and Iraq’s war against the Kurds almost certainly saw the deployment of chemical weapons of mass destruction. Meanwhile, low-yield and more usable nuclear weapons are being developed for the United States army and even nuclear weapons of enormous intensity to bust deep bunkers are believed to have been made. Whether they were used to “smoke out” Taliban and Al Qaeda militants hiding in bunkers in the border areas between Pakistan and Afghanistan is not known. Efforts are being made to militarize and nuclearize outer space through Ballistic Missile Defence and Theatre Missile Defence programmes, which can hardly be ‘defensive weapons’.

Even as these lines get written, the U.S. Government’s repeated threats of attacking Iran’s nuclear installations do not seem just

political posturing. The presence of U.S. aircraft carriers and other naval forces armed with nuclear weapons indicate that active preparations are on to back up the words with action. Iran on its part has also warned of dire consequences and hitting back at American targets anywhere in the world. An imaginary account of the Third World War (purportedly written in 2020) speaks of the war – starting with Iran’s missiles hitting Israel that retaliates with nuclear weapons that it possesses, triggering of a World War with China backing Iran and the USA coming to the defence of Israel – and seems too close to reality for comfort. Although the greatest and most immediate danger arises from nuclear weapons the enormous amounts being spent on conventional weapons are no less dangerous.

## **World military spending**

World military spending is increasing at a frenetic pace. The highest spender is, of course, the United States. SIPRI figures say that world military expenditure in 2006 is estimated at \$1204 billion in current prices. This represents an increase of 3.5 per cent in real terms since 2005 and of 37 per cent over the 10-year period since 1997. Average spending per capita has increased from \$173 in 2005 to \$177 in 2006 at constant (2005) prices and exchange rates and to \$184 at current prices.

World military expenditure is extremely unevenly distributed. In 2006 the 15 countries with the highest spending accounted for 83 per cent of the total. The USA is responsible for 46 per cent of the world total, distantly followed by the U.K., France, Japan and China between four per cent and five per cent each.

Government spending priorities in countries in different per capita income groups shows that the lower the income, the higher the priority to military spending in relation to social spending. Over the five-year period 1999-2003, the share of military expenditure in GDP has been kept at a constant level in the high and middle-income countries while it has decreased somewhat in the low-income sample. At the same time, social spending as a share of GDP has increased in high and low-income groups but remained relatively stable in middle-income countries.

The rapid increase in the United States' military spending is to a large extent due to continued costly military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Most of the increase resulted from supplementary allocations in addition to the regular budget. Between September 2001 and June 2006, the U.S. government provided \$432 billion in annual and supplemental appropriations under the heading 'global war on terrorism'. This massive increase in U.S. military spending has been one of the factors contributing to the deterioration of the U.S. economy since 2001. In addition to its direct impact of high military expenditure, there are also indirect and more long-term effects. According to one study, taking these factors into account, the overall past and future costs until year 2016 to the USA for the war in Iraq have been estimated to \$2,267 billion.

In 2006, China continued its steep increase in military expenditure, for the first time surpassing that of Japan and replacing Japan as the top Asian military spender and emerging as the fourth biggest spender in the world. Amid intense discussions on the right level of Japanese military spending, Japan decided, for the fifth consecutive year, to reduce its military spending in 2006, focusing its

military budget on missile defence.

It is well known that the military-industrial complex promotes war preparation in order to profit from government orders that are free from the competition of a capitalist market. In fact, the military industrial complex of the United States is able to influence the government's foreign policy. Thus the arms race is often instigated to ensure a continual flow of orders for the military-industrial complex.

Only the very naïve would believe that the huge stockpiles of arms in different countries are just a deterrent. The experience of history is that once arms come into the possession of an individual or group they are used to further the interests of the individual or group. The arms being used by the Taliban and other militant groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan were mostly supplied to them by the United States to fight against the Russians who had occupied Afghanistan. These same arms are now being used by terrorist groups against India and the Afghan government.

The arms race is doing the maximum damage to the economies of Third World countries. India's defence budget has been increasing by leaps and bounds. No matter what the colour of the party or coalition that runs the government the pressure of the arms lobbies and the prospect of the cuts offered in the huge arms deals ensures that the defence budget keeps increasing. In India, the provision of Rs 96,000 crores for defence – almost double the figure of the allocation only three years ago – is a staggering figure for a country where 27 per cent of the population is below the poverty line and which is ranked only 127 in the Human Development index of the United Nations.

## **Global warming**

The second big threat that faces the world today is of global warming with all the consequences that flow from it. The journal, *Resurgence*, reports that in the summer of 2003 as many as 15,000 people died in the heat wave in France. Some of them, says the report, “had to be buried in temporary graves when no one could identify the bodies”. Britain also saw temperatures climbing above previous records. As many as 2,500 excess heat related deaths were recorded during the August period. In India too 1,500 deaths were recorded when a June heat wave struck the country. Pakistan’s Jacobabad saw temperatures rise to 52°C, 8° above normal. “Such temperatures make normal life impossible and, if global warming continues to accelerate, dry sub-continental areas like Pakistan, the Middle East and North Africa may become literally uninhabitable in future decades”, says the journal.

Four years later reports are pouring in of the Arctic ice melting, of Himalayan glaciers shifting. Droughts in some parts of the world and tornadoes in others with wind speeds reaching more than 200 km per hour such as the one that struck Katrina in the United States are beginning to occur at regular intervals, indicating the shape of things to come.

Climate change is one of the greatest environmental, social and economic threats facing the planet, says Earth Trends. The warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from

observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global mean sea level. The Earth's average surface temperature has risen by 0.76° C since 1850. Most of the warming occurring over the last 50 years is very likely to have been caused by human activities. In its Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), published on February 2, 2007, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects that, without further action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the global average surface temperature is likely to rise by a further 1.8-4.0°C in this century. Even the lower end of this range would take the temperature increase since pre-industrial times above 2°C, the threshold beyond which irreversible and possibly catastrophic changes become far more likely.

Projected global warming this century is likely to trigger serious consequences for humanity and other life forms, including a rise in sea levels between 18 to 59 cm which will endanger coastal areas and small islands, and a greater frequency and severity of extreme weather. Among the most significant areas threatened, as specifically mentioned in Al Gore's Oscar winning documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* is the Sundarbans delta of West Bengal.

Human activities that contribute to climate change include in particular, the burning of fossil fuels, agriculture and land-use changes like deforestation etc. These cause emission of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), the gas mainly responsible for climate change, as well as of other 'greenhouse' gases. To bring climate change to a halt, global greenhouse gas emissions must be reduced significantly.

## **Water scarcity**

One of the consequences of climate change and global warming is the growing scarcity of water resources. Deforestation combined with global warming is leading to the desertification of vast areas.,

Dr. Jacques Diouf, (The Director General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations) explaining how serious the problem of water scarcity is says that “Global water use has been growing at more than twice the rate of population growth in the last century.

Water scarcity already affects every continent and more than 40 percent of the people on our planet. By 2025, 1.8 billion people will be living in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world’s population could be living under water stressed conditions.”

To understand how serious the problem is, one needs to take stock of the immense impact water has on our daily lives and our ability to provide for a better future. Lack of access to adequate, safe water limits human ability to produce enough food to eat or earn enough income; limits ability to operate industries and provide energy; without access to water for drinking and proper hygiene it is more difficult to reduce the spread and impact of life-threatening diseases like HIV/AIDS. Every day, 3,800 children die from diseases associated with a lack of safe drinking water and proper sanitation, says Jacques Diouf.

## **Water scarcity enhanced by climate change**

The water scarcity is being exacerbated by climate change, especially in the arid zones of the world, which are home to more than two billion people and to half of all poor people. The human impact on the earth's environment and climate must be addressed in order to protect the world's water resources. There are other factors involved as well, such as increases in the amount of water needed to grow the food for a growing population. Agriculture is the number-one user of freshwater worldwide. Also, the trend towards urbanization and increases in domestic and industrial water use by people who live in more developed areas are factors that lead to growing water use.

Ultimately, the problem is one of the way in which man manages existing water resources. Whether the global community has the political will to support policies and invest in programmes that protect our natural environment, conserve water and use less water to do more?

Political will and investment may not make the Sahara disappear but political will, international cooperation and investment can help to stem the loss of water from huge river basins like those of the Nile and Lake Chad. That is something that FAO and other United Nations agencies are involved in. "Political will and investment can help to bring available water to the millions of small farmers around the world who are struggling to grow enough food to eat, by supporting locally-based programmes that directly involve those farmers and their neighbours in conserving rainfall, using water more efficiently and protecting water resources. Political and moral will can help us to bring water to the 1.1 billion people who do not have access to the minimum of 20-50 liters of freshwater required to meet

their most basic needs and the 2.6 billion people who don't have enough water to provide proper sanitation”

The crux of the problem lies in how one deals with agriculture. Jacques Diouf agrees that there is no magic wand, no flip of the switch that is going to suddenly eliminate water scarcity. However, concrete measures can help to turn the tide against water shortages. “We at FAO recognize that the agriculture sector must take the lead in coping with water scarcity by finding more effective ways to conserve rain-fed moisture and irrigate farmlands”.

While growing enough food is fundamental to fighting hunger and improving lives on every continent, the fact remains that agriculture consumes about 70 per cent of all freshwater withdrawn and up to 95 per cent in several developing countries. Tackling water scarcity even as the demand for food increases, means supporting initiatives to produce more food with proportionally less water. This means protecting the waterways, keeping forests healthy and improving the way in which farms are irrigated and livestock managed. “Taking advantage of the growing scarcity of water attempts are being made to privatise water resources. Various types of arrangements are made such as public private partnerships, lease agreements, BOT i.e. Buy Own Transfer. In all these arrangements private corporations try to convert what is nature's free resource on which humanity depends for survival into a commodity that is traded like any other”, Jacques Diouf points out.

Examples of water scarcity as a source of conflict between different regions or provinces within one country can be cited from

India. The Tamil Nadu-Karnataka conflict over water is a recurring phenomenon in India. So is the Haryana-Punjab conflict. In the case of the former, there have even been clashes between the political parties backed up by the local farming community of the two states. Attempts to settle the cases through reference to Courts or Tribunals often do not yield results as availability of water for agricultural purposes is a matter of life and death for the farmers.

Threat of even more violent conflicts is arising when two sovereign countries are involved and rivers which flow through several countries are sought to be blocked by building dams and storing water within one country leading to the down stream countries being deprived. The India-Bangladesh dispute over the Farakka barrage, which Bangladesh feels is depriving them of the water it needs for irrigation; the India and Pakistan dispute on the Indus waters are realities. As China seeks complete control over the Tibetan rivers that flow into India, the threat intensifies.

### **Is war inevitable?**

“Having moved away from the conventional understanding of water strictly as a zero-sum environmental resource by reconceptualizing it in more fungible economic terms, we nevertheless believe two incompatible social trends will collide to make war in the Middle East and North Africa virtually inevitable in the future”, says Jacques Diouf. With economic globalization, as capitalism gets embraced as the only global economic philosophy, with the world going in for free-trade economics, things are set to change dramatically. Economic growth is both required and is

inevitable and Jacques Diouf believes that “the WTO will facilitate this aggregate global growth, which, on the plus side, will undoubtedly increase the basic standard of living for the average world citizen. However, the global economy will be required to meet the needs of an estimated eight billion citizens in the year 2025. Achieving growth will demand an ever-greater share of the world’s existing natural resources, including water. Thus, if present regional economic and demographic trends continue, resource shortfalls will occur, with water being the most highly stressed resource in the Middle East and North Africa”.

## **The oil crisis**

A petroleum consultant, Ivanhoe, writing in the *Futurist*, warns that almost all the oil that exists has been found and is being consumed fast. There will thus be a future with less petroleum entering world markets within the foreseeable future. “After the oil crises of the 1970s, petroleum shortages disappeared and prices stabilized. The world stopped worrying about oil, but the grim fact remains that the world's petroleum reserves are limited, and they are rapidly being used up”.

In the 1970s prices shot up and the search for additional petroleum supplies became compelling. The incentives to conserve oil increased sharply and the shifts in supply and demand of all fuels solved the global petroleum problem. The future, however, poses a far more serious problem. “Most of the world's large, economically viable oil fields have already been found, so a permanent oil shock is inevitable early in the next century. More Europeans than Americans

are aware of this”, says Ivanhoe. While there is difference of opinion over how soon the global crude oil productivity will decline enough to give a permanent oil shock: some say in the next 50 years, Ivanhoe does not agree with the time schedule: “I disagree: Most of the large exploration targets for oil supply have been found, at the same time that the world's population (and, along with it, demand for energy) is exploding.”

The war for world’s oil resources has already started. No one believes that the US invasion of Iraq was to restore democracy or to save the world from the “Weapons of Mass Destruction”. Iraq has one of the world’s largest reserves of oil and that is what the war with Iraq was all about.

### **Wealth disparity triggering violence**

One of the direct consequences of globalization is the accumulation of wealth by a small section of the population on the one hand and a huge mass of not so well off and absolutely impoverished on the other. The bulk of the poor are in the third world countries where the disparities become even more glaring. Billionaires in dollar terms are growing faster in India than even in Japan and yet more than 50 per cent of the population – that is more than 500 millions, more than the population of almost the whole of Western Europe – lives on less than two dollars a day. The middle strata with incomes of two lakhs a year or more are elated as they have more money on their hands than their ancestors dreamed of. The crisp notes in their hand do not measure adequately the quality of life though. With the real estate market hitting the roof few are able to

rent flats. Outright purchase is the preferred option but once they start paying interest on their loans, money in hand does not seem so exciting. When costs of children's education are provided for there is not much that separates them from the poor. With television and cinema showing the lives of the 'bold and the beautiful' set, it is not surprising that the young hanker for the same life style and then get frustrated when they find it beyond their reach. Some take to the gun, which explains why not only the ranks of the poor and unemployed but those of the middle class supply the pool of recruits for fundamentalists and crime syndicates.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13), says the Bible and "having made money our God we have dethroned God", says Gandhi. The service of the Mammon demands only one goal in life – to make money; the means do not matter. Much of the violence and crime is a direct consequence of this as Mammon comes to 21<sup>st</sup> century man in the shape of the 'market'. It is by paying obeisance to the 'market', often by sheer manipulations, that some are making billions to spend in ostentatious consumption.

The best brains, and the largest share of the financial and physical resources, are engaged today in the production of weapons and research is aimed at finding ways of making the weapons more and more lethal. This is what is allowing the cult of violence to hold sway. Market led economies tend to make the maximum profits from the sale of weapons. The U.S. administration's main interest in pushing through the nuclear deal between the USA and India is to tap the huge

Indian market for nuclear fuel that will open out when the restriction on such sale is removed. The countries in the nuclear suppliers group, which are limited to only a few developed countries of which USA and Russia will undoubtedly be the main, stand to gain as much as a 100 billion dollars in the coming years according to some estimates.

It is clearly in the interest of the military-industrial-academic complex that the cult of violence be propagated actively. Hence the media's concentration on violence and it is the electronic media with its ability to show violence in its stark and bloody brutality that today is perverting the minds of the youth. The repeated incidents in the United States of teenagers going berserk and shooting young school kids just for the heck of it are a natural consequence of the cult of violence and the easy availability of guns in the market.

In the process, perhaps for the first time in the history of human civilization the animal instincts of human beings are beginning to dominate the human consciousness and all the values and higher faculties that spiritual leaders and philosophers, artists, poets and musicians, scientists and intellectuals have tried to inculcate through the ages are sought to be suppressed and destroyed.

How else can one explain the action of those leaders who had no qualms about dropping the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? They take pride in calling themselves the most advanced and developed and have the Statue of Liberty on their gateway. They knew very well that these bombs would wipe out entire cities including women and children and that the effects of the radio-active

material would be felt for generations. There has never been a word of regret. Is it because it was an Asian country and deep down in their psyche is the feeling that all, but the “white”, are sub-human?

Is then the end of civilization and perhaps of the human race as a whole in sight? Are we then in the first years of our “Final Century”? Will the question posed by Sir Martin Rees in his book “Will the Human Race Survive the Twenty-First Century?” have to be answered in the affirmative? Even if one does not wish to be guided by faith and belief in a Supreme Being and look at the issue rationally, there are enough grounds for refusing to take the pessimistic view.

Not only the recorded human history but even the evidence that is available from geology and archaeology reveals that a process of evolution has been going on from the time the first life appeared on earth in the shape of plants and trees. The process has always shown an upward movement in the sense that it is from lower to higher forms of life, from less intelligent to more intelligent, from less conscious to more conscious. Homo-sapiens emerged perhaps some 200,000 to 300,000 years ago and since then has evolved mentally till the present day. There is no doubt that his mental faculties have grown sharper though it seems physically there have not been any significant changes.

The progress towards what is called modern civilization has not been a linear movement. There have been periods of dark ages and then has come a renaissance. Consider the present – as it has evolved since industrialization and the factory system started leading to

colonization of large parts of the world and the building of empires – phase of economic imperialism generally referred to as globalization as a period of regression; another “dark age”. Even today, there are positive developments. The spread of knowledge and of the tools of communication, the concept of Human Rights, the idea that democracy is the best form of government have been assets that will help man move forward to societies that are able to free themselves from the shackles of neo-liberal imperialism.

All empires have had their day but even though the human spirit has been suppressed and enslaved for a period, it has ultimately broken free and moved forward. The future of mankind as has been visualized by seers such as Shri Aurobindo is that there will be a development in human consciousness to a higher stage and the super-aggressiveness and cut throat competition of the present period will yield place to a spirit of co-operation, where hatred will be replaced by love for fellow human beings and for all life on earth.

The renewed interest in Gandhi and the many courses on Gandhi’s ideas that have been started in the United States and in Europe indicate that people all over the world are beginning to realize that violence cannot be combated by violence nor hatred by greater hatred. In India, the land of his birth, the revival of Gandhi has been slow but it is manifesting itself in many ways. The rampant consumerism that is part of the present-day market economy produced its back-lash in the West in the shape of the hippie movement. In India the younger generation, mesmerized by the glamour of globalization and the opportunities of making quick money that it holds out, has been slow to react but there are enough signs

that there is a process of rethinking going on in the youth.

Utterly disillusioned by the hypocrisy of modern day politicians, the politicking that goes on in the name of democracy and the extent of corruption that is prevalent at all levels, sections of the youth are beginning to realize the significance of the Mahatma's message. They are seeing for themselves that foul means do not lead to fair ends, that hypocrisy and deception cannot fool all the people for all time. The extent of corruption that has permeated all levels of our society has begun to stink and the stench is now becoming unbearable. Truth has to be the foundation for human relations in all spheres. Aiding their rethinking is the fact that the cycle of violence and counter-violence is not leading anywhere.

Time was when wars were fought between armies on battlefields remote from human habitation and the civilian populations were largely unaffected. The induction of modern weapons of warfare, the fighter and the bomber aircraft, the long range ballistic missiles have brought about a qualitative change in the nature of warfare. World War I and particularly World War II were total wars: they affected the civilian population as much as the military personnel. Now, with the addition of the nuclear weapons to the arsenal of quite a number of countries – including China and India, the two countries which between them hold one third of the world's population – only the irrational will think in terms of achieving any ends through war and violence.

Gandhi's *Satyagraha* was not derived from books or based on

any ism. It took shape during his struggle in South Africa and was born out of his experience of the 20 years of experimentation that he carried on there. It did not drop from his mind like a fully developed weapon of struggle but evolved slowly as he carried on his work. It needs to be remembered that he first thought of winning the goodwill of the government through co-operation. In the Zulu war, he formed an ambulance corps and nursed the wounded on the battlefield. Later, he called his non-violent struggle passive resistance. He developed the idea further and found a name that best describes it – *Satyagraha* (soul force or truth force).

Numerous struggles based on just demands have been going on for years with intermittent violence. The one that has had the most far-reaching consequences is the Palestine-Israel conflict. There have been periods of violence where many on both sides have perished, followed by talks and negotiations without any result. Violence has erupted time and again even when there has been some agreement for a temporary truce without any lasting solution emerging. Both within Israel and in Palestine there is a considerable body of opinion that Gandhi's weapon of *Satyagraha* should be tried. One of Gandhi's grandsons even led a peaceful march through the streets of Palestine as it is clear that there can be no military solution to the problem.

In Northern Ireland after years of "terrorist" actions some sort of an agreement has finally been reached with the IRA and the pro-British Protestant elements agreeing to a formula for the joint administration of the region. In Nepal the Maoists after having extended their sway over two thirds of the country have agreed to surrender arms and take to the political process of elections. Though

there have been major differences between them and the main line parties the truce still holds.

In Kashmir, at least some elements among the separatists have realized that the method of dialogue is the only one that can yield results though a section of the *jehadis* continue to cross the line of control and inflict damage on the security forces of the Indian government. Today the militants are completely isolated from the Kashmiri people and even though anti-Indian feelings are still strong, their rejection of violence and terrorism is genuine.

Nothing can stop an idea whose time has come, goes the saying. The idea of non-violence and *Satyagraha* is gaining ground and hopefully some solution to the problem will be found in course of time.

### **Action programme**

Spreading the culture of non-violence can never be a matter of waiting for things to happen, for mere passive resistance when violence takes place. It is a dynamic, pro-active concept. Only through struggles and sacrifice can the cult of violence be ended. Where struggle is involved it can only be in the form of *Satyagraha*. The days of power flowing out of the barrel of a gun are over.

The struggle for Nuclear Disarmament, the elimination of all nuclear weapons must be the primary objective; a reduction in military spending on conventional arms all over the world must be the next objective.

Since nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger before mankind and their elimination is a realizable objective even in the short term, this must be central to any action programme.

In fighting terrorism, there is need to emphasize that *Satyagraha* and non-violent methods of mobilization and struggle have to play a major role.

It must also be emphasized that the fight against terrorism can be meaningful if struggles against State terrorism in all its manifestations which is increasingly becoming a threat to peace are simultaneously carried out.

All means of communication, including staging of events, concerts and theatrical performances should be used to send out these messages. *Satyagraha* before sites where nuclear weapons are located should also be resorted to.

Joint actions with environmentalists, Greenpeace movement and peace activists should be planned wherever possible.

David Kieger, President of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, explains why the possibility of bringing about an end to nuclear weapons is not as impossible a task today as it might seem: "An amazing and important commentary appeared in the January 4, 2007 issue of the Wall Street Journal, co-authored by four high-level

architects of the Cold War: George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn. The article, entitled “A World Free of Nuclear Weapons,” was amazing not so much for what it proposed, but for who was making the proposal. The four prominent former US officials reviewed current nuclear dangers and called for US leadership to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons. Their argument was as follows:

1. Reliance on nuclear weapons for deterrence is becoming increasingly hazardous and decreasingly effective.
2. Terrorist groups are outside the bounds of deterrence strategy.
3. We are entering a new nuclear era that will be more precarious, disorienting and costly than was Cold War deterrence.
4. New nuclear weapons states lack the safeguarding and control experiences learned by the U.S. and USSR during the Cold War.
5. The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty envisioned the elimination of all nuclear weapons.
6. Non-nuclear weapons states have grown increasingly sceptical of the sincerity of the nuclear weapons states to fulfill their Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.
7. There exists an historic opportunity to eliminate nuclear weapons in the world.
8. To realize this opportunity, bold vision and action are needed.

9. The U.S. must take the lead and must convince the leaders of the other nuclear weapons states to turn the goal of nuclear weapons abolition into a joint effort.
10. A number of steps need to be taken to lay the groundwork for a world free of nuclear threat, including de-alerting nuclear arsenals; reducing the size of nuclear arsenals; eliminating tactical nuclear weapons; achieving Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and encouraging other key states to also do so; securing nuclear weapons and weapons-usable materials everywhere in the world; and halting production of fissile materials for weapons, ceasing to use enriched uranium in civil commerce and removing weapons-usable uranium from research reactors.

For those committed to the global effort to abolish nuclear weapons, there is nothing new in these arguments. They are the arguments that many civil society groups have been making since the end of the Cold War. Other former officials, such as Robert McNamara and General George Lee Butler, former head of the U.S. Strategic Command, have also made such arguments. What is new is that these former ‘Cold Warriors’ have joined together in a bipartisan spirit to publicly make these arguments to the American people. This means that the perspectives of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, the Global Security Institute, the Nuclear Policy Research Institute and other dedicated civil society groups are finally being embraced by key former officials who once presided over Cold War nuclear strategy.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer, said: “All truth passes through three stages. First, it is ridiculed. Second, it is violently opposed. Third, it is accepted as being self-evident.” The truth that if there is to be a human future the U.S. must lead the way

in abolishing nuclear weapons has been frequently ridiculed and violently opposed. The commentary by Shultz, Perry, Kissinger and Nunn suggests that this truth may now be entering the stage of being self-evident.

Fortunately even the animal instincts of human beings contain the instinct for survival. This ensures that once the mass of people are made aware that the choice before mankind today really is between non-violence and extinction, there is little doubt as to what they will choose. Therein lies the hope that the future destiny of the human race is a forward movement in the evolutionary process that will lead to race of men with a higher consciousness.

## **Move Towards Nuclear Disarmament: The Need for French Initiative**

*Jean Molénat*

Jacques Chirac was elected as the President of the French Republic on 7th May, 1995. Four months later, on 9<sup>th</sup> September, France started up its nuclear tests again on the islands of Mururoa and Fangataufa in the Pacific Ocean. Three years later, at the beginning of May 1998, India carried out 5 nuclear tests and at the end of the same month Pakistan carried out two nuclear tests. One might say that we were observing a chain reaction. One can immediately see who gave the bad example. Whilst all nations with nuclear capacity had agreed to respect a moratorium on tests, Jacques Chirac's French Government was the first to break those agreements unilaterally to satisfy the nuclear lobby. Protest movements around the world were such that Jacques Chirac had to suspend his series of tests and to carry out only six whereas eight had been planned. In order to avoid a similar outcry, India and Pakistan hastened to make a show of force.

India and Pakistan presented a true challenge to the arrogance of the big nuclear powers who wanted to keep this dark honour for themselves alone in order to better impose their domination. Out of fear of atomic arms proliferation, the five powers who make up the Security Council decided on a moratorium on nuclear tests. This

moratorium was tacitly observed for several years, with the exception of China.

Yet, in the non-proliferation treaty signed by the five nuclear powers which are also members of the Security Council, Article Six is very clear. The signatory states undertake to move towards total nuclear disarmament. Although the Americans and the Russians agreed to reduce their stocks significantly (with which they could destroy the surface of the earth several times over) generally speaking, the big nuclear powers continue nonetheless to perfect their weapons, notably by simulations and by trials referred to as “sub-critical” (nuclear tests without the final explosion phase, which would be too easily detected) which is totally against the spirit of this treaty.

## **Nuclear barbarity**

Do we need to recall the main characteristics of what one can rightly call nuclear barbarity? Plutonium 239, which is furnished by nuclear power plants and which is one of the basic constituents of atomic weapons, takes more than 24,000 years to lose just half of its radioactivity. Can one imagine a worst gift for future generations and for tens of millennia to come?

This weapon has become the justification upon which the State accords itself all rights, confirms its sovereignty and its supremacy. It grants the power to set off nuclear fire and a trail of unimaginable horrors. Such is the morbid fascination it inspires. It has become the preponderant vector of the dominant classes fantasies of power.

Through nuclear ideology, they transmit these fantasies to the uninitiated crowds.

In France, as elsewhere, they squander the most precious riches to carry out these fantasies at the cost of the most disadvantaged populations. In spite of the technological refinements with which it can be adorned, nuclear barbarity leaves nothing to envy. The survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can testify to that.

Since the providential fall of the Berlin wall the great powers had undertaken the destruction of their respective arsenals concretely and sincerely whilst opting for a more just repartition of riches and for a move toward peace and mediation, relations between India and Pakistan would have had a better chance of taking a less dangerous turn. By selling arms to both countries, France encourages their confrontation.

### **Threats of devastation**

Thus, as signed treaties are no longer respected by members of the Security Council, other countries in turn remove themselves from the legal constraints of non-proliferation in order to possess this weapon. How can one prevent other governments from appropriating our arguments for nuclear ideology based on so-called total security? It is in wishing to imitate us that the present governments of Iran and North Korea are trying to gain access to the nuclear club which one could also easily call the club of “ hooligan states “. In January 2007 the members of the board of the BAS (Bulletin of Atomic Scientists) among whom figure 18 Nobel Prize winners, confirmed that it was

their responsibility to warn worldwide public opinion about the apocalyptic dangers threatened by nuclear armament, including global climatic changes.

The development of certain weapons (warheads with impoverished uranium, fragment bombs...) arise from, as in the case of nuclear arms, the criminal use of science and technology. Because of expenditure on maintaining and perfecting all our weapons, we are dragging a true ball and chain behind us. It represents one of the main sources of our budgetary deficit and prevents us from having a true social welfare policy based on solidarity. We cannot leave unspoken the enormous weight of our over-capacity in terms of weapons which through arms trading and all the dramatic consequences it brings, has compromised us and continues to compromise us with the worst dictatorships such as that of Saddam Hussein or Gaddafi.

The abolition of nuclear weapons would allow the release of major funds. A part of these funds could allow us to be more effective in a certain number of areas such as education, justice, and social affairs. Another part would allow us to launch a true policy of co-development with Southern countries to help them get out of the misery in which we maintain them. The unacceptable social cost of expenditure on weapons was clearly pointed out by General Dwight Eisenhower: “ *Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.*”

Considering nuclear weapons they rob the most disadvantaged

populations on our planet.

## **Nuclear ideology**

Nuclear armament could not exist without the ideology that goes with it and justifies it. This ideology, like all other ideologies, is totally misleading. A large majority of the French are persuaded to believe that (thanks to their atomic bombs) they no longer have anything to fear and can sleep tranquilly. In a letter addressed to the head of the movement “ Citizen Action for Nuclear Disarmament “, President Sarkozy stated that our nuclear weapons could also protect us from worldwide epidemics. French president is so busy doing so many things that he must not have had the time to reread his letter.

The terrorist tragedy of September 11, 2001 clearly shows that contrary to what they tell us, the most powerful and sophisticated nuclear weapon is incapable of countering new threats. Furthermore, the French Government has always maintained that its nuclear experiments have been perfectly clean and inoffensive. However, independent epidemiological surveys have shown the death rate due to cancer as well as the number of birth defects were significantly higher in our Pacific Islands than anywhere else especially among civil and military personnel who worked on those experiments. Some of them have come forward to ask us to represent them in the courts since the French Government does not wish to recognize that their medical problems are the direct consequence of our experiments.

The Nazi ideology led to the Second World War and resulted in forty million deaths. France’s nuclear ideology means a potential of

570 million deaths with which we threaten humanity. Obviously, we are not as efficient as the Americans and Russians who can each destroy all the continents of the planet several times over.

The Charter of UNESCO states “ *since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.*” Furthermore, non-violence seems to be the best adapted and most appropriate means of combating and sterilising the germs of war and to dismantle nuclear ideology which is the very base of this weapon.

### **Before it's too late**

For all these reasons, France could open the way toward disarmament everywhere and toward an end to the dissemination of this weapon by taking the courageous decision to dismantle its nuclear weapons under UN supervision. It would thus be able to develop a true social welfare policy to benefit the most disadvantaged people in France and provide the Third World with more substantial aid whilst establishing fairer economic relations. This aid would scarcely compensate for all the pillaging of riches that our great nations have carried out since colonisation first began. It would, therefore, be possible to stem a large part of the flow of despair of legal and illegal immigrants. Dismantling our strike force could give meaning back to French politics by opening up totally new perspectives at an international level beginning in Europe, by promoting a policy of nuclear disarmament for all, of solidarity, of

peace and therefore of hope for a world which is in such need of it .

Ethics, justice, peace, human solidarity, democracy, respect for the environment as well as non-violence and, for some, our religious beliefs, are all values that we try to promote, which are at the foundation of our commitment and which are radically incompatible with nuclear armament and its ideology.

We are convinced that if the French government wanted to, it could play a major role on the international scene in the extraction of humanity from the suicidal path where these weapons are heading it, by taking the lead in the process of nuclear disarmament. The abolition of this weapon is the only possible way of putting an end to the dissemination of this most iniquitous arm.

Just a final question: If humanity has been able to get rid itself of the plague and of cholera, when will it get rid itself of the nuclear scourge before it is too late?

## The Choice of Simplicity

*Bernard Dangeard*

*Simple Living* was the title of a talk my wife Simone gave in Montpellier in the South of France on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Gandhi's martyrdom. She started her talk with a quote from Muhammad Yunus: "A society's quality of life should not be measured by the standards of rich people, rather by the standards of those at the bottom of the social scale."

This idea is still relevant, but the market oriented research does not give us a lot of information on this subject. Since its formation in 1948, the Community of Ark, France has kept alive this idea and the commitment to a simple way of life. But in practice, what does it mean to live simply?

Let me quote again from Simone's talk. She wrote: "In the footsteps of Gandhi, the Ark of Lanza del Vasto has been attempting, in all humility but with perseverance, that it is possible to forsake privileges, abuses of power, accumulation of consumer good, selfishness, exploitation of people and the earth, easy options proposed by the media, mass production and uniformity. Instead we experimented the choice of a simple life, sharing, co-operation, mutual support for the hardest jobs, seeking to be as coherent as

possible with a lifestyle which respects each person with what they have in terms of creativity and to give. This process begins with oneself, others and nature. We learn through this, to be content with little, as long this little is beautiful and good.”

Thus, simplicity of life is a choice. Is it a choice for the rich? Yes. In a certain sense to have such a choice is to become rich. It involves the decision not to increase wealth, not to compare ourselves to those who are richer and no desire to be rich. While taking this decision one should know well where this can lead us... But can we just choose not to amass wealth? Would this mean refusal of happy life?

Simple life is a choice within which we recognize other riches. There is a deep perversity in the belief that scaling down our wants or voluntary simplicity is synonymous with abject poverty. It is also an error to think that all problems confronted by humanity could be resolved with dollars, euros or rupees... How many traditional societies have collapsed, or have been damaged following thoughtless introduction of money? French farming is a case in point. Can we still talk about a farming lifestyle? European aid has widely destroyed farmers’ autonomy, independence, solidarity and generosity. We believe that their true wealth was and is in those values.

Simple living involves choosing those values, different from those values which appear in our societies now as unavoidable viz. egoistic evolution, economic development, rejection of faith and spiritual life, frenetic drive to possess symbolic goods, losing touch little by little with the ordinary activities (cooking, gardening...).

The most important thing is to see beauty and to bless the Lord through humble tasks, praising God for what He gives us to live. In doing so, it can happen by chance that we become rich, even materially!

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, who founded the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), wrote the following in the 16<sup>th</sup> century:

“Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it. For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.”

If we follow Saint Ignatius, his message seems very compatible with those of Gandhi and of Lanza del Vasto, Gandhi’s disciple and founder of the Ark Movement in the West.

There is no need to despise the lovely and good things of life. On the contrary one has to live life fully, to the utmost, taking our

experiences as a gift with thanksgiving; even when the gift seems a bit unpleasant.

Over the past ten years global consciousness has made good progress against the craziness of certain human activities and their serious consequences. However, voluntary simplicity is not yet a subject for the electoral campaigns!

For those who seek inspiration from Gandhi, who wish to follow him, voluntary simplicity has become a necessary act, a personal choice which brings us closer to those for whom frugality is neither voluntary nor accepted.

Returning to Muhammad Yunus who was quoted at the beginning, as well as Gandhi, living simply is thus to get closer to the lifestyle of those who are at the bottom of the social scale, not from a pleasure of self-denial –a kind of masochist ideal- but in order to increase the quality of life, the fulfilment of the greatest number, and to find therein one's own fulfilment.

## **Civil Society and Peace**

*Sandip Das*

Perhaps since the last decade of the twentieth century the concept of civil society has gained euphonic popularity as a platform for peoples' participation based on co-operation and mutuality for a common objective to elevate morals and moreses of social life. Sometimes as a social solidarity on a particular issue or the long term objective often to safeguard the human rights have also been sought for. Thereby, a civil society may have to face various forms of contestations. But this wide description of civil society may not suit many social and political theorists and activists.

The origin of the notion of civil society dates back from Aristotle, through the Latin translation of his *Politika Koirona*. It was revealed in the West that Aristotle had conceived of an ethico-political community of free and equal citizens who were both ruling and being ruled. In the city states, he felt the necessity of personal acquaintance of citizenry. For greater good of the state, social relationship should also cultivate moral values which could be transmitted to the ruling class. It may be mentioned that in ancient Greek city states, there were no perceptible differences between the private and public sphere for the citizens. But non-citizen slaves had no public sphere. Howsoever different it may look like present notion of civil society with that of Aristotle's, we should keep in mind that the identification

of civil and political was carried on by the western philosophers up to 18<sup>th</sup> century. Even though there were good number of the western writers who overlapped society with state, some of them thought that political behaviour of the citizens had a normative import which could be differentiated from the state craft.

With Hegel, the concept of civil society achieved a new ground at the philosophical level. To Hegel, history is the justification of the will of God. The state had been projected by God or the Absolute as a finite world to comprehend all human activities which he called civil society. Whatever importance he might have paid to civil society, it could in no way be an autonomous body. On the other hand, in his concept of civil society all familial relationships which are outside the political and judicial character of the state and which are of intrinsically egotistic nature were also included in civil society.

Karl Marx, much influenced by Hegel for his methodology, refused to accept atomistic character of individuals as conceived in a bourgeois democracy. He found bourgeoisie, in their zeal for capitalistic mode of production had fashioned civil society to augment their selfish purpose. Marx sought to reconceptualize civil society by separating state from society in order to eliminate atomistic concept of individuals. To what extent later development of Marxist State could maintain such a separation is a different question.

Gramsci, a Marxist with a difference, noticed that although from the Marxian point of view, no social formulation withered away so long the previous mode of production survived, he did not find any

prescription from Marx in the transitional phase of transformation. He suggested continual passive revolution must be set in through changing the existing hegemony of the ruling bourgeois which should be ideological, cultural and political. The phase of struggle for hegemony in civil society into the phase of state power would be corresponding to specific intellectual activity. Following Italian anthropologists of the previous century, Gramsci felt that co-relation between culture and power should be related with the hegemony through contraposition and mutual agreement with the subalterns. He assigned these tasks to civil society. However he had little takers. For Gramsci, civil society was after all a series of tracks on terrain of struggle between ruling class and contesting classes for political hegemony. The ideological struggle in the form of passive revolution should be carried on through union, media, educational, cultural and other social institutions to win over capitalist class domination.

As a departure from the Western ideas, it may be mentioned that the basis of collective life in India was not state since the ancient days. It was society which was the basis of human virtues, called as *Manav Dharma*. The morals of state craft were derived from larger human values and by and large the rulers of state and their laws could not deviate from formation of social values. Very often state authorities could not however preserve the greater human virtues. So irrespective of change in ruling of territories of the state, the *Manav Dharma*, as propounded by society worked as a vehicle. Traditionally in India, state and society are different concepts but society comprehends state. In this context what we call a distinct civil society was not felt. But when we find civil society as a political construction to meet the challenges, often pressurizing the Government to behave

democratically, we may find some similarities between civil society and societies and social formations of Indian past.( where Gandhi's, thought and action had veered round, which we shall discuss afterwards).

The revival of the concept of civil society in the late twentieth century took place with a new strategy to transform dictatorial regimes and also serving as a vigil to safeguard and enhance democratic rights of the citizens of the states who profess to be democratic. The natural question could arise again: what constitutes a civil society? It was also suggested that civil society might be a conglomeration of voluntary associations. But voluntary associations are in varied forms, size and character. Some are NGOs engaged purely in constructive activities designed and funded by the Government or by foreign agencies. Some are engaged in organizing combative movements. There are some others which are involved in both constructive and combative activities. Now should the civil society be confined to theoretical plane to articulate normative guidance for contesting terrain or should it plunge into activist struggles against those forces which arrest the democratic, egalitarian order? We feel that the civil society's task would be mainly the second alternative but that should not preclude it to be engaged in constructive work.

With all the divergences in the definition and descriptions of civil society, we may summarize for the purpose of this paper that civil society should not be an appendix of state power. It should be open for different sections of society which should have commitment for upholding the greater interests while chalking out a programme, civil society should take into the perspective of its own composition. It

should not be allowed to grow as a shapeless, amorphous crowd. It should not however be exclusive or secretive.

As a resident of Calcutta, we have gathered some empirical knowledge now for the growth of civil society. The first and most important instance in recent times is peoples' movement to protest against the atrocities of the police and the principal ruling party in a place named Nandigram in West Bengal. From January 2007 protests against the forcible occupation of fertile land for chemical hub supposed to be started by a tainted multinational company but the farmers sought to resist the move. Some of them were shot dead. Then on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007 brutal attacks, killings and gang rape took place. Besides opposition parties, many social activists and voluntary associations came forward in support of farmers. Then from 8<sup>th</sup> November 2007, police and the ruling party cadres began unprecedented brutalities. On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2007, the renowned social activist Medha Patkar and some of her companions wanted to reach Nandigram. They were prevented and had to face inhuman treatment. They returned to Calcutta and started *satyagraha* with fast in a prominent place of the city. Since then squatting started there. On 14<sup>th</sup> November 2007, Calcuttans witnessed an unprecedented massive silent protest march. West Bengal's leading intellectuals, writers, actors, painters, singers and other prominent personalities of diverse cultural fields and common man, some of whom had previously never joined any such demonstration took part in this procession of a lakh which was without any flag or festoon. Some prominent political leaders who expressed their desire to join the procession with their party members were requested not to join. From 18<sup>th</sup> November, 48 hour rotational fasting *satyagraha* started in groups which was led by

prominent thinker Professor Amlan Datta. It is being continued uninterruptedly upto 20<sup>th</sup> December. Different organizations and individuals from different parts of the country have been extending their support to the cause. Every day from 10 am. to 10 pm. thousands of assembled before the *manch* to hear the speeches of the speakers and other cultural programme associated with the issue. Thereby they are demonstrating solidarity with the suffering people of Nandigram. The main purpose of this unnamed organization (now popularly named *Nandigram manch*) is condemnation of brutalities perpetrated by the state Government and cadres of ruling party and also to restore peace. This is no doubt a unique experience for not only the people of Bengal but also for people from other parts of the country and abroad who have joined it.

The second instance originated from purely personal issue. One Rizwanur Rehaman a cultured muslim young man married in August 2007, one Priyanka a Hindu girl of Marwari community. After their marriage under Special Marriage Act, the girl began to stay with her husband at his place. The girl's businessman father along with the police and administration tried to nullify the marriage and separate the couple and then Rizwanur was found dead mysteriously. Civil right activists, intellectuals, artists, writers and teachers and students in a unique demonstration of shock and horror, anguish and sympathy condemned the police and state administration and also the girl's father's family. So-many non- party protest marches and meetings took place in Calcutta and elsewhere. The students led by St. Xaviers college students, where Rizwanur was an ex-student organised silent candle marches for weeks.

In both the cases opposition parties might have taken advantages over the issue. But so far both the movements are essentially civil society movements. Almost similar is the case when some fundamentalists demanded expulsion of Taslima Nasreen, a Bangladeshi writer who was expelled from her country of origin and had taken shelter in India. The fundamentalists caused destruction of vehicles and unleashed rampage. The ruling party's supreme leader in a public assertion asked Taslima to leave Calcutta and she was dragged to a plane for Rajasthan. The civil society took a vital part in this case also irrespective of their agreement or disagreements with the opinions expressed by Taslima in her writings. It may be worth noting that in the civil society led programmes, Gandhians also took a significant part.

In this context let us consider to what extent Gandhian organizations by themselves can be accepted as civil society. In South Africa Gandhi set up two *Ashrams*, one was Phoenix settlement and the other was Tolstoy farm. In both the *Ashrams*, Gandhi sought to build up social solidarity of Indians belonging to different religions and languages residing in South Africa by community living and sharing a common life style. All of them had to undergo 'bread labour' and to be engaged in constructive work. But when Gandhi resorted to *Satyagraha* and jail going movement against the unjust measures imposed on the Indians and other coloured people, the residents of the *ashrams* joined enmasse and suffered jail terms and other forms of police repression. Similarly at Sabarmati and Sewagram where Gandhi setup his *Ashrams* and many other *Ashrams* setup by Gandhi's compatriots in India, inmates through their constructive activities and sharing a common life style developed amongst themselves some sort

of community sentiment and on occasions they also joined political action in the form of *Satyagraha*. Unlike many others, *ashramites* referred to here were well trained and disciplined. In the movement for Total Revolution called by J. P. Narayan, *Sarvodayees* of Sarva Seva Sangh and other Gandhian organizations played a very important part. Whether to recognize these Gandhian groups as civil society is a question that might be seriously pondered upon. It may be worthwhile to mention here that though Gandhi had not specifically referred about civil society, but we may notice his assertion that the experience of something larger than our day to day life creates a new community which expands and consolidates itself through communication and conversion. Such community might constitute first line of defence against all corrupting influences from without and within.

Gandhi, by belief was a non- statist. He wanted selfrule (*Swaraj*) by the individuals. He felt real *Swaraj* could be enjoyed by *Swarat* (self enlightened) persons. Since that was difficult to translate in action, he preferred collective *swaraj* in the form of *gramswaraj* where villagers would determine their well being by mutual deliberations and formulate a consensus. The *gramswaraj* could be expanded through an oceanic circle to encompass the entire world. Gandhi had admitted that state could not be avoided but the role of the state should be minimal. The authorities of social organizations as built by Gandhi might fit in as civil societies as we conceive now which in Gandhian way might act as first defence as we have already mentioned. Strictly speaking, some lacunae could be found in them so far as marks of civil society as mentioned by political theorists, particularly of the West are concerned. But from the point of view of peace building and violence

resistance programme, the Gandhian organizations could be taken as civil societies and they should take lead in formulating *modus operendi* for peace making through civil society.

Let us now try to understand what exactly we should conceive of peace. The Greek word *Pienire* and its Latin equivalent *Pax* from which English word peace is derived literally meant 'Pause' or break in the struggle. This type of peace is a negative idea and further it does not signify the end of war or struggle. Peace expressed as *shanti* in India is a positive idea, though it is more inward, but it also signifies outward peace. We are now faced with increasing violence and terror both at micro and macro levels. The world we live in today has become tension- oriented. In personal life emotional imbalances due to mal-adjustment with family and group, poverty and widespread unemployment and also corroding competition in every sphere of life creates so much tension which are prone to violence. We are placed in a social order, which is reflected in our immediate social circle where manifestation of opulence and show by some and deprivation to many provoked younger generation for violent resistance. At the same time increase of state sponsored terrorism has been endangering the very fabric of our democracy. So expression of violent motive and psychosis of tension are expanding. Ancient Indian psychologists consider that fear, jealousy, hatred and lust are manifestations of distressed (*klisha*) mind.

Tolerance in the positive sense is a mental attitude to fraternize with other view points. This kind of tolerance is voluntary and it should be differentiated from the imposed way of tolerating evils under duress. Intolerance is an attitude of superiority ingrained in one's psyche

through totalitarian traditions- political, communal, racial or otherwise.

Violence has two Latin roots- *violentus* and *violate*. *Violentus* signifies forcible or vehement impulses. *Violate* denotes causing injury or outrage. Many thinkers including those at the helm of the United Nations had made a long list of different kinds of violence. Gandhi added besides economic, intellectual violence. Besides, covert violence often becomes more dangerous than overt actions. It would be a task for civil society to strive for peaceful social norm which should encompass both inward and outward peace. The goal of the civil society should be to attain sustainable or perpetual peace as Kant characterized. Kant was far ahead of his time when he said, 'It is a duty, if the hope can even be conceived of realizing through by endless progress, the reign of public right- perpetual peace, which will succeed to the suspension of hesitation, hitherto named treaties of peace is not the chimera, but a problem of which time, probably abridged by the uniformity of the progress of human mind promises us to the solution' (Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, Columbia University Press, 1939, p. 67). Needless to say, influences of Kant or Tolstoy so far as peace making processes are concerned are minimal in the West. But can we afford to ignore to notice the striking similarities between the attitude of Kant and that of Gandhi so far as the concept of peace is concerned? We hope, it would not be an over estimation to say that Gandhi was the first man in the modern world who in the first decade of the twentieth century opined that the seeds of violence were rooted in the post- industrial western civilization. By toeing the same pattern, India, China and many other Third World countries are contributing towards the extinction of natural, resources bio-

diversities and pollution of every form including disruption of psycho-social and these manifold forms of pollution are endangering our ecology and way of life. We cry for world peace and at the same time feel the urgency of strengthening our defence through nuclear arms.

Before we pass on to the role of civil society in peace making efforts, we may refer to a letter written by Gandhi to Edith Hunter where we find comprehensive outline of peace which civil society should strive for: 'Attainment of real world peace is impossible except for greater scientific precision, greater travail of soul, greater patience, greater resources required for the invention and consideration of means of prevention of mutual slaughter. It can not be attained by mere muster roll signed by millions of mankind desiring of peace. But it can, if there is a science of peace as I told there is, by few devoting themselves to the discovery of means. Their efforts being within, will not be showy but then it will need a single farthing' (*Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 66, p. 72). If we believe in Gandhi's bold assertion, then we may find steps to proceed.

For outward peace, civil society should raise its voice against all types of on going violence and terrorist activities and particularly state-sponsored terrorism for we have become horrified by its ugly face. Secondly, the bogey of nuclear arms and craze for nuclear power should be eliminated through mutual discussion. Many scientists who have been showing the enormous potentialities of renewable energy should be available to the civil society for feed back. Thirdly the people should be made to understand that this ongoing developmental paradigm is corroding and destructive. While the multinationals and their henchmen intellectuals and the allies in the

governments are parroting Margaret Thatcher's dictum, 'There is no alternative', the civil society should rise to the occasion to assert and expound logically that there are indeed alternatives. It was revealed from a recent U.N. survey that the people of the world are consuming 40 per cent more of the capacity of the world resources.

With the propagation for the urgency of greedless society, the propagators also should practise what they are preaching. Fourthly, civil society should be able to act as a political conscience against thwarting of human rights and non democratic norms by powers, whatever might be. Fifthly, the civil society should formulate some strategy for convincing the people that violence and democracy can not co-exist. For the attainment of inward peace, a civil society, whatever might be its strength should strive for the 'greater travail of soul and greater patience', which Gandhi felt as so necessary for the attainment of peace.

We may now discuss in brief, culture of peace. Following Mathew Arnold, by culture we may mean here overcoming limitations and to rise to superior thought and also in expressions. This should be applicable to individual to family, to group and to society in both narrow and broad sense. We agree with T. S. Eliot, as he said the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of the group or class which is dependent upon the culture of the whole society to which the group or class belongs (T. S. Eliot, *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, Faber, p. 21). However it must also be admitted that leading personalities in political or social sphere and cultural groups conscious of democratic values often influence civil society and play crucial role in advancement of cultural standard of society at large. There is a natural propensity of any culture to learn or to

synthesize its cultural expressions with the cultural expressions of other societies. While there is no reason for a civil society to discourage this tendency but it should also see that it must not lead to cultural subjugation.

The U. N. had appealed to its member countries to work for making the decade 2001-2010, a decade of peace. It would be too much to expect that they would fulfill this task in the next three years. But without being a pessimist in establishment of peaceful world order, we urge upon the civil society of all the nations to come forward to elevate their individuals', groups' and communities' moral standard through their philosophy, literature and art and science, so that they can re-evaluate their customs, moreses and tradition, and eliminate jealousy, violence and terror. Thereby civil societies could play leading roles in establishment of harmony, integration and peace.

After independence, we have not achieved '*Hindusthan*' but an '*Englishthan*' as Gandhi warned a century earlier. We have retained the same types of bureaucracy, police, army and large scale capital-intensive industrialization. Are not centralized economic order and centralized polity in practice corollaries? On the other hand, mutual suspicion between the countries would lead to craze for powerful armouries. A sense of deprivation by ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities sometimes fanned by foreign vested interests are creating an atmosphere of desperation. Over and above, colossal poverty and unemployment of the many and affluence of the few, if allowed to be continued then the psychosis of violence can not be removed. Also when repressive attitude of power intoxicated state being hand in glove with totalitarian force seek to ruthlessly suppress the

democratic and peaceful appeals and protests of the people, they definitely lose their legitimacy to rule. In such a situation the civil society of that state should rise to the occasion fearlessly to provide intellectual and moral leadership and also to stand by the suppressed people for mitigating their grievances. If thereby civil society can be consolidated, it should prepare for a sustainable peace through working for a new social, cultural, moral, economic and political order.

## **Human Rights Education in Catania in the 90's**

*Paula Eagar*

This is the description of an experience of HRE (Human Rights Education), organized by the Amnesty International teachers' group (Gabriella Colonna and Paula Eagar), in Catania, Sicily, in the 90's. The objective was to organize courses in Human Rights in the three levels of school education: the Elementary School, the Scuola Media (Middle School - students from 11 to 14 year olds) and the Secondary School.

The Scuola Media is compulsory and it gives teachers a greater possibility of introducing interdisciplinary themes relating to Human Rights, Peace, Solidarity, Citizenship, the economical and social gap in the South of the world. We felt it would be helpful to experiment a project which included teacher formation and follow up in the classes in two Scuola Media where we were able to single out teachers that wished to use these themes in their daily teaching.

The project "Child Education" was sponsored by the educational branch of the Town Council of Catania.

***The first phase*** consisted in a course for thirty teachers from two schools: SMS "Dante Alighieri" and SMS "Salvatore Quasimodo" with an Amnesty International expert, Renata Toninato, from the Veneto Region. The course lasted for two days (19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> February 1999) for three hours after school - theory and practice, using questionnaires, games, role-playing and Gordon's circle time for

integrating relationship between the members of the class and the teacher. The method was to experience the three moments of this type of education: "to know", "to feel" and "to act". One of the most important factors that emerged was that the teachers perceived that, after discussions on how they felt about these experiences, a new more active form of teaching (far from the teacher to class role) was possible, not limiting themselves to a sterile factual impartation of information and data on the problems of our society, but reflecting on the two thirds of the world where there is injustice, hunger, exploitation. They realized that fostering an emphatic and affective relationship between teacher-student and student-student, based on mutual respect, where means and ends are interrelated, opens up the channel to understanding people in all parts of the world.

This ability can be obtained by reading stories about other children from all over the world, watching films, showing charts on the unequal distribution of the world resources and wealth, discriminating between primary and secondary needs (many of the secondary needs result from the consumer society) and focusing on the right to primary needs.

The next ability was to "to act". In a world of violations of human rights and injustice, war and "denied rights", the teachers were perplexed about any concrete action they could take.

A number of suggestions were made:

- international correspondence and visits between classes or schools from different countries using modern languages (twinning);
- join associations or write letters and petitions to government authorities in the Amnesty International campaigns;

- become volunteers in NGO's that work in those countries where human rights are violated in the South;
- adoptions of boys or girls in other countries, helping them to pay for their schooling, organizing collections of school material;
- fund raising for help to the South;
- a very powerful experience : listening to actors in Human Rights who can recount their lives in prison, or under torture, or their fear of becoming "disappeared" .

**The second phase** of the project was to return to school with the teacher creating a teaching unit in ten selected classes in the two schools, for three encounters of two hours each.

In *the first encounter*: analysis of fundamental needs to equivalent rights, using the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights) as a basis. The methodological approach took into consideration was "to know", "to feel" and "to act".

- a. Brainstorming, a random spontaneous activity on what are our needs, using a large sheet of paper where the pupils' answers were reported;
- b. in pairs, classify the fundamental needs from the secondary ones in their exercise books;
- c. the needs are selected and then classified on a second sheet;
- d. the class is divided into groups of 4 or 5 and each group is given a photo where needs are shown and rights are being violated, with three questions to answer:1. what is happening? 2. where is it happening? 3. what needs do the people in the photo

have?

- the students write their answers. One of the group glues the photo on another large sheet with the related caption;
- e. from needs to rights (the students were given a text created by their teachers)
- e. what is a right?
- f. game on the distinction between rights and whims
- h. find the articles in the synthetic version of the UDHR that correspond to the fundamental rights classified by the students and see which of them might be missing.
- At this moment there are three posters on the class walls where the information about needs and rights is clearly shown.

In *the second encounter*, the focus was on "to feel": the film *IQBAL* (directed by Cinzia Th Torrini, 1998) was shown, preceded by an information sheet which deals with the theme of child labour (an Amnesty report *All the children in the world*; "Famiglia Cristiana" about UNICEF's work with children, 24/051997 and *Global March Mani Tese 1998*). After the film, which was followed with great attention and empathy, the students were given a comprehension questionnaire where they had to focus on certain points: the setting, the type of environment, the relationship between the protagonists (the young boy, his parents and his master, his work companions), their needs and the rights violated.

In *the third encounter*, the focus was on "to act": the awareness that each person can contribute to the defence of human rights. Explain the work of Amnesty International and its campaign on Human

Rights held that year in the USA and how the pressure of public opinion can improve the situations of people whose rights are being violated. A letter or petition can be sent to the authorities with the help of the foreign language teachers.

***The third phase*** of the project was creative: the students were asked to produce poetry, a painting or even a collage on the theme "Adopt a Right", which later were displayed on the school walls. There were small prizes for the most meaningful ones, presented on the 29<sup>th</sup> May.

This project covered three months of the school year and it was so successful that many other teachers wanted to repeat and develop similar themes using this methodology.

During the late 90's, several Human Rights actors came to Catania and spoke both to Catanese citizens and particularly in the schools, where a great emotional impact was aroused in the young students.

We invited Laura Beatrice Bruchstein - one of the founders of the Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires Argentina that with her white handkerchief and her lovely smile captured the Catanese and the classes of a secondary school, who listened with comprehension and pathos to her story. Seven of her family "disappeared": two daughters and their husbands, another daughter, her ex-husband and her son and his wife. Her role in the Madres was to fight against the impunity of those responsible for these crimes, to keep their memories alive so that such things should never be repeated ("Nunca mas") and that those "disappearances" be considered crimes against humanity.

We also invited an Indio from Guatemala, whose family had "disappeared" and who was afraid to give his real name and to be

interviewed by the local press.

Another guest was a Chilean woman, Gina Gatti, who was tortured with her husband in Santiago after Pinochet's "golpe". Her debt to the Catanese students was described in an article, *To be born again – The possible recuperation of torture victims*, from an Amnesty International publication, *Doctors against Torture* in 1993: "I think this type of torture was afflicted on everyone: they tore off my clothes, tied me to a metal net, applying electricity to my breasts and genitals; these charges fired down right through my whole body, causing me great pain. I screamed and shouted continually, thinking I could somehow release the pain, but the result was that my torturers got tired of my shouts and clammed a filthy piece of cloth into my mouth to stop me. This episode has become symbolic as they tried to silence me, filling my inner space with their violence. I had to recuperate the ability to express what I was feeling and thinking in coherent language.

Only after more than twenty years had passed, I suddenly succeeded in tearing away the dirty cloth that had suffocated me as I was speaking about my experiences to a group of Catanese students in the Amnesty International campaign *We won't Stand for Torture*".

The same type of methodological approach lies behind the description of an experience during the Amnesty Indonesia Campaign in the Secondary School.

We proposed three possible itineraries that covered three aspects of the Indonesian reality: development/underdevelopment, environmental resources, migration flows and a growing intolerance towards those who were "outsiders" estranged from the dominant group.

These areas cover the following themes in the teaching unit:

- getting to know the “others” - beyond stereotypes;
- environment and deforestation: the rights of native indigenous populations;
- what type of development? From the spice route to international trade.

The model was similar to that followed in the Scuola Media, using role-playing, simulation, questionnaires, discussions, games and research with a greater range of information with instruments such as newspapers, TV programmes and films. Such methods leave room for creativity, for participation that question matters such as justice, power, abuse, the solution to conflicts, the law, for the ability to show indignation, analyse problems and take action.

We chose to experiment the first itinerary: confrontation with the “outsider” - beyond stereotypes, which can also take place in class relationships. First we asked the students to write down the keywords for this teaching unit: Foreigner - South of the world – Race – the Outsider – Ethnic identity - Ethnocentrism – Eurocentrism – Interculturality – Racism – Assimilation –Integration – Prejudice – Xenophobia – Nation – Multiculturality – Apartheid – Anti-semitism – Nationalism.

These are all words expressing integration problems between races and minority groups.

*In the first two phases* - using materials such as a planisphere, photos of both Indonesian men and women and the natural landscape tourist brochures, advertisements for airlines, passages from adventure

novels - the students were able to point out the characteristics and the perception they had of their stereotyped image of Indonesia.

*In the third phase*, Indonesia became the object of research using the map of Peters, a physical and political map with information about the natural resources, religion, the development of industrial activity including tourism and the main indicators of life quality.

The use of articles from Amnesty reports and other reviews, such as “Avvenimenti” and “Le Monde Diplomatique”, that give information about political-economic and social conditions in Indonesia and in other countries from the rest of the world all over the world.

*In the fourth and fifth phases*, they carried out research on how the South of the world is usually presented in national newspapers and TV.

*In the sixth phase*, films on the South of the world and Indonesia were shown to emphasize the image of the “other”. After the projection, the students filled in questionnaires discussing their points of views beyond the stereotypes.

*In the seventh phase*, games gave the students the opportunity of reflecting on “diversity”, simulating and taking the role of “outsiders”, experiencing the bitterness and lack of self-confidence due to the fact that they were “different”.

*In the eighth phase*, the international texts concerning Human Rights - the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Convention of Children’s Rights (1979) signed by many countries - were examined to indicate the articles that clearly refer to the importance of not discriminating but respecting the “outsider”.

At the end of the teaching unit, the students “take action” by

participating in the Indonesia Campaign with letters or petitions to the government authorities against human rights violations towards the population and particularly the minority indigenous groups.

After an interlude of some years, I joined the association ASSEFA-Italia (Association for Sarva Seva Farms), which has a branch in Catania. This movement bases its model on Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave, proposing a holistic vision of development realized by the basic communities in which love, justice and truth are strived for.

It finances agricultural, educational and women empowerment projects in India with ASSEFA-India in the village communities. It is also interested in setting up schools for the young people who are being brought up to take part in this development.

The Human Rights education experience is now coming to fruit in the Peace/Non Violent Education in the Catanese schools, following the footsteps of Gandhi where non-violence and peace is part of the development of human consciousness for a better world.

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