# PRACTICAL NON-VIOLENCE

BY
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# FOREWORD

It is simply a coincidence that these essays on "Practical Non-violence" are being published in pamphlet form almost simultaneously with Richard Gregg's "A Discipline for Non-violence". The votary of non-violence should read the two together. Kishorlal Mashruwala is like R. Gregg a deep student of non-violence. Though he has been brought up in that faith, he never takes anything for granted. He believes only what he has tested. Thus he has come to accept non-violence by hard thinking. He has in his own life and practice proved its efficacy in a variety of conditions: political, economic, social and domestic. His essays have, therefore, a value all their own. They should help the believer in non-violence in sustaining his faith and the honest unbeliever in resolving his doubts.

Sevagram,
31st August 1941

M. K. GANDHI

## NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

When this essay was first published in September 1941, we were in a critical period of the second world-war. Though India had been dragged into it without her previous consent and, as a protest, Congress ministries had resigned from all the provinces in which they functioned, it must be owned that Gandhiji had expressed his moral sympathy towards the cause of Great Britain and her allies, and, as for the Congress, it was only too eager to take an active part in its prosecution, if those at the helm of affairs in the British Empire had made it honourably possible for it to do so.

I hold no position whatever in any of the political institutions of the country. But I have worked with Gandhiji and Congressmen for the best part of my life, and have participated in most of the satyagraha campaigns launched by the Congress. Hence, I happen to possess a circle of Gandhian and Congress workers, who read my writings. I found myself in an unenviable position. I felt no sympathy towards any of the warring governments on either side. I strongly felt that if India had been a free country and I had a powerful voice, I should have strongly opposed any government desiring to involve the country in that war. This was irrespective of my creed of non-violence. Frankly, I considered the war as unholy on both the sides and against the interests of the masses of all the belligerent countries. I never believed that any ideals — except the base ideal of territorial expansion by which every conqueror is moved — was involved in the war. It was nothing more than an outburst of rivalry in a hideous manner between ambitious cliques of powerful countries on either side. This attitude of mine was known to those, who read my writings. It was not approved by the section of Congressmen, who were anxious to become a part of the war-machine, if necessary, even against the advice of Gandhiji himself. The doctrine of non-violence came to be hotly discussed during this

period, and this essay was written in the atmosphere of these discussions. Thus, necessarily, a part of it had only contemporary interest.

Besides, three great events have happened since its first publication. The first was the great 1942 movement; the second, the dramatic end of the war after the satanic destruction of the Japanese cities; and thirdly, (though its knowledge was only since obtained) the brilliant military organization of Shri Subhas Bose for the liberation of India.

How did we (I do not exclude myself) react to the "Quit India" resolution of 8th August 1942 and the arrests following it? How do we feel at the end of the victory of the "democratic" powers and the installation of the Labour Government in England? How do we feel now towards Subhas Babu and the Azad Hind Fouj? What is the response of our hearts towards the principle of non-violence in the light of these experiences? For, after all, it is the actual response of our hearts that counts in the matter and not the logical perfection of the doctrine.

In revising this essay, I have thus reconsidered the matter afresh, and re-cast and re-written some of its parts. Since, from the commencement, I had taken *Practical* Non-violence as the subject of discussion, there was not much, which I had to re-shape. Yet, what little has been added is material.

I hope the reader will find the revised essay even more helpful than the first.

14th Jan. '46 K. G. M.

# ARGUMENT

The issue between violence and non-violence has now become more than ever a matter of immediate and practical importance for us. We owe to Mahatma Gandhi this new word *Non-violence.* He has presented it to us in the course of his patent technique of resistance, known as *Satyagraha.* For more than thirty years now, he has been spending his argumentative and demonstrative talents to make its conception clear to us. But still many of us feel that it is either too subtle for our intelligence, or that its practice is beyond our capacity.

On the other hand, we all understand what violence is. We associate with it malevolence, hatred, revenge, enmity, murder, injury, war, cruelty, barbarity, torture, deception, rape, loot, exploitation and so on. Shortly put, it is acquisition, re-acquisition and preservation of material interests by any *means which prospects of success may suggest.*

A few months after the out-break of the last war, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, in a statement to the Press said,

> " . . . . this war and the events that preceded it have impressed upon me more than ever the futility of violence, and in India, as she is circumstanced to-day, the idea of our organizing violence for defence against the external aggression of a major power is futile. We cannot do so effectively in this present crisis at least . . . " ( From *The Bombay Chronicle,* dated 23rd June, 1940).

I do not know if he holds the same opinion now. The events, which took place in the years 1942-44 in India and, under the leadership of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, in our neighbouring countries in the East, as also the manner in which the Axis powers collapsed and Japan was defeated, have disturbed the previous views of not a few old Congress workers. Several, who till '42 swore by non-violence,

seem now inclined to believe that the above events prove that if proper effort was made it was not impossible to organize India in terms of violence for regaining her freedom, in spite of the apparent might of the British Empire. On the other hand, there are several who draw from the same experiences the conclusion that in a violent struggle, the ultimate issue was not decided by either the heroism of the fighters or the justness of their cause, but solely by the capacity of the belligerent to harness superior type of violence and the power to hold on for a longer period. It might be possible to capture Delhi by a *coup de etat*, even as the revolutionaries of 1857 had done for a time, or even as Japan conquered almost the whole of East Asia in 1941-43. But the possibility of retaining the conquest permanently depended upon how far the capture or conquest inflicted *total* defeat upon the enemy and compelled his unconditional surrender. Until Britain and every ally who might come to her help was defeated in the same way as Italy, Germany and Japan, the capture of Delhi even for a couple of years would not mean the liberation of India. This would be so, even if India, in making the attempt, did not enter into a "subsidiary alliance" with any other foreign power.

One of the important lessons of the rise of the British power in India was that the defeat of British arms in India never seriously impeded its progress. The reason was that their defeat was never made total and was not followed by their total expulsion. The result was that by reason of their superiority in Machiavellian methods, they were enabled to proceed with their imperialistic designs from the very next moment after their defeat. Machiavellism is the *sine qua non* of violence, and victory by means of war is never complete — if it ever can be complete — unless the war is supremely offensive and almost totally annihilates the enemy.

These are the minimum conditions of violence. The great war has once again demonstrated it before our eyes. We also witness its practice every day of our life both in its hideous and subtle forms. Under its spell the Indian

situation—not to mention that of scores of other nations—has so developed that for the sake of our very existence as a nation, we have to make a choice between violence and non-violence, and organize ourselves in terms of either the one or the other.

The choice cannot be made intelligently, unless we take pains to understand clearly the possibilities and limitations of both violence and non-violence. In these sections I think this question aloud, in the hope that it may help the reader. In doing so, I have assumed that, when it is a question of life and death, the mere moral superiority of non-violence over violence is not likely to interest the millions. For, the moral nerve of most people breaks down, when danger is felt to be imminent. Therefore, if non-violence is to succeed, it must be made quite *practical.*

## 2

## ANTI-VIOLENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE

As I have said, we seem to understand violence. It is also not difficult for one to understand the opposite of it, namely *anti-violence* or benevolence. It is love, forgiveness, friendliness, peace, kindness, civility, frankness, service, protection, philanthropy, generosity and so on. It will be conceded that, if one is so minded, it is not impossible for one to be benevolent, i. e. generous and unselfish. But it is evident that one cannot become so under compulsion. It can become the act or trait of a man acting only freely. Nor can one feel love for a wrongful act. Also, one cannot be benevolent, and at the same moment enforce a claim. But Gandhiji propounds that one can enforce it nonviolently, i. e. without being violent towards the usurper. It is, therefore, well to distinguish between benevolence which is anti-violence, and this technique called non-violence. For practical national and social purposes, it is sufficient, if we can explore the conditions and possibilities of non-violent methods for regaining lost rights and defending those already possessed.

It will be seen that there is a large uncovered field between benevolence at the one end and violence at the other. The former arises from unselfishness, or working for the good of others. The Indian word for it is *parartha*. But a person is not malevolent simply bacause he is not working for *parartha* — the good of others. It is possible to be selfish without violence or malevolent intentions. Thus, if I desire the return of my loan or my field, I may not take the credit of being benevolent, but I can deny the charge of being malevolent, and refuse to be ashamed of the degree of selfishness implied in making the demand. I may even plead that my selfishness is just and proper.

In all our disputes the issue is not between benevolence and violence, but between just and proper selfishness on the one hand, and malevolence with pseudo-just or unjust selfishness on the other. And the problem is how we may, without resorting to violent methods, enforce what we consider to be our just selfish ends against violence and unjust selfishness. I call this Practical Non-violence.

It will be seen that non-violence necessarily excludes violence, but it does not necessarily exclude benevolence. Or say, selfishness does not necessarily imply malevolence, but may possibly touch a part of benevolence. *Practical Non-violence may thus be defined as just selfishness without malevolence and with a touch of benevolence.* This is not Ideal Non-violence, which is practically the same as benevolence. When a person feels keenly about his rights and wants to enforce them, he cannot afford to be benevolent, though he may be just, non-violent and, *after the struggle*, be even benevolently generous. *During the struggle* benevolence seems suspended in the act, though according to the definition it has to be present in intention.

We shall examine now whether such practical non-violence can be organized on a large scale as an effective force, and, if so, what are its limitations and method.

## THE AVERAGE MAN

Before proceeding further, let me lay down a few fundamental propositions. For, if we do not agree thereon, then it may not be possible to carry conviction about the rest. I proceed with my loud thinking in the hope that a majority of judges will accept my postulates.

I believe that a vast majority of human beings abhor violence and malevolence. They like to practise benevolence to a certain extent, and respect it always. This majority is the largest in civilizations built upon agriculture and industries and commerce of civil and peaceful life. It is less in nomadic and piratic civilizations, and in people whose living depends upon military occupations and war industries.

When I say that a vast majority of human beings abhor violence, I do not mean that they are incapable of violence and cannot, under violent leadership, be stirred and organized for violence; nor do I mean that they can never become mad with violence spontaneously. I only mean that they have not such temperamental leaning towards violence, or prejudice against non-violence, as to be incapable of refraining from violence if so firmly advised and trained. Not only this, but if the people had to make a choice between violence and malevolence on the one hand, and non-violence and generosity on the other, a vast majority of them would prefer the latter in their normal behaviour.

I believe that this is true not only of India, but of all countries where people have settled down permanently. The average man loves his home, family and possessions, and his country and its people. He is not prepared to give these up altogether. So he will fight for them. How he should do so is a question for his king and leaders to decide. He is simple and, in the absence of proper guidance and training, may resort to spontaneous and unplanned violence, even as children and animals do. But he is willing to be guided by a trusted leader. He will follow a Babar,

a Shivaji or a Hitler, as also a Buddha or a Gandhi, with equal zeal and loyalty.

But every society in every age produces a few abnormal men. They are either abnormally benevolent or abnormally adventurous. The former is not merely very benevolent, but has also a passion for it. The latter has similarly a passion for adventure. Both have a special gift of intelligence and power of persuasion for taking the masses with them. The former appeals to the higher nature in man, the latter to his selfish and violent one. Some people are more affected by the one than the other, but many of them have an unstable character and show symptoms of both affections spasmodically. For these, both the affections may be regarded as just passing phases or waves. They do not leave a visibly permanent mark upon the people. After a period the wave of extra benevolence passes away as much as that of extra violence. The memory of both types of leaders is often preserved with a sense of equal sanctity. But the difference is that the former phase is cherished with greater love and respect than the latter, and there is a yearning to return to that period. This shows that normally the average man abhors violence and malevolence, and tends towards non-violence and benevolence.

## 4

## CHARACTERISTICS OF MASS BENEVOLENCE AND VIOLENCE

Let me proceed a step further.

Not only do a vast majority of human beings incline towards benevolence, but there are some remarkable features of this inclination. Thus, unless artificially excited by leaders, people are generally more goodwilled towards a distant enemy or opponent than towards a near one, although the former may have caused more harm to them than the latter. Also, strange though it may seem, they are more generously inclined towards a strong and open enemy than towards a

weak and secret one. Thus, though Napoleon actually spread greater misery in several countries of Europe than any daring dacoit could, still, when he was defeated, there was no general desire to put him to death. Nor, I suppose, would the masses of England have insisted upon inflicting the death penalty upon Hitler, if he had been captured alive, if their leaders advised them generosity. There may be political considerations for this in the minds of leaders. But with the people, it is not political wisdom, but a feeling of genuine regard for a valiant enemy. The same masses would treat the leader of a gang of dacoits, attacking their village, with merciless ferocity, if they got hold of him in affray, although the actual injuries inflicted by him would be insignificant in comparison. The reason is that, even when Napoleon was being fought against, he was a more distant enemy to the masses than the dacoit, and also a stronger and open foe.

This is also the reason why ordinary men are more non-violently inclined towards Britishers and their agents than towards opposing political parties; and more towards leaders than towards their local workers, although in their reasoning they know that their main quarrel is and should be with the former.

Then, most people are unable to visualize clearly subtle forms of violence—such as exploitation, encouragement of intoxicant habits, degrading luxuries, etc.—as they do manifest violence—such as murder, torture, rape, loot, etc. Consequently, they are more accustomed and willing to adopt non-violent methods towards the former forms of violence than towards the latter. This is also the reason why it is more difficult to rouse the masses to strong and prolonged action for abstract issues than for specific grievances. The injury inflicted by foreign domination is so subtle, and mixed with such palliatives that the average man is unable to visualize it as a real, near and unbearable harm. This is more so in a country like ours where the actual administration has always been carried on at the base through the people's own kith and kin by every conquering power. Not that the people do not at all intellectually

understand the struggle for Swaraj, but the understanding is too feeble to create a passion for it. And then, in the non-violent temperament, the desire for a settled and stable government is stronger than for a merely swadeshi government. Consequently, the mass mind is entirely favourable to non-violent methods for bringing about an internal revolution. This is the reason why, in India, the masses, even though they may have temporarily applauded political murders and revolutionaries and participated in mob-violence and riots, have hardly ever rendered any effective help to them. I do not think this is peculiar to India. Probably it would be so in every country under similar circumstances.

## 5

## TWO FUNDAMENTAL CULTURES

What I have said so far about the non-violent leanings of the masses applies, in my opinion, to all mankind. It is not the peculiarity of any one country, race or religion. In my humble opinion, the teachings of the Vedic religion and the attitude of the average Hindu towards the functions of government and towards enemy and crime is not fundamentally different from that of other religions and nations. The symbol of government in Hindu Political Science also is *danda* (i. e. the *lathi*, to put it crudely), as it is in other countries. If I remember my reading of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana correctly, the fearless wielding of the *Rajadanda* (that is, to put it in modern language, the maintenance of law and order) is indispensable even in *Dharma-raj* and *Rama-raj*. I do not think that in this respect the teachings of the Hindu religion are essentially different from those of Judaism (including Christianity) and Islam.

But side by side with these ideas, every religion has also developed a different kind of culture, to which I give the name *Sant* or *Saint* culture, as distinguished from the

former, which I call *Bhadra* or *Aristocratic* culture. It is not suggested that the *bhadra* culture is simply wicked, and full of sheer violence. As a matter of fact, much of the brilliant splendour of the great civilizations of the world is due to it. The *bhadra* civilizations have done great and mighty deeds, raised great monuments and produced immortal literature, and considerably evolved science and art. They have helped mankind to bring out its limitless and wonderful creative and expressive faculties in numerous ways, both good and bad. But the *bhadra* culture is everywhere based on pride of birth, race, wealth, power, learning, dogmatism and so on: in short, on a superiority complex. It has not tabooed violence — neither in Hinduism nor in other religions. The taboo against violence and malevolence has been imposed by the *sant* culture of all lands. And it so happens that most of the founders of the *sant* culture in every land have been men of the people — even when they have been born in a *bhadra* society. While the *bhadra* culture has insisted upon the maintenance of differences of rank in men, the *sant* culture has always worked for their liquidation, and, in doing so, they have employed not coercion but banevolence and love.

The two cultures are always found to exist side by side in every people. The attitude of the masses towards them is that, on the one hand, they have generally submitted to and loyally followed the *bhadra* culture of their land, and, simultaneously, on the other hand, they have always respected, and to the best of their capacity tried to assimilate, the *sant* culture with faith. The opposition or persecution of the *sant* culture, wherever it has taken place, has started from the promoters of the *bhadra* culture. But later on it has generally surrendered to the former to this extent at least that it has joined the masses in offering homage to the saints.

This is only another proof of, what I have said before, namely, that the masses generally abhor violence and incline towards benevolence. Also, that the *bhadra* culture has no argument to offer against the culture of the *sants*, except one of force.

## PECULIARITIES ABOUT INDIA

To the foregoing I shall add a few facts peculiar to India.

1. Although the teachings of the *bhadra* culture in the Hindu religion did not taboo violence and war, the peculiar classification of the Hindu society in the four main *varnas* (orders) made violence and war the hereditary calling of only a small class of Hindus. If this had been brought about in the same way as by the British Government, it could have been said that a majority of the Hindus had been *disarmed* some centuries ago by the creation of hereditary soldier-craft. Though it was not so done, the result has been the same.

From the point of view of violence, the *varna-vyavastha* has been harmful to the political independence of India. If martial spirit and training are good, they should not be confined only to a very small section of the people, and should not become just an occupation. Having been looked upon as an occupation, and nothing more, the fighting castes of India, to this day, act as mercenaries of any individual adventurer or state, who is prepared to pay them, and transfer their services from one master to another as unconcernedly as clerks do in commercial firms. They know no loyalty except to the immediate paymaster, who, again is often a mercenary with a larger pay. If the paymaster could be bought over, or larger salary could be promised to the sepoys, a whole regiment might transfer its services, even in the midst of a battle, to its former enemy. The history of India has been full of such instances, and the loss of India's liberty is in no small measure due to the occupational character of Indian militarism.

What the institution of the *varna* did partially, the British Government did more extensively and thoroughly. It disarmed almost the whole nation.

But at the same time it took the fullest advantage of the occupational character of India's fighting ability. It did

employ such numbers of the martial castes as they needed for holding and adding to its conquests, and took care to see that none else could employ them, without its consent. It made organization of violence except by the central state impossible. Thus, while fighting continued to be a calling, the fighting class lost the liberty of serving any one it liked. This was neglected by the previous imperial powers of India, and both they and the country paid heavily for it. This is an important lesson which India should remember.

To the process of disarmament the growth of the *sant* culture in Hinduism gave perhaps a mute welcome. Buddhism, Jainism, Vaishnavism, Lingayatism, and a host of other minor sects—some of them now extinct—but all founded by saints, all worked for the spread of a culture based on equality, non-violence and justice. Their teachings created an abhorrence not only to war, but to taking even animal life and animal food. India is the only country in which lakhs of people have given up animal food, and where many would not kill even a snake.

So the condition in India is that, *socially*, a large majority of the Hindus has been disarmed for several centuries. *Culturally*, a considerable number of Hindus—and they came from the fighting classes also—accepted disarmament by choice. That is to say, they became pacifists of a kind.* This, too, has been for some centuries now. *Politically*, the whole nation—Hindu or otherwise—is practically disarmed for about a century. And, *economically*, a still larger number—a substantial majority of the total population—has no use for arms for the simple reason that individually they have nothing important left to be protected against invaders or dacoits.

* I use the expression 'pacificists of a kind' advisedly. Their non-violence is confined to abstention from taking life. It does not extend to other spheres of life and to non-participation in any trade in war commodities or to not rendering assistance in other ways. It was a great step towards pacifism in so far as hundreds of *kshatriyas* voluntarily gave up arms and took to peaceful vocations.

2. Owing to the vastness of our numbers, there is no practical fear of any imperialistic power desiring to conquer it for the colonization of its people. The ambition for its permanent conquest can be only for exploiting its resources and people for trade, and this cannot be done without active military help and civil co-operation of our own people.

3. No foreign power can successfully exploit the resources of our country, even with intense mechanization, without engaging our own labour.

4. On the other hand, even if India became war-minded, (i) it would be impossible for her to be effectively armed, at least during the present crisis; (ii) it could do so even in future only with the money and technical help of foreigners; (iii) the terms for getting such help might crush India and practically render its 'complete independence' a statement devoid of substance.

Thus, voluntarily or involuntarily, we are now so far advanced in the direction of disarmament that we must now seek our way to life and prosperity by evolving strength out of this very situation, instead of by reverting to a method which we want the world to give up. If we, with our vastness and density, cannot hope to live independent and secure without armaments, then disarmament should be frankly abandoned as a foolish and dangerous ideal.

And, if we can organize stiff and complete non-cooperation, no foreign power can keep us in subjection, without our having to raise a finger in self-defence, unless it literally wipes us out of existence.

I shall examine later whether and how far this can be achieved. But I shall state the negative part of it here, namely that, *if we cannot organize ourselves for non-violence sufficiently and satisfactorily, our attempt to be organized for violence will be the weakest and most dangerous to ourselves. For, a solid internal organization is a much more necessary prerequisite for the successful organization for violence than that for non-violence.* Without such organization militarism will, as has been our experience during the last thousand years, instead of bringing or strengthening our independence,

throw the country in all kinds of internal strifes and disorders and intrigues with foreigners.

## 7

## INVASIONS AND DISORDERS

I have hitherto tried to show that the permanent conquest of India by a foreign power can be prevented, if at all, only by solid non-violent organization. If non-violence is unable to achieve it, violence would be able to do it still less.

But the question may be asked, is it possible to prevent by non-violence such an invasion of India as, for instance, of Muhammad Gaznavi, Ahmed Shah Abdali, or Babar, or such raids as those of Shivaji on Surat and of Nadir Shah on Delhi? Is it possible for non-violence to prevent an invader from occupying, say, Bombay or Calcutta or Delhi for a few days and looting its banks and granaries and robbing its millionaires?

As I am not discussing here Perfect and Ideal, but Practical Non-violence only, I admit that this cannot be guaranteed in non-violent action any more than it can be in a violent one. And since such test cannot be promised in a violent struggle, it is improper to demand it for non-violence. *What can be said with greater confidence is that the loss of life and property resulting from non-violent resistance (even if it is unsuccessful) will any day be far less than that caused by unsuccessful violent resistance,* and if the non-violent organization is perfect, the invader can never occupy the country for a long time and can never break the *morale* of the people.

The same methods of non-violent resistance as apply to a conquest or raid by a foreigner would apply to similar acts of a neighbouring prince or a gang of dacoits. But, though it may appear a little paradoxical, in a way it is easier to resist a foreigner than an inlander. For, though the internal raids may also be made in a military fashion,

they are quarrels between ourselves, being either civil wars or ordinary crimes under the Penal Code. There are no well-known ways by which and days on which they may come; they are not preceded by ultimata; they are manned by our own countrymen: thereby simply revealing the fact that all is not well at home, but that there is disease in the body politic, — either of unrestrained selfishness or of great poverty or of some grievance.

If the contingency of princely aggressions ever arises, the non-violent method to be applied will have to be of the same kind as that against a foreigner *plus* that to be adopted by 'State subjects' for achieving democratic government.

The problem of robbers and dacoits has to be tackled in another way. Ordinarily, it would simply mean that more policing was necessary. It would be sufficient for preventing ordinary burglaries. But it would not be of much use against armed gangs. As matters stand, it is not likely that in Practical Non-violence disarmament will be immediate and cent per cent. Nor is it suggested that the usual police force should be disbanded or that it should be deprived of its usual arms. But the work of the police must be supplemented by a different kind of work. The true function of the police ought to be the *prevention* of crime. At present it practically consists in watching for criminals, and detecting and arresting them *after* a crime has been committed. They are unable to prevent crime, because that requires the study and removal of the causes of crime. Is it want of food and other necessaries?, Is it want of opportunity to show one's mettle in a lawful manner? Is it revenge? Is it despair, following inability to obtain redress of a real or imaginary injustice? Is it fanaticism? Is it a clan or communal dispute? It is obvious that these are not items in the programme of the ordinary policeman; they are items of the 'constructive' programme. Since we have not yet paid sufficient attention to this side either as State or unofficial institutions, some penalty will have to be paid in times of disorder. It will be minimized to a considerable extent if wealthy people instead of

spending more money to engage 'pathans' and 'bhayyas' for their safety will liberally patronize constructive activities and deal with their debtors, tenants, labourers and workers with generosity, and take interest in their life in a spirit of fellow-feeling. Goodness may not beget goodness as an immediate consequence, particularly when it is born of calculation and fear. Immediately it may produce even bullyism. But this cannot last long. Good relations must in the end result from fair dealing. And there can be no organization of Practical Non-violence, which can dispense with the necessity of fair and generous dealing either with the opponent or with our own.

## 8

## POSSIBILITIES OF ORGANIZING NON-VIOLENCE

Let us now consider the possibilities and difficulties of organizing non-violence.

The one great circumstance in our favour is that, by age-long practice, we have developed almost an instinctive genius for organizing non-cooperation. We feel on sure ground when we think of it. We have often used the weapon of non-cooperation both for offence and defence, and both with a spirit of vengeance and of satyagraha. We still have before our eyes the Harijans, whom we have almost crushed down by ostracism, which is a very severe form of non-cooperation. It was done so many centuries ago that we do not even know the offence for which the punishment was meted out. It is not probable that they were ostracized simply for the nature of their vocations. It is more likely that they were first severely boycotted, and they found their present humble vocations as the only way to escape extermination. Untouchability was perhaps the mildest punishment in this intensive boycott. It went to the extent of unapproachability and unsightability. To the extent that this was done with a spirit of violence, it has

recoiled upon us. If it had been done, perhaps under compulsory circumstances, but in a spirit of non-violence, the boycott would have been lifted after the necessity for it had gone, just as it is done when a person or a group is excommunicated for breach of traditional customs. A great number of our castes and subcastes have originated from a just or unjust use of the weapon of non-cooperation.

The Mussalmans too, though they came as conquerors and proselytizers, found the Hindu's capacity to organize non-cooperation a hard nut to crack. He, who yielded to the threat of the sword or the temptation of reward, was allowed to go his way, but the society cut off all social relations with him. Even the conquering race was put outside the society to the extent it could be done within the limits of non-cooperation without active violence. The tragic story of Pratapsingh's quarrel with Mansingh, leading ultimately to a prolonged war with Akbar, is an instance of the spirit of boycott *versus* the spirit of compromise with the foreigner. Pratap had no desire to declare war against the house of Jaipur simply because the latter had entered into marital relations with Akbar. But he insisted upon exercising his right to dissociate himself from it by boycotting the house. Nowadays we would say that this is within the rights of a citizen. But kings are not citizens, and when a right has to be exercised against one in alliance with a strong victor, a quarrel is bound to ensue. As Pratap was not wedded to non-violence but accepted the institution of war, naturally it took the form of a disastrous bloody feud.

But elsewhere, where the weapon of non-cooperation was wielded by ordinary civilians, it confined itself within the limits of no-direct-violence. The demand for separate electorates by a section of the Harijans is out of a spirit of despair. It is the result of the dread of the Hindu genius to organize non-cooperation without resorting to violence. The necessity for separate societies is gone; what is needed now is combination. But the old prides, prejudices and bigotries still subsist, and they prevent us from discovering a formula which will adjust us to one another. But this is an independent subject.

It may also be mentioned that this genius has not been lost by conversion to Islam, Christianity or Sikhism. The Harijans, of course, have plenty of it.

No doubt, the weapon will have to be remodelled to suit new situations; it will also have to be refined in accordance with our advanced ideas about non-violence. The only point I want to stress here is that it is a weapon known to us, and the genius for using it is almost instinctive in us. So that it is necessary to suggest only the main principles of honour of its revised code, and lay down the rules of its do's and don't's. The people may be trusted to work out the applications in detail in accordance with their local requirements.

Another important circumstance in our favour is that ours is not a barren country. Our life does not become impossible,—no, it can be led with decent comfort, if not with all the luxuries of the modern city-home,—without a foreigner's assistance. We have sufficient natural resources, labour and skill to build up our country, if not with the rapidity and dash of Europe and America, certainly with steadiness. Not only this, we can even lend a helping hand, as we have done in the past, to other nations to rebuild themselves in a moderate manner, if they seek it on terms of equality and in a spirit of friendliness. Non-violent non-cooperation does not mean a desire to remain isolated, but a desire to form only honourable alliances with other people. It refuses to accept defeat and helplessly merge itself in the victor. *Let it be realized that if we are serious about speedy fulfilment of the "Quit India" objective, the programme of self-sufficient villages is not an ideological and economic thesis, but a political necessity. Until India is absolutely and finally free, every large-scale industry, railway, airplane and other mechanized contrivance will impede our effort for independence. At the critical moment, it will stand in the way of organizing effective non-cooperation, and it will help the government we want to overthrow. It cannot help our struggle. Consequently, whether non-violent leaders permit it or not, their sabotage will be instinctively resorted to. Large-scale industrialization has little scope under foreign rule, if the aim is to end that rule.*

Otherwise, the programme to become self-sufficient is neither hard nor inelastic. It is a fortress the gates of which can be opened or closed according to circumstances.

If we do not mind having to travel ordinarily in a bullock or horse vehicle, to bathe in an ordinary enclosure with water heated on a *sigree* or a *chula*, and to remain contented with getting news only once in a day, we can reconstruct our country with confident self-help. But if we aim at a rapid import of 'scientific civilization', we cannot escape the difficulty of having to face baffling problems of all sorts, including not only that of reconstructing with non-violent methods a society which has been built up by patient toil on a non-violent culure, but also that of organizing non-violent non-cooperation.

Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean that we must, for all time, close our doors fast against modern science, and all that it means in the shape of production, consumption and utilization of natural resources. But even after we have gained our freedom, we must give up the frantic hurry of introducing every invention and labour-saving device, which knowledge of the laws of nature and mechanics may suggest. We must watch the effects of each innovation upon society, make sure that it has brought us good, see that we are able to make other adjustments necessitated by it, and then proceed to another. The West has run so fast with science that it has come to a crash before reaching its goal. And for this the Western countries have entangled themselves with one another in so complicated a manner that we do not know who controls whom. It is not necessary for us to entangle ourselves in that intricate machinery; let us, as far as possible, keep out of it, until they revise their notions of 'advanced civilization'. Let us not mind being considered to be still living in the Victorian or even the mediaeval age. It is enough if we can provide even unto the last of our countrymen sufficient food, clothing and a house to live a healthy and sturdy long life rather than have a rapidly moving and luxurious but complicated and violent life of up-to-date science.

## DIFFICULTIES OF THE SAME

Against the above favourable circumstances, there are a few unfavourable ones which must be taken notice of.

A great population is not without its disadvantages. We know from the papers that even such small and highly 'civilized' countries as those conquered by Herr Hitler were not free from people who could be treacherous to their fatherland. Unfortunately our country has for centuries been guilty of providing an unbroken succession of treacherous non-patriots. One may think that treachery would appear in lower ranks and unemployed classes only. But it makes its appearance more often in the people at the top. In such a vast country as ours, with so many differences of aims and ideals, and with so much mutual distrust accompanied with ambition for power and post, it is difficult to expect that we can have plain sailing in the task of organizing non-violence. But these people really form a part of those who believe in violence, and so try to baffle the attempts of non-violent organizers. But a more formidable problem will be presented by those who will not wield arms themselves, but will co-operate with them for their own personal or party ends and will not carry out the injunctions of non-violence. A similar problem may also be created by those who accept non-violence but are separatists. They are too firm non-cooperationists and independent thinkers to cooperate and work with even those who work for the same objects. But it is as necessary for a non-violent organization as for a violent one that those who are on the same side speak with one voice and act as one man. Mistakes may occur; but mistakes mean only a little more suffering, a little more delay in success. But treachery, intrigue and divided counsel make success impossible, and may even turn victory into defeat.

Let us divide India into two parts: one, organizing the country on a violent basis; and the other, accepting non-violence, either as creed or as an inescapable destiny, and trying to organize the people that way. Each would require their particular code of discipline, loyalty and programme. Any weakness in that respect must bring suffering and

defeat. When one is organizing for resistance, there is bound to be something hard to do, some unpleasant duty to be performed, some sacrifice to be made, some personal opinion to be subordinated, some liberty to be sacrificed. In a violent organization, it is permissible to apply even force to compel obedience. In non-violence, the utmost coercion that can be applied is the expulsion of the recalcitrant. But expulsion does not necessarily mean an end of the difficulty. It may even increase it, as we have often seen in cases where the Congress has taken disciplinary measures against its rebels. Though this may have to be done, it has to be remembered that expulsion is an amputation of one of the limbs of one's own body, and is therefore, to that extent. an unfortunate circumstance in one's organization. Consequently, it has to be resorted to only when all appeal to reason and higher sentiment fails, and neglect to take notice of indiscipline is risky. Therefore, those who want to make non-violent resistance successful must agree to surrender themselves in all matters of national importance to a small body of their chosen leaders. The only thing which people should feel certain about is that the leaders are men of sound common sense, upright character, and unquestionable patriotism.

This is necessary. But it is likely that we may find it very difficult to achieve this. Besides open insubordination, there are other ways also of obstacles being created in our way by the very spirit of non-cooperation which is inherent in us. There may be no protest, no refusal to comply, no molestation of the people who follow the leaders of non-violence, but a simple indifference to their appeals. With this easy way of non-cooperation our people are extremely familiar. All local bodies and constructive workers have considerable experience of this passive non-cooperation of the people. It is not due merely to ignorance or illiteracy or idleness. It is deliberate, a sort of silent disapproval of the acts of the public body. It may be easier for electricity to pass through sheets of insulators than for a non-violent organization to succeed in the face of such non-cooperation.

But these difficulties have to be faced and overcome.

## COMMON FACTORS OF VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT ORGANIZATIONS

There are some factors which are common to violent and non-violent methods of resistance. For example:

In proportion to the intensity of the struggle and extension of the area, in both forms there is bound to be some amount of discomfort, privation, separation from friends, extra expenditure, trade losses, reduction of profits, compulsory or voluntary payment for prosecuting and organizing the struggle, danger to life and property, over-work, performance of duties to which one is not accustomed and other types of dislocation of ordinary civil life,

So also, death, torture, destruction and loss of valuable property, and, in the case of women, also rape are risks to which both violent and non-violent nations are equally liable. But it will be easily realized that all these should be less on both sides, when there is violence on only one side than when it is on both sides. When the aggressor knows that the other side has no guns to fight with, he need not manufacture and bring tanks, air-craft, bombs and the like, except so far as he thinks necessary in order to strike terror amongst the non-violent people. Even if he wants to hunt down the whole undefended nation and, so that he may guard himself against his own conscience, does not wish to come face to face with his victims, he will not need the mechanized force to the extent he needs today. He may reduce the non-violent )ation to the same condition as the aboriginal races of India and America. But can all this happen to a greater extent in non-violence than in unsuccessful violence? If violence has to succeed, it has to be more terrible than that of the opponent. There can be no hope in partial and ineffective violence. In the case of non-violence, if it is successful, you live in peace with another branch of the human family; if you are not effective or lose heart in the middle, the dishonour cannot be greater than that of Germany at the end of the two world wars, or of Japan at the end of the last one.

Thus a non-violent struggle has to face the same risks as a violent one. In violence, cruel bravery is needed to defeat the other side; in non-violence cool bravery is needed to court the risks without retaliation, The cruel bravery of the armed soldier is not unaccompanied with a desire to escape the risks of fight. It is never merely offensive; it is always offensive and defensive. In cool courage, there is no attempt to shirk the risk, and so no defensiveness. And, offensiveness, of course, there cannot be. It is only facing an ordeal, similar to what in mediaeval times men had to face in order to prove their innocence.

Then there is common to both the necessity of an intensely constructive programme as a preparation for and during the continuation of the struggle. As Shri Vinoba has pointed out in one of his articles:

> "Although there is a great difference in the aims and methods of the violent war in Europe and our non-violent struggle for independence, there is a good deal for us to learn from that war. Whatever may be the weapons with which a war is fought, the war today signifies a gigantic effort to organize co-ordination of every person in the nation in every matter possible. Although its aim is destruction, the effort is entirely constructive. It is said that Germany has brought an army of 70 lakhs to the war. To raise this large army from a nation of eight crores, to manufacture arms, ammunition and provision to make it effective, to carry on at the same time the routine government of the country with the help of all but physically the fittest part of the nation, to keep also the industry and trade of the nation going, so that the river of wealth may continue to flow as far as possible unbroken; and for this purpose, the closing down of colleges, the nationalization of key industries, and the regulation of the principal necessaries of life, and above all, the unification of the country so that the whole nation may concentrate itself upon a single purpose with one mind; in short, the transformation of the nation into a single organic body possessed of numerous limbs but controlled by a single heart: all this is such a wide and all-absorbing constructive programme that, in

spite of its destructiveness, it furnishes us with much to learn from."

Lastly, just as violence cannot remain simply defensive, so also, in my opinion, is the case with non-violence. Whether it takes the form of passive resistance, non-co-operation, civil disobedience, general strike or active conversion of the opponent to the side of the resister, each item must be thoroughly and fully carried out. If we are unable to execute it, it is weakness which will have to be overcome some day before final success is achieved. If it cannot be achieved non-violently, the final conclusion will be delayed, and there will always exist a body of dissatisfied patriots. As a result, whether one wills it or not, spasmodic violence will always break out.

The history of the British power in India is an unbroken record, on the side of Great Britain, of intrigue, unscrupulousness, loot and cruelty of the vilest type, and on the side of India, corruptibility of rulers, diwans, generals and other principal officers of states and mercenarism of the fighters. Until both become awakened to superior standards of morality, there cannot be genuine and lasting friendship between the two countries. Violence will never be able to bring about this conversion; and the mission of non-violence must be held as not completely fulfilled, until this is achieved.

## II

## PRE-REQUISITES OF NON-VIOLENCE

Now let us consider the pre-requisites of organizing non-violence.

I have not assumed for this purpose greater non-violence or more benevolence of the heart than what ordinary men are capable of. As I have said in the definition of Practical Non-violence, it is absence of violence with a leaning or prepossession for benevolence. It is not entirely free from selfishness, but it is just-selfishness.

This means that the masses must be made thoroughly to understand that—

(i) in no case can they resort to violence;—no, not even in spite of grave provocation and an opportunity to commit it with safety;

(ii) there can be no taking or expectation of revenge for any act of inhumanity by the opponent; they must be prepared to show generosity themselves, and must expect the directing body to do so always;

(iii) they must not expect any unjust advantages to accrue to them in case of success;

(iv) they must be prepared to surrender all unjust advantages and privileges, which they may be enjoying either as against the opponent, or within the nation itself against other sections of the people;

(v) those who are in happy circumstances must share their wealth with the unfortunate 'ones; they must liberally support all programmes meant for the benefit of the downtrodden, the unemployed and the poor;

(vi) the people must also understand that there is a difference between the non-violent non-cooperation as advocated now and the non-cooperation as practised in India in the past. In the latter every kind of violence short of actual injury to the body used to be inflicted. There was no spirit of love, compassion or generosity towards the other party. The non-cooperation was not lifted without exacting a severe penalty or inflicting extreme humiliation. The other party was not regarded as a brother to be reclaimed,

but as a foe to be crushed. The attitude is different in non-violent non-cooperation. It is never to be forgotten that the aim of resistance is not to inflict a crushing defeat or to gain an absolute victory, but to bring about a lasting peace, honourable to both. It is not an enmity to be handed down from sire to son for endless generations. It has to be lifted as soon as circumstances permit. The measure of non-cooperation has also to be regulated according to necessity.

(vii) As stated in the previous section, people must not carry extravagant notions about the security of non-violent resistance. It is open to all the risks of war, without any retaliatory heroism to boast of. The mind of the people must be prepared to face a fiery ordeal with grim determination.

(viii) The people must have complete confidence in their High Command. No settlement should be accepted unless approved by it, and no relaxation or alteration of the programme must be made on the advice of anyone else. They must have the trust, on the one hand, that their leaders will not sell the country, and on the other, that they will not involve the nation in more than the necessary hardship and risk.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF ORGANIZERS

So much concerning the people. But, in a nationwide organization of this type, there has to be necessarily a great band of provincial and local leaders and workers. They have not only to understand and thoroughly imbibe the national policy and the principles of the struggle as laid down by the highest body, but also to explain them to the public and to use their own resourcefulness in applying them to local circumstances. It is to them, particularly, that Gandhiji's demand of "non-violence of the strong" applies. As I understand the term, it means that no one who feels that we are compelled to resort to non-violence because we are unarmed and helpless, should become the interpreter, guide, organizer or controller of this movement. It must be organized by those who believe that it is superior to violence not only on moral grounds, but also as a practical proposition even for nations armed with up-to-date weapons: that weakness, diffidence and helplessness produce not non-violent but violent moods, in the same way as unscrupulous selfishness and passion. Though it may appear strange, it is not surrender alone which is born of fear, but also daring, which spurs one to fight desperately. Every cat shows it, when it is afraid about her kittens or herself. And surrender is not always the result of cowardice; it is possible also with bravery. When an invasion takes place every nation says in the beginning, "We shall fight to a man; we shall die, but not surrender." But barring a few stories of Rajasthan, there are not many instances in history in which this has been literally carried out. There are, indeed, some brave souls in every land and in every age, who would not live except with honour. But it is not commonly practised on behalf of or by a whole army or nation. Men fight for honour, risk their all for a time, and lose it at times in spite of their attempt to save it. But few men have really died for honour after all hope has been lost. In most people the desire to live is stronger than the love for honour, and awrlike people, with a reputatior for bravery have not

always declined to live without honour. There is a Gujarati proverb which freely rendered means, 'Live in the hope of seeing a better day.' The average man of every country believes in this, and consents to live a life of humiliation and privation rather than die. The conclusion is that the possession of arms does not make a man more strong-willed and determined to die than a man who deliberately resolves to face the opponent without arms. But persons not convinced of this should not seek to be in the front ranks. They can help immensely and with safety to all concerned by being content to assist liberally from outside.

Secondly, the movement cannot become popular, unless the local leaders and workers are popular and respected. And they may be unpopular or unrespected for two reasons: (i) people do not trust them as unselfish, sincere and incorruptible persons; or (ii) they live too much aloof from the people, either like government officers or like *sannyasis*. In either case, there is a great gulf between them and the people, as if each section lived in a world of its own. The workers know enough of the weaknesses of the people, but they are unable to appreciate their worries, aspirations, and sentiments. It is sometimes this gulf between the workers and the people, which is responsible for that spirit of silent non-cooperation of the latter in the national movement. It is clear that unless the distrusted class is eliminated and the workers who live aloof correct their attitude and come closer to the heart of the people, non-violence cannot be satisfactorily organized.

Thirdly, if the imlications of practical non-violence and a campaign of resistance are well understood, it should not be difficult to realize the importance of putting all the constructive activities of the Congress on a sound basis and in vigorous operation. A spirit of self-help, a sense of self-confidence, and a consciousness of the nation's inherent strength are to be created in the people. Unity is to be so established amongst the various communities, that they may live as one organic whole; their mutual relations have to be adjusted on a footing of equality, justice and goodwill; there has to be neither a superiority nor an inferiority

complex anywhere; no surrender to bullying, no cringing, no attempt to humiliate, and no submission to humiliation; no hypocrisy, no camouflage, no flattery;—and all this without compulsion. People have to be taught to stand erect—not merely in drills—but in dealings with persons wielding authority,—and this without giving up their own civility. The down-trodden, the hungry and the forsaken, as also those who are gone astray are to be befriended. People having means are to be persuaded to empty their purses for the public good. All this cannot be done unless the constructive programme is activated, and unless the leaders and workers, who possess sufficient good things of the world, themselves set an example of self-denial, simplicity, and liberal donation. The plying of the charkha is only a symbol, a token, of the worker's earnestness to carry out the constructive programme. *So far as workers are concerned,* it does not signify their payment in full to the cause of Swaraj, but only its "earnest" money. Further payment is to be made by organizing various items of the constructive programme both extensively and intensively. Swaraj is not merely the settlement of our relations with a foreign power,—a political revolution—but a readjustment of our relations with and between the various states, provinces, communities, and cultural, linguistic, social and economic groups,—a thorough revolution in our own life. *Those who cannot realize the relation between Swaraj—i. e. complete political independence of India in terms of the "Quit India" demand,—and the constructive programme will fail to secure her liberation from foreign domination. One big power or another will take her into her grip; and the grip will not be less tight, simply because it is not one of direct annexation. Until this is realized the movement for freedom will oscillate between parliamentary programme at the one end and incomplete direct action at the other.* Politicians, who do not understand the political significance of the constructive programme, should at least take up a position, which will not work as a brake upon the movement.

## 13

## THE HIGH COMMAND

A few words about the character and functions of the High Command of the nation.

If India is to be built up as one strong nation ruling itself and influencing the world by its practice of non-violence, we must reach a state where there is only one body which, in the final instance, is given the privilege of guiding the nation in all matters concerning the good of the people. It must take the place of a Manu, Moses or Mahommad. Whether the High Command is exercised by a single leader of the people or by a small number of leaders acting jointly is not very important. The fact that it is pledged to secure complete independence of India by all non-violent means and will not compromise in the matter, and that the continuance of the people's love and respect towards it is its only charter of authority, will be sufficient to prevent it from doing any intentional harm to the people.

If such a body lays down a particular method of action, it should be followed with faith and enthusiasm by the people without alteration. In a military organization, there is no liberty even to reason "why?". In a non-violent organization, one may ask "why?" up to a limit; but when the High Command exhorts, "Now, please, enough of 'why'," then at least, questioning must cease and compliance follow. As a non-violent organization cannot coerce, it is clear that its High Command would be generally anxious to explain as clearly as possible the reasons behind its instructions.

It seems to me that it is not possible for such a body to become the High Command of practically the whole nation until it commands the respect of a very great majority of the vocal elements of all important communities and interests. For, although a very vocal section may not really represent the real good of the majority of even the community or interest for which it claims to speak, it always exercises sufficient influence to create suspicion, misunderstanding and confused thinking in the people and in third

parties also. Therefore, if an opposition is sincere, every attempt should be made to come to an understanding with it, or else its insincerity should become so self-evident as to lose its credit with both its own community and third parties.

Democracy will always have several political parties. Then, within a particular party, age itself is responsible for creating difference of outlooks between the older and the younger generations. Thus the High Command does not only shift from party to party, but within the party itself, in course of time, a junior group often succeeds a senior one by ousting it. Continuity of national policy may appear impossible under these conditions. But the British Parliament provides an example to the contrary. From the commencement of the East India Company in 1600 till this day, whichever might have been the party in power, there has been uniformity of policy in regard to India and the Empire. Imperial affairs have always been regarded as falling outside the sphere of party politics. All the parties have been unanimous in pursuing the policy of pocketing all gains however obtained. Never has a party been guilty of relinquishing or refunding a wrongful gain. Any matter on which there is uniformity and unanimity of policy amongst all parties may well be regarded as the national policy of that country.

Similarly, India must be unanimous on the matter of her complete independence. The issue of Purna Swaraj must be above party politics. Whether it is the Congress, or the Muslim League, or the Hindu Mahasabha, or the Princes, and whether it is the capitalists, socialists, communists, or Gandhi-ites, who control and direct popular movements, there ought to be no two opinions on the point of complete freedom from foreign control, and no compromise on that issue. It must remain the national policy of India, to be uniformly and consistently pursued by every party commanding. The party which is prepared to compromise on this issue will never attain the prestige of a High Command, and, if in power, is bound to be overthrown.

## 14
## NEED FOR ORGANIZATION

It ought not to be necessary to explain at length the advantages of organization. But an idea seems to be current that non-violence does not gain much by organization, particularly when its purpose is to offer resistance to violence; that bravery is a virtue of the individual, which will express itself as such whether he is alone or with others; and that if we are weak, (weakness being a negative quality) the combination of several weak men would augment the weakness of the organization rather than diminish it. So, it is argued, non-violence is best organized by not attempting to organize it at all. It is also said that organization tends to centralization, and that, in its turn, to violence; therefore organization tends to violence, while non-organization to non-violence.

In my humble opinion, all these are wider generalizations than what it is proper to make. Both bravery and cowardice or strength and weakness, are infectious. A and B may each feel not brave enough to face a risk alone, and if each is conscious of his weakness and uses it to suffocate the feeble desire in himself and his companion to face the risk, then, their combination will be weaker than each of them. But if both have a desire to find strength from each other in the face of risk, their combination will reduce weakness. So that, given the right attitude, an organization well brought about must always become stronger than the sum total of each member's individual capacity.

Then neither centralization nor decentralization should be looked upon as an end by itself. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. What is needed is not to be enamoured of either the grandeur of centralization or the simplicity of decentralization. At every stage and in every sphere of life, we have to find out a proper adjustment between two opposite principles in a manner which will yield the nation the most satisfactory result under the circumstances which it has to face. In our present political and economic situation, the greater the decentralization (consistently with orderly

necessary and to give service on any occasion of panic, e. g. attack by dacoits, invasion, riot, fire, flood or other calamity, etc.

2. Economic organization of the unit, i. e. regulation of the production, distribution, sale, preservation, etc. of products, and of exports and imports of the unit.

3. Organization of Khadi and other industries within the unit.

4. Unemployment relief.

5. Charitable relief work for aged, invalid, indigent and the like.

6. Reclamation of bad characters, drunkards, etc.

7. Uplift and removal of social and other hardships of Harijans and others.

8. General education of the people (as distinguished from literary education).

9. Female education (to supplement or assist official or special institutions).

10. Basic and literary education (to supplement or assist as above).

11. Medical relief and sanitation (to supplement etc. as above).

12. Raising the moral level of the people.

13. Improvement of relations between different communities, castes and groups of other kinds.

14. Kindness to animals.

15. Organization of popular, inexpensive and morally good entertainments, sports, festivals, *kathas, kirtans,* songs, *bhajans,* fairs, exhibitions, etc.

16. Organization of works of public utility, such as construction of roads, *nalas,* bridges, etc. by self-help (to supplement or in co-operation with official work).

17. Co-operation with neighbouring units.

18. Keeping close connection with higher and central bodies.

No doubt, collection of necessary funds (in cash or kind) would be an important item in the group's programme, requiring as a necessary corollary the keeping of proper accounts and records.

It is not necessary that every group should necessarily undertake all these items. If a unit happens to have a satisfactory specialized institution or body for any particular kind of work, it would not be necessary for the working group to have that kind of work on its list.

## 16

## CONCLUSION

During some period of foreign domination in India, our forefathers organized the caste system (as distinguished from the *Varna* system). The caste system developed on various factors, such as race, religion, profession, creed, language, etc. For some time it was elastic, and enabled us to assimilate the immigrants so as to form with them a single great people, with a due place for each one in the organization. The great society so formed lost its original designation of the "Aryas", and in spite of a certain degree of exclusiveness of the caste, became blended together under the name of "Hindus". Later on, as all organic bodies do with age, it degenerated, became inelastic, and was unable to assimilate later immigrants or reclaim ex-caste or excommunicated groups. So it becomes necessary now that a new structure of a Hindustani or Hindi (Indian) society should be raised on a more refined basis.

There was a germ of non-violence in the conception of the *Varna* and the various castes. But it was perhaps hardly more than a germ. It did not exclude subtle types of violence, such as exploitation, humiliation, or decivilization of its weak or offending members. It did not also recognize the social equality of all castes and the political and civil equality of every man.

Still it was an attempt to organize society on a non-violent basis, and it enabled disarmed people to develop effective power. For several centuries it worked well.

When we think of the scanty means of communication and travel of those times, we feel surprised at the all-India character of this organization on the one hand, and the

variety of its forms on the other. It would seem as if someone just planted an idea in the minds of the people, and then the people both instinctively and intelligently developed it in practice. The idea must be re-presented to the people in a newer and purer form with the confidence that the people will understand it and work it out.

The *Bhagavadgita* says: Each one must follow in a righteous manner the course of action which is determined by his nature: that is his *swadharma;* and it is better to die in the performance of *swadharma,* for *paradharma* is dangerous. This is in keeping with the law of Nature.

There is a latent power in every creature and in every species to evolve such special organs, organizations and methods of life, as will enable it not only to subsist in the surrounding environment, but also, to a certain extent, assert itself against and resist an inimical species. In doing so, that creature or species imitates not the inimical surroundings, but the friendly ones; and adopts not the enemy's weapons and methods, but invents (rather discovers) altogether new forms, or even the reverse of the enemy's forms. Thus the grasshopper takes the colour and form of its vegetable surroundings, and if there is an eternal enmity between the snake and the mongoose, each has adopted its special modes and tricks, so that neither is exterminated. Though there is not a difference of species between man and man, still there is always one vital difference between the governors and the governed. It consists in the fact that the governors are always more thoroughly organized and possess superior weapons of destruction than the governed. This difference makes the governed almost resemble a different species of creatures. If the governors are a pack of wolves, the people are, at best, a crowd of street dogs. This makes a violent attempt by a people to overthrow a well established government extremely difficult. Often it ends only in a change of masters. Then, when one people has, partly by cultural choice and partly under pressure of circumstances, placed itself in an environment different from the rest of the human race, it can be said to have been assigned to a different destiny or, say, assigned a

different mission. Consequently, it must evolve its own special mode of subsistence and organization to successfully resist the aggressions of other races, which from this point of view are for the time as good as a different species. Imitation cannot make us strong, and it is wrong when we feel at the same time that our own destiny or mission is also the right thing for all. The capacity to evolve such power is latent in us, as it must be according to nature. It can grow, only if we adhere to it in spite of temptations to the contrary.

If we believe in our special destiny or mission, we can confidently hope, if not to eradicate violence, at least to successfully resist it with the *Power of Non-violence.*

# THE IDEOLOGY OF NON-VIOLENCE

*(The following brief enunciation of the fundamental Principles, Aims and Rules of Discipline will be found useful for all those who seek to serve the people and achieve the welfare of society through non-violence only.)*

## Principles and Aims

1. Non-violence, and not violence, is the fundamental law or basis of life.

2. The search and discipline of non-violence (the *Sadhana of Ahimsa*) consists in a constant and progressive widening of the conception, that all life is equal, nay, on deep thinking, one.

3. Needless, therefore, to say that all men are equal and the whole mankind is one human family. Man and woman are also equal.

4. This family has become a complex organization on account of its division into various groups based on differences of habitation, government, race, colour, occupation, birth, religion, education, wealth, language, script and various other factors. These differences have been instrumental in producing distinguishing factors between groups as well as individuals.

5. It is not possible to remove or ignore these differences. But it is wrong to arrogate any special merit on their account. They are worthy of preservation and development only to the extent to which they contribute to the welfare and happiness of the whole human family. The search and practice of non-violence consists in dedicating one's distinctive specialities to the service of the human family, and in voluntarily renouncing or giving them up, if they are harmful to any part of the family. It is futile and, without violence, impossible to eradicate all differences, and shape all men in a single or a few moulds.

6. Differences and specialities must give rise to duties, and not rights, in one's relations with others. The corollary to this is that the discipline of non-violence makes equal

respect for all religions, removal of untouchability, and freedom of social intercourse indispensable.

7. In order to ensure the happiness and well-being of each and every individual of the human family, it is essential to completely eradicate violence from human affairs.

8. When one party has resorted to violence, there is a feeling in the opposite party to employ counter-violence either in self-defence or by way of retaliation. Thus man has developed the habit of meeting violence by counter-violence.

9. But this habit never puts a stop to violence and there is no final establishment of just relations between the quarrelling parties. Also, ultimately all the quarrelling parties gain nothing except harm to themselves, their future generations and the whole of humanity.

10. Hence, whatever may be the severity of the injustice or evil perpetrated, it is not proper to resort to violence as a remedy against it. The discipline of non-violence is possible only when one restrains one's urge to use violence.

11. There is, as there must be, in non-violence the power to preserve, perpetuate and develop life in a just manner. Consequently, there must necessarily be appropriate non-violent remedies for all those evils, for the removal of which there is an urge to use violence. One, who earnestly seeks and practises non-violence, will be able to discover them.

12. It must be possible to carry on every activity justly necessary for human life without resort to violence between man and man. It is necessary to remove from one's own mind as well as from society the superstition that non-violence cannot be practised in certain fields of life or against certain kinds of evil. As long as this superstition persists, the votary of non-violence must regard his search and practice to be incomplete.

13. But, for this purpose, it is necessary to revise some of our prevailing notions about civilization and happiness. From the experience of the discipline of non-violence hitherto practised, the principles hereafter mentioned appear to be inseparable from non-violence.

14. There is a direct relation between an ease-loving life and violence. On the other hand a life of simplicity, self-restraint, body-labour and service is favourable to non-violence.

15. Deeds of colossal magnitude and pomp, and a life of dazzling prosperity and luxury cannot be raised and maintained without violence. It is a mistake to regard these as marks of civilization.

16. True civilization or culture must enable every member of the human family to live a life of health, fearlessness, self-respect and sweet relations, even though it may be simple, self-restrained and hard-working. This is the civilization of " *Sarvodaya* " ( the Well-being of All ). Such civilization is possible only through non-violence.

17. Non-violent culture does not mean disorder, anarchy, and formation of only small groups of men, living entirely apart and independently of one another without interconnection. Non-violence aims at realizing one's unity with the whole universe, including non-human life. And this aim cannot be realized by acts of self-aggrandisement or exploitation but in and through acts which will provide proper opportunities of life to the tiniest of creatures. Bearing this in mind, one must seek the proper adjustment between the extremes of centralization and decentralization, and between mechanization and human labour.

18. The discipline of non-violence does not necessarily depend upon the co-operation of others. Every one has to be a witness to his inward light and thus be an example to others. But this does not mean that the votary of non-violence should be careless of the co-operation of others.

19. Non-violence is not merely the highest *dharma*, but to the *satyagrahi* it is also his *swadharma*. This means that he has to be loyal and true to it, whether its observance will bring him pain or pleasure, gain or loss, success or failure. This presupposes ceaseless search of and faith in Truth or God, or the First Principle ( call it by whatever name ), and the search presupposes a life of fearlessness and purity of thought, word and deed.

20. Without this search and Faith it is difficult for anyone to persevere in non-violence till the end.

## Rules of Discipline

1. The votary of non-violence must be prepared to make all such sacrifices and changes in life as may be necessary for the fulfilment of the Principles and Aims of Non-violence.

2. As the discipline of non-violence has to begin from one's personal life, the non-violent person's conduct towards his family, colleagues, neighbours and society must be strictly non-violent and full of love. In case of any misunderstanding with them, or any injustice or misbehaviour by them, he must adopt only a non-violent remedy. The votary of non-violence must not resort to civil or criminal proceedings or seek the aid of the police for the protection of his personal life, property or honour, or the redress of a personal grievance.

3. He must not entertain the thought of resorting to violence for the protection of the life, property or honour of himself or his community, or for putting down a disturbance or riot or other breach of the peace, but must seek a non-violent remedy for the same even at the risk of serious personal loss, including his life.

4. He must try to find out the root cause of every violence done or likely to be done in private life or society. And, if in the course of his investigation he finds that the party seeking to resort to violence has a just demand or grievance, he must admit it and persuade society to do likewise, and remove the same. In case of his failure, he should persuade the aggrieved party to resort to non-violence. If he fails even there, he must seek an appropriate form of Satyagraha against both the quarrelling parties.

5. The votary of non-violence will run to the aid of the people, when they are in distress, even at the risk of his life.

6. The realization of the foregoing principles must be expressed in his personal life by the following traits of conduct:—

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