

NONVIOLENCE AS A WAY OF LIFE  
*History, Theory and Practice*

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*History, Theory and Practice*

*Edited by*

PREDRAG CICOVACKI

KENDY HESS

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## **Preface**

This book is dedicated to Devendra Raj Mehta, Dr. Sulekh C. Jain, Samani Charitra Prajna, and the entire Jain community. In this short introduction I will try to explain why this is so.

I visited India for the first time in 2007. The occasion was a conference, “Gandhi is Back,” held at the Vardhaman Open University, in the ancient Rajasthani city of Jaipur. I presented a paper that compared Gandhi’s nonviolence and Albert Schweitzer’s reverence for life. Among the roughly eighty participants of the conference, one Indian man in his mid-sixties seemed to be especially revered. I must have missed his presentation and did not really know who he was. On the last day of the conference he approached me, introduced himself, and immediately asked me what I was planning to do the following day. I told him that I was staying in Jaipur for one more day of sightseeing, and he asked me if I would instead join him, for he would like me to see some things. He looked trustworthy enough for me to nod my head in assent, but before I could ask what he would like to show me, he told me that he would pick me up at 6:30 a.m. and departed as suddenly as he had come.

The next morning his car appeared at the appointed time, I got in, and we drove to the hospital where he worked. It was shortly before seven when we arrived, and the hospital was already buzzing with activities. It turned out that my companion was not only the director in this hospital but also its founder. Two of his assistants were waiting for him, and as soon as he parked the car, he told me to accompany the three of them while they visited the incoming patients. About thirty patients – mostly middle-aged men, but some women

and children as well – were lined up in front of the hospital, using the wall to hide themselves from the sun. My host walked from one patient to the next and spoke with each for several minutes. His two assistants were taking notes on these conversations, detailing where the patients were from and what medical assistance they needed. They came from all over India, some even from the neighboring countries (such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka), and all of them had one or both legs missing. I soon realized that this was an orthopedic hospital. More importantly, I realized that everyone, without any discrimination of caste, social status, gender, race, or religious affiliation, was welcome here. The door of this hospital was open to all.

It was well past 9 a.m. when my host finished interviewing each incoming patient and took me to eat breakfast with him in the hospital cafeteria. During our meal he told me more about the patients, the hospital, and his work. While we were eating, his assistants were doing a more detailed medical examination of each patient to establish both the nature of the injury and what kind of prosthetic replacement each person needed. After the examination, the patients would rest on the grounds of the hospital, where they had free meals and shelter. The next day they would receive an artificial limb, which would be immediately tested and adjusted. After that the patients were free to go back to their homes. Like food and accommodation, the prosthetic limbs and medical assistance were free.

Knowing that something like that would cost thousands of dollars in the US, I must have had an incredulous look in my eyes. My good host understood my puzzlement and told me that I would see the whole process for myself, and that he would explain later how this was possible.

After breakfast I accompanied him to the department where newly produced limbs were tried on the patients who arrived the previous day. After about two hours there, my host took me to another department that looked more like

a workshop than a hospital. This was where the prosthetic limbs were being made. At first I only noticed relatively primitive looking tools and machines used there, but then I realized that the man working closest to me has a prosthetic leg. And the one next to him as well. In fact, all the workers in this little “factory” had prosthetic limbs. This was part of the secret of how this complex could run for free. The people working here were former patients who, upon receiving the help for which they came, opted to stay in the hospital and work in this workshop for several months. While working, they would have free lodging on the premises of the hospital. They received no salary for their work, but they did it because of their gratitude for the help received. And their voluntary work made it possible for other people to come and receive free help.

As I was standing there speechless, my host told me that I was free to stay there or to roam freely through the rest of the hospital while he made some phone calls and answered his correspondence, and that he would find me later for lunch.

During our late afternoon lunch, my host told me more about the history of the hospital and how it was possible to make it run free. The cost of production, with those simple machines and free labor, was incomparably cheaper than in the United States and other developed countries. The United Nations is well aware of the work of this hospital, and has employed its director and his team more than forty times in places of armed conflict where people were left with missing limbs: Rwanda, Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka ... wherever they were needed. The U.N. transports the director and his team to a neighboring country into which many refugees pour from the areas of conflict, and they establish a temporary hospital and stay put for several months during the most acute crisis. The financial compensation by the U.N. has been an important source of income for the hospital, which enables it to keep providing its services for free.

It was already getting dark before my good host and I left the hospital. Just before leaving, my host told me of the last source of financing for the hospital – private donations. When he asked me if I would like to make a small donation, I simply emptied my pockets of all the rupees I had with me and put them in the donation box.

On the way back, my host looked far less tired than I was. I was exhausted by the heat of about 100 degrees Fahrenheit, the early April heat that did not seem to bother anyone but me. More than the heat, what made me silent was the awe that I felt toward the man driving me back. I did not get to see the renowned Jaipur fortress, its numerous ancient temples, or its famed pink-stone walls, as I intended to do that day. But I saw something incomparably more precious – a human being who renewed my hope and left me with a sense of pride about what we are capable of doing when we integrate our goodwill and our talents. The name of this human being is Devendra Raj Mehta. The name of his hospital is the Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti.

\* \* \*

It may surprise the reader that I have not mentioned the words “violence” or “nonviolence” while narrating this story. Nor did I talk about “justice” or “injustice.” Neither do many of the authors whose stories will fill the following pages.

I take it to be a sign of change in our discourse and our way of thinking. This change is apparent in the language we resort to, the values toward which we aspire, and our overall approach to the problems of violence and nonviolence.

The discourse of the twentieth century was dictated by its “big” events – two world wars, the Holocaust, the killing of millions of people during the times of political turmoil in India, China, Cambodia, the Soviet Union, and numerous other countries, and the nuclear arms race during the Cold War. The haunting images of broken bodies and destroyed countries, and the thoughts of how easily all life on this planet could be destroyed, brought to our eyes and minds the

realization of the unprecedented levels of physical destruction of which we are now capable. While we work eagerly to perfect the means of mass destruction, and the weapons industry becomes more profitable than ever before, we have at the same time become increasingly aware of the extent to which the physical brokenness of the world has afflicted our souls. Tortured and dehumanized by physical violence in an increasingly mechanized world that relies on violence in almost all of its aspects, the soul of humanity has become poisoned and disoriented. It is bleeding heavily and searching desperately for any kind of help, for any ground on which to sustain hope in a more promising future.

In the frenzy of war, those who are violent are hailed as heroes and saviors. Those who refuse to choose sides, those who do not shoot and murder, those who resort to nonviolence, are regarded as traitors and cowards. There are “just” wars and the “right” to self-defense, which pretty conveniently justify the use of all means. Yet when the weapons stop firing, when the surviving “heroes” are relegated to hospitals and psychiatric wards, it is the healers who take the central role. What is so dearly needed for all of those who are hurting are hospitality and healing acceptance and care.

I have intentionally told a story of a hospital because I think that the stories and essays in this volume shift the emphasis away from our discourse of violence and nonviolence and toward a discourse of hurting and healing; away from injustice and justice and toward hostility and hospitality; away from building fences that divide us, and toward reaching out with sympathy, with the desire to understand and to help.

The brokenness of our world has reached such an alarming level that it appears to undermine the distinction between victimizers and victims: those who victimize others do so because they themselves have been victimized, because they themselves have been hurting. And the forms and levels

of hurting have become so numerous that playing the blame game and insisting on justice is often beside the point. What is sorely needed is not another instance of hurting but its opposite: healing. This is why, on the pages that follow, you will find so many stories of hospitality: toward strangers, toward refugees, toward orphaned or imprisoned children, toward the elderly...

When nonviolence is understood in terms of hospitality and healing, it becomes clear that it is not a single attitude but a cluster of positive, participatory emotions and actions. And the other way around: violence stands for numerous attitudes, emotions, and actions that center around narrow self-assertiveness and egoism, coupled with insensitivity and indifference toward others.

Healing and hospitality are closely associated with two other things we have managed to devalue and neglect in the contemporary world: community and serving. In the twentieth century we have seen plenty of emphasis on individualism. We have also witnessed numerous mass movements in which a herd mentality swallows all individual differences. Although apparently contradictory, these extreme attitudes are actually intimately connected; we neither understand what it means to be a human being, nor do we give much thought to the communal causes around which we might gather. The ease with which we swing from one extreme to another reveals a hollow middle, a lack of understanding of how to harmonize our individual uniqueness with our common humanity. Not really grasping either of these two constitutional elements of the human personality, we have little appreciation for the indispensable role of community in building and maintaining a peaceful world. In many of the essays that follow, there are illustrations and thoughts about the distinction between pseudo and dysfunctional communities on the one hand, and those that provide hospitality and nurturing on the other.

Any healthy and prosperous community requires individuals willing and ready to serve. In our exaggerated individualism, we think of serving as lowly and degrading; all of us want to be on top, in charge, dominating and making decisions. In our herd mentality, we believe that belonging to our “community” requires being hostile to all those who do not belong and blindly following the “higher” goals of our group. But serving is not degrading, nor does it require the performance of inhumane deeds. Instead, it requires us to develop our humanity and devote ourselves to the well-being of the community. Service requires patience, sensitivity, respect for and affirmation of others, and the ability to care and help. If there is a single lesson behind the numerous stories about healing, nursing, guarding, teaching, nurturing, and providing hospitality that you will find in the pages that follow, this lesson is that helping and serving others is something that everyone can practice, in almost every situation. And not only that we *can* help, heal, and serve, but that we *should*.

\* \* \*

I never learned why Mr. Mehta invited me to visit his hospital. Upon returning home I checked the hospital’s website to learn more about this remarkable man and his hospital, and I found that as a young man, he was involved in a serious road accident in which one of his legs was smashed. His doctors had to fight not only to save his leg but his life. The process of recovery was a long one, lasting for about five months, during which he was confined to bed. During that time Mr. Mehta read numerous stories about various remarkable men, among whom was Dr. Albert Schweitzer. Dr. Schweitzer left a promising academic and artistic career in Europe (he was a professor of theology at the University of Strasbourg, authored several influential books, and became an accomplished organ player) to enroll in medical school. He specialized in tropical medicine, opened a hospital in the most malaria-infected part of Africa,

and spent most of the remaining fifty years of his life there. Dr. Schweitzer's hospital was a communal place of healing and service, operating on his principle of ethics of reverence for all life.

Mr. Mehta wanted to create a similar community for the disabled, and this is how the "Jaipur Foot" originated. The Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti itself (the hospital I visited) was established in 1975, and the whole "Jaipur Foot" project eventually grew into a network of 22 branches across India, with two associated centers in Pakistan, three in the Philippines, and a joint venture in Columbia. It grew into one of the world's largest organizations for the disabled, which by now has benefited more than one and a half million patients.

While Schweitzer's example may have provided the final impetus, Mr. Mehta acquired the basic ideals of service, hospitality, and reverence for all forms of life from his own Jain background. Jains are perhaps the oldest organized religious group in the world. In 1975, as the hospital opened, the Jain community celebrated 2500 years since the enlightenment of Mahavira, the most recent of their twenty-four "*Jinah*" (liberated beings). An older contemporary of the Buddha, Mahavira spent his life promoting the equality of all living beings, and compassion for them. While all religious traditions promote peace, Jains are the only religious group that has nonviolence as its central and leading principle. The word they use – *ahimsa* (also spelled as *ahinsa* and *ahimsā*) – literally means non-hurting. In a more extended meaning, *ahimsa* refers to a positive and unconditional attitude of non-harming, care and concern for the well-being of all, humans and nonhumans alike.

After my first visit to India I wanted to learn more about Jainism. I got an opportunity to attend the first Jain-organized conference in the US, at Claremont Lincoln University in August of 2012. During the conference I became acquainted with one of the leaders of the Jain community in the US,



Dr. Sulekh Chand Jain. This man, who works tirelessly for the promotion of the Jain tradition and the well-being of humanity, proposed that I edit a book on the practical application of nonviolence. I took his counsel seriously, but needed to learn more about the Jains and think about how to realize this project in the best way. Immediately after the conference, I was fortunate enough to return to India, this time as a Fulbright fellow, in order to study the nature and history of nonviolence. During my stay in India I spent more than a month as a guest of the Jain Vishva Bharati University in Ladnun, Rajasthan. The Vice Chancellor, Samani Charitra Prajna – a wonderful host and yet another Jain who inspired me with her devotion and demeanor – also suggested the preparation of a similar book. More important than their formal invitations were the ways they enabled me to learn more about the Jain way of life. Let me mention just one simple example. During the second day of our visit to Ladnun, my wife and I were passing by the residence of the elderly Jain nuns. Since the gates were open, and since we were both curious, we walked in. What surprised us was the atmosphere of peace and openness. Several nuns were quietly helping local girls with their school-work. Other nuns were studying on their own. All the doors were open and we, two complete strangers, could freely walk around and talk to anyone we wanted. The nuns lived simple lives of service and learning. The same atmosphere permeated the university campus: it was an oasis of peacefulness, a community of service and learning where every guest was always welcome.

In the course of my stay with the Jains, I learned much about their history. What impressed me far more than anything I read in their books was the simple way of life they live, a life dedicated to the promotion of peaceful coexistence of all living beings. Living with the Jains helped me realize that the essence of nonviolence consists in its providing for us a model way of life. What matters the most in that way of life is not so much what we refrain from doing,

but that whatever we do, we do it with the attitudes of humility and hospitality, of open-mindedness and trust.

What we should all learn from the Jains is to keep the doors of our homes and our hospitals always open and welcoming to all living beings. Even more importantly: we need to learn from them how to keep open and welcoming the doors of our hearts and our souls.

— PREDRAG CICOVACKI

## Introduction

### I

There is hardly an educated person in the world who would not recognize a photograph of Gandhi. In this regard, there is a striking analogy between Gandhi and Einstein. They are well-known and almost universally admired, yet most of us can hardly say anything beyond the key phrases of “nonviolence” and “relativity” when discussing their accomplishments. It may indeed be true that no other person has contributed more to our understanding and appreciation of nonviolence and relativity; nevertheless, we often forget, or simply ignore, the fact that their individual work with “nonviolence” and “relativity” was the culmination of a long and complex history of personal and intellectual developments.

In the case of Einstein, most of this development occurred during the few decades immediately preceding his work. To understand Gandhi’s development, however, we need to return to spiritual movements that occurred centuries ago.

There are three traditions that had a significant influence on Gandhi: Christianity, Hinduism and Jainism. Gandhi was fascinated by the New Testament, especially the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel of Matthew. In this well-known text, Jesus presents his ethics of love and nonresistance to evil: “Love your enemies” and “Turn the other cheek” became the ideals by which Gandhi tried to live. Through his actions and words, he also encouraged his countrymen, and all other fellow human beings, to implement these ideals in their daily practice.

Gandhi's devotion to the ideals preached by Jesus was so strong that some of his Christian friends suggested that he convert to Christianity. Yet Gandhi was, and remained, a Hindu. In this more than three thousand-year-old tradition and its sacred writings, Gandhi found a continuous inspiration for the life of nonviolence. While Christianity encourages us to love our neighbors and our enemies as we love ourselves, the sacred texts of Hinduism proclaim the interconnectedness and even essential identity of all living beings: love your neighbors and your enemies because they *are* yourselves! This Hindu belief can be seen in a Hindu's ordinary way of greeting: the hands are pressed together and accompanied by a slight bow and the word "*Namaste*" (or "*Namaskar*"), which means, "I greet the divine in you!" And if I recognize the divine in you, how could I harm you and not show my respect for you?

Many in the Western world are familiar with the Christian and Hindu traditions, but the tradition of Jainism – so important to Gandhi's work – is less well known. Perhaps the oldest religion in the world, Jainism is the only one that insists on nonviolence as the central principle of all human behavior. The Jains use the word "*ahimsa*," which literally means the "non-harming" of any other living being, but which more broadly refers to a refusal to violate the essence of any other living being. All living beings contain living souls, trapped by bad *karma* performed in previous lives. Following the example and the teaching of Vardhamana Jainaputra, a slightly older contemporary of the Buddha known as Mahavira (the Great Hero), the Jains try to liberate themselves by observing a number of prohibitions. The most important of the prohibitions are those forbidding the Jains to kill or harm another creature (including plants and insects), to steal, to lie, to take intoxicants, or to engage in sexual intercourse. Gandhi knew of these Jain "vows" from his early childhood, and he tried to implement all of them in his life and the lives of those living in his small village community (*ashram*). He was convinced that the strict

observance of these vows makes human beings less egotistical and less focused on the material world and the pleasures of the flesh. At the same time, and even more importantly, the observance of these vows redirects energy toward spiritual tasks and helps us become more humane toward others, and more complete as human beings.

## II

This brief overview may be sufficient to intimate that not only the history, but also the theory and practice of nonviolence, are complex and multi-layered. Indeed, even in the case of Gandhi, it is possible to distinguish between his different identities as a political activist, a social reformer, and a moral and spiritual leader.

Gandhi's fame is mostly due to his first role, in which he opposed the use of brute force, in particular the forceful domination of the British over his own country, which eventually led to the political liberation of India. Gandhi formulated the principles of nonviolent opposition in five points: 1. nonviolent opposition implies not wishing ill to one's opponents; 2. it includes total refusal to cooperate with or participate in the activities of an unjust group, extending even to eating food that comes from it; 3. it is of no avail to those without living faith in the God of Love; 4. an individual who practices must be ready to sacrifice everything except his or her honor; and 5. it must pervade everything we do and not be applied merely in isolated acts. These principles show that, for Gandhi, political activism is not a struggle against our opponents. It focuses on problems rather than on individuals, and brings us to the roots of these problems, often by intensifying the crisis at our own expense.

Gandhi's political activism, channeled through active nonviolent resistance, inspired Martin Luther King, Jr. to lead the struggle against racism in the United States. Following Gandhi, King realized that an organized opposition must be well trained and highly disciplined, so

that even extremely brutal oppression does not provoke a violent response. To prepare his followers for encounters with the brutality of the police and white extremists, King formulated his own five principles of nonviolent resistance: 1. this is not a method for cowards; 2. this method of resistance seeks not to defeat or humiliate the opponent but to win his friendship and understanding; 3. it is directed against the forces of evil, rather than against persons caught in these forces; 4. this method requires avoiding not only physical but also internal violence of spirit, because at the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love; and 5. this method presupposes that “the universe is on the side of justice.”

In the past two decades, Gandhi and King’s political activism was further developed by Gene Sharp, who systematically outlined roughly two hundred different techniques that can lead toward the nonviolent transformation of a tyrannical regime into a democratic society. These techniques aim to lead us from a world dominated by a few toward a world of justice, equality, and collaboration.

Besides being a political activist, Gandhi was a social reformer. Early in his career, in 1909, he wrote a short book, *Hind Swaraj* (*Indian Home Rule*), in which he identified a number of centuries-long problems besetting Indian society (and most other societies in the world). The issues included the inferior position of women and some social castes, the lack of literacy and hygiene, the widespread use of alcohol and opium, the corrupt ruling elite, and the mindless use of the newest technologies. Gandhi’s social reformism was directed against poverty and ignorance, as well as what we nowadays call “structural violence” (the phrase introduced by Johan Galtung, one of the contributors to this volume). Gandhi knew that political liberation by itself would not be sufficient to guide India toward the path of equal opportunities and social justice. Gandhi’s contribution to raising awareness of the plague of the underprivileged and

the need for deep social reforms has been no less important than his insistence on the possibility of nonviolent resolution of political conflicts.

Lastly, Gandhi was a moral and spiritual leader. He realized that violence oppresses humanity not only in the form of brute force and dehumanizing conditions of life, but also in the form of indifference and insensitivity toward those with whom we live. Gandhi called his autobiography “The Story of My Experiments with Truth,” and there he described the numerous trials that led him toward an ethic of love and sympathy, and a spiritual orientation of sensitivity toward others and solidarity with them. He realized that violence dehumanizes both the victim and the perpetrator, and that there is no genuine peace unless there is peace in the human heart. Peaceful and happy people do not oppress and victimize others, and so often perpetrators of violence harm others because they themselves are being victimized and do not know of an alternative to spreading the cycle of violence. Our political and economic activities are based on the principles of dominance and trade-offs, while our moral and spiritual lives require something quite different. They call for the realization of our vulnerability and our inclination to help and heal, to understand and appreciate. Our moral and spiritual relations are asymmetrical, resembling a situation in which one side offers a gift to another without expecting anything in return.

Gandhi could have entitled his autobiography “The Story of My Experiments with Faith,” for it is faith that forms the bedrock of his nonviolent approach. Negatively speaking, it is the faith that human nature is not essentially violent, nor essentially self-serving. Positively expressed, it is the faith that there is a good core in every human being – often obscured and overshadowed by unfavorable external circumstances, to be sure, but there to be touched and nurtured. With patience and love, this core can become the foundation of one’s way of life.

In the biblical tradition, faith is described as not seeing and yet believing. This suggests that faith is essentially a capacity to trust, a capacity for cooperation. Gandhi considered distrust to be impotence, and believed that faith has a transformative power that can lead to humane social relations. He considered himself to be a pragmatic idealist who did not confuse faith with blind credulity. Faith requires perceptiveness and moral strength and is obtained by striving and maturing. To have faith in others is to stake ourselves for others, and also to make ourselves vulnerable in this process. Gandhi's morality and spirituality are based on the recognition of our vulnerability and our attempts to be sensitive to it. Because we are so vulnerable, it is easy to violate and destroy. What is difficult and what is expected of us is to grow and help others grow, so that we can all get a chance to fulfill our natural and spiritual potential.

### III

The practice of nonviolence requires moral strength and spiritual faith, but it does not require heroes. Nor does it require great leaders, like Gandhi and King, or elaborate political, social, or moral theory. The theory is always an elaborate discussion of a "what"; the practice, by contrast, is about "just do so." Theory is always an appeal to reason; practice depends on a response of the heart. Let us briefly consider one historical example to clarify these insights.

In Nazi-occupied France, there was a village called La Chambon. One winter evening, a Jewish woman knocked at the door of the pastor in this remote, mountainous village, and he let her in. After her, others Jews came, mostly children. The villagers followed the example set by their pastor and opened their doors and their hearts, and managed to save about five thousand Jews over the course of four years. The villagers knew that if the Nazis found the Jews, they would all be prosecuted. Yet their faith told them that all men and women are brothers and sisters, and they opened their doors wide for the Jewish refugees.

Opening those doors is simple and natural when we have faith that what is good should be acted on. It becomes far more complicated when we start calculating the risk, when we turn morality into a trade-off relation. There is seemingly nothing to gain by opening those doors, feeding the hungry strangers, and risking the lives of our family members and other villagers. When such calculations begin, the doors remain closed. When there is no faith, we pretend not to hear the knock on the door and console ourselves with a rational explanation that there is really nothing we can do for the uninvited strangers. Self-interest reigns, while morality and spirituality remain on the other side of the door, locked out of our lives. The villagers of La Chambon acted the way they did because they believed in the preciousness of all life and because they were touched by the obvious suffering of the strangers. When interviewed after the war about their deeds, the villagers of La Chambon emphatically denied that they were heroes, or that they did anything heroic. They were even puzzled by the insistence of their interviewers that they explain why they risked their own lives for the refugees. For them their behavior seemed perfectly obvious and normal: they were convinced that what they did was something all human beings would also do.

And yet we know that this is not so. Not only do we know that we would not all open the doors of our houses and our hearts to those strangers, but we even bar them from our histories. Our history books have nothing to say about the rescuers of La Chambon, just as they are usually silent about the nonviolent resistance of the Danes toward the Germans, and the rescue of almost all of the Jews in Denmark. Our history books contain the histories of violence, affirming our felt sense that violence is and has always been the rule, and that we can hardly expect this to change in the future. This makes it all the more important that our daily lives should be those of nonviolence. This, truly, is the spirit of Jainism, the oldest spiritual religion that conceives of nonviolence as a way of life. This is also the spirit in which this book is conceived and written.

#### IV

The contributors to this collection live in twelve countries on five continents. They are scholars and priests, scientists and artists, activists and professionals, teachers and students, husbands and wives and parents, and the only thing they have in common is a world increasingly beset by violence and a shared conviction that nonviolence is the only adequate response.

As the title suggests, the book addresses the subject of nonviolence, especially as it is understood and practiced in the eastern spiritual tradition of *ahimsa*. The tradition of *ahimsa* is not just about political, economic and social change. It is an ancient set of beliefs and practices that can guide each of us toward happier, quieter, more centered and joyful lives while *also* speaking to the larger societal and global issues that occupy so much of our attention. As our world becomes more violent, and we become increasingly aware of the many ways in which violence affects our lives, there is a growing demand for resources that will help people understand and respond to the situation. This book is an effort to satisfy that need.

While there are many scholarly books on nonviolence and *ahimsa* – many of them written by the contributors to this volume – the goal here is not to provide a single, univocal, monolithic argument or rationale. Instead, the collected essays explore the history, theory, and above all the *practice* of nonviolence, from a myriad of perspectives. Many of the essays introduce readers to the history and theory of *ahimsa*, comparing the particular ideas of *ahimsa* to similar ideas in other traditions (Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism), but most are about real world efforts and experiences. Violence affects us at all stages of life and can be present in every sphere. Thus, in this collection you will find essays dealing with children, ranging from their education, adoption and their treatment in juvenile jails. There are also stories about adults involved in the practices of medicine and law, as well as those who are refugees and

peacemakers, political activists and religious leaders. And there are concerns about the elderly, and the violence they may experience during “care” in their final years.

This book is intended for those who are struggling to understand and confront the epidemic of violence in our world but are not familiar with the nonviolent alternatives. Among those alternatives is the tradition of *ahimsa*, which has been advocated and practiced by the Jains for the last twenty-five centuries. Inspired by the Jains, this collection of essays speaks with many “voices” – personal reflections, scholarly studies, religious insights – to provide examples, guidance, and encouragement to those trying to cope with the violence that has become so prevalent. The essays should speak to a broad audience, but most especially to young people (late teens to early twenties), who are surrounded by violence practically from their birth and in virtually all aspects of their life: home, school, community, work, and media. The book will help them see:

1. What is involved in a nonviolent approach to the world, and how to apply it in various aspects of their daily lives.
2. That there are many of us out there – of different genders, race, professions, social classes, and religious affiliations, on every continent – who take nonviolence very seriously and try to live in accordance with its principles and values.
3. That there are many groups, institutions, and organizations that practice nonviolence and who can offer guidance, counsel, and help.

The central aims of this book are to let those dealing with or surrounded by violence know that there is another way, and to encourage them to try to live in accordance with that way – the way of nonviolence.

— PREDRAG CICOVACKI

## Part I: **HISTORY**

## In the Footsteps of Mahatma

An Interview with ARUN GANDHI

by PREDRAG CICOVACKI

**Predrag Cicovacki [PC]: You are a grandson of the great Mahatma Gandhi, and you have continued to disseminate his message of peace and nonviolence throughout the world. How easy and how difficult is it to grow up in the shadow of such a giant as your grandfather? When did you decide to follow in his footsteps for the rest of your life, or was there a period when you were preoccupied with different issues that did not have much to do with the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi?**

Arun Gandhi [AG]: When I was growing up as a teenager I was always plagued by people's expectations and I realized I would not be able to live up to them however much I tried. In utter frustration I expressed my feelings to my mother, who said: "Your life is for you to lead. If you consider the legacy that your grandfather has left you to be a burden it will get heavier as the years pass. However, if you see this legacy as a light that is illuminating the path for you it will be easier to deal with." Those words of wisdom changed my

perception of the legacy. I am doing my best to promote peace and nonviolence in the world in the best way I can. I cannot claim to be walking in his footsteps. I have attempted to interpret grandfather's philosophy and share it with people. I cannot pinpoint a time in my life that I can say, "from this point onwards I began sharing grandfather's philosophy of nonviolence." I think it is something I lived all my life, watching my parents doing what they could in a hate-filled country like South Africa, attempting in a small way to help them with their work. For instance, when I was growing up the only friends I had were children of very poor African laborers who were ignorant, had no means to go to school, lived in mud hovels and ate dried beans day and night. Their potbellies were a testament to their malnourishment. My parents had no objection to my playing with them but at the age of nine they instilled in me compassion. I was taught not only to treat them with respect and equality but to share with them. My parents said that relationships should not be just for fun. The time I spent with them was to be divided between fun and games and teaching them whatever I learned in school. This informal class with a handful of African children dressed in rags soon became bigger than anyone anticipated. When word got out that I was teaching the children how to read and write, African mothers from far and wide brought their children to the Phoenix Ashram with a plea to teach them too. Soon we had scores of children and my sisters and parents joined in running informal classes in the home that grandfather built. My parents worked quietly and compassionately to change people slowly and deliberately. My mother would collect unwanted clothing from friends in the city and run a little shop for the poor. I call it a shop, though it was not a regular – profit making enterprise, but she was of the firm opinion that giving people something for nothing hurt their pride and was demeaning and oppressive. She wanted to build the self-respect and self-confidence of the poor so the clothes would be washed and ironed and displayed for the

people to come and pick what they wanted for a nominal price. Sometimes she sold things for a penny and the poor who bought it felt proud that they paid for what they got. We also had an excess of milk since the ashram had cows. My mother would sell milk and yogurt to the poor, again for a ridiculously low price. She did the same with vegetables that grew on our farm. These were such small actions that they have been ignored by history as being insignificant. Yet, I think during their lifetime my parents laid the foundation for a compassionate society. So, I would say that in one way or another I have been doing what my grandfather would have expected us to do right from my childhood. As I grew up, got married and started a family of my own, my wife and I carried on serving the poor and the oppressed in India in the same way as my parents had done in South Africa. In addition to this, being a journalist for the Times of India, I used my talent to highlight the problems of the poor and the oppressed and make society aware of what was happening. It was only when I came to the United States in 1987, and when people learned that Gandhi's grandson was present in their midst, that I was invited to speak and share my life experiences with my parents and grandparents. So, it can be said that 1987 was the watershed between a life of activism and a life of theorizing.

**PC: When your grandfather moved back to India, your father was left in South Africa to carry on his mission. This is also where you were born and spent most of your youth. What was it like to grow up in South Africa and continue your grandfather's mission there, when public attention turned away from South Africa and followed him in his struggles in India? How large was your ashram? Did the life in the ashram continue strictly according to the principles establish when Mahatma Gandhi was still there, or did it gradually evolve and introduce some modifications and novelties?**

AG: My father was not left there to continue the work. He accompanied everyone on their journey to India. The

Phoenix Ashram and its activities were left in the hands of two British friends – Mr. Albert West and Mr. Pollack. Both were with grandfather through his transformative years. However, within a couple of years they had a falling out and decided to return to England so they wrote to grandfather to send someone from India. That is when grandfather asked for volunteers and my father was chosen to take over. He journeyed back alone since he was not married. He was 22 years old then. It is important to know a little of the background to life in South Africa. When grandfather went there the Indian society was made up of agricultural laborers (indentured workers, a modern euphemism for slavery) and businessmen who imported and sold groceries to the Indian laborers. Neither the laborers nor the businessmen were educated, nor did they speak the English language. So, when laws were passed in the English language the Indians knew nothing about them until they were enforced and then it was too late to do anything. That is why grandfather thought it very important to publish a weekly called the Indian Opinion so that he could translate the news and political happenings and make the Indian community more aware of what the government was doing. While he was there he also, on occasion, launched nonviolent opposition to unjust laws. My father inherited this but he was all alone. Those who did not go back to India with grandfather were lured into material pursuits and left the ashram. All by himself, with a handful of workers and a hand-operated printing press, father brought out a weekly and barely had time to do some farming. In 1927, only when his mother Kasturba insisted, he returned to India to get married. Then he not only acquired a life partner but a working partner. My two sisters and I were born exactly six years apart, Sita in 1928, me in 1934, and Ela in 1940. In retrospect I do not envy my father and the position he found himself in. Grandfather's philosophy was still evolving, he himself was making new discoveries, and for father to be on his own in South Africa and not only interpret his father's philosophy but find new

applications was an onerous task. When he wrote to his father for clarifications grandfather got annoyed with him for being so weak, and if he did something that he felt right but grandfather didn't, he was upbraided for not understanding. To live and work in an illustrious parent's shadow is not something I would recommend to anyone. For me growing up in South Africa was in many ways very unpleasant. Firstly, since the ashram was about 18 miles outside the city of Durban there were no schools nearby, so my sister Sita and I had to get up at 5 a.m., quickly get ready, walk a mile through sugarcane fields to the nearest bus-stop, ride a bus to Duff's Road Railway Station and take a train into town, then walk another two miles to the school. Since this was a very strict Catholic convent school, we had to be on the grounds before 8:20 a.m. or get caned. Added to this was the hate-filled atmosphere in a society that was divided between the Whites, the Colored (this was the prevalent term for mulattoes), the Indians and the black Africans. To make it possible for less than 3 million whites to rule over 29 million non-whites, they used the time-honored policy of divide-and-rule. So there was a lot of hate and suspicion pervading the atmosphere. We felt it every step in our daily interactions with each other and in the blatant signs that excluded non-whites from many public facilities. The Phoenix experiment of love and respect for all has to be viewed against this background. That the poorest and the richest, the whitest and the blackest of human beings were made to feel equal and loved in that atmosphere was a great achievement. This became apparent in 1949, when the white government instigated a massive riot between Africans and Indians; many hundreds on both sides were massacred, but Phoenix remained an island of sanity and peace. The surrounding African neighbors took it upon themselves to patrol the Phoenix farm, day and night, to ensure that we were not harmed in any way. Finally, in 1985 when the white government was determined to destroy Phoenix they had to import hordes of Africans from far and wide to loot and

set fire to the place. Physically the ashram was a hundred acres, much of it comprising a hill. After grandfather left, no one was willing to come and live a simple life of self-service, so at the best of times we had just half-a-dozen families of press workers. For them it was a job. In that respect I think Phoenix was unlike any of the Indian ashrams, though life was simple. As children we were taught to make our own toys and entertain ourselves by learning to make things that we needed. I remember as a teenager when I became interested in playing tennis I asked my father if we could build a tennis court on our land and he said: Yes, if you and your friends are willing to provide the labor. We worked for months digging and leveling the ground and then laying the clay and pulling the rollers over it. Every weekend before playing we had to water the court and then run the rollers, paint the lines and then play till we were exhausted. So life was simple and hard and parents were loving and compassionate and this combination made it instructive and educative.

**PC: Mahatma Gandhi was a complex man. You got a chance to be around him as a child, and you certainly heard many stories about him from your parents. Was Mahatma Gandhi as you know him and as your father knew him different from Gandhi as the most people think of him (that is, Gandhi as described by his friends, by foreign journalists who interviewed him, and by scholars who later wrote about him)? Is there any one source of information about Gandhi that you consider the most reliable or the most penetrating? Is there any one book that captures him the best?**

AG: Gandhi was certainly a complex personality and therefore misunderstood and often misinterpreted. For us he was a human being with a mission to change the world. We saw the simplicity in his message to replace the existing culture of violence with a culture of nonviolence by replacing within each individual all the negativity that rules us with positive attitudes of love, respect, understanding,

and compassion. Gandhi has been misinterpreted because people have either viewed his philosophy literally and dogmatically, or accepted it wholly as a means of peaceful resolution of a conflict. Most definitely Gandhi's philosophy is not a strategy or a weapon of convenience. It is a way of life, a simple way of life. Allow love, respect, understanding and compassion to supersede the hate, arrogance, greed, selfishness and other negative attitudes that dominates us. There is no such thing as good people and bad people. We are all capable of doing good or doing bad depending on the buttons pressed. If we accept this premise it should not be difficult to be better human beings than we are. We did hear many stories and experienced them too. For instance when my father was 12 years old, he and his two younger brothers were taken to grandfather's law offices for their daily tuitions, walking four miles each way. My father had just acquired spectacles and was not quite used to wearing them every day. One morning they reached the office and he realized that he had forgotten his eyeglasses at home. He was made to walk back four miles and return with them. He ended up walking sixteen miles at the age of 12 and never forgot his glasses again. Gandhi expected humility in everyone, apart from being alive and conscious every moment of the day. He practiced discipline and expected discipline from everyone around him. He believed that killing or wasting time was a crime. As a teenager he had me draw up a daily planner and follow it conscientiously. It included physical exercises and play time but the important thing was that when anyone asked me what was I doing at a certain time of the day I should answer with confidence and not fumble. The thing about Gandhi was that he practiced everything that he preached. No one was asked to do anything that he wasn't already doing himself. When a young boy in the ashram was medically required to give up sugar for health reasons, he did not obey his parents because they consumed sugar and sweets everyday. Out of exasperation the parents brought the boy to grandfather for some stern advice, and

they were shocked when grandfather said to bring him back after ten days. They did not know why, nor did they have the courage to question grandfather. Ten days later when the boy was brought back again, grandfather whispered something in his ear and the boy readily gave up sugar and sweets. The parents were stunned, so they asked grandfather what he said to the boy that caused him to obey when they failed to impress him with stern parental admonitions. Grandfather said: I had to give up eating sweets before I could ask him to do so. I feel people have focused so much on Gandhi's complexities that they have overlooked the simplicity of his message and his life. This is not to say that none of the thousands of books written on him are worth anything. They do contribute insights to one aspect of his life. But none have been able to capture the nature of the man. I realize this is a gross generalization since I cannot claim to have read all the thousand-odd books written on him, but I haven't yet come across one that captures the simplicity of the man and his message and the transformation that he was able to bring about in his nature. Everyone has dwelt on his greatness but, quite simply, his greatness lay in his determination to become a better human being. Having said this I think Louis Fischer's *Gandhi*, D.G. Tendulkar's volume entitled *Mahatma*, and Pyarelal Nayyar's volumes *The Early Phase* and *The Last Phase* are outstanding books. The best of course is his *Autobiography*, but sadly it does not cover the most important phase of his life. Still, it does give an insight into the gradual transformation that he was able to bring about.

**PC: Your grandfather entitled his autobiography *The Story of my Experiments with Truth*. Since your father and you followed the footprints of the great predecessor, where did it leave you? To follow the already well-trodden path of Mahatma, or to perform your own "experiments with truth"?**

AG: The one thing my grandfather detested most was people following him blindly. He did not wish to leave behind

a dogma or an “ism” as he would call it. He expected people to use his experiments to launch their own, just as a scientist would take the incomplete experiments of one scientist to the next level. In that spirit both my father and I have tried to experiment with Truth on our own.

**PC: For Mahatma Gandhi, religion had a fundamental and indispensable role in his conception of nonviolence. Do you see it that way as well, or do you think that nonviolence can be plausibly developed, defended, and practiced on non-religious (or secular) grounds?**

AG: I think there is a great misunderstanding and misconception in this field as well, which is largely due to our very narrow understanding of religion. While religion to us means the practicing of rituals that we associate with our religious practices, to Gandhi religion was a spiritual observance and understanding. That is why he was able to understand and respect all religions and, in fact, incorporated prayers from every major religion in his daily prayer services. It is true that in his practice and spread of the philosophy of nonviolence during the freedom struggle in India, he did make open references to Hindu scriptures and, in fact, even suggested that “Ram Rajya” (Rule of Rama) should be established in free India. It is not surprising that many scholars, including the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi’s foremost follower, were misled into believing that Gandhi wanted India to be a Hindu nation and that he associated Hinduism with his philosophy of nonviolence. Nothing could be further from the Truth when viewed in the context of his desire to see India as a secular nation with unity and equality for all religions, and his insistence that there was no need for partition because Muslims were an integral part of this nation with the same rights and privileges as Hindus. One could say that Gandhi had a dual personality – the political and the spiritual. Someone once suggested that Gandhi was “a saint masquerading as a politician.” Gandhi countered by saying

“I am a politician masquerading as a saint.” These references to Hinduism and Ram Rajya in his political pronouncements were designed to appeal to the majority of the Hindu community in India and gain their support for the struggle. His reference to Ram Rajya must be viewed in the context that he did not see Ram as a God figure as most Hindus do. For him Ram was a symbol of the goodness in man. The story of Ram is of a very compassionate, truthful, loving, respectful leader for whom the rich and the poor were equal. He even abdicated his throne so that his father could keep his promise. Ram was the epitome of Truth and goodness and Gandhi expected free India to be modelled on the same principles. For a long time he believed God is Truth, until he realized that Truth is God. So anyone, from any religion or no religion, who honestly and diligently pursued Truth, was a spiritual person in his opinion. So it would be wrong to say that he stressed the need for religious observance in the practice of nonviolence. What he expected was the observance of ethics, values, and high moral behavior that are common in all religious scriptures.

**PC: Mahatma Gandhi had a peculiar way of understanding economy, by defending village communities, a simple and self-sustained way of life, and the conception of trusteeship (rather than ownership). The development of the economy in the world did not follow Gandhi’s vision but rather developed in an opposite way. Does that make Gandhi’s ideas obsolete? Or do you still see them as being relevant and promising in our free market global economy?**

AG: The world did go in the opposite direction but I don’t think that make his ideas of simple living obsolete. Our consumerism and free market economy have, in fact, given rise to what I call the “Culture of Violence.” The free market economy has given rise to competition that has given rise to selfishness and greed. In other words, the free market economy subscribes to the law of the jungle – survival of the fittest. This has led to disparities and vast populations living

in poverty. For instance, none of the western nations would have achieved the affluence they enjoy today if they had not colonized and exploited half the world. The effects of that are felt today when half the world enjoys affluence and the other half languishes in poverty. It is also a fact that the resources of the world are not enough to make it possible for the entire world to live in the kind of affluence that the United States enjoys. So, the exploitation continues because the affluent nations use up the resources making it difficult for the poor nations to compete. What Gandhi had in mind was more “compassionate capitalism,” where making money and profits was not as important as giving every individual a chance to aspire to a better life. He stood more for equality than the freedom of an individual to do what he or she pleased. Today we have built an economy where people do not matter, profits do. People are dispensable, profits are not. We practice what Gandhi would have called “commerce without morality.” It is the cumulative effect of this kind of greed that gives rise to violence. Violence and greed are two sides of the same coin. Many in the West may call Gandhi’s ideas “communism” or “socialism,” but I prefer to call it “humanism.” If we view the world as one large human family, then there can be peace in the family only if all members are given equal opportunity, equal respect and equal understanding. If not, then the disparities lead to squabbles and the squabbles to violence. Gandhi’s form of humanism cannot and should not be enforced by the state. It has to come from within and that can happen only through proper education and enlightenment.

**PC: For your grandfather, nonviolence went hand in hand with truth (he would say: Truth) and love. How do you understand and/or define nonviolence? If you also understand nonviolence as intimately connected with other concepts (or values), what (besides truth and love) are they?**

AG: No, there are no other concepts to define nonviolence. The philosophy is rooted in Truth, Love,

Respect, Understanding, Compassion and all the values that the civilized world cherishes. That is why I say when people question the relevance of nonviolence today that, if we claim that Truth, Love, Respect, and Compassion are not relevant, then nonviolence is not relevant. And if that be so, then this world will be a difficult place to live in. Fortunately, humanity still values these ideals and applies them occasionally, which makes life tolerable. In the culture of violence that we have created it is important for us to project an image of power and strength and a willingness to be aggressive. This requires that we suppress the good in us and allow the negative, or the evil spirits, to dominate our thinking and attitude. It only aggravates violence.

**PC: Much of your grandfathers effort was directed toward the liberation of India from British rule. Much has changed since he died, not only in India but also in the rest of the world. What do you see as the central problems of the contemporary world, toward which the application of nonviolence can and should be directed?**

AG: I see a steady and inexorable decline in “humanism”: I see the division of humanity into “good” people and “bad” people; I see the proliferation of greed, selfishness and narrow-mindedness. While nonviolence requires one to have a global vision and the belief that the security and stability of any nation depends on the security and stability of the whole world, we have created the opposite. We have created nationalism, making people believe they owe allegiance only to what we call our “nation,” so to preserve our way of life and the security of our corner of the world each nation spends billions of dollars building armies and weapons of mass destruction. In fact, **a recent UN survey** shows that the world spent \$2.3 trillion in the year 2012 alone for weapons of mass destruction. Yet half of that amount would have eradicated poverty in the world and created more peace and harmony. Gandhi’s revolution was not limited to seeking freedom from British rule. When he promoted the concept



of “swaraj” it meant self-rule, not just in the political sense but self-rule in the spiritual and ethical sense as well. Like Jesus, Buddha and other greats of the past Gandhi believed salvation for humanity lay in changing their present negativity into positivity and living an ethical life. Some Gandhi scholars believe that all these greats were wrong in believing that humanity can change. I agree: if we continue living in the culture of violence, change would be impossible. But, I do not believe people are incapable of changing. Gandhi once said: “People will follow me in life, worship me in death, but not make my cause their cause.” These words could be attributed to any of the great souls of the past. In order to justify our greedy and selfish existence we have found it easier to venerate the personalities instead of their philosophies.

**PC: Why is violence so widespread in the world? Which form of violence do you find the most troublesome, or the most difficult to uproot? What are the greatest obstacles on the way to universal acceptance and application of nonviolence?**

AG: In our ignorance when we talk of violence we only think of the physical violence – the actual physical use of force as in street fighting, wars and so on. But as a society we, individually and collectively, practice a great deal more passive violence – violence where no force is used, and often we don’t even come face to face with the victims, but we hurt them nevertheless. Passive violence can be in the form of discrimination, oppression, greed, selfishness, lack of understanding, over-consumption, lack of sensitivity for the needs of others and millions of things that have become so much a part of our life and attitude that we don’t even think of it as being violent. When I was a teenager grandfather suggested I build a genealogical tree of violence as a means of introspection. Every day I had to examine and evaluate all my experiences and actions and put them down on the tree that had two branches: Passive and Physical. Very quickly,

I realized how the passive side grew phenomenally while the physical side was restricted. Then my grandfather explained the connection between the two. He said that we commit passive violence all the time, consciously and unconsciously, and the victim of that passive violence is moved to anger and resorts to physical violence to get justice. So, in effect, it is passive violence that fuels the fire of physical violence. Logically, therefore, if we want to put an end to physical violence and create peace in the world we have to cut off the fuel that ignites the fire of violence. Since the fuel comes from each one of us **WE MUST BECOME THE CHANGE WE WISH TO SEE IN THE WORLD.**

**PC: Is it possible to live like Gandhi today? Is it necessary? How should we continue the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi? What was his main message for the young generations?**

AG: If humanity is to survive, Gandhi is inevitable. Ultimately, the younger generations will have to decide what is important to them. Do they wish to pursue the suicidal path that the world has adopted and which is leading us into more and more violence, or do they want to change course and create a world where peace and harmony can prevail. When human beings have the desire and commitment to achieve something they have found nothing to be impossible. To build anything it is important that we know what we want to build and how we can go about doing it. It is the same with peace. We cannot build peace if we do not know what peace means or what it looks like. Peace is certainly not the absence of war. It is the absence of ignorance, narrow-mindedness, selfishness, greed, aggression and all the negativity. I don't think it is impossible for people to achieve this if they stop being like sheep and start behaving like human beings. When we allow ourselves to be led then the herdsmen could take us to greener pastures or to the slaughterhouse. On the other hand, if we begin to think and make our thoughts our masters, we can take hold of our lives and turn it around to transform this world into a better place for all humanity.

## Mahatma Gandhi's *Ahimsa* and *Swaraj* in 1947 and Today

DOUGLAS ALLEN

*This essay considers the similarities and differences between America at the time of the Founding Fathers and India after Gandhi. India finds itself internally divided: one part follows Gandhi's ideas but the other rushes toward modernization and consumerism. To ensure a future in which the humanity of all of its citizens can be respected and enhanced, India has to reconnect with Gandhi, selectively appropriating what is of value, creatively reformulating and reapplying Gandhi's approach in ways that are contextually significant, and integrating his continuing legacy with complementary nonviolent non-Gandhian contributions.*

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When I first came to India, I was fascinated by the celebratory Indian Independence Day ceremonies held on 15 August 1963 at Banaras Hindu University.<sup>1</sup> During the past 50 years, I've observed Independence Day celebrations on India's largest, national, secular holiday. With slight variations, one

notices a rather ritualized formula usually shaping the Independence Day events that include the following: the solemn flag raising ceremony; the speeches by politicians and other dignitaries, often with the same idealized slogans about glorious India and frequent invocations of the name and image of Mahatma Gandhi as the Father of the Nation; the strong Indian military presence as integral to the patriotic message; and the enthusiastic singing of the National Anthem. In recent years, many Indian commentators, sometimes citing the contrast with the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebrations in the United States, have noted that the 15 August commemorations have become increasingly ossified and meaningless to much of India's population. The youth, in particular, have no historical memory of, or personal connection with, the pre-independence, anti-colonial Freedom Movement, and the 15 August speeches and other ritualized activities often appear to them as rather boring and completely irrelevant to their values, priorities, and lifestyles.

Therefore, in this context, I have no interest in offering observations and interpretations that adhere to the traditional or "normal" 15 August ritualized expectations. Instead, I intend to use Gandhi as a catalyst to challenge others to think and rethink, in new creative and urgently needed ways, the deeper values and significance of *ahimsa* and the lessons of 15 August for India and for the contemporary world.

15 August is not the date for Indian independence chosen by Indians during the anti-colonial Freedom Movement. It seems fair to say that this was the date chosen for India by the British when they decided to leave and give India its "independence." 26 January was the date chosen by Indians, dating back to 26 January 1930 when the Declaration of Indian Independence was passed. At the December 1928 meeting of the Congress Party in Calcutta, Gandhi pushed through a compromise resolution giving the

British government one year to grant India dominion status or face a new campaign of noncooperation with the goal of complete independence. When the British did not respond, the Indian flag was unfurled at the Lahore Congress meeting on 31 December 1929, with *Purna Swaraj* or complete Indian Independence declared for 26 January 1930. That date, 26 January, marks one of India's three major national secular holidays and is India's Republic Day. It marks the day when India finally adopted and put into force the Constitution of India on 26 January 1950, thus becoming a constitutional democratic republic.



#### The Fourth of July and 26 January

The Fourth of July is Independence Day in the U.S.A. It commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, declaring independence from Great Britain. This national holiday features fireworks, parades, picnics, family and community gatherings, baseball games, and ceremonial gatherings with honored military presence and patriotic speeches by politicians and other dignitaries. Politicians and others with influence emphasize how fortunate we are to live in such a wonderful nation, as we express our gratitude for our freedom and independence. They often extol America as the greatest nation in the world and the greatest in human history. Appeals to *ahimsa* (benevolent harmlessness, nonviolence) do not define the Fourth of July. The July 4th ceremonies are often characterized by appeals to patriotism, nationalism, militarism, chauvinism, and American exceptionalism.

In this regard, there are many celebratory similarities with India's 15 August Independence Day, along with many profound differences. I'll cite only two major similarities. First, both India and the U.S. were British colonies, and 15 August and July 4 commemorate independence from British colonial rule and the birth of new nations. Second, on July 4, we often honor the lofty ideals and accomplishments of "the Founding Fathers" at the time of the American

Revolution and the nation's independence. We honor George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and other Founding Fathers as remarkable leaders, with visions, values and ideals far ahead of their times. Similarly, we honor the memory and accomplishments of India's truly remarkable, very diverse, visionary, dedicated, self-sacrificing leaders during the Freedom Movement, extending far beyond the leadership of M.K. Gandhi.

In both the United States and India, it is not unusual to draw a radical contrast between national leaders at the time of independence and the corrupt, petty and hypocritical politicians of today. The latter are seen as representing the interests of their wealthy and powerful masters and as lacking any inspirational or unifying vision, integrity, morality, or deeper personal and national values. When the contrast is made, the earlier leaders, dedicated to achieving freedom and independence, invariably appear as giants dwarfing contemporary "leaders" and reinforcing the sense of our sad state of political realities today.

There are significant differences between U.S. and Indian independence. Although one can interpret the Boston Tea Party and other colonial developments as illustrations of *satyagraha*, acts of nonviolent civil disobedience, the American Revolution is never presented as a struggle for independence characterized by *ahimsa*. Unlike India's experience, the American Revolution involved a major war that ended with a clear-cut military victory. The British surrendered. Britain did not determine the date or terms of U.S. independence.

Unlike the 15 August commemorations, which cannot fail to acknowledge the bitter internal divisions and tragedy of partition that so defined India's independence and its history since 1947, the unifying vision and account of July 4 is radically different. The American message, greatly mythologized and idealized, does not emphasize the deep

internal divisions in colonial America. According to historians, about one-third of the population consisted of Loyalists, who maintained allegiance to Britain; another one-third supported the American Revolution for independence; and the remainder took no side. In addition, the U.S. Independence Day commemorations rarely mention the radically different experiences and perspectives of the Native Americans, the African slaves, disenfranchised women, or even the poor whites, who were denied the revolutionary ideals of life, liberty, equality, and the pursuit of happiness. These omissions allow for the unqualified aforementioned message of joyful celebration and unifying gratitude, often accompanied by the sense of patriotism, nationalism, militarism and American exceptionalism.

What about India? With so much criticism and cynicism about India's political realities today, and with so many daunting challenges – India's poverty and growing economic class inequality, continuing caste oppression and mistreatment of *dalits*, violence against women, secessionist movements, and drastically rising pollution and destruction of the environment – it is easy to overlook India's achievement as an incredible experiment and remarkable success story. I recall the decades after India's independence when commentators and scholars formulated extremely pessimistic accounts of India's future as an artificial creation with so many linguistic, religious, ethnic, regional, and other divisions and contradictions. India, it was repeatedly claimed, lacked the unifying social forces of cohesion necessary for a viable nation state. India may have been a noble experiment, but it was up against overwhelming negative odds and doomed soon to degenerate into a failed state. With such pessimistic analyses and forecasts, it is truly remarkable that India has survived, even developed and flourished in many ways, as a vibrant democratic republic, especially when one contrasts India with many of the anti-democratic failed states in South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and other parts of Asia.

On Independence Day, what does India celebrate? Why does India celebrate? How does India celebrate? One cannot overemphasize that India is extremely diverse, and this means that there will be very diverse reactions to 15 August and diverse ways of celebrating or relating to India's Independence Day. Are we referring to the values, attitudes, priorities, and perspectives of an impoverished peasant living in a village near Jalgaon, or a wealthy, highly Westernized and modernized businessperson in Mumbai? Are we referring to a rightwing, militant, Shiv Sena, Hindutva nationalist, or an Ambedkarite *dalit*, or a Maoist Naxilite, or a Gandhi-informed Indian? Is India's Independence Day an occasion to celebrate some version of patriotic nationalism? Is 15 August an occasion for celebrating India's militaristic power, or India's exceptionalism among nations, or India as the superior nation, culture, and civilization? Or is it an occasion for promoting India's ethical and spiritual ideals and practices of *ahimsa* by celebrating Gandhi and the relevance of an urgently needed, Gandhi-informed approach?

In short, there are numerous, often contradictory, Indian responses and ways of relating to India's Independence Day, some Gandhian, some non-Gandhian, and some strongly anti-Gandhian. Even for those who are inspired by M.K. Gandhi, there are numerous, often contradictory, perspectives toward India's independence, ranging from pre-modern, anti-modern, often rigid, conservative, reactionary Gandhians to future-directed, more flexible and open-ended, revolutionary Gandhians. Especially for those who affirm Gandhi's values and significance, with an emphasis on *ahimsa*, it may be helpful to gain insight into how Gandhi would celebrate Independence Day today if we reflect on how he related to India's first post-colonial Independence Day.



### Gandhi on 15 August 1947

Let us return to 15 August 1947 and Gandhi's views at the time of India's birth as an independent modern nation. In India, there are many false interpretations regarding Gandhi's life and views before and at the time of India's independence. Misinterpretations honoring or condemning Gandhi often arise from views of whether Gandhi accepted and endorsed the British Partition of India.

On the one hand, there are many views of Gandhi as Bapu, the Father of the nation, so that when we celebrate 15 August, we celebrate and honor Mahatma Gandhi. As the national leader of the Freedom Movement and after decades of dedicated selfless struggles and sacrifices, India's independence from British colonial rule was Gandhi's greatest achievement. On the other hand, there are many views of Gandhi as in fact most responsible for delaying Indian independence and as most responsible for the continuing tragedy of 15 August 1947. In various versions condemning Gandhi, he is blamed for the devastating failure of partition, the communal violence and countless deaths before and after independence, the loss of much of Kashmir, the favoring of Muslims and other minorities over Hindus, and his moralistic and nonviolent demasculization and weakening of what should be a strong, forceful, virile, Indian nation. A large part of the source of both of these misinterpretations arises from the view that Gandhi accepted and endorsed the British partition that led to India's independence, whether he is then celebrated or condemned for his position. The truth is very different.

How did Gandhi feel about his role in the Freedom Movement and the formal declaration of India's independence on 15 August 1947? In his many writings, as well as accounts by others, it becomes painfully clear that Gandhi was increasingly disturbed, went through periods of depression, and felt overwhelmed by the horrific degenerating developments that negated his deepest values

and commitments to unifying and harmonious truth and nonviolence. In the 1940s, with the escalating developments of distrust, unwillingness to compromise, divisiveness, conflict, violence, and then widespread atrocities that led to partition and independence, Gandhi repeatedly commented that he seemed to be irritating everyone, even his closest Congress Party allies. No one was listening to his advice. He felt increasingly that events were passing him by and that he was becoming ineffective and irrelevant. Especially in late 1946 and 1947, he wrote that he was “totally lost,” and surrounded by “utter darkness,” that death for him “would be a glorious deliverance rather than that I should be a helpless witness to destruction of India, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam.” Gandhi wondered whether even his so-called Gandhian followers from earlier decades had ever really embraced his philosophy of truth and nonviolence as a way of life.

Having worked for over 40 years for Muslim-Hindu unity as one of his highest priorities, the partition of India into two nations, which he often described as India’s “vivisection,” was a devastating blow to Gandhi. He never favored partition. However, he finally realized that he no longer had any influence with the British rulers, Jinnah and the Muslim League and the majority of Muslims, or even Nehru, Patel, and his other close associates in the Congress Party. In such a context of feeling completely marginalized and of little influence, Gandhi finally gave his assent to the Congress Working Committee’s reluctant acceptance of the Viceroy Mountbatten Partition Plan as the only way to avoid Hindu-Muslim civil war. However, Gandhi’s acquiescence and rather passive acceptance, in which he would not engage in active nonviolent opposition, are far from an active endorsement or support.

This is evident when we note what Gandhi was doing on 15 August 1947. Not only is Gandhi not in Delhi, to join Nehru when he delivers his famous “Tryst with Destiny”

speech on the eve of India's independence, but Gandhi even refused to send the requested message of good wishes. Gandhi felt no reason to celebrate. Instead he was far away, in Calcutta, fasting and doing constructive work trying to stop the killings and to restore communal peace and harmony. It is tragically significant that 16 August, the day after the celebratory Independence Day, marked the start of the "Great Calcutta Killing," in which many thousands were slaughtered. As chronicled by Pyarelal, Manu, N.K. Bose, and others, what Gandhi achieved in early September – in stopping the slaughter, restoring peace, and obtaining pledges to work for communal harmony from those who had been supporting and doing the killing – was admirably extolled as the "Calcutta miracle." According to close associate and Congress leader Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, "Gandhiji has achieved many things, but in my considered opinion, there has been nothing, not even independence, which is so truly wonderful as his victory over evil in Calcutta."

It is necessary to examine the background contextual material, including Gandhi's analysis of independence in his influential *Hind Swaraj* and other writings, to comprehend why Gandhi was not celebrating India's Independence Day of 15 August 1947. In Gandhi's more revolutionary, nonviolent, transformational view, real political independence is based on real *swaraj* or "self-rule." Such real independence involves an organic, holistic realization of our interconnectedness and interdependencies with other humans, other sentient beings, and nature. It involves the values and goals of truth and nonviolence, of real egalitarianism, freedom, democracy, and sustainable moral, economic, political, and cultural living. This is only possible if citizens are capable of actively participating and of self-determining self-rule. Therefore, as Gandhi writes, what the British had in Great Britain was not individual and national freedom and independence. What the U.S.A. achieved on July 4, 1776 was not national independence in the deeper sense of *swaraj*. And what India achieved on 15 August 1947,

substituting Indian for British rulers and oppressive untruthful and violent power relations, is not *swaraj*, the basis for real independence. Therefore, Gandhi did not celebrate in 1947, and he would not be celebrating today's India as having realized social, moral, and economic independence and a national independence of political *swaraj* based on *satya* and *ahimsa*, truth and nonviolence.



### Devotees and Critics: Inadequate Approaches to Gandhi on 15 August 2013

It is tempting, as many have done and continue to do, to approach M.K. Gandhi, first in examining the lessons of August 1947 and now in applying them to August 2013, by asking: What would Gandhi say? What would Gandhi do? What is his timeless message of *satya* (truth) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence)? What is his theory of *swaraj* (self-rule and independence)? What are his essential foundational concepts and values, including his economic theory of *sarvodaya* (the well-being of all), *swadeshi* (local and national self-reliance and self-sufficiency), *aparigraha* (non-possessiveness), *satyagraha* (method of truth force, soul force, nonviolent love force), and his constructive program? We could then develop and apply Gandhi's essential moral and spiritual philosophy or theory to contemporary India, India's Independence Day, and the world.

Such a common approach, while at times insightful, has led to two widespread inadequate interpretations and applications by both devotees and critics. On the one hand, one finds the devotees who are absolutely certain that Gandhi had and continues to present us with all of the needed answers. Their Gandhi is the morally and spiritually essentialized Mahatma, often larger than life and too good for this world. In such interpretations and applications, Gandhi's writings often function like sacred scriptures, revealing the eternal truths, and devotees sometimes function like Gandhian fundamentalists. On 15 August 2013, the Mahatma continues to provide us with the absolute Truth

and Reality. We need only listen to what he has told us about *ahimsa*, quote his scriptural writings accurately and then apply his eternal message to our lives, India and the world.

On the other hand, one finds the critics who are often equally certain that the Gandhi of August 1947 did not have adequate answer. To these critics the Gandhi of 2013 offers an eternal message, philosophy and applications that are even less relevant and only create confusion, false answers and hopeless unrealities. In today's India, there is a wide range of different kinds of such Gandhi critics. There are some critics who may express sympathy for Gandhi's sincerity and goodwill, his sacrifice and concern for the well-being of Indians, and his final martyrdom, but they dismiss his timeless philosophy of *ahimsa* as unrealistically utopian and largely irrelevant today. There are a large number of critics who simply ignore and sometimes dismiss Gandhi's essentialized message of *ahimsa* as irrelevant to their modern, Westernized, ego-driven and ego-attached, globalized, capitalist, corporatized, militarized, consumerist India. Finally, there are many critics who are aggressively hostile to Gandhi and his essentialized moral and spiritual philosophy and theory of *ahimsa* with its Gandhian applications. They view Gandhi as the enemy of India today and of a strong, anti-Gandhian future India. According to these critics, too many Indians are still infected by the debilitating Gandhi *ahimsa* disease, and their anti-Gandhi approaches involve the need to eradicate the Gandhi cancer from the Indian body and consciousness as necessary for national purification and reconstituting a powerful India today.

On India's Independence Day in 2013, both of these approaches to Gandhi, by various Gandhi devotees and Gandhi critics, should be rejected as false and inadequate. Both devotees and critics seem to assume that Gandhi intended to present us with some timeless absolute, *ahimsa* blueprint for how to construct a strong independent India. For devotees the essentialized Gandhi blueprint, revealing

the foundational values and realities of truth and nonviolence is structurally sound, showing us the structural weaknesses of the modern India. Modern India is lacking in truth, nonviolence, and *swaraj*, and Gandhi provides the true plan for reconstructing the self-rule of individuals, communities, an India, and a world worthy of celebrating on Independence Day. For critics, Gandhi's essentialized, absolute, *ahimsa* blueprint is structurally flawed, showing us the foundational weaknesses of a Gandhi-led and Gandhi-informed India. Modern India needs radically different non-Gandhian or anti-Gandhi theories, values and applications in developing and reconstructing the India of 2013.

Both of these approaches to Gandhi, by devotees and critics, assume that Gandhi intended to offer us his Gandhi recipe based on his many experiments with truthful nonviolent living. Our task is to formulate and understand the abstract, essentialized Gandhi recipe and then to apply it today. For many devotees, this is the perfect moral and spiritual *ahimsa* recipe, with all of the necessary ingredients for a strong, independent, healthy, sustainable, value-based India. It provides the framework for understanding why the non-Gandhian and anti-Gandhian recipes, with their ingredients of untruthfulness and violence, have resulted in an India today that denies true freedom and independence. By way of extreme contrast, critics claim that the essential *ahimsa* recipe, with its false values and ingredients and its false plan for preparing the perfect Indian dish, has led to an India today that is often suffering from indigestion and lacks individual and national strength and health. The Gandhi *ahimsa* recipe undermines the basis for true freedom and independence.

The major problem with such contrasting approaches to Gandhi as offering us some blueprint or recipe is that they are inconsistent with how Gandhi himself viewed his life, his contextualized world, and his moral and spiritual philosophy of *ahimsa*, his message, and its applications.

Neither approach allows us to interpret, apply, and evaluate Gandhi's values and significance adequately on 15 August 2013.



### Gandhi on 15 August 2013

If we approach Gandhi in ways that embrace and are consistent with his spirit, his moral and spiritual orientation, and his existential way of being in the world, then we must emphasize his action-oriented philosophy of relevant and significant engagement. Gandhi is always most concerned with the primacy of practice. His primary focus is on how human beings can live virtuous lives in which they are actively engaged in a dynamic process of nonviolent and truthful, moral and spiritual transformation; in which they achieve true self-realization through the selfless nonviolent transformation of a relational world of untruths, violence and humanly caused suffering. Theory, philosophy, and general formulations of values are all necessary and significant, but not as abstract, theoretical, detached and unengaged, eternal truths, that can then at best be rather mechanically applied to the contextualized world. Instead, they are valuable as integrally related to practice and as necessary for informing, shaping and testing our nonviolent practices.

In this approach to Gandhi, we can appreciate his very complex, often contradictory, open-ended, flexible, creative and innovative relations with Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, atheism, secularism, socialism, communism, nationalism and other interactional influences on his views and practices regarding India's *ahimsa*, freedom and independence. Gandhi often affirms that he is a Hindu, but he is not a traditional Indian Hindu or unqualified proponent of any traditional Indian philosophical or spiritual position. Quite the contrary, he is a radical critic of much of traditional, violent, untruthful, hierarchical, institutional Hinduism. He repeatedly asserts that the devotee of any religion must have the freedom and duty to criticize what is

untruthful, immoral, violent and oppressive in his or her own religion in order to purify and transform it in moral and spiritual ways.

Using such an approach, Gandhi is deeply impressed with the pure monism of the Hindu philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, in which the universal spiritual Self is formulated as the Atman and as identical with Brahman. However, he criticizes the traditional approaches of Advaita Vedanta and other traditional Hindu and Indian philosophical and religious positions that devalue this *karmic* world of untruth, violence, and suffering as *maya*, as the world of illusion that must be renounced and transcended. He embraces the Hindu *Bhagavad-Gita* as his favorite scripture, his daily guide to meaningful living, and he most identifies himself with the *Gita's* action-oriented path of *karma yoga*. But he presents a creative, contextually significant, nontraditional interpretation of the essential message of the *Gita* as presenting a philosophy of *nonviolence*, of nonattached selfless nonviolent action, that is at odds with traditional approaches and interpretations. His interpretation of the *Gita* still strikes readers and commentators as idiosyncratic – rather a bizarre, false reading and interpretation of a text that is far from nonviolent.

When we examine Gandhi's life, his struggles, and his many formulations, we can appreciate why the aforementioned approaches to Gandhi by many devotees and critics are inadequate. In these approaches, Gandhi is viewed as presenting us with some abstract, eternal, inflexible blueprint or recipe, so that we can then apply his philosophy of Truth, Nonviolence and Reality to our contemporary world in order to evaluate the message as providing the solution or as completely irrelevant. Recall that even with his experiential claims and personal faith in the absolute ideals of Truth and Nonviolence, Gandhi frequently was full of doubts and at times despair, as he struggled to purify his self, to listen to his "inner voice" of truth, to listen to the voice of conscience,

God, or Truth. As we've seen, at the time of India's independence, Gandhi often felt lost, in utter darkness, as he was deeply engaged with the complex and contradictory realities and crises of extreme violence and suffering in August 1947. He struggled to find the most relevant ways to apply his message, ideals and values in embodied, contextualized, limited and imperfect practices expressing relative truths that were most urgently needed to resist the violence, hatred, killings and suffering overwhelming him. And what can continue to inspire us, give us hope, and provide lessons for today is understanding how Gandhi, at the time of independence, while full of despair and lacking simple applied solutions, could nevertheless carry on with such motivation, perseverance, incredible energy, remarkable fearlessness and courage, and nonviolent, transforming, practical effectiveness.<sup>2</sup>

In our approach to Gandhi, consistent with his life and his message, Gandhi's essential teachings and practices of *ahimsa* are not only relevant and significant today, but they are more urgently needed than during his lifetime. However, it is imperative that we not deify or worship Gandhi as the superhuman Mahatma who provides us with the exclusive, absolute, nonviolent truth. Gandhi was an extraordinary human being, but he was human. He devotes hundreds of pages to sharing his personal flaws, "Himalayan blunders," and failed experiments with truth and nonviolence. Some of his theories and practices were failures during his life; some had contextual relevance in the decades leading up to his assassination on 30 January 1948, but are now outdated and largely irrelevant; others are even more relevant and significant today.

It is essential that we approach Gandhi in ways that contextualize his *ahimsa* message, values and practices so that they are integrally related to the crises and realities of contemporary India and the world. Just as Gandhi did, this entails our struggling to reinterpret, reformulate and

reapply his *ahimsa* message in new, open-ended, contextually relevant ways; to integrate what is of value in Gandhi with complementary economic, environmental, and other non-Gandhian approaches that are insightful and significant today; and to use Gandhi as a catalyst to rethink our own, dominant, violent positions in ways that allow for the qualitatively different, transformative paradigm shifts that are desperately needed if we are to survive, develop and flourish as self-ruling, free, interdependent, independent beings.

The continued relevance and significance of Gandhi's values, philosophy and practices, often selectively re-appropriated and creatively re-contextualized and reapplied, cannot be overemphasized. In contemporary India and the contemporary world, we should be alarmed by the multidimensional and structural violence of the growing inequality and the increasing concentration of wealth and power; of the widespread violence and destruction of life; of modern experiences of alienation, dehumanization, powerlessness and hopelessness; and of violent economic and environmental priorities and policies that are unsustainable and threaten future survival on the planet.

Gandhi offers us *ahimsa* ideals, values, and ways of living that emphasize a radical commitment to egalitarian relations; interconnected democratic socialist relations that allow for the development of moral individuals fulfilling their social and ethical duties (*dharma*) in meeting the needs of others and in providing rights necessary for human development; ways of resisting and transforming the widespread violence into more sustainable, truthful, nonviolent relations; and ways of living that allow for greater individual, national and global *swaraj* or self-rule, real moral and spiritual development, and greater happiness and harmonious meaningful living.

When we examine the contemporary U.S., India and the world, we should be deeply alarmed by the growing

divisiveness, distrust, hatred, violence and terrorism expressed through communalism, religion, nationalism, ethnic and cultural divisions, class exploitation, gender and caste oppression, destruction of sustainable communities with the commodification of all of life, and globalized and militarized policies that divide and destroy us and the earth.

Gandhi offers us a philosophy and practices of *ahimsa* that emphasize the essential unity, interconnectedness and interdependence of all of life; a commitment to the belief that what unifies us as humans is more basic than what divides us and that truth force and nonviolent force (soul force, love force) allow for meaningful unified relations; a commitment to a way of being that affirms that significant and meaningful, moral and spiritual life consists in a nonviolent, life-affirming, value-based, transformative experience of unity with a respect for diversity.

This is evident in Gandhi's *satyagraha* formulations and campaigns and in his constructive program and other writings in which he offers urgently needed means and ends for religious and communal harmony; for eradicating the violence and domination directed at untouchables (*harijans*, *dalits*) and caste and class oppression; for overcoming the violence and domination directed at women and working for gender equality; for selfless service to meet the needs of others, especially the most disadvantaged and least free; and for working for qualitatively different views of education so that students become virtuous human beings of character and live lives based on truth and nonviolence. All of these speak to the contemporary crises of India and the world.

We should be deeply alarmed by the dominant violent values, priorities and contemporary lifestyles that express the worst features of what Gandhi labeled "Modern Civilization" with its endless proliferation of ego-desires, needs and attachments. Indians, especially "modern" young Indians, who adopt Western and especially U.S. images and values of youth culture, increasingly live lives dominated by

the multiplication of endless ego-driven desires and needs for maximizing materialistic consumption; by personal out-of-control identification with commodified consumerist culture; by ego-driven hedonistic desires and needs for maximizing immediate pleasures; for the “machine craze” with its worship of the latest technology; and by identification with imaginary worlds of “virtual realities” that often function as escapes from and substitutes for truthful and nonviolent relations with real human beings living in a real world lacking self-rule, self-realization, freedom, and interdependent independence.

Gandhi offers a desperately needed critique and alternative of nonviolent simple living. He challenges the modern, nonsocial and antisocial views of the separate, aggressive, amoral and often immoral, ego-driven individual and of viewing individual and national standards of living and development in terms of the levels of materialistic consumption. For Gandhi, the dominant endless proliferation of desires, needs and attachments expresses a violent lack of self-control and self-rule and a rather low level of self-realization and individual, national and global progress and development, that is also unsustainable and threatens life on this planet.

By offering us a qualitatively different, *ahimsa* alternative of simple living as a higher standard as living, and as necessary for human and civilizational progress and survival, Gandhi does not extol the involuntary forced simple living of those living under the multidimensional and structural violence of poverty and necessity. He intends just the opposite. Simple living is high living when it is freely and voluntarily chosen – when we can selectively control our desires, needs and attachments, have much greater freedom and independence in determining our lives, and can all choose to engage in meaningful, selfless, nonviolent action to meet the needs of others that allows for moral and spiritual transformational development and a nonviolent sustainable way of living and a nonviolent sustainable future.

Gandhi today challenges us with ethical, spiritual, social, linguistic, economic, psychological, political, cultural, religious, educational and environmental values, ideals and practices grounded in his formulations of and experiments with *satya*, *ahimsa*, *satyagraha*, *swaraj*, *sarvodaya*, *swadeshi*, *aparigraha*, constructive program, and his other moral and spiritual contributions. Gandhi's values of *ahimsa* and ways of being in the world are even more relevant, significant, and urgently needed today in challenging our dominant violent paradigm that is economically, politically, militarily and environmentally unsustainable.

### Would Gandhi Be Celebrating India's Independence?

If Gandhi were addressing us today, he would find much to celebrate about India's accomplishments. Gandhi would celebrate that even with its violent and untruthful birth and with its persisting divisiveness, violence, poverty and inequality, India has survived as a nation and has maintained a remarkable commitment to a multicultural, diverse, inclusive democracy, greatly indebted to Gandhi's legacy and continuing influence. Gandhi would celebrate that even with so much tragic, internally and externally imposed violence, India has often shown an imperfect but significant embrace of some of the values of Gandhi's legacy of *ahimsa*. This was evident in the remarkable restraint India manifested after the 26/11 Mumbai terrorism in 2008 despite violent militaristic demands by outraged Indians to attack Pakistan and finish it off once and for all as a hostile failed state. Gandhi would especially celebrate the resistance and significant accomplishments by women, *dalits*, *adivasis* (tribal and other indigenous Indians), other religious and ethnic minorities, and lower caste Hindus in their legitimate struggles for self-rule, freedom and independence.

Nevertheless, "celebrate" is a very misleading term. As was the case in 1947, Gandhi would probably not be "celebrating" on India's Independence Day 2013. He would be most deeply concerned with the fact that the modern

India is moving in the wrong direction, away from *ahimsa* and away from moral living based on a commitment to truth and nonviolence.

Gandhi would focus on the disturbing observation that modern, westernized, globalized, wealthy and powerful Indians and so many of the socialized, modern, Indian youth identify with the separate, “autonomous,” I-me ego, repeatedly analyzed by Gandhi as the false, illusory, violent self that does not allow for moral and spiritual self-realization and for meaningful, truthful, nonviolent living. He would expose and critique the dominant Indian paradigm of life with its consumerism, materialism, worship of money and technology and unworthy images and role models, widespread corruption, violence, domination, exploitation and oppression, inequality and environmental destruction.

As he did in *Hind Swaraj* and later at the time of Indian independence in 1947, Gandhi would challenge modern Indians by asserting that they are far from realizing *swaraj* or real independence as they imitate the violent and untruthful values and ways of living of the modern West, especially internalizing and often parroting and parodying the values of the U.S.A. as universal standards of acceptance, success and progress. This, Gandhi would remind us, involves rejecting what is truly of value and significance in India’s remarkable civilization with its *ahimsa* ideals and practices. And, more generally, this involves rejecting the valuable moral and spiritual resources from pre-modern and modern India and the world that can now be selectively appropriated, interpreted, creatively reinterpreted, contextualized and integrated in relating to an India and world today and that can allow for the transformative process of *ahimsa* resulting in real meaningful living, development, progress and sustainability.

When selectively and critically appropriated, reinterpreted and reapplied in contextually relevant ways, Gandhi continues to inspire us and to give us hope. He offers

us an insightful *ahimsa* view of ethical, spiritual, and cosmic evolution and ways of tapping into our higher nonviolent human nature. At his best and most relevant to India and the world today, Gandhi is a pragmatic realist, who attempts to engage and transform a real world of suffering, violence and untruthful living. And Gandhi is at the same time a pragmatic idealist who has a lofty philosophy and message of *ahimsa* with moral and spiritual ideals, goals and practices that can and must be actively and integrally related to our real world.

Gandhi fully recognized that the values, relations and conduct that dominated India at the time of partition and independence, with so much hatred, divisiveness, violence and untruthful behavior, are part of our human nature. He would fully recognize that the values, relations, conduct, and dominant paradigm of modern India and the world today, with egotistic aggressiveness and greed and lack of moral and spiritual ways of being in the world, are also part of our nature as human beings. For Gandhi, such modern violent ways of being in the world condition, reward, and express the brute forces of our lower nature.

In his philosophy, theory and practices of *ahimsa*, Gandhi nevertheless appeals to the higher moral and spiritual nature that allows human beings to activate their nonviolent transformative truth force, soul force and love force. By tapping into our higher nature, which is humanly accessible, we can control and have self-rule over our lower nature and realize a more developed, nonviolent and truthful way of living. This expresses a qualitatively different, *ahimsa*-based, way of being in the world that challenges the dominant values, means, and ends defining India and the world today. This expresses a nonviolent, qualitatively different way of relating to one's self, to other sentient beings, and to nature, and of realizing what is meaningful, significant and truly human.

Gandhi leaves us with a message that is extremely challenging in confronting the modern economic, political, violent relations of domination. His message is also realistically hopeful in offering the means for attaining desperately needed goals. He challenges a modern violent version of human and planetary evolution, a social Darwinian view of survival of the fittest (radically different from Charles Darwin's evolutionary account). In the dominant economic, political and military narrative, might makes right, the ends justify the means, and those with brute aggressive force of the most wealth and possessions, the most political power, and the most powerful weapons and forces of coercion survive as the most fit winners. For Gandhi, if such an account of violence, conquest and domination, as usually narrated in our history books and contemporary media, were true, and our lower nature were identical with our human nature, we would have become completely dysfunctional and even extinct. Indeed, one can submit that our dominant values, priorities policies, and paradigms today have become dangerously dysfunctional and even suicidal, as our dominant account threatens us with the crisis of human and other species extinction.

Instead, Gandhi leaves us with a profound, radically different, *ahimsa*-informed, evolutionary account. Human beings have survived, evolved and even developed and flourished because of our higher, more developed nature. We have evolved because human beings are touched, deeply concerned, and moved to respond when we experience the suffering of others; because we can work cooperatively, nonviolently, through selfless action to meet the needs of others in our family, local community, or larger social groupings. We can tap into and actualize forces of loving kindness rather than hatred, and forces of compassion and self-sacrifice that control and overcome ego-oriented selfishness. We can be motivated by a sense of justice and moral obligation when we experience oppression, exploitation and domination. At our best and highest level

of human development, we are capable of moral and spiritual nonviolent and truthful living. And it is nonviolent force and truth force that unify us, that bring us together in loving and caring relations, that have allowed us to survive, evolve and develop, and offer the possibility of confronting our personal, local, national and global crises and developing the evolutionary process that will allow for real human freedom and independence.

Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi, with his values of *ahimsa* and his significance for contemporary India, the U.S. and the world, leaves us this strong message and urgently needed advice: on Independence Day, as well as other days, let us pause, think critically, and rethink our violent and untruthful presuppositions, values, priorities, policies, dominant paradigms and ways of being in the world. As human beings, empowered by individual, local, national and international *swaraj*, we are fully capable of rethinking our current perspectives and of transforming ourselves and our nation and our world in the direction of more truthful and more nonviolent values and relations. This will not be easy. To struggle for and realize far greater *ahimsa* involves self-sacrifice, cooperation, resistance, courage and perseverance. But this is the only way that will ensure a sustainable future and that will ensure the well-being of all to live as self-ruling, free, interdependent, independent, developed human beings. Such a meaningful and significant life of *ahimsa* is well worth living.

## A Dialectic of *Ahimsa* in the Face of War

LEROY N. MEYER

*While violence is often used carelessly for some limited purpose, as exemplified by the use of aerial bombing in World War II, ahimsa has intrinsic value. Engagement in the dialectic of ahimsa fulfills our ontological need to restore our humanity. Through the dialectic of ahimsa – even in the face of war – we may become human once more.*

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### “Give Back Humanity”

Give back my father; give back my mother;  
Give grandpa back, grandma back;  
Give me my sons and daughters back.  
Give me back myself.  
Give back the human race.  
As long as this life lasts, this life,  
Give back peace  
That will never end.

—Toge Sankichi, 1945

The plaintive lamentation by *hibakusha* (atomic bomb survivor) poet Sankichi Toge is carved on a stone in the Peace Park that memorializes the devastation of Hiroshima by the atomic bomb on August 6, 1945. The use of nuclear weapons at the end of World War II compounded the terrible impact of that war on human culture. Weighing a probabilistic fantasy against the facts of nuclear devastation of innocent lives, with no basis in military strategy, the apologetics for the use of the atomic bomb against Japan entailed a fictional rationale of military necessity that has fed the nuclear dog of war for more than a half century. Despite the founding of the modern United Nations – in the midst of World War II – and the extraordinary postwar efforts and achievements of international organizations to establish and maintain human rights and international accord notwithstanding, Toge’s plea for “peace that will never end” remains unfulfilled, frustrated by the perpetual use of weapons of mass destruction.

When Europe was becoming engulfed by war – after East Asia had been war-torn for several years – Bertrand Russell observed in his study *Power* that, “Violence and injustice breed violence and injustice, both in those who inflict them and in their victims.”<sup>3</sup> Among Hannah Arendt’s “reflections” on the social-political turbulence of the 1960s, she warns that, “The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world.”<sup>4</sup> As a corollary to the self-generation of violence that Russell and Arendt stress, use of a *new kind* of violence engenders the proliferation of that *same kind* of violence. Consequently, by 1991, American pacifist poet William Stafford observed:

Several generations now have lived by values or disvalues generated by war, including the Cold War and its reliance on “deterrence” through terror. The situation continues the social qualities of confrontation, competition, power; and we now have a world balanced continually on the brink. Brinksmanship is our current unnoticed religion or prevailing myth.<sup>5</sup>

Toge's desperate appeal for the restoration of humanity had been drowned out by the perpetual threat of nuclear arms and the habitual use of weapons of mass destruction.

The simplicity and innocence of Toge's poem is compelling. In our contemporary world, however, managed and controlled as it is by national and corporate bureaucracies, directed by political and military leaders who are confronted with so-called hard facts, it appears impractical, even futile, to appeal to the poets to help resolve the conditions that perpetuate terror and mass destruction. In fact, poetry and creativity are not inherently pacifistic, as Homer and the author of *Gilgamesh* remind us. Slavoj Žižek warns us that what is bad are soldiers inspired by *poets*, soldiers inspired by nationalist poetry. But, for the sake of a culture of *ahimsa* – nonviolence in the broadest sense – bellicose, patriotic cant requires a critical response. Perhaps nothing responds to the cultural promotion of violence and war so effectively over time as poetry, music and creative arts.

We remember that poets and creative artists of every sort are barred from the Platonic *kalipolis*; for, despite their divine inspiration, they are ignorant of its meaning. Aristotle complains that the poets merely follow their public, writing as its wishes dictate. I'll not quibble with Plato nor with Aristotle, except to point out, on the one hand, that policy-makers and generals also have been known to think themselves divinely inspired or endowed with esoteric wisdom beyond reason – even in wars of the twentieth century, in directing the armed forces of liberal democracies that are presumed to be rationally and morally well controlled, in the best interests of global harmony. On the other hand, I stress that leaders, of various political persuasions, are wont to make decisions based upon what they perceive to be the wishes of their public. It is difficult to think of any disciplined field of human endeavor that is dedicated to nonviolence *per se*; we may expect such dedication from religious leaders, educators and physicians, but we know of dreadful exceptions even among them.

Fulfillment of Kant's great aspiration of a "league of peace" (*foedus pacificum*), coincident with the poet's plea for "peace that will never end," calls for a concerted, interdisciplinary dialectic of *ahimsa* – in the broadest sense – to be conducted by various conscientious groups and entities and sustained even in the face of war. I am concerned, however, that we not lose the benefit of diverse modes of constructive thought and varieties of perspective that could contribute to the prevention of war and terror and to the restoration of humanity. The poet Toge seems to have understood what political leaders, military commanders and most scientists could not: the damage done by atomic bombs extended beyond the deaths and suffering of the victims, beyond the material destruction, even beyond psychological effects. Devoid of strategic purpose, the use of nuclear weapons in World War II undermined moral value and outstripped rational explanation, leaving a world bewildered by the disruption of humanity. It was, as Tennyson wrote in reference to another tragedy of war, in another moment of ignorance: "Not though the soldiers knew, someone had blundered."

The voice of the poet should not be dismissed out of hand, for the insight and inspiration from any of the creative arts are invaluable in contributing to a culture of *ahimsa*. In the spirit of the dialectic, Socrates reconsiders the poets, in Book X of *Republic*, despite "the ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy," and concludes that under certain conditions poets might be let into the *kalipolis* after all. More to the point, however, poetry, song, painting – certainly drama and film – often direct us, guide us, sometimes jar us into recognizing something we have failed to understand in regard to war, injustice and suffering. How is it, after all, that Plato uses dialogues to convey to his students and to us the very process of the dialectic, the insights from which (as he insists in his Seventh Letter) cannot be didactically rendered? Why does the retired poet Plato have his Socratic

character continually refer to the poets, quoting them, often embracing the insights expressed in their poetry?

Poetic and artistic expression might be regarded as complementary to the more philosophically deliberate dialectical discourse, but we should not undervalue poetry and creative expression in the effort to promote *ahimsa*. Historically, protest movements on behalf of justice are often tempered, as well as emboldened, by song and poetry. Long after the guns have been silenced, after old enemies have passed on, peace can be promoted and strengthened among their descendants by music and poetry, promoting “*Alle Menschen werden Brüder*.” Goya’s “Third of May, 1808,” his “Disasters of War,” and Picasso’s “Guernica” may instill a cultural abhorrence of war across ethnic boundaries. Evoking the sublime in responding to the aftermath of terror and destruction or in confronting the advent of war, poetic and artistic expression can address our ontological need, as identified by Walter Kaufmann. Focused on the image of his life “turned ... into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed,” Elie Wiesel’s autobiographical account of the Nazi Holocaust continues to have a pervasive impact on world culture a generation later.

But creative expression is less apt to have such influence on belligerent parties in the midst of war. Apart from the fact that authorities waging war are wont to discourage art that challenges the *casus belli*, a public at war may be less apt to respond approvingly to dissent from the cause or to critique the violent means of war. Without a pre-established cultural affinity toward *ahimsa*, within the society of a people at war, it is difficult, perhaps impossible, for war policy and planning to mitigate violence and terror, once war has “broken out.” When “the country was up in arms, the war was on, in every breast burned the holy fire of patriotism,” as Mark Twain imagines, “the half dozen rash spirits that ventured to disapprove of the war and cast a doubt upon its righteousness straightway got such a stern and angry warning

that for their personal safety's sake they quickly shrank out of sight and offended no more in that way." When much of the world is at war, it may be impossible for any neutral party to instigate peace. Johann Galtung has cautioned that the word "peace" becomes a very effective peace-blocker. Without cessation of all hostilities or restoration of harmony and tranquility, the expectation and demand for "peace" becomes an excuse to sustain violence, "peace" becomes the "enemy" of diminishing violence.

The history of the use of nuclear weapons against Japan reveals a manifold of irony and confusion from which we should learn several lessons that support the critical restraint of military force and the prospect of nonviolence in international relations. In their physical impact the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are indistinguishable from natural disasters. But, unlike natural disaster, the bombings were, of course, deliberately planned. Toge might well have written a poem of mourning "had he survived a *tsunami*," but not an appeal for the restoration of humanity. Toge's poetic lamentation is emblematic of the "violence to culture" that Johann Galtung includes in his "mapping" of the formation of violence. The poem alerts us not only to the "damage to social structure" and "to social culture," but "the damage to world culture," all of which Galtung lists among the "nonmaterial, invisible effects" of violence. As an extreme case in the human experience of deliberate violence on a massive scale, critical inquiry into the peculiarities of the atomic bombings of Japan can serve as a comprehensive project to mitigate the terrible conditions that induce intense and widespread violence in the world. In the first place, a brief critique of the atomic bombings of Japan can displace a dreadful myth and correct a widespread misunderstanding of that unique and terrible event in human history; in the second place, a critique of the use of nuclear weapons of mass destruction against Japan will enhance our understanding of the dynamic complexity of violence in relation to power.

The case of the atomic bombings of Japan extends our understanding of the “invisible” damage from violence to which Galtung refers. Within the category of invisible effects upon humans individually Galtung places “general hatred,” “general depression,” “general apathy” and “victory addiction.” By logical extension, the category must include damage done to the moral character of the perpetrators of violence: self-inflicted harm such as the false sense of superiority ascribed to the segregationist by Martin Luther King, Jr., recalling the Socratic image of “the swift pursuer.” Those who were involved in the use of the atomic bomb against Japan became dependent upon an apologetics of obfuscation and self-deception regarding their purpose and the function and importance of their task.

It is important that those who were involved in the use of the atomic bomb against Japan not be dismissed as simply evil or morally corrupt. The quest for an evil source of violence becomes merely a quest for a scapegoat, obscuring our search for the means to *ahimsa*. Underscoring Toge’s plea for the restoration of humanity is the very troubling fact that the moral failure in the use of the atomic bomb against Japan lies in the *incidental* character of what has mistakenly been regarded as a *decision*. That is to say, there was *no deliberative decision* whether to use the atomic bomb against Japan or not; but there was a moral lapse on the part of those involved in “routinely” planning to test the new weapon in combat, without thorough moral deliberation. It is a dreadful fact that otherwise good people, of considerable learning and of sound moral character, became engrossed – beyond critical, moral, and prudential reflection – in a massive project to create and to test in combat – against civilian populations – a weapon of extraordinary destructive magnitude. The use of the strange new weapon – indeed, the very existence of it – could not comport with the practical standards of war, much less with ethical principles against mistreatment of humanity.

We must never lose sight of the militaristic atrocities committed by the Axis powers in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia: the horrors of the Nazi “Holocaust,” the Fascist attacks on Abyssinia, the “Rape of Nanking” by Japanese forces, the enslavement of Koreans, etc. Unlike such dreadful atrocities, which were committed in accordance with policies derived from outrageous ideologies, in the case of the use of the atomic bomb against Japan we learn that the proliferation of massive violence can transcend ideology and subvert policy. The deliberate purpose of dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima and on Nagasaki was to *test* a newly devised weapon, in order to *understand it militarily*. Ironically, the atomic bomb could not have been used for a strategic purpose during World War II, because the use of the atomic bomb was not yet understood by military leaders, let alone by political leaders. (Until the “*Enola Gay*” took off from Tinian Island, no one knew whether it would be possible even to deploy the weapon.)

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the result of failures of principle and of understanding on the part of leaders of the United States, who had assumed absolute authority and control over the entire endeavor to create and to deploy nuclear weapons. First was the failure in the *operational art* – the intermediate level of strategy, above tactics and below the level of strategic planning for a theatre of war. Among other failures, the atomic bombings of Japan did not accord with the strategic “Plan for the Defeat of Japan;” the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were combat tests of a new weapon that could not have been relied upon for a strategic purpose. Second, in allowing the use of the atomic bomb, the Allied leaders failed to maintain the proper relation between political strategy (as a matter of foreign policy) and military strategy (as an implementation of policy). Most importantly, by deliberately targeting civilian populations in order to test the new weapon, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki subverted the principles of *jus in bello*, which constitutes both

a failure of policy and a moral failure, by military and political leaders alike. Each of these failures must be analyzed in turn, before we draw some larger lessons.

Use of the atomic bomb against Japan was the culmination of a rational plan to develop an extraordinary weapon as a “counter-threat,” in case the dreaded Nazi enemy were to develop such a weapon. The only *deliberative purpose* of the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki was to conduct *combat tests* of a newly developed weapon of mass destruction of two distinct types, U-235 and Pl-239. Physicists Leo Szilard and Eugene Wigner had enlisted the assistance of their mentor Albert Einstein to urge President Franklin Delano Roosevelt to initiate an atomic bomb project. To take charge of the “Special Section Project 1” (S-1 Project) to make an atomic bomb, President Roosevelt had set up the Top Policy Committee (or “Group”), originally consisting of Secretary of War Stimson, Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall, Dr. Vannevar Bush (head of the Office of Scientific Research and Development), Dr. James Conant (head of the National Defense Research Committee) and Vice President Wallace. The Group was officially headed by the President, who deferred to the Secretary of War to lead it; the President never bothered with it again.

The existence of the highly secretive S-1 Project to create the atomic bomb predated the United States’ declaration of war against Japan by two months. Thus, the S-1 project to build an atomic bomb had begun before the establishment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (which came into existence after the war had begun, to provide the U.S. contingent to serve with their British counterparts as the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff). Although U.S. Army Chief of Staff General George Catlett Marshall served in the special Top Policy Group, President Roosevelt did not place S-1 under the authority of the Joint Chiefs.

The S-1 Project was hidden in a labyrinthine, top-secret bureaucracy that had a “life of its own.” After civilian scientists

had achieved a controlled nuclear reaction, S-1 effectively became the Manhattan Project (under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), the sole purpose of which was to create the most powerful weapon ever devised. Although direct authority over S-1 was exercised by the Secretary of War with the cooperation of General Marshall, both men were heavily engaged in conducting the most extensive war in history. Thus, the military commander of the Manhattan Project, General Leslie Groves, an engineer, was left to direct the project without any external review. A highly secretive and complex bureaucracy, virtually independent of political oversight, the Manhattan Project was afforded *carte blanche* for the material and personnel demands of the project and for the operational needs to execute the combat test of the weapons. In that context, conducting a combat test was assumed as the ultimate stage in the weapon's development. The atomic bomb could not have been used for a military strategic purpose without it first having been tested in combat, which is a standard procedure for new weapons development. Critical discussion about such tests in relation to war policy was not considered. Compounding the confusion over the use of the atomic bomb, American military leaders and statesmen were generally ignorant of strategic theory during World War II and they remained so throughout the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup>

Somewhat in the spirit of open, critical dialectic, Arthur Compton, head of the Met Lab branch of theoretical physics under S-1, had set up committees of scientists to address various concerns regarding the control of nuclear power. James Franck chaired a committee with six other nuclear scientists to address the "Social and Political Implications" of the atomic bomb. On June 11, 1945, the committee's report, the "Franck Report," was submitted to George L. Harrison, advisor to Secretary of War Stimson, pointing to serious problems that would result from the use of the bomb, echoing earlier cautions by Niels Bohr and Alexander Sachs, two key figures in initiating the Manhattan Project. While

conceding that, “important tactical results... can be achieved by a sudden introduction of nuclear weapons,” the report raised serious strategic objections.

The Franck report found it “doubtful whether the first available bombs ... will be sufficient to break the will or ability of Japan to resist,” since “major cities ... largely have been reduced to ashes by the slower process of ordinary aerial bombing.” The committee report warned that, “If the United States were to be the first to release this new means of indiscriminate destruction upon mankind, she would sacrifice public support throughout the world, precipitate the race for armaments, and prejudice the possibility of reaching an international agreement on the future control of such weapons.”<sup>7</sup>

Franck’s committee urged authorities to regard the use of nuclear bombs “as a problem of long-range national policy rather than of military expediency,” and the committee recommended a policy aimed at “an agreement permitting an effective international control of the means of nuclear warfare.” Franck’s committee received little attention from policy-makers, however.

Apart from the fact that some of the S-1 scientists – especially Leo Szilard, the inventor of the atomic bomb – objected to using the weapon against civilian targets and tried desperately to prevent it, most of those who were involved with S-1 did not object to using atomic bombs against Japan. Only the Commander-in-Chief (who was the official head of the Top Policy Group), President Franklin D. Roosevelt, could plausibly have interceded to prevent the use of atomic bombs against Japan; unfortunately, Roosevelt died in April 1945, never having been in touch with the project or with the Top Policy Group, leadership of which had been delegated to the Secretary of War. Archival records of the President’s personal papers and of the S-1 Project make clear that President Truman (who was first informed of the existence of S-1 days after Roosevelt’s death) never

deliberated about using the atomic bomb against Japan, despite his post-war account to the contrary.

Use of the atomic bomb was never part of the strategic plan to defeat Japan, nor was the new weapon ever under the purview of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, whose responsibility it was to plan and to execute military strategy. The strategic plan against Japan entailed maintaining a naval siege of the main islands of Japan, with the expectation that the Soviet Union would declare war on Japan as soon as Germany was defeated – an expectation which the Soviet Union fulfilled, as promised. If necessary, the plan called for a graduated invasion of the main islands of Japan. U.S. National Archive records show very clearly that, from its earliest stages in 1943 until the end of the war in the late summer of 1945, the official strategic “Plan for the Defeat of Japan” never mentioned the use of the atomic bomb. On June 18, 1945, at an important meeting at the White House, General Marshall and the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reviewed the Plan with newly inaugurated President Truman for the first time. Although Secretary of War Henry Stimson had informed the new President of the S-1 project a month earlier, the atomic bomb was not mentioned at that meeting, or at any subsequent meetings. Thus, with dreadful consequences, Project Alberta – the segment of the Manhattan Project devoted to deployment of atomic bombs against Japan for combat tests – was operationally separate from and strategically independent of the conventional bombings of Japan.

The presence of both the Secretary of War and the Army Chief of Staff in the Top Policy Group might suggest that the project to create an atomic bomb would be guided by strategic thinking and directed toward some strategic purpose. Not every new weapons project would require the direct oversight of the Secretary of War and the Army Chief of Staff, not to mention direct approval of the President. At no point, however, does anything resembling military

strategic purpose surface in the planning and development of the atomic bomb, other than the rather obscure notion of a “counter-threat,” which was never considered by military planners. Conceived by nuclear scientists, that notion verged on puerile whimsy that was uninformed by either military strategy or war policy, and it was never addressed by military thinkers. Given the calculated power of the atomic bomb, one might suppose that use of the atomic bomb against Japan, even as a combat test, would have been coordinated with the strategic plan to defeat Japan. But strategic military planners were never involved in the discussion. The military authorities had neither requested nor encouraged the establishment of the S-1 Project to create an atomic bomb. Indeed, there has never been a *coherent* strategic function for nuclear weapons, although the development of that argument lies beyond the scope of the present paper.

From the standpoint of strategic analysis, a review of the case of the atomic bombings of Japan reveals several failures. For this purpose, it helps to recall the four dimensions of strategy which British military historian Michael Howard distinguished in the 1970s: technological, logistical, operational and socio-political. The development of nuclear weapons under the Manhattan Project constituted a technological success, and the “delivery” of the atomic bombs on Japan was a terrible success within the logistical dimension of strategy; however, the use of the atomic bomb against Japan involved a failure in both the operational and socio-political dimensions.

The most basic strategic failure was operational, in that Project Alberta was never coordinated with the Plan for the Defeat of Japan. Operation Centerboard, to attack Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear weapons, was directed entirely at testing the weapons on civilian populations that had not been previously bombed. The operational art, which is intermediate between tactical planning and the strategy for an entire theatre of war, concerns the purposeful linking of

battles and military objectives. Operational failure was characteristic of Allied military campaigns during World War II; with few exceptions, throughout the war, British and American military leaders failed to understand the *operational art*, a critical layer of strategic planning, studied by both Soviet and German military strategists for a generation. There was no coherent link between selected targets for the atomic bombings and any subsequent course of action, except the directive to continue bombing cities with plutonium bombs as they were made available. Selection of targets was strategically irrelevant. The directive was issued by General Handy, not by the President, only because General Spaatz, commander of the Twentieth Air Force, demanded a written order for such an extraordinary weapon to be used on civilian targets for no apparent strategic purpose.

Although President Truman had nothing to do with strategic planning, let alone operational planning or the directive to attack Japanese cities using nuclear weapons, it appears that he had naïvely thought that once an atomic bomb was dropped on Japan, the Emperor would be compelled to surrender. The new President might be excused his naïveté, but an experienced military thinker – certainly a strategic planner – should have realized that such a weapon could completely destroy the entire infrastructure of the targeted city, as indeed it did in Hiroshima. If the infrastructure were destroyed in a remote city such as Hiroshima, separated from the capital of Tokyo by mountains and hundreds of miles, it is unlikely that communication could be made for several days. That oversight constitutes a monumental failure of the operational art.

It is much more difficult to terminate a war than to instigate one, and it is at least as unclear how to accomplish the one as it is to avoid the other. Although the atomic bombings of Japan occurred at the end of World War II, they did not end the war against Japan. Not only was the use of the atomic bomb not part of the strategic Plan for the

Defeat of Japan, but the atomic bombings were not actually crucial in defeating the enemy. By the time the bombs were deployed, Japan had already been effectively defeated and was fumbling its way to surrender.

The challenges to mitigate violence in war confront each party and the neutral nations as well. Communication between the belligerent powers is essential for war termination. If violence is to be mitigated in war, and war termination is to be achieved, each power must have in place a functional, deliberative body engaged in critique of the war policy and the nature of military operations. There were fifteen Prime Ministers of Japan from July 1929 till the end of the war in August 1945. The Japanese government had been dysfunctional for decades. The Japanese War Council had been created late in the war for the purpose of extricating Japan from a lost cause. Having been under naval siege for months, the War Council was trying (ineptly) to get out of the war which Japan's uncontrolled military had started in Asia. The main remnant of Japan's army remained in Manchuria, with no real prospect (for want of a navy) of returning to defend Japan; the Soviet Red Army overwhelmed that force on August 8, prior to the atomic bombing of Nagasaki. The Japanese leader's last hope was an appeal to the previously neutral Soviet Union to assist in negotiating a peace settlement with the United States, Great Britain and China. The Soviet Union declared war and directed its attack after Hiroshima was bombed, but before Nagasaki was bombed on August 9. More than any other events, the overwhelming defeat of the Japanese Kwantung Army in Manchuria by the Soviet Red Army directly following the Soviet Union's sudden declaration of war, settled the question of Japan's defeat, announced by the Emperor on August 14. The diplomatic shock compounded by a severe military defeat were clearly understood by the Emperor's War Council. They could not immediately comprehend the nature and significance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; the infrastructure of Hiroshima had been

destroyed to the extent that coherent communication was impossible for some time.

For their part, the Allied powers had clung to a vague and unsupportable cant demanding “unconditional surrender.” Although the term seems rhetorically forceful, it is indefensible under the conventions of war, as Michael Walzer points out. No surrender should be regarded as *unconditional*. Under just war theory, extraordinary moral and practical responsibilities devolve to the victor as fundamental *conditions* for accepting the former enemy’s surrender; the principles of *jus post bellum* require that the defeated populace be treated humanely; prisoners of war must not be enslaved and must be exchanged in a timely manner; and the defeated nation must be restored to some reasonable capacity as a political community under justice and law that meets the standards of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. Although such standards and principles were yet to be completed for the nascent United Nations, they were well understood and recognized by President Truman, former Secretary of War Henry Stimson, and Secretary of State James Byrnes. The Potsdam Declaration issued to Japan by the United States and Great Britain a few days before the atomic bombing raids nevertheless continued the obscure demand for “unconditional surrender,” which confounded the dysfunctional Japanese leadership.

In two important respects the atomic bombing raids against Hiroshima and Nagasaki depended *incidentally* upon the more conventional airpower operations to bomb Japanese airplane production sites. Without the so-called strategic bombing program, Operation Matterhorn, implemented by the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff to attack the “Inner Zone” of Japan, it would have been impossible to use the atomic bomb against Japan. To carry a load such as an atomic bomb, it was necessary to use specially refitted B-29 Superfortress bombers, but the B-29 would not have been available during World War II without the U.S. Army Air

Forces program to rapidly develop Very Long Range (VLR) bombers – “Very Heavy Bombers (VHB)” – for bombing raids on the home islands of Japan. Furthermore, it was necessary to fly from a base in the Marianas in order to “deliver” atomic bombs to the main islands of Japan and to return. A B-29 airbase had been established on the plateau island of Tinian, from which firebombing raids could be flown against Japanese cities on Kyushu and Honshu. Had that base not been situated on an elevated plateau, the “*Enola Gay*,” carrying the U-235 bomb that was dropped over Hiroshima, would have plunged into the sea.

There is yet a third, most terrible respect in which Project Alberta was conditioned by the strategic bombing campaign against Japan. For months, the United States Army Air Forces had conducted regular bombing raids against Japanese airplane engine factories, in several Japanese cities, without concern for the fact that tens of thousands of civilians were being killed and thousands more had been forced to flee their homes. The habit had been established earlier in the war by bombing raids on Germany. Consequently, by August 1945, there was no special compunction against using the new weapon on a Japanese civilian population.

In order to test the effects of the weapon “in combat,” the S-1 Target Selection Committee deliberated in recommending sites that were of considerable size in population, which had not been severely attacked previously. Historian Martin Sherwin explains how firmly engrained was the assumption that the A-bomb would be used: “That [Secretary of War Henry Stimson] failed to question as well *any* use of the bomb indicates how deeply rooted were his assumptions about the appropriateness of that decision, and how firmly he had integrated them into the context of the war. It never occurred to Stimson that the destruction of any city, or two cities, might be considered ‘wanton’.”<sup>8</sup>

The question whether to use the atomic bomb against Japan, posed by Stimson, was addressed only as an

afterthought in a meeting of another S-1 committee with no military expertise and no strategic authority, as if to reassure himself. There was never a *deliberative* decision whether to use the atomic bomb against Japan.

The fundamental moral failure of the use of the atomic bomb (in targeting civilian populations) traces back to the early stages of the war in Europe. Early in 1944, the prominent English pacifist poet and journalist Vera Britain wrote "The History of Our Bombing Offensive," exposing the evolution, from January 1940 to January 1944, of "Changes in Policy" for Allied aerial bombing, which supported "methods" and "tactics" that increased the intensity of attacks and broadened the targeting of German cities. Referring to the official language of the time, she traces the escalation of Allied bombing in Europe from its official condemnation as a "new and odious form of attack" (Churchill's words in 1940) to its acceptance as "the systematic shattering of German cities." An early, naïve notion of "precision" bombing soon gave way to "obliteration" bombing, involving "cascade bombing" by "saturation raids." The vague and unrealistic notion of "precision bombing" was later applied in the bombing operations against Japan; the primary targets were airplane engine factories, but napalm bombs dropped from American planes flying several miles above tended to drift with the jet stream, landing in populated areas, where they created firestorms that terrified civilian communities.

Although she was an avowed pacifist, Vera Britain did not oppose the strategic use of arms in World War II by Allied forces. But she strongly advocated restraint and actively criticized the Allied bombing of German cities. In addition to the moral force of her arguments for restraint, in keeping with the moral tradition of the just war theory, Vera Britain's critique of Allied bombing practices as counterproductive were subsequently vindicated by critics from the perspective of strategic analysis. The Allied strategic bombing program

terrorized German civilian populations. But, as historians and strategic analysts attest, the presumed “psychological effects” were never achieved and the bombing operations failed to fulfill the strategic expectations. According to strategic theorist Edward Luttwak, “strategic airpower was undone by its own shortcomings and by the reaction it evoked.”<sup>9</sup> “Moreover,” Arendt observes, “the danger of violence, even if it moves consciously within a non-extremist framework of short-term goals, will always be that means overwhelm the end.”<sup>10</sup> The operational habits of bombing civilian populations were well ingrained in the minds of American operational planners, as they turned their attention toward Japan, as there had been no effective policy discussion critical of the terrible practice. For want of a dialectical critique, violence escalated.

Understanding “how habits and limited environments had fostered institutionalized smugness and vainglory,” Stafford identifies what I take to be the crux of the psychological problem underlying the development and use of the atomic bomb: “success at customary activities enables us to assume that we are in control of anything we put our minds to.”<sup>11</sup> Despite the outrageous abrogation of the principles of *jus in bello* and *jus post bellum* – without any basis in strategic fact – use of the atomic bomb against Japan was generally regarded as militarily successful. Whether or not the scientists and engineers who helped build the atomic bomb had thought it was necessary to use it, relatively few of them openly questioned its use.

Among the victors, the immediate public sense of relief from war termination interferes with any constructive critique of the means by which victory was achieved. To make matters worse, there is ever the presumption by the perpetrators of violence (not always disingenuous) that the course of violent action was necessary. The fact of victory is held out as *prima facie* justification for whatever degree and means of warfare was used. Whether or not a particular means and degree of

violence is warranted under international laws of war, the victor's society is apt to accept it as an unpleasant necessity. Military professionals are no less subject to the same fallacy. "With victory," Edward Luttwak observes, "all of the army's habits, procedures, structural arrangements, tactics and methods will indiscriminately be confirmed as valid or even brilliant, including those that could have stood some improvement or indeed were positively harmful, but with all their harm concealed by the undissected experience of success."<sup>12</sup>

The general confusion over the purpose and intent of the atomic bombings of Japan stems from the uniqueness of nuclear weapons and the complexity of the *ad hoc* S-1 project, which culminated in the combat tests of the new weapon. But the infamous terror of the events of Hiroshima and Nagasaki impelled otherwise honorable, conscientious statesmen to collude in fabricating a spurious justification for the use of the atomic bomb. We should be distrustful of any attempt to rationalize "the terrible thing we had to do," which is often characteristic of a glib – sometimes cynical – attempt to excuse horrible courses of action that could have been avoided or prevented through more critical reflection. After war termination, the complex circumstances and the intentions manifested in the use of nuclear weapons against Japan were deliberately and officially obscured by the highest authorities over S-1 – President Truman and former Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson – who claimed in public statements that it was necessary to use the atomic bomb against Japan in order to save American lives. In *Just and Unjust Wars*, Michael Walzer demonstrates that the argument from extreme emergency in regard to Hiroshima is fallacious, as one cannot justify protecting armed combatants by deliberately killing innocent noncombatants. Even so, Walzer's critique does not show how disingenuous the apologists were. The Soviet Army's decisive defeat of the Japanese Kwangtung Army in Operation August Storm was entirely independent of the use of nuclear weapons. As a

matter of logistical fact established before the use of the atomic bomb against Japan, no invasion of Japan could possibly have occurred before November 1, 1945, by which time Japan would certainly have capitulated without use of the atomic bomb. Despite official postwar claims to the contrary, historic records demonstrate conclusively that there was *no strategic purpose* – indeed, there could *not* have been a coherent strategic purpose – for the use of such an untested weapon. The argument from apologetics for use of the atomic bombs against Japan is baseless in fact and in principle.<sup>13</sup>

The false apologetics of necessity are veiled by the fact that Japan had started a terrible war which it was unable to terminate. In this manner, the American public, and perhaps much of the world, have accepted the tragic myth that the atomic bombings of Japan were a dreadful necessity to end a terrible world war instigated by a militaristic dictatorship. The invisible damage of the atomic bombings of Japan is not limited, however, to the false apologetics. The use of nuclear weapons against Japan generated strategic confusion over nuclear weapons in particular, and a delusion regarding the strategic effectiveness of the use of weapons of mass destruction in general. Another tragic confusion compounds the invisible damage. For, during the Cold War, American leaders never understood the harsh psychological impact its use of nuclear weapons had upon the rest of the world; they could not understand, because the United States is unique among nations as the only power to have used nuclear weapons in combat. Awareness of the fact that the apologetics for the use of nuclear weapons against Japan do not comport with either history or strategic theory should make any rational, intelligent person wary of the United States in possession of nuclear arms.

The prideful notion of “harnessing the forces of nature” was enhanced by the discovery and production of plutonium. Fundamental research in nuclear science had amalgamated

chemistry and physics; but the newly formed international community of nuclear science was segregated by war. During World War II, at least four secret projects to develop nuclear weapons were conducted internationally, without any coherent notion of how or why to use such a weapon if it became available. In addition to the United States' S-1 Project (with cooperation from Great Britain, Canada, Australia and France), nuclear weapons projects were surreptitiously initiated by the Soviet Union, by Germany and by Japan.

Acting under the War Powers authority of the President of the United States, the Top Policy Group had nationalized scientific research programs and begun complex technological engineering development under tightly restricted government control. The Manhattan Project assumed the essential purpose of S-1, which remained the same from first till last: the successful development of a special nuclear weapon of mass destruction. The Manhattan Project required theoretical research by the Met Lab at the University of Chicago; uranium purification systems at laboratories near Oak Ridge, Tennessee; plutonium production at a special base near Hanford, Washington; and the design and assembly of atomic bombs at Los Alamos, New Mexico. Each facet of S-1 required a considerable bureaucracy. Furthermore, the development of nuclear weapons under S-1 presupposed combat tests of the bombs, and the continued use of the weapon thereafter. Combat tests required special aircraft. Thus, before it had run its course, S-1 entailed major subsidiary projects in theoretical and experimental science, technical engineering, arms manufacturing, bomber design and production, bomb design and construction, Air Force personnel training and, ultimately, deployment of nuclear weapons of mass destruction against Japan.

Thus, under "Top Secret" restrictions, the complex nexus of multifaceted tasks for S-1 were completed by a

bureaucratic structure that was entirely independent of the conventional military command authority, and virtually free of any independent, critical oversight. It is difficult enough to curb violence in the face of strategic purpose and practical evidence of the effectiveness of violence. Without any declared strategic purpose, without any evidence of military effectiveness, nuclear weapons were used against Japan. The expansive bureaucracy of S-1 manifested a characteristic Hannah Arendt describes as “tyranny without a tyrant.” “No doubt ‘violence pays,’” Arendt observes, “but the trouble is that it pays indiscriminately.”<sup>14</sup> Nuclear weapons are especially non-discriminating and the unguided “tyranny” of the bureaucracy of the atomic bomb increased the difficulty of controlling its use and limiting the dreadful human suffering that followed.

In a dialectic toward nonviolence, we are confronted by what Galtung calls “a general cultural syndrome,” which exacerbates the struggle to take invisible effects seriously. The apologetics of the atomic bomb have focused almost entirely on the terrible physical damage of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ironically, the *ex post facto* apologetics of the use of the atomic bomb reveal another kind of invisible, cultural damage that occurs in war: historical obfuscation and the politicization of historiography. The general public has remained ignorant of weakness of purpose and rationale for the use of the atomic bomb against Japan. Consequently, ignorance by the public and by statesmen regarding the use of the atomic bomb in World War II has contributed to a dangerous misconception about the strategic function of nuclear weapons in particular and of weapons of mass destruction in general.

In light of the inquiry into the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have a two-fold need for a critical dialectic toward *ahimsa* – a prudential need and an ontological need. It is important that we understand these two needs as interdependent. Thorough historiography,

strategic analysis and moral philosophy clarify the prudential need for a critical dialectic to mitigate the use of violence in world affairs. As our inquiry has shown, however, the loss of humanity to which Sankichi Toge refers in his poem extends well beyond the immediate suffering of *hibakusha* and the physical damage to cities, to include layer upon layer of invisible damage to human culture, to our understanding of history, to human values, and to our collective human character. Such damage reveals what Walter Kaufmann refers to as our *ontological need*. To be fruitful, a concerted dialectic toward *ahimsa* must engage the exponents of alternative modes of thought and experience. Ironically, the *strategos* must engage in a dialectic with the pacifist poet.

Whether or not it is feasible to engage such profound and radical dialectic *in the midst of crisis* will depend upon the contextual circumstances of a particular crisis. But it was Vera Britain who understood the folly and the injustice of what the war planners blindly practiced in bombing cities. It was the scientists who contributed to the Franck Report who had more critical understanding of the political and cultural damage that would result from the use of the atomic bomb than policy makers in the Top Policy Group could fathom. In anticipation of crisis, each coherent perspective should be considered and addressed in an effort to avoid violence. The prudential need for a dialectic of *ahimsa* calls for critical analysis from strategic theory as well, for it often presents prudential reservations against the precipitous use of force. Thus, Rear Admiral, USN (retired) J.C. Wylie urges scholars from diverse disciplines to engage in a critical study of the pattern of strategic thinking, presumably to improve the very process of strategic thinking by the nation's leaders, so as to avert war and violence. To mitigate the risk of the use of nuclear weapons in the twentieth century, Michael Howard made a similar recommendation.

Recruiting strategic theory to the cause of *ahimsa* is important. On the basis of remarks to the effect that war is

an alternative means for conducting national policy, Carl Maria von Clausewitz has often been misrepresented as advocating armed conflict in international affairs. A more careful and charitable reading of his posthumously published work reveals a caveat that use of military force must be understood as a political act with a political purpose, which should only be conducted in accordance with national policy set by the legitimate political leaders of the state. Clausewitz's warning went unheeded in the use of the atomic bomb, as it not only failed to serve national policy but it undermined that policy in regard to the conventions of war. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were contrary to the fundamental moral policy of the Allied Powers during World War II, to restore peace and to rebuild independent nations after war termination. With a few exceptions, American leaders failed to understand the difference and the relationship between military strategy and political strategy, as Clausewitz intended.

A greater contribution can be made by critical strategic theory in the dialectic of *ahimsa*. One monumental lesson of the history of World Wars in the twentieth century is the fact that grand strategy, properly understood, must meet not only the principles of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*, from traditional just war theory, but it is essential that grand strategy should accord with the principles of *jus post bellum*. As a matter of national policy – political strategy – during World War II, the United States was instrumental in planning the creation of the modern United Nations. Laying aside cynicism regarding the complex motives of Western Allies, the magnanimous efforts to restore Japan and West Germany after the war, might well have resurrected Kant's glorious hope for a "league of peace," not merely a "peace treaty." But, the use of the atomic bomb against Japan had undermined any such prospect for "perpetual peace" in the twentieth century.

A recent and more encouraging example indicates the contribution to be made by strategic theory to a dialectic of

*ahimsa*. Shannon Beebe and Mary Kaldor stress that security for this century is a concern of not only the departments of defense but also of civilian agencies and NGOs. Beebe and Kaldor explain that the concept of human security emerged from the UN Development Program's 1994 Human Development Report, which shifts the emphasis from security of nation states to security of persons. The new *human development* concept of security entails seven aspects: security of economy, food, health, environment, person, community and politics.

To avoid violence in international affairs, Beebe and Kaldor present an approach that is explicitly based on the human development concept of security:

A human-security approach aims, above all, to prevent violence by tackling the conditions that lead to violence. But where people are in the midst of violent upheavals, as is the case now in Afghanistan, it also focuses on how to dampen down the violence rather than on how to "win." And in the aftermath of violent upheavals, a human-security approach looks not just at reconstruction but also at preventing new outbreaks of violence, since the conditions that led to violence – weak rule of law, unemployment, criminality, surplus weapons, loss of livelihood, or extremist ideologies – are often worse after conflict than before.<sup>15</sup>

Beebe and Kaldor's six principles of security through human development consist of: 1. The Primacy of Human Rights; 2. Legitimate Political Authority; 3. A Bottom-Up Approach; 4. Effective Multilateralism; 5. Regional Focus; and 6. Clear Civilian Command. In such principles one can readily see an affinity between the human development concept of security and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, drafted under the chairmanship of Eleanor Roosevelt in the late 1940s. The U.N. principles of human rights can be understood as applied in many ways through various branches of the U.N., such as UNESCO. But it is a wonder it took several decades for the connection between human rights and human security to be made manifest by

the United Nations, and yet, implementation of the standards and values embodied in such a concept has only recently begun.

One should appreciate the prudential value of security through human development, as it promises to prevent violence and war without using the threat of violence. There is a remarkable convergence between the moral achievements and the prudential aims of such a concept. It promises, furthermore, to address our ontological need for *ahimsa* as well. Whereas violence is primarily functional, as it is aimed, ever so carelessly, at some purpose, *ahimsa* is intrinsically valuable. Kant's great vision of perpetual peace is most assuredly an end in itself, as the violence of war cannot be reconciled with the categorical imperative, since some persons will suffer in war at the hands of others, merely as means to an end, or for no reason at all. In this way the dialectic of *ahimsa* addresses our ontological need. But the dialectic of *ahimsa* can fulfill our ontological need even more by restoring our individual humanity; as Sankichi Toge had pled, through the dialectic of *ahimsa*, we may become human once more.

## Nonviolence: Confessions of a Unitarian Universalist

PAUL S. ROPP

*In this autobiographical essay, the author reflects on his evolution from a Mennonite farm boy to a Unitarian Universalist professor of Chinese history. With special attention to American militarism, he argues for a multi-faceted approach and a secular-religious alliance to promote nonviolence in our personal lives and our public policies.*

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The particular *ahimsa* challenge, I want to address in this essay, is how to be an effective advocate for nonviolence while living in the United States of America, the most affluent, and arguably the most militarized, society in world history.<sup>16</sup> I will structure this essay autobiographically, beginning with my youth and religious background, my coming of age in the 1960s, my career as a China specialist, and my post-retirement work with the Center for Nonviolent Solutions in Worcester, Massachusetts. I will also address some key issues

of war, peace, and America's role in the world since the mid-twentieth century. In the later part of the essay, I will note some signs of progress in recent years, propose a religious and secular alliance in this cause, and outline some concrete ways to promote nonviolence in a society that invests so heavily in the means of lethal violence.

Growing up on a Mennonite family farm in central Illinois in the 1950s, I was taught that Jesus provided the model of how we should live, turning the other cheek and loving our enemies. My mother was a nurse who saw caring for the sick as a Christian calling. I registered as a pacifist at age 18 without any hesitation, but also considered myself a patriotic anti-communist American. I went to a Mennonite college and until my senior year, I intended to go to seminary and become a Mennonite minister.

The one thing that troubled me about the conservative Christianity of my youth was its exclusivity, its assurance of salvation only for devout Christian believers. It didn't make sense that I would be born, not only in a middle class family with plenty to eat, but also into a family that basically inherited from its ancestors the truth guaranteeing eternal life, while others, through no fault of their own, had no access to middle class comforts and no access to that truth guaranteeing salvation. I was also troubled by the nagging suspicion that I had not really had an authentic conversion experience. I had no overpowering emotional moment when God spoke to me with a compelling truth.

In college, I got inspired to read books for the first time, and one day, reading Paul Tillich's *The New Being*,<sup>17</sup> I suddenly felt a rush of excitement from his sermon on the assertion in First John, 4:16: "God is love. He who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him." He went on to discuss a Swedish woman who ministered to German prisoners of war in Russia during World War I. Tillich said he didn't know anything about her theology, but he proclaimed her an exemplary child of God because of her

loving behavior. That sermon struck me with the force of a revelation. It solved my problem and made God no longer a culture bound tribal deity who privileged Western culture, spoke only a few languages and condemned the non-Western world to damnation unless they became like us.

I think every Christian has a selective list of Biblical passages to live by. For me the key passages are the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus's parable in Matthew 25. Whatever we do to "the least of these" we do to Jesus, and "It is not those who say 'Lord, Lord,' but those who do the will of the Father" who are the true Christians. Jesus interprets the "will of the Father" as caring for the least privileged people on earth. In the many years since college, I drifted from the fairly fundamentalist Mennonite traditions of my youth to the Unitarian Universalist message of many truths and many paths to a common truth shared by all the great faiths.

In retrospect, I was headed toward universalism long before I became a Unitarian. One key moment in my youth occurred when a young sociology professor wished to join our Mennonite church even though he said he didn't believe in the resurrection of Christ. My dad was adamant that since he came to church every Sunday and sang in the choir, he should be allowed to join the church, and join the church he did. What mattered to my dad was not what a person happened to believe but how he lived his life. Not that he said "Lord, Lord," but that he "did the will of the Father" and cared for his fellow human beings.

The U.S. sent troops to Vietnam in the early 1960s in order "to contain China," and although that made little sense to me, I wanted to learn enough to be able to argue the point. And in the summer of 1966, just before I started graduate school, China was in the news daily because of the chaos of the Cultural Revolution. Thus, in September, I enrolled in a course on the history of Chinese thought. In the first week of the class, I was stunned and delighted to discover that Confucius, five hundred years before Christ,

said: “Do not do unto others what you would not want them to do unto you.” That same week I decided to switch my focus from European to Chinese history.

Confucius’s version of the golden rule confirmed for me the Universalist idea that moral truth, whether by divine revelation or natural processes of human thought and reflection, could occur in any culture. The saving of the world would not depend on any one religious tradition alone. Confucius made no claims to supernatural status and only said he was a student of the past and wanted to carry on the best traditions of his ancestors.

A key Confucian value is *ren*, which can be translated with a number of terms including benevolence, kindness and humanity. The ideogram includes a signifier of a person and the number two indicating two people in relationship. Implicit in the concept of *ren* is the natural reciprocity of human relationships. Human beings are naturally predisposed to respond to kindness with kindness (or to hate with hate). This is the reason why Jesus taught “turning the other cheek” when suffering an angry blow from another. Jesus and Confucius shared the optimistic assumption that if we respond to a person with kindness, that person will likely reciprocate with kindness in turn. This is not a naïve commandment to “accept defeat” at the hands of an adversary, but rather a shrewd assessment of the way moral power can work.

The Chinese concept of virtue or integrity implies a sense of the power of virtue to move people. A virtuous act can inspire virtue in others. Mencius, the second great philosopher in the Confucian tradition, was convinced that human nature is fundamentally good. Evil, he suggested, comes from a bad social environment, not from the fundamental nature of human beings. While he didn’t explain very well the source of a bad social environment, his optimistic teaching is radically different from the Christian (or at least Pauline) assumption that humans are

fundamentally evil and can only be saved by the external force of God.

If we strip away the many layers of Christological theology added onto the stories of Jesus over many centuries,<sup>18</sup> and just look at Jesus's ethical teachings, we can see that Jesus himself shares the optimism of Confucius and Mencius. That's why he recommends turning the other cheek rather than responding to force with force. If we refuse to hate our enemies, they will have a hard time continuing to hate us.

Later in my first semester of graduate school I was thrilled by the Daoist classics, the *Dao De Jing* and the book of *Zhuangzi*. The *Dao De Jing* (available in many translations including two of the best, *The Way and Its Power* and *The Classic Book of Integrity and the Way*)<sup>19</sup> struck me also with its advice to return good for evil. *The Dao De Jing* was a book of personal advice born of a time of warfare, strife and chaos. One of its central messages is to celebrate the power of the soft to win out over the hard, in Chinese terms, the power of *yin* over *yang*. A common metaphor to explain this emphasis is that one of the hardest substances is rock while one of the softest substances is water, yet over centuries of their interaction water has the power to erode rock.

Zhuangzi was thrilling for different reasons. Zhuangzi was a cynic, a skeptic and a satirist who doubted all conventional wisdom and poked merciless fun at the powerful. He urged nonresistance to military force on the theory that military force would ultimately defeat itself. He spotted hypocrisy wherever it appeared and he challenged every assumption made by conventional philosophers. He was the first postmodernist who reasoned, two thousand years before *The Matrix*, that we are ever imprisoned in our own finite perceptions. If life is a dream and death is actually an awakening, we have no way of knowing that until we die. When asked if a thief has virtue, he responded that of course a thief needs courage to enter a house in stealth, wisdom to

know where the treasures lay hidden, bravery to be the last out of the house, and a sense of justice to divide the spoils fairly. Zhuangzi loved to confound those certain of the truth with his own insistence on the relativity of all knowledge. I fell in love with the playfulness of Zhuangzi, with his skeptical questioning of authority, and with his condemnation of rulers who relied on military force. He seemed to me utterly in tune with the 1960s.

Two movements dominated American life and my own consciousness in the late 1960s: the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. The civil rights movement demonstrated the power of nonviolence to promote racial equality and justice a century after the American civil war supposedly freed the slaves. Drawing on the lessons of Thoreau, Gandhi, Tolstoy and others, civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and James Lawson effectively mobilized millions of black and white citizens to shame the American government into ending legal segregation and giving African Americans equal rights under the law for the first time since Reconstruction ended in 1877. Civil Rights activists in the 1960s didn't overcome the Ku Klux Klan by lethal force; indeed, by exposing to the world the fear, hatred and ignorance of the Klan, they effectively marginalized it as a political force in the United States.

As the civil rights movement demonstrated the power of nonviolence in addressing injustice, the Vietnam War demonstrated the ultimate impotence of military force to impose foreign control on a proud and determined people. (It also betrayed all the American ideals of freedom and justice that I had been taught America stood for.) Studying the history of Western imperialism in detail for the first time in graduate school, I came to understand why Marxism was an attractive doctrine for colonized peoples.

Before and after World War II, Marxists were the only Westerners who condemned Western imperialism and racism unequivocally. The atheist Marxists put much of the

Christian world to shame by condemning racism unequivocally in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when many Christians still held a very paternalistic attitude toward the non-Western world. World War II helped destroy the moral rationale and material sustainability of Western imperialism. After Japan took over former Dutch, British, French and American colonies in East Asia during World War II, those former colonial subjects were in no mood to welcome back their Western overlords in 1945. In quick succession, the British and the Dutch lost their empires and American granted independence to the Philippines. The French tried to maintain the colony of Indo-China for almost a decade, but withdrew after their defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954.

Unfortunately, the United States inherited the mantle of the severely weakened Western colonial powers, and embarked on an anti-communist crusade which to Asian eyes looked very much like the French and British of the previous century. The U.S. no longer aspired to assume complete control of non-Western countries, and we would declare our belief in world racial equality, but our military policies in Vietnam, with free-fire zones, search-and-destroy missions, massive defoliation and carpet bombing campaigns, all appeared even more destructive than our European predecessors, and equally racist in effect. American GI slang terms for the Vietnamese were easily as contemptuous as anything the racist French colonialists had ever uttered.

World War II has been interpreted unambiguously in the United States as a “good war,” in which heroic Americans, British and French defeated the diabolical Nazis and Japanese and liberated Europe and Asia from slavery. America’s leaders concluded from World War II that American isolationism (and American military weakness) in the interwar years was a mistake that allowed fascism in Germany, Italy and Japan to gain a foothold and begin wars of conquest which could only be stopped by a worldwide conflagration.

Ever since World War II, the most frequently used historical analogy by American politicians has been Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain at Munich. Every American adversary since that time, whether North Korea in 1950, North Vietnam and China in the 1960s, Iran since the 1980s, Iraq and Afghanistan after 9/11, have all been portrayed as Hitler-like threats to the United States if not to Western civilization itself. In actual fact, every one of those countries has been extremely weak, has posed little threat to the United States, and has borne little resemblance to Hitler's Third Reich.<sup>20</sup>

One irony of World War II is that the Japanese people concluded from the war that war is at best counterproductive, and at worst immoral and corrupting of all sides. The American occupation authorities wrote Japan's post-war constitution, adopted in 1947, stipulating that Japan shall "renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation," and shall not maintain land, sea and air forces. Such a sweeping renunciation of force has never been voluntarily adopted by any nation. And irony upon irony, within two years of writing such a pacifist constitution, the U.S. was anxious to re-arm Japan (to the great disgust of the Asian victims of Japanese imperialism) and to enlist its help in "containing China," first in Korea and later in Vietnam. But the U.S. also made it difficult to revise the Japanese constitution, and since 1947, the Japanese public has not come close to adopting any revision of this renunciation of war. The Japanese Supreme Court has avoided any constitutional crisis by reasoning that Japan's military is a "self-defense force," and therefore not in violation of the constitution. Thus Japan now has the fifth largest military budget in the world after the U.S., China, Russia and Great Britain.<sup>21</sup>

Living in Japan for a year in 1971-72, it was hard to believe that the U.S. and Japan had been bitter enemies just 25 years previously. The Japanese people were so civil, polite and kind that it seemed inconceivable that they had ever

been the fierce invaders of Korea, China and Southeast Asia. The defeat of Japan was so overwhelming, the destruction of the Japanese economy and the Japanese military so complete, that it served to delegitimize the Japanese wartime leaders and the entire propaganda machine that had once stirred the Japanese population to such a war frenzy. As the unambiguous victors of World War II, the U.S. conclusion was just the opposite of Japan's, and America became the most militaristic power on earth.

There is a paradox in the way, in recent years, progressive leaders in the United States have sung the praises of some great nonviolent campaigners of modern times such as Gandhi, King and Mandela, without ever showing the slightest awareness of how American foreign policy is in direct contradiction of most of what these men stood for. We praise the leaders of oppressed minorities who refuse to hate their oppressors, yet we would never dream of showing such magnanimity to poor and oppressed minorities who lash out at us from such a position of weakness that their only option is the suicide attack.

When Ku Klux Klan members conducted terror campaigns, lynchings and bombings in the Southern United States, they were no less evil than the 9/11 terrorists, yet they were not ultimately defeated by military force. They were defeated by nonviolent boycotts, demonstrations and civil disobedience campaigns that dramatized their ignorance and cruelty as well as the injustice of racial segregation. Without firing a shot at the KKK, the Civil Rights Movement effectively marginalized them in American life.

Despite the dramatic successes of nonviolent campaigns in India with Gandhi, in the United States with the civil rights movement, and in South Africa with the end of apartheid, our national leaders display remarkably little faith in the power of nonviolence. When President Obama went to Stockholm to accept his Nobel Peace Prize, which was awarded mostly on the promise he offered as a contrast with

George W. Bush, he ended up sounding far more like a George W. Bush than Gandhi or King or Mandela. He spoke of evil that must be opposed by force. This is a remarkable and tragic blind spot that American leaders seem to share with all the white racist imperialists of the nineteenth century. Our drone strikes violate the rules of sovereignty that we see as basic to the international order, and proclaim to the world that an American life, any American life, is worth more than any non-American life. We thus rain destruction down on poor remote villagers who could not possibly threaten the national security of the United States.

The United States, a self-professed Christian nation declaring in our pledge of allegiance to the flag that we live “under God,” has invested more in military power and been involved in far more wars than any other nation since World War II. The dramatic contradiction I see between Christian ideals and American faith in military power makes me wonder whether the future of the human species depends on a religious reformation or the abandonment of religion.

I taught for 28 years at a secular institution that attracts students with left-leaning sympathies. Students flocked to my class entitled “Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism” because they sensed that there must be more to life than the “American dream” of the endless acquisition of material possessions. They also tended to reject Christianity as tainted by a narrow belligerent right-wing nationalism and a superstitious hostility to science. They were (and are still) hungry for an alternative vision.

Having become a Unitarian Universalist, I have grown more skeptical of many religious claims in recent years. Yet some of the most compassionate and self-sacrificing people, I have ever known, are deeply devoted theist believers in Christianity. At the same time, too many American Christians seem to identify “God’s will” with anything that enhances American wealth and power. That seems nothing more than idolatry by the standards of Jesus.

The self-proclaimed born-again Christian president, George W. Bush, launched two enormously destructive and open-ended wars that killed well over 100,000 civilians and maimed many more tens of thousands among troops and civilians alike. He launched those wars in a tribal fit of anger with little attention to the long-term consequences of American invasion for the people of those societies. Having been blown apart by American “shock and awe,” both of those countries now live in an ever-continuing state of chaos. And in keeping with the theories of the *Dao De Jing* and the book of *Zhuangzi*, those wars have clearly weakened, not strengthened, the national security of the United States. America’s foreign policy, whether under Bush or Obama, seems a screaming contradiction of the principle of *ahimsa*.

Unfortunately, hostility to *ahimsa* is not evident only in America. India’s popular new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, is a Hindu nationalist who presided as the chief minister of Gujarat (Gandhi’s home state) during riots in 2002 that claimed the lives of over a thousand Muslims. Buddhism in many ways seems best adapted to the modern world with its message of compassion for all beings and its lack of dependency on supernatural miracles (at least in some of its many forms). Yet in Sri Lanka, nationalistic Buddhists fought a thirty-year civil war against the Tamil Hindu minority living in the northern part of the island, and the civil war ended with massive atrocities against the Tamil civilian population.

The Western press has emphasized the murderous tendencies of militant Islamic believers ever since September 11, 2001, but militant Jewish settlers in Israel’s occupied territories have shown little but hatred and contempt for Palestinians in their aggressive determination to colonize former Palestinian territories on the West Bank, thus helping to make peace impossible between Israelis and Palestinians. Ironically, a people who survived the genocidal racism of the Nazis now have a minority of militant orthodox Jews who practice a virulent racism themselves and have managed to

dictate aggressive settlement policies to a secular state whose majority opposes those policies but seems powerless to stop them.

It is an irony of modern history that the greatest threat to world peace today is the hostility between the three monotheistic Abrahamic religions and their followers in the oil-rich and war-ravaged Middle East. The writhing tensions and hatreds of the Middle East offer a compelling condemnation of monotheism when compounded by Western imperialism, modern nationalism and faith in military power.

Perhaps the lesson is that while all religions have at their core useful and inspiring teachings about the need for compassion and cooperation in human life, religions are also easily susceptible to the disease of tribal and nationalist loyalties that readily endorse industrial-scale murder in defense of “national security” and national pride. Once religious loyalties are corrupted by hatred and fear, can the religion be restored to its better ideals and impulses? One hopeful sign is the eventual resolution of the decades-long conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. That conflict, between professing Christians, seemed irresolvable until several women on each side rebelled against the demonization of each other, came to believe that too many innocent lives had been sacrificed, and pressured their leaders to negotiate a peace agreement. The religious teachings didn’t change, but the political will was found to apply the ideals of the religion instead of using the religion to rouse tribal passions.

In this regard, the most notable recent sign of progress has been the work of Pope Francis since his election to the papacy in March 2013. Simply by his actions, his evident humility and compassion, and his willingness to criticize the injustices of the world economic system, he has changed the tone of much political discourse, and helped to shine a spotlight on the contradiction between the ethic of Jesus

and the behavior of many self-professed Christians (and so-called “Christian nations”). For the first time since Pope John XXIII, I as a Unitarian Universalist leaning toward secular humanism feel that the leader of the Catholic Church shares my preferred reading of the New Testament, with the emphasis on the Sermon on the Mount and the parable of Matthew 25.

The best hope for the future, it seems to me, is a multi-front struggle within all religious traditions and within secular circles as well. Religions are by no means the source of all violence in the world, but they are also by no means the only source of hope for overcoming the present dire situation with nuclear-armed states willing to justify mass murder for their own protection. Pope Francis’s appeal to atheists on Christmas Day, 2013, asking them to join in the quest for peace, is an excellent first step in calling a truce in the destructive culture wars of the last few decades.

Several recent books by atheists and/or secular writers also offer reasons to hope for the ideal of *ahimsa* in the secular community. In *Religion without God*,<sup>22</sup> published after his death, philosopher Ronald Dworkin argues that atheists can have just as much of a sense of awe and transcendence as devout religious believers. Drawing humility from Einstein’s observation that there are mysteries that will always lie beyond human comprehension, Dworkin writes with respect toward theistic beliefs, and offers something of an olive branch in the culture wars, finding much common ground among atheists and theists alike.

In *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined*,<sup>23</sup> Stephen Pinker draws on history, psychology, evolutionary biology, and cognitive sciences, to demonstrate that violence of all kinds, from family feuds to genocide, has been declining steadily over several thousand years. Many forms of violence that were seen as normal for millennia (including slavery, torture, wife-beating, corporal punishment of children, and capital punishment for one’s

beliefs) are now socially proscribed in most countries, and we currently live in the most peaceful time in human existence.

Pinker's claims seem counter-intuitive. We highlight violence in our media, featuring it in our movies, video games and local newscasts, because it is both abnormal and exciting. We also have more powerful technologies than ever before to bear witness to the violence that does occur. In response to those who cite World Wars I and II as the most destructive wars in history, Pinker argues that violence declines over time in a downward sloping saw-toothed graph, and the world wars were abnormal spikes which did not reverse the downward sloping incidence of violence.

As a psychologist well read in evolutionary biology and human history, Pinker argues that humans have both aggressive and cooperative tendencies, and he demonstrates how human behavior has changed substantially over the past five millennia. He cites in particular four "better angels of our nature," taking that memorable phrase from Abraham Lincoln: our capacity for empathy, our ability to develop and exercise self-control, our moral sense and our capacity for reason. Each of these human traits is generally more developed today than a century ago, or even half a century ago. It is our responsibility, Pinker argues, to cultivate these better angels, whatever our religious inclinations or disinclinations.

Two other recent books complement Pinker's arguments. The anthropologist Douglas P. Fry, in *Beyond War: The Human Potential for Peace*,<sup>24</sup> draws on cultural anthropology, archaeology and human paleontology to debunk theories of the "natural aggressiveness of human beings." Fry finds ample grounds for hope in the fact that most humans live peaceful lives based on cooperation with others, and he argues that we can learn from our ancient ancestors to curb aggression and find peaceful ways to realize social justice and security.

Finally, Joshua S. Goldstein, in *Winning the War on War: The Decline of Armed Conflict Worldwide*,<sup>25</sup> complements both Fry and Pinker in documenting that the world wide death toll due to war has steadily declined since the end of World War II. Dealing with a much shorter time span, Goldstein demonstrates in detail the radical decline in violence between states after 1945, and the intensification of that trend since 1989. By Goldstein's calculations, 2010 marked the lowest level of armed violence of any year ever in recorded history.



Goldstein concentrates much of his book on the United Nations, and he shows how much the UN peace-keeping efforts have accomplished despite whatever bureaucratic problems may exist. He describes UN failures and successes in peace-keeping since the early 1990s, and calculates that 14 countries (in Africa, Central America, the Balkans and Southeast Asia) are at peace today as a result of these efforts. He notes that the UN commits about \$8 billion annually to its peace-keeping efforts. That amounts to roughly one percent of the US military budget.

These authors together suggest that a paradigm shift is occurring in the world today, and they urge us to encourage these trends. We can nourish in our schools the “better angels” of empathy, reason, moral values and self-control. We can support the United Nations in its efforts to prevent and stop civil wars. We can form multinational coalitions to protect civilians in all conflict areas, and we can shift some of our own resources from weapons of mass destruction to more effective ways of motivating people to live in peace.

Promoting *ahimsa* in today's fractured and war-torn world, is a daunting task in part because most nation-states assume the right to employ lethal force whenever their national security, or even national pride, is threatened. But these above signs of progress suggest that positive change has occurred and more positive change is possible. And much of the important work to promote *ahimsa* can occur at the local level in our daily lives.

After years of teaching Buddhism to American students, I began to attend Zen Buddhist sittings, and came to know some remarkable Buddhist teachers who taught me that peace-making is not only, or not even mostly, about preventing violence and promoting peace among nations. It really begins with how we live every moment of our lives. After I started teaching my students the basic principles of the practice of meditation, my courses became more popular and clearly had more impact on students than when I only taught ideas about meditation. Students began to look to my course not just as an academic change of pace but as an exploration of values they might embrace the rest of their lives.

Through my work with the Center for Nonviolent Solutions, a non-profit organization established in 2009, I have come to learn about many additional avenues for pursuing the ideal of *ahimsa*. The restorative justice movement explores ways to shift the emphasis away from “justice through punishment,” and to promote instead the repairing of relationships broken by crime. Specialists in nonviolent communication teach methods of active listening and address the underlying causes of violence by seeing all violence as the expression of unmet needs. Seeing violence in that perspective helps to defuse conflict by putting the focus on actions and not the “good or evil” nature of the people involved. Specialists in mediation and dispute resolution have demonstrated that even longstanding conflicts can be resolved through mediation where all parties are heard and their dignity is respected.

The beauty of the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* is that every act has natural consequences, but we have the freedom to choose how to respond to every act we encounter. We don’t have to compound a hateful deed by responding with hate. No *karma* is so bad that it can’t be overcome with good *karma*. In every moment, we can choose to be reflective, we can cultivate calmness and compassion, we can look for the

good rather than the bad in others, and we can seek to honor the dignity of all persons, with no exceptions. This is not an easy task, but as Gandhi, King and Mandela have shown, it is possible to organize oppositional political movements without giving in to anger, and without hating and disrespecting one's opponents. If we put the main emphasis not on defeating our opponents but reasoning with them, respecting their dignity and addressing their fears, we have a chance to convert them one by one to our side. Cultivating *ahimsa* can be a joyous daily occupation.

## Thoughts of Nonviolence in the Traditional Culture of China

LISIA SHEN, in collaboration with PU HUI

*Nonviolent thought has been a widely accepted idea all over the world, and a mark of globalization in emotional and spiritual communication, cultural interchange, economic immersion, political mutual trust and religious diversification. It is important for contemporary humanists to unearth, adapt and absorb the modern meanings of this thought as it developed in different cultures. The Chinese conception of nonviolence is ancient, and it provides rich resources for today's efforts to build a global philosophy of nonviolence. In the history of China, the philosophy of nonviolence was theoretically rich and strongly advocated by the intellectual class. At the same time, however, violence could be found everywhere. This reminds us that the enacting of nonviolence has always been difficult, and we must work hard to accelerate it.*

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Globalization has been a primary topic of discussion since the 1990s, and the term has been accepted by scholars from

all over the world. With its arrival, the revolution in new techniques and the development of transportation have changed people's concept of space and time. For instance, it took 14 to 16 hours from Xi'an to Beijing by train in the past, but now it only takes a little more than 4 hours by bullet train, and you can go there and come back within one day, the time being reduced greatly. Another example, it takes 14 hours for an ordinary train to wind along the curved railways in the Qin Mountains in Shaanxi Province and the Daba Mountains in Sichuan Province from Xi'an to Chengdu. However, it will only take 3 hours when the high-speed rail is completed. (It took many days to go to Sichuan Province from Shaanxi Province when there was no railway.) With the popularization of the internet, all the obstacles in the way of communication from distant places have been removed, and people can video-talk with each other through Skype, QQ, WeChat, etc., as if they are talking face-to-face no matter how far they are from each other, promoting their emotional and spiritual communication very much. Cultural interchange, economic immersion, political mutual trust and religious diversification are all marks of this irreversible globalization.

However, the process of globalization has not been so smooth, for there has been a lot of violence, killing, terror, robbery, jostling and such inhumane, disharmonious and uncivilized phenomena as moral degeneration and abnormal ethics. What's more, consciousness and concepts of fanatical nationalism, religious extremism and aggression of imperialism are still in people's minds and dominating their behaviors. Such behaviors are really dangerous and should be attended to with caution.

In the 1990s, a Global Ethic Movement was launched by some western theologians represented by Prof. Hans Küng, from the University of Tübingen in Germany, and Prof. Leonard Swidler, from Temple University in the U.S. This movement was quite influential throughout the world. Its



achievement was symbolized by the World Religious Conference held in Chicago in 1993, at which the *Declaration toward a Global Ethic* was adopted. It stresses that the human cardinal virtues is of vital importance in the current world, pointing out the deep basis of the cardinal virtues in different religions and the possibility of equal dialogues and the peaceful development between different religions, which aroused extensive interest and participation of scholars from all over the world on how to build a new global ethical order. It is undoubtedly the social responsibility and historical mission for contemporary humanists to unearth, trim and absorb the modern meanings of the value of ethics in different cultures.<sup>26</sup>

In Chapter 3 Section 1 of the *Declaration toward a Global Ethic* is a special topic: Commitment to a Culture of Nonviolence and Respect for Life. The culture of nonviolence originated from traditional Indian thought. *Ahimsa* (nonviolence) was derived from the verbal root *him* in Sanskrit. *Hims* means to have the desire to kill and *ahimsa* has the meaning of getting rid of the desire to kill. The classic Indian work, the *Upanishads*, proclaims that nonviolence is the highest rule in the world. In fact, it is the basic doctrine among Indian Hindus, Jains and Buddhists. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism are all well-known for their ideas of nonviolence and pacifism. It should be noted that nonviolence is not merely a substitute expression for being weak. The full meaning of nonviolence goes well beyond notions of passivity and weakness and at the same time means more than “not hurting all the creatures.” In Sanskrit, *ahimsa* refers primarily to a kind of active intention and action. If we think violence is the instinctive impulse of animals, then nonviolence should be the natural tendency of human spirits, but it needs to be maintained by people’s positive activities. When a human being is practicing a nonviolent life wholeheartedly, the inherent spirit can be exerted in depth, actively and even indefinitely, and it can attain such a realm that it can sweep out and clear up any violence. Besides,

“not hurting any creatures” is only a kind of exterior manifestation. Any vicious ideas and hatred, such as hating the wealthy and wishing others to be poor, are all rejected and opposed by the primary principle of nonviolence.<sup>27</sup> As a national and political movement, nonviolence started in India in the 1940s, but, as a kind of thought, it not only existed in ancient India but also hid in ancient Chinese wisdom.



The Chinese concept of nonviolence originated in very early times, not only in political society but also in the aesthetic field. Tradition says that in the ancient Chinese political system the Great Tribe Leader Yao adopted a very democratically recommended system of “abdicating and handing over the crown to another person,” which means peacefully transferring the Leader’s position and power to another person who has a different family name. Before that, “a son or younger brother would succeed the position of the Leader if he died.”<sup>28</sup> But Tribe Leader Yao held an assembly of the union of tribes on who would succeed him when he became old, and all the chiefs of the tribes recommended Shun to be the successor. After three years’ examination Yao thought Shun was qualified and ordered him to act as an agent first. Then, after Shun’s work was approved from every aspect, Yao held a ceremony of abdicating and handing over the crown, formally declaring Shun to be his successor before the Spirit Tablets of their ancestors. Shun succeeded Yao’s position as the Leader of all the tribes after Yao died. Then Shun adopted the same method to choose his successor. Because Dayu was successful in preventing floods by water control, all the chiefs approved Dayu’s job, and so Shun did the same thing to Dayu as Yao had done to him. Dayu thereby became the Great Leader of the tribes after Shun died.

Though this kind of political system was followed by the hereditary system in the times of Xia Qi, it had been

considered an ideal mode in the ancient Chinese political system. No matter what method they used to change the dynasties, even with violent revolutionary means, the successors of wise emperors would let the previous emperors abdicate and hand over the crown by issuing an imperial edict. Whether the edict was issued actively or passively, the emperor would be accepted by the social elites if he got the crown via imperial edict. For example, Cao Pi, Emperor Wen of Wei Dynasty (187–226 A.D.), was believed by many people to have usurped Liu Xie's position (Emperor Xian of East Han 181-234 A.D.). However, if you are carefully reading the *Biography of Emperor Wen in Weishu*, Vol. 2 in *History of the Three Kingdoms*, by Chen Shou,<sup>29</sup> you will find that eighty percent of the content was about the process by which Liu Xie abdicated and handed his crown to Cao Pi,<sup>30</sup> because he knew he did not possess the ability to order his subordinates to do things. It claims that Emperor Xian issued six imperial edicts<sup>31</sup> to Cao Pi within one month, and the ministers such as Huan Jie, Hua Xin, Jia Xu, Wang Lang, Li Fu, Xu Zhi, Sima Yi, Dong Ba (among others), submitted written statements to ask Cao Pi to ascend the throne, but Cao Pi wrote sixteen letters to refuse to take it, showing how broad-minded and holy he was, a truly virtuous emperor.<sup>32</sup> Some may think Cao Pi and the ministers were playing a two-man comic show, and they might be correct if he did this twice or three times. But to refuse the throne sixteen times is really hard for an ordinary person. Cao Pi thought his case was just like that of the tribe leaders Yao, Shun and Yu.<sup>33</sup> And after Emperor Xian of the Han Dynasty abdicated and handed over his crown to him, Cao Pi gave him the name of Duke of Shanyang. As the Duke of Shanyang, he was in charge of ten thousand families, above all the marquises; he did not have to say "Your Majesty" when he wanted to make any statement to the Emperor, did not need to kneel to the Emperor when he was asked to come, and could offer sacrifices to heaven and earth and the ancestors in the cart of the Emperor, as everything was just the same

with the Han Dynasty.<sup>34</sup> That Cao Pi endowed Liu Xie with the power to offer sacrifices to heaven indicates that he still had a symbolic political position.<sup>35</sup>

This again shows that Cao Pi was really generous and magnanimous. It is rare for an emperor to behave like this. Instead of using revolutionary means to change a dynasty politically, he chose to abdicate and hand over the crown, a truly nonviolent approach, a reflection of nonviolent thought and culture, rare and commendable in a feudal autocratic society. As a matter of fact, this nonviolent manner was greatly praised by Confucius: the music “Shao,” which represents how Yao abdicated and handed over his crown to Shun, was perfect both in artistic form and in political ethics, unlike the dance “Wu,” which represents how King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty conquered King Zhou of the Yin Dynasty. The latter was almost perfect in artistic form but lacking in political ethics, since it was a violent revolution.<sup>36</sup> Although he was talking about music and dance, Confucius put his nonviolent ideals of political ethics in his aesthetic conception and considered the nonviolent way of giving up the position as meeting the highest artistic criteria.



## II

The theoretical basis of the political ethical ideal of nonviolence in ancient China seemed based on a kind of principle and spirit of “neutrality.” It may be one of the central ideas from which the ancient Chinese spiritual world was constructed. Tradition says that when he abdicated and handed his crown over to Shun, Yao proposed that a leader should speak and act in the middle of the path and demanded that Shun remember the principle of being in the middle of the path<sup>37</sup> while he ruled. And Shun did the same as Yao did when he abdicated and handed over his crown to Yu. Fang Xiaoru in the Ming Dynasty said that Yao, Shun and Yu did have the way and principle of human virtue and holiness, which is “the middle path,” when he commented on the political conceptions of the three great

tribe leaders.<sup>38</sup> During the late Spring and Autumn Periods (5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), Confucius and his grandson Zisi (483–402 B.C.) carried forward this conception of the middle path.

Confucius thought people should get along with each other in a harmonious way while still keeping their own characteristics, but some people (which he called hounds) had no characters or principles, and they only knew how to repeat what others said and were unable to harmonize social relations correctly.<sup>39</sup> He also stressed that every individual had his own desires, hobbies and dislikes that should not be imposed on others.<sup>40</sup> This is the basic principle and ideal goal for Confucianists; in dealing with the ethical relationship between a person and himself, and between one person and another. In his work *Moderation*, Zisi raised the ideas of the middle path to the height of cosmology. He believed that if you do not express your feelings inside, it is the middle path; while if you can express yourself in a moderate way it is harmony. The middle path is the essence of the world order, while harmony is the rule of the world. Confucius thought we should carry out the way of the middle path and harmony both to deal with the relationship between people and nature and to address social relationships between people, so as to resolve contradictions, eliminate conflicts and realize social development in a harmonious way.<sup>41</sup> This kind of social ethic is a spiritual pursuit that goes far beyond the epistemology and methodology of the middle path of the Confucianists in the Spring and Autumn Period and marches toward the level of ontology.<sup>42</sup>

Laozi and Zhuangzi, the Daoists in the pre-Qin period, also put forward the idea of neutrality, but unlike the Confucianists, Laozi discussed it from the aspect of ontology from the start. He states that Dao is the parent of the whole universe, and it germinates a void which splits into *yin* and *yang* which in turn are neutralized and become the Qi of the Chong channel. The Qi ascends adversely and animates

all the creatures in the world, which were all in a state of harmony.<sup>43</sup> However, Zhuangzi stresses that the essence of De is neutrality while the essence of Dao is the rule.<sup>44</sup>

Therefore, the neutrality of the Confucianists is applied more in social relationships while Daoists place more stress on the neutrality between man and nature. Daoism as a religion inherited the ideas of neutrality of the early Daoists. *The Neutralization of the Xuan Spirits in the Taishang Cave*, one of the important classics of Daoism written in the Tang Dynasty (7<sup>th</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> centuries), put forward a ritual procedure of neutralization for religious practice, indicating that the Dao which Daoism venerated was the impartial quality of neutrality.<sup>45</sup> Based on this concept, the book states that from the social phenomena of corresponding pairs such as heaven and earth, state and family, monarch and subject, husband and wife, father and son, etc., neutralization should be upheld, so that when heaven and earth are in an harmonious state, all creatures in the world would flourish; when state and family are in harmony, there is peace in the world; and when husband and wife get along well, there will be an affectionate father and a dutiful son. On the contrary, if there is no harmony between heaven and earth there will be imbalance of *yin* and *yang*, which results in frost in summer, thunderstorms in winter, floods here and there, anomalies and dry plants everywhere. If state and family are not on good terms and monarch and subject cheat each other, the strong might bully the weak, foreigners might invade, fights and chaos might occur, and the people will live without peace. If husband and wife do not get along well, there might not be affectionate fathers and dutiful sons and families might break up. This is indeed a constructive thought of nonviolence.

While the Chinese native religions – Confucianism and Daoism – were trying to extract and refine the thought of neutrality, Buddhism, which came from India, began to sow its concept of nonviolence on this field too. Actually, the

concept of nonviolence originated in ancient India, and Buddhism was established with this basis of social ethics. It preached from the very beginning that people should not do any evil things but should persist in doing all goodness. The goal was to purify oneself.<sup>46</sup> Pursuing goodness means people shouldn't commit or even think of violence.

Buddhism in India had already set up commandments of avoiding killing, and, after it was introduced into China, Xiao Yan (464–549 A.D.), Emperor Wu of Liang of the South Dynasty, issued a government decree that Chinese Buddhist monks shouldn't kill and should only eat vegetables.<sup>47</sup> From then on, monks and nuns were prohibited from eating the meat of any sentient beings, which became a basic principle. What's more, some plants such as green onions, gingers, coriander, etc., which stimulate the appetite, were also prohibited. The Chinese Buddhists were pursuing a kind of perfect spiritual life in a bland diet of daily life.

The three main religions were mainly pursuing the nonviolence in thought and action, and so they could get along well with each other. However, in the field of thought, there were still tendencies toward violence. Even between different schools within the religions there were furious debates, though they would never resort to arms. For instance, there had been very fierce debates between Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism for 500 hundred years from Mid-East Jin (4<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) to the beginning of the Tang Dynasty (9<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.). These did not result in violent conflicts but turned into a comedy of debates held by the emperors in which representatives from the three religions participated. This was really a positive contribution to the field of nonviolent thought compared with the violent wars in which countless people died in ancient India, Persia and the Middle East just because of different faiths.



### III

The ideal of nonviolence pursued by ancient Chinese sages was often extremely disharmonious with reality. It is

really a very good reflection of the ancient history of China. As the saying goes: the ideal is good-willed while the reality is so cruel. Order in reality was not at all improved as the sages expected in spite of their efforts. So called “harmony in diversity,” “seeking common points while preserving diversity,” “pursuing all goodness,” etc., could only be slogans.

Such inhumane violence as slaughter and cruel and sanguinary torture were not at all rare in the Chinese history. Indeed, such violence could be found everywhere in the historical documents. Conflicts between different nations occurred frequently, and fights within a nation happened now and then. For example, at the end of the Qin Empire the Chu forces buried – in just 24 hours – 200,000 soldiers who had already surrendered to them.<sup>48</sup> In the late Ming Dynasty (the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century) Zhang Xianzhong rebelled against the government and entered Sichuan Province, where his army killed more than eighty percent of the local residents.<sup>49</sup> What is most incredible is that during the time of peace, when someone committed a political crime, all the members of his three clans – his paternal family, his maternal family and his wife’s parents’ family – would all be killed. And a more cruel punishment was to kill all the members of the criminal’s nine clans, resulting in the deaths of many innocent people. They are the criminal’s parents, brothers, sisters and his own children, the brother’s children, the sister’s children and his father’s sister’s children, the mother’s father’s family, the mother’s maternal family, the mother’s brothers and their children, the wife’s father’s family and mother’s family. This was called “cutting the weed and digging up the roots.” A founding father of the West Han Dynasty, Han Xin’s (?–196 B.C.) three related families were all killed by the Queen (241–180 B.C.) of Emperor Liu Bang.<sup>50</sup> Huo Guang (130–68 B.C.), a great minister of Liu Fuling, Emperor Zhao of Han, and of Liu Xuan Emperor Xuan of Han, made great contributions to these two emperors; however, after he died, his nine related families, about one thousand persons, were

all killed because Emperor Xuan (in reign in 73–49 B.C. ) thought these families were threatening his power.<sup>51</sup> The famous scribe Fang Xiaoru (1357–1402 A.D.) in the Ming Dynasty was killed by Emperor Zhu Di (in reign in 1357–1424 A.D.) along with ten related families. About eight hundred people, including some of his students were killed at the same time, which was the only case of massacre that involved ten families in Chinese history.<sup>52</sup> These historical truths tell us that violence will not perish because of the proposals of the sages. On the contrary, the proper people must act to get rid of it.

We should base the global ethic on concern for the individual's life and respect for his or her personal dignity after we have obtained the realization and comprehension about the "ultimate concern." Only when a certain moral principle becomes part of people's lives can it have general efficacy and true significance for the society and the whole world. The ideals of nonviolence proposed in ancient China can make a crucial contribution to today's global ethic movement, which is of great importance to the world.

## *Ahimsa* and Peace: Terror's Unequal and Opposite Reaction

SADHU ATMATRUPTADAS

*On September 24, 2002, there was a tragic terrorist attack on BAPS's Akshardham Temple in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India. Two terrorists armed with assault rifles and grenades fired indiscriminately into crowds of thousands of pilgrims. This essay recounts how the leader and guru of the temple, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, reacted to the violence with calm, thus inspiring peace throughout the country in the aftermath of the attack.*

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*Ahimsa* is ordinarily defined as nonviolence – it is a demand to not knowingly hurt or cause pain to any living creature. While this definition is not incorrect, our conception of *ahimsa* can be significantly expanded through the living example of spiritually elevated souls. In the face of a violent attack upon them, such extraordinary individuals never respond violently, but beyond that they neither say anything

that might incite violence nor even harbor the thought of violence in their mind. Such remarkable *ahimsa* is evident today in the life of the leader and guru of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, and was apparent in his response to a tragic terrorist attack on BAPS's Akshardham Temple in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

The Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS) is a Hindu denomination revealed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and formally established by Shastriji Maharaj in 1907. It has several thousand centers around the world, but is most widely known for its popular Akshardham Temple complexes in New Delhi and Gandhinagar, Gujarat. While the popularity of their temples may have made them the target of a terrorist attack, the spirituality of their leader made them an exemplar for how to respond to one.

At 4:45 p.m. on September 24, 2002, two terrorists armed with assault rifles and grenades began a gruesome rampage, indiscriminately firing into crowds of thousands of pilgrims who had come to Akshardham for *darshan*. Shortly thereafter, government authorities called Pramukh Swami Maharaj in the village of Sarangpur, 100 miles away, to inform him of the attack. As soon as he received this tragic news, Pramukh Swami Maharaj compassionately and instinctively prayed that further bloodshed be averted and the terrorists be captured alive.

The event was a shock to Hindus of every denomination and the country as a whole, as this was the first time in the nation's history that terrorists had targeted defenseless pilgrims a prominent Hindu temple. Many observers feared the attack would become the spark that would reignite the tinderbox of religious violence that had been bedeviling the country for the past year.

As night fell and police in Gandhinagar set up a perimeter around the temple complex to prevent the terrorists from escaping, in Sarangpur, Pramukh Swami

Maharaj gathered several senior *sadhus* around him and drafted an appeal for peace and unity to prevent a senseless outbreak of religious violence that could harm countless innocents. Just a few hours into the attack, Pramukh Swami Maharaj had sent this peace appeal to major newspapers and television outlets around the country. That night, Pramukh Swami Maharaj remained awake until 3 a.m. in constant prayer that there be no further violence.

At 6:45 a.m. the next morning, after a fourteen-hour rampage that left 33 dead and 70 wounded, the terrorists shot at security forces, revealing their own position, and were killed in the ensuing gun battle.

In the aftermath of the attack, Hindu and Muslim religious and civic leaders from around the country called Pramukh Swami Maharaj to express their condolences and offer support in this tragic time. One BAPS devotee requested Pramukh Swami Maharaj, "Please pray that BAPS is never again victim to such a terrorist attack." In reply, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, who has lived his life focused on universal enlightenment, said, "We should not have such a narrow perspective, but rather pray that terrorism is eradicated around the world. May everyone experience peace and happiness. May God destroy the demonic instincts within people's hearts and grant them the wisdom to do what is right. May everyone experience peace."

Four days later, on September 29, 2002, Pramukh Swami Maharaj invited Muslim, Christian and Hindu leaders to a public prayer assembly of thousands at Akshardham to offer condolences to those who had lost loved ones and to pray for peace for all. Addressing the gathering, Pramukh Swami Maharaj said:

God resides within all. If we can develop that vision, then we will experience love for everyone and everything. We will not experience any negative feeling toward anyone. But, because we lack such vision, tragedies such as these befall us. Yogiji Maharaj used to say, "O God! Do good for all." If we adopt this principle,

then we will experience peace. Peace cannot be bought by money or attained by force. If we can grasp the true meaning of our *dharma* and if we can understand the true faith of others, then we will all be able to pray, worship, and celebrate, each according to his own faith, in peace.

With these words Pramukh Swami Maharaj revealed the spiritual perspective that undergirded his practice of *ahimsa*.

The extent of Pramukh Swami Maharaj's *ahimsa* was seen as he went around the Akshardham Temple showering sanctified flower petals and offering prayers in the areas where pilgrims had been killed. When someone pointed out where the terrorists had been shot, Pramukh Swami Maharaj walked over to that spot, showered sanctified flower petals and prayed for the good of their souls and that such violence may never reoccur.

In contrast to those who advocate an equal and opposite reaction to the violence of terrorism, Pramukh Swami Maharaj's appeal for peace and calm in response to the Akshardham attack inspired peace throughout the country in the aftermath of the attack. In analyzing the entire event at an international conference in Germany, security experts lauded Pramukh Swami Maharaj's nonviolent approach to this terrorist attack on his own institution. They termed his nonviolent approach the "Akshardham Response" and noted that it seemed to be the only way to break out of the cycle of violence. It is emblematic of the sentiment of "*Sarvetra Sukhinah santu*" [May all experience happiness] that has guided the life of Pramukh Swami Maharaj and forms the foundation of true *ahimsa*.

## Message from Pramukh Swami Maharaj

આવા કરુણ પ્રસંગોએ આપણે સૌ સહાનુભૂતિપૂર્વક એક-બીજાને લૂંટી જાય છે, કોઈ એકલા રાખીને શાંતિમય વાતાવરણ જોઈવી રાખીએ. આવા ક્રૂર અત્યાચાર ક્યારેય, ક્યાંય પણ, કોઈના પર પડ્યા ન થાય એ માટે સતત ભગવાન સ્વામિનારાયણ, અક્ષરબ્રહ્મ ગુણાતીતાનંદ સ્વામી, ભગતજી મહારાજ, શાસ્ત્રીજી મહારાજ, યોગીજી મહારાજ, સર્વ અવતારો અને સર્વ સંતોનાં ચરણો આર્થના કરીએ.

૨૫. ૧૦.૨૦૨૦ (૨૧.૧૦.૨૦૨૦)

May we continue to offer one another empathy and support in the wake of such tragic incidents. May we all stand united to preserve the atmosphere of peace. We forever pray at the feet of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, Aksharbrahman Gunatitanand Swami, Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj and all the avatars and great saints that such an atrocity may never reoccur in any place upon anyone.

SHASTRI NARAYANSWARUPDAS  
(Pramukh Swami Maharaj)

## The Fruitful Tree in My Enemy's Garden: Biblical Ethics for a Peaceful World

GRACE DARLING

*For the last several centuries, the Northeastern part of India has been a place of continuous violence. If there are no foreign invaders, the native people face the persecutions of the Indian government, and if that does not bring enough trouble, the tribal people and others fight amongst themselves. The history of violence in this area suggests that it is an epidemic that cannot be stopped by means of escalating violence. I argue that the only solution is to take the Biblical ethics of love seriously, and practice it. This is the only way to bring peace to this conflicted region.*

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The world is crying in pain because of identity crisis, hatred, ethnic conflicts, racism, casteism, religious radicalized terrorism, gender bias issues and atrocities toward women, covetousness and corruption, invasion, shameless greed, racism and maliciously revisionist history, intolerance, the

deterioration of human moral values, arrogance, dishonesty, pride, political issues, vengeance – the list can go on. These are like gangrene to the bone of the human society. Whether we look to the East or the West we see conflict, war, violence and intolerance in various degrees. Mankind has always been caught in a vicious cycle of tit-for-tat, evil for evil, and violence for violence. Most of the time human beings try to resist evil with evil, deal violently with problems of violence, and wage war to preclude another war. But such responses are at best short-term solutions, and they ultimately succeed only in spreading the bitterness, hatred, anger and resentment which breed further evil and suffering down the line, which is no good to anyone. The world needs peaceful co-existence and harmony, love and respect. It is thus imperative that we look for peace, the way to peace, the one who gives peace and who is himself the Prince of Peace – the one who taught mankind to truly love one another, who himself showed the supreme example in the first century A.D. To find a long-lasting solution, to break the vicious cycle of hatred and violence, we need a philosophy that is built on *agape*, or unconditional love and forgiveness.

A few great leaders have sprung up in various communities and societies, leaders like Gandhi who stood for *ahimsa* or nonviolence. Gandhi had a profound influence on the world, showing that we can fight injustice through nonviolent means. He encouraged the Indians to use peaceful means during the Freedom Movement, when India sought to free itself from British rule, and this prevented or averted massive destruction and loss of precious human lives. He based his ethics on the teaching of Christ's "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew, 5-7), not to return evil for evil but to overcome evil with good or love. Time and again he quoted from Biblical scriptures, while Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was a great inspiration to him, and he in turn inspired the Indian people to use nonviolent methods to achieve freedom. It is reported that former British Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, asked Gandhi what he thought would solve the

problems between Great Britain and India. Gandhi picked up a Bible from the Viceroy's table and opened it to the fifth chapter of Matthew and said: "When your country and mine shall get together on the teachings laid down by Christ in this Sermon on the Mount, we shall have solved the problems not only of our countries but those of the whole world".

To Gandhi, Jesus was a true *satyagrahist* who passed the test of nonviolence even if he seemed to be otherwise a failure. "The virtues of mercy, nonviolence, love and truth in any man can be truly tested when they are pitted against ruthlessness, violence, hate and untruth. This is the true test of *ahimsa*. He who when being killed bears no anger against his murderer and even asks God to forgive him is truly nonviolent. History relates this of Jesus Christ. With his dying breath on the Cross, he prayed for the people who were persecuting and killing him saying, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). Gandhi even said: "I shall say to the Hindus that your life will be incomplete unless you reverentially study the teachings of Jesus... Make this world the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and everything will be added unto you."



# I

Much of the unjust suffering, violence and pain in this world are clearly due to greed and corruption at various levels, aggression, covetousness, revenge, moral decadence and a lack of regard for others' lives, sentiments and properties. This is vividly clear in the case of the Northeastern part of India. Northeast India comprises the seven states commonly known as the "seven sisters": Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura. (Sikkim State is now included as well.)

There were many distinct independent democratic republics and independent kingdoms in Northeastern India before the British East India Company forcibly annexed

them. After Independence, the Indian Army repeated the process of forcible annexation. Torture and killing continues to this day. For instance, the Naga insurgence, which started in the 1950s and is known as the “Mother of the Northeast insurgencies,” is one of the oldest unresolved armed conflicts in the world. The area includes more than 200 different linguistic groups with unique cultures, customs, traditions and religious practices, all very different from those of the mainland Indians. They are mostly of the Tibeto-Burman or Sino-Tibetan Mongoloid race, a self-sufficient group of people with no caste system. They were mostly honest, brave, simple, hardworking tribe with high moral standards. Patriarchal societies as well as matrilineal societies are found in the area. The woman who has spent the longest time in prison for resisting British rule came from Northeast India: Rani Gaidinliu, from a Zeliangrong Naga tribe was sentenced to life imprisonment.

The people in this area sometimes engaged in inter-tribal feuds and head hunting when provoked, raided or intruded upon. They generally relied upon tribal customs to maintain law and order and resolve conflicts; in extreme cases they invoked the intervention of the Supreme all-knowing God of justice, calling out to God to judge them and to make the water, spear or an animal like a tiger or other natural forces be their witness.

Their major difficulties started with the coming of British rule. They had to pay taxes on their own land, products and properties, and many were sent to different parts of the world to fight on behalf of the British in World War I. The British also hanged many tribal leaders. Many died in World War II fighting for the British armies. Their homes, barns, and fields were burnt and destroyed. Bullets rained down from the skies when the British and Japanese were competing to gain control over the region.

We can see how they were living before the British arrived to rule over them by force. For instance, we can have

a closer look at the Zeliangrong Naga tribe from which both Mr. Jadonang and Rani Gaidinliu hailed. On the whole, the Nagas are hospitable and cheerful in their dealings. They have great attachment to the place where they live, and most especially to the place where their ancestors are buried. Many of these people have bright intelligent faces, and generally they were found to be simple and honest in character. Field Marshall William Slim, in his book, *Defeat into Victory*, spoke highly of the gallant Nagas whose loyalty never faltered, even in the most depressing times of the invasion. In practice they had neither kings nor slaves. Almost everyone is equal in the society, and they show respect for other individuals' property. For example, their granary store houses were just bolted on the outside, for they knew nothing of locks and keys; indeed, they had no need of either, since the habit of stealing or looting from each other is quite unheard of among these simple people.<sup>53</sup> Economically, they were self-sufficient people and begging was practically unknown.<sup>54</sup> There is absolutely no caste system in the Zeliangrong culture as there is in many Indian cultures; everyone is equal. One of the great socio-cultural and religious reformers of the Zeliangrong was also a freedom fighter. Jadonnang, who died in the hands of the British (hanged in 1931), directed the people to stop paying taxes, disobey government orders and refuse government forced labor. The Nagas sent a memorandum and declared Independence from British rule on 14 August 1947, just before the British departure and India's Independence Day (15 August 1947). After the British left, many of these states were forcibly annexed into the Indian Union against the wishes of the people.

The Naga delegation met with Gandhi at the Bhangi colony in New Delhi on 19 July, 1947; they told him that they were resolved to declare their own Independence a day before India did so, on August 14, 1947, and asked him for his help. Gandhi reassured them that if the Naga brothers wished to join the Indian Union, they were most welcome, but that if they did not then they should not be forced. The

Naga political leaders sent a letter to the UN to declare Naga Independence on the same day. India responded by unleashing a war in which, according to official statistics, more than two hundred thousand Nagas were killed, from the 1950s to the present. The real figure vastly exceeds that number. Villages and granaries have been burnt, women raped and mutilated, men tortured and killed, children smashed to death. Starvation and disease destroyed a third of the rural population. In the Nagaland Hills and Northeast India, however, Indian troops with arms and ammunitions were sent to suppress the political rights and freedom of the people through violent means and to put them under Indian rule. The Hindu Fanatics assassinated Gandhi not long after India's Independence, and the tribals knew nothing about UN Human Rights at that time.

Very large numbers of people were brutally killed, murdered after being tortured, women were raped and killed, and children suffered violence and hunger during annexation.<sup>55</sup> Many men never recovered from the brutal torture of their bodies – bones broken and fractured, nails sliced with sharp weapons and knives. Their houses and barns or storehouses full of valuable goods were raided, treasures looted, burnt. Their fields were burnt. Literally nothing was left for them to survive. The only goal of the invading forces was to crush and rule forcibly, and no one could speak out for the truth. Many times people ran to the caves, deep forest, rugged cliffs and gorges to take shelter from the cruelty of the Indian armies. Many were cruelly forced to labor for the armies without being paid. Witnessing all the injustice, the horror and the terrible pain and devastation all around, many people wished they were never been born. People lived in terror: men's clothes were stripped off in public, women were raped in front of their husbands and forced to deliver babies in the open concentration ground surrounded by armies, many people died of starvation through no fault of their own.<sup>56</sup>

To add fuel to the blazing fire, India passed the Armed Force Special Power Act (AFSPA), on 18 August, 1958, as a “short-term measure” to allow deployment of the army to counter an armed separatist movement in the Naga Hills. AFSPA has now been in place for the last five decades, and was extended to all seven states of the Northeast region in 1972 (with the exception of Mizoram). AFSPA gives Indian security forces the unilateral power to detain, torture and kill to maintain order, with a legal immunity for extra-judicial killing. The Armies have been given the power to shoot and kill people on mere suspicion (if they suspect someone to be a freedom fighter/insurgent/militant), and they have killed many innocent people in the region. Irom Chanu Sharmila, from Manipur state, has refused food and water, fasting for more than 15 years (from November 2000 until now) in protest against the Central Government of India, demanding that they repeal AFSPA.



## II

In addition to all the problems imposed from outside, there are problems within Northeast India, too. Ethnic problems are also a great challenge, as there are inter-tribal clashes between one community and others.

Northeast India is more than a “living museum” of many races, cultures, creeds and languages. Many tribes and communities fight with other communities from time to time. The Northeast is well known for its deep-rooted tribal rivalries and conflicts. Nagas versus Kukis, Khasi versus Garo, Bodo versus non-tribals (especially illegal immigrants from Bangladesh), Mhar versus Dimasa, Dimasa versus Nagas, Khasi versus Karbi, Mizos versus Bengali (Non-tribals), sometimes between specific tribals and non-tribals in the region, and the list can go on. Sometimes even within the same group, factional problems come up resulting in killing, hatred and distrust. These problems mostly arise because of

land issues. The people had been forced to divide or club together to live with other communities and fall into different states. Nagas, for example, have been divided and placed into four different states of India (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Manipur) against their wishes; and this despite the fact that their land is contiguous. There is a great deal of resentment over this policy.

To understand the situation better we can look at the case of Manipur. The situation in Manipur is no better. The fault lines between the Meiteis (non-tribal) in the Imphal Valley and tribals in the hills, and between the tribals (Nagas versus Kukis etc.) are causing many problems for normal civilian life in the state. There are approximately forty militant organizations in Manipur. A slightest spark of provocation can cause a massive violence like a wild fire drawing ethnic lines. Many tribes fought the British, then the Japanese on behalf of the British, and then the Indians. Though they are Indians now, still the ethnic conflicts erupt from time to time. The ethnic conflict in relation to land between the Nagas and Kukis in Assam, Nagaland and Manipur was a terrible conflict in which many innocent people were killed in horrifyingly violent and unthinkable ways. There are difficulties everywhere; honesty is lacking. Nagas remember only that their loved ones have been killed, their houses burnt down. Kukis likewise remember and publicize only their loss of precious lives. When one presents its case, it seems right, but when another comes up with another version, it is difficult for an outsider to find out who is right and who is wrong. Both communities are reluctant to acknowledge the loss and death of other communities.

Many innocent people from both tribes have been killed. The Nagas believe that they own the land, as they had been living by themselves since time immemorial and the Kukis came much later. They claim that the Kukis came along with the British, carrying British arms and ammunition to Northeast India from Burma. The Kukis were required to

pay small taxes to the Nagas just to remind them that they were living in others' land. When the Kukis began to refuse to pay taxes and claimed that they were landowners, the ethnic clashes erupted again on a large scale, as recently as the 1990s. The only force that calmed them down in 1997 was the intervention of the Churches to stop the fighting, and Jesus' teaching to forgive unconditionally and not take revenge.

Even after problems have calmed down for some time, they surface again and again when people forget to love and respect one another. We find Kuki communities calling for months-long economic blockades (all vehicles carrying goods are stopped, excepting passengers without luggage who are allowed to travel) to force the Manipur government to give them a homeland, or Sadar Hills' demand for a full-fledged revenue district. Then the United Naga Council calls for a 121-day counter economic blockade, warning the government *not* to give the Kukis a homeland from the land of the Nagas connecting Manipur to the rest of India. Everyone suffered very badly from shortage of supplies and essential commodities.

Then comes the tribal resentment over corrupt leaders in the Manipur Government – leaders who take the lion's share from the poor people. The tribes of the hills moved to separate themselves from the valley people due to resentment, and the Manipur government even tried to legalize taking tribal lands and to make the land saleable to the non-tribals despite being protected by the Central Government of India all over the country. In response, the hill people started demanding an alternative arrangement outside of Manipur, a separate state. All of this leads to tension, distrust and a sense of alienation; most dangerous of all, it leads to a mob or crowd attitude which is attached so much to one's community, people, tribe, group or factions even among the militant groups.

We create endless problems when we become too materialistic, forgets to love and respect others and their property, tries to move the boundaries set by their ancestors, or covets neighbors' belongings. But the teaching of the Bible for peace is very clear. Exodus 20:17 also says, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Similar problems are everywhere. When one becomes too materialistic, greedy or selfish, or loses one's love, regards or respect for others, then a war-like condition appears. It results in aggression, invasion, exploitation, and covetousness. Revenge, vindication or vengeance take place when there is no forgiveness. All these can disappear when mankind follows the simple ethics of *agape* or unselfish, unconditional love and forgiveness.



### III

Jesus Christ taught that we should forgive one another. The Love of God is forgiving and forgetting. Jesus taught, according to Matthew 6:16: "But if you don't forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your sins." Another great teaching of the Bible is not to take revenge. Leviticus, 19:18, "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus also instructed us (Matthew 5:44): "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

What, then, is love? The Greeks had four distinct words for the different kinds of love that we know: *eros*, *philia*, *storge* and *agape* love. *Eros* is passionate physical love or romantic love, with sensual desire and longing. *Philia* refers to affectionate love, or love between friends. This type of love includes give and take. It includes loyalty to friends, family and community, and requires virtue, equality and familiarity.

It is also a general type of love, including love between family, between friends, a desire or enjoyment of an activity, as well as love between lovers. *Storge* means affection, or brotherly love. It is natural affection, like that felt by parents for offspring. *Agape* love is the unconditional, sacrificial love. And what God commands of us is the sacrificial love that does not expect anything in return. It is the love that can easily be extended even to enemies, and the undeserving. The best definition of the *agape* love that Jesus wants from us is found in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 which goes as:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

It is thus imperative that we forgive one another. This keeps ringing in the ears and mind of the people of Northeast India. Trying to forgive and forget when others have harmed us, intentionally and deliberately to an irreparable degree, is a huge challenge. To forgive, to forget and to love one's

enemy takes a lot of effort, but it is the only sure way to peace.

The Bible says in Romans 12:17-18: "Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." This is true not only for the Nagas but also for many people of Northeastern India, like the Assamese, Bodos, Meities, Mizos, Khasis, Garos, Kukis, Tripuris and Arunachalis and much more. Every tribe has its own sad story to tell about how their freedom has been taken by the people following the principle, "Might is Right."

Now the big question is how to love and overcome these hurts and wounds and hatred. The Bible teaches every one of us (Mark 12:30-31): "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself." There is no commandment greater than these. After all these, Jesus goes on further to say (John 14:15): "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

Jesus did not only command people but he himself lived a life which perfectly expressed his own teaching through his supreme sacrifice as an example of *agape* love. As he was being hung on the Cross and was dying for the sins of the world, his last words include (Luke 23:24): "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." Following nonviolence even in our struggle for justice is the only sure way to peace.

#### IV



Tolstoy saw the implications of Jesus' instructions in Matthew, chapter 5, as nothing short of revolutionary. He saw Jesus proposing a new, radical and wiser method for human beings to respond to any form of evil. That is, when coerced or when treated unjustly, do not retaliate, but respond with love, forgiveness and generosity. He saw that man is caught up in a vicious cycle of violence and this is the

only remedy. The destructive cycle of evil, anger and revenge can only be overpowered by a cycle of love, forgiveness and sacrifice which is stronger than any other forces of this world.

Gandhi believed in achieving freedom only by applying the soul force because he believed in the inseparable relation between right means and right end. His philosophy also pointed out that we humans have two natures, the brute force and the soul force. If we fight brutality with our brute force, it will produce violence. Only when we meet brute force with soul force (love force, nonviolence, *ahimsa*, self-sacrifices, truth force), rather than meeting violence with violence, will we achieve *swaraj*, or the freedom that gives peace. Nonviolence is a more powerful weapon than violence. Truth will triumph in the end. It is infinitely superior to violence. This is true *satyagraha* for him.

Martin Luther King, Jr. found something noteworthy in Gandhi's ideas to be followed. King states in *Stride Toward Freedom*:

Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale.... It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months.<sup>57</sup>

King was deeply moved and influenced by the Gandhian philosophy, which was inextricably linked to the Biblical ethics of nonviolence, and he successfully led the American Civil Rights movement to resist evil force without adopting violent means. In the initial stage he led the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56, which was a form of nonviolent protest against the forces of inequality in the name of color differences. King also wrote:

As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love, operating through the Gandhian method of nonviolence, is one

of the most potent weapons available to an oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.<sup>58</sup>



As I was travelling one day after the dreadful ethnic conflict between the Nagas and Kukis in the 1990s, I looked out from the window of a vehicle and saw a tree (*parkia roxburghii*, a kind of bean tree with strong scent, liked by South Asian people). It was full of healthy beans hanging down from its branches in abundance in the garden of a Kuki home, near the roadside on the hill outside Imphal. Being brought up in the Christian tradition, I believe God is the Creator and the One who makes things grow and bear fruits. The tree struck me in such a forceful way that I can see it clearly in my mind's eye – even today. The idea that stayed with me is that God, the Creator, is a loving God and He greatly loves your tribe's enemy too. That spoke to me very clearly. Who am I to hate them if our same Heavenly Father created them, loves and cares for them? It is a fearful thing to hate what God loves and cares for. That thought scared me, and still prevents me from thinking bad thoughts about people I think of as enemies. Slowly and steadily our love for them must return and will return if we trust and follow the Biblical ethics of love.

*Ahimsa* and Identity:  
Jains During the 1947 Partition of India

MATTHEW ZARO FISHER,  
SHALIN JAIN, and SANTOSH KUMAR RAI,  
in collaboration with NAVIN SRIVASTAV

*In January 2013 Claremont School of Theology, in partnership with the International School for Jain Studies and the Federation of Jains in North America (Jaina.org), began a research project to preserve and tell the Jain narrative of the impact of the 1947 Partition of India on this minority religious community. We have conducted approximately forty interviews with those Jains who survived this most unfortunate period of India's history. While we recognize that it is impossible to provide a "journalistic" account of the Jain role in partition history, nevertheless these interviews – coupled with the available historical data on the history of Jains in northwestern India – provides an interesting picture of the way Jainism's unique philosophy of nonviolence factored into the survival of the Jain community in the face of partition violence and their subsequent migration to India.*

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As we sat in the living room in a suburb of New Delhi on a chilly January day, bundled up with coats and scarves, the American on our research team came to the stark realization that India's homes are clearly built for a warm-weather climate to keep the heat out and not in. And this makes sense considering that there are only one or two weeks of the year where temperatures approach freezing at night. Unfortunately this week happened to be one of them. One could say that such warm-weather thinking is part of the Indian identity. The elderly man sitting across from us was a Jain, and we were here to record his memories of his experience during the 1947 partition of British India into present day India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (formally East Pakistan). The partition was a dark time in the mutual histories of these countries. Though each country gained its independence from colonial British rule, independence was achieved only through the loss of tens of thousands of lives, the abduction of tens of thousands of women, and the displacement of millions of people who were forced to migrate across the newly drawn borders of India and Pakistan to escape the sectarian violence that erupted in the region from 1945-47. According to our interviewees, the responsibility and blame for the violence lay not with Muslims, Hindus, or Sikhs in general, but with the nationalistic motivations of certain politicians on both sides of the independence movements (i.e., the Hindu RSS and the Muslim League). As a minority representing only 0.5% of the population of India, Jains have been lumped together with Hindu culture throughout the history of the Indian sub-continent, much to detriment of Jain self-identity. Given that there is no Jain-specific account of partition history, it is the goal of this research project to tell the story of how one of the bloodiest periods of Indian history affected the Jain community in particular.

When we asked the gentleman whether or not the Jains in his community were harmed by any aggressors he said (paraphrased): "No, they knew who the Jains were and that

they would never hurt a fly. No God-fearing Muslim would hurt a Jain who practiced *ahimsa*.” If a house in India is built to keep out the heat of the summer, *ahimsa*, the Jain way of nonviolence, is a way to keep violence out of one’s thoughts, words and deeds. Moreover, this personal commitment translates into a lived experience of nonviolence for the entire community. As the historical and narrative evidence from our research suggests, *ahimsa* as a form of cultural identity played a vital role in the overall survival of the Jain community during the communal violence of the partition.

Before analyzing the impact of the Jain value of *ahimsa* and its attitude of tolerance as an “agent” in the process of community building among Jains, it is imperative to locate the Jains as a community in the historical context of the Indian sub-continent, particularly in the northwest region of the Punjab and other cities which now lie in Pakistan (e.g., Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Gujranwala). The discussion about the Jain presence and their concerns percolates *via* an identity discourse produced by members of the Jain intellectual elite from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, as well as their efforts at internal organization, unification and reform. Any individual carries a “hierarchy of identities” that factor into his or her self-identity as an individual within a similar hierarchy of identity that constitutes the wider community. One could argue that understanding the dynamic and complex nature of such identity-hierarchies is the only way to gain any fruitful understanding of partition history. Thus a Jain could identify him or herself as a member of a specific caste, a specific regional sub-group, a Digambar or Shvetambar, and more generally as a Jain within the milieu of the partition period. Depending on the context and specific circumstances, various identities will become more or less dominant. Although many of our interviewees confirmed the malleable nature of Jain identity, nevertheless almost every interviewee reported a strong understanding of *ahimsa* as the central feature of what it means to be Jain, signified first and

foremost by a vegetarian diet. In a wider sense, then, collective identity established along sectarian lines was superseded by the stress on the concept of a supra-locally, supra-caste-based Jain community.

Part of the Jain identity of *ahimsa* is occupational in nature. There is a correlation between the Jain imperative to observe nonviolence to the best of one's abilities and the economic integration of Jains throughout India's history in predominantly urban locales. Due to their religious vow of nonviolence Jains historically remained apathetic toward agriculture as an occupation. Largely an urban class of merchants and bankers, promotion of non-agrarian activities suited their material interests. Thus, to fulfill their occupational objectives, Jains have historically maintained an affirmative relationship with the state. An analysis of the processes of identity formation among the Jains requires an analysis of the demographic pattern of Jain urban settlements in northwestern India. This region, particularly the Punjab, historically attracted the Jain community due to the concentration of government cantonment and royal towns having commercial value as well.<sup>59</sup>

Many of our interviewees spoke of the harmonious interaction between Jains and Muslims in the Punjab and pre-partition Pakistan. We see that these narrative reports have deep historical roots. During the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar a large number of Jain families from Marwar came into Punjab and settled in important cities and towns.<sup>60</sup> The Rajput policy of Akbar would have further attracted the Marwari merchants toward the royal capital along with their Rajput patrons. Lahore became the center of Jain activities. The Jain temple in the Saidmitha Bazar and Tharhiyan Bhabrian (Jain Street) were established with Akbar's permission. Here the Oswal Shvetambars known as '*Bhabhade*' lived. A village called Bhabhada was situated eight miles south of present day of Lahore. Here Mantri Karamchandra Bacchawat of Bikaner also built a shrine to

establish the footprints (*charanpaduka*) of Jinkushal Suri in his residential quarters. The village came to be known as Bhabhra after the common word for the Jains of Punjab. In Multan a group of Jain traders followed the *Adhyatma* sect of Banarsidas. One of them, Vardhaman Naulakha, went from Multan to Agra to meet Banarsidas.

The Jain pontiff Jinsingh Suri went to Lahore on the invitation of Karamchandra Bacchawat. His followers (such as Parbat) gave him a very warm and grand reception and organized meetings of the Jain community for his preaching.<sup>61</sup> In fact, Tapagaccha ascetics Vijaysen Suri and Bhanuchandra were sent by pontiff Hiravijay Suri to meet Akbar in Lahore in 1591 A.D. To facilitate the stay of Bhanuchandra, Akbar granted land to build a Jain *upashraya*. According to the Jain narrative, prior to the 1590s there was no Jain abode in the fort of Lahore. Bhanuchandra secured the place at the risk of antagonizing Muslims and other non-Jains (*Mallecha Mithyadrashschanyepaysmaddhadharmadivshoyatah*). He gave the excuse of having to live in the distance city of Lahore for being late at the royal court. His request to the Emperor for a gift of a piece of land for the Jain community was duly accepted. A magnificent Jain temple was built for the consecration of idol of Shantinath at the cost of Rs. 20,000.<sup>62</sup> In V.S. 1651, the poet Krishnadas composed a *bavani* of Durjanshal of Lahore, who was from Jadia *gotra* of Oswal caste. He was a descendent of Jagdushah, and his father's name was Nanu. Durjanshal was probably the nephew of Sah Hiranand of Agra. He led a Jain congregation on a pilgrimage to *Sauripura tirth* where he repaired the temple and the Jain idol was consecrated. He also played an important role in constructing the Jain temple at Lahore. Given his adherence to Hiravijay Suri, he seems to be a Tapagaccha follower. It was he who informed Emperor Akbar about Vijaysen Suri, the successor to Hiravijay Suri, leading the emperor to invite Vijaysen Suri to Lahore.<sup>63</sup>

The Jain identity in this region during the British rule was a complex issue. As far as the demographic spread of

the Jains during the colonial period is concerned, in 1895 Vijayanand Suri or Aatmaram told a Jain congregation at Ludhiana city that the “highest number of Jain families in Punjab lives in Gujaranwala town.”<sup>64</sup> Gujaranwala was an important Jain inhabitancy, and at least nine of our interviewees reported migrating from Gujaranwala to India during the partition. One of the leading Jain personalities of Gujaranwala was Lala Manakchand Dugar, who owned cloth shops in the city and also functioned as President of *Shri Jain Sangh* of Gujaranwala.<sup>65</sup> If one goes by Jain estimates, Multan city and cantonment together had 39 Digambar families with a numerical strength of 240 members. The Multan city Jain community had one temple and one *chaityalaya* for the purpose of worship. The temple complex also had a Jain school and one Dharmashala, and in the cantonment area had similar arrangements (though without a school).<sup>66</sup> The Rawalpindi cantonment had 197 Jains divided into 22 households with one temple. Most of those Jains were in government service.<sup>67</sup> In Lahore 33 Agrawal households had 154 members, most of them active in business and government. Here they also had one temple.<sup>68</sup> Sialkot had a comparatively higher number of Jains: approximately 1200, largely from Shvetambar sect. There was only one Digambar family with seven members.<sup>69</sup>

From the late nineteenth-century onward census data points to a Jain presence in predominantly Muslim towns like Multan, Deraghazi Khan, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Gujaranwala and Peshawar.<sup>70</sup> Jain monks and nuns were a crucial factor for the social cohesion of the Jain identity, and many of our interviewees attested to the strong influence of monks and nuns in their communities. These monks and nuns would constantly preach the value of an *ahimsa*-oriented lifestyle in their sermons, often visiting individual households where they were honored and revered as the holy archetypes of the Jain way of nonviolence. Shvetambar Muni Budhivijay (Boote Rai) and his five disciples – Muni Mukti vijay Ji (Mulchand Ji), Muni Vridhivijay (Vriddhichand), Muni

Vijayanand Suri (popularly known as Atmaram Ji), Muni Khantivijay Ji and Muni Nitivijay Ji – played a very important role in promoting of Jainism in this region. These monks and nuns were revered by their Jain communities, and the narratives from the interviews show the significance of Jain piety for guiding the activities of the Jain community during the partition.

The significance of the peaceful piety of Jain ascetics is therefore an essential part of Jain *ahimsa*-identity. One story repeated by multiple interviewees tells of how the Jain monk *acharya* Vijay Vallabh Suri was instrumental in securing the survival of his community during the migration from Gujaranwala to India. Specifically, Vijay Vallabh Suri developed a tightly knit network of local organizations that assisted in this task. He fostered the formation of *Shri Atmanand Jain Mahasabha* and local *Shri Atmanand Jain Sabhas* to further the cause of the Atmavallabh mission.<sup>71</sup> Vijay Vallabh Suri also shaped the Jain community's political response toward the freedom struggle. He criticized the use of mill-made cloth, objecting to the use of animal fat in the manufacturing process, and promoted the use of *khadi* and *swadeshi* by himself using *khadi* cloth. In spite of being a Gujarati by birth, his ability to converse in multiple languages (Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu) helped to mobilize popular support.

At the time of partition in 1947, Vijay Vallabh Suri was spending his *chaturmas* (four months of rainy season) stay with his *sangha* at Gujaranwala. According to one narrative, the *upashraya* in which the *acharya* was staying with his *sangha* was targeted by some violent Muslims. An attempt was made on the *acharya*'s life, but the bomb did not explode. Rather the man who threw the bomb was killed by accidental friendly fire from his own gang. According to our interviewees, the Muslim population of the locality, familiar with the nonviolent nature of the Jain community, took it as a sign from God and promised to protect the *acharya* along

with his *sangha* for the length of his stay. His followers from India made serious efforts that included making a special request to Muhammad Ali Jinnah to ensure the safe passage of the *acharya* to India. The *acharya* flatly refused the offer of personal protection and safe passage from the Pakistan Government, as he wanted safe passage for the whole Jain community of Gujaranwala. Thus the Pakistani government ensured that he, along with his disciples and *sangha*, should be provided safe passage to India by way of Lahore. After reaching Lahore Vijay Vallabh Suri found that a *Terapanthi* muni Amolak *rishi* was surrounded in the hostile locale of Lahore. *Acharya* Vijay Vallabh Suri asked the company of soldiers and the Jain followers to bring Amolak *rishi* safely to him. In spite of the riotous violence in the city of Lahore, ultimately even Amolak *rishi* was safely brought into the company of *acharya* Vijay Vallabh Suri and then the whole Jain *sangha* crossed the Indo-Pak border safely.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to the narrative reports gleaned from our interviews, the available historical material establishes that in spite of any ambiguity over Jain identity, Jains in northwestern India interacted peacefully with the surrounding Muslim and the Sikh communities. Everyday experiences in the public domain show that the sermons of the Jain monks created a harmonious ambience in the various towns that were otherwise quite sensitive. One can say that the everyday lifestyle of the Jain ascetics and the community fostered an amicable environment between persons with significant religious differences. The principle of nonviolence certainly played a decisive role in shaping these everyday experiences.

Yet in the mob-driven communal violence of the partition, one cannot say decisively that the principle of *ahimsa* played a significant role as an intervening factor to change the course of events. Official records are largely silent as far as Jain responses on the occasion are concerned. Other Jain narratives and memoirs refer to the partition of India,

but they do not make any specific claim about their own adherence to the principle of nonviolence in relation to their actions during the partition. In short, there are significant sociological and economic factors at play that make it difficult to identify *ahimsa* as a tool for actively responding to violence in a mob-like situation. Instead, it appears that the efficacy of *ahimsa* lay in its defensive power as a philosophical tool for nonviolent-identity formation, as celebrated through the roles of monks and nuns like *acharya* Vijay Vallabh Suri. Certainly, when the madness of mob-driven violence had taken over the sub-continent one would not expect a minute minority to preach nonviolence in the face of their own impending death. Instead, saving the lives and property of the Jain community was the first priority. And in some cases this implied the use of self-defense by Jain householders.

Although our interviewees recounted family preparations to defend the household, most understood this to be a fruitless endeavor in the face of assured death and so most Jains chose to migrate instead of putting up a fight to defend their homes and property, justified or not. There is one ambiguous historical reference regarding Jain involvement in partition-related violence related to self-defense. Lala Moti Shah Oswal was the President of *Sthanakwasi Jain Society* of Sialkot and he possessed a lot of immovable property in Sialkot. At the time of partition, when Jains had been attacked by Muslims, his house was the main sheltering place in which “Jains encountered miscreants and compelled them to go back. His younger brother Khajanchi Lal was shot to death in the encounter.”<sup>73</sup> Many of our interviewees reported preparations of bricks, bottles and other easily accessible items to be used in household defense. And one interviewee recounted his memory of Jain youth encircling their elders after a train derailment to fend off Muslim attackers for twenty minutes or so until help from the army arrived. Hence, though *ahimsa* is observed completely by monks and nuns, non-ascetic Jains who have

taken the minor vows take a pragmatic understanding of the use of violence in relation to self-defense. In fact, the defense of self, family, and household is a duty incumbent upon the householder within Jain social divisions. Anecdotally, a son who was present during the interview of his mother went so far as to interject (paraphrasing): “to lay down and allow another to kill your family misses the entire point of *ahimsa*.” Hence though Jain philosophy does not make a pragmatic exception to the use of violence and the corresponding influx of *karma* due to that violence, we see that the pragmatic need to sanction certain degrees of defensive violence on the part of the householder makes it possible for the ascetic to take the major vow and live a life of complete nonviolence while supported by Jain householders.

In conclusion, the historical evidence, both archival as well as popular, indicates that throughout the colonial period the Jain presence in northwestern India had a soothing effect on multi-religious urban populations due to the cultivation of the philosophical principle of nonviolence within the Jain community. Moreover, there is no historical evidence of any major violent response on the part of the Jains toward “others,” particularly Muslims, during the period of partition violence. But we must not be too hasty in drawing a direct correlation between the adoption of *ahimsa* and a nonviolent reaction. Moreover, we have to distinguish the ancient Jain philosophy of *ahimsa* from Gandhi’s application of *ahimsa* to nonviolent civil disobedience in the twentieth century. One should be wary of comparing Western nonviolent resistance movements against a leviathan government, and nonviolent resistance in the face of mob-violence. After all, every Jain interviewed reported leaving their native home *because* they believed they would have been killed had they stayed. However, we can initially say from the narrative reports that it certainly appears that the cultivation of a community centered around nonviolence demonstrated to the “outside” local community (e.g., the

Muslim community in Gujaranwala) that this Jain sub-community would never respond with violence, and so would shame any aggressor who sought to harm that community. However, it appears that this “identity-protection” breaks down when the outside population is too large to be familiar with the particular community. As such, many of the reports of violence against Jains were said to come from Muslims unfamiliar with the local Jain community, who were themselves displaced from India. One must be aware of the many other social and cultural factors at play in a minute but prosperous community in the face of partition violence, for which a nonviolent response was more circumstantial than principled.

On the other hand, the cultivation of an *ahimsa* identity over time surely had micro-level influences throughout the history of Jains in this region. While we cannot locate a direct causal correlation between *ahimsa* and the relatively nonviolent response of Jains to partition violence, given the complexity of factors addressed above, we can nevertheless say that the many micro-level influences of an *ahimsa*-oriented Jain community in the history of this region may very well have led to the group’s overall survival during the partition migration. In the end it should always be remembered that the narrative gleaned from these interviews is one of a displaced people forced to migrate or face inevitable death. *Ahimsa*, or nonviolence in thought, word and deed, is the rallying cry of Jain identity both in times of peace and distress, and is perhaps the very thing that allowed this group of people to survive a horrific migration relatively unscathed.

## *Ahimsa* and Reverence for Life

CHRIS DOUDE VAN TROOSTWIJK

*There seems to be a natural connection between Albert Schweitzer's reverence for all life and Jain ahimsa. Nevertheless, Schweitzer was very critical of the Jains because he saw in ahimsa only a negative principle, a principle of restraint and non-harming. A careful reading of the Jain sacred texts and a closer look at their practice shows that this is not the case. Reverence for life and ahimsa go together, and there are many ways in which they complement each other. The deepest sense of both is a silent faith that peace between all living creatures is possible after all.*

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### **Introduction: An Eyewitness Account**

Nothing seems more self-evident than to associate the old spiritual *ahimsa* principle with the famous ethical principle “discovered” and formulated by Nobel Prize winner, Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965). At a certain moment in his life, Schweitzer became convinced that the only true foundation of an ethical and spiritual life consisted in a respectful and

supportive veneration of the mystery of life. For Schweitzer, ethical engagement and mystical self-realisation were one and the same thing. He called his principle “reverence for life.”

Yet it was not this ethical-mystical postulate that motivated him in his early intellectual endeavours. In his student years – he studied theology at the University of Strasbourg – Schweitzer had vowed to dedicate his adult existence to the poor and to those who were less lucky than he had been in his youth, in the presbytery of the Alsatian village of Gunsbach. This decision was his personal and pious answer to Jesus’ word in the Gospel: “Thou, follow me!” Nothing could change his mind, not even the explosion of his intellectual and artistic talents. And thus, despite having achieved a promising career as a teacher at the university, as a vicar in a Strasbourg church, and as an organ player in concert halls, at the age of thirty he took up his studies in medicine. With three doctoral theses under his belt – in philosophy, theology and medicine – he departed in 1913 for the French Congo (present-day Gabon) where he founded what later became his world famous bush hospital at Lambarene.

Nonetheless, it appeared that the Christian vocation was not enough for Schweitzer. One question kept nagging him: “How may I explain, in a rational manner, my ethical conversion and engagement?” His religious vocation led him to search for a rational explication that was ultimately summarized in the above mentioned maxim. It came to him during a boat tour on the large Ogowe river in Gabon. Realising that he was a living being amongst other living beings, realising that all life is one and interconnected, that his individual quest for life, for its continuity and its improvement, is similar to the desire to live that motivates any other living creature, what else could he conclude but that the totality of Life should attest to an infinite solidarity? The concept of Life implies solidarity and thus imposes

ethical obligation at a very fundamental level. The sight of the struggle for life of even low creatures works in your soul in a profound and often silent manner, eliciting a feeling of compassion. Therefore, living a life as Life itself would ultimately agree to is living the ethical principle of reverence for life.

Schweitzer's affinity with the *ahimsa*-principle seems self-evident. And indeed, history bestowed on us unassailable eyewitness testimony of Schweitzer's interest in Indian spirituality. In 1923, a certain Charles Freer Andrews met him in England. Andrews himself was one of those who travelled, not as a tourist, but rather as a servant, eager to learn and ready to help. In 1904, he stepped ashore in Bombay, lost his Christian heart without ever losing his Christian faith, wrote, lived and worked with the people there, and died in 1940 as a devoted friend of Hinduism. Rabindranath Tagore was his guru, Gandhi was his comrade. When he came by accident to meet Schweitzer in London, Andrews immediately captured Schweitzer's profound *ahimsic* spirituality.

As we went to the railway station, on a very slippery and frosty morning— the snow having partly thawed — I witnessed with my own eyes an example, which revealed to me how truly he carried out in everyday life his own philosophical and religious ideals. We were carrying to the station, jointly, his German knapsack on a stick. He was holding one end of the stick and I was holding the other, the knapsack hanging down between. Suddenly, as I was anxiously fearing that we might just miss the train which was approaching the station, he pulls himself up with a quick movement, exclaiming "Ach, so!" and I was very nearly swung round by the sharpness of the jerk. Then I saw him put down his hand tenderly to the ground and take up a poor half-thawed worm out of a motor-rut in the road. He put it with equal tenderness in the hedgerow.<sup>74</sup>

On this misty morning in London, the spirit of *ahimsa* – in the person of Andrews – and the spirit of reverence for life – in Schweitzer – met and recognized each other.

Let such have been the case. How discomfoting, then, to discover that the same Schweitzer would later assess the *ahimsa*-principle in a rather disapproving manner. How is it possible that the worm-saving Schweitzer refused to embrace the *ahimsa* ideal that he himself practised so sincerely?

In my contribution, I will try to answer this question, and I will reverse Schweitzer's critique. In doing so I will concentrate mainly on Jainism. What flows from Schweitzer's pencil as a disqualification could also be interpreted as a stream of light in which *ahimsa* reveals the profound richness of its hidden treasures. In my view, *ahimsa* is not so much a moral concept, as a habit, a way of life. Reducing it to a moral obligation stemming from a clear-cut religious conviction misses the point. And this is precisely what Schweitzer does. He reduces *ahimsa* to morals and dogma, in order to disqualify it. For him, *ahimsa* is like an idea stuck in the middle, a "half-way concept" that fails to blossom into what should be the ultimate standard of ethics: reverence for life. We will discover that *ahimsa* does not enjoin us to avoid the world (out of self-interest, or otherwise), as Schweitzer would have it. Rather, *ahimsa* asks for an opening up, a window to the world without which no ethical engagement would ever be realisable.

### **Schweitzer's Criticism of *Ahimsa***

In the time Schweitzer studied theology and philosophy in Strasbourg, not much attention was paid to non-Christian religions. These religions were approached in a rather generalized and reductive way. For instance, Schweitzer's intellectual mentor, the neo-Kantian philosopher, Wilhelm Windelband, published a famous article "on the sacred," linking it to the abstract and *a priori* philosophy of Kant. Schweitzer's interest in the spiritual kernel that lies beyond the historical and institutionalized religions, his interest in Life as a universal concept that embraces reality, reflects this neo-Kantian approach. But it was probably his reading of Arthur Schopenhauer that provided him with the

hermeneutic framework and his first entry into the world of India. Through Schopenhauer, himself an incorrigible pessimist, Schweitzer acquired his negative interpretation of Indian philosophy.

This could explain why Schweitzer's *Indian Thought and Its Development* warns the reader right from the start: "What may give offence to Indian readers is my opinion that world- and life-negation in itself is void of ethics and that the *ahimsa* commandment owed its origin not to a feeling of pity, but to the idea of keeping pure from the world, and that it was only later that *ahimsa* adopted the motive of compassion." Schweitzer then softens his disapproval by what might seem to be a friendly correction: "Whatever opinion one may form as to the historical origin of this great ethical principle, it cannot detract from its importance."<sup>75</sup>

Schweitzer interprets the *ahimsa*-principle as the *prohibition* to kill, probably stemming from the ancient Vedic prohibition to intervene in the divine order of the world. But Schweitzer distanced himself from scholars who placed its roots in the Brahmanist tradition. He attributed the "invention" of this principle to the Jain religion, more precisely to Mahavira, the last of the 24 *jins*, one of those legendary masters who managed to break the infinite circle of reincarnation. Mahavira was a contemporary of Buddha, and both ascetics preached *ahimsa*. His argument is simple: the Brahmins practiced animal sacrifice, so how could such a principle which only appears in the margins of their writing, be credible? It cannot. As Schweitzer puts it, in Jainism Indian world- and life-negation first assumes an ethical character. From the beginning, Schweitzer interprets *ahimsa* as a moral rather than a spiritual issue.

Schweitzer's criticism is concerned with what he considered the purely negative characteristic of this ethics. *Ahimsa* is a *prohibition* principle: it does not allow, nor provoke the positive attitude of *compassion* and, therefore, it should be rejected. According to Schweitzer, the *ahimsa*-ideal is

egocentric in essence. Its profound meaning is that of “non-contamination.” It is a method of staying pure in order to be liberated from the *samsara* circle. It prescribes detachment from the world, not engaging with it, in order not to become tainted. This negative approach to life is a profound obstruction to positive compassion. Schweitzer’s view is that even though in history, the practise of *ahimsa* could not prevent feelings of compassion from arising, the theory behind the principle is pessimistic and negative and should therefore be repudiated. Let us first try to understand his analysis, after which we will try to correct and relativize it in the second part of this essay.

### **Compassionate *Ahimsa* as a Historical Paradox**

Schweitzer could not think of the relation between *ahimsa* and *compassion* other than in terms of conflict and opposition. India’s negative metaphysics had stamped *ahimsa* for eternity with a negative aura. Only an ethics of “escapism” could correspond to a world-negating view, and *ahimsa* was such an ethics. When India believes that *true* life is spiritual in character, our real life here and now, our physical and earthly life, is not life as understood in its fundamental essence. Hence, we should not hesitate to conclude that in the house of Indian metaphysics, there is no room for concrete compassion; no room for Schweitzer’s very palpable and concrete principle of reverence for life.

Schweitzer’s firm juxtaposition of *ahimsa* and *compassion* is revealed in what might be considered a historical paradox. Although the doctrine of Hinduism does not allow it, it could not prevent history from opening itself up, slowly but steadily, to an ethics of compassion. From early Brahmanism, via Jainism and Buddhism, right up to Gandhi and Tagore, compassion found its way from within Hinduism, but at the same time against it. Doctrines are, according to Schweitzer, by definition fallible and the demands of Life are stronger than the consequences of theory. From within the negative view of worldly life slowly emerges a profound affirmation

of concrete life as worth living, as in need of help in its struggle against death. But for Schweitzer, this inconsistency between theory and praxis is not a sin! To the contrary, it is a sign of improvement! It is a proof of the rightness of his own ethical-mystical vision.

Did not Buddha himself dare to give compassion the noble place in his spiritual discourses? And did that not mean that he overtly rejected his negative and pessimistic worldview? From that time onwards, step by step, life-negation was confronted with life-affirmation, and pessimism had to make way, timidly, for optimism. *Ahimsa* got charged with compassion, and the apogee of this historical unfolding of ethical maturation was, of course, the Mahatma Gandhi. Challenging traditional Indian philosophy, he had adopted an untouchable baby-girl. He even called her his own daughter. But at the same time, he continued to explain his engagement on the basis of *ahimsa*. That was not a coherent position and Schweitzer interpreted Gandhi's compassionate adoption of the girl as a sign of the truth of his own reverence for life principle. In the battle between a religious concept and the feeling of compassion, the latter would finally triumph. Although he admired Gandhi for many things, Schweitzer rejected his efforts to ascribe his own emancipatory action to the tradition of *ahimsa*.

When we accept for the moment Schweitzer's analysis, we are lured into a disturbing paradox. If *ahimsa* is indeed a guideline for spiritual hygiene, then the argument of asceticism approaches that other, much more familiar principle of untouchability. In both cases, fear of impurity predominates. Both are justified by the metaphysical law of *samsara* that provokes a desire for radical purity. If Schweitzer was right, the directive of "not killing animals" (*ahimsa*) and "not touching the under-class," the outcaste, stems from the same precaution. Thinking through Schweitzer's interpretation of *ahimsa* in this radical way, the political principle of nonviolence, often based upon the *ahimsa*

commandment, appears to be, in itself, a source of rude, social violence. *Ahimsa* becomes then the source of social and moral indifference, and thus the source of violence because there is no violence more painful than the silence of indifference. (Incidentally, *ahimsa* figures as the first of four Brahmanic obligations in the *Yoga Sutra*, while purity is the third; this indicates that in the Indian perception the two are not simply equal.)

In his book on Indian thinkers, Schweitzer criticizes Gandhi for his short-circuiting of *ahimsa* and his political idea of nonviolent resistance. "It is not clear to Gandhi that it belongs to the original nature of the *ahimsa* commandment only to demand abstinence from killing and hurting, and not the complete exercise of compassion," he writes in a rather arrogant tone of voice. And somewhat further on, he continues: "In themselves, *ahimsa* and passive resistance are two quite different things. Only *ahimsa* is non-worldly; passive resistance is worldly."<sup>76</sup>

In a further explanation, Schweitzer even argues that Gandhi's passive resistance is not at all "nonviolent." Gandhi applied this "nonviolent violence of passive resistance" often in a much too vehement and non-communicative way. (He shared this critique with Andrews who wrote a furious letter to his political master Gandhi, after the last had appealed to his followers to burn all western clothes.) The violence Gandhi provoked is, in Schweitzer's eyes, traceable to his effort to conquer the world peacefully on the basis of the unworldly *ahimsa*-principle! And with a simplification he boldly affirms: "All mixing up of what is different in essence is an unnatural and dangerous proceeding."<sup>77</sup> It is, we will later show, precisely this reductive essentialism that blinded Schweitzer to the inherent positive energy of the *ahimsa*-tradition.

Thus, this disapproval of *ahimsa* might have been on Schweitzer's mind as early as that misty morning in 1923 when he met Gandhi's friend Andrews in London. His

gesture of love, after all, was not an implicit tribute to *ahimsa*. It was, rather, a silent lesson to Andrews in the ethics of reverence for life. The peaceful scene was perhaps, in reality, a scene of two conflicting principles. We understand now where his disapproval came from. But did he do justice to Hindu spirituality in claiming moral superiority for reverence for life? I have my doubts. It could be that Schweitzer was trapped by his own prejudices. It could be that you should not reduce religious traditions to essentialist doctrines or dualisms like that of world affirmation versus world negation. It could be that every religion, in its depth, possesses positive ethical resources, even when they are expressed in ritualised asceticism or metaphysical speculation.

### Schweitzer's Blind Spots

World- and life-affirmation, ethical optimism, in short: reverence for life – such is the truth Indian Philosophy could not accept, according to Schweitzer. Blinded by its religious doctrines of purity and enlightenment, it was driven toward asceticism and spiritual egocentrism with moral and social indifference as its inevitable outcome. And if compassion emerged, it was only accidentally, not thanks to religion but in spite of it. Yet, I believe, a more benevolent interpretation of *ahimsa* is possible and necessary – one that not only questions Schweitzer's vision, but also sheds some light on the blind spots in his thinking.

Searching for a critique from an Indian perspective, I stumbled upon an article by Swami Nityaswarupananda. In his article *Schweitzer and Indian Thought*, published in *The Journal of The World Congress of Faiths*, December 1954, he builds his reply to Schweitzer on Vivekananda's interpretation of the *Upanishads*. *Ahimsa*, Nityaswarupananda explains, cannot be understood in isolation from *advaita*, the principle of non-dualism. Schweitzer was right, he explains, insofar as the first step of spiritual enlightenment in India is, indeed, concerned with a dualist concept of the world: man wonders about reality and

considers God, its condition of possibility, as different from his own conscious being. But that is only a first step. In the second step the perspective changes radically: God penetrates all existence as “the one *atman* that lives in the hearts of all creatures.” Schweitzer, being a disappointed pupil of German idealism, would surely reject this form of speculation. For him, it would be a form of spiritualizing reality and thus of justifying escapism. But in so doing, he would have dispossessed himself from the possibility of what Nityaswarupananda considers the crucial third phase: recognition of full identity between the individual self and the divine cosmic Self. This is the uppermost doctrine of *advaita*.

From this doctrine, according to Nityaswarupananda, ethical implications should be derived and explained. “In injuring another, I am injuring myself; in loving another, I am loving myself.” Thus, *advaita*-spirituality calls for self-abnegation. “When a man has become ready even to give up his life for a little insect, he has reached the perfection which Advaitists desire to accomplish; at that moment, when he has become thus ready, the veil of ignorance falls away from him, and he will feel his own nature. Even in this life, he will feel that he is one with the universe.”

If all is one, as Nityaswarupananda concludes, individualism will be the root of all evil. Hatred, jealousy, competition, and all kinds of disruptions and violence stem from the overstressed ego. He who plays at bowls must look out for rubs. Nityaswarupananda hits on the right spot. Schweitzer was indeed a convinced individualist. Only strong individuals, he wrote on several occasions, are able to make the world a better place. Shouldn’t we say, together with Nityaswarupananda, that this Schweitzerian individualist pathos is not very consistent with his own mystical idea of the cosmic unity of all Life?

Nityaswarupananda formulates another point of criticism: *ahimsa* does not only exist as a negative, as in “the

abstention from evil,” as Schweitzer would have it. In Sanskrit, the “a” is not only privative. As in *a-dvaita* (which is *non dvaita*, i.e., non-dualism), the positive idea of unity prevails; and similarly in *a-himsa* the idea of compassion and positive engagement with life prevails. I will come back to this argument later on in this article.

But there is a third correction, and in my view the most crucial one, from Nityaswarupananda’s article. After his rejection of Kant, expressed in his very critical thesis about Kant’s religious and ethical philosophy, Schweitzer was horrified by all forms of theoretical dominance and philosophical speculation. Sometimes you get the impression that this disgust rather threw out the baby with the bath water. The effect is visible in his compendia on the history of ethics, where Schweitzer is blind to the value of imagination, even if it might be spiritual and speculative. He does not even touch upon the possibility that ethical motivation needs imagination, that philosophy or spiritual speculation are not only dry theories about the constitution of the world, but also – and probably primarily – expressions of hope, courage, love, fantasy, engagement and sorrow. Schweitzer misses this point he judges spiritual speculation and philosophy by purely rational criteria.

Schweitzer’s inability to value the imaginative force of spiritual philosophy originates in his academic theological work as an ultra-liberal theologian. In one of his books, he deconstructed what is called the eschatological content of the New Testament. In Greek the word *eschaton* stands for the “end of times,” the moment when the Kingdom of God will replace this sinful and dying world. Of course, this living eschatological expectation was in Jesus’ time illustrated with mythological images, with prophecies, divine experiences, magical prefigurations, and esoteric calculations. Jesus himself, like many of his fellow Jews, believed in the imminence of the *eschaton*. The Gospel cannot be understood, according to Schweitzer, but in the light of this

belief. And that is problematic for us modern readers. After 2000 years we know that Jesus' vision was wrong. He simply adhered to the wrong theory about the world. We should say goodbye to eschatology.

With this radical goodbye, Schweitzer relegated eschatology to the museum of history. That is, he annulled the spiritual imagination. Schweitzer neutralizes the eschatological imagination by reducing it to a world vision, to a theory. This reduction is, as we saw, based on his experience with Kant: no truly ethical motivation can be derived from theory or speculation. Reality does not respond harmoniously to our theories. And thus, the old prophetic dream of a Kingdom in which lion and lamb live together, taken by Schweitzer as a *Weltanschauung*, a vision on the world, and the religious utopia of redemption and recreation, were forbidden to play any role of importance. Reality itself, he preached, should be heard. It should in itself be appealing enough to provoke ethical engagement.

It is the same kind of hypercritical attitude toward theory and the Gospels alike, which Schweitzer developed during his academic years, that continued to be the guiding principle in his books and articles on Indian thought. There are only two options: either spiritual speculation and philosophical theories are imposed from above onto reality (in which case they should be rejected), or, starting from real experience itself, concrete mystical and ethical thinking could give rise to a world affirming vision. Humanity had to wait for the discovery of reverence for life before philosophy and spirituality could liberate themselves from their world- and life-negating attitudes.

We should sincerely doubt this position. Schweitzer does not admit a middle ground. The opposition between theory and reality is problematic. Theories do not stand in front of reality, they are part of it. They are, as many continental philosophers explain, "inventions," creative responses to reality, *imaginary* systems of conceptuality that, even if they

pretend to express ultimate and totalising truths, always show traces of the historical situations in which they were shaped. And thus, even in theoretically “negative” and “pessimistic” worldviews, we will find the force of imagination that lies at the heart of *any* form of ethical engagement.

What is more, Schweitzer’s very normative philosophy of ethics often appears as a paradox, when viewed in connection with his personal artistic talents and aesthetic sensibilities. He was an artist! His love for Bach was a love for a musical form of spiritual imagination. His love for Jesus, who exclaims: *Thou follow me!* motivated him from a distance of two thousand years, and is only understandable by way of spiritual imagination. And yet, curiously, he refuses any role for the imagination in his ethics. (In his notes he once wrote: *I am in fact a materialist* – a fierce rejection of an imaginative approach.) Maybe we should understand this paradox as arising from Schweitzer’s protestant Lutheranism. In fact, he seems to have had an innate reservation toward a prominent role for images, colours and symbols, although his writing style abounds in metaphors. Whatever the case, Schweitzer prefers to adhere to philosophical dualisms – affirmation versus negation, pessimism versus optimism, theory versus practice, and it is unfortunate that he did not reserve a dignified place for spiritual and narrative imagination as a motivational condition in his ethics.

### **Interpreting the Imaginative Force of *Ahimsa***

Like Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, Schweitzer is a critic of ideology, definable as a set of images, visions and convictions. He is, to cite the famous expression of the French hermeneutic philosopher Paul Ricoeur, a “master of suspicion.” According to Schweitzer, religious and spiritual visions of the world hide a difficult truth. Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism promote in whatever form “a world behind this world” and they “mask” the unrealized and unjust character of the real life we should engage with. In this respect, *ahimsa* is only an ideological “tool.”

With Paul Ricoeur, however, we should relativize the pretensions of this criticism of religious ideology. There is no such thing as a pure, true vision of the world, maliciously hidden behind false ideas. The so-called authentic truth itself will, when its time comes, be unmasked as an interpretation, relying on a set of unspoken presuppositions, images, expectations and traditions. To put it differently: we will never get rid of ideology. So criticizing ideology is not enough. We should also take into account its possible stimulating energy for the future of the world. We should develop what Ricoeur called a “hermeneutics of affirmation.” Ideology, i.e., the complete set of theories, visions, narrations, rituals, legends and symbols – is not only a mask, it is also an open door to unexpected possibilities. Especially where the imagination is concerned.

“The symbol gives rise to thought,” is another of Ricoeur’s often quoted dictums. Imagination, theory and speculation: they contain something of a self-transcending kernel. The same religious dreams about the Kingdom of God that, according to Marx, cover up unjust social relations – for instance in the Indian caste system – could just as well turn out to be sources for emancipation. In South Africa, the Scriptures were used by both defenders and opponents of Apartheid. In a similar way, *ahimsa* was used to cast the pariah out of society, but also – and this was Gandhi’s brilliant insight – as an impetus to nonviolent activism in favour of recognizing the pariah as a full citizen. That is why I think Schweitzer’s suspicious reading of Indian thought should be completed with a benevolent interpretation – and with what we could call a hermeneutics of emancipation – of traditional views of *ahimsa*.

In the remainder of this article, I will develop such a rereading. The question in the background is: How can *ahimsa* help us in the world of today? With a nod and a wink to Vivekananda’s three spiritual phases (referred to above by Nityaswarupananda), I think that *ahimsa*’s actuality can

be established in three steps. They are, more or less, enlargements of the threefold correction Nityaswarupananda proposed regarding Schweitzer's criticism of *ahimsa*. That means that I will contemplate further on Schweitzer's spiritual negativism, his denial of the worth of spiritual speculation, and his heroic individualism. Thus, the first step will concern the mysophobia and escapism Schweitzer thought was inherent in the Indian worldview, but which we could also evaluate in terms of a *respectful distancing*. It is only when we achieve distance from suffering, death, and emotive exaltation that we are able to dream of a better world, or of a world that extends the happiness to which it gives birth at times. This leads to the second step: *concrete imagination* (be it even in the form of spiritual speculation). This step turns Schweitzer's suspicion upside down. The third step consists in overcoming Schweitzer's practical individualism. Where Schweitzer valued individual heroism and ethical genius, in a tonality typical of the German romanticism of his time, *ahimsa* invites us to redefine the human subject. It is only in dialogue with the other, in cooperation and humility, that I will be able to discover the fundamental status of my deeper personality. Compassion is not secondary to subjectivity. It is the very condition of it.

### **First Step: Respectful Retreat**

The *Acaranga*, the hagiographic stories about Mahavira based on oral traditions, show us the life of an ascetic who had learned about the eternal wisdom of the *dharma*, the cosmic regularities inherent to life and being itself. Like his Brahmanic predecessors, Mahavira was convinced of the human responsibility in this cosmological system, a responsibility that the *brahmanic* tradition had only expressed and practised in ritualised forms (*rita*). In contrast to them, Mahavira decided to embody his entire life in a kind of ritualization. Instead of sacrificing animals and corn, instead of reciting magical spells and sacred hymns, he transformed his own body into a sacrifice and his entire being into a

continuous spiritual song. Just as the apostle Paul would preach a life of continuous prayer in his struggle for unification with the spirit of Christ, Mahavira lived his life in continuous meditation and ascetic practice. He discarded his clothes and wandered naked, except during the monsoon period, along the endless roads of India. Such detachment – what else could it have been but a scandal to those who tried to live their life in a decent and social way? To those who fought the bitter struggles to survive amidst the rudeness of natural and human violence? What else but violent reactions could he have provoked? Mahavira's ascetic and nonviolent (*ahimsic*) asceticism was irritating. He was beaten, humiliated and tortured by his fellow countrymen. Dogs and wild animals attacked him, insects and fleas covered his body. But Mahavira continued on his way. He did not take up batons or sticks, nor did he throw stones to defend himself; he did not even scratch where he itched. Being detached from the world, he was above the distractions of pain and pleasure. Being extremely vulnerable – no hoods, no clothes, no weapons – Mahavira was paradoxically incredibly invulnerable.

Does this *ahimsic* asceticism typify a negation of life and therefore something unethical, as Schweitzer would have it? The western mind might agree. Does not Mahavira seem to be the embodiment of the conviction that man, through his soul, is a stranger in this world who should negate world reality by concentrating and withdrawing his soul into itself, i.e., into the real realm of spirituality? In his reading, Schweitzer over-accentuates this aspect, linking it to the metaphysical aspects of Jainism in order to reject them. In so doing, he does not consider the silent and maybe secondary possibility of world- and life-affirmation in Mahavira's asceticism.

It is, I think, of great importance that the first line of the *Acaranga*, the anonymous compilation of popular reminiscences, tells us that "the habit Mahavira had adopted was

conforming to the *dharma*.” Ritualising his entire life was a way of restoring and respecting the original order of the cosmos and life. Understood in this way, Mahavira’s radical negation of the world suddenly appears as implying a fundamental affirmation of its *dharmatic order*. How could this be a negation of life? Or should we, if we wanted to follow Schweitzer, not only exorcize Mahavira’s ascetics, but first and foremost its foundation, that is the *dharmatic* vision of the world as such? Are we allowed to do so? Are we allowed to reject the idea that there is a kind of universal order inherent to the cosmos? Of course, we are allowed to do this, but only on the condition that we are ready to accept nihilism and cynicism in return. Schweitzer would not have wanted this. Does his reverence for life principle not precisely imply at least a minimal cosmological order, namely the order that posits that every form of life in its universality strives to continue living and improve life? Is there not, hidden behind Schweitzer’s ethical imperative, his strong belief that such a thing is possible? Could we even think of ethics without presupposing an order to the world in which our ethical actions will be realized? Why not take *dharma* as the Indian expression of this presupposition?

Here, Schweitzer meets Mahavira! The difference between the two concerns their presence in history. Mahavira looks back to the already existing cosmological order, while Schweitzer respects the natural order but, at the same time, looks forward to its improvement. And further, does Schweitzer’s ethics not imply, necessarily, at least a bit of world negation? Improving does require negating a part or some aspect of the existing world. Thus, the relation between the two is like a balance: Schweitzer starts from world-affirmation allowing a form of world-negation (implied by the ethical ideal); Mahavira starts from world-negation allowing world-affirmation, in the sense of respect for *dharma*. In short: reverence for life meets in a mirror *ahimsa*, when it is considered to be a “respectful retreat.”

From this point of view, we can render Mahavira's *ahimsa* asceticism more suitable for our modern world. We should say that the deeper sense of his ascetic retreat was precisely to prepare a space for reality, to allow it to appear, to rediscover its "natural" order, its *dharma*. In contemporary philosophical terms, I propose that Mahavira practiced a form of embodied, phenomenological *epoché*, i.e., putting in parentheses all presupposed knowledge of the world, anything we would like to do that we pretend the world should accept from us. *Ahimsa* allows the world to appear as it is on its own terms. This is the absolute condition for dreaming about the possibility of making it better – i.e., to restore it to what it was originally meant to be.

### **Second Step: Embodied Imagination**

We saw already how Schweitzer, with his methodological dualism, puts the central role of imagination in both religion and philosophy in brackets. In his critique of Kant's ethical philosophy, he had removed the veil of speculation and theory: ethics needs other motivations than critical idealism can provide. In his theological criticism he had reduced Jesus' eschatological beliefs to a theory falsified by history. Imagination could please him neither in its speculative, nor in its religious form. This explains why his reflections on Indian spirituality are immune to its symbolism and imaginative force. It meant, as I will show, missing a source of ethical motivation.

The figure of Jina Mahavira, so central to Jainism, is itself a symbol pregnant with ethical energies. An old manuscript depicts him in the centre of a *samavasaranja*, which is a universal gathering of all living creatures. At his feet, an ox and a tiger dwell peacefully. Akin to Francis of Assisi, Mahavira preaches to human beings and animals alike. You cannot miss the point: this symbolic representation is eschatological in character: Mahavira's gathering symbolises the restoration of the cosmological order (*dharma*).

In religion, the gathering of opposites in the utopia of peace is an archetype. Let me cite some examples from the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Isaiah developed his version of peace between lamb and lion in his messianic dream (Is. 11:6), Noah gathered male and female specimens of all living creatures in his ark (Gen 7:1-9), the speculative philosophy of the Renaissance thinker Nicolas of Cusa defined the divine in terms of a unification of opposite elements (*coincidentia oppositorum*) and, last but not least, Schweitzer himself, in his Lambarene experiment, gathered monkeys, pelicans and humans peacefully together. All these gatherings – imaginary or speculative – are eschatological expressions of the faith that this world is worth living in and potentially a place of peace and harmony.

The “universal gathering,” typical for Mahavira, is like a messianic exaltation of the possibility of worldly harmony. It does not contradict *per se* his *ahimsic* spirituality. To the contrary: his *ahimsa* spirituality is represented as a feast of world- and life-affirmation that is only fully possible after the restoration of cosmic harmony as originally meant! We cannot affirm the world fully as long as it is broken; if we could, that would mean the end of our ethical endeavours to improve it.

In short, when we take *dharma* seriously as the horizon of our understanding of the *ahimsa*-principle, we discover in the practice of asceticism – which Schweitzer interpreted so negatively – a diametrically opposite meaning. The *jin*, the realized soul, he who obeyed the *ahimsa*-principle by his nonviolence and his non-intervention, creates a reality in which he becomes a focal point of orientation and hope. Thus we may conclude that, paradoxically, *ahimsa*, this practice of non-interventionism, turns out to be an imaginative intervention that opens up the hope for a final eradication of all animosity between men and men, between men and animals, and even amongst animals. If ethics is, as Schweitzer surely thought it should be, an active intervention

in the world aiming at the improvement of this world, *ahimsa* – this non-active form of intervention – is much more than simply an egocentric, negative, or pessimistic form of spirituality. *Ahimsa* is in itself ethical, because it stirs our ability to produce utopian dreams and it feeds our hope. Dreaming and hoping – are these not the indispensable conditions for any ethical activism?

### Third Step: Compassionate Self-Discovery

Schweitzer's reconstruction of the development of thought in India endeavours to show that Jainism (like its counterpart Buddhism) sprang from an originally world- and life-affirming religiosity. The ancient Brahmins believed in the total unity of all existing beings. They believed in an original force expressed in the figures of their divinities. From this original affirmative vision the concept of a world soul – *atman* – was derived: all living creatures participated, through the soul, in this *atman*. This transition, according to Schweitzer, meant an opening up of the original affirmative religion. Slowly but surely *atman* became opposed to the material side of existence. It is a mystery, he writes, that the doctrine of the universal affinity of the soul (*tat tvam asi*) of the Brahmins did not lead to a positive, compassionate ethics.

Easy as it would be to turn the doctrine of *tat tvam asi* in an ethical direction, they nevertheless neglect to do it. That man has to see himself in all beings and all beings in himself, they only take as meaning that he must presume in them the same world-soul that he carries in his own breast. They do not demand that by reason of this relationship with them he shall have sympathy for them and show pity toward them.<sup>78</sup>

Apparently, the original belief in the unity of Life did not allow for an ethics of compassion to come to the fore. According to Schweitzer, the Brahmin religion was beyond good and evil. The only possible ethics was one of mystical knowledge: learning the eternal laws of Beings, an “ethics of insight.”

In Jainism the doctrine of the universal *atman* became individualised. Each living creature carries inside its material envelope an inalienable soul that lives there as if imprisoned. The great system that detains it is called *samsara*, the wheel of reincarnation. It is now, through a strict opposition between the individual soul and the material body, that ethics pierces into Indian philosophy. But for Schweitzer this ethics is based only on a negative concept of the world. Each soul should be animated by only one essential desire: to escape *samsara* through avoiding a worldly contamination of the soul. The Jainist-religion offers a complex collection of life's rules and moral directives to make such a deliverance from reincarnation possible, presumably on the basis of the principle of *ahimsa*.

As we have already seen, *ahimsa* should not be put on the same level as the ethics of compassion summarised as reverence for life. The love for animals is, for Schweitzer, the absolute criterion. "*Ahimsa* does not develop, as one might expect, out of a feeling of compassion. The most ancient Indian thought hardly knows sympathy with the animal creation.... It belongs originally to the ethics of becoming more perfect, not to the ethics of action."<sup>79</sup>

But in a curious remark, Schweitzer admits to something strange that seems to echo what we analysed above as the ethics of imagination.

When once the *ahimsa* commandment has become generally accepted, it operates with educative effect. It arouses compassionate feeling and keeps it awake. As time goes on it is explained as arising from the motive of sympathy and is lauded as being behaviour originating in fellow feeling. But that it originally arose from the principle of abstention from action is seen by the fact that it keeps within the bounds of compassionate non-activity and completely disregards help sympathy.<sup>80</sup>

But imagination and pedagogy are not enough for Schweitzer. The feeling of compassion, aroused by *ahimsa* practice, is, he judges, not entirely ethical. Why not? Because it does not lead to concrete action. That Schweitzer

erred on both points – animal ethics and concrete moral action – we will discover in what follows.

Let us first reflect on the question how *ahimsa* – assumed to be pure abstention from the world – could give rise to compassion, as Schweitzer suggests. What else could be the outcome of our reflection than that *ahimsa* means *epoché*, suspension of judgment and of presumed self-sufficiency? *Ahimsa* opens up a space in our perception of the world in which the suffering of other living creatures succeeds in touching our souls. Precisely because Jainism, different from original Brahmanism, believes in the individuality of the soul, it is possible that my feelings of compassion will be aroused after the *ahimsa* exercises have woken me up.

For Schweitzer this is not serious ethics. Serious ethics starts with compassion. But why should it? We could as well maintain that any ethics that originates from compassion is per definition an egocentric ethics. If my soul forms a union with all living creatures, feeling the pain of others is nothing but feeling my own pain. Thus, compassion for the other is fundamentally the same as compassion for oneself.

At this point, we discover that Jainist spirituality inserts, tacitly, a new element into the Indian reflection on moral engagement. The Jainist doctrine of the individualised souls retreating from the world allows us to discover the other living being in its individuality, that is: in its otherness. The otherness of other living beings breaks through the protection I built, or that Life built, around my proper, intimate soul. I am touched, because I discover the other in his difference from me. I am touched by the other, not because he or she is the *same* as I am, as the classical, substantialist interpretation of the *Tat tvam asi principle* wants to have it. The other person is like me. He or she is, like me, an individual soul searching for redemption. The other and I, we form a small community of suffering souls. What we share is our differentiated state of being. So, what is more striking, face to face with this other soul, I finally discover

the individuality of myself. Faced with the other, the still incarnated individual souls of both monks and lay people discover a deep solidarity, the solidarity of primary imperfectness and vulnerability.

The compassion streaming out of *ahimsa* is inscribed, not so much in a kind of spiritual universality of all Living Souls, but rather in a recognition of their shared incarnated condition. It is a compassion of humility rather than a compassion of mastery. But at the same time, the discovery of this “self “ as being imperfect contains the promise of a possible completion and realisation, expressed as the deliverance from *samsara*. Does not all religious spirituality aim for this: to awaken the conscience to the broken condition of all living existence and, at the same time, to become open to its ultimate possibility of realisation? *Ahimsa* is the ethics of solidarity of all broken souls in the light of the possibility of healing and deliverance.

Schweitzer was not sensitive to the ethical value of the *epochal* character of *ahimsa*. Neither was he, as we have seen, sensitive to the symbolic, imaginative aspect of it. His severe description of Jainist asceticism as rude and loveless – disregarding animals, only concerned with the deliverance and redemption of the individual soul – does not correspond to historical reality. It does not, if only because we should not only judge a religion by its professional practitioners but also, and maybe primarily, by the concrete and practical effects this religion works on its laymen. Let us briefly glimpse how the rigour of the *ahimsa* ascetics that follow the example of Mahavira translates into the daily engagement of ordinary believers.

It is well known that many adherents of Jainist spirituality are active in business. Fear of doing harm to living creatures prevents them from working in the fields or from other manual work. But *ahimsa* does not stop there. Because the life of lay people is modelled on that of the religious leaders, albeit at a lower kind of intensity, each year they refresh

their confession, consisting of twelve vows. Mirroring the vow of absolute poverty uttered by monks and nuns, lay people promise, in the fifth vow, not to amass richness beyond certain limits. That means concretely that they promise to put generosity and charity at the centre of their ethics. Contrary to what Schweitzer presumed, this charity often becomes the expression of a concrete and active compassion toward animals: animal hospitals can be found in many Jainist settlements! These are not simply collateral effects of something that is, as Schweitzer would have it, essentially world- and life-negation, if not pessimism.

The actuality of the Jainist *ahimsa* concept probably lies in the discovery of each man's individual, existential place in the world. When Schweitzer stresses time and again that only strong individuals can make a difference in the world, he does not see that the same goes for illumination-searching Jains. Finding your soul in reserving a space for the other is a way of spiritual individualising, of getting strong and focused, and of becoming influential in the world. *Ahimsa* is about being strong enough to live humbly your unfulfilled life in solidarity with the unfulfilled lives of others, but motivated by the hope for the ultimate possibility of redemption. Those who respect *ahimsa* find themselves, which means that they find a form of inner sovereignty.

### **Conclusion: The Silent Sense of *Ahimsa***

At the end of his article, in which he recalls his meeting with Schweitzer in London, Andrews presents a long letter the doctor wrote to him from Lambarene, a few years after their meeting. In the letter, translated from the German by his second nurse Emma Hausknecht, Schweitzer explains his engagement. Perhaps in part because of Emma Hauskecht's poor writing skills in English, this explanation is one of the most unequivocal I have ever read. We should, writes Schweitzer, distinguish between two sorts of Christianity. The first is talkative and theoretical: it is the religion of doctors and scholars. Only a few select people

are able and interested enough to follow their discussions. The other is working silently, simply obeying the call of Christ to do works of love. This kind of Christianity is open to everybody. Being both a theological scholar and a practical philanthropist, Schweitzer was aware that he belonged to both camps. But, he writes, the last version of Christianity triumphed in the end:

Personally I would venture to say this, that I went out to Africa to take up this adventurous and difficult work constrained by Jesus' spirit.... I feel like one who has been conquered by Jesus and who is willing to serve Jesus.... Jesus is the Master of our lives, our Master. It is not the theories we are teaching about Him – this is not the decisive test – but rather with what obedience we are serving Him. *Christianity without words*.<sup>81</sup>

Schweitzer's ongoing adherence to his own religion, even after he criticised it radically to the point that none of its doctrines remained standing, is breath-taking: the ultra-liberal theologian remained at the same time a deeply pious follower of Jesus. Schweitzer discovered that the ultimate sense of religion does not express itself in opinions or visions of the world. The deepest sense of religion is the existential answer a person gives through the ethical transformation of his own will. It was Jesus' spiritual will that impressed, "conquered" Schweitzer and drove him to leave his academic and artistic careers behind. True religion, for Schweitzer, is this silent communication between will and will. True religion is the silent religion that unfortunately and seemingly unavoidably, is masked in history by all kinds of theories, mythologies, world visions, or doctrines.

It is curious, however, that this deeply spiritual, not to say mystical, discovery did not guide Schweitzer to the idea that in all religions and in every spiritual concept such an unspeakable, deep religious truth is waiting to be "heard" and obeyed. In his treatment of the Indian philosophies, and especially of the *ahimsa* concept, Schweitzer plays the role of the severe German professor. He applies his dualist conceptual framework – world- and life-negation versus

world- and life-affirmation – to the question of *ahimsa*, a concept that he contrasts with his own ethical concept of compassion, reverence for life. And thus, the principle of nonviolence is, in the Jainist religion, egocentric, because it is only directed toward individual salvation.

As we have seen, this view is rather limited. What I have endeavoured to show is a different way to understand *ahimsa*, especially when we take into account what Schweitzer himself called his silent religiosity. *Ahimsa* is not a doctrine, that is to say, it is not only a doctrine. *Ahimsa* is a way of life, an existential habit, an intimate flow of consciousness and practical piety. Of course, this attention to the silent, practical impact of religion does not contradict the fact that in the various branches of the Jainist religion, more flexible (Svetambara) and more rigorous (Digambara) modes of observance exist simultaneously. But the ultimate meaning of *ahimsa* is the way it determines man's relation to the world in which he co-exists with other living beings.

I have distinguished three levels of the silent spiritual meaning of *ahimsa* that give it a meaning far beyond the limits of any particular religion or belief. *Ahimsa* is a way of transforming the world into an open space where it can appear without being obstructed by prejudices or strategies of anxious self-defence. In philosophical terms we could call this the phenomenological moment: *ahimsa* is a practical form of *epoché*. Secondly, we have met *ahimsa* playing its role in spiritual imagination, without which no ethical engagement could ever arise in human existence. We could call this moment hermeneutical. And finally, we discovered *ahimsa* doing its work of compassion in the self-discovery of the individual and in the solidarity between all living creatures struggling with their imperfect existential condition. This is the *existential* moment. Respectful retreat, embodied imagination, and compassionate self-discovery – these are the three colours of *ahimsa* that silently transcend the doctrinal shrouds of religion. *Ahimsa* is way of being in the

world and being open to the world. But in this opening up of man to the world and to the other living souls, *ahimsa* is also a way of opening up the world to its most intimate significations and possibilities. Disguised in the language and imagination of Jainism or of any other religion, the deepest sense of *ahimsa* is not a belief, but a faith, a silent faith, precisely the faith that peace between all living creatures is possible after all.

## Part II: **THEORY**

## *Ahimsa*, Nonviolence, and the Practice of Medicine

ROBERT L. HOLMES

*This essay explores the potential bearing of nonviolence on the contemporary practice of medicine. The Hippocratic Oath counsels: “Do no harm,” the core idea in ahimsa. The practice of medicine extends this to treating harms and disorders, as well as to trying to prevent them. In the 1980s and 1990s violence was recognized as a public health issue. A concerted effort to prevent violence would open the door to considering militarism, warfare, and global violence as public health issues as well, and would define a new, challenging, nonviolent role for the medical profession.*

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The emergence of the idea of nonviolence marked an extraordinary step in the moral evolution of human beings, comparable in its potential to transform human life for the better to anything that has taken place in the scientific realm.

The idea did not emerge fully at once, in one time and place, but over centuries in different cultures. In the process,

it was shaped by different social, religious, and ethical influences. The core notion of nonviolence, that of *ahimsa* (literally “non-injury”) occurs in the earliest Vedic text, the *Rig Veda*, and in the later *Upanishads*, but it is in embryonic form there and does not clearly preclude all killing. The still later *Bhagavad-Gita* cites *ahimsa* as but one of many virtues and – if one takes the narrative literally, as Gandhi, for example, did not – was thought to be consistent with waging war. Arjuna, the reluctant protagonist of the *Gita*, is persuaded by the god, Krishna, to fulfill his duty as a warrior and do battle against his relatives.

At roughly the same time as the *Gita*, the counsel to do no harm surfaces in the Western world in the thoughts of the physician Hippocrates and the philosopher Socrates. It appears later – though it is not expressly stated – in the teachings of Jesus, whose commandment to love infuses a positive element into the notion of nonviolence. It becomes no longer merely a counsel to do no harm, but a positive injunction to love and show compassion. In this form it is transformed by Tolstoy into a notion of Christian nonresistance and later by Gandhi and King into the modern idea of nonviolence.

As fascinating as it is to learn how all of that came about, that story is not my primary concern, which is to explore the practical bearing of the idea of nonviolence on the contemporary practice of medicine. For the Hippocratic oath taken by most medical students in the U.S., and a central element in contemporary medical ethics, includes a vow never to do harm, the core idea in *ahimsa*. I shall argue that this should be expanded into a full-fledged commitment to nonviolence on the part of the medical profession.

It will be instructive to begin by looking at the treatment of this notion by Socrates, for whom the imperative to do no harm applies to everyone, not merely to physicians, and whose intended concern extends to everyone, not just those under the care of a physician.



# I

As recounted by Plato, in his dialogue, *Crito*, Socrates, under sentence of death, meets in prison with his friend, Crito, who tries to persuade him to escape, an option Socrates rejects after careful reflection. In a brief passage, whose broader significance has tended to be neglected, Socrates argues that retaliation – returning evil for evil – is never right, no matter what has been done to you. But the passage may be read as advancing the stronger claim that it is never right to harm another person, whether in retaliation or not. Retaliation for wrong suffered is one way to cause harm, but not the only way, since you can obviously harm those who have done you no wrong. Whatever the historical Socrates actually thought – and there are disagreements about the proper translation and interpretation of this passage – this more radical idea, which is the core notion in nonviolence, nonetheless surfaces in this exchange between Socrates and Crito. And it is probably the first time in Western thought that the idea of nonviolence emerges, though not yet fully conceptualized and not explicitly identified as such. To commit oneself to doing no harm is to commit oneself to nonviolence. It is perhaps for this reason that Gandhi refers to Socrates as a *Satyagrahi*, a follower of the Gandhian understanding of nonviolence.

The idea that it is never right to harm another person, of course, prompts the question: What constitutes harm? Socrates does not answer this, but the rudiments of an answer are provided by Plato in Book I of the *Republic*, when he examines and rejects the definitions of justice offered by Glaucon, Polemarchus and Thrasymachus. There Plato reasons (through the words of Socrates) that to harm a person is to make him less perfect – that is, to make him less just. This is central to understanding the notion of harm. You have not been harmed by something – however much pain or suffering it may entail – if you have not been made worse off by it. To be hurt is not necessarily to be harmed. If

we push this understanding of harm further, we can identify various ways in which one can be made worse off. One can be made worse off physically, obviously, if one's bones are broken. And one can be made worse off mentally if one has suffered psychological damage. But one can also be made worse off morally if one has been made a worse person or if one's ability to function fully as a moral agent has been impaired. Socrates, at his trial, as depicted by Plato in the *Apology*, alludes to this third kind of harm when he pleads that, since no one would want to be surrounded by bad people, either he did not corrupt the youth of Athens (as charged) or he did not do so intentionally. Whether it is even possible to harm a person morally in this sense is of course an open question. Not only the Stoics, but much of Eastern thought suggests that it is not possible. Be that as it may, the idea of moral injury – or moral harm, as I would put it – has come to be a recognized category of harm in the treatment of war veterans in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

It is the implications of nonviolence, with its nuanced conception of harm, for the understanding of medical practice that is my concern. For nonviolence is important, not merely for the conduct of the individual, but for more general social practices such as medicine. Put in philosophical terms, I want to explore the importance of nonviolence not as a personal virtue but as a social virtue, one that has the potential to transform one of the most vital of human institutions. My starting place is an issue that has come to occupy a central place among the concerns of American society in the latter phases of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the opening decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, that of violence. I shall then explore its implications for warfare.



## II

Public awareness of violence as a major problem grew out of the turmoil surrounding the Vietnam War in the 1960s and the race-related riots in a number of major American cities. It was not until the 1980s, however, that then Surgeon

General C. Everett Koop declared violence to be a public health issue. That theme, particularly as it applied to youth, was explored by Deborah Prothro-Stith in her groundbreaking 1991 book, *Deadly Consequences: How Violence is Destroying Our Teenage Population and a Plan to Begin Solving the Problem*, and reaffirmed in an extensive 2013 report by the American Psychological Association, entitled *Gun Violence: Prediction, Prevention, and Policy*. These issues have led to heated debate over violence and gun control in contemporary America.

The seriousness of the problem of violence is clear. Nonetheless, many would question whether this suffices to make violence a public health issue of particular concern to the health care community. Earthquakes, hurricanes and floods cause great suffering, and everyone agrees that their victims deserve medical care. But no one argues that physicians should study seismology or meteorology to better enable them to predict natural disasters and thereby prevent or minimize the harm such disasters cause.

It is unproblematic that health care providers are properly concerned with the cure and remedy of diseases and disorders. It is also unproblematic that this concern extends to the treatment of injury. These three – disease, disorder and injury (so long as they are understood to apply to both the mental and the physical realms) – cover all of the detriments to health that are the concern of medicine.

While the treatment of these detriments is unproblematic once they have been sustained (i.e., once the disease has been contracted, the disorder experienced, or the injury sustained), the same is not uniformly true of their prevention. It is accepted that prevention is proper in the case of diseases (for the sake of simplicity, I shall not deal with disorders). For example, medicine has long sought to prevent polio, small pox and diphtheria. And it is accepted that prevention is proper in the case of some kinds of injuries, such as those from auto and workplace accidents. But

prevention is problematic when it comes to injuries suffered as the result of criminal violence – street violence, gang violence, drug violence – and even more problematic when it comes to violence at the hands of the police in law enforcement, the state in capital punishment, the government in military action. To many, the fact that criminal violence is, by definition illegal and violence at the hands of police or the state is legal is a crucial difference.

That, however, is questionable. In the treatment of disease, disorder, and injury we make no distinction as to the cause of the detriment or the status of the sufferer of the detriment. It is irrelevant that violence has human causes whereas polio, smallpox and diphtheria do not. Society already seeks to prevent injuries with direct human causes; the concern with safety seats for children, head injuries from motorcycle accidents, concussions from football, and deaths from drunken driving attest to this. Even in the case of injuries at the hands of others, we make no distinction between the guilt or innocence of the perpetrator or the legality or illegality of their actions. Even those on death row are entitled to medical care. Persons who are engaged in criminal activity when they sustain injury are as much entitled to medical care as their victims; a gunman wounded in a shootout with the police receives the same medical care as a wounded police officer. If we are as willing to treat gunshot wounds inflicted by assailants as we are those suffered in hunting accidents, why should we not be as willing to try to prevent the one as the other? The medical profession has mobilized to prevent diseases. Why not a similar effort to prevent gun violence? The causes of the detriments are different, but that is irrelevant. What is relevant is whether the harms are preventable. At the minimum, this means finding ways to combat violence, not simply as a criminal phenomenon, needing police, SWAT teams, courts and prisons, but as a public health issue.

To do so opens the door to considering militarism, warfare, and global violence as public health issues as well.

People already recognize the importance of a global perspective on economic and environmental issues. The same needs to be done with violence. The mission of health care providers has already been extended beyond the narrow “Do no harm” of the Hippocratic oath to the prevention of disease, disorders and accidental injuries. It needs to be extended, I contend, to the deliberate infliction of harm and injury in the social and international spheres as well.



### III

The starting point in developing such a perspective is to reflect upon what Prothro-Stith calls an ideology of violence – or as I would put it, a culture of violence. The U.S. suffers more than 31,000 homicides per year, and homicide is the second leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 15-34; the average child witnesses 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on TV before finishing elementary school. Added to this is the upsurge in popularity of violent video games and brutal mixed martial arts competitions. PG-13 films reportedly now contain more violence than R-rated films. In our society, thousands earn their livelihood in military industries, nearly 2 million serve under arms, and colleges and universities – and many high schools as well – provide military training for young people in the form of ROTC. On top of that, organized American military violence has taken a toll on countless persons since WWII – possibly hundreds of thousands in Korea, more than two million in Vietnam, hundreds in the attacks upon Grenada and Panama, and thousands in the Gulf, Iraq, and Afghan Wars. Thousands of Americans have themselves suffered injury and death in those conflicts, including many who have suffered lasting psychological damage. If one accepts the argument that we should regard interpersonal violence as a public health issue, there is no apparent reason why we should not regard military-related violence as a public health issue as well.

Consider weapons production and sales. Corporations profit from the manufacture and sale of war-fighting weapons to other countries, and thousands of Americans make their livelihoods working for them. But many of these weapons are used to harm and kill people in conflicts abroad, sometimes in conflicts in which both sides are using American weapons. Even where international conflicts are not involved, many governments use those weapons (as well as training provided by the U.S. military) to repress their own peoples.

Weapons production and sales should be regarded in the same light as drug production and trafficking. We do not regard it as a justification for drug-related violence that the livelihoods of peasants in Peru, Southeast Asia, or Afghanistan depend upon the cultivation of coca plants or poppies. Why should it be relevant that many Americans make their livelihood in the production of weapons? If anything, what morally relevant dissimilarities there are weigh more heavily against the weapons trade than against the drug trade. Drugs at least are not intended to kill people. They are voluntarily chosen (unless or until addiction takes hold), their effects sought by those who use them. Weapons, on the other hand, are for killing. Those they are used against do not consent to be harmed or killed.

It is roughly the same group of Americans, namely, young people, who are both the instruments of military violence and the victims of interpersonal violence. More specifically, it is young males who not only predominate overwhelmingly as both perpetrators and victims of gun violence but who also predominate in the infliction of military violence and the deaths and casualties it entails. Indeed, young males might fairly be said to be one of the groups most discriminated against in American society. They are required, upon pain of a \$250,000 fine and five years imprisonment, to register for the draft at age 18; required to train to kill other human beings once in the military; and required, if

ordered to do so, to kill other human beings, whether or not those others have wronged them and whether or not they have any real understanding of the issues for which are required to kill. A medical profession that has scrupulous safeguards governing informed consent in the case of medical care should be concerned that young people are led with but the flimsiest of consent to commit themselves to killing and risking being killed if and when commanded to do so by others.

What toll this takes on our youth we do not know. The long-term effects of killing on those who do the killing are not well understood. This is where our earlier discussion of harm is relevant. Clinicians are just now coming to recognize “moral injury” (or moral harm, as I would prefer to put it) as a detriment to health. Mental harms affecting one’s capacity to function fully as a normal person have long been recognized in the form of what was once known as “shell shock” and more recently as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). These have primarily been associated with feelings of fear borne of life-threatening wartime situations or a sense of loss over comrades killed in combat. Moral harm is narrower in scope. It is rooted in guilt felt by many veterans for the killing they have done or helped to promote or, in some cases, failed to prevent. “I am a monster,” a former Marine Captain is quoted as saying, regarding his sense of responsibility for the deaths of two Afghan teenagers, even though he did not personally shoot them.<sup>82</sup> Whether or not participation in systematic harming and killing in fact makes one worse as a moral being (hence harms him in Plato’s sense), or simply makes one think that he is morally worse, is immaterial. In either case the person has been harmed. The effects of bullets and explosives are well known. Under similar conditions, they cause the same harms to anyone they are used against. Moral harms, on the other hand, are in part a function of a person’s sense of right and wrong. And this can vary from person to person. What is devastating to one person may be brushed off by another. But this simply

means that the resultant harms may be more difficult to predict, and their prevention more of a challenge, than in the case of many other harms. It does not affect the severity of the harms. Nor does it mean that the prevention of such harms, or their remedy once sustained, should be of less concern to medicine than harms and injuries from other causes.



#### IV

It might be objected that while we properly feel outrage at criminal violence at home and aggression and terrorism abroad, we should accept the use of military force in our name. As a democracy we have elected officials who set policy, and the military is an instrument of that policy, defending the country and promoting its interests. Aggression and terrorism, on the other hand, lack the sanction of duly established authorities. It is not merely the legality of military violence that is relevant but the fact that it is legitimated by well-established democratic processes. To oppose such violence is to subvert the very foundations of a free society that make the practice of medicine possible.

This objection is a strong one and cannot adequately be met short of a detailed examination of what is and is not legitimated by democratic processes, which I cannot undertake here. I shall only try to establish the relevance of the broader context in which medical practice takes place. I shall do so by means of three examples: torture, capital punishment, and the role of combat medics. These examples, I should say in advance, do not fully answer the objection, but they show, I believe, the importance of examining the issue from a broader perspective than the objection represents.

Torture, as inflicted by states, frequently is practiced with a physician in attendance. The aim is neither to restore health nor to prevent harm but to ensure that the victim is not inadvertently killed. The point of torture is to inflict excruciating pain, often with a view to extracting

information, and one can do that only so long as the victim lives. Torturers (unless it they are torturing unto death) try to inflict pain up to – but not beyond – the limits that the person, as a living organism, can endure. And where that line is to be drawn is a matter of professional medical judgment.

One might argue that it is the job of the physician to preserve human life wherever possible, regardless of the context and the uses to which the efforts to that end are put by others. But while there might be some contexts in which that is the case, it cannot be the case with regard to torture. For there the physician is a participant in a practice whose ends – the infliction of harm and suffering – are contrary to everything the medical practice stands for. If the Hippocratic oath means anything at all, it means that the physician's professional expertise should not be put in the service of inflicting harm.

In the case of capital punishment, the procedure is legal and more widely accepted than torture. Its aim is not to inflict unbearable pain, but to cause death, and in some jurisdictions even to do so as painlessly as possible. If a physician is present to pronounce death (or if the heart is still beating, to convey that the execution is not complete), then the physician is a participant in the process. And the process – stripped of its euphemistic characterization as the administration of justice – is normally the deliberate nonconsensual killing of a healthy person. Even if the condemned attempts to kill himself prior to execution, he is given medical care (whether he wants it or not) to preserve his life.<sup>83</sup> The aim is to keep the condemned alive long enough for him to be executed. The state not only wants the condemned person dead, which it could achieve by confining him or her until natural causes bring that about; it wants him dead because it has caused his death. It is the killing that is important. Otherwise he is deemed to have cheated justice.

A third and more problematic case is the provision of medical care to wounded combatants during wartime. Again, so long as one concentrates only upon the detriments sustained, and focuses narrowly upon the role of medical health professionals in helping to restore health, this case clearly belongs under the heading of restoring health. But if the context in which medical care takes place is relevant – as with torture and capital punishment – then it is relevant here as well. The use to which the medical care in question is put is to enable combatants, where possible, to resume fighting. Medical personnel are a part of the prosecution of a war effort. This, it should be said, in no way detracts from their personal dedication and sacrifice. They often display extraordinary courage in the face of extreme danger in what is often a selfless devotion to caring for the war-wounded. Even Gandhi was an ambulance driver in the Boer War. The differences between the practices of wartime medical corps and medical personnel involved in torture and capital punishment, in other words, are significant. But they are similar in one respect. In each case the provision of medical care takes place in the context of an activity whose moral status may be very different from that of medical care considered in abstraction from that activity. Warfare is the organized, systematic use of military violence to harm and kill people. Even if one thinks some wars are justified, many wars are not, and if they are not, then the contribution that medical personnel make to their prosecution arguably is not justified either.

The preceding, of course, presupposes that torture, capital punishment and at least some wars are wrong, and there has not been space to defend those judgments. My point only is that it is at least an open question whether the provision of medical care, which is good in itself in isolation from the broader context of which it is a part, is justifiable when it makes the provider a participant in a morally unjustified practice. The context in which the delivery of health care takes place is always relevant. Human beings are

harm or killed on a massive scale in warfare. If we spare no effort to restore them to health when we can, why should we do less to stop them from being harmed in the first place?



### V

What are the implications of this for medical health professionals? In answering this, it is instructive to look at the case of so-called “holistic” medicine, or holistic health as it is sometimes called. Two features of holistic medicine are, first, that it seeks to preserve and promote the overall physical and mental well-being of persons (as opposed, say, to merely helping them recover from disease and injury), and, second, that it considers the patient as a whole person, not simply as an organism afflicted with a certain ailment or suffering broken or damaged limbs or organs.

The transformation of medicine around the notion of nonviolence would accept both of these features of holistic medicine, which go hand-in-hand with one another. If medical care is concerned with well-being, understood more broadly than simply the restoration of health, then it requires that one consider the patient as a whole person, set in a social context whose institutions and practices affect well-being. It also requires that one consider the prevention of harms to those who are not yet patients but who are caught up in the sweep of policies and practices that by their nature are far removed from the conventional concerns of medical practitioners.

The view I am proposing adds an additional component. It requires that medical health professionals also think of *themselves* as whole persons, and be prepared to consider the ways in which their actions viewed in a larger social and global context bear upon the well-being of others, including those whom they may never see. It requires that they look beyond the immediate effects of those very specific acts of health-care delivery that they perform when on duty as medical health professionals. As Gandhi said, immediate

effects are often misleading. Doctors and nurses are persons first and medical professionals second. They are morally responsible for what they do. The policies they support may have vastly greater effects upon health and well-being the world over than the particular acts they perform for individual patients. What precisely those broader practices are and how they should be evaluated cannot be answered in the abstract and may vary for medical health professionals in different societies and in different contexts. It means only that this is always a relevant consideration, and that responsible health-care requires that one be prepared to consider it.

The conception of medicine I am proposing might be called contextualist medicine, meaning that health care delivery is viewed in as large a context as has a bearing upon the health and well-being of persons wherever situated. It does not ask the impossible of medical health practitioners; it does not ask them to assume responsibility for the effects of policies and practices over which they have no control. It does, however, ask them to consider whether they are participants in practices or policies that result in preventable harm or death irrespective of proximity and geographical or boundaries.

Finally, I would urge that this conception of contextual medicine recognize nonviolence as a central value, and that the study of violence and nonviolence – not only at the interpersonal level, but at the international and global level as well – be made a part of medical education. For medical practice by its nature is the antithesis of the use of violence. Prothrow-Stith proposed programs in nonviolent conflict resolution for the prevention of violence among adolescents. We need to recognize that education in nonviolence is no less important in the case of international and global violence. There is a seamless set of concerns that grow out of the core concerns of medicine.

As an institution, medicine is the antithesis of the military. Military training, stripped of the rhetoric surrounding it, produces specialists in killing and causing destruction. That is its primary function; the occasional use of those specialists to provide disaster relief or help in “nation building” is ancillary. The training of medical health professionals, on the other hand, is the creation of specialists in the restoration and promotion of health and well-being and the prevention of unnecessary harm and death. These two functions are diametrically opposed. As the concept of violence is at the heart of military institutions, nonviolence, with its core notion of *ahimsa*, should be recognized as central to medical practice.

Such a perspective would revolutionize medicine and make the study of violence and nonviolence part of medical education and, indeed, of public education as well. This, to be sure, could be achieved only over time, for in the end it is an issue not only for the practice of medicine but for society as a whole. But steps taken today, however small, can gradually make possible larger steps by others later on. Viewed in its broadest light, nonviolence fosters a concern for the well-being of persons the world over, and beyond that, for the future of humankind, and in so doing is part of an ongoing historic process that began with the notion of *ahimsa*.

## *Ahimsa: Spirituality for an Evolving Human Consciousness*

GEORGE PATTERY, S.J.

*Taking the act of Pope Francis kneeling at the feet of a Muslim woman and washing and kissing her feet as its point of departure, this essay attempts to argue that ahimsa is a new way of relating with “the other” and a different way of exercising power in a pluralistic world. Ahimsa’s dynamic is not a narrow “spiritualism,” but a scientifically evidenced and historically tested heroic tool that is accessible to all and empowering for all. It is the mark of new consciousness of an evolutionary process that is both political and mystical at the same time.*

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I cannot forget the image of Pope Francis kneeling at the feet of a Muslim woman and washing and kissing her feet.<sup>84</sup> With that one act he became an icon of humility and of a new way of relating in a pluralistic world. Rather than playing the role of supreme authority, he chose to be a humble servant. This simple act demonstrated both a new way of

relating to the Other and a different way of exercising “power.” It was an act of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* is a new way of relating with people and the world around them, and it is a different way of exercising power. This, to my mind, constitutes the essence of spirituality for evolving humankind. Taking this as the point of departure for my paper, I will try to highlight *ahimsa* as a new way of relating and as an alternate way of exercising power.

### **1. *Ahimsa*: A New Way of Relating**

The spirituality of *ahimsa* stands for a new and ever-refreshing way of relating with oneself and the other. The true foundation for such an approach can be traced back to the evolutionary process of the creation.

#### **1.1. An Evolutionary Foundation**

Astronomer Adam Frank writes:

In the beginning there was a single geometrical point containing all space, time, matter and energy. This point did not sit in space. It was space. There was no inside and outside. Then “it” happened. The point exploded and the Universe began to expand. The Universe had a temperature of 100 billion degrees at this point and was so dense that a single teaspoon of cosmic matter would weigh more than a thousand tons. As the cosmic clock ticked off the instants, expansion continued to stretch space, and with it the particle-photon sea thinned and cooled ... protons and neutrons collided and combined to form nuclei of light elements such as helium and lithium ... this cosmic nuclear furnace stopped just three minutes after the Big Bang when the universe dropped below the temperatures and densities at which nuclear reactions can be sustained.... After 300,000 years of expansion and cooling, negatively charged electrons were moving slowly enough to get caught by positively charged protons.... One by one a hierarchy of cosmic shapes was born. Galaxies appeared first. Then clusters of galaxies were swept together by their mutual gravitational pull ... gravity alone constructed a cosmic architecture that is filamentary and beautiful... [But] the universe is also composed of tremendous quantities of something else, that something that emits no light. This “dark matter” constitutes the

majority of mass in the universe ... it is dark matter... that sculpts the large scale structure. The visible galaxies we see strewn across space are nothing more than strings of luminous flotsam drifting on an invisible sea of dark matter.<sup>85</sup>

We are also told that,

the universe is about 13.7 billion years old with a future of billions of years – about 100 trillion years – although the sun will die out long before then. Our own galaxy, one among the billions of galaxies, the Milky Way, consists of 100 billion stars and stretching about 100 thousand light years in diameter. This amazingly fine-tuned universe narrates its story through us the humans; in us the humans, the universe is coming to consciousness. In this thoroughly dynamic, excitingly evolving universe, the guiding principle – call it God or the Spirit – is the within and the ahead, leading us to fullness. In this magnificently evolving universe, humans like mammals, have existed on earth for a relatively short time, only about 0.04 percent of the earth's 4.5 years of existence.

Through greater complexification and emergence of new forms, however, life increased and multiplied. Philip Clayton writes: "Once there was no universe and then, after the Big Bang, there was an exploding world of stars and galaxies. Once the earth was unpopulated and later it was teeming with primitive life forms. Once there were apes living in trees and then there were Mozart, Einstein and Gandhi."<sup>86</sup> Commenting on this process, Ilia writes: "From galaxies to Gandhi, emergence may be a way the Big Bang repeats itself as the universe continues to unfold. At some point evolution reaches a reflexive state that generates the idea of evolution, the point of Homo Sapiens – that we know. We are evolution become conscious of itself."<sup>87</sup>

In this long, winding and exciting journey of evolution, everything in the universe is "genetically" related; the universe is bound together in communion, each thing with all the rest. According to Brian Swimme: "The Universe shivers with wonder in the depth of the human."<sup>88</sup> We are fundamentally interconnected and interdependent. In this world, we humans are neither superior nor the centre of

the universe, but we are part of a web of life; by nature we are interconnected. To be is to be related. Three characteristics, according to Ilia, define the systemic evolution. Firstly, being is intrinsically relational and exists as unbroken wholeness in a system. Secondly, the system is in movement – holon-movement – and is a dynamic reality (a whole that is part of other wholes). Thirdly, as reality is in movement and in relationship, it manifests endless depth. Reality is not exhaustive; reality is beyond us. Wholeness, relationality and depth characterize the evolutionary system. Relationality, mystery and evolution form the new trinity of reality we call God.



## 1.2. Relatedness is our Way of Being.

Quantum physics teaches us that what we think of as matter is actually the manifestation of energy; quantum is a lump of energy manifesting out of fields of energy. What is seen is sometimes waves and other times photons. Matter reveals itself as electron-wave when observed; otherwise its options are open. It manifests itself *as wave* when observed and when a relationship is established. This shows that we do not live in a deterministic universe, but in a participatory universe, with no distinction between the process of observation and what is observed; no line between subject and object. Everything is in continual dialogue. Only what can be observed and what is in relationship can be known; we are actors, not spectators. We are invited to new discoveries and surprises. Our relationship to the creator would imply a call to observe, to be related and thus to discover what one is meant to be; to be part of a large whole, to be the Whole; to be part and whole at the same time.

Biology gives us further insights into the process of evolution. It speaks of integrated wholes, inseparable webs of relationships. Living organisms are open systems, feeding on a continual flux of matter and energy; the physical world is relational. According to Delio:

Everything in the universe is “genetically” related. The universe is bound together in communion, each thing with all the rest.... We live in interwoven layers of bondedness. The world is not a “machine” but an integrated whole, which means the network of phenomena that compose the stuff of the universe is fundamentally interconnected and interdependent ... the interconnectedness of life in our universe means that we are part of a web of life. Integral systems tells us that our universe is thoroughly interconnected, so that even our own being is not our own. Reality by its very nature is interconnected.<sup>89</sup>

Relationship is not just a quality of being; it is being. To be is to be related. This realization alone should interrogate our consumerist life-style that plunders the earth instead of relating to it.

The inter-related and inter-dependent feature of all that is in this universe means that in relating to one another and to the universe we need to develop a caring relationship; a relationship that does not violate the whole. Similarly the holographic feature of all that is in the universe implies that each one contains the whole and that one cannot violate the individual without violating the whole. It is through a nonviolent attitude toward the whole and the parts that we find access to the mystery of life and of the entire creation. This is the sure foundation for *ahimsa*. It calls for an integral attitude toward life and the totality of creation.

### 1.3. Historical Experiment

From a historical point of view, in recent memory, it is the Gandhian experiment with *ahimsa* that testifies to the operational success of *ahimsa* spirituality.

Gandhi was critical of modern civilization; however this should be located within his vision of the larger purpose of life – namely the realization of God. It is through actual engagement with the world and through a nonviolent pedagogy that one attains perfection: not a world-negating perfection, but one that is in constant struggle in the world. Modernist theories of development tend to curtail this holistic

vision by disrupting the holon movement, and by denying the organic growth of all. Hence Gandhi talked about development that is based on the *swadeshi* (rootedness in the local) principle.<sup>90</sup> Rooted in the here and now, each one and each nation moves ahead in an ever-widening oceanic circle, where centre and periphery are everywhere. According to Gandhi:

In this [*swadeshi*] structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle for which they are integral units.<sup>91</sup>

The outer circumference in this design would not wield power to crush the inner circle but would give strength to all within and derive its strength from it. Machinery will not displace human labor nor concentrate power in a few hands. Gandhi wanted India to strive for this ideal, and come in to her own, rescuing the weaker section of the earth from the exploitation of modern civilization and from the narrow concept of independence. In this *swadeshi* model of many villages forming an ever-widening circle, Gandhi saw the ancient civilization coming alive through its traditions. It preserves its inter-connectivity and inter-dependence in this ever-widening circle of relationship. To Gandhi therefore the kind of development that one chooses provides the hermeneutical key for understanding and advancing life in its integrity. *Khadi* (hand spun cotton) and the *charka* (spinning wheel) represented this model of development. It is the model of glo-calization (instead of globalization). The *charkha* provided him with a tool for productivity at one's leisure and in one's surroundings. It shifted production from the factory to the home; it re-located the producer in his or her surroundings. In one stroke, the *charkha* connected him with

ancient traditions and enabled individuals to be independent. It was a way of empowering the masses and introducing a new concept of cooperation. It was a way of life that respected life in its totality.

Today many are rediscovering Gandhi as a prophet for the age of the communication revolution. Interestingly, modern means of communication find a parallel in Gandhi. Kulkarni argues that universal connectivity leads to the emergence of new communities in virtual space, transcending the barriers of race, religion and nationality; social media in which new friendships blossom each day; participatory democracy at international, national and local levels; steady progress toward inclusive development within nations giving rise to the real possibility of poverty becoming history throughout the world; trans-border collaborative scientific research; new tools to promote and preserve the heritage of arts, culture and indigenous knowledge traditions; the promise of new technologies to arrest and reverse the enormous damage wrought on the environment – all these changes prove how the internet is promoting the “*khadi* spirit.” For they will mean transition from globalization to glocalization, from centralization to decentralization; from power and prosperity in the hands of a few to many; from prosperity defined purely in material terms to that which gives primacy to the richness of culture and ethical values; from unhealthy competition to healthy cooperation; from an exploitative attitude toward nature and its resources to an attitude of harmonious co-living.<sup>92</sup>

It is assumed today that the disconnect between economics and ethics which is dominant in the market-driven economy (since the colonial onslaught conquered distant markets) will eventually be redressed with the new technology. Like *khadi*, the new technology should enable individuals to determine a mode of work/production that is locally rooted and enhances one’s goal in life. The new technology augments the exercise of freedom without

distancing one from his or her immediate surroundings, and yet it is capable of connecting with the rest of the world. The new technology's connectivity is the true meaning of inter-dependence. To see oneself in the web of connectivity from the origins to this day and to see oneself in holistic movement toward greater evolution is to retrace the true meaning of *ahimsa*. Like the *charkha*, the new technology will be an empowering tool for everyone to be self-sufficient and at the same time to connect with one's surroundings and traditions.

For Gandhi, development is aimed at *sarvodaya* (development of all) and *antyodaya* (development to the last end). Development is development when it cares for all. *Antyodaya* could also mean development that takes into account the end or purpose of life – development to the end – a never-ending process. Connecting *sarvodaya* with *antyodaya*, one could speak of a development that is interconnected, respecting wholeness and aimed at advancing the original intent of all creation. *Antyodaya* as “development of the last” or to the end could signify that the end-purpose of all needs to be taken into account in any model of development.

The Gandhian perspective is centered entirely on *ahimsa*. Rather than limiting *ahimsa* to the spiritual realm, Gandhi attempted to redefine economics, politics and religion from the point of view of *ahimsa*. This is unique in the history of the world. Viewed from an evolutionary point of view, *ahimsa* is an interactive perspective that is all embracing and at the same time ever-growing into higher consciousness. That means we can always grow more, further, higher, and deeper in *ahimsa*. In “Evolutionary Enlightenment” there is no final resting point – it is about infinite becoming forever. *Ahimsa* is the future of humanity as growth in inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of “part and whole” in a holon movement.

#### 1. 4. Spiritual Heritage

*Advaita* (non-dualistic) philosophy in Hinduism may be well suited to explain the inter-relatedness and inter-dependence of all and thus gives a strong foundation for *ahimsa*. The part and the whole are connected with one another in an *advaitic* relationship – not identical, nor separate, but non-dualistic in its relatedness. Nothing is so dependent as to not have identity, and nothing is so independent as to be its own identity. Such *advaitic* relationship can also explain well the holon movement – part and whole together moving forward. Holon movement implies an integral perspective that defines spirituality as integrity. Spirituality is an integrative way from which nothing is excluded; rather, every aspect of life is perceived in its inter-relatedness. It is an integrative relationship to all and with all, respecting the wholeness of everything, beyond the dualistic concept of spiritual and non-spiritual.

The major religious traditions in the world essentially propagate an integral view of spirituality; in and through the actual historical development, however, the religions tend to promote binary thinking of body-soul, this world-other world, spiritual-material, pure-impure. Genuine spirituality will be of *ahimsa* as an integrative approach to life and reality. The emerging evolutionary findings seem to support *ahimsa* as the right attitude and approach to relate with the world around us. There has been a consistent Catholic tradition, to mention one instance, which always upheld an integrative view of spirituality. Karl Rahner, the well-known Jesuit theologian observed: “God is not merely the one who as creator establishes a world distant from himself as something different, but rather he is the one who gives himself away to this world and who has his own fate in and with the world. God is not only himself the giver, but he is also the gift. God is the core of the world’s reality; the world is the fate of God.”<sup>93</sup>

In the Seventh Chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, it is said:

I am the taste of living waters and the light of the sun and the moon. I am OM, the sacred word of the Vedas, sound in silence, heroism in men. I am the pure fragrance that comes from the earth and the brightness of fire I am. I am the life of all living beings, and the austere life of those who train their souls. And I am from everlasting the seed of eternal life. I am the intelligence of the intelligent. I am the beauty of the beautiful.

There seems to be agreement among the wisdom traditions of the world on the inter-relatedness of creation and the immanent and dynamic presence of the divine in creation. Dichotomous thinking, which has crept into religious thought, has often deviated from this tradition and weakened an integrative approach to life.

From the scientific evolutionary point of view, from the historical applications and from the development of religious thinking, *ahimsa* – inter-related and inter-dependent way – is emerging as the *sine qua non* of living; it is not just a spiritual outlook but an essential and inevitable way of being on this earth. That makes *ahimsa* a genuinely spiritual tool - to be respectful of all and everything.

## **2. Ahimsa: A New Way of Exercising Power**

There is a revolution underway all around us. In corporate set-ups, university circles, community leadership groups and in families, change is occurring around the ways in which we, as a society, approach the subject of our relationship to the world around us. People are seeking new and better ways of relating, of integrating work with their own personal and spiritual growth, of relating to the environment in a healthy way. People are seeking to combine the best elements of leadership based upon *service to others*, as part of an exciting concept called “servant leadership.” It is influenced by the profound thinking of Robert K. Green, who has come to be known as the grandfather of this movement.

Servant leadership is based on the principle of caring for people and the earth; the so-called “more able” people supporting and serving the “less able,” to help people to grow healthier and freer. Everyone helps everyone. *Ahimsa* enshrines this servant model of leadership. Herman Hesse’s celebrated novella, *Journey to the East*, lays the foundation for a new concept of power. Real power consists in being connected with all and at the service of all. It is basically a nonviolent and loving relationship with all. Respectful tolerance of the limitations, learning styles and temperaments of one’s followers marks servant leadership. It implies that the focus is not on what one is at the moment but what one *can become*. *Ahimsa* believes in the capacity and capability of the other to grow into freer human beings. Secondly, *ahimsa* in relation to the exercise of power admits that one does not need to get it right the first time; people can seek opportunities to debate, to discuss and discover new ways. This provides for creative expression, openness and growth at both personal and collective levels. *Ahimsa* turns out to be a creative tool in exercising power. Thirdly, both in servant leadership and in *ahimsa*, there is a conscious effort to develop the power of persuasion. Gandhi – one of the greatest exponents of *ahimsa* in modern times – was known for his powers of persuasion. In fact, in the pedagogy of *satyagraha* (“holding fast unto truth”), one is expected to develop the art of articulating and presenting one’s point of view clearly and succinctly, but also to understand the arguments on the other side. Being convinced of one’s truthfulness, the nonviolent proponent leaves no stone unturned to convince the other of his point of view. This presupposes trust in the richness of humanity. Fourthly, the *ahimsa* way of exercising power strives to build community. *Ahimsa* is basically inter-relatedness, and this presupposes relationships and thus community. It is a community that includes all, including the environment and the earth. *Ahimsa* is the surest foundation for community formation. It sees oneself as servant of others caring for the greater good.

## 2.1. Power of Powerlessness

In the *ahimsa* way of exercising power, there is a transposition of power. Power is shifted from the centre to the peripheries. Or, rather power is distributed to where it belongs: to each and every one. It was the claim of Gandhi that soul-force is the greatest force and that everyone owns it. By emphasizing soul-force as the real might, Gandhi was re-defining power and re-distributing it to everyone. In soul-force, glory, power and majesty give way to humility, powerlessness, and abandonment. Soul-force theory implies a radical reinterpretation of our way of being and relating. No wonder, then, that Gandhi found such affinity with and admiration for Christ on the cross and called him perfect *satyagrahi* – holding fast unto truth.

From the Christian theological perspective, C.S. Song has interpreted death on the cross as God's politics: "The politics of God was not a politics of the sword but the politics of the cross and suffering."<sup>94</sup> The "politics of power" is exchanged with "politics of powerlessness." Power has shifted its base. There is a transposition of power.

It is the power of mercy, goodness and love that becomes evident in the demonstration of God's reign. His kingdom is to be characterized as the power that does good, manifests mercy, and embodies love. In word and in deed Jesus manifests the transformation of the power that oppresses and exploits the poor and the powerless, into the power that protects and cares for them. This was central to his ministry.<sup>95</sup>

Plenitude of love is found in total emptying. For one who believes in *ahimsa*, there is joy in giving oneself away; there is fullness in emptying oneself; there is hope in the despair of life. Joyful living of the Sermon on Mount, walking the way of powerlessness of the cross, empowered by God's unconditional love poured out on the cross – this is the Christian perspective that is *ahimsa*-centered.

## 2.2. Heroic Way For All

*Ahimsa* is the heroic way. It is the way of the courageous. It is the mark of a heroic leader. It is based on the principle of soul-force – the power of the inner spirit. As soul-force is in all, and everyone can access it, so everyone is a leader and can realize the leadership potential in everything that we do. A heroic leader who embraces *ahimsa* is very much aware that he or she has the soul-force within and that others possess the same. They are also aware that there are violent tendencies in all and in the other. This awareness enables the heroic *ahimsa* leader to be aware and to launch out on new and creative paths of relating. In this search, an *ahimsic* leader is guided by genuine love as soul-force is present in all; the other is engaged in a positive loving attitude. The presence and potentiality of soul-force provides courage to take risks, to launch into the unknown, to be daring. In short, *ahimsa* leader/power is a matter of the within; it springs from within. Who I am makes a difference; who I am is as important as what I do. *Ahimsa* power is one's life; it is a heroic way of being. I am inspired to link soul-force of *ahimsa* with heroic leadership from the life of Gandhi and by re-reading Chris Lowney's *Heroic Leadership*. To believe in *ahimsa* is to appropriate a vision and a pedagogy at the same time. To believe in *ahimsa* is to trust the capability in all and for all. *Ahimsa* is the ancestral grace that we all have; all of us can grow in it and that makes us heroes.

The study of evolutionary consciousness – especially of Ken Wilber, John Haught O'Muruchu, Diarmuid and Michael Dowd – confirms in me the conviction that *ahimsa* is the future and that humankind is evolving definitely toward an *ahimsic* way of living in spite of the violence and disruption around us. The marriage of science, religion and the wisdom traditions in the world is transforming life and world around us. In short, *ahimsa* is the spirituality of the emerging and evolving human consciousness.

## Techno-Scientific Rationality

NATACHA SALOMÉ LIMA and ELIZABETH B. ORMART

*Contemporary bioethics presents us with huge challenges. In this essay we address the specific scenario of Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) from the perspective of nonviolence. The principles and premises of techno-scientific rationality still guide our interventions and actions, and we analyze its influence from a gender-based perspective considering the woman's body as the place where these techniques are performed. Where do women stand? Is being a woman the same as being a mother? The woman's body seems to oscillate between social demands and scientific development, led by the ideal of one of the main theoretical notions of modernity: the ideal of instrumental rationality. We close by considering the contested crossroads between the coordinates of desire, femininity and motherhood from a subjective framework.*

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### Introduction

This paper is about instrumental rationality – its limits and its consequences for the human being, as these are analyzed

by the Frankfurt School. Placing assisted reproductive technologies in the terrain of scientific technological development places the human being as product and object of exchange. From the viewpoint of modernity, technology and the market are intricately intertwined, and in this case, Man is the technological product, while it is the female body that carries the weight of development. The yearning for motherhood often becomes a prolonged submission to practices that in many cases are experimental in character.

Therefore, we find that assisted reproductive technologies present themselves in a bivalent way. On one hand, the woman and her body may be objects of violence because instrumental rationality seeks the means to achieve its goals despite the woman's suffering. On the other hand, it is necessary to find a nonviolent way of living with technology, which means learning how to live with technology but not submitting ourselves to it. We will also use the notion of *labor* developed by Hannah Arendt in order to explore the idea of violence that implies the *fabrication* of a product.

### **Techno-Scientific Rationality**

The ideal of modern science, as defined by Bacon and Descartes, was to succeed in imposing man as "lord and master" of nature.<sup>96</sup>

It is an ideal of domination, appropriation and exploitation that makes nature subject to man. Modern reason was conceived in both the theoretical and practical planes. Being rational has become synonymous with analyzing, organizing, manipulating, controlling, and determining the efficient and safe means, the most economical and productive means. In order to do this, it is necessary to organize the division of human work in the most effective way.

Instrumental reason defines the means to achieve a given end or goal. It is exclusively interested in instruments or tools and it calculates the most efficient way to obtain a certain objective. In the words of Hannah Arendt:

The instrumentality of tools and implements is much more closely related to the object it is designed to produce. The implements and tools of *homo faber*, from which the most fundamental experience of instrumentality arises, determine all work and fabrication. Here it is indeed true that the end justifies the means; it does more: it produces and organizes them. Because of the end product, tools are designed and implements invented, and the same end product organizes the work process itself. It determines the needed specialists, the measure of co-operation, the number of assistants, etc. During the work process, everything is judged in terms of suitability and usefulness for the desired end, and for nothing else.<sup>97</sup>

What is characteristic of instrumental reason is that it is only about the calculation of the means. Instrumental rationality, as the only exercise recognized by reason, has capital consequences for politics in society. Politics is caught in the claws of technocracy and decisionism; in this way, instrumental rationality renders public discussion meaningless.

Aims and values, as they cannot be discussed rationally, are left to the arbitrary decisions of irrationality – the effects of desire – and to the interests of those who have the power to impose them.

The technocratic society feels tempted to request experts to solve all and any issues of concern. This tendency leads to the de-politicization of civil society. Instrumental rationality has found its culminating expression in our technological civilization, which is expressed by the following aspects:

*The realm of logic and formalism:* formal, logical thought determines the conceptual means to establish truth. It is operative, calculating and it establishes close correlation to mathematics. This is the theoretical aspect of instrumental rationality.

*The realm of technique:* technique determines the efficient, physical means with the purpose of concretely achieving an objective. This practical aspect of instrumental reason is what reduces human action to organized technical work.

Mónica B. Cragnolini discusses Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's superman in terms of a passage from the subject of representation to the subject of power:

What does thought become for this representative super-subject? For the superman "to think" is "to calculate," it is a means for the will to power to make secure conditions that will allow the intensification of power. In Heidegger's interpretation, the superman is the inverse of the classical definition of man as *animale rationale*: reason (*ratio*) is now placed at the service of animal nature (*animalitas*) understood to include all urges for power. Representing the will to power implies an inversion of the primacy of the act of representing to the primacy of want: now reason becomes "acting reason." But this representation of want is an "unconditioned" representation, inasmuch as the will to power wants nothing outside itself. From this inversion of the subjectivity of the act of representing into the subjectivity of the will to power, reason loses its hegemony as "pathway" for the being's project. However, we must at this point indicate that that inversion of the idea of animal *rationale* indicated by Heidegger would not exist as it characterizes this animality as the will to power, and the will to power, as the will to calculate: the techno-scientific project's super-reason of global domination. Superman dominates it all in virtue of a "machinalization" of things.<sup>98</sup>

Let us turn to some possible issues that arise in the transition produced in the context of new technical-scientific developments, which we can characterize as principles of reprogenetics.

### **From Instrumental Rationality to Reprogenetics**

The guiding principles of reprogenetics have been produced in the light of instrumental reason. Reproduction of the species is dissected into steps that are susceptible to being addressed by techno-scientific means. The division of work makes it possible to work on different phases of reproduction, stopping, manipulating and redirecting future evolution of the human species.

—*The principle of technocracy*: Human reproduction relinquishes its anchor in the bodies of lovers and becomes

a field of decision-making for reproduction technicians. Technology commandeers decisions made regarding the development of the offspring. From quadruplets, we go on to triplets, then to twins, and now single ongoing pregnancies that are at this moment the result of advances made in *in vitro* reproduction. Did the parents of quadruplets who resorted to science in search of a child wish to increase the number of descendants to this extent? Or did they accept that their wish could only materialize under the terms proposed by techno-scientific rationality?

—*The principle of maximization of the benefits*: If we can have a child, why not choose a healthy one? And why not choose a pretty one over an ugly one? And why not endow it with superior intelligence? Why not choose a tall one over a short one or a thin one over a fat one? We choose the one that rates higher in the characteristics that society values most. And why produce only one? Why not make thousands of perfect children? Why accept defective children if reprogenetics removes us from the universe of indecision and offers us the certainties that are absent in traditional conception?<sup>99</sup>

—*Primacy of the means that cloud the meaning or intention*: If the means are there to have children, why not make use of them? Having children is no longer a matter of choice, but a right; and, as such, it must be demanded for everybody. The issue is not the desire to have a child or the meaning it has for the couple that makes that decision, but that the concept itself changes and transforms if the means are there. Why not use them?

—*The principle of domination*: Domination of nature gives way to domination of Man. The body and its products enter the logic of the market. Assisted reproduction clinics dance to the tune of supply and demand.

—*Human labor transforms the world that surrounds it*: In the words of Hannah Arendt, the human being “fabricates the

sheer unending variety of things whose sum total constitutes the human artifice.”<sup>100</sup> To elaborate its products, *homo faber* faces nature, which involves a certain amount of violence done to nature. In Arendt’s words, this is inevitable: “this element of violation and violence is present in all fabrication, and *homo faber*, the creator of the human artifice, has always been a destroyer of nature.”<sup>101</sup> The violent disposition increases exponentially in the field of the creation of new human beings. If we analyze only the perspective related to the dimension of destructiveness, violence could turn against mankind in the future, endangering the reality of the unique ecosystem that supports life in the universe: our planet. But we should also analyze the perspective introduced by technology in the creation of new human beings when such technology appears as the only viable option for reproduction as a result of infertility. For such technology is a positive opportunity for a couple who want to have children.

We can argue that the debate relating the validity and the relevance of these principles has just started. However, these questions are not so recent. The ideas and actions of the women’s liberation movement beginning in the 1960s moved women to ask these questions themselves and to fight for their own reproductive rights, among other important things; women fought hard to earn rights that society denied them. With these concerns in mind, we would like to come back to these questions.

### **Where Do Women Stand?**

In the context of reprogenetics it is worthwhile to ask ourselves where women stand. Do these techniques constitute a true advance on the subject of reproductive rights? Or are they a new form of suffering and violence – of submission of women to social mandate?

Both the reasons why people resort to technology and the reproductive technologies themselves are very diverse. Let us take two cases.

There are millions of couples that want to have their own children, but cannot, and so resort to new technologies. In this case, reproductive technologies make up for a human flaw; they counteract the deficiencies that burden couples who want to have children and are unable. In this case technology repairs a biological flaw, but as opposed to other biotechnological products it concerns the human couple. This represents a significant difference as it is not the decision taken by only one person; in this case, there are at least two people who, after various failed attempts, resort to a medical specialist who shows the way toward procreation. Couples possibly resort to reproductive technology under the influence of the fantasy of healing their union.

Technology has come to set right what is not working, what cannot be given a solution in the real world, what is sought in Nature but cannot be found. The specialist tries to make up for the biological flaw, but this is not so simple in a human being. Decentralization takes place. Sexuality is not exclusively or fundamentally biological. The human body is wrapped in symbolism.

Medicine approaches the body as real and the subject opposes it. The individual seeks to heal its biological body; the doctor must fix what does not work. There are times that something does not work and must be fixed, but at the same time, symbolic restructuring takes place. In order to give life, both a biological body and a symbolic body are needed. This urge has its roots in biology and finds there its springboard. The biological body and the symbolic body join in the task of reproduction. There are many couples who undergo fertilization treatments and after many failed attempts have children naturally. It is also quite common to hear of cases where couples adopt children and later have children of their own. These cases can be interpreted, after the fact, as a psychological impossibility rather than a biological one.

A gap is produced between the individual that medicine takes as object and the subject that demands the use of technology. A first problem arises in the dichotomy between the Knowledge of science and the Truth of the subject. Science and its ally, technology, claim total knowledge; in the human sphere, these two come into collision with the subject-effect. This de-totalizing effect carries in it the germ of impossibility.

The fantasy of repair (or healing) can enclose the secret to identity. Technology is called in to conceal a biological flaw. Parents hide the biological identity of the engendered child as a way to hide their own failure to produce descendants. Depending on the technology applied, for example, in vitro fertilization with donated sperm or ovum, the child might grow up not knowing the biological material from which he originated. This opens the way to a series of very diverse ethical problems. Where do the rights and privacy of the parents and the donor end, and where does the child's right to identity begin? Is it right from the psychological and ethical point of view to deny a human being its right to know who provided the genetic material that gave birth to him? Is the parents' refusal to tell their children about the treatment they sought the result of fear of revealing their own imperfection, or is it motivated by the fear of losing the love of their children? The latter reason would seem to be unjustified. Very often, parents' silence is allied to their narcissistic longing to show themselves to be perfect. The idealized image of themselves that parents show their children becomes an obstacle rather than a benefit for the children. If the parents' argument is that they want their children to be happy, the road to their happiness lies in showing their faults, not in hiding them. Parents who accept their limitations, who recognize their faults, and respect their children's right to identity, provide a more sound psychological economy for their children than those who present themselves as omnipotent and complete, and who

guard family secrets. These secrets will sooner or later leave symptomatic footprints on those who suffer them.

We have been reflecting on the questions that arise in the context of heterosexual couples. However, these technologies are also available to homosexual couples, which raises further important questions.

We now address the intersection between the maternal function or role, the desire to have a child and the social imperative.

### **Is Being a Woman the Same as Being a Mother?**

Some women want to be mothers with or without partners.<sup>102</sup> Some are single and want to become mothers;<sup>103</sup> others have partners and want to become mothers no matter what their partners think about it. What does a woman want when she seeks to become a mother? What happens when women driven by the social imperative, “you must have children,” resort to new technologies? If motherhood is sought because of social pressure, it is very possible that it is part of a superego demand that will become an obstacle for the development of the function of being a mother. In order for the maternal function to develop, there has to be a desire to have a child. If it is only considered a duty, the child comes from the imperative of pleasure and not from desire. On this matter Dr. Pfeiffer wonders:

How do the imaginaries affect the choice of these practices, as for example the ancient law that dictated that barren women were to be ostracized because infertility was divine punishment? Have the levels of guilt that push women to accept these practices been studied? Is having a child a “biological need” stemming from the primal instinct of reproduction of the species? Or is this another imaginary?<sup>104</sup>

The imperative, “be mother,” becomes radical in women. In our culture womanhood is equated with motherhood. This identification between woman and mother knots together sexuality as a search for pleasure and reproductive sexuality, the former subsuming the latter.

The social mandate seeks to bridge the difference between being mother and being woman. For these identifications to take place a price must be paid. The price of being a woman is having children, or at least one. When a woman is willing to resort to reproductive technology in search of a “product” that man does not give her, she pays that price. As technology develops, the market fixes that price. But, in reality, the price is subjective and incalculable. “Being” is crushed by “having.” The baby becomes an object that can be “bought.” Its value is objective. When the logic of the market takes over, a flattening process takes place that equates subject and object. The logic of the market thus overcomes the logic of subjectivity, consequently affecting one dimension of the subject. The child becomes an object of consumption. Consumption destroys the product by devouring it in one way or another. The only thing that remains as a result of labor, is, as Comesaña says,<sup>105</sup> the labor/workforce which is constantly reproduced, but we can’t talk about models or paradigms. However in the huge exchange market in which the world has become in the frames of capitalism, that continues following the model of *homo faber* (competitiveness and purchasing power), everything could be a product, even a workforce<sup>106</sup> of *animal laborans*, which acquires *exchange value*.

A clear example of this advance/attack is seen in the case of babies chosen by catalogue. The catalogue of semen donors is the guarantee for a custom-made baby. Semen banks have on offer the color of eyes, hair, height, among other phenotypic traits, but also a profile on intellectual capacities, scholastic, artistic and professional activities. When we see that the semen of a Nobel Prize winner is listed as more valuable than that of a regular guy, we can clearly see subjectivity being flattened by the logic of the market. Here again ethical problems arise, and they arise from the use of technology. From what standpoint does one resort to technology?

It is not a matter of simply demonizing the use of new technologies, but rather of making use of the technique in a way that does not desubjectivize us. In order to do that, it is necessary to have certain laws or regulations that govern the use and development of these techniques, as well as clear, well-written consent documents related to benefits and potential risks. Accordingly, we believe it is necessary to develop different tools, such as informed consent, to safeguard the autonomy of the people involved.

### **Informed Consent**

This issue deserves special attention. The terminology used in the informed consent forms includes scientific terminology that the patient does not understand. There are certain practices that are not clearly explained. This is what happens in the case of ovarian stimulation, which means incorporating high levels of hormones that produce an abnormal functioning of the ovaries, originating a greater number of ova than usual.

Ovulation of multiple eggs allows for selection and insemination from a larger number of ova, which translates into speed, efficiency and lowered costs, at the expense of an imbalance in hormone levels and the female endocrinological system. This manipulation of the female body is unnecessary, as insemination could be carried out respecting the production levels of hormones during the menstrual cycle. But this would mean longer wait and a higher cost, and would lower the rate of success. As we can see, the values that are prioritized are those of techno-scientific rationality.

Women are told that the artificial insemination technique has a very low success rate and that they might have to face a series of abortion practices. In this regard, Dr. Pfeiffer asks herself:

What is the psychological situation of a woman submitted to numerous abortions that a series of treatment failures would imply,

especially bearing in mind what it would mean to undergo these types of abortions? How many abortions will be necessary before the practice improves its efficiency?

What does the woman wishing to have a child through artificial insemination give consent to? How much physical and psychological suffering will she have to endure? Protocols for informed consent are far from disclosing the true nature of artificial insemination. According to **María** Luisa Pfeiffer.



Informed consent implies giving information to patients on the serious risks involved, apart from the possible alternatives to this procedure. For example, is the woman informed that the procedures are experimental and of the risks that she runs? Is she informed of the genuine chances of success? Or of other alternatives offered by society? Shouldn't the informed consent signed by the future parents, warn that it is a technique that is still in its experimental stages and that the results will be evaluated 20 or 30 years on, when their children are adults? Shouldn't they be entitled to know that there are no reliable percentages of success, as has been recognized by World Health Organization? That this same organization, in a report written by Dr. Marsdan Wagner, labeled the practice as "experimental, invasive, expensive and involving serious mental and physical health risks for women"? Although it is ethical to experiment on those who accept being subjects of experimentation, it is not ethical to present an experiment as a scientifically proven practice.

This means, among other things, that we still have a very long way to go. Meanwhile Argentina has implemented its new Civil and Commercial Code (August, 2015) which recognizes more power to the autonomy of will. It thus provides, under the scope of Family Law, the possibility of same-sex marriage, assisted fertilization as a third way of filiation, and the right to choose the order of the surnames that a child will have, among other important civil rights. The new Code not only respects the idea of equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex or gender orientation but also incorporates regulations regarding assisted fertilization techniques.<sup>107</sup> Finally, let us present some striking data collected

in the survey “Attitudes Toward Egg Donation,” carried out in 2011 by the CEGYR (Gynecology and Reproduction Study Center). We are eager to continue expanding our approaches and questions.

### **Technological Advance and Gender Based Violence**

We are not speaking out against techno-scientific development. What we seek to do is to question the place techniques have in regard to the subjectivity of people. What is also remarkable is the fact that countries create new laws, as is the case of Argentina, Law No. 26.862, that “guarantee comprehensive access to medical techniques and assisted reproduction procedures, whatever the healthcare coverage the holder has to that right.” This means that from now on, more prepaid health care coverage will have to cover assisted reproduction treatments for all. This can be understood to be a clear social advance on the subject of “rights,” as we said before, for having a child is now a right and the law must guarantee equal access for both men and women. It could also be an opportunity to ask ourselves about the consequences of this type of practice in today’s society. It is known that in Argentina there are, as of this writing, at least one thousand babies born by egg donation techniques. What will happen in the future when these techniques are readily available to wider populations? Up to now it is not obligatory for donors to provide their identity. If donation becomes common practice and becomes widespread, cases of consanguinity in future generations might increase. What reason is there for not providing the identity of the donors? Is it out of respect for their privacy, or is it that relinquishing anonymity would considerably reduce the number of donors and “hurt business”?

It is interesting to once again face the fact that a scientific advance in some way violates the subjectivity of people and more particularly that of women. But can we really speak of violence? If a woman is biologically impeded from having children, and a reproductive technique such as egg donation

“solves” the problem, can we say that something is being violated here? This is an interesting matter because it opens a debate beyond the moral dimension – in other words, beyond what can be considered right or wrong – and it brings us into the ambit of a subjective dimension delimited by the desire for the impossible. A child is something that one has, but care must be taken to ensure that this “having” does not suppress the child’s subjectivity. In other words if one thinks of a child as something more than that one “has,” as one has a job, a house, or a car, the child is ranked as one more of a series of goals to be met, of social mandates to follow. And the desire to have a child disappears, crushed by the dimension of “having” that annuls any possibility of “being.” When one thinks of having a child as an acquired right, one should wonder what conditions for the possibility of being can be offered which will not be associated with the technocratic logic of having.

But once again we ask ourselves where the woman stands regarding this problem and if there might be some form of violence at play. Although the medical procedure takes place in the woman’s body, we must also consider the perspective that the constitution of the symbolic body introduces. This perspective provides a necessary framework to think the place that in the future will lodge the new baby. This interplay between the body as real – as a physical organism – and the body as symbolic – as the place of subjectivity where the baby will nestle – opens the possibility to think a space of phantasmization, which, as an imaginary dimension, affords the substrate that will later lay down the basis of the new individual’s identity. But the subject of identity is a controversial subject when it refers to assisted reproductive techniques. Gamete donation in Argentina is anonymous – for the moment – and since there is no legislation to the contrary, the individual that is born via egg donation is bound to the logic of anonymity, unless the parents agree to tell the truth regarding its process of gestation. In other words,

the parents must tell the child that the genetic material that gave origin to him comes from a donor.

The CEGYR (Gynecology and Reproduction Study Center) carried out a pioneering study in Latin America, on the attitudes of mothers on the subject of giving information to their children who were conceived through egg donation. The survey was on “Attitude Toward Egg Donation”; they found that the rate of disclosure to children as to how they were conceived was very low. The study revealed that 9% of the mothers had told their children, and they did so between the ages of three and six. The Center clarified that “donor information is anonymous and has yet to be legislated, but information can be obtained in case of a health problem in the child. Medical information is only given in cases of consultation for health reasons. This is why the centers are obliged to keep the registers of the donors indefinitely.” Here we see how other points of view on this dilemma – which touches on subjects such as confidentiality, privacy, protection of future generation – begin to appear. These are important issues that have been consigned in the *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights* (UNESCO 2005).

Although we cannot yet know the effects of concealing from people information on their genetic origins, we can conjecture that any process of subjectivation where concealment and secrecy prevail, will take a complicated turn. This means that if we take the genetic background as mere data, as something that can be spoken about and in this way enter the discursive web that slowly constitutes identification, it goes on to be some of the real substance of the body which is however, symbolized. On the other hand, if this data is concealed for whatever reason, it becomes pathogenic for subjectivity because it begins to operate as traumatic. Here we can make a “reference to the maternal function (to the Other of the language), as that which produces the speaking subject via the transmission of a desire that is always singular,

and as a place of establishment of the symbolization, as it is the mother who transforms the real into significant.”<sup>108</sup> If something in the transmission of this desire becomes significant, the subject passes on to the sphere of the Other.

### Conclusion

Throughout this paper we have tried to raise questions, to think about the reaches and limits of the development of scientific technology, of problematizing a practice that develops mechanically and affects millions of women. Lastly, it is interesting to point out that the questions raised here are mostly incipient – many of them awakened by technological and scientific advances that often go beyond the real power of subjectivation had by the societies that created them. We must wait before carrying out a more detailed analysis on these matters. However, it seems essential to reflect on the place these techniques of assisted reproduction are taking in the symbolic framework of both users and donors.

Some issues remain open: can we make a nonviolent use of technology? In this case, in which the product is a child and “fabrication” affects the woman’s body, can we live in a nonviolent way with technology?

These questions are some of the concerns of Hannah Arendt’s teacher. In Heidegger’s text on technology, he made a detailed analysis of technology and its essence, as he understands them. Heidegger warned us about the danger of reducing the world to calculable forces. This is not about rejecting technological advances. That is impossible. However, “precisely the essence of technology must harbor in itself the growth of the saving power.”<sup>109</sup> We must then admit that technique uncovers the world, but this is not the only truth: there are other *aletheias*<sup>110</sup> that bring us closer to the human essence. “There was a time when it was not technology alone that bore the name ‘*techne*’. Once that revealing that brings forth truth into the splendor of radiant appearing also was called ‘*techne*’.”<sup>111</sup>

The technological world that we live in is at a point of no return. Together with the difficulties in technology, there are also important benefits. We do not reject technology, but there is a point at which it becomes alienating and desubjectivizing for the human being. It is necessary that technology face the challenge of building a civilization not dominated by violence. How do women deal with the “use” of their bodies in the fields of reproductive technologies? Is it time to make a new revolution in technology, with a primary focus on humanization, taking care of patients without a violent invasion of their bodies? In a sense, we believe, the future of humanity and also the future of women depend on such questions.

## Moral Injury

DUANE L. CADY

*Moral injury results from making difficult moral decisions under extreme conditions, witnessing immoral acts, or behaving in ways that deeply challenge conscience, identity, and the values that support them. Moral injury differs from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in that it is based on what agents do rather than on what is done to them. This essay compares Plato and Gandhi on the central feature of this contemporary problem, namely, that violence harms the perpetrator as much as it harms its victim, perhaps more.*

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“The Truth which was the object of his quest was not outside himself but within. Hence, the more he took to violence, the more he receded from Truth. For in fighting the imagined enemy without he neglected the enemy within.”

—Gandhi, “*Ahimsa* or Love”

“No evil can befall a good human being.”

—Socrates, *Apology*



“Socrates: Doing what’s unjust is actually the greatest of evils.

Polus: Really? Is *that* the greatest? Isn’t *suffering* what’s unjust greater?

Socrates: No, not in the least.

Polus: So you’d want to *suffer* what’s unjust rather than to *do* it?

Socrates: I certainly wouldn’t want either, but if it had to be one or the other, I would choose suffering over doing what’s unjust.”

—Plato, *Gorgias*

Moral injury results from having to make difficult moral choices under extreme conditions, witnessing immoral acts, or behaving in ways that profoundly challenge conscience, identity, and the values that support them.<sup>112</sup> Veterans Affairs clinicians define moral injury as “perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.”<sup>113</sup> It can arise from participating in or witnessing cruel or inhumane acts which clearly transgress one’s own moral code.

William Nash, combat psychiatrist in the battle of Fallujah in 2004 and lead author of the current US Navy and Marine doctrine on stress control believes that moral injury may be the leading cause of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), depression, substance abuse, and even the military’s current suicide epidemic. What is important regarding moral injury is that, unlike most accounts of post-traumatic stress disorder, the focus is on what military service members do to others – or in some cases fail to do for each other – *not* on what gets done to them. Being shell-shocked does not provoke moral injury; participating in an attack on noncombatants does. “War itself, no matter how just or good, will leave many of the men who fight it feeling like they’ve dirtied their souls, and perhaps for a simple reason: there is something about killing that bites the conscience and just doesn’t let go.”<sup>114</sup>

While moral injury is as old as war, the psychological burden of killing in war has become more and more heavy to bear as war increasingly spills beyond combatants to

ordinary citizens. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century victims of war were likely to be soldiers; by the end of that century victims were more likely to be civilians. This became especially prevalent during US wars in Korea and Vietnam where guerilla warfare made distinguishing soldiers from civilians impossible. One irony here is that a primary cultural shift in the nature of war – i.e., hiding and wearing camouflage rather than brightly colored uniforms and drill-team maneuvers of soldiers – led to success for colonists overthrowing British rule in North America in the eighteenth century, but nearly two hundred years later American military personnel in camouflage uniforms were out-fought by guerilla soldiers hiding openly among ordinary villagers: women, children, and the elderly. Not only uniforms, but even the battle-line fronts, so familiar in World Wars I and II, had given way to insurgency conflict and the inevitable dislocation, injury to, and killing of increasingly large numbers of innocent citizens. Subsequent wars have continued to blur the distinction between soldiers and noncombatants to the point that, today, half of all veterans of the war in Afghanistan report to the VA looking for help with their mental health and one in five soldiers has PTSD or major depression. Describing their participation in war, one in three soldiers who served in Iraq or Afghanistan reported killing the enemy, one in five reported killing a civilian by mistake, two in three handled or uncovered corpses, and two-thirds saw wounded or sick women and children they couldn't help. Almost eighty per cent had a friend wounded or killed.<sup>115</sup> Such traumatic experiences often cause moral injury. And wars of this sort have made the just war tradition increasingly obsolete. Perhaps war could be just if volunteers engaged enemies on remote battlefields in unpopulated rural areas, but those days are gone. War is no longer a game played by aristocratic gentlemen maneuvering their pawns/combatants on isolated battlefields; it may have been like that hundreds of years ago but not today. War, now more than ever before, lives up

to its German etymological root: *werra*, confusion. The best-trained soldiers cannot tell the enemy from innocent civilians, so the just war principle of sparing noncombatants is impossible to enforce.

Although the US military has been called “the world’s best killing machine,” the word, “killing,” rarely gets used by the military. Twenty years ago, I spoke to an ethics class at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis. The “middies,” I met, to use their own slang term for Annapolis students (formerly “midshipmen” but increasingly including midshipwomen) rejected my suggestion that they were being trained to be effective contributors to the world’s most efficient killing machine. Rather, they insisted they were being trained for careers in middle management, initially for the Navy and, after completing their service obligation, for American and multi-national corporations. “Killing” does not appear in US military training manuals or in surveys of returning soldiers, and “the effects of killing aren’t something the military screens for when service people come home.”<sup>116</sup> Among Vietnam vets, killing in combat doubled the risk of suicidal thoughts; in veterans of Iraq, killing predicts PTSD, alcohol abuse, marital problems, and anger-management issues. A quarter of killers develop drinking problems and a third show signs of depression. Nonetheless moral injury is *not* an official diagnosis of the American Psychiatric Association. In his 2011 memoir, *What It is Like to Go to War*, Vietnam veteran Karl Marlantes argued “for an end to our chirpy, parade approach to veterans,” which he compared to clapping for a surgeon who has just amputated a leg. “This ain’t a football game; we’re talking about killing people.”<sup>117</sup>

What has moral injury to do with *ahimsa*? “Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt part of *ahimsa*. But it is its least expression. The principle of *ahimsa* is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody.”<sup>118</sup> Gandhi makes clear that being violent harms the perpetrator as much, perhaps more, than it harms the victim. Socrates makes the same point in his *Apology* as he

explains why he would rather be put to death wrongly than commit a wrong himself: “the difficulty is not so much to escape death; the real difficulty is to escape from doing wrong.” (39b) “Make yourselves as good as you can. This is my last message to you who voted for my condemnation.” (39e).

In *Gorgias* Socrates develops this point further in discussion:

Polus: Surely it is the man unjustly put to death who is pitiable and wretched.

Socrates: Less so than his slayer, Polus, and less than he who is put to death justly.

Polus: How is that Socrates?

Socrates: In view of the fact that to do wrong is the greatest of evils.

Polus: Is that the greatest? Is it not greater to suffer wrong?

Socrates: Most certainly not.

Polus: Then you would wish rather to suffer than to do wrong?

Socrates: I would not wish either, but if I had either to do or to suffer wrong, I would choose rather to suffer than to do it. (469bc)

Later in the dialogue, after Polus has given up and Callicles takes over the discussion, Socrates drives the same argument to the same conclusion: “the greatest possible evil” is to be “depraved of soul and ruined...” (511a)

What was clear to Socrates 2,500 years ago, that doing evil is worse than being a victim of evil, is equally clear to Gandhi a hundred years ago. This is why both understand the inevitability of suffering in pursuit of goodness. And this is why both realize the wrong of returning evil for evil. A significant aspect of both Socrates’ and Gandhi’s rejection of violence is their challenge to the oldest common law, the *lex taliones*, the law of retaliation.

Plato’s *Crito* is an early dialogue reconstructing Socrates’ conversation after his trial and conviction for corrupting the youth of Athens and teaching false religion, but before his

execution. It includes Socrates' claim that we should never do evil, even in response to evil, no matter what we may have suffered.<sup>119</sup> While Plato scholars often dismiss this point as merely rhetorical, Socrates' rejection of retaliation undermines nearly all the justifications for violence and war offered throughout history. Gregory Vlastos, perhaps the most highly regarded Plato scholar of the twentieth century, regards this as an original moral insight: "*if someone has done a nasty thing to me, this does not give me the slightest moral justification for doing the same thing, or any nasty thing, to him.* So far as we know, the first Greek to grasp in full generality this simple and absolutely fundamental moral truth is Socrates."<sup>120</sup>

It is well established that Gandhi's education was wide and deep, drawn from across the world's major religions, literary traditions, and philosophical perspectives, certainly including Plato. While Gandhi's expressions of nonviolence are varied, written and spoken over decades in a variety of settings and presented less as theory and more as advice for action, it is nonetheless clear that Gandhi's position consistently rejects not only retaliation against but also perpetration of evil. Socrates and Gandhi both knew what contemporary moral psychologists are beginning to realize, namely, that we injure ourselves morally by acting violently, and that moral injury is not only real but it is also serious. Our souls (Greek: *psuche*, the etymological root for psyche, self), we ourselves, are at risk of ruin by moral injury. To safeguard our own well-being we must do what we can to avoid moral injury just as we try to avoid physical injury. In fact, if we are to believe Socrates and Gandhi, we need to be *more* careful about moral than physical injury. Our bodies are important, but our very selves *are* us.

While courses in ethics debate the fine points of deontological and consequentialist nineteenth century moral positions – for the most part dismissing Socrates' nonviolence as rhetorical and ignoring Gandhi altogether – the world

needs to learn and apply the principles of nonviolence discovered and refined in practice by our true moral leaders. We find these lessons in Plato's *Crito* and *Gorgias*, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount,<sup>121</sup> Erasmus' Renaissance anti-warism in *The Praise of Folly*, Kant's *Perpetual Peace*, Adin Ballou's pragmatic pacifism, Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, James's "The Moral Equivalent of War," DuBois' *The Souls of Black Folk*, Dewey's *Human Nature and Conduct*, Gandhi's *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*, King's "Beloved Community," Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom*, Ruddick's *Maternal Thinking*, Bell Hooks' *Feminism from Margin to Center*, Frye's *The Politics of Reality*, and more. The shame is not only that dominant academic culture has yet to take nonviolence seriously, largely dismissing nonviolence as hopelessly naïve and/or ghettoizing it into peace studies programs rather than infusing nonviolence into the central focus of all disciplines. The further shame is that Gandhi and many others knew the significance of moral injury a hundred years ahead of what is just now dawning on contemporary psychologists, with conservative politics foot-dragging on any change. Generations of our best thinkers, going back to Socrates, knew about and warned us of moral injury. Why, then, do we hesitate to take it seriously? Why does the issue get politicized with the "sides" pushed to extremes? And why are military psychiatrists, those with (arguably) the most experience of moral injury, so reluctant to recognize participation in violence as a cause of the rise in psychological problems of modern war? Gandhi knows how to answer questions like these: "in fighting the imagined enemy without we neglect the enemy within." And Socrates reminds us that the integrity of our very selves is at stake.

## *Ahimsa* and Social Ethics

GREG MOSES

*This essay presents a phenomenology of ahimsa, beginning with its status as an incredulous rumor, spoken in a context of habitual and normalized violence. The essay then shows how ahimsa discloses the silent but undeniable assumption of peace that surprisingly guides expectations, even in a world habituated to cycles of violence. But, finally, the essay demonstrates how ahimsa under the guidance of Gandhi becomes bound to actions of courage and freedom. In the end, the concept of ahimsa has been developed into the power of self-transformation as such and therefore the essence of liberation.*

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Re-living values cultivated from mouth to ear by ancient peoples of his beloved homeland, Gandhi spoke of *ahimsa* as a discipline of body and mind. The structure of the word emphasizes restraint, refusal, prohibition. One refrains from *himsa*, from violence, from harm. The negative form of the word confesses a human context where violence and harm are readily apparent, where we prepare ourselves to hurt

and harm because it seems commonplace, because we are so frequently hurt and harmed, and would be more battered and abused if not for our preparedness to hit back. When the cycle of harm is what we are accustomed to acknowledge then the discipline of nonviolence is what we are prepared to deflect. *Ahimsa*, as a teaching for life, therefore arrives to our ears from Gandhi's mouth sounding patently unrealistic, delusional, self-defeating. And yet, here we allow the ancient rumor of *ahimsa* some few minutes of probation before it gets shipped up river for eternity.

Although *ahimsa* may sound unrealistic, we ask what allows us to name the inescapable experiences of harm and violence? What allows the self to discern *himsa* so that it passes neither unremarked nor un-named? Violent events are not like the unremembered air of some ordinary day already faded into insignificance. Hurt, harm, and violence step forward and signify something to be remembered that won't be smuggled creaselessly through the felt experiences of our space-time. Demanding representation in the explicit grammar of our sensibility, *himsa* semantically invokes its counterweight term. The significance of harm depends upon the meaning of non-harm. Without the silent assistance of the term, *ahimsa*, our hurts and harms would fade into the noncognizability of brute experience. *Ahimsa* is that flash of illumination which makes the shadows of *himsa* discernible.

In the usual grammar of our daily relations also, *ahimsa* is already quite busy. Violence and harm are remarkable for the ways they interrupt so many peaceful actions, habits, or plans. Hearing news of victims we also hear how they were on their way to school, to weddings, to buy gifts for children, jogging, watching television, sitting on porch steps, coming home from work, playing ball, dining out, singing. News of violence murmurs with traces of so many peaceful intentions contradicted. We wonder why reporters don't bring good news more often, but good news is ordinary, everyday subject

and verb. How could one keep up with routine kindness – holding doors open, saying thank you, smiling, or attending to the cry of a baby? The non-harm idea quietly sustains the significance of our practical expectations, and wherever it slips from power we don't ask if peace is possible, but how soon. Even in the case of everyone's favorite form of violence – self-defense – the idea of harm is invoked under strict scrutiny, weighed and measured against the non-harm that would be reasonable to effect.

As a semantic treasure of widespread significance, therefore, *ahimsa* arrives as a carefully wrapped jewel, already drilled through from vowel to vowel, and rolled in our direction by twenty thousand fingers who have felt the name already strung upon some precious heirloom necklace long gone unworn and broken yet waiting for its thousandth time to be restrung. *Ahimsa*: unbreakable jewel of the breakable necklace, the non-harm idea, strobe-lighting the world of harm, yet to which no harm may come. To pick up the jewel of *ahimsa*, to re-string it, is to make it better than a name. And what is better than a name, asks the *Chandogya Upanishad* (7.2): "Speech is better than a name." In speech the name of the non-harm ideal achieves living re-connection.

As *ahimsa* moves from its silent, counterweight presence into the open air of speech, it begins to cultivate a sensibility regarding the injustice of violence. Harm participates in a general form of theft whenever well-being is stolen. And after we have experienced the commonplace theft of well-being, in both petty larcenies and grand, the call for non-harm is spoken as a plea for restitution to a burglarized world. *Ahimsa* calls us to live in some possible world where less is stolen and to take responsibility for making that difference. Mindful of ways that well-being is stolen we begin to comprehend how we are not only victims of theft but thieves. Shall we begin with the necessary evils? We breathe out, we eat. To breathe out is to have harmed already, say the ancient sages. Only within the inbreathing is there innocence; out-

breathing carries evidence of corruption; something has been polluted forever and apparently without permission. If out-breathing is dependent upon inbreathing then the innocence of inbreathing is life's first will. Ancient sages contemplated primal breath, perhaps to mark the marvel of it – how life blamelessly wills itself into living.

Primal breath is steady witness to innocence in the face of intractable judgment. So long as we confine the self to an existence that only eats and breathes out, we are born thieves. Stealing smiles, slamming doors, stepping deliberately around some cry for help. Ancient beggars seeking total release from judgment could eat nothing that was prepared for them, stolen for them. They could eat only leftovers. But even then, the scrupulous beggar could accept only what was necessary to avoid starvation, not a sip of water more. These spiritual specialists dedicated their bodies to simplicities that refused to expand the exhaling legitimations of so-called human nature or natural greed. They lived as open testaments, flesh and blood exhibits of what a human economy may sincerely define as necessary.

When the will is not careless but considerate with its primal form, then we glimpse how *ahimsa* might be nurtured in human understanding. Non-harm, having been willed and considered, betters itself in strength or power, sustaining the presence of life's innocence as the grace of our co-cyclical reality. As we arrogate the will to breathe out, we must take care with the reality we breathe in. For every harvest that we cut from the world, we cannot neglect a season of nurture. Power betters itself in food said the ancients – a cosmic way of teaching that real power is put to work in ways that sustain us. Even the modern-day rush hour with its collective exhale stinking up the morning air finds itself dependent upon an innocence of primal breath willing to cultivate a world we shall be able to consume.

But why did the ancients teach that water is better than food, fire better than water, ether better than fire? What

attentions did they call to these dependencies? Only with water may we grow food. Only with fire is the world not ice. And from where do the energies of fire come? Ether, *akasa*, is what they called that unseeable source of all possibility. The food we harvest contains dependencies that have nothing to do with what we will. A well-nourished mind, not forgetting its dependency upon ether, remembers that ether was there whether we knew it or not. When memory fulfills its relationship to ether, hope takes root in reality.

Spirit is able to trace back, remember, and value its dependencies – call them truth. And the truth of *ahimsa* is that the idea of it belongs to the essence of spirit, ready to be spoken, exemplified, nurtured, and recognized in the grace of reality. Under the tutelage of ancient sages spirit is invited to embody its perceptions, empower its beliefs, and enact those sacred duties that awaken ethereal memory to the significance of its capacity to dream. We have a duty to imagine well.

When the ancient Jains imagined the universe, they envisioned a community of souls related to each other the way cells relate in a human body: no two cells exactly the same; some radically different in form and function; yet each with its part to play in the embodied, cosmic whole. As each of us imagines herself or himself as a cell among cells, then we imagine that every other cell, person, living creature, crystal, or any other thing, despite its radical difference, enjoys a kind of equality with us. This makes it difficult for us to imagine that we are more important than others or more worthy of life. When we use our imaginations well, our capacity to judge and harm others is constrained, our capacity to appreciate others is enhanced.

On the other hand, consider the popular imagination that presents us with two grown men fighting. This imagination not only calls upon each man to defend himself and his life against the other; it calls upon each of us to step into one of their skins. Him or me. Me or him. In this scenario

an exclusive disjunction is imagined to be the centering structure of life's struggle. For Hobbes and Hegel such primal fight scenes are universal, anonymous, necessary to a well-ordered imagination. Hobbes presents absolute war as the imagined negation of commonwealth; Hegel presents the death match as misrecognition of self-consciousness. In both cases, Hobbes and Hegel alike, the primal conflict is presented for displacement. Their primal violence is already an unsustainable imagination on its way to developing a capacity for commonwealth and recognition. In both cases the significance of the fight scene is that its necessity for imagination has already been refuted, overcome, sublimated.

For Tolstoy the scene of primal conflict is carefully chosen for its extreme obscenity. An infant is about to be slaughtered. We can stop the killing if we kill the killer, if we become the first killer. Tolstoy argues that he may rightfully will not to become the first killer; the will to kill is what must never be affirmed. It is a hard lesson in ethics, following closely after the example of Thoreau, who said that it is not our responsibility to reform the world's evils, only that we refuse to participate. Tolstoy and Thoreau are ancient holy sages reborn into a modern, railroad-infested world. They choose to opt out of harm, and invite anyone to see.

When Thoreau considered his particular relation to social evil he gave the example of slavery, an institution driven by killers, and therefore a history crammed with obscenities of violence. The autobiography of Frederick Douglass is one witness to that very same system of killing and scarring. Famously, one day the teenaged Douglass turns on a slaver's attack and fights back. For Douglass, the immediate motivation may have been something like self-defense, but in winning that fight Douglass achieved a liberation of conscience. In his own eyes he began to see himself as a man, reducible to the status of his father's property nevermore. When Douglass shows us how and why he seized an opportunity to resist a tyrant's hand one can almost hear

Lord Krishna speaking to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*: it is your duty to fight; do not think of escaping your duty.

Gandhi broadens the message of Lord Krishna's instruction to the heroic warrior Arjuna; the teaching is not about fighting as such, but selfless service. As Gandhi studied his beloved *Gita*, reading it closely in jail, translating it, he found nothing like an apologetics for war as such. On the other hand, it cannot be said that the *Gita* condemns war as such, either. The key point of Krishna's teaching seems to be that the essential truth of our action cannot be located either in its success or failure. The warrior Arjuna asks deep questions about reality and finds answers that are completely unseeable. Righteousness is to be found in action as such. Or, as St. Thomas said, divine being is pure act. Not the creation but the creating, not the fruit but the living, not the self as an accomplishment but the still-breathing self that can never perish. That is all. Thou art that. Go and do your duty. Seize that truth and act courageously upon it.

When I look into the majestic interweavings of the *Bhagavad Gita*, I find a world where human carelessness accumulates to a point where care is to be found in the absolute undoing of a relentless war. Arjuna faces an already corrupt and disjointed order that begs for divine re-location. The time has come to tear down the visible world and start over. But once everything has been torn down, and in the absence of so many destroyed lives, there is nothing much to celebrate. Arjuna's victory may be honorable, but it is tragic. The great teachings that legitimated Arjuna's ferocious exploits are in fact recorded as the ponderings of a veteran already returned from war, reviewing how such a war could have seemed to make sense before the killing started. In the artful presentation of the poet Vyasa, the reader must remember to smell the already accomplished death of war throughout the divinely spoken *Gita*. The teachings, as they are remembered, bear a double truth that is both inescapable and tragic. One must kill to restore the

divine order. The divine order will never be restored through killing. It is never the killing that has any value, but the courage to go on fighting. The warrior's inbreathing is what redeems his spirit, not what he has done.

With Douglass, therefore, we see that he neither kills nor loses the fight. And it was never in winning the fight that Douglass retrieved his humanity, but in the courage to fight. Not in the harm he inflicted, but in the self he enacted, the selfless self; selfless in the sense that it gets entirely consumed in the action with nothing held back. Selfless service to the self. Act so that the self you become is completely beside the point of the self that you are becoming. Douglass is not motivated by harm but by freedom. Divine freedom, natural freedom, and freedom that cannot be subsumed.

The pacifist, therefore, more often than not, assumes a respectful attitude toward the freedom fighter. Harm may be neither the original motive nor culminating meaning of the harmful act. It is possible – even immersed in some inescapable stink of death – that the motives for killing were not killing motives. On the other hand, the pacifist confronts so many warriors who appear to be nothing like Arjuna. They appear to ask no questions that transcend the motive to accomplish a killing field. Yet even this may not be the worst thing. What is most demoralizing about modern warfare is how the killing motive is planted and fertilized in the banality of public opinion. Just because skillful rhetoricians have described organized killing as “defending our freedoms” doesn't mean that the pacifist has to believe that he or she is hearing from, or about, freedom fighters. Just because motives of freedom cannot be reduced to motives of harm does not mean that motives of harm can be so easily camouflaged. The truth of the act is at stake.

Mindful of the propagandizing power of modern warfare, the nonviolent activist attempts to clarify the motive power of a freedom fight by disavowing its most equivocal

outcome – killing. The nonviolent activist or passive resister is careful to communicate the non-harm motive through speech and action. From this point of view it is interesting to consider how forms of militant nonviolence follow technologies of communication. The European peace churches had printing presses. Gandhi was developing *satyagraha* in the 1890's when mass communication was just getting organized. The very term *satyagraha* was produced by means of a newspaper contest. King's militant nonviolence would be impossible to narrate without reference to television. What *ahimsa* means to the modern world of social media, therefore, is the possibility of sharing a motive for action that lies in clarity of freedom, disambiguated from harm.

*Ahimsa*, therefore, or the non-harm principle, has become a watchword for a certain kind of warfare, centered in freedom, drawing upon the innocence of life, and mindful of reality's deeper levels. Following upon Gandhi's example, *ahimsa* asserts a positive, collective responsibility for what Addams called social ethics. Vowing to end slavery, stop killing, and protect innocent children from their multifarious would-be killers, *ahimsa* means to get right up in the face of evil without forgetting to inhale the perseverance of life. *Ahimsa* seeks to be a purifying action, never perfect of course, but steadied in the motive to communicate the difference between power that feeds us and power that hungers us into submission. Resistance to harmful power, when it becomes collective, does resist many things that have been operating under a cloak of normalcy, and begins to illuminate violent shadows. The first duty of *ahimsa*, therefore is to become a freedom fighter, enacting new forms of power in collective courage.

## Environmental Rites: Plants and Animals in Jain Repentance

BRIANNE DONALDSON

*This paper examines rituals of repentance in the Jain tradition and their relevance for rethinking contemporary relations between plants, animals, and people. Jain philosophy provides foundations for respecting all life forms and invites greater awareness and sensitivity to our planetary multiplicity. These “environmental rites” are not prescriptive regulations, but ethical experiments in world loyalty inspiring wider modes of co-feeling with less loss.*

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I ask pardon of all creatures, may all creatures pardon me.

May I have friendship with all beings and enmity with none.

—*Pratikramaṇa Sūtra*, 49<sup>122</sup>

I spent the morning in the garden breaking off kale leaves a bit overdue for picking. Since I try not to use chemical insecticides in my small backyard plot, I often find tiny insects, caterpillars, slugs, or aphids nibbling on produce

that I intend to eat. Hence, a standoff commences. This morning I picked a leaf already well-munched and inhabited by a number of aphids, and put it in the compost pile with a sigh. Insects: 1; Me: 0. Other leaves went the same route, but I nonetheless emerged with three large bowls of fresh dinosaur kale (*brassica oleracea lacinato*) bound for the kitchen.<sup>123</sup> En route, I noticed a new seedling pushing up through the mulch – a mysterious volunteer from last year, perhaps a sugar pumpkin or cucumber. I stopped to pour a little water on some young sunflowers that will keep the local finches happy later in the summer when their blooms give way to seeds. I resisted the urge to yank out a weed and noticed a small white spider making his way across the dark soil below. *I see you there*, I say aloud.

Once inside, I filled a pot with cold water and submerged the leaves, swirling and rotating them in order to remove all the dirt and debris, before taking the whole pot outside to dump the excess water on the thirsty herb containers on the back patio. Returning, I spread the leaves out, and began the task of cleaning each one with a paper towel, wiping away aphids, breaking off insect-damaged areas, carefully setting aside a waterlogged cabbage worm, and pulling off the other casualties of my harvest. After cleaning the last leaf, I took the discarded kale scraps and surviving insects out to the compost pile and wished them well. I apologized silently to those who did not make it through the morning's picking.

This small act of repentance is a practical habit that I have developed gradually, even unintentionally, through my encounter with Jainism and the great significance the tradition places on repenting and seeking forgiveness from all life forms that one hinders or affects in daily life. Such practices, though they might be dismissed as impractical or sentimental in the human-centric west, continue to impact my experience and awareness as a person evolving within myriad physical relations, but also as a teacher and writer

exploring the major narratives of religion, science, and philosophy that inform how societies get on in this world of dynamic, co-constitutive life. In this essay, I will examine the concepts of repentance and forgiveness in Jainism, paying special attention to the Jain worldview, the place of plants and animals in Jain philosophy, and the specific rituals of repentance that extend beyond deity and humanity that are practiced by Jain monastics and the lay community. In the last section, drawing upon political theorists Judith Butler and Jane Bennett, I maintain that the practice of seeking forgiveness from plants and animals is a tangible daily habit of cultivating a deeper understanding of mutual benefit and nonviolent decision-making – personally and politically – at all levels of society.

### **The Jain Worldview**

Jainism is an ancient Indian tradition with roots going back as far as the ninth-century B.C. Textually, Jainism emerges as one of the *sramanic* – or wandering ascetic – communities of non-Brahmanical mendicants from the Jain, Buddhist, or Ājīvika traditions that existed during the time of the Buddha and the Jain teacher Mahāvīra, circa the sixth-century B.C. Jains understand their tradition as without beginning, end, or creator. More than being a structural “religion,” Jainism is best understood as an orientation and response toward a multi-faceted reality that is always present, though understanding can waver in certain parts of the universe due to cycles of greater or lesser awareness (*utarpīṇi/avasarpīṇi*).

Jainism’s worldview begins with *what is* – a detailed metaphysical description of the multiplicity of life forms. Each existent entity possesses a core life force (*jīva*) that interacts through relational and causal entanglements within the past, present, and future material world (*karma*), and aims toward the possible achievement of infinite perception, knowledge, power, and bliss (*mokṣa*). A *jīva*, sometimes referred to as a “soul” or “consciousness,” enlivens the body

of every entity from an elemental particle, blade of grass, or maple tree to a housefly, sunfish, blue jay, pig or person. Each *jīva* is understood to possess full perception of the universe that is partially obscured due to ignorance, bodily limitation, and circumstance. Every *jīva* is reborn in consecutive and innumerable life forms en route to free itself from the cycle of rebirth and to achieve full perception and knowledge that is its right by virtue of existence. Because each *jīva* has existed in multiple forms, compassion and carefulness toward all life is a logical expression of Jain ethics.

In the same vein, Jains understand that there is a *karmic* cost to existence that corresponds with the number of senses in companion life forms. Thus, Jains divide the living world according to a hierarchy of sentiency with single-sensed plant and organisms possessing touch on one end, up through five-sensed organisms such as birds, fish, animals and humans (the latter of which also possess mind). Jains aim to eliminate all violence toward five-sensed beings and to minimize harm toward one- through four-sensed beings as much as possible. Accordingly, among their many acts of non-harm and charity, Jains practice compulsory vegetarianism, also refraining from eggs and honey, as well as certain root vegetables and bulbs whose cultivation destroys the entire plant as well as microorganisms in the soil. Many Jains also eat after sun-up and before sundown to avoid drawing bacteria or luring insects to lights; many also filter water before drinking.

There is no deity in the Jain worldview, but a series of twenty-four teachers in every epoch who understand and teach the true nature of the *jīva* as its own perceptive authority that can be gradually accessed by practicing the five vows (*vratas*) of non-harm (*ahimsā*), truthfulness (*satya*), taking only what is given (*asteya*), sexual restraint (*brahmacarya*), and non-possessiveness of material goods (*aparigraha*). The last teacher of this epoch was Vardhamāna *Jñātr̥putra*, known by the honorific title “Mahāvīra,” meaning

“great hero.” Although Mahāvīra is sometimes referred to as the founder of Jainism, historians agree that a Jain community was already established at the time of his birth in the fifth or sixth-century B.C. Mahāvīra is the twenty-fourth and last liberated teacher, or *Tīrthaṅkara* (literally “ford maker”) of the present era. *Tīrthaṅkaras* are non-transactional figures who function as inspirations for the Jain ideal. They can neither respond to nor intervene in the lives of practitioners in any way.<sup>124</sup>

It is important to recognize that there is not one unified “Jain” tradition or “Jainism.” There are two dominant sects in Jainism: the Shvetāmbara (“white clad”) and Digāmbara (“sky clad”), who split sometime before the 2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. in the subcontinent. The split was predicated primarily on a disagreement over what clothing was appropriate for monastics, whether women could attain liberation, and what texts could be authentically attributed to Mahāvīra. As is evident in the names of each sect, Shvetāmbara monks feel it is possible to remain unattached to one’s body and clothing while possessing a simple white robe for both monks and nuns. As such, women and men are theoretically able to achieve liberation. To the contrary, Digambaras assert that true nonattachment requires nudity that is only practicable by male monastics. There are further sub-sects within each of these two communities, though in contemporary Jainism the sects often interact and still share many commitments and practices in common.

Moreover, the Jain community is predicated upon a mutually beneficial relationship between monastics and lay Jains. Monks and nuns live much closer to the Jain ideal of the *Tīrthaṅkaras* and strive to fully live out the five great vows (*mahāvratas*), plus many additional commitments, through ascetic practices such as nudity or the simple white robe, wearing a mouth shield to guard against inhaling or disturbing microorganisms, fasting and eating small amounts of vegetarian food specially prepared by lay Jains, refraining

from wearing shoes, from motorized or bicycle transportation, and from even walking during the rainy season. Most Jain monastics carry a water pot for their daily drinking and most carry a peacock feather broom for sweeping the floor clear of insects before sitting, laying, or walking. Jain laymen and laywomen, on the other hand, practice the five vows to a much lesser extent (*aṇuvratas*, meaning small vows), as is necessary for a life of family and employment. Lay Jains also eat a vegetarian diet, and strive to live toward the vows within their professional occupations and family structure, occasionally taking on monastic practices for short periods of time. The degree of practice reflects the different aims of the four-fold community. The goal of a Jain monastic is to reach *mokṣa*, and thus neutralize all *karma*, while the aim of the Jain laity is to foster a life of well-being and to ensure a positive rebirth in the next lifetime.

### Plants and Animals in Jainism

Plants and animals figure centrally into the Jain worldview. Of the four classes (*gatis*) that a *jīva* can occupy, animals and plant (*tiryāṇca*) are one, along with human beings (*manuṣyas*), heavenly beings (*devas*), and hell beings (*nārakis*). The category of animals and plants is broad, containing all life forms and elements that do not fit into the other three categories. As already mentioned, these lives are classed according to their sense capacity. The *Tattvārtha Sūtra*, a text written by the Jain philosopher Umgsvgti in the second-century B.C. and viewed as authoritative by both Jain sects, describes the taxonomy of mobile and immobile beings, as well as the ten vitalities possible to differently-bodied forms.<sup>125</sup> It is important to note that Jains understand human form (and for the Digambaras, male human form) to be the most supreme body to be born in. Not only do Jains claim that one can only achieve liberation from human form, but Jains also consider it tantamount to *karmic* backsliding to be reborn as an animal, plant, or elemental body, to be avoided at all cost.

Nevertheless, Jains understand that each *jīva* will inhabit multiple forms, transmigrating between differently-sensed bodies over potentially hundreds of thousands of lifetimes on its way toward *mokṣa*. Further, Jains recognize that all humans, including the liberated teachers, had previous incarnations as plants and animals. For example, Mahāvīra was a virtuous lion in a previous lifetime; the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara Pārśvanātha was an elephant. Additionally, for those humans still in the *karmic* cycle, it is possible to yet be reborn as an animal or plant. The *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* highlights this continuum of plant-animal-human experience: “As our body is born, plants are born. As we grow, so plants grow. As we have consciousness, so plants have consciousness. As our body is damaged when cut, so a plant is damaged when cut.”<sup>126</sup>

Likewise, the Jain practice of *ahiṃsā* is predicated upon the sentience of other life forms: “The Arhats and Bhagavats of the past, present, and future, all say thus, speak thus, declare thus, explain thus: all breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away.”<sup>127</sup>

The *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* also states:

All beings hate pains; therefore one should not kill them. This is the quintessence of wisdom: not to kill anything. Know this to be the legitimate conclusion from the principle of the reciprocity with regard to non-killing. He should cease to injure living beings whether they move or not, on high, below, and on earth. For this has been called the *nirvāṇa*, which consists in peace.<sup>128</sup>

In spite of these clear injunctions not to injure other life, scholars have rightly pointed out the anthropocentrism that is evident within the Jain taxonomy, as well as the danger of reading Jain texts as self-evidently concerned with plants, animals, or the environment more broadly. Paul Dundas asserts that the classification of life is still predicated upon human epistemology, and that all life forms beyond the human are seen as “a type of diminished or inadequate hu-

manity.”<sup>129</sup> John Cort also resists any contemporary reading of Jainism as inherently one of ecological harmony, suggesting instead that the Jain *mokṣa-mārga* ideology, meaning the emphasis on the liberation of the individual *jīva*, is not a meaningful source for environmental equity.<sup>130</sup> Christopher Chapple likewise suggests that the rarified aim of liberation requires a path of increasing isolation that “focuses on personal, spiritual advancements, not on a holistic vision of the interrelatedness of life.”<sup>131</sup>

Yet, these same scholars, along with many others, also find numerous resources within the Jain tradition that can inform the future development of meaningful practices that might enlarge the circle of nonviolence in tangible ways to help reframe the conversation on environmental destruction beyond ownership or stewardship models, as well as to provide textual and practical resources for approaching the nonhuman – or what I will call the “more-than-human” world – as being alive and co-creative. Chief among these practices is the Jain ritual of *pratīkramaṇa*, a ritual of repentance that extends beyond human neighbors to the community of all entities.

### Repentance in Jain Communities

Both Śvetāmbara and Digambara sects celebrate the ritual of forgiveness as the culmination of the most important event of the Jain year. For the Śvetāmbara majority, the ritual of confession is called *saṃvatsarī-pratīkramaṇa* and is celebrated at the end of the annual festival of *Paryuṣaṇa*. For the Digambara minority, the ritual is called *kṣamāpanā* and is celebrated at the end of *Daśa-Lakṣaṇa-Parvan*.

*Paryuṣaṇa* (literally “spending the rainy season”) is an eight-day festival that begins on the 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> day of the dark half of *Śrāvaṇa* (July/August).<sup>132</sup> Historically, this festival coincides with the season of *cāturmāsa*, the four-month long rainy season in India when Jain mendicants stop their usual wandering to stay in one village. Because the monsoons bring

forth a surge of life in the soil, monastics cease their travels to avoid injuring the microorganisms that flourish during this time. These four months of stability provide an opportunity for lay Jains to live near and learn from the itinerant monastics. *Cāturmāsa* runs from June/July through October/November and marks a time when many Jains heighten their engagement with the ideals and ethics of the great Jain teachers. By meeting with and hearing sermons from monks and nuns, many lay Jains are inspired to undertake religious restraints during *Paryuṣaṇa* such as fasting from all food or certain foods, not eating after dark, daily meditation and studying scripture. This festival provides a lay Jain the opportunity, though not a compulsion, to endeavor toward the monastic ideal, if only briefly. Monks offer lectures and recite the *Kalpa Sūtra*, a key Śvetāmbara text that details the auspicious moments of Mahāvīra's life and the fourteen dreams of Mahāvīra's mother Trīśalā. *Paryuṣaṇa* culminates in the annual ceremony of communal confession, *saṃvatsarī-pratikramaṇa* ("annual turning back" or "annual confession"), that I will elaborate shortly.

*Daśa-Lakṣaṇa-Parvan* (literally "ten religious qualities event") is the parallel festival for the Digambara community. It begins immediately after the Śvetāmbara festival of *Paryuṣaṇa* and proceeds for ten days. Because Digambaras do not recognize the authenticity of the *Kalpa Sūtra*, they draw upon the *Tattvārtha Sūtra* that elucidates the ten moral virtues of perfect forgiveness (*uttama kṣamā*): humility, straight-forwardness, freedom from greed, truthfulness, self-restraint, austerity, renunciation, detachment, and learning from the teachers. Each of these qualities is meant to cultivate a keener sensitivity to the nature of the *jīva*, a greater understanding of how violent thoughts, actions, and words harm oneself and others, and the commitment to vigilance on behalf of one's own *karmic* path. Every day is dedicated to a sermon and reading on one of the ten virtues. The most auspicious final day is called "Endless Fourteenth" (*Anantacaturdaśī*), which marks a commemoration of the

fourteenth Tīrthaṅkāra Ananta. The ritual of repentance, *kṣamāpaṇā* (“requesting pardon”), is performed on this final day.

### ***Saṁvatsarī-Pratikramaṇa and Kṣamāpaṇā***

*Pratikramaṇa* and *kṣamāpaṇā* are both means of confession of and repentance for past transgressions (*ālocanā*) and the failure to keep one’s vows. Padmanabh Jaini has traced this ritual back to the wider practice of *sāmāyika* – meaning the single restraint from all harmful activities – described in the Śvetāmbara text *Ācāraṅga Sūtra*, and a second restraint called *cheovaṣṣhāvaṣa* (or *chedopasthāpana*) in which one, after having given up past infractions of vows, enters into a state of confession.<sup>133</sup> In fact, *sāmāyika* remains an important part of the Jain rituals of repentance, about which a word is in order.

For those outside the Jain tradition, it is important to remember that these festivals, and their associated rites of repentance, are predicated upon the Jain commitment to the ascetic ideal of ultimate nonviolence as demonstrated by each of the twenty-four great teachers. These festivals are times when the lay Jain community can temporarily deepen their five smaller vows (*aṇuvratas*) to a level closer to that of the five great vows (*mahāvratas*) taken by monastics. Lay Jains may also practice six additional duties (*āvaṣyakas*), which are obligatory for mendicants, and recommended for the laity: 1. the attainment of equanimity (*sāmāyika*); 2. praising the twenty-four *Tīrthaṅkaras* (*caturvīṃśati-stava*); 3. veneration of the mendicants (*guru-vandana*); 4. confession (*pratikramaṇa*); 5. periods of standing still with mental concentration outside the body (*kāyotsarga*); and 6. renouncing certain foods or activities for a specific period of time. Each of these duties is explained in great detail in *sūtras* detailing the rigorous requirements of monastic life. For example, there are actually five different kinds of monastic confessions, depending on the period of time that the confession covers: 1. evening confession

covering the past day, 2. dawn confession covering the past night, 3. confession covering the past two weeks, 4. confession covering the past four months, and 5. confession covering the past year. In the *Uttarādhyaṇa Sūtra*, which details the characteristics of a true monk, Mahāvīra states:

By practicing [repentance], he gets rid of sins, and commits no transgressions; he who correctly practises [repentance], gains the road and the reward of the road, he wins the reward of good conduct. By begging forgiveness he obtains happiness of mind; thereby he acquires a kind disposition toward all kinds of living beings; by this kind disposition he obtains purity of character and freedom from fear.<sup>134</sup>

The Jain lay community may choose to perform one or all of the obligatory monastic duties to some degree during the year, including one or all of the various modes of confessions, which many Jains do practice regularly. At the very least, lay Jains are invited into these mendicant practices annually during the rainy season of *cāturmāsa*, culminating in *Paryuṣaṇa* and *Daśa-Lakṣaṇa-Parvan*. Every lay Jain decides on their own to what degree they want to attempt these practices. Thus, the entirety of the two festivals is devoted to deepening one's own restraints in order to more comprehensively approach the multiplicity of all *jīvas* and to increase one's awareness of intentions, thoughts, and actions, through an experimentation with mendicant vows.

According to Cort, the confession rite – regardless of the mode of confession – begins “with the individual recognizing and seeking to absolve himself or herself from the *karmic* consequences of any form of harm caused to a wide array of life-forms, in bodies with one to five senses, including seeds, plants, dew, insects, mold, and spiders.”<sup>135</sup> The individual also recites a liturgy, a version of which is below, that details all the possible entities one may have voluntarily or involuntarily harmed:

700,000 earth bodies

700,000 water bodies

700,000 fire bodies  
700,000 air bodies  
1,000,000 separate plant bodies  
1,400,000 aggregated plant bodies  
200,000 two-sensed beings,  
200,000 three-sensed beings,  
200,000 four-sensed beings,  
400,000 divine five-sensed beings,  
400,000 infernal five-sensed beings,  
400,000 plant-and-animal five-sensed beings,  
1,400,000 humans:  
in this way there are 8,400,000 forms of existence.  
Whatever harm I have done,  
caused to be done,  
or approved of,  
by mind,  
speech,  
or body,  
against all of them:  
may that harm be without consequence.<sup>136</sup>

Although the precise rituals are different for each community, the last phrase, usually spoken in the original *Prākṛit*, is held in common, “*tassa micchāme dukkaṇaṃ*,” often written as “*micchāmi dukkaṇaṃ*,” meaning variously, “May that fault have been done in vain,” “May my faults have no effect,” “May my missteps be fruitless,” “May all my improper actions be inconsequential,” or “May all my faults be forgiven.”<sup>137</sup>

These prayers signify the deep personal commitment that Jains have to the real possibility of *ahimsā*, and the responsibility that every individual bears toward other life forms beyond (and constitutive of) the human, and beyond any transcendent deity. One asks forgiveness from other *jīvas* directly. Rather than seeking pardon from one Ultimate

entity, every *jīva* is recognized as its own ultimate, with which every other is bound and to which every other is responsive. The transgressions are not abstract, but the daily costs of living. The five *samitis*, or mendicant rules of conduct, for example, exemplify precisely the importance of mundane practices such as walking carefully, care in speaking, care before accepting items, care in picking things up and setting them down, and care in the basics of excretory functions. Jains recognize that much of our life is but a compilation of these daily tasks, and the public commitments of a community begin in such private moments.

This mode of religious discipline is a unique feature of the Jain tradition, reminding practitioners that all life is ontologically equal, even if practically distinct based on senses. The Digambara philosopher Kundakunda (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) describes these two perspectives of ultimate equality and practical difference as two ways of viewing reality.<sup>138</sup> In daily life, we find ourselves continuously making decisions based on relative distinctions (*vyavahāra*), but the aim is to keep in mind the equal value and authority of every entity and to minimize any hindrance toward those lives, for the sake of one's own full realization (*nīścaya*).

To do this, practitioners attend to their intentions and awareness as much as to their actions, and to the ways that they participate in violence directly, but also indirectly by causing others to do violence, or by sanctioning violence – the implications of which are even more significant in our contemporary world of violent systems from which we are indirect beneficiaries. Although lay Jains understand some degree of harm to be inevitable in daily life, they nonetheless endeavor to reduce that impact for the sake of others and for the sake of their own soul, which is the ultimate concern for Jains. Given this understanding, a devout Jain may well “sacrifice even his own life in order to guard and nurture his soul,” as is the case for monastics who restrain their movement, and eventually, when possible, embark on a fast

unto death, the culmination of the ideal Jain life. As part of the *pratikramaṇa* ritual, lay Jains also recite – to one another in person, by letter, and now by email and text message – the same prayer of a dying mendicant:

I ask pardon of all creatures, may all creatures pardon me. May I have friendship with all beings and enmity with none.<sup>139</sup>

This prayer, and the regular practice of *pratikramaṇa* stand as meaningful daily interventions in human-centric politics that falsely separate human decision and ethics from the more-than-human partners and environs with which we are co-constituted and co-creative of our possible futures.

### **Cultivating Environmental Rites Between Cultures**

It is indeed a leap to suggest that merely confessing one's transgressions to a cabbage worm is sufficient for a wider approach to planetary politics. Yet the Jain extension of repentance to plants and animals, and even to the "very essential prerequisites of life – to air, water, earth, and plant,"<sup>140</sup> makes clear that *ahimsa* is not merely a matter of isolated human relations, but of understanding and appreciating the intractable entanglements of living systems and societies as part of the self.

Increased attention and sensitivity to this many-sided multiplicity is the first step to correctly framing knowledge and action in the Jain tradition. For this reason the "three jewels of Jainism" begin with right perception of the nature of all *jīvas*, from which follows right knowledge and right conduct as expressed in the *Tattvārtha Sūtra: samyag darśana jñāna charitani mokṣa mārṅa*, or "Right perception, right knowledge and right conduct constitute the path of liberation."<sup>141</sup> Rites of repentance are, in a tangible way, rituals of increasing one's perception for the sake of deeper consideration of non-harm to our planetary fellows, and ultimately to oneself.

The act of reframing who is included in the community of ethical consideration is deeply political. Judith Butler makes this clear in *Frames of War* when she describes the way in which certain populations are “framed” – or excluded from the frame – through visual media and public narrative. In Butler’s analysis, systematic violence and war function upon populations who “do not count as living beings,”<sup>142</sup> meaning lives that are not quite – or, indeed are never – “recognized as lives.”<sup>143</sup> Such populations, according to Butler, “have already suffered the violence of derealization” even before they can be injured by tanks, bombs, or drone strikes.<sup>144</sup> Likewise, we see that the western psyche has been profoundly shaped by theo-centric and human-centric narratives of value and rights that systematically exclude the more-than-human world from communal “frames of recognition.”<sup>145</sup> If something is already excluded from the living community, than its loss cannot be grieved, nor can its destruction be safeguarded. “They cannot be mourned,” asserts Butler, “because they are always already lost or, rather, never ‘were’.”<sup>146</sup>

Thus, a simple gesture of *repentance* toward plant, animal, or even elemental life, is first and foremost an act of *recognition*, an active reframing of the life that counts *as life* in our functional realities of thought and action. Butler suggests that mourning – of making a loss valuable enough to note and even to grieve – redefines what lives qualify as valuable lives. Her analysis of the public obituary describes the way in which certain lives (Palestinians in the Israel-Palestine conflict, for example, or queer victims in the attacks of the World Trade Center) are omitted from the public record and consequently excluded from the recognition of mourning and communal identity.

Thus, the act of repenting-as-recognizing – and perhaps especially for recognizing life traditionally categorized as “nonhuman” – is a mode of perceiving or mourning those entities that are typically outside our political frames and

perhaps even beyond our gross senses – *in order to* bring that life back into the community of consideration. Such a move is necessary if we are to adequately engage the ways that human societies and more-than-human individuals and systems are intimately entangled biologically, historically, economically, and developmentally. The Jain *pratikramaṇa* is a chance to acknowledge even those lives that exceed our sensory awareness – as in the Jain litany of earth, air, water, and fire bodies – while simultaneously affirming that we do affect and are affected by, constitute and are constituted by, innumerable life-forms and relations that we are not always consciously aware of. Our futures will not be created by humans alone in some isolated vacuum, but must be co-creative experiments that press us beyond any strict humanism. A significant part of human responsibility is attempting to comprehend the socio-emotional-biological entanglements of our human experience more fully.

It is precisely in the act of repentance-as-recognition that we might cultivate this awareness, first at the level of personal, and then public, consciousness. In doing so, we open productive spaces to examine existing frames of community as well as the subtle and overt ways that violence is justified or resisted based on those frames. Butler explains: “The apprehension of the precarity of others – their exposure to violence, their socially induced transience and dispensability – is, by implication, an apprehension of the precarity of any and all living beings, implying a principle of equal vulnerability that governs all living beings.”<sup>147</sup>

To be sure, the historical Jain community has not always understood their relation to the environment in these political terms. As Dundas points out, so-called “nature” has not been seen as a locus for political reform, but “a potentially menacing force that by its mere existence has the capacity to threaten the embodied soul at all times.”<sup>148</sup> Yet, the *pratikramaṇa* is also a ritual of dispensing with fear, as articulated in the aforementioned verse from the

*Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*: “By begging forgiveness [a monk] obtains happiness of mind; thereby he acquires a kind disposition toward all kinds of living beings; by this kind disposition he obtains purity of character and freedom from fear.”<sup>149</sup>

Contemporary Jainism is increasingly moving toward this fearlessness, seeking new applications of traditional commitments in a globalizing world of systemic violence. In 1980, Ācārya Tulsī, a monk in the Śvetāmbara Terāpanthī tradition, initiated a new monastic order, known as *samanas* and *samanis* who are given special dispensation to travel by modern means, to visit abroad, and to eat food prepared by non-Jains in order to learn from and teach Jain *dharma* to others. This group of novice mendicants has been extremely active applying Jain precepts to contemporary social problems such as poverty, homelessness, corruption, factory farming, gender inequity, and war. The Young Jains of America is an active national youth corps linking Jain principles to local-service needs within diaspora communities. Jain Vegans is an international networking group building awareness about cruelty to animals, especially in the dairy industry. There is also a move to critically engage the Jain tradition of *pinjrapoles*, or Jain-run animal sanctuaries in India, to examine their structure and function in contemporary society.<sup>150</sup> As Jains spread throughout the world, their contact and collision with other global perspectives inevitably multiplies, resulting in imperfect, but necessary attempts to translate inherited commitments into scenarios that far exceed the original texts and intent. L.M. Singhvi, for example, a member of the Indian Parliament and former high commissioner from India to the United Kingdom, composed *The Jain Declaration on Nature*<sup>151</sup> detailing five teachings that bear on the well-being of plants, animals, and elements: 1. *Ahiṃsā* toward all life as the goal and method for Jain philosophy; 2. interdependence as stated in the preeminent Jain slogan *parasparopagraho jīvānām*, meaning the “mutual assistance of all beings”; 3. the doctrine

of many-sidedness that requires Jains to anticipate distinct points of view from every existent entity;<sup>152</sup> 4. the practice of equanimity in order to reign in potentially damaging desires or aversions that inhibit other creatures; and 5. *jīva-dayā*, or the effort to understand and show compassion for living beings.<sup>153</sup>

The question remains: might these experimental attempts to reframe our more-than-human relations at the level of thought and practice also better prepare communities to meet the messy social relations that exist between diverse “human” groups? Accepting diversity takes practice and is never as easy as our liberal aphorisms would have us believe. This is all too evident when examining persistent violence around racial and gender differences, disputes over government and civic leadership, disparate economic life ways, nation-building, legal mandates, and state and international trade policies. Dealing with genuine differences, competing power claims, and access to resources is untidy business, requiring an adaptability to shifting hierarchies and to the mutual flows that constitute our discourses and decisions regarding today’s versions of right and wrong. Political theorist Jane Bennett, in her provocative text *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, makes this leap between social politics and the more-than-human world by actually rewriting a version of the Christian Nicene Creed in the spirit of vital materialism:

I believe in one matter-energy, the maker of things seen and unseen.

I believe that this pluriverse is transversed by heterogeneities that are continually *doing things*.

I believe it is wrong to deny vitality to nonhuman bodies, forces, and forms, and that a careful course of anthropomorphization can help reveal that vitality, even though it resists full translation and exceeds my comprehensive grasp.

I believe that encounters with lively matter can chasten my fantasies of human mastery, highlight the common materiality of

all that is, expose a wider distribution of agency, and reshape the self and its interests.<sup>154</sup>

In these strange rearticulations, we see how Jain rituals of repentance can serve as inspiration for meaningful reworkings of communal concepts, doctrines, and creeds. For in confessing our limits and trespasses to another – be it a plant, animal, element, or Bennett’s heterogeneous forces or forms – we admit them into the political community as unique contributors whose well-being and influence matters to our collective experience and future. Simultaneously, we acknowledge our shared vulnerability and social constitution. As Butler suggests, this act can “constitute a disposition of humility and generosity alike: I will need to be forgiven for what I cannot have fully known, and I will be under a similar obligation to offer forgiveness to others, who are also constituted in partial opacity to themselves.”<sup>155</sup> Surely, personal and public confessions alone will not replace the difficult work required to make intractable decisions of life and death, of safety and exposure. Yet, the evolution of new social rituals keeps us from settling for worldviews in which entire populations or enormous swaths of existence are already precluded from consideration at the outset, derealized as creative members of our planetary cadre before we even get to the hard questions.

Crafting environmental rites is not about prescriptive regulations, but about experiments in what philosopher Alfred North Whitehead calls “world-loyalty,”<sup>156</sup> as well as experiments in community-building that take bodily entanglements seriously, first and foremost by increasing our empirical perceptions and sensitivities. We may still walk, and eat, and breathe, and speak, create trash and toxins, beauty and blight, but we also have the opportunity to acknowledge the preexisting bonds and multiple relations by which our actions emerge, reframing our previous concepts and rethinking our practices.

Rituals of repentance-as-recognition need not be mediated by an external authority, nor need they be guilt-inducing attempts at perfection. They arise in the remarkable mundanity of existence where life buzzes and pulses its own contribution, insisting its way into our frames, reminding us that we, too, pulse with life beyond measure, carried in our DNA, wriggling in our cells and bacteria, externalized in birdsong and aphids, hidden in disembodied systems. *I see you. I hear you. I am not sure what you are or what I am to you, but I know you are there. Pardon me, jīva. Damn, I will try again.*

Such simple statements will not solve nor absolve our ills, nor the cost of existence. But stated personally, and then publicly, they give voice to excluded realities, widen our intentions and, in turn, inform our actions. In our environmental rites we look for absent faces, listen for the voiceless, and stretch our language, as well as our silence, toward the rhizomatic and strange. Maybe we start to tread the sidewalk rather than the grass, transport the crane fly outside, learn more about cabbage worms, leave a weed to bloom, and expect that our possible futures will be richer and more realized for the dissonant multiplicities they hold.

## Nonviolence Toward One-Sensed Beings in Jainism

ANA BAJŽELJ

*This essay explores Jain nonviolent ethics in relation to one-sensed beings. The first part addresses the ontology supporting the appeal for their ethical consideration and the second the practical application of nonviolence toward them in the lives of Jain mendicants and laity.*

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### **I. Nonviolence in Jainism**

If I invite you to imagine a follower of Jainism, you might picture an image of a naked ascetic or one clad only in white, possibly wearing a mouth-shield. Both are carrying whiskbrooms, with which they carefully sweep away any insects that might be on the ground upon which they will stand or sit. In addition to acts of severe asceticism, such as pulling out hair and regular fasting, you may also associate their practice with a strict observance of nonviolence to all living

beings. You might even recognize the connection between the whiskbroom and the mouth-shield, and precisely this nonviolent practice. With all this, you will have imagined only one aspect of the great complexity that is Jainism, but your image will be quite accurate. Certain aspects of Jain practice are very restrictive, to a great extent due to efforts not to violate life. In this essay, I will address both the theoretical grounds for these practices and the practical application of nonviolence (*ahimsā*) in Jainism, particularly that which is directed toward living beings, whose ethical consideration is neither self-evident nor unanimously acknowledged as requisite in the other traditions of India. Jainism has extended the notion of “living beings” beyond human, heavenly, hellish, and animal life-forms to speak of versatile plant lives as well as life in earth, water, air, and fire. These latter five will be the focus of my writing, but first I will explore the Jain notion of nonviolence as such and locate its place in the broader context of Jain doctrine.



Jainism agrees with most other Indian traditions in the idea that (due to traces of certain activities) most living beings have been and continue to be trapped in a beginning-less cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*). It also concurs with them in the optimism that there is a way out of this cycle and precisely describes the conditions of both, entrapment and release, upon which it builds the path of purification. The foundation for the Jain doctrine and practice was laid down with the teachings of the *jīnas*, that is, victors, who are believed to have conquered the recurring cycles of lives and deaths by attaining omniscience (*kevala-jñāna*) and liberation (*mokṣa*). Followers of these teachers are called Jain(a)s, comprising both mendicants and laypeople. Over the course of its history, the Jain community has split into two main branches, namely, Śvetāmbara (literally, white-clad) and Digambara (literally, sky-clad). These differ in several aspects, amongst which are the recognition of canonical texts, their respective hagiographies of the last Jain teacher of the present descending time-cycle Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, and, as their

names suggest, the renunciation of clothes as a necessary prerequisite for release from *saṃsāra* and, consequently, the possibility of liberation for women. Both of these groups have further divided with time, but all of the created factions agree on the greater part of the basic teaching.

Since the early developments of the doctrine, nonviolence has been the fundamental ethical principle of all groups of Jainism. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*, the oldest extant Śvetāmbara canonical text on the conduct of mendicants, proclaims it to be the eternal and unchangeable law:

[A]ll breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor tormented, nor driven away. This is the pure, unchangeable, eternal law, which the clever ones, who understand the world, have declared...<sup>157</sup>

As the heart of Jain ethics, nonviolence has come to form the foremost of the five great vows (*mahā-vrata*) of strict restraint for mendicants, the other four being truthfulness (*satya*), restraint from stealing (*asteya*), celibacy (*brahmacarya*), and non-possession (*aparigraha*). With limited or lesser vows (*aṇu-vrata*), laypeople endeavor to observe these to the greatest extent possible. Both mendicants and laypeople vow that they will restrain themselves from performing unacceptable activities with their bodies, minds, and speech, from encouraging others to perform such activities, and from approving of their execution.

In his *Tattvārtha-sūtra*, the first systematization of Jain thought in Sanskrit, Umāsvāti describes violence as “taking life away out of passion.”<sup>158</sup> The word *ahiṃsā* is in fact derived from a desiderative form of the Sanskrit verbal root *vhan-* (to harm, kill, or destroy) and negatively prefixed with an “*a*” – thus, “nonexistence of the desire to harm, kill, or destroy.”<sup>159</sup> Thus it does not mean only “not-harming” but the absence of the desire to harm. This etymology extends the spectrum of what is considered to be a violent activity from actual to potential, covering not only those activities

actually carried out, but also those merely desired or intended. Furthermore, it directly relates to the Jain doctrine of *karma*, in accordance with which every bodily, verbal, and mental activity characterized by passions (i.e., anger, pride, deceitfulness, and greed) attracts unwholesome *karma* and thereby fortifies the grip of *saṃsāra* on the agent. Violent activity then not only harms the beings at which it is directed, but also the acting individual. With the words of the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra* of the Śvetāmbara scriptural canon: “If a man kills living beings, or causes other men to kill them, or consents to their killing them, his iniquity will go on increasing.”<sup>160</sup> Resolution for the practice of nonviolence therefore protects oneself as well as others. Since the “others” are defined as “breathing, existing, living, sentient creatures,” the first step to take in order to eliminate violence is to know who these creatures are, that is, to know who is even violable. The Jain ethical imperative of nonviolence therefore goes hand in hand with an accurate knowledge of reality. Only one who knows the distinction between life and non-life understands where violation of life takes place. As is written in the *Daśavaikālika-sūtra*, “first knowledge, then compassion.”<sup>161</sup>

## II. Diversity of Embodied Life

All of Jain philosophical and religious endeavor is built on the recognition that there is more to oneself than just the body. As Digambara author Kundakunda writes in the *Pravacana-sāra*: “I am neither made of matter, nor is the matter lumped by me; therefore, I am neither the body nor the maker of that body.”<sup>162</sup> The body is merely one, that is, material and non-living (*ajīva*) dimension of oneself, the essence of which is different from the body, in so far as it is immaterial and living – which is why it is called *jīva* or that which lives. If I take an example of a dandelion, its roots, stalk, leaves, flower, etc. are just parts of the material inanimate shell, within which exists an animate *jīva*. *Jīvas* are substantial and individual in character. There are an



infinite number of them, and their quantity remains constant. This means that it is not possible for new *jīvas* to emerge, nor is it possible for already existing *jīvas* to fully expire.



Every one of the existing *jīvas* has the same basic makeup. They all have matching qualities, the main ones of which are consciousness (*caitanya*), energy (*vīrya*), and bliss (*sukha*). These qualities are essential qualifiers of *jīvas*, meaning that there is never a time when *jīvas* are without them. Although always present, their operation varies from one *jīva* to another; certain *jīvas* are, then, for example, more conscious than others. Particular manifestations of the basic qualities, which arise and perish momentarily, are called modes, and modes are those specific aspects of *jīvas* by which they may be distinguished from one another. From the point of view of being *jīvas* and having the same qualities, all *jīvas* are then the same, but from the point of view of modes, they are all unique. From the point of view of being *jīvas*, the dandelion and I are the same, but from the point of view of possessing different modes, we are different.

Upon the decay of one gross body, embodied *jīvas* usually proceed to occupy a new one. This continuous occupation of bodies is sustained by the complex relationship between *jīvas*, on the one hand, and matter (*pudgala*), on the other. The dynamics between *jīvas* and matter constitutes the underlying mechanism of the Jain *karmic* theory, according to which *karma* is material. Jain authors claim that matter is atomic in nature, and minute material particles may combine and form aggregates of various shapes and sizes. Some of the aggregates are karmically bondable, and when arising modes of *jīvas* are affected by passions, these aggregates are attracted and stick to *jīvas* like dust to moist ground. They remain attached for a limited time period; after a phase of dormancy, they bear fruit, fall off, and are then usually replaced by newly drawn *karmic* matter. The type of activity which attracts *karmic* matter affects the nature of the bound *karma*, and the degree of volition that governs this activity



determines its quantity. The duration of *karmic* bondage and the fruit it bears are decided by the degree to which the *karma* - attracting activity is influenced by passions. Generally speaking, violating life draws inauspicious *karma*, which brings about an unhappy and difficult life, whereas restraint from violating life draws auspicious *karma* and leads to a happy, prosperous life.

Since all *jīvas* are essentially the same, Jain authors account for the great variety of life-forms with an intricate classification of various types of *karmic* matter that may come to bind *jīvas*. They distinguish different kinds of *karma* with regard to their specific functions. Some pollute the functioning of the *jīvas*' qualities and are therefore called destructive (*ghātiyā*) kinds of *karmic* matter. So long as these types of *karma* affect *jīvas*' qualities, they may not function properly and are therefore deemed to generate impure, imperfect modes. There are four kinds of destructive *karmic* matter, corresponding to the four qualities of *jīvas*; since the quality of consciousness has two aspects, namely, perception (*darśana*) and knowledge (*jñāna*), these are often considered to be two separate qualities. They are perception-obscuring (*darśana-āvaraṇīya*), knowledge-obscuring (*jñāna-āvaraṇīya*), energy-obstructing (*vīrya-antarāya*), and bliss-defiling (*mohanīya*) kinds of *karmic* matter.<sup>163</sup>

Perception- and knowledge-obscuring kinds of *karma* prevent the arising of omniscience. As noted above, however, no matter how great their quantity, they merely block the functioning of perception and knowledge; they never terminate it. Similarly, the energy-quality can only be undermined; this causes a weaker operation of perception and knowledge and hinders donation, reception, enjoyment, and continual enjoyment. The only quality which may experience real defilement is bliss. Bliss-defiling *karmic* matter produces delusion (*moha*) and passion (*kaṣāya*), and is accordingly divided into insight-deluding (*darśana-*

*mohanīya*) and conduct-deluding (*cāritra-mohanīya*) kinds. The first causes *jīvas* to possess a false view (*mithyātva*), preventing insight into the true nature of reality (*samyag-darśana*); the second leads to failure to observe proper conduct (*samyak-cāritra*).



Other kinds of *karmic* matter are non-destructive (*aghātiyā*), since they do not contaminate *jīvas* but merely bring about their specific embodiments.<sup>164</sup> These are also divided into four different types: pain and pleasure producing (*vedanīya*); longevity determining (*āyu*); birth-state, class, and body-type generating (*nāma*); and status determining (*gotra*). *Jīvas*' experience of happiness and unhappiness is governed by the pain and pleasure producing *karmic* matter. The bodily life-span, which is related to a specific birth-state, is regulated by the longevity determining *karmic* matter. This type of *karmic* matter is bound only once in a particular lifetime and its bondage broadly outlines the possibilities of the next birth, which is the only existence it affects. If the *jīva*'s next life is bound to be seven thousand years, it will need to be born in a body that permits this particular age. In this sense the longevity determining *karmic* matter influences the operation of all the other non-destructive types of *karmic* matter, since they all need to follow its basic framework. The next, birth-state, class, and body-type generating *karmic* matter brings about the particular birth-state (*gati*), class (*jāti*) in that birth-state, and the specific kind of body (*śarīra*) the *jīva* will occupy. Jain authors speak of 8,400,000 possible birth-states, which they categorize into four basic groups, namely, human beings (*manuṣya*), heavenly beings (*deva*), hell-beings (*nārakī*), and animals, plants, and elemental beings (*tiryāṇc*). These groups reflect levels of the modal development of *jīvas*. Hell-beings and heavenly beings are, for example, respectively considered to possess lower (i.e., less perfect) and higher (i.e., more perfect) modes of the consciousness quality than human beings.<sup>165</sup>



Classes within these birth-states account for the variety of life-forms that belong to each of them and bodies for the particular material shells that they occupy, namely, their sense-faculties, particular formations of their bodily parts, mobility, etc. Apart from the gross physical body, Jain authors speak of other types of bodies that *jīvas* occupy, two significant amongst which are the luminous body (*taijasa-śarīra*) and the *karmic* body (*kārmaṇa-śarīra*). The first maintains the *jīvas*' temperature and the second represents the accumulation of all the *karmic* matter that is attached to the *jīvas*. When the gross physical body decays, the luminous and *karmic* bodies function as vehicles, which grant *jīvas* a swift and almost immediate passage from one state of existence to the next. The last, status determining *karmic* matter brings about the particular environment of the *jīvas*' birth, either promoting or hindering spiritual progress. These are the four kinds of non-destructive *karmic* matter. Since none of them affect the *jīvas*' qualities, a living being may perfect its qualities while they are still operating. This means that attaining omniscience does not entail immediate release from the cycle of rebirths, and an omniscient being may lead an embodied life for a long time after reaching omniscience, but will certainly achieve liberation upon physical death. In order to attain liberation, the *jīva* must exhaust all destructive and all non-destructive *karma*.

All this information is significant for understanding how a certain creature comes into being, what the conditions of its life are, and which possibilities are available to it in that state of existence. Jain authors have emphasized that there is only one birth-state from which a living being may attain liberation, and that is the state of a human being. This means that no matter how highly developed, every *jīva* needs to be reborn as a human in order to attain release from *saṃsāra* and commence a disembodied solitary life, characterized by the perfection of all of its qualities. However, no matter how auspicious it may thus seem to be born as a human, this prerequisite does not imply that I am necessarily much closer

to liberation than my fellow being, the dandelion. There are restrictions regarding the attainment of omniscience and liberation for the part of the cosmos which we both live in; they are only achievable when *tīrthaṅkaras* teach their doctrine, the time of which has now long passed and will take a long time to come again. *Tīrthaṅkaras*, however, always teach in certain other parts of the cosmos, and, depending on the previously accumulated *karma* and the activation thereof, both the dandelion and I have the (unlikely) possibility of being reborn there as human beings, in which case the gateway to liberation would be much more accessible. Even a seemingly undeveloped living being may thus be a *jīva* that is only a step away from the attainment of liberation. This is a significant aspect of Jainism, which undermines proposed justifications for giving certain living beings precedence over the others. While the movement of *jīvas* from one state of existence to the other may be gradual, it can be also very nonlinear, and this is particularly apparent in certain textual references to one-sensed beings. Although the Jain classification of life undoubtedly developed a hierarchical character, such developments still speak for the equal value of all lives. The fact of the spiritual perfectibility of beings born in all kinds of birth-states further enhances the already heightened sensitivity of Jain practitioners, particularly mendicants, to lives that their actions may be violating.

### III. One-Sensed Beings

Different classes of beings, their unique bodies, and the specific abilities they possess are thus all attained through *karmic* influx, which is brought about when the activities of living beings are informed by passions. Within these diverse bodies are *jīvas*, all of which are essentially identical. Since they are extensive in nature, adapting to different kinds of bodies in no way affects them, just as a piece of cloth may be folded in many ways while remaining the same piece of cloth throughout.<sup>166</sup> In a great variety of material forms and

magnitudes, *jīvas* occupy the whole of the cosmic landscape, although some parts of the latter are restricted only to specific kinds of *jīvas*. Because the burden of *karmic* matter prevents *jīvas* from moving in their natural upward direction, it is generally considered that the heavier the *karmic* weight they acquire, the lower the cosmological position into which they are born. Since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the large but finite Jain cosmos (*loka*) has been artistically represented in the form of a cosmic man (*loka-puruṣa*), with legs slightly apart, arms bent, and his hands at his waist. At the apex of the cosmos or the top of the cosmic man's head is the space of the liberated *jīvas* (*siddha-loka*). The rest of the cosmos, which extends vertically from the bottom to the top in the shape of a cylinder, is divided into three worlds. The middle world (*madhya-loka*), which is located at the cosmic man's belly, is occupied by human and animal beings. Below it is the lower world (*adho-loka*), which is inhabited by hell-beings, and above it the upper world (*ūrdhva-loka*), which is inhabited by heavenly beings. These beings may for the most part exist only within their respective realms.

The Jain doctrine, however, tells also of beings that may occupy any part of the cosmos because their material bodies are so subtle. These represent the fine-bodied part of the group of the so-called one-sensed beings (*ekendriya*); the other part of this group occupies gross material bodies and is therefore restricted to living in the middle world, co-existing with animal and human beings. All of them belong to the same category as animals but unlike animals, which experience the world through either two (touch and taste), three (touch, taste, and smell), four (touch, taste, smell, and sight), or five senses (touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing), they experience the world only through the one sense of touch (*sparsa*). In addition to the five sense-faculties, some animal beings possess the capacity for reflection (*saṃjñā*), which one-sensed beings lack. Apart from having fewer modalities with which to connect to the world, one-sensed beings are also immobile (*sthāvara*), which further

distinguishes them from mobile (*trasa*) animal beings. Mobile living beings are described as having the natural ability to move away from the objects they fear, and immobile beings as lacking the ability to do so. Although all one-sensed beings are often described as immobile due to their inability to move voluntarily, certain texts consider fire- and air-bodied beings to be mobile. The entire class of one-sensed beings consists of plants (*vanaspati*) and elemental beings, with the latter further divided into earth-bodied (*pr̥thivī-kāyika*), water-bodied (*āp-kāyika*), fire-bodied (*tejo-kāyika*), and air-bodied (*vāyu-kāyika*) kinds. These beings are acknowledged as living already in early Jain doctrine. In the *Bhagavatī-sūtra* a disciple of Mahāvīra by the name of Gautama asks his teacher if one-sensed beings also breathe, despite the fact that their breathing may not be observed, and Mahāvīra answers in the affirmative.<sup>167</sup> The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* conveys Mahāvīra's recognition that careful observation sheds light on such lives:

Thoroughly knowing the earth-bodies and water-bodies and fire-bodies and wind-bodies, the lichens, seeds, and sprouts, he comprehended that they are, if narrowly inspected, imbued with life, and avoided to injure **them**.<sup>168</sup>



### III.I. Plants

There is a story in the *Śvetāmbara Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* about a prince called Mṛgāputra who, talking to his parents, recounts his various rebirths, which caused him, as he says, “dreadful pains of body and mind, repeatedly misery and dangers.”<sup>169</sup> Among them, he recalls his life as a tree, saying: “As a tree I have been felled, slit, sawn into planks, and stripped of the bark by carpenters with axes, hatchets ... an infinite number of times. ... Always frightened, trembling, distressed, and suffering, I have experienced the most exquisite pain and misery.”<sup>170</sup>

The story conveys how a certain *jīva*, at one time embodied as a tree, was later reborn as a human being, thereby indubitably including plants in the spectrum of the possible destinies of reincarnation. This *jīva* had previously

inhabited an infinite variety of other bodies, and was, due to traces of activities that it had performed while so embodied, born as a plant, in the form of which it continued to produce *karmic* traces that ripened in its further rebirths. As embodiments of *jīvas*, all plants must then behave not much unlike other embodied beings, including humans. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* points to the shared ontology and behavior between plant and human lives:

As the nature of this (i.e., men) is to be born and to grow old, so is the nature of that (i.e., plants) to be born and to grow old; as this has reason, so that has reason; as this falls sick when cut, so that falls sick when cut; as this needs food, so that needs food; as this will decay, so that will decay; as this is not eternal, so that is not eternal; as this takes increment, so that takes increment; as this is changing, so that is changing.<sup>171</sup>

Despite these similarities, however, Jain texts consider plants to be, by and large, much more heavily burdened by destructive kinds of *karmic* matter than human beings; this means that the qualities of *jīvas* embodied as plants are deeply polluted. Never are they so clouded, though, that their consciousness would completely diminish. As is indicated in the story of Mṛgaputra, plants continue to be conscious of the external damage brought upon them and experience it as pain. The fact that the quality of consciousness is not clearly manifest does then not entail that it is not present.

The level of imperfection of essential qualities varies from one plant to another in accordance with the quality and quantity of destructive *karmic* matter that *jīvas*, which occupy them, have accumulated. As noted, the determining factor, which decides whether *jīvas* are even born as plants, and if so, in the form of which particular plant and which specific body they do so, is non-destructive *karmic* matter. It is already in the *Uttarādhyaṇa-sūtra* that the classification within the birth-state of plants divides plants with regard to the number of *jīvas* occupying one physical body, recognizing that some plants may take an individual (*pratyeka*), while others a

collective (*sādhāraṇa*) form of living. According to the *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra*, plants in which there is only a single *jīva* are trees, shrubby plants (where many stalks spring from the same root or bulb), shrubs (where twigs or stems spring from the same root or bulb), big plants (such as lotuses), creepers (such as gourds), grass, palms, plants that have knotty stems or stalks (such as sugarcane), mushrooms, water-plants, annual plants (such as rice), and herbs, while communal living occurs in the life-forms of elephant foot yam, radish, ginger, onion, garlic, plantain-tree, red water-lily, turmeric, and many others.<sup>172</sup> This distinction was recognized as one of the essential bases for the Jain dietary choices, for it was deemed less violent to take a life of one rather than the whole community of *jīvas*.

Collective living is particularly characteristic of the minuscule type of plant-life called *nigoda*, which is considered to be the most basic possible and at the same time most numerous kind of life-form. Whereas there is said to be an innumerable multiplied by innumerable number of other living beings, there is deemed to be an infinite multiplied by infinite number of *nigodas*.<sup>173</sup> *Nigodas* are tiny creatures living in clusters (*golaka*); they form a single body, through the means of which they breathe, take nourishment, and move. Even though the longevity determining *karmic* matter generally allows plants to reach the maximum life-span of 10,000 years, lives of *nigodas* are very short, in fact the shortest amongst all life-forms. In his *Gommañāsāra-jīva-kāñā*, Nemicandra explains that conglomerates of *nigodas* are born and die together; when one is born, a vast number of others are born with it, and when one dies, so do a great number of others.<sup>174</sup> *Nigodas* may occupy either fine or gross kinds of material bodies and, as noted above, fine-bodied *nigodas* can come to inhabit any part of cosmic space. Being so fine, they can pass through all kinds of matter. They do not obstruct and cannot be obstructed, they do not violate and cannot be violated, and consequently always die naturally, when their longevity determining *karmic* matter is

exhausted. Gross-bodied *nigodas*, however, communally inhabit bodies, or better bodily tissues of other living beings, such as those of plants (especially sweet, fleshy, and seed-filled plants), animals, and humans.<sup>175</sup> This other type of *nigodas*, which is supported by host bodies, can both obstruct and be obstructed, violate and be violated. The differentiation between fine-bodied and gross-bodied *nigodas* is another significant distinction that bears practical implications for the daily life of Jain mendicants and laity, since, as indicated above, the consumption of food that is considered to contain many *nigodas* came to be regarded as unacceptable.

Plants are, however, not considered to be merely passive recipients of the effects brought about by *karmic* matter, but also as capable of drawing new *karmic* material by performing activities driven by passions. In his *Samarāditya-kathā*, Haribhadra narrates a story about a greedy person whose next rebirth is in the form of a coconut tree that rapaciously strives to reach the treasure underneath it with its roots,<sup>176</sup> thereby accumulating new *karma*. Similarly, Jain texts contain passages that speak for the possibility of the spiritual advancement of plants, i.e., for the possibility of the wholesome status determining *karmic* matter generating circumstances conducive to spiritual purification and liberation. It is once again important to note that the form of a plant can never be the last bodily form of a *jīva*, so a *jīva* will necessarily need to be reborn in at least one more material form as a human being in order to attain liberation. That, however, as already noted, does not mean that plants lack the capacity for internal cultivation, and neither does it mean that they are necessarily further away from liberation than any other living being. In our story of Mṛgāputra the *jīva* once born as a tree was several lives later born as the human narrator, Mṛgāputra. In the *Bhagavatī-sūtra*, Mahāvīra, similarly, envisaged a tree and two individual branches, which were damaged by heat, drought, and fire being first reborn at a – soteriologically speaking – slightly superior level of the same subclass, that is, as sacred trees,

and afterwards attaining human birth and enlightenment.<sup>177</sup> Although Jain texts mention a vast number of *nigodas* that have never been born into a birth-state other than that of a *nigoda*, there is also a famous example of a *nigoda* that was reborn as Marudevī, the mother of Ṛṣabha, the first *tīrthaṅkara* of our descending time-cycle. The Śvetāmbara tradition maintains that Marudevī attained omniscience while on her way to her son's first teaching, after which she died, and is so deemed to be the first person in the present time-cycle to have achieved liberation. The spiritual development of plants is then not necessarily gradual and five-sensed beings may be, for example, reborn in the birth-state of a plant, in the same way as plants may be reborn as five-sensed beings.<sup>178</sup>

### III.II. Earth-, Water-, Air-, and Fire-Bodied Beings

I began the section on plants with the story of Mṛgāputra, who lived the life of a tree in one of his preceding existences. He described how in his life as a tree he experienced pain brought about by the chopping of the axes. Immediately thereafter, Mṛgāputra speaks about the pains of his life in the form of iron: "As iron I have been malleated, cut, torn, and filed by blacksmiths, an infinite number of times."<sup>179</sup> Embodied as iron, the *jīva* was conscious of the external damage it bore and experienced it as pain. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* similarly indicates that elemental beings may experience pain and suffering:

As somebody may cut or strike a blind man (who cannot see the wound), as somebody may cut or strike the foot, the ankle, the knee, the thigh, the hip, the navel, the belly, the flank, the back, the bosom, the heart, the breast, the neck, the arm, the finger, the nail, the eye, the brow, the forehead, the head, as some kill (openly), as some extirpate (secretly), (thus the earth-bodies are cut, struck, and killed though their feeling is not manifest).<sup>180</sup>

The same is repeated for all the other elemental beings. It is suggested that although the earth-, water-, air-, and fire-bodied beings have fewer sense-faculties and do not convey

that they experience pain in any manifest way, they can still be hurt. The comparison with a blind man may even indicate that, like a human being who cannot see, elemental beings also cannot see the injury coming and are in that sense very vulnerable and easily harmed. They are of course always conscious of their environment to a certain degree, but no matter what danger threatens, the fact that they cannot move voluntarily makes them incapable of fleeing the objects of fear. They are exposed to violation and its prevention is entirely in the potential violator's hands.

The first step toward avoiding violence inflicted upon elemental beings is to know what they are. It is here particularly important to distinguish between elements that serve as bodies of *jīvas* and those that don't. Earth-, water-, air-, and fire-bodied beings are *jīvas* that take the elements of earth, water, air, and fire as their bodily forms. These elements otherwise exist independently of *jīvas* and they represent particular kinds of non-living material aggregates. Due to the *karmic* mechanism, some of them come to form bodies of *jīvas* and after the longevity determining *karmic* matter runs its course *jīvas* leave them to inhabit new bodies. Even though plant-bodied *jīvas* may exist either individually or communally, earth-, water-, air-, and fire-bodied beings always live a solitary life; one elemental body is at all times occupied by a single *jīva*. As in the case of plant-bodied beings, elemental bodily forms may be either fine or gross. The first allow *jīvas* unobstructed motion in every part of the cosmos, whereas the second restrict them to living in the middle world, and thereby often expose them to encounter with other living beings there. Fine kinds of elemental bodies are the same in the case of each particular element, but the gross bodies are of many kinds and the *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* provides a long list of them. Gross earth bodies can be either rough or smooth, and there are said to be seven basic kinds of smooth and thirty-six basic kinds of rough earth bodies. Smooth earth bodies are black, blue, red, yellow, white, pale dust, and clay, whereas rough earth

bodies include earth, gravel, sand, stones, rocks, different kinds of minerals, metals, precious stones, corals, etc. Gross water bodies are pure water, dew, exudations, fog, and ice, and gross fire bodies are coal, burning chaff, fire, flame of fire, meteors, lightning, etc. Gross wind bodies are squalls, whirlwinds, thick winds, high winds, low winds, etc. Within all of these categories, there are said to be further “thousands of varieties” of bodies with regard to color, smell, taste, touch, figure, and place.

The *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* further mentions that the earth-bodied beings may attain at the most an age of twenty-two thousand years, water-bodied beings seven thousand years, fire-bodied beings three days, and air-bodied beings three thousand years, adding that *jīvas* may remain in the form of element-bodied beings for an immeasurable amount of time.<sup>181</sup> This means that there may be *jīvas* that have never left the birth-state of an elemental being; that, however, does not mean that they cannot do so nor does it mean that their next birth cannot be, for example, in the form of a five-sensed being. Jain texts do posit a set of restrictions regarding this development, though, stating that earth-bodied and water-bodied beings may be reborn as humans, whereas fire-bodied and air-bodied beings may only be reborn as non-human five-sensed beings, perhaps, as is noted by Kristi L. Wiley, because of the “greater amount of *himsā* that air- and fire-bodied beings are capable of causing, especially in cooperation with each other.”<sup>182</sup> Like plants, elemental beings are then capable of drawing new *karmic* matter through performing activities driven by passions. The *Bhagavatī-sūtra* states that just by breathing elemental beings can commit three to five kinds of actions, the five being those caused with one’s body, those caused with an instrument, those caused with animosity, those that cause pain, and those that cause death to other living beings. Air-bodied beings can do so by moving parts of a tree or making it fall.<sup>183</sup> Elemental beings are therefore autonomous creatures on the path of purification and thus, according to

the Jain doctrine, equally worthy of ethical consideration as any other embodied *jīva*.

#### IV. Practical Implications:

##### Nonviolence Toward One-Sensed Beings

Notwithstanding the immense variety of embodied lives in this world, a truly great monk should, so the *Daśavaikālika-sūtra*, realize that all of these life-forms are just like oneself.<sup>184</sup> Living beings have a shared ontology and, according to the *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*, a shared aspiration, since all of them are “fond of life, like pleasure, hate, pain, shun destruction, like life, long to live. To all life is dear.”<sup>185</sup> Particularly regarding life-forms with only the tactile sense-faculty, this teaching assigns a great ethical responsibility to its followers, one that is sometimes observed with utmost rigor and at other times with lesser severity yet still, ideally, with the greatest possible care.

##### IV.I. Nonviolence Toward One-Sensed Beings in the Life of Jain Mendicants

The life of Jain mendicants is regulated by the already mentioned five great vows. According to Paul Dundas:

It is the adoption of the five *mahāvratas*, the ‘Great Vows’, and their integration into what must after ascetic initiation become a totally realigned way of life which is the central defining characteristic of the monk and nun, governing their external, observable behavior and providing a system of internal, spiritual control.<sup>186</sup>

Among the five great vows, it is the vow of *ahiṃsā* that directs and even dominates the other four. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* formulates non-harm in the following way: “I renounce all killing of living beings, whether subtle or gross, whether movable or immovable. Nor shall I myself kill living beings (nor cause others to do it, nor consent to it).”<sup>187</sup>

The restriction of violence toward both mobile and immobile living beings is externally manifested in the appearance and behavior of Jain nuns and monks. To ensure

the avoidance of violence toward one-sensed beings, Śvetāmbara *Terāpanthī* and *Sthānakavāsī* mendicants wear protective mouth-shields (*muhpattī*); these not only prevent mendicants from inhaling tiny insects, but also from accidentally harming air-bodied beings by abruptly exhaling warm breath. They wear them at all times, and only take them off while eating. In order to protect air-bodied beings from being hurt by the changing of temperature, monks and nuns also do not utilize fans. All Jain mendicants must regularly inspect their clothes with great care in order to remove any tiny life-forms as well as carry whiskbrooms (*piñchī*, *rajoharaṇa*), with which they sweep the ground, not to harm small animal-beings, tiny plant-beings, earth-beings, etc.

Since during the monsoon period plant- and animal-lives flourish and grow profusely, there is a four-month restriction on movement for all Jain mendicants, lest they hurt the budding and thriving life. The *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* notes that, walking during the rain, a mendicant could injure “living beings, mildew, seeds, grass, water, mud.”<sup>188</sup> Even in other circumstances, monks and nuns should not tread on, pick, or touch plants. In order not to harm water-bodied beings, mendicants also have restrictions regarding bathing. According to Paul Dundas, these were very strict in classical times, whereas today mainly restrictions regarding bathing in running water (such as rivers) remain.<sup>189</sup> Mendicants are, furthermore, not supposed to swim or wade in water to prevent injury to water-bodied beings.

Accidental harming of living beings by movement may also occur at night when it is difficult to see what lies on the ground, and this is one of the reasons why eating after dark is restricted, the other one being that lighting fire at night draws insects into the flames. Mendicants are, moreover, under no circumstance allowed to light matches or kindle and extinguish fires themselves, in order not to harm fire-bodied beings, “for such is the evanescent nature of the fire bodies that the very act of producing them is virtually

equivalent to causing their destruction.”<sup>190</sup> They must ask for food and never cultivate it themselves, since digging and plowing the earth would mean causing harm to earth-bodied beings. According to the *Daśavaikālika-sūtra*, they are, however, not supposed to take food or drink from a layperson whose hands are wet or dusty,<sup>191</sup> once again for fear of causing injury to one-sensed beings. They also ought to take care where they place their alms bowls and carefully inspect them before eating, for they may contain small, particularly one-sensed, life-forms. According to the *Ācārāṅga-sūtra*:

When a male or a female mendicant, having entered the abode of a householder with the intention of collecting alms, recognizes food, drink, dainties, and spices as affected by, or mixed up with, living beings, mildew, seeds or sprouts, or wet with water, or covered with dust – either in the hand or the pot of another – they should not, even if they can get it, accept of such food, thinking that it is impure and unacceptable.<sup>192</sup>

The dietary prescriptions of monks and nuns are detailed and very restrictive. A pure vegetarian diet, in which no meat and eggs may be consumed, is further restricted by the prohibition of eating plants that contain many *jīvas*, i.e., colonies of gross-bodied *nigodas*. These include potatoes, garlic, onions, eggplants, fruits which contain many seeds (such as figs and pomegranates), etc. Consuming any form of earth is forbidden as well. Monks and nuns can only drink filtered water or water that has been previously boiled, in order not to consume any living beings; this means that eating snow and ice is to be also avoided. Drinking alcohol is likewise prohibited, since many life-forms die during the process of fermentation, and, for similar reasons, mendicants ought to avoid eating fermented milk products, fermented rice, and pickles.

Apart from external behavior, mendicants should internally cultivate equanimity (*sāmāyika*) toward all creatures. The following passage from the *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* suggests the way in which mendicants may think of and observe trees and vegetables:

A monk or a nun, seeing big trees in parks, on hills, or in woods, should not speak about them in this way: "These [trees] are fit for palaces, gates, houses, benches, bolts, boats, buckets, stools, trays, ploughs..." (They) should speak about them in this way: "These trees are noble, high and round, big; they have many branches, extended branches, they are very magnificent."<sup>193</sup>

A monk or a nun, seeing many vegetables, should not speak about them in this way: "They are ripe, they are dark colored, shining, fit to be fried or roasted or eaten." ... (They) should speak about them in this way: "They are grown up, they are fully grown, they are strong, they are excellent, they are run to seed, they have spread their seed, they are full of sap."<sup>194</sup>

Rather than seeking to use them instrumentally and thereby violate them, monks and nuns ought to view them with equanimity and appreciation of their form.

The recognition that the world is teeming with *jīvas* sets a demanding responsibility for Jain mendicants, one that is extremely difficult to follow, as the very sustenance of bodily life involves various sorts of subtle violent activity. However, even though all violence was considered to generate *karmic* bondage during the early developments of the Jain doctrine, this was somewhat modified over time. Any *karma* that was attracted through performing religious duty was proclaimed to immediately burn off; careful behavior which resulted in accidental harm, or harm caused by certain occupations, was considered less *karmically* burdening; and, importantly, the Jains developed a distinction between *karmic* retribution arising from causing harm to lower (i.e., immobile) and higher developed (i.e., mobile) life-forms. The former was deemed to draw much less *karmic* matter than the latter. In the words of Will J. Johnson:

[A]ll acts, which harmed any of the six types of living beings, whether *trasa* (mobile) or *sthāvara* (immobile), were considered to be equally binding. (To be clear about this, their ethical attitude is not so much that a man is as worthless as a mango or a louse, but that a mango or a louse is as important as a man, all *jīvas* having equal value.) Such a distinction between the binding effects of doing harm to *trasa* beings on the one hand, and *sthāvara*

beings on the other, only emerged in later Jaina speculation, where the concept of the “pious householder” is defined as “one who abstains from all violence to the *trasa* beings,” that done to *sthāvara* ones being tolerated.<sup>195</sup>

#### IV.II. Jain Laity and the Observation of Nonviolence Toward One-Sensed Beings

The rules of *karmic* law, which distinguish between the *karmic* retribution caused by violence directed to one-sensed beings and that directed to two- to five-sensed beings, lighten the burden of the Jain layperson, who remains a householder and an active member of the society. As a householder, a layperson may avoid cultivating the ground but will still prepare food, boil water, etc. As an active member of the society, and particularly the religious community, a layperson may shape stones to build temples, within which rituals will be performed by lighting fire, pouring water, offering cut flowers, etc.<sup>196</sup> Nevertheless, the acknowledgment that plants and elemental beings are alive and the consequent enjoinder not to hurt them, undoubtedly remains present also for laypeople, and some of them adjust their behavior to the prevention of this kind of violence more strictly than others. Some mendicant practices, such as wearing mouth-shields and using whiskbrooms may be adopted by laypeople on special occasions, such as during ritual performances. In their everyday lives, however, they follow the five lesser vows, where the same imperatives of the great vows are observed to the greatest possible extent. The vow of nonviolence particularly restricts them from harming two- to five-sensed beings.

Several Jain authors have likened the Jain layperson to a heated iron sphere, which destroys life wherever it rolls.<sup>197</sup> In order to restrict the movement of the “sphere,” a layperson may decide to observe several supplementary vows (*guṇāvrata*) in addition to the five basic vows. The purpose of these is to set boundaries to the area of a layperson’s activity as well as to quantitatively limit the number of possible

encounters with one- to five-sensed life-forms. The first one of these supplementary vows is the restriction of movement in all directions (*dig-vrata*). The aim of this vow is to spatially restrict travelling and movement, in order to ensure that despite the inevitability of causing harm to various life-forms, the area in which it happens is limited. A layperson may geographically demarcate the boundaries of movement by naming specific regions, rivers, hills, etc. or vow to keep within the limits of a certain radius.<sup>198</sup>

The second supplementary vow prohibits the usage of particular things, such as food and drinks, and the performance of certain activities (*bhogopabhoga-parimāṇa-vrata*). Regarding consumption of food, there are similar restrictions as those that were mentioned for mendicant diets: certain kinds of food, which contain communities of one-sensed plant-lives, as well as eating after dark, should be avoided. Likewise, drinking water should always be filtered, in order to avoid causing harm to tiny creatures. There are, furthermore, certain occupations that Jain texts list as preferable to others. Drawing from different textual sources, R. Williams provides a detailed list of forbidden occupations in his book *Jaina Yoga*. These comprise fifteen unacceptable trades and it is here significant to mention those that directly refer to non-harm to one-sensed beings. Since it violates earth-bodied beings, livelihood from charcoal, which includes working with metals, and making of bricks and pottery, is unacceptable. Livelihood from destroying plants, such as selling timber, leaves, shoots, fruit, and milling, is also not acceptable, because it results in causing harm to plant-bodied beings. Hewing and digging, which includes cultivation of soil, excavating, and quarrying and shaping rocks, is not desirable, as it destroys earth-bodied beings. A Jain layman also should not engage in trading with destructive materials, which include weapons as well as plows and spades, once again to prevent violence to all forms of life. In order to avoid violence to fire-bodied and water-bodied beings, work involving the use of fire and water, such

as setting land on fire and drawing water from various water surfaces, should likewise be avoided.<sup>199</sup>

Knowing the Jain view of reality, it is easier to understand the reasons for all of the above-mentioned guidelines for practical living of both mendicants and laity. Since the world is recognized to be densely populated with life, which includes miniscule one-sensed creatures, the law of *ahimsā* inevitably leads to an obligation of an enhanced care in all aspects of living. Whereas the practice of nonviolence toward two- to five-sensed beings is a requirement for all Jain laity, its extension to one-sensed beings is obligatory only for mendicants. Laypeople may choose to follow a more rigorous practice, which includes a stricter observance of non-harm to one-sensed beings by taking additional vows. This distinction reflects the differing religious goals of mendicants and laypeople. While the former strive for liberation, which requires that all *karmic* matter be burnt off, the lay community works toward a better rebirth, therefore cultivating the accumulation of auspicious *karmic* matter rather than trying to completely destroy it. The practical implications of the theoretical basis that I described are mainly drawn from textual sources and as such represent ideals. The actual adherence to them of course varies from one individual Jain to another.

There is a duty of confession (*pratikramaṇa*), which is an obligatory daily practice for Jain mendicants and a recommended practice for the laity, during which a person recounts his or her deeds and acknowledges any misdoings. It is followed by a Prākṛit phrase, *micchā mi dukkaḍam*, which has been variously translated as asking that the faulty actions have been done in vain, in the sense of having no *karmic* effect, and also as asking for forgiveness for all the misdeeds. I will let the *pratikramaṇa* that is used for avowal of injury caused while walking to conclude my paper:

I want to make *pratikramaṇa* for injury on the path of my movement, in coming and in going, in treading on living things, in

treading on seeds, in treading on green plants, in treading on dew, on beetles, on mould, on moist earth, and on cobwebs; whatever living organisms with one or two or three or four or five senses have been injured by me or knocked over or crushed or squashed or touched or mangled or hurt or affrighted or removed from one place to another or deprived of life – may all that evil have been done in vain.<sup>200</sup>

## The Limits of Nonviolence in Reactive Action

RUBEN APRESSYAN

*The principle of nonviolence is not an overriding ethical principle. It is limited by the requirement to actively oppose and resist evil – either evil aimed at me, or at my neighbors, my fellows and kin, or any for whom I feel responsibility. Sometimes evil can only be opposed by the use of force. In such cases, force should be applied as a last resort and according to strong ethical rules.*

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An idea of nonviolence as an ethical principle and a standard of practical actions was articulated thousands of years ago. The ancient teachers of mankind were actively preaching nonviolence. Mahavira (6–5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), the most known propagator of Jainism, proclaimed *ahimsa* (non-harming) as one of four or five supreme ethical principles. He likely received this principle from his predecessor – an eminent teacher in spiritual liberation and enlightenment Pārśva (8–

7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.). The principle of *ahimsa* is shared by all Indian religious traditions. Sometimes a Taoist principle of non-action (*wu-wei*) is associated (not quite correctly, in my opinion) with *ahimsa*. Christian principles, *resist no evil* and *love your enemies* are also usually associated with *ahimsa* (although the principle of loving one's enemies is only partly coherent to the idea of nonviolence). Anyhow, in this or that form, in greater or lesser degree of universality, the principle of non-harming is one of the key principles in any religious or ethical traditions.

About a century ago nonviolence was proposed as a means of public practice, conflict resolution, and a method of political struggle. Nonviolence was endorsed in writings and through the personal activity of Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy, John Ruskin, and especially Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi was the first to convert the idea of nonviolence into the language of civil movements for social and political goals. He embodied *ahimsa* in his way of life, as well as in his mass campaigns of *satyagraha* ("insistence on truth"). In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of nonviolent political movements successfully accomplished their political ambitions. A campaign for civil rights under the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr., in the U.S. has left the largest footprint in the sand of the 1960s. In the 1980s and 1990s the methods of nonviolent struggle were reexamined theoretically and became a subject matter for special research, education, and training. Meanwhile, in the most recent decades we have witnessed how nonviolence, without the ideal of *satyagraha*, has been applied to political struggles born out of violations of the principles of constitutional democracy. This points to the fact that the concept of nonviolent struggle needs to be reconsidered. Nonviolence is certainly better than violence. However, nonviolence as such does not guarantee the ethical integrity and legitimacy of civil and social-political actions. Scholars, educators, and civil activists often omit such a possibility from their accounts.

In this essay I shall address a different issue regarding the limits and feasibility of nonviolence in situations of adverse communication, when one faces an unfolding rather than an emerging conflict. In other words, I will consider those situations in which one of the parties has already resorted to force or the imminent use of force is evident. There are two basic approaches toward conflicts of this sort with respect to nonviolence: a) under any condition one should adhere to nonviolence, even at the expense of the possible harm caused by an opponent, or b) one should definitely stand by nonviolence in one's initial responses, but in subsequent actions the use of force is admissible as a last resort. The latter approach contains a particular philosophical and ethical premise, namely, that nonviolence is not an absolute ethical principle. It is an ethical principle, but its employment in practice should be critically examined and justified both ethically and pragmatically in every case.

Violence and nonviolence are paired concepts, and it is possible that by the inertia of their association, the two concepts are considered to be symmetrical not only in their content, but also in their ethical status. By their semantic content violence and nonviolence characterize actions. Unlike violence, however, the concept of nonviolence has a particular normative import – it has the status of an ethical principle. A violent person feels no need to justify violence: violence is routine, usual, and spontaneous. The routine and spontaneous do not need to be articulated in normative terms or supported by ethical argument. The world has sunk into violence and one should exert an effort only to understand the possibility and preference of nonviolence. The necessity for such an effort presents nonviolence as an ethical, spiritual, and practical challenge. The attempts to justify and to legitimate the use of force (as different from violence) emerged in the history of moral and political thought as a response to the edification of nonviolence and the expansion of the teachings of nonviolence (expressed most explicitly by Tolstoy, Gandhi, and King).

I hold any action to be violent that unjustly or unethically reduces or threatens a person's moral (spiritual), social, and vital status. This stipulation sets up a semantic framework for the concept of violence. The ideas of *normative invalidity* and *decrease of status* are of key importance in this definition. By "normative invalidity" I mean the incongruity between an action and the laws and cultural mores of a particular society. The most general manifestation of legal principles for nonviolence is the International Bill of Human Rights.<sup>201</sup> By "decrease of personal status" I mean any offense to a person's status, specifically, disturbance to her identity, violation of her rights, harm to her living condition, dispossession of or harm to her property, harm to her person or to her health, or finally an attempt upon her life. This definition of violence is stronger and more specific than the one given by Leo Tolstoy, who defined violence as any action toward another person undertaken against her will and desire.

Nonviolence is opposed to violence in that it affirms the person's moral status. A nonviolent approach appears in actions that neither harm others, nor violate others' rights, and maintain justice at least at a minimal level. Nonviolence does not entail care, or mercy, or even respect. It is simply the restraint from doing harm to others, and thereby affirming their autonomy, dignity, and sovereignty.

Nonviolence is one of the *primary* ethical conditions, i.e., a condition that should be realized in principle in every circumstance, which indicates the basis for morality and a moral attitude toward the other. In this respect nonviolence is more compelling than charity, mercy, and care. Mercy and care represent a particular dimension of morality, namely, one which directs a person to the good. Nonviolence is more urgent insofar as one should first be nonviolent in order to be charitable, merciful, and care-giving. Otherwise the rights and the dignity of the recipient of mercy and care would not be guaranteed.

Morality goes beyond determination toward the good; it entails resistance to evil, an aversion to evil. Properly speaking, nonviolence should, in principle, always precede kindness, good deeds, and care. Resistance to evil is prior to an orientation toward the good. If ever there were an absolute moral principle, it would be resistance to evil. It governs the implementation of nonviolence. The principle of nonviolence is derivative from the principle of resistance to evil. That is why nonviolence, though it is good as a principle, is not unconditional: in normative and behavioral respects nonviolence is contextualized by the opposition of good and evil and is determined by it.

Violence and nonviolence characterize actions, which can be initiating or reactive. Morality determines initiating actions unambiguously; they should be virtuous, i.e., harmless, fair, friendly, careful, or merciful. In Christianity the requirement to be merciful was strengthened by the commandment to *love our enemies*. This commandment definitely relates to initiating actions. But what about the reactive ones? It is clear how to show love toward enemies when they are captured and hobbled, or when they are peaceful because of weakness, or cunning for some tactical reasons, when they are, in fact, abusing and offending one's sense of dignity. But how is one to show love toward one's enemies when they are evidently hostile, e.g., when they damage one's property, steal or destroy it, menace the safety, health, and life of innocents, of one's partners, friends or loved ones? How is one to show love to enemies under such conditions, when love toward them may conflict with one's love of neighbors, fellows, and friends?

Those who insist on the unconditional moral preference of nonviolence and the unconditional prohibition against using force, even against wrongdoers, do not just sidestep this question (substituting a direct answer by sophisticated philosophical and ethical clarifications), but in fact they spur others to connive to do evil.

The reflective aspect of ethical reasoning is heterogeneous. Moral consciousness (especially a philosophizing moral consciousness) develops in opposition to an imperfect world, establishing moral requirements largely by negation or restriction of natural and spontaneous human inclinations; the moral consciousness is inclined to give moral judgments an absolute status and, hence, it forces an aversion of morality from the real world. The model of universal and absolute morality is significant for understanding an abstract concept of ideal morality. However, that model is inappropriate for discussions of social and communicative issues of morality, where the opposition of good and evil appears through the differences of private interests, usually in a form of their contradiction and collision.

Let us consider two real cases.

*A.I. Case.* In an autumn night of 2003 A.I., a 27-year-old woman, flagged down a passing private car in Moscow to take it as a taxi to get home.<sup>202</sup> Instead of driving A.I. to the required destination, the driver, S.B., a 24-year-old man, turned to a dark street and by threatening bodily harm tried to force her to have sex. After making him believe in her consent, the woman suggested the use of a condom, which she had in her handbag. While opening the bag she drew out a five-inch long kitchen knife with which she stabbed the driver's thigh. Unfortunately, she severed the femoral artery, which caused S.B. to bleed to death. There are no doubts regarding the man's intentions. His pants were half-taken down and he was partly naked. We do not know exactly where A.I. was aiming the knife. She later explained the presence of the knife in her handbag by her traumatic adolescent experience, when at the age of 16 she survived violent harassment and since that time had always kept a knife in her handbag. In early June 2005, A.I. was conditionally sentenced by a Moscow court to two years in prison and forced to pay a huge material compensation to S.B.'s family. However, a few days later, amid a hot discussion

in the mass media, the Moscow Prosecutor required the sentence and the criminal charges to be dropped. A.I. resorted to force for the sake of self-defense. Her intention was to stop S.B., but by tragic accident the use of force was fatal for the violator.

Let us imagine that A.I. had been more accurate in her defensive efforts. Would it be right to regard her action as violent? How should A.I. have acted in response to S.B.'s univocal demands, if she were to have manifested nonviolence?

*General's Story.* In *Three Discussions*, the nineteenth century Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev tells of an episode that happened during the Russian-Turkish war. On the morning of October 28, 1877, a General's forces approached a place which according to the map should have been a big Armenian village. By the time they reached the site it was in flames with only the remains of men, women, and children – even babies – who had suffered horrible deaths. From an Armenian who had miraculously escaped cruel death the Russian General learned that a Turkish division of several thousand cavalymen had left for another Armenian village deliberately intending to commit a similar atrocity. The Armenian survivor guided the Russian forces to the other Armenian village by way of a shortcut along an unknown mountain road; thus, the Russians encountered the Turks, engaged them in battle, and completely annihilated the Turkish division – in order to save the second Armenian village and to punish the Turks for the morning's atrocities.<sup>203</sup>

The General accounted for his actions as a manifestation of *Christ love*, which was traditional for Russian warriors, but it was extremely surprising to his interlocutor – a Prince. Would it be incorrect to identify the General's action as violent? How should the General have acted in the face of real and inevitable destruction and death for the entire village, if he were to have manifested nonviolence?

In *Three Discussions*, Vladimir Soloviev proposed an interesting way of understanding the struggle against evil. He distinguishes three practical notions concerning the issue: a) a religious conception of everyday life, b) the ideas of culture and progress, and c) an absolutely religious idea. He associated the first notion with “times past,” the second notion with “our time,” and the third with “the future.”<sup>204</sup>

Instead of such temporal associations, I would rather reinterpret Vladimir Soloviev by considering these notions as contemporaneous with any time, and simply presenting different modes of struggle against evil according to various conditions and circumstances, both general and particular. I can imagine a broader interpretation of Soloviev’s classification of the modes of struggle against evil. For instance, in Lawrence Kohlberg’s terms, the principle of nonviolence would call for a different implementation at pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional levels in interpersonal or public relations. The principle of nonviolence will probably have a different form for each of these levels, which is congruous with a particular understanding of the struggle against evil. Individuals at different levels may have different kinds of sensitivity regarding good and evil, different understandings of right and wrong, violence and nonviolence, and they should be treated according to their respective normative differences. In head-to-head confrontations with evident and immediate threats of evil, adherence to nonviolence, accepted as an absolute and unconditional principle, may lead to adaptive, conformist, or escapist behavior; or, worse, it may engender connivance with evil.

Against this background, arguments like those proposed by Leo Tolstoy, that nobody has a right to judge others, to speak on behalf of morality and to define what is good and what is evil cannot be justified and accepted. In particular situations one does not need to be a philosopher to understand what is evil and who is a wrongdoer. A righteous

man or a holy person may be afforded the right to accept evil made for themselves personally, or to stop it by the force of their heart. We know from hagiographies that many holy men are thought to have had enough inner strength to suppress a wrongdoer by the force of their will. However, as we know from the same sources, not all of them were spiritually so strong. Then what should one do when one's spiritual power is not sufficient to suppress the evil? Tolstoy and his sentimentalist followers think that the force used to suppress a wrongdoer's actions and intentions is violence and, hence, by definition, evil. To my mind, such a notion reveals a lack of trust toward the agent, doubting his autonomy and ability to achieve moral resurrection.

Taking such philosophy into consideration, another person featured in Soloviev's *Three Discussions*, a politician, asks the Prince acrimoniously whether he could count at least up to three – to distinguish a victim from a wrongdoer and a defender. He further asks: What about the victim's autonomy and moral growth? A righteous man and an ethical rigorist may allow themselves the choice whether to become a wrongdoer's victim or to suppress the wrongdoer.<sup>205</sup> However, neither the ethical rigorist, nor the righteous man should ever sacrifice the life and well-being of another for the sake of his or her own ethical purity. A refusal to defend innocent persons is a means to evil and, hence, is itself evil.

So, the principle of nonviolence is limited by the requirement to oppose and to resist evil actively – either evil aimed at me, at my neighbors, at my fellows and kin, or at everyone for whom I have accepted responsibility. My responsibility for the well-being of others includes protecting them from evil by all legitimate means.

This general disposition needs to be translated into the language of practice, that is, into the language of strategy: particular reasonable and appropriate actions enable us to resist evil efficiently and with the least sacrifice on the part of an agent. Thus, strategic principles and other rules for

the use and restriction of force in resistance to evil have been elaborated in the particular intellectual tradition known as the “just war theory.” The ethics of nonviolence should be supplemented or otherwise limited by the ethics of justice, which specifically insists on the denial or prevention of any breach of justice. More broadly, the ethics of nonviolence requires augmentation by the ethics of active benevolence, which expressly insists upon constant opposition to evil.

## Violence and Justice<sup>206</sup>

BORIS KASHNIKOV

*Violence is the major threat to civilization. Since the monopoly on violence still belongs to the political states, the core of the problem is the excessive violence of the states. There are two aspects to this problem: violence toward the citizens of the state, and violence toward other states. The author treats these two facets of violence as two sides of one coin. The purpose of this essay is to highlight a possible normative approach toward the violence-free society.*

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### **Introduction**

The unprecedented violence of the 20<sup>th</sup> century remains the dominant and lingering fact of our social existence, and we still do not know how to cope with it. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is not much better in terms of its record of nonviolence. Although the total amount of violence has been reduced, our general propensity for violence has not diminished. There is amazingly little understanding and awareness that humankind is balancing on the edge of the cliff of total

annihilation. It is nothing but dumb luck that we still enjoy life on this planet, despite the collected stockpiles of the most deadly weapons and our eagerness to put them to action. But it is not only weapons that matter. 9/11 proved once again that violence nowadays can be deadly enough even without weapons. It is sufficient to crash two high tech devices with the consequences equivalent to the use of weapons of mass destruction; thus, no weapons are really needed to do the destructive job. Their target may be a plane, a skyscraper, a nuclear power plant, an oil refinery, or anything else. The problem is not that of the means of destructions, but of our goals, intentions, desires, and values. War, of course, is the quintessence of the problem of violence. We wage wars and we stockpile the most dangerous weapons in the illusory hope of reaching security and prosperity, while in reality we are paving the way to total self-destruction. In our domestic affairs we stick to violence to no smaller extent and there is an ever-strengthening link between domestic and international violence. In what follows I will try to find at least some preliminary answers to the question of how to extricate ourselves from the insanity of this position.

We seem to recognize much less significant global threats and even to allocate significant funds to deal with these threats. Take climate change as an example. Many agencies are assigned to work on this problem and are receiving, nowadays, a significant amount of public money for research and action in this sphere. By the time these efforts start to bear fruits, there may well be nobody alive on the planet to enjoy the wonderful climate. A single insignificant military skirmish may make a mockery of all the efforts to stop climate change. Even if we consider war solely in terms of the harm to the environment, the launch of a single strategic missile amounts to a combined pollution of all the cars in this world in a span of a year. The destruction of a single oil refinery during a strategic bombardment produces irreversible damage to the environment, which could hardly be mended

at all. If we are really eager to take more care of the climate, why not eliminate the most significant cause of environmental damage, namely war? The answer to this seeming paradox is evident enough. We deal with the environment or other even less actual global problem simply because we do not need to change ourselves to any great extent. It is high time to understand that the efforts to solve any less urgent global problem, while ignoring the most urgent one, is an exercise in futility. The problem of violence is the most momentous of all the problems of humankind taken together.

It is true, violence has radically changed its face in the course of history; it has lost some of its glamour, but not its effectiveness and viciousness. Violence is still culturally attractive as a demonstration of manly character. Violence is still efficient as a shortcut to a desired end and sometimes the only possible way to achieve political goals. Very often it is simply a tragic necessity of politics, which results from the lack of coordination and understanding. In any case it often goes as a kind of existential denomination of politics. Chairman Mao claimed that political power emanates from the gun's barrel. It may be true that violence does not belong to the political sphere only. The propensity to violence seems to be one of our most lingering character traits, with a track record going deep into history. But there is every reason to believe that human nature is flexible. On my own experience of as an eyewitness of several wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the personal violence of human beings is in no way fixed. People are capable of both violence and compassion; it is mostly political wind that blows in the sails of violence in human souls. Violence is so well entrenched in the interests of the powerful political elites all over the world. There is a global parasitic industry of violence including standing armies, the military establishment, and the military industrial complex. The contemporary political state is still above all a mechanism of violence.

But what is violence? To move further on we need to coin at least some preliminary definition of the concept and here already we find ourselves on shaky ground, since the definitions, not to mention the evaluations of violence, are many. My preliminary definition of violence will be broad enough. By “violence” I understand a deliberate infliction of physical force on human beings with a conscious intention to cause physical harm, pain, suffering or death. If violence is that bad, why don’t we turn to pacifism and reject violence once and for all, if pacifism is the professed rejection of all forms of violence? To answer this logically sound question we will have to examine the capacity of the existent pacifisms to meet the problem of violence. Pacifism is not a single theory; there are different brands of pacifism, which may mean very different things. For my purpose I will first draw a distinction between what I call “thick” and “thin” pacifism. By thick pacifism I understand a teaching that completely rejects violence, including the rejection of resistance by force. By thin pacifism I understand some less radical teaching, which allows some violence in self-defense. My own position may be regarded as a thin pacifism. Now I will try to show why thick pacifism inevitably falls, when it deals with violence. I will examine three versions of thick pacifism: metaphysical or religious pacifism, existential pacifism, and pragmatic pacifism.

The most characteristic feature of metaphysical or religious pacifism is the strong belief in some kind of metaphysical entity, a true reality that you may reach in the afterlife. By turning violent, you block your chance to continue a decent afterlife or harmfully disturb the predetermined course of the events to your own detriment. In other words: it is better to be dead (but permanently alive in terms of the afterlife) than violent. That is understandable and logically sound. The only problem is that we cannot be sufficiently confident that the afterlife really exists; even less can we be certain that many people will follow us on our way to salvation. This pacifism is lacking

existential validity. It simply rings hollow for the majority of people, who do not share these metaphysical assumptions.

The second brand of pacifism makes a step forward to meet these doubts; it scores better in terms of universality and normative validity. What I call existential pacifism does not need many assumptions and can gain universal approval. The pacifism of Tolstoy, unlike the popular understanding of this teaching, is not founded on any metaphysics or religious dogmas. The teaching of Christ is regarded simply as the most evident and simple truth of human existence and Christ is not regarded as God, but as a human being, godly as he may be. Tolstoy was confident that people were on the verge of realizing this simple and eternal truth and rejecting violence for good. Violence will become generally repugnant and not acceptable any longer.

Only when I yield myself to that intuition of love which demands the obedience to his law is my own heart happy and at rest. And not only can I then know how to act, but also I can and do discern that work, to cooperate in which my activity was designed and is required. I cannot fathom the divine work which is being accomplished in this world, and in which I participate by living. This work is the annihilation of discord and strife among men, and among all creatures.<sup>207</sup>

The general idea of Tolstoy's normative philosophy is very simple. Violence is not an evil, it is the Evil. If you want to stay out of harm's way, simply never use violence – neither in self-defense, nor in the defense of others. Since the political state is violent by its nature, we must turn away from the state and toss it away like an empty shell. The very moment people realize this simple and evident truth, their life becomes fulfilled, happy, and accomplished. Peter Brock rightfully holds: "Tolstoy's is primarily a system of individual ethics. But its application embraces the whole of society. Its practice demands the total transformation of society, a nonviolent revolution, which would replace the law of violence presently prevailing by a new law of love."<sup>208</sup> In the other words, the project of Tolstoy is the project for the

multitude, not for any institutional body. The transformation he is writing about is the transformation of the whole world, which no longer needs any sovereignty or institutional medium. There is no denying the fact that this transformation would be a most desirable one, and there can hardly be any rational argument against it. I do not think that Tolstoy is wrong strategically, although I think he is wrong tactically and pragmatically. If it were possible to accomplish this general transformation, which some human beings and even societies do accomplish, we really would solve the problem of violence once and for all. The only problem with Tolstoy's existential pacifism is the existing lack of trust and coordination, a prisoner's dilemma situation of sorts. Tolstoy was naively certain that human beings were already striving for nonviolence, and that it is only the harsh apparatus of the political state which prevents them from the realization of their nonviolent creed. This happened not to be the case, and Tolstoy would no doubt have modified his teaching had he lived up to the beginning of the World Wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We may be dead long before all the rest of the people, not to mention the states, understand the benefits of being nonviolent. Besides, the forces of evil may regard our nonviolence as a gift. Just imagine Hitler, invading Russia in 1941 to find out that the Russians are nonviolent. There is every reason to believe that this and the like nonviolent stand might turn out not only to be harmful in terms of bringing nonviolence as a lasting norm of life but as a treason and submission to evil. That is exactly the criticism, which was so passionately addressed to Tolstoy by Ivan Ilyin in his "On Resistance to Evil by Force." Existential pacifism fails pragmatically in the world as we currently know it. The project may become possible in global Empire, to which we will refer shortly.

The third brand is a pragmatic pacifism, founded by Gandhi. It strives to mend the faults of existential pacifism and still tries to remain loyal to the general message of thick pacifism, of being nonviolent to the extent of non-resistance

to evil by force. The policy of nonviolence is forged for this or that particular political environment and circumstances. Pragmatic pacifism scores much better in terms of its practical applicability. Unlike the pacifism of Tolstoy, it can be politically successful. We may take the example of Gandhi, King, or the recent theory of Gene Sharp (although it is already used for political purposes of the global Empire). There is every reason to believe that pragmatic thick pacifism can do the work of minimizing violence only in some special environment and circumstances. We can hardly rely on it in our efforts to change the general situation with violence. It fails miserably as a universal normative theory, which we are looking for. Hannah Arendt once mentioned that, if Gandhi's enormously powerful and successful strategy of nonviolent resistance had met with a different enemy – Stalin's Russia, Hitler's Germany, even prewar Japan, instead of England – the outcome would not have been decolonization, but massacre and submission.<sup>209</sup>

These general considerations leave me skeptical of the thick pacifist stance for current supranational affairs. Still, if I had to make a choice, I would lay my bet on the thick existential pacifism of Leo Tolstoy. The only problem is to overcome its pragmatic deficiencies without losing the universality of the ethical approach. Leo Tolstoy was a pragmatic thinker who failed to foresee the additional complexities, coming into existence in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The pacifism I am looking for will stick to the Tolstoy's idea of nonviolence as a goal, but try to find some universally applicable means for this goal. At this point we will have to reconsider our definition of violence and apply some criticism to the general understanding of violence by Tolstoy. My own position in terms of violence should be regarded as a pragmatic, but still universal development of Tolstoy's general position.

I will refer to the two deficiencies of Tolstoy's understandings of violence, which create the possibility for

improvement. The first is the equation of Violence and Force. Force should not to be regarded as violence if its application is based on the general consent of rational, free, and autonomous agents and for the benefit of those same agents in the political community. Plato famously asks in his *Republic* how we can deal with our friend, who has lent us a sword and demands it back, if he has gone mad in the meantime. Shall we drop the sword? Is it violence, if we have to bind or incarcerate the fellow for his own good? Tolstoy gives no answer to these questions, but it seems evident that justice demands that we keep the weapon. There is every reason to believe that there would be no violence in putting some force on our crazy friend, the same as if we forcefully and painfully grab him to prevent him from falling down the cliff. The lawful and moral political power is a kind of union based on friendship; not on violence. Even if it resorts to force, it does it for our own benefit. This is a Kantian criticism of Tolstoy, but not the criticism of Kant. To apply this kind of criticism, we need a kind of modified Kantianism, able to meet the idea of social discourse and contract. We can find such a theory in the philosophy of Rawls and Habermas. Both of them conceive universalization very differently than Kant, not as an individual mental procedure but as a social one.

Our second distinction from Tolstoy would be a certain justification of violence, but only in supranational relations and only for collective self-defense. Since the rational agreement of autonomous individuals cannot exceed the boundaries of discourse within the nation-state, international relations as we currently know it still remains the sphere of violence. But this violence may be reduced, minimized, and limited within generally acceptable levels, until we find some better terms of supranational cooperation. No one questions the use of violence in self-defense, because the danger is not only clear but also present, and the end justifying the means is immediate. Even Tolstoy in his classification of violence did not consider all forms of violence equally

repugnant and unacceptable. The most culpable violence is violence in cold blood, committed by governmental officials and executioners. The more or less excusable violence is the violence of the affect. The most excusable form of the latter is a collective self-defense, like the one he described in the *War and Peace*, which mercilessly crushes the invaders of our homeland. By acting in collective self-defense you come to rescue those whom you love. It is a form of love, not a form of egoism, unlike individual self-defense; you simply cannot help it, if you really love. More than that, collective self-defense may be a necessary precondition and a preliminary form for the creation of the truly nonviolent supranational relations. If we understand it like that, our difference from Tolstoy will be a difference of procedure, not a difference of principle.

The two subsequent sections of my paper are entitled “Violence of Justice” and “Justice of Violence.” The first deals with the problem of violence in the domestic sphere of the political state, the second with international relations and war. In the first I will draw a distinction between violence and force and justify the possibility of political power based on force, rather than violence. In the second section I will justify “necessary war,” as war restricted to self-defense and waged by a nonviolent state as precondition to nonviolent relations in the global society. My treatment of violence is limited to the political violence of the state, on both domestic and international levels. I believe that the political violence of the state still remains the major source of violence since the state still holds the monopoly on violence. If it is possible to minimize the political violence of the state, it is possible to bring to terms all the violence.

### **Violence of Justice**

Political power is not necessarily based on violence. What is truly political is nonviolent; a legitimate political order is founded on consent, not violence, although some amount of nonviolent force may be necessary. In our everyday life,

we are able to draw a distinction between force and violence. The social order may be based on force, without violence. Legitimate laws elicit voluntary rational compliance from citizen. Social order and lawful behavior arise without the threat of punishment as a response to the legitimacy and rationality of the law. As Habermas puts it: "Only those action norms are valid to which all possibly affected persons could agree as participants in rational discourse."<sup>210</sup> The difference of force and violence is a difference of value, not a difference of fact. One and the same physical act can be regarded as both Force and Violence depending on the motives, goals, and values involved. We may painfully grab a person to prevent her from falling down a cliff. We may restrict the movements of a lunatic. The truly moral law and the force of law is nothing else but the restrictions of this kind writ large. Of course in the majority of cases, even the most democratic states and the most egalitarian codes of law are based on violence, simply because the people, who constitute the popular sovereignty, are violent through and through. They love violence and violence emanates in the law codes they adopt. Daniel Ross refers to the "violent heart of the democracy." The United States is probably the most clear-cut case of this democratic violence. The idea of democracy in this country has a theistic background. It is founded in the biblical reminiscences of the Hebrew Republic ruled directly by God, which predetermined the idea of the exceptional nature of the American democracy. The religious sacred violence and victimizations for the benefit of such a democracy are not even regarded as violence, simply because it is a "divine violence" (law creating) and thus distinctive from the mythic (law preserving) violence.<sup>211</sup> Divine violence is nonviolent violence. It manifests itself in a just war that does not stick to any norms of conservative law, it creates a new world. A democratic crusade in the name of democratic transition, or the simple security of the exceptional democratic state, is also not regarded as violence. This internal reliance upon force has consequences for

America's external relations, as well. In fact, the weakness of its welfare state helps to explain why the U.S. is among the most overtly violent states on the face of the earth. This might be seen as the dark side of American exceptionalism.<sup>212</sup> This kind of egalitarianism and democracy cannot be regarded as rational, much less nonviolent. It is thus on a par with radical Islamism which is trying to achieve the global Caliphate. In this case terror and torture are just the balance of the two kinds of religious revolutionary violence fighting each other.<sup>213</sup> If it is so, the contemporary War on Terror is truly a clash of Civilizations, *à la* Huntington, which the American administration vehemently denies.

But democracy is not necessarily about that. Let us imagine the ideal case, rather than the American historical form of democracy. Let us follow the logic of Rawls in his *A Theory of Justice*.<sup>214</sup> Let us modify a little bit the quality of rationality to meet the necessity of time. The rational and autonomous individuals under the veil of ignorance are rational to the extent of understanding the danger of general violence both within and without the national borders. They may also come to understand the condition of multiculturalism, which means that they may belong to any of the cultural milieus constituting the political community. They are not eager to bargain security at the price of violence and are much less concerned to preserve the violent political state by all means. They would prefer their state to be nonviolent at least in terms of internal relations. They obviously do not want a democratic crusade, much less to become a target of clandestine terrorist groups, trying to promote their own project of the global world in response. It may be hard for them to understand the simple truth of the teaching of Christ in the interpretation of Tolstoy. They may be too rational for that. But they may understand the rational side of the necessity of being nonviolent, as Walter Benjamin understood it:

On this planet a great number of civilizations have perished in blood and horror. Naturally, one must wish for the planet that

one day it will experience a civilization that has abandoned blood and horror; in fact, I am ... inclined to assume that our planet is waiting for this. But it is terribly doubtful whether we can bring such a present to its hundred – or four-hundred-million birthday party. And if we don't, the planet will finally punish us, its unthoughtful well-wishers, by presenting us with the Last Judgment.<sup>215</sup>

Let us assume that the rational individuals want to bring this present for themselves here and now: if this desire is not rational, nothing is. In this case the rational individuals of Rawls, operating under the veil of ignorance in the original position, will vote in a slightly different way and will introduce a somewhat different set of norms and policies, namely with an emphasis on nonviolence. These norms will make them exclude certain practices, which are broadly incorporated in the practice of even the most democratic states. The justice system of many democratic states is often excessively violent to the extent of irrationality. The rational individuals, who understand the clandestine threat of violence to their very existence, will vote against certain forms of domestic political violence. The actual or hypothetical agreement of rational individuals will exclude the atavisms of violence, which are frequently on display in acting democracies. What follows is a short list of the practices that will be excluded if the rationality of the parties to the constitutional convention is given any chance to speak for itself.

1. There is absolutely no proof that capital punishment (the death penalty) has ever helped to diminish the level of crime. At the same time there is every reason to believe that even the most sophisticated justice system often puts innocent people to death. We stick to capital punishment only because we trust vengeful violence. If it is so, we should regard capital punishment as a remnant of vicious and revengeful spite. Revengeful religious fanaticism is the major driving force maintaining capital punishment all over the world. The system of state justice, which came to substitute the former tradition of blood revenge, was predetermined

at its early stages to be shaped according to the expectations of those who renounced their right to revenge by surrendering it to the state. The state justice system still sticks to the desires and values of a bloodthirsty mob. As I already mentioned, Tolstoy regarded capital punishment as the most disgusting and inexcusable form of violence. According to Gandhi, who tends to agree with Tolstoy: "The principle of taking a life for a life will, on the contrary, only lead to an increase of murders."<sup>216</sup>

2. Still another case of widely spread and unjustified violence of justice is related to the prison system. Temporal confinement may be regarded as punishment, but should not be regarded as violence if it is based on rational law. Rational individuals can agree that they may be detained if they violate the law or pose a threat to the others and or themselves. It goes without saying that the conditions and the level of comfort of the prisons must be a function of the general level of welfare of this or that country. In a Russian prison, we cannot reproduce the comforts of a Swiss prison, just because the general level of well-being of these countries is different. But a certain proportion should be at least discussed, determined, and enforced. Still there is an even more notorious and widely practiced source of penitential violence, which results from the practice of outsourcing the function of the security of the prison to hard core criminals, who take responsibility for maintaining order in the prison in exchange for privileges. In the Soviet Union it was a usual practice adopted to subdue the numerous political prisoners. But even now, nothing has been changed. The so-called "thieves-in-law" constitute the elite of the prison system and enjoy privileged status. They subdue, humiliate, and torture all the rest of the inmates in close cooperation with the official administration. This form of violence thrives behind bars not only in Russia but also all over the world. It also should be regarded as political violence, since the state simply either turns a blind eye on this practice or secretly maintains it. Gandhi thought that crime should be treated as a disease.

I do not think that we should go that far, but in any case violence should be eliminated from the prison system.

3. Another case of widely used domestic violence is compulsory military service. Conscription from its very beginning was a harsh and inhumane form of social discipline. With the introduction of the idea of popular sovereignty, attitudes toward conscription became ambivalent. In many cases military service could be a matter of pride and self-realization. The French army of Napoleon was mainly composed of citizen-soldiers who served with pride, honor and initiative. This was also the case in the Soviet army for many years. This is not the case now, and I doubt it is the case anywhere. Conscription can easily take the form of a compulsory military service for the poor and vulnerable and as such an additional burden for the lower strata of society, factually a state slavery. Some contemporary pacifists rightfully regard conscription as a pure violence. Thus Holmes considered contemporary conscription unlawful, since “nobody has the right to order to kill.”<sup>217</sup> Yet another reason to reject conscription and to stick to the professional army is that the citizen-soldier is not capable of respecting the humanitarian norms of war. The eighteen-year-old Russian conscripts in Chechnya were just a frightened crowd, opening fire on everything that moved. They cannot even be blamed for the damage they caused.

4. We should also regard it as violence if a certain professional group of state employees is unjustly underpaid by a state and thus subject to harm and suffering. In this case, it is not the level of payment itself which matters, but mostly distributive justice. The salary of a medical doctor and school teacher in Russia (two–three hundred dollars a month) is not just insufficient and below subsistence level. It is humiliating and harmful, not for this category of professionals only but for the nation as a whole. It is humiliating and harmful not only because it is low, but also because it is unjust. The salaries of other governmental

employees (especially governmental officials) are not only high but incredibly high, even according to international standards. The privileges of governmental officials are indeed enormous and arrogant. Unfortunately statistics of this kind neither exist, nor is possible. The privileges are usually clandestine. Some facts occasionally find their way to the public media. Thus we can read in the popular newspaper in the article by Igor Naumov: "The former head of Central Bank Sergei Ignatiev was officially recognized as most highly paid head of the largest central banks in the world."<sup>218</sup> It is a shame and violence that a country of humiliatingly poor teachers and medical doctors can at the same time afford unbelievably high incomes for state officials. The practice of bailing out of certain well-heeled businesses and banks in the USA, as well as the practice of paying enormous bonuses to the CEOs of companies which in fact failed to do a proper job in the face of the financial crisis, belongs to the same category of harmful practices, although in the latter case it may refer less to the violence proper and more to injustice.

5. Yet another evident form of violence is the torture of prisoners. The elimination of torture from investigatory practices constituted the development of modern law. The American Constitution prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." The prohibition on torture appeared in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. It is true that torture is widely used in many countries and many prisons as an illegal practice. In Russia it is an extrajudicial norm, to which the government turns a blind eye. It is rather different if torture comes to enjoy the legal status. The G.W. Bush administration in the USA introduced the so-called "enhanced interrogation techniques" to be used against suspected terrorists. It is still torture, which has always been and still remains a case of violence and human rights violations.<sup>219</sup> Even if the torture gives some positive short-term pragmatic advantages it is both unlawful and harmful in the long run. It disrupts the system of justice and enhances general

violence. The United States enacted domestic legislation that prohibits all torture. Kahn rightfully holds in his extended research: "Of course, torture violates the most ordinary understanding of our legal norms and political institutions. Similarly, it violates our ordinary moral intuitions."<sup>220</sup>

6. One more innovation, widely practiced in Russia during the Chechen campaign and currently in the USA after Afghanistan, is the detention of terrorism suspects, or simply those who fight against American aggression, in special prisons. The prisoners held indefinitely at the U.S. military base in Guantanamo Bay violate not only the Geneva Conventions on the treatment of prisoners of war but also U.S. criminal law. The inmates do not have any legal status. They are neither criminal convicts, nor prisoners of war. The practice has long been the subject of debates and a matter of human rights concern. President Obama has promised to close the prison and stop the practice; nevertheless, nothing has changed and the practice still goes on. Ross finds it rather telling and eloquent: "But the fact that the camps are largely accepted by the American public without too much fuss or trouble also tells us something."<sup>221</sup>

7. One more form of violence, which also enjoys legal status is the practice of now widely used targeted killings. Whatever the intentions, motives or chances of success of such a practice it is a cold-blooded murder, even worse than the cold-blooded murder of capital punishment. The Americans are widely using targeted killings, very often by means of drones, with innocent lives frequently lost as collateral damage. Israel has engaged in a practice of extrajudicial killing for decades, by means of so-called targeted assassinations. It offends the idea of law. It is violence pure and simple, which must be eliminated if we want to achieve nonviolent state.

The list can be continued. It is not the purpose of this article to provide all the facts of the unjustified violence,

which thrives within the democratic state. These and the like forms of violence which have no justification, can and should be eliminated from the practice of the state. The argument of security or utility simply does not work here. If the state is not capable of running the security system by other means it simply should not exist, or must be considered a rogue state. It is true, there can be a kind of pessimistic or, rather, cynical attitude toward the possibility of eliminating of violence as a legal practice of the state. This cynicism is rather characteristic to the so-called postmodernists. Derrida holds: "As soon as there is sovereignty, there is abuse of power and a rogue state. Abuse is the law of use; it is the law itself... Potentially or actually."<sup>222</sup> I do not agree with that, otherwise all our efforts to improve the human condition seem senseless. It is the same as to claim that miscarriage is the law of birth.

The political states are different to a great extent in terms of their general level of domestic violence. The rates of homicide, violent crime, and incarceration may be high or low. What seems evident is that the violent states, or the countries with a low score of domestic nonviolence, should have no political strength and moral fortitude to rule over other countries. Domestic peace is the common demand and the necessary condition for all projects to address global problems. It would probably be a good idea to create some kind of a global political body of nonviolent states. Let it be called, for example The Association of Nonviolent States (ANS). This association may act within the United Nations or on its own accord. It could take care of some of the tasks of the Security Council of the United Nations, providing guarantees of peace, security, and non-intervention and running peacekeeping operations.

### **Justice of Violence**

In the sphere of supranational relations, violence still reigns supreme. Tolstoy was rather naïve to hold that as soon as we disband the political state there will be no violent

clashes of the social communities. My personal experience of Karabakh, Yugoslavia, and Chechnya makes me certain that violence very often has much deeper roots, which go far beyond the political state and may force the political state itself to go violent. But it is almost always the political sphere and the politicians, who carefully brew, direct, nourish, and perpetuate this violence for their own egotistical purposes. Tolstoy did not really take into consideration the dark side of the massive communication of the communities; he simply did not witness the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The great American realist, Reinhold Niebuhr, pessimistically believed that human egoism would never let the dreams of a future without conflict come true. The major human instinct of self-preservation tends to blow out of proportion in a group. The group is more likely to act aggressively than the individual. "The beast of prey ceases from its conquests when its maw is crammed, but man's lusts are fed by his imagination, and he will not be satisfied until the universal objectives which the imagination envisages are obtained."<sup>223</sup> Because groups tend to regard their most aggressive demands and actions as defensive, they are likely to regard objections from other groups as hostile. The power that prevents anarchy in intra-group relations encourages anarchy in inter-group relations.

According to Hans Morgenthau, who develops the line of tragic realism in American political philosophy, politics is a contest between indistinguishably cynical actors, all driven by one force: "the lust for power which is common to all men."

For while man's vital needs are capable of satisfaction, his lust for power would be satisfied only if the last man became an object of his domination, there being nobody above him or beside him, that is, if he became like God. For here the *animus dominandi* is not merely blended with dominant aims of a different kind but is the very essence of the intention, the very life-blood of the action, the constitutive principle of politics as a distinct sphere of human activity. Because the simple and universal lust for power, rather than economic inequality or the existence of undemo-

cratic civilizations, drove international conflict, war would persist in the international realm indefinitely.<sup>224</sup>

The undying lust for power makes any political solution to war impossible.

We cannot disregard or ignore this profound evidence. Tolstoy has no counter arguments. It seems that in supranational relations we have very limited choices: to stick stubbornly to nonviolence and face the possibility of annihilation and death, or to go violent and inflict death on the others, even if we do not really want it. I agree with Hannah Arendt that it is impossible to trade away the sovereign right of the political community to resist death. Tolstoy's insistence on collective non-resistance sounds extremely counterintuitive. The aim of the political community is first and foremost its own continued existence. If this existence is under threat, the community has a right to wage war on a perpetrator up to the level of absolute war. What makes violence unavoidable is its capacity to serve as an instrument of political mobilization and fierce resistance. Unfortunately the international relations and the decisions to wage war go beyond the national ethical discourse, and there is still no global ethical discourse with sufficient ability to influence political decisions. There seems to be no other way but to agree with morally justified violence, based on the idea of the right of collective defense in the situation of general anarchy. Unfortunately, there is no way to avoid violence in the relations of sovereign states. But there is a way to minimize and ameliorate it as a preliminary step toward totally nonviolent supranational relations.

We can at least try to diminish this violence to the socially acceptable level of Necessary War, which is significantly different than Just War. The former justifies war not by reference to justice, but by reference to necessity. These are basically different normative forms. Moral necessity is stronger than justice and more restrictive. A crusade, which may be supposed just is not necessary and cannot be regarded

as a cause of war. According to Ivan Ilyin, who developed the doctrine of necessary war in Russian philosophy: "Resistance to evil with the sword is permissible not when it is possible, but when it is necessary; but if it is in fact necessary, man does not have a 'right', but a 'duty' to follow this path." Still, "the way of the sword is an unjust path."<sup>225</sup> The concept of necessary war, unlike the concept of just war, is an existential one. It does not rest on moral, much less religious consideration. It is only concerned with the physical existence of the political body, threatened with elimination from the face of the earth. The Necessary War is a reluctant war; it knows only one rightful cause, which is self-defense.

Of course, there is a problem with self-defense, too. Aggressive wars were often waged under the banner of self-defense. Government officials routinely deceive their fellow countrymen. Occupying the Sudetenland in 1938, the Nazis claimed to be acting in defense of the Sudeten Germans; the Soviet tanks rolled into Afghanistan in 1979 with the claim of defending the local government. One of the arguments used by the United States administration in Iraq after 9/11 was that it was self-defense against the use of weapons of mass destruction. Even genocide, not to mention terrorism, very often goes under the name of self-defense. Thus, in his fundamental research on genocide, Adam Jones claims that, "The genocide was carried out on the grounds of military 'self-defense' against minority groups accused of seeking to subvert the Ottoman state, in alliance with a historic enemy."<sup>226</sup>

Nevertheless, there is a core meaning of political self-defense, linked to the return to the status quo. Self-defense can in no way be mixed with the idea of revenge, or even deterrence, nor can it refer to pre-emption or prevention. This makes it a more or less reliable instrument, especially if used alongside unbiased international law and international organizations, which are supposed to provide collective security. The founding of the United Nations was based on a principle that strictly banned recourse to force with the



only exception for self-defense, according to the Article 51 of the **UN Charter**. The general idea behind this system was the further development and continuation of the idea of the international system of rules, which is known by name of the “Westphalian order.” The basic parameters of this system are still in use. Basically this is the ideal of relations of mutually respecting states who do not interfere with one another’s domestic concerns. It is the existence of this system which made it possible for Gandhi to assert: “Therefore a nation or a group which has made nonviolence its final policy, cannot be subjected to slavery even by the atom bomb.”<sup>227</sup> It would be subjected, if the system of security did not exist. The collective security which was created at the end of the World War II was able to give some guarantees to the peaceful strivings of the nations. After the fall of the Soviet Union we expected the further growth of democratic constitutionalism, security, and peace based on the general idea of nonintervention. The “Westphalian order” could be further improved by the use of what I have called the Association of Nonviolent States.

Unfortunately the “Westphalian order” is in decline. Instead of sovereign states, respecting each other and the United Nations, we are witnessing the rise of the new form of global sovereignty, which some scholars already entitled the “Empire.” This Empire is first and foremost a new form of the global sovereignty of Capital, which is getting free from the bounds and obligations inflicted by the nation states and national moral discourses. We are witnessing the rise of an unchallengeable capitalist sovereignty. What is even more important, this sovereignty is not identical with politics but is in fact a threat to political life.<sup>228</sup> The concept of the global Empire of capital was developed in detail by Hardt and Negri. They hold that this is a specific form of sovereignty: Empire no longer presuppose any balance of power or continuous exclusion of war. On the contrary, its sovereignty is only possible in the state of constant limited wars or, better, extended police operations inflicted on the multitude of

those who do not succumb to its power. Unlike the former Westphalian system, where war was a limited state of exception, the global empire wages a permanent war. War thus becomes a norm rather than an exception. In other words, the state of exception becomes permanent and general; it is the rule, pervading both foreign relations and the homeland. Of course, this is soft power and the war is going to be limited more or less to terms of just war theory, which was swiftly renovated for this special occasion. But the spirit of crusade of Augustine's original Just War Theory has remained a permanent and unchangeable core of this new version of the doctrine.



The two basic forms of the new crusade are the war on terror and the war of humanitarian intervention. Both presuppose the continued uninterrupted exercise of violence, with a declared just cause, but without end and with massive collateral damage. The aggression which was once outlawed by the **UN Charter** is openly professed now under the banner of humanitarian intervention and the war on terror. Imperial sovereignty creates order by proposing a regime of disciplinary administration and political control directly based on continuous war. In such a system the violence of the strong is automatically legitimated and the violence of the weak is immediately labeled terrorism. The very distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence, between wars of liberation and wars of oppression tend to blur, which is why this postmodern state of war resembles pre-modern war. Humanity is plunging again into an indistinct state of war continually over-coded in moral and religious terms.

Ross holds:

The War on Terror is formulated as a potentially endless struggle against an infinitely extended enemy, that permeates all borders, and that may inhabit any sphere. The new struggle is essentially militarized, the sovereignty of individual states less important than a coordinated and integrated system of "security." Such a

system may be centralized in the United States, but nevertheless implies the creation of planetary security arrangements that transcend any particular state.<sup>229</sup>

It is morally inspired and unlimited total war, in which the adversary is not treated as a human being, not even as an enemy. I doubt that there can be war against terror in the original meaning of the term “war.” The war can be waged only against sovereign authority; and terror is not a sovereign authority, much less an entity. The war on terror, like the war on crime, or drugs or poverty is not a war in the proper sense, it cannot be regarded as an exception, it tends to become a norm – a perpetual global hostility of enhanced security measures, which tend to overthrow democracy and liberal norms. According to Kahn, terror evokes torture in response, and torture evokes terror. The two tend to resonate and perpetuate each other without end.<sup>230</sup>

The concept of a humanitarian intervention ruins the very foundations of international law, as Hugo Grotius set them. The just war of modernity is only possible as a conventional war, of legitimate and mutually respecting states with a presupposed exit strategy. The humanitarian rhetoric, especially blown out of proportion by the mass media, belonging to Capital and used in the information war is plunging us into absolute enmity. It opens the Pandora’s box of perpetual war. There is no mutually recognized supreme authority; the claims of humanity and human rights will always be regarded as biased and there is no firm factual ground to assess the level of the human rights violations. Besides, the most amazing fact is the propensity for humanitarian intervention demonstrated by the USA – in terms of the domestic violence, the most violent country in the West. The adversaries are usually viewed as outlaws and enemies of the humanity. The use of the language of humanity renders violence extremely dangerous in such cases. Schmitt rightfully holds: “Humanity as such cannot wage war because it has no enemy, at least not on this planet.”<sup>231</sup>

In the former system of collective security within the Westphalian order some limited forms of peacekeeping operations were possible, but only within strictly codified international law and by means of internationally recognized peacekeeping forces. The general logic of humanitarian intervention as well as the war on terror is the logic of absolute enmity. It is to annihilate the foe, not to defeat the enemy. This is the logic of war escalation without limit and a dangerous slippery slope.

### **The Idea of Political Pacifism**

It is hard to predict the further development of supranational relations. The strategy of introducing nonviolence will depend on the factual course of events. We are facing a certain eclipse of reason, which results from the condition of a sole, lonely, and seemingly crazy superpower, which works as the driving force for the coming global empire of capital. Basically there are two possible strategies for those who struggle for peace, which correspond to two possible trends of development.

We may in the long run return to some kind of balance of power. That would mean the restoration of the Westphalian Order, the principle of state sovereignty and international law. In this case we may at least restrict war to conventional war and the conventional war strictly to self-defense. We may return to the conditions of peaceful coexistence and to the Kantian idea of the Eternal Peace. Kant had argued that republican states would not generally go to war, even less so the republican nonviolent states. According to Kant, there are two main reasons to hope for peace. Of course Kant did not consider the possibility of absolute enmity and terrorism. We have somehow to deal with these threats and add to the Kantian conception some additional enforcements and peacekeeping operations.

There are certain deficiencies in the mechanisms of the United Nations as the instrument of peace. It is rather

inefficient, clumsy, wasteful, and outdated. It does not really correspond to the reality of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The truly reliable and earnest international body, which would be able to carry out the task of international arbiter, peace keeper and peace enforcer, can be the Association of Nonviolent States. The preliminary criterion of nonviolent status of a state has been worked out in the previous chapters. The majority of the contemporary European states, Canada, Japan, India can fit this criterion. But not the United States, Russian, China, and many other states with rather murky domestic nonviolent record. The ANS may well be able to create its own peace keeping and peace building forces. These forces should have nothing to do with the contemporary national armies. They should be neither the conscripts nor the professionals in the style of the American "green card army." They should be highly motivated professionals capable of risking their own lives for the benefit of saving the lives of the civilians and extremely reluctant to do any collateral killings. These should be the military more in the style of contemporary national policemen, firemen, and security guards. Special ethical codes should be developed for this contingent. Only they would have the moral right to interfere in case of national crisis in this or that country and only they would be allowed to engage in a humanitarian intervention in exceptional circumstances. These forces may be outsourced, which means that the contract may be forged with one or two of the international military companies for the special purpose of running peacekeeping operations. The choice of the military companies should be highly competitive.

The other scenario will take place if the situation of the sole superpower continues and the world drifts in the direction of the global empire. There is every reason to believe that global capital constituted as a positive universality and lacking the current legal control of the national state will tend to be very similar to what we already have in the case of Russian crony capitalism and patrimonial state. This is the most clear-cut case of a state totally subdued to the

interests of the enrichment of a few oligarchs. Here we have a political state which has nothing to do with politics or popular interests, a state which is privately owned by the elite. Something like that we are risking to get on the global level if the corresponding global society will be late to take roots. The natural tendency for capital is a search for unrestricted and unlimited profit. The empire of global capital may mean global inequality, injustice, dictatorship, and war.

In this case the strategy of bringing peace will be completely different, but not without hope. Fortunately the global empire will inevitably trigger the emergence of global civil society and the force of the multitude will tend to grow. Nonviolent resistance to war as well as to global inequality, domination, and exploitation will take different forms and some new strategies will emerge of which we cannot know. Thus, according to optimistic prognosis of Hardt and Negri, some kind of a global bio-political strike might be used to block any war. Or the multitude will invent another peaceful weapon that will not only allow it to defend itself but will also be constructive.<sup>232</sup> If it comes true, it will be exactly as predicted by Tolstoy – the global individual nonviolent resistance to war, enhanced by new technologies and means of communication.

## Leo Tolstoy and Joseph Brodsky on Resistance to Evil

OLGA V. ARTEMYEVA

*Leo Tolstoy and Joseph Brodsky (1940–1996) proposed very different interpretations of the commandment, “Resist not evil,” each relying on his own practical and moral experience. The analysis of differences in these Russian thinkers’ approaches to the commandment demonstrates the complexity and depth of the ethical problem implicit in this commandment.*

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The idea of nonviolence came about in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C. and is found in all cultures and religions formed in that epoch. In European culture it is expressed in the Christian commandment of nonresistance articulated in Matthew’s Gospel (5:38–41):

You have heard that it was said, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if

someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

The “in between” compositional position of this commandment partially delineates its meaning and its significance: on the one hand, it comes as a response to the principle of equivalent retribution (*lex talionis*<sup>233</sup>) and is opposed to it. On the other hand, the commandment of nonresistance precedes the commandment of love,<sup>234</sup> which epitomizes the very essence of Christianity. The commandment of nonresistance is to a large extent explained by the commandment of love, i.e., it is precisely the commandment of love that spells out what it means: to refuse to respond to evil with evil, to hold no grudge against one’s neighbor, to forgive offences caused, and to seek conciliation.<sup>235</sup> As conjoint in content, the two commandments thereby testify to the almost central significance of the nonresistance commandment in Christianity.

Due to this circumstance the commandment of nonresistance is even nowadays subject to polemical interpretations. In this debate one can single out at least two explicitly opposite approaches. The first is put forward and asserted by certain thinkers who expound the commandment of nonresistance in the literal sense as an absolute and universal law. First and foremost, among these we find Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and their contemporary followers. The other stand is represented by philosophers who perceive this commandment as something that is fully at variance not only with everyday experience but, primarily, with our *moral* experience. This experience maintains that it is necessary to resist evil and that resistance to evil is, indeed, an unquestionable moral imperative. The proponents of this stand reject the absolute character of the commandment of nonresistance, recognize the priority of the demand to resist evil, ascertain the permissibility of resisting evil by force in strictly defined instances, and seek to formulate and

substantiate *ethical* principles of such resistance. These principles restrict the use of force and make it morally admissible and appropriate. This stand is rooted in the tradition that originates from Augustine; it is found in the doctrines by Thomas Aquinas, Hugo Grotius, Russian philosophers Ivan Ilyin, Nikolai Berdyaev, Vladimir Solovyov, and in the contemporary theories of a just war.

One can also distinguish a third stand on the issue of the Christian commandment of nonresistance. The first one imposes an absolute prohibition on definite ways of resisting evil and the second one proceeds from the unconditional priority of the demand to resist evil; the specificity of the third stand lies in the simultaneous recognition of the commandment's key significance and the absolute priority of the demand to resist evil in its concrete manifestations. In so doing, the commandment of nonresistance itself is construed exclusively as a prescription for fighting evil. Poet Joseph Brodsky upholds this stand in "A Commencement Address," delivered in 1984 at Williams College.<sup>236</sup> In this speech Brodsky directly contrasts his understanding of the commandment of nonresistance with Leo Tolstoy's interpretation, and his doctrine of nonviolence in general with the doctrines of Gandhi and King. The latter two believed it was possible and even necessary to implement the strategy of nonviolence not just in individual practice but also in political practice, and scored significant success along this line.

The subject matter of this article is a reconstruction of interpretations of the commandment of nonresistance by Leo Tolstoy and Joseph Brodsky. By relying on the analysis of particular features of their approaches I will show that, mindful of the unquestionably humanist significance of the refusal to resist evil with force, its value, both theoretically and practically, will in many respects depend on the ability to see a complex problem inherent in this idea, which does not allow a simple solution.

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Tolstoy developed one of the most consistent doctrines that asserted nonresistance as the supreme moral principle. He assigned nearly central, if not central, significance to the commandment of nonresistance. In his letter to Russian book critic M.A. Engelhard, Tolstoy wrote: "the very short fourth commandment, Resist not evil with evil, reply not to evil, is, I shall not say, the main, but the binding link of the whole teaching, the one which all the pseudo-Christian teachings have most carefully circumvented."<sup>237</sup>

Tolstoy perceived the Christian doctrine exclusively through the prism of the Gospel which, in his opinion, was not so much the exposition of the divine word showing the way to salvation or to embracing eternity but, rather, the doctrine of living – a concrete guide to life, a guide within the reach of all people. In the same letter he urged Engelhard to reflect on the Gospel – "Not of the Gospel as a word of Christ, or God, and so forth, but of the Gospel as the clearest, simplest, most comprehensible, and practical teaching of how each of us and all men are to live."<sup>238</sup>

It is important to keep in mind that Tolstoy, to be sure, did not treat the commandment of nonresistance simply as the demand not to resist evil at all, but as a prohibition on specific ways of responding to evil. The meaning of the commandment for him consisted precisely in that it was impermissible to respond to evil with evil. And Tolstoy identified evil with violence. The commandment of nonresistance, in his view, imposed an absolute prohibition on the use of violence. The meaning of the notion of violence in Tolstoy's interpretation is extended beyond limit. In the first place, for him both an initiative action aimed at destroying the other (others), and reciprocation that safeguards the other (others) from the destructive impact caused by the initiator of force, are violence. Both the initial display of violence as well as the reciprocation of violence by force, the attempt to protect the other or oneself in a situation when other means are unavailable, are tantamount

to violence for Tolstoy – i.e., they are absolutely evil. In the second place, in terms of content, besides murder, the threat of murder and other external action that infringes human dignity or inflicts some sort of damage on the human person with the purpose of impelling him or her to do something, are acts of violence. Tolstoy also believes that it is violence to do to somebody “what he does not like, and what he who uses force would certainly not like done to himself.”<sup>239</sup> This definition of violence is the key one for Tolstoy. Essentially he identifies as violence any action performed against the will (desire) of another person. When so understood, violence is evil as such and is opposite to the love that implies the submission of one’s own will to the will of the other person. Nonresistance, nonviolence, the refusal to reciprocate evil with evil – according to Tolstoy, all of these are manifestations of love, the only form of existence adequate for human nature.

If one takes into account these interpretations of violence, then the commandment of nonresistance in Tolstoy’s reading can be specified as a prohibition on responding to evil a) by murder, the threat of murder or any other external action that infringes the aggressor’s dignity, or b) by performing toward the aggressor actions which he does not like to experience, or which are aimed against his will (desire). Tolstoy seems to have avoided confusion, which the latter thesis may cause, by acknowledging that there is no indisputable, universally and unexceptionally acceptable criterion of evil by which one can identify the wicked:

Even if to use force against wicked men had been permitted by God, since it is impossible to find a perfect and unfailing distinction by which one could positively know the wicked from the good, so it would come to all individual men and societies of men mutually regarding each other as wicked men, as is the case now.<sup>240</sup>

Animosity between people emerges, more often than not, precisely due to the fact that they differ in their ideas about good and evil. So when people stop dividing their kin into

good and evil, Tolstoy argues, there will be less violence in the world. However, in this case this explanation makes nothing clear, for Tolstoy himself says quite definitely that violence is evil as such. Therefore, one can hardly doubt that the one who kills, threatens to kill, or violates another person's dignity commits evil. But since (for Tolstoy) the use of force even toward the initiator of violence aimed to stop a concrete violent action is evil as such, force does not allow us to overcome evil – it can only multiply it, i.e., it will aggravate the problem. It is impossible to quench fire with fire or dry water with water; likewise it is impossible to destroy evil with evil.

It is becoming clear from Tolstoy's reasoning that he viewed the problem of opposing evil exclusively in metaphysical terms, i.e., as the problem of completely overcoming evil itself and achieving the kingdom of pure goodness. What will make it possible to oust evil from people's lives once and for all? This is the question which Tolstoy was answering and whose solution he thought to be possible not just in theory but also in reality. It makes no sense, according to Tolstoy, to separate the question about how one can stop particular evil – violence toward a concrete person in concrete circumstances, about how one can protect another concrete person from evil perpetrated against him at the moment – from the general context of decisive victory over evil and establishment of the kingdom of pure goodness. The subject matter of his deliberations was the salvation of mankind from evil as such and not the protection of the life and dignity of a concrete other person from the threat coming from a real villain in concrete circumstances.

Tolstoy dealt metaphysically with the problem of opposing evil, and erroneously ascribed the same approach to his opponents. He assumed that they believed the use of force – i.e., violence, in his sense of the word – to be a means for winning a decisive victory over evil and for maintaining the good. Meanwhile Tolstoy's opponents were actually

addressing a more down-to-earth problem: they were exploring the possibility of using force as a way to oppose specific manifestations of evil in exceptional circumstances – when all other ways prove inapplicable. And one of the chief questions here is how to protect the particular victim (or victims) right here and right now against an aggressor who, in the given set of circumstances, cannot be stopped by anything except the use of force and how, in so doing, not to exceed the limits of what is morally permissible. To put it another way, the fundamental problem that Tolstoy's opponents were thinking about was not how to establish a kingdom of pure goodness on the earth, but how to confront the real manifestations of evil.

A particular feature of Tolstoy's understanding of the nonresistance commandment is associated with the treatment of the commandment as an absolute, universal and immediately applicable law – a totally indispensable law. Tolstoy cites many examples in an effort to convince us that the use of force is always inadmissible and unnecessary and, moreover, futile when resisting evil. These examples are important for making clear the essence of Tolstoy's doctrine; they make the doctrine definite and rule out the possibility of variations in interpreting his ethical ideas. Tolstoy gave a vivid explanatory example in his letter to Engelhard cited earlier:

All men are brothers, all are alike; and if a Zulu comes and wants to roast my children, there is only one thing which I can do, and that is, to impress upon the Zulu that this is not advantageous and good for him – to impress this upon him, while submitting to his force – the more so since [there is] no profit in struggling with a Zulu: either he will overcome me and will roast more of my children, or I shall overcome him, and my children will get ill tomorrow and die in worse agonies of disease. There is no profit in it, because by submitting I certainly do better, while by resisting I do something doubtful.<sup>249</sup>

The law of nonresistance to evil by force must not be violated, not even when the case in point is saving the life of a concrete

person, not even when saving the life of one's own child. It is noteworthy that Tolstoy justified his claim of the absoluteness of the nonresistance commandment by reference to the unconditional value of human life – value that should not be encroached upon under any circumstances. However the logic behind his line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that only the life of the violence initiator is of unconditional value; the value of his victim's life proves secondary, because he may not save it by doing anything that the aggressor does not want. And in this example he does not want to be prevented from roasting children.

One additional argument that Tolstoy most frequently employs to confirm the senselessness of using force against the aggressor was determined by epistemological skepticism: we can never know for sure that we are truly rendering a service to the victim of the attack. As follows from the latter example, it might well be better for the children to be roasted by Zulus rather than die in a terrible agony from a contagious disease. Breaking an absolute law may cause consequences for all those involved in the situation that are far worse than the strict observation of the law. The impossibility of having absolutely trustworthy knowledge about the potential course of events, according to Tolstoy, also justifies non-interference for people who are capable of taking guidance at least from common sense, if not from sublime moral considerations, in their actions.

An impression may arise that Tolstoy was simply indifferent to the question of fighting real evil – violence. In one of his works he wrote: "The Christian will not dispute with anyone, nor attack anyone, nor use violence against anyone. On the contrary, he will bear violence without opposing it."<sup>242</sup> But this statement would be excessively strong. Tolstoy is simply convinced that this kind of a tolerant attitude toward violence can deliver the whole world from violence. Tolstoy's texts allow one to track down several ways

of combating evil that are morally grounded in his opinion. In the first place, this means taking care of one's own soul. Taking care of the soul requires an essential repudiation of violence in all its forms and the maintenance of the order of love in one's soul. Hence self-improvement presupposes a definite – nonviolent – treatment of all other people (including enemies and wrongdoers), with forgiveness, reconciliation, and love. Secondly, opposing evil demands non-participation in those forms of activity that somehow imply the use of violence. Herein Tolstoy referred to governmental, industrial, clerical, educational, scientific, aesthetic and other types of activity that, according to him, not only permit the violation of the fundamental moral law of nonviolence but also rely on violence canonized as law and are inconceivable without the existence of slavery.<sup>243</sup> Third, it is necessary to explain to people that violence in whatever form is criminal and senseless. And, finally, in the event of facing straightforward violence that carries a direct threat to people's lives, Tolstoy sees no other way out but addressing the villain's common sense, an attempt to impress on him that his intentions are vain, unprofitable, and wrong for him. In the last resort one can try to come to the victim's defense at the cost of one's own life. It is only at this ultimate point that Tolstoy speaks of a situation of facing real evil and a tentative way of resisting it.

Tolstoy's strategy of opposing evil without the use of violence, understood in broad terms, consisted in the renunciation of evil and non-participation in evil doings: "Yes, before doing good I must myself stand aside from evil, in conditions where one may cease to do evil."<sup>244</sup> Every person must put oneself in these conditions, and this is the only case when the space of evil's manifestation will shrink like the Magic Skin, while the space of love, conversely, will widen, thereby solving the problem of overcoming evil and maintaining the good in the world. Tolstoy rests assured that in order to defeat evil it is necessary not so much to fight it but to go beyond it: as far as possible, one should not come

into contact with evil but safeguard the purity of one's soul and live in keeping with the laws of the good enshrined in the Gospel. The most important of these laws require: the prohibition of evil speaking; the purity of married life and avoidance of debauchery; the prohibition of swearing and promising anything in the future; returning good for evil, being patient under wrong, and giving the cloak; not doing evil to our enemies, speaking well of them, and making no distinction between them and our neighbours.<sup>245</sup>

The strategy of non-participation may seem sublime but it is unlikely to achieve the goal that Tolstoy himself regarded as being of primary importance: the establishment of a world without violence. Repudiation of resistance to real evil when facing it directly (as was the case, for example, with the Zulus) turns out to be collusion with real evil – something that, surely, does not make it less evil. Self-sacrifice in opposing evil, motivated by recognizing the demand not to perpetrate what the other does not want, even if he is wicked and expressly demonstrates his intentions and determination to carry them out, turns out to be self-sacrifice not so much for the sake of protecting or saving the victim but, instead, actually helps the wicked one: having eliminated the victim's "defender" he can go back, unresisted, to his intention and get it done. The moral pathos of Tolstoy's stand has also greatly declined: while self-sacrifice for the sake of remaining true to one's convictions excites admiration, maintaining loyalty to convictions at the price of other people's lives is in moral terms extremely questionable.

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The meaning of the nonresistance commandment in Joseph Brodsky's interpretation is primarily determined by an understanding of the nature of evil that differs from Tolstoy's vision. Evil, as seen by Brodsky, is first and foremost a "palpable social reality," which is very often beyond our control. Evil is irremovable from life – just like good. Evil assumes a variety of forms, many of which are not necessarily

extreme or easily recognizable ones; it often acts “in the guise of good,” something that makes it rather difficult to recognize. This is the reason why it is particularly dangerous. The prevalence of evil in a variety of forms and guises makes confronting it inevitable. Unlike Tolstoy, Brodsky is confident that it is impossible to stand beyond evil and preserve moral eminence. No efforts along this line – neither taking care of the soul nor artful providence – can ever prevent an encounter with evil. If so, it is important to understand how to behave when explicitly faced with a real manifestation of evil and how to depart from a rendezvous with evil with a minimum of moral losses to one’s own self rather than know the way to avoid an encounter with evil while remaining morally impeccable.

Brodsky perceived the commandment of nonresistance as a formula for how to behave at such a “rendezvous.” This formula mandates active or even “aggressive” struggle against evil in various situations, including the situation of inherently unequal contest when the enemy has immense strength on its side, while the means of counteracting it are extremely poor. In this situation an adequate understanding of the commandment proves vitally important, as the price of misreading the commandment may prove extremely high.

First, Brodsky is warning against a moralistic and political reading of the commandment. Since Christ was not just a good man but also a divine spirit, “It is fatal to harp on His goodness at the expense of His metaphysics.” To Brodsky this means, among other things, that the commandment does not demand moral or political resistance to evil, but *existential* resistance. Failure to grasp this is either fatal or dooms the non-resistant to the life of a “mental bourgeois” who merely enjoys the comfort of his own convictions.

Second, Brodsky points to the inadvisability of reducing the meaning of the commandment to nonresistance as such. It was precisely this reduction that he saw as Tolstoy’s fundamental error. In real life this approach cannot and

does not result in anything but collusion with evil, increasing its scope, its greater upsurge and “delaying the comprehension of its weaknesses.” Nonresistance as such ensures neither real victory over evil, since the aggressor more often than not perceives the victim’s nonresistance as a guarantee of his impunity, nor the moral character of the victory. From this viewpoint, the vulnerability of the stance of nonresistance consists, among other things, in the possibility that the non-resistant tempts the aggressor into continuing his willful actions. However a more significant reason to question the morality of the non-resistant’s victory, according to Brodsky, is that this victory “renders the victim superior, that is better, than his enemy.” But evil arises exactly when somebody starts to think that he is better than other people: “This is why you’ve been hit on your right cheek in the first place.”

In order to correctly understand precisely what the commandment of nonresistance prescribes, Brodsky deems it necessary that two major conditions be met. The first involves understanding the nature of evil. In spite of being irremovable and ubiquitous, evil is secondary and not self-sufficient, and for this reason it seeks to find allies, to gain a foothold. Due to this, effectively combating evil requires the utmost individualism, independence of thinking, and even eccentricity. An effective response to evil must prove unpredictable to the offender, unnerve him and cut the ground from under him. The second condition demands that the commandment be perceived in its completeness and integrity; it cannot be reduced to the demand to turn the other cheek on the aggressor again and again, but must also be understood to include the demand that deals with the tunic and the cloak and the two miles. A thorough understanding of the commandment allows one to interpret it as an indication that it is possible to render evil “absurd through excess,” demonstrating the pettiness of its claims. This stand, according to Brodsky’s belief, places the victim in the shoes of an active “mental aggressor” who does not

opt out of evil but, instead, directly gets in touch with the villain and imposes his own rules of the game by force (i.e., against the villain's will). The victory that the victim may score in this situation is not a moral one but, rather, an existential one: the victim in this case is not appealing to the offender's conscience or sense of guilt, which the offender can repress with ease, but "exposes his senses and faculties to the meaninglessness of the whole enterprise." Brodsky checked the efficiency of such a strategy of fighting evil with his first hand experience in the penitentiary camp, i.e., in the situation of an invariably uneven confrontation. As a result he maintained his own dignity and stopped the coercive behavior of the confinement officers toward Brodsky himself, as well as toward his camp fellows.

It is important to understand that the prescription offered by Brodsky pertains to the *personal* experience of evil, and it has to be understood in the context of the assertion that the response to evil should be entirely individualized. While describing his personal experience of opposing evil, Brodsky is not offering it as a model to emulate or as a ready-made universal prescription. On the contrary, he underscores that effective resistance to evil cannot and should not be stereotyped. This is essential not only in the existential sense that Brodsky talks about but also because the mode of resisting evil depends on the form in which evil is manifested (harassment, affront, suppression, humiliation, threat, including the threat of murder, etc.), on the one at whom the evil is aimed (against the person himself or against other people), on the scale of evil (whether evil is embodied in one villain or in an aggressor state), on the real opportunities at the disposal of the person or persons confronted with evil and on the concrete situation where the collision unfolds.

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If one compares the stands taken by Brodsky and Tolstoy in their major message in relation to the commandment of

nonresistance, the main difference between them consists in the fact that Brodsky understands the commandment not as a demand for self-perfection but as a prescription for an active and aggressive struggle with the real manifestations of evil. He recognizes this struggle to be extremely important and urgent. According to Brodsky it demands recapturing the initiative from the villain and compelling him to play according to your rules – that is, not to return good for evil but to commit toward the offender exactly what he does not want, something that is against the vicious will as such.

In my view, a major lesson to be learnt from Tolstoy and Brodsky's reasoning concerning nonresistance consists in the acknowledgement that the struggle against evil as such, beyond the context of fighting real manifestations of evil, is impossible. Speculating about nonresistance in isolation from the attempt to address the question about the ways and means of opposing real manifestations of evil reduces the moral value of nonresistance. For nonresistance to be successful as the strategy and tactics of opposing real manifestations of evil, one must scrutinize the details of each case. In the course of this scrutiny, many important details are taken into account, including all the likely consequences for which the non-resistant will be held responsible. And, first and foremost, he will be held responsible for the life and wellbeing of other people for whom the consistent and rigorous implementation of the nonresistance principle may lead to substantial, if not fatal losses.

## The Politics of *Ahimsa*: Reimagining the Village Republic

JOÁM EVANS PIM

*While ahimsa has sometimes been portrayed as a passive attitude, Gandhi's political development of the term through satyagraha and the view expressed in this essay are the opposite: proactively resisting injustice, violence and oppression through individual and community self-government and self-sufficiency. Even though it is clear that traditional self-government (panchayati raj) was an immediate inspiration for Gandhi's vision of village swaraj, it has been argued that such forms of local political organizations are only relevant to (and possible in) the Indian subcontinent or similar cultural settings – certainly not for in urbanized Western societies. Such a view fails to see the connection between Gandhi's proposal and other social and political movements around the world that have included similar conceptualizations as a key component of their aspirations. This essay explores such connections.*

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In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Gandhi's *satyagraha* movement effectively applied the principles of *ahimsa* to the realm of politics through the vision of *swaraj*, understood as full community self-government. Taking Gandhi's political interpretation of *ahimsa* as a starting point, this essay will look into some recent political experiences that seek to revive its political validity. The findings of this essay offer an array of heuristic models for the development of nonkilling social and political forms of organization that reflect the ethics of *ahimsa*.

In imagining a political system based on *ahimsa*, Gandhi's ideas were very close to those of Tolstoy and Thoreau, two figures he admired, though providing a vision that was richer in detail. In an interview prepared by Harold Williams and published in *The Manchester Guardian* in February 9, 1905 ("A Visit to Count Tolstoy," 7-8), Tolstoy insisted that, "All governments are maintained by violence or the threat of violence and violence is opposed to freedom." Gandhi would repeatedly insist on this Weberian definition of the state, thus considering this form of political organization as incompatible with his vision of nonviolence: "The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence."<sup>246</sup> Tolstoy's nonviolent society would be based on small-scale agrarian self-sufficiency, without division of labour, without cities, without factories, without laws enforced by coercion, without governmental rule or courts, setting the basis for Gandhi's village *swaraj*.<sup>247</sup>

From Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* Gandhi literally borrowed the motto: "That State will be the best governed which is governed the least," adding: "That is why I have said that the ideally nonviolent State will be an ordered anarchy."<sup>248</sup> Yet Gandhi's idea of self-government, understood both as individual self-government and community self-government, is also one of Thoreau's most

significant contributions expressed in *Walden*, where self-governance is presented as a deeply political everyday experience emerging out of freedom from, or indifference to, the state, thus implying the absolute decentralization of political commitments. Gandhi agreed: "Centralization as a system is inconsistent with the nonviolent structure of society."<sup>249</sup>

Gandhi's vision of building nonviolent societies relied upon two basic principles: *swaraj* (self-government) and *swadeshi* (self-sufficiency), which were presented as mutually interdependent. The socio-political structure that would support a nonviolent society was labelled by Gandhi as "Village Republic" or "Village *Swaraj*,"<sup>250</sup> following the traditional *panchayat* local government. Gandhi's definition of self-government involves a "continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national" as no government should take care of the regulation of every-day life.<sup>251</sup> *Swaraj*, characterized as "true democracy" and "individual freedom," will be achieved "only when all of us are firmly persuaded that our *swaraj* has got to be won, worked and maintained through truth and *ahimsa* alone,"<sup>252</sup> "outward freedom" being obtained only to the extent that "inward freedom" has been self-grown.

Every individual and community should autonomously practice *swaraj*. Gandhi argued in 1946: "Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or *panchayat* having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world."<sup>253</sup> The "village republic," as a societal unit, would be naturally based not on social status or property titles but on truth, nonviolence, and equal labour. An outline of the village *swaraj* is presented as that of "a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which

dependence is a necessity," being evidently inspired by the traditional *panchayat*:

Every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children.... As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no castes such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Nonviolence with its technique of *satyagraha* and non-cooperation will be the sanction of the village community.... The government of the village will be conducted by a *panchayat* of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this *panchayat* will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office.... Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of nonviolence rules him and his government.

He and his village are able to defy the might of a world.<sup>254</sup>

In practical terms, Gandhi argues that the establishment of such form of independent village *swaraj* does not require external authorization and needs not to wait for any major political revolution to happen in the surrounding state, therefore setting a clear precedent for contemporary intentional communities, such as eco-villages, that are able to flourish in the interstices of the state. Initiating a village *swaraj* is an individual obligation that should expand to involve and commit the whole community:

Any village can become such a republic today without much interference even from the present Government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the exaction of the village revenue.... To model such a village may be the work of a lifetime. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find good results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine man and schoolmaster all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning.<sup>255</sup>

As early as 1910, Gandhi warned that if India replicated the British political, economic, administrative, legal, educational and military institutions she would be ruined, as it was these institutions, regardless of who controlled them, that posed the greatest barrier to the development of nonviolent *swaraj* and *swadeshi*. The freedom of India's peoples could not be reduced to transferring the administration of the state apparatus but should, above all, mean the complete removal of such structures. Unfortunately, this was not the case, as Gandhi clearly stated in his "Last Will and Testament" (January 29, 1948):

India having attained political independence through means devised by the Indian National Congress, the Congress in its present shape and form, i.e., as propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral and economic independence in terms of its seven hundred thousand villages as distinguished from its cities and towns.<sup>256</sup>

In fact, even if the Indian National Congress placed village *swaraj*, as envisioned by Gandhi, at the core of its political platform from the 1920s outright to the country's independence, it was almost completely neglected thereafter. The *panchayats* were included in the Constitution (Art. 40) but in non-justiciable terms ("The State shall take steps to organise village *panchayats*"), only to later be completely distorted in Part IX.<sup>257</sup> It could be argued that Gandhi's vision of village *swaraj* is not only incompatible with the Western configuration of the Indian state but also with the industrial and urban ethos that currently rules it: "You cannot build nonviolence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages.... You have therefore to be rural-minded before you can be nonviolent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning-wheel."<sup>258</sup> From a neurobiological perspective, this relates to Darcia Narvaez's argument that immersion in the natural world (vs. urban isolation) is crucial to develop "receptive intelligence" from early childhood onwards, as an

environment that embeds children with natural agents and companions (and not just objects) is important in the process of creating a common human nature of cooperation, empathy, self-regulation and small I-ego.

Gandhi argued that two divergent schools of thought confronted each other to move the world in opposing directions: that of the rural village, based on handicrafts, and that of cities, dependent on machinery, industrialization, and war. Modern cities are presented as an “excrescence” with the only purpose of “draining the life-blood of the villages,” being “a constant menace to the life and liberty of the villagers.”<sup>259</sup> As Thoreau and Tolstoy marked Gandhi’s vision of politics, his correspondence with Edward Carpenter, author of *Civilisation, Its Cause and Cure* (1921), influenced the opposition established by Gandhi between *Satyagraha* and industrial civilization, understood as a “malady that needed a cure.” Industrialism was based on the “capacity to exploit” and the “cure” for urban populations would be to “become truly village-minded.” Gandhi sharply stated: “The blood of the villages is the cement with which the edifice of the cities is built.”<sup>260</sup> There was no place for exploitation or coercion in the context of village self-sufficiency and self-government.

Much of the malaise that Gandhi attributed to industrialism did in fact affect India in the hands of the new independent state in spite of his continuous warnings. The consequences are evident in Vandana Shiva’s book *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1991) that exposes the tragic results of India’s governmental agricultural development programs launched with the technical and economic support of international agencies under “quick fix” promises. Such measures left a deadly trail of violence with approximately 15,000 killed between 1986 and 1991 in associated conflicts, destruction of soil fertility, suppression of genetic and ecological diversity, and indebted farmers. While he stated without doubt that, “tractors and chemical

fertilizers will spell our ruin,”<sup>261</sup> Gandhi publicly supported contemporary efforts to develop organic agriculture. In fact, the principles of organic agriculture developed by Balfour and Howard during the 1940s and still current today were based mainly on the observation of traditional agricultural methods in India, an experience also facilitated by Gandhi and his associates.

This places Gandhian thinking on integral simple living as a clear precedent for many proposals that were advanced in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the fields of economy (E. F. Schumacher), technology (Glendinning’s *Neo-Luddite Manifesto*), energy (Ted Trainer) and politics (Bookchin and Rodrigo Mora). The practical application of such principles in intentional communities such as the *ashrams* also spread into numerous experiments around the world. Lanza del Vasto’s “Community of the Ark” is one early example of what would later develop into a global eco-village movement. Vinoba Bhave, another disciple of Gandhi, also continued the vision of decentralized administration in India in spite of the lack of political support for such a program. In the following section, I will explore some of these movements and their own diverse historical roots.



### Beyond Gandhi:

#### The Global Struggle for a “Village Republic”

While *ahimsa* has sometimes been portrayed as a seemingly passive attitude, Gandhi’s political development of the term through *satyagraha* and the view expressed in this chapter are the opposite: proactively resisting injustice, violence, and oppression through individual and community self-government and self-sufficiency. Even though it is clear that the traditional *panchayati raj* was the immediate inspiration for Gandhi’s vision of village *swaraj*, it has sometimes been argued that such forms of local political organization would be relevant only to (and possible in) the Indian subcontinent or similar cultural settings and certainly not for/in urbanized Western societies. Such a view fails to

see the connection between Gandhi's proposal and other social and political movements around the world that have included similar conceptualizations as a key component of their aspirations. Gandhi's writings on this topic were probably unknown to many agrarian, libertarian, ecological, spiritual or indigenous movements but, nevertheless, the same thread binding self-government, self-sufficiency and nonviolent conflict resolution (even if expressed in different terms) appears abundantly.

Early agrarian movements such as the "Diggers" in mid-17<sup>th</sup> century England defended the egalitarian simple lifestyle of rural communities embedded in nature, resisting enclosures of communal land (that placed in the hands of individuals or the state what previously was open territory under community stewardship) and other impositions of the expanding state. Other Christian-based rural movements, such as the Amish, Hutterites or Mennonites (with obvious internal nuances), developed similar patriarchal interpretations of egalitarianism and rural community government, while more recent Christian pacifist communities, such as the Tzotzil Maya "Las Abejas" from Chiapas, practice a more integrated approach along similar lines to the Zapatista efforts toward community autonomy. Another relevant example of spiritually-based community self-government initiative is Sri Lanka's Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement, founded by A.T. Ariyaratne, which clearly combines Buddhist and Gandhian practices for village *swaraj* based on *ahimsa*.

In other contexts, it was national liberation or indigenous movements that placed traditional and renewed forms of community self-government at the core of their political aspirations, which were naturally and frequently confronted by centralistic Nation-State ideology. The inclusion of rural assembly democracy, including the participation of men and women, was a feature of Galizan nationalism in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, seeking the reestablishment of village

and parish “open councils” (*concelho aberto*) and mutual aid practices (*ajudas, rogas*). Similar practices (such as the Basque *batzarre* and *auzolan*) have also been considered as tenets for the reorganization of these societies in opposition to the decaying Nation-State framework. An especially interesting case is that of Kurdistan, where Abdullah çalan proposed to abandon violence, embracing a new model of “democratic confederalism,” striving for community self-sufficiency and self-government as a democratic system of a people without a State. The implementation of such ideas since 2005 in the “low intensity war” context of Northern Kurdistan by the *Koma Civakîn Kurdistan* (Group of Communities in Kurdistan) is a practical example of an effort to establish an extensive system of village and neighbourhood councils incorporating the principles of ecology, gender-liberation and direct democracy. Such efforts share commonalities with the new forms of rural community governance in the Zapatista Autonomous Municipalities and *Caracoles* of Chiapas, which also represent an on-going large-scale model of alternative social and political organization. The fact that such structures are able to emerge and thrive in the war-torn contexts of Chiapas and Kurdistan reaffirms some of the hypotheses brought forward above.

Arguably, libertarian-inspired “village republics” also share much of Gandhi’s vision of *swaraj*. Early anarchist theorists such as Proudhon, a pacifist, conceived a stateless society organized through a federation of “free communes” (*The Principle of Federation*, 1863). In his *Revolutionary Catechism* (1866), Bakunin also argues that “the basic unit of all political organization in each country must be the completely autonomous commune,” in similar terms to those of Kropotkin in his 1880 *The Paris Commune*. The autonomy of Swiss communes (municipalities) with their well-established assembly governments was an inspiration for such proposals and continues to serve as a relevant example today. A fair number of contemporary intentional communities set out in rural areas (eco-villages) represent attempts to implement

such libertarian principles. The “Federation of Egalitarian Communities” in several U.S. states is one example.

Eco-villages with diverse sources of inspiration, yet including a common set of Principles that usually integrate voluntary simple living, permaculture, consensus decision-making and ecological sustainability have grown exponentially since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Trainer went as far as to suggest that the eco-village movement was the most significant event in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as the “first significant attempt to build settlements that are ecologically, socially and spiritually satisfactory.”<sup>262</sup> Of course, many communities with these attributes were already in existence if we look beyond the Western industrialized world, but eco-villages certainly represent an experimental demonstration of how individual and collective transformations of city-dwellers back to a nonviolent rural ethos is possible, as Gandhi affirmed. The larger Transition Towns Movement is a recent attempt to take the values of such small intentional communities to larger town and city settings, with a fairly positive start. Peasant organizations in the “Via Campesina” movement, and agrarian authors have also shifted to advocate for family-farm-based sustainable agriculture and food sovereignty in opposition to the system of the so-called Green Revolution. All in all, such efforts reinforce Gandhi’s vision of (re)building societies based on *ahimsa* from the small efforts of individuals and communities throughout the world.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> This essay is based on the invited Mahatma Gandhi Lecture I delivered at the Gandhi Research Foundation in Jalgaon on India's Independence Day, 15 August 2013. I wish to express my deep gratitude to Professor M.P. Mathai, Dean of the G.R.F., Shri B. Krishnakumar, Principal of the Anubhuti School, Dr. Bhavarlal H. Jain, Founder and Trustee of the G.R.F., and others at the Gandhi Research Foundation who made my visit so enjoyable and personally rewarding. I also want to thank Professor Mathai and Sri Krishnakumar for permission to use this revision of my lecture, which was entitled "Mahatma Gandhi's Values and Significance: 15 August 1947 and 15 August 2013."
- <sup>2</sup> In "Gandhi Today," the concluding chapter in my book *Mahatma Gandhi* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), I attempt to understand how Gandhi, so late in his life, could tap into such incredible energy and act with such courage and effectiveness. This can provide us with invaluable lessons for living active, meaningful, value-based, significant lives of truth and *ahimsa* in the contemporary world.
- <sup>3</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Power* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962), 180.
- <sup>4</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (New York: Harvest Books, 1970), 80.

- <sup>5</sup> William Stafford, *Every War Has Two Losers: William Stafford on Peace and War*, ed. Kim Stafford (Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2003), 75.
- <sup>6</sup> See *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, ed. Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 2005); Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, *We All Lost the Cold War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- <sup>7</sup> The Franck Report, 332. See also the following archival documents: (1) "Over-All Plan for the Defeat of Japan," report prepared for the Combined Staff Planners by the British Strategical Planning Section and the U.S. Joint War Plans Committee Red and Purple Teams, 30 November 1943, A.T. Cornwall-Jones and C.H. Donnelly, Combined Secretariat (A02266 – A02267), 1; RG 218 1942-45 Central Decimal Files, Joint Chiefs of Staff; National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. (2) "Specific Operations for the Defeat of Japan, 1944," Joint War Plans Committee (JWPC) report, C.E. Miller and J.T. Hillis, Joint Secretariat, November 7, 1943 (A91714 – A91722) [Copy no. 33]; RG 218 1942-45 Central Decimal Files, Joint Chiefs of Staff, [legal size pages in brown hardcover binder, brass clamped at top]; National Archives II, College Park, Maryland. (3) "Pacific Strategy," "Report by the Joint Staff Planners," A.J. MacFarland and E.D. Graves, Jr., Joint Secretariat, "J. C. S. 924/15; 25 April 1945"; "Appendix 'A,'" 252; RG 218, 1942-45, Central Decimal Files, NAR II, College Park, Maryland.
- <sup>8</sup> Martin J. Sherwin, *A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and the Arms Race* (New York: Random House, 1987), 231.
- <sup>9</sup> Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: The Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 165.

- <sup>10</sup> Arendt, 80.
- <sup>11</sup> Stafford, August 18, 1984.
- <sup>12</sup> Luttwak, 20.
- <sup>13</sup> This is merely a terse summary of years of research on the atomic bombings of Japan, for a book in progress.
- <sup>14</sup> Arendt, 79-80.
- <sup>15</sup> Shannon D. Beebe and Mary Kaldor, *The Ultimate Weapon is No Weapon: Human Security and the New Rules of War and Peace* (New York: Perseus Books, 2010), 7.
- <sup>16</sup> I realize other societies appear on the surface as more highly militarized, with troops patrolling streets, etc., but given the combination of American affluence, high levels of private gun ownership, and high levels of military spending, it is doubtful that any society in world history has devoted more resources, in absolute terms, to weapons of all types.
- <sup>17</sup> New York: Scribner's, 1955.
- <sup>18</sup> In *Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1995), 16, Martin Borg notes that some quotations attributed to Jesus – for example, “I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh to the Father but by me” – were never uttered by the historical Jesus.
- <sup>19</sup> These are the titles used in two excellent translations, the first by Arthur Waley (1934; reprinted by Grove Press, 1958), and the second by Victor H. Mair (New York: Bantam Books, 1990). Waley translates the *de* in the title as “power” and Mair translates the *de* as “integrity,” but both recognize the idea that virtue or integrity carries a great deal of power with it.
- <sup>20</sup> The one exception to this statement, the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, was brought to power, and embittered enough to commit genocide, precisely by the American bombing campaigns against their tiny country.

- <sup>21</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute 2013 Yearbook. See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_military\\_expenditures](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_military_expenditures). The U.S. spends more annually on the military than most of the other countries of the world combined.
- <sup>22</sup> Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- <sup>23</sup> New York: Viking Publishing 2011.
- <sup>24</sup> New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- <sup>25</sup> New York: Dutton, 2011.
- <sup>26</sup> Hans Küng & Karl-Josef Kuschel, *A Global Ethic: The Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions* (London: Continuum, 1993); translated into Chinese by He Guanghu (Chengdu: Sichuan People's Press, 1997), 7-28.
- <sup>27</sup> Eknath Easwaran, *Mahatma Gandhi*, translated into Chinese by Lin Dongtao (Beijing: China Yanshi Press, 1998), 84-85.
- <sup>28</sup> Sima Qian: *The Historical Records*, Vol. 38, *Song Weizi's Family* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 1622.
- <sup>29</sup> Chen Shou: *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, *Weishu*, Vol. 2, *Biography of Emperor Wen* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 57-90.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid. 61-75.
- <sup>31</sup> Yan Kejun: *Articles on the Three Ancient Dynasties (Xia, Shang and Zhou), Qin, Han, the Three Kingdoms and the Six Dynasties*, Chapter 6, *The Three Kingdoms*, Section 6 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1999), 57-61.
- <sup>32</sup> Chen Shou, *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Vol. 2, *Biography of Emperor Wen*, *Chen Shou's Review*, (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 89.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid. 75.
- <sup>34</sup> Fan Ye: *Records of East Han Dynasty*, Vol. 9: *Biography of Emperor Xian* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 390.



- <sup>35</sup> Zhu Ziyang, *Han's Transformation to Wei and the Politics of the Three Kingdoms* (Shanghai: Oriental Publishing Center, 2013), 40.
- <sup>36</sup> *The Analects-Bayi, Explanatory Notes and Commentaries on the Thirteen Classics* (Shanghai: Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, 1997), 2469.
- <sup>37</sup> *Shu-Dayu's Project, Explanatory Notes*, 136ab.
- <sup>38</sup> Fang Xiaoru: *Collection in Xunzhi Mansion*, Chapter 5, Complete Library in the Four Branches of Literature, Book 1235 (Taipei: The Commercial Press, 1986), 141.
- <sup>39</sup> *The Analects-Zilu, Explanatory Notes*.
- <sup>40</sup> *The Analects-Duke of Weiling, Explanatory Notes*, 2508.
- <sup>41</sup> *The Book of Rites-Moderation, Explanatory Notes*, 1625.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>43</sup> *Laozi, Zhu qianzhi; Collations and Annotations to Laozi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984), Chapter 42, 174-175.
- <sup>44</sup> *Zhuangzi-Shangxing*, Guo Qingfan: *Collected Explanations to Zhuangzi* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1961), 548.
- <sup>45</sup> *Neutralization of the Xuan Spirits in the Taishang Cave*, ed. Zhang Jiyu, *Zhonghua Daozang*, Vol. 5 (Beijing: Huaxia Press, 2004), 141.
- <sup>46</sup> *Dharma Sentences Sutra*, translated into Chinese by Weizhinan, Vol. 2, *Taisho Tripitaka*, Book 4 (Taipei: New Wenfeng Publishing Company, 2004), 567b.
- <sup>47</sup> Xiao Yan, *Talk with Zhou She on Giving up Eating Meat*; see Daoxuan, *Guang Hongming Collection*, Vol. 26. See Daoxuan, *Guang Hongming Collection*, Vol. 26, *Taisho Tripitaka*, Book 52 (Taipei: New Wenfeng Publishing Company, 2004), 303.
- <sup>48</sup> Sima Qian, *The Historical Records*, Vol. 7: *Biographic Sketches of Xiang Yu* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959), 310.

- <sup>49</sup> Zhang Tingyu, *History of the Ming Dynasty*, Vol. 390 (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974), 7976.
- <sup>50</sup> Sima Qian, *The Historical Records*, Vol. 92, *Biography of Marquis of Huaiyin*, 2629.
- <sup>51</sup> Ban Gu, *History of the Han Dynasty (Hanshu)*, *Biography of Huo Guang* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962), 2956.
- <sup>52</sup> Zhang Tingyu, *History of Ming*, Vol. 141, *Biography of Fang Xiaoru* (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974), 4020.
- <sup>53</sup> See Verrier Elwin, *The Nagas in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 455.
- <sup>54</sup> See Ramkhun Pamei, *The Zeliangrong Nagas: A Study of Tribal Christianity* (New Delhi: Uppal Publication House, 1986) 26-27.
- <sup>55</sup> [www.npmhr.org/index.php?qoperationbluebirdq.npmhr](http://www.npmhr.org/index.php?qoperationbluebirdq.npmhr).
- <sup>56</sup> Another, recent example of the kind of treatment these people experienced can be seen in “Operation Blue Bird,” in July 1987.
- <sup>57</sup> *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, ed. Coretta Scott King, sec. ed. (New York: New Market Press, 2008), 8.
- <sup>58</sup> King, “Making a Way Out of No Way,” in *Martin Luther King’s Sermonic Proverbial Rhetoric*, ed. Wolfgang Mieder (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 289.
- <sup>59</sup> Hiralal Duggad, *Madhya Asia aur Punjab Mein Jain Dharma* (Delhi: Jain Prachin Sahitya Prakashan Mandir, 1979).
- <sup>60</sup> Banarsidas Jain, “Jainism in the Panjab: A Neglected Chapter in the History of Panjab,” in *Sarupa Bharti or the Homage of Indology Being the Dr. Lakshman Sarup Memorial Volume*, ed. Jagan Nath Agrawal and Bhimdev Shastri (Hoshiarpur: Vishveshvaranand Institute Publications, 1954), 247.



- <sup>61</sup> Jayasoma, *Karamchandvanshutkirmam Kavyam*, trans. into Hindi by Pandit Gauri Shankar (Ojha, 1939), Verses 381, 383, 82, and Verses 391, 393, 84.
- <sup>62</sup> Upadhyaya Siddhichandra Gani, *Shri Bhanuchandragani Charitam*, Canto II, Verses No. 122 149, 18-19; Rishabdas, *Hiravijaysuri Raas*, Verses 38-44, 182-183.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid. Canto II, Verses No. 1-8, 11; Krishandas, "Durjanasaal Bavani," in *Jain Gurjar Kaviyo*, Vol. II: *Descriptive Catalogue of Jain Poets and Their Works in Gujarati Language in 17<sup>th</sup> Century*: Part I, ed. Mohanlal Dalichand Desai, revised by Jayant Kothari (Bombay: Mahavir Jain Vidyalaya, 1987), No. 580 (1237), 275-276.
- <sup>64</sup> Shri Mahavir Jain Vidyalaya Rajat Mahotswa Grantha, "Pachish Varshni Karwahino Sankshipt Vivran" (Bombay: Mahavira Jaina Vidyalaya, 1941), 1.
- <sup>65</sup> Pradyuman Shah Singh, *Jainism in Punjab* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 2011), 200-201.
- <sup>66</sup> Shri Bharatvarshiya, *Digambar Directory* (Bombay: Manikchand Panachand, 1914), 551-552.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid. 553.
- <sup>68</sup> Ibid. 555.
- <sup>69</sup> Ibid. 557.
- <sup>70</sup> Hiralal Duggad, *Madhya Asia aur Punjab Mein Jain Dharma*.
- <sup>71</sup> Pradyuman Shah Singh, *Jainism in Punjab*, 169.
- <sup>72</sup> Hiralal Duggad, *Madhya Asia aur Punjab Mein Jain Dharma*, 467-468.
- <sup>73</sup> Pradyuman Shah Singh, *Jainism in Punjab*, 201.
- <sup>74</sup> *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly* 36:1971, 191-192.
- <sup>75</sup> Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and Its Development* (Boston: The Beacon Press, 1960), viii.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid. 229 and 231.
- <sup>77</sup> Ibid. 233.

- <sup>78</sup> Ibid. 43.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid. 80.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid. 81.
- <sup>81</sup> *The Visva-Bharati Quarterly* 36:1971, 197-198.
- <sup>82</sup> “‘I’m a monster’: Veterans suffer from ‘moral injuries’,” by Pauline Jelinek, Associated Press, Rochester *Democrat and Chronicle*, February 23, 2013.
- <sup>83</sup> One might raise similar concerns about the force-feeding of attempted suicides among prisoners at Guantanamo. The provision of nutrition and hydration have been declared to be forms of medical treatment in America, and a person of sound mind is presumed to have the right to refuse medical treatment. With the collaboration of physicians, that right is denied to the prisoners at Guantanamo.
- <sup>84</sup> Holy Week Service at a Juvenile Home in Rome, March 2013.
- <sup>85</sup> Adam Frank, *The Constant Fire: Beyond the Science vs. Religion Debate* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 152-155.
- <sup>86</sup> Religion-online.org.
- <sup>87</sup> Ilia Delio, *The Emergent Christ, Exploring the Meaning of Catholic in an Evolutionary Universe* (New York: Orbis, 2011), 21.
- <sup>88</sup> Brian Swimme, *The Universe is a Green Dragon: A Cosmic Creation Story* (Santa Fe, NM: Bear and Company, 1984), 32.
- <sup>89</sup> Delio, *The Emergent Christ*, 27.
- <sup>90</sup> Cf. George Pattery, S.J., *Gandhi – The Believer* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1996), 57.
- <sup>91</sup> Gandhi, *The Collected Works* (Delhi: The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, 1958) Vol. 85:33.

- <sup>92</sup> Cf. Sudheendra Kulkarni, *Music of the Spinning Wheel* (New Delhi: Amaryllis, 2012), 363.
- <sup>93</sup> Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1991), 21.
- <sup>94</sup> C.S. Song, *Third-Eye Theology* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1980), 228.
- <sup>95</sup> Song, *Third-Eye Theology*, 234.
- <sup>96</sup> According to Bacon, "Knowledge is power."
- <sup>97</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 151.
- <sup>98</sup> Cragnolini, Mónica, "Nietzsche in Heidegger: Counter-Figures for a Loss." Conference at University of Sao Paulo, Nietzsche Research Group, August 21, 2000.
- <sup>99</sup> The film "Gattaca" (Andrew Niccol, 1997) examines the competition between a wished-for-child, but not genetically engineered, and a designer child. The doctor in charge of the engineering states that the child would bear the best of his parents' traits.
- <sup>100</sup> Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 136.
- <sup>101</sup> Ibid. 139.
- <sup>102</sup> In the American film "Switch," Jennifer Aniston plays an independent woman whose biological clock is ticking and decides to select a donor to have a child.
- <sup>103</sup> In the October 20, 2013, edition of *Viva* magazine (Argentina), there was a long article on women who decide to have children as a one-sided project. According to the motherhood observatory (2011), the last 25 years have seen a two-fold increase in the proportion of single-parent homes, most of them led by women. Today there are many activists that defend motherhood as a decision taken by independent women.
- <sup>104</sup> "Woman: Protagonist or Object?," Maria Luisa Pfeiffer; <http://www.chasque.net/frontpage/relacion/9904/responsabilidad.htm>.

- <sup>105</sup> Comesaña, Gloria, *Labor as Product of the "Human Artifice" in Hannah Arendt; The Annual Report of the Seminar on History of Philosophy*, No. 14 (Madrid: Complutense University, 1997), 99-129.
- <sup>106</sup> Comesaña, G., "Critical Concerns Regarding the Concepts of Labor in Hannah Arendt," *Philosophy Magazine*, 21:1995, 115-142.
- <sup>107</sup> *Buenos Aires Herald*, Saturday, August 1, 2015.
- <sup>108</sup> A. Kletnicki, "A Desire that is Not Anonymous. Reproductive Technologies: Transformation of the Symbolic and Affectation of the Real Nucleus," in *The Crossroad of Filiation. Reproductive Technologies and Restitution of Children* (Buenos Aires: Lumen/Humanitas, 2000), 214.
- <sup>109</sup> Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (Barcelona: Serbal Editions, 1994), 28.
- <sup>110</sup> The notion of *aletheia* in Greek shows that truth is composed by a prefix "a" which means remove, take out, without, and "letheia" to veil or cover.
- <sup>111</sup> Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, 34.
- <sup>112</sup> Soul Repair Center website: [http://brite.edu/programs.asp?letnav=sr&BriteProgram=soulrepair\\_event](http://brite.edu/programs.asp?letnav=sr&BriteProgram=soulrepair_event).
- <sup>113</sup> Brett Litz *et al*, "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy," *Clinical Psychology Review*, 29:2009, No. 8, 695-706.
- <sup>114</sup> Tony Dokoupil, "Moral Injury," *Newsweek*, December 10, 2012, 42.
- <sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* 43.
- <sup>116</sup> *Ibid.* 44.
- <sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>118</sup> Mohandas K. Gandhi, "Ahimsa or Love," in *Nonviolent Resistance (Satyagraha)*, ed. Bharatan Kumarappa (New York: Schocken Books, 1951), 42.

- <sup>119</sup> *Crito* 48bc.
- <sup>120</sup> Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 190.
- <sup>121</sup> Most Christians as well as the Christian Church have almost completely abandoned the pacifism characteristic of Jesus of Nazareth, his early followers, and what comes to be Christianity for the first three hundred years after Jesus' death. After the Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in 313 A.D., Christians could become soldiers and the church moved from pacifism to embrace just warism. Scholars have ever since debated whether the emergence of the *Holy* Roman Empire means that the church conquered the Empire or whether the Empire conquered the church.
- <sup>122</sup> R. Williams, *Jaina Yoga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 207; also found in Padmanabh Jaini, "Ahimsā: A Jaina Way of Spiritual Discipline," *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010), 17-18.
- <sup>123</sup> Lacinato kale, also called dinosaur kale, black palm kale, or Tuscan kale, has been grown in Italy since the 18<sup>th</sup> century and is a staple in Italian cuisine. Its earthy flavor, garden heartiness, and prehistoric appearance make it a garden favorite and was even recorded in Thomas Jefferson's Monticello garden in 1777. It is a perfect plant for edible landscaping. It is usually blanched first and then sautéed with other vegetables, but can be eaten raw in salads or mixed in smoothies. It is loaded with Vitamin A, K, and C. Like other members of the brassica family such as cabbage, collards and Brussels sprouts, kale is a rich source of organosulfur compounds that have been linked to cancer prevention.
- <sup>124</sup> Jain cosmology also includes *devas* and *devīs*, who are thought to be able to respond to practitioners. Although they are often called "gods," these figures are relational entities still bound in the *karmic* cycle who, because of

their advanced (but still limited) state, may have some knowledge, wisdom, or skill that practitioners may aspire to and seek assistance from.

- <sup>125</sup> *Tattvārtha Sūtra* 2.11-25; translated by Nathmal Tatil as *That Which Is* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 40-46.
- <sup>126</sup> *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1.1.5, v. 6, in *Jaina Sutras, Part I and II*, trans. Hermann George Jacobi (Forgotten Books, 2008), 36.
- <sup>127</sup> *Ācārāṅga Sūtra* 1.4.1, v. 1; in Jacobi, *Jaina Sutras*, 56.
- <sup>128</sup> *Sūtraṅga Sūtra* 1.11, v. 9-11; in Jacobi, *Jaina Sutras*, 462.
- <sup>129</sup> Paul Dundas, "The Limits of a Jain Environmental Ethics," *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*, ed. Christopher Key Chapple (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 96.
- <sup>130</sup> See John Cort, "Green Jainism? Notes and Queries toward a Possible Jain Environmental Ethic," *Jainism and Ecology*, ed. Chapple, 65 and 73.
- <sup>131</sup> Christopher Key Chapple, "The Living Earth of Jainism and the New Story," *Jainism and Ecology*, ed. Chapple, 138.
- <sup>132</sup> Kristi Wiley, *The A-Z of Jainism* (Lanham, PA: The Scarecrow Press, 2009), 166.
- <sup>133</sup> Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Cātuyāma-Savara in the Pāli Canon," in *Essays in Jaina Philosophy and Religion*, ed. Piotr Balcerowicz and Marek Mejer (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003), 120-121. Jaini notes that, according to the *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, *sāmāyika-sayama* and confession (*pratikramaa*) only for *specific* infractions is taught by twenty-two of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras, except the first and last. The requirement for daily confession (*cheovahavaa* or *chedopasthāpana*) is taught by the first and last Tīrthaṅkaras, ostensibly because during those times, sensitivity to specific infractions was dulled and

practitioners may not have even been aware of their violations. In times of greater sensitivity, the single vow of *sāmāyika* (called the supreme *cāujjāma-dhamma*, or four-fold restraint from which the five vows are likely derived) is sufficient.

- <sup>134</sup> *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 29.17-18; in Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras*, 365.
- <sup>135</sup> Cort, “Green Jainism?,” 75.
- <sup>136</sup> Cort, “Green Jainism?,” 75, translated from text in *Śrāddha-Pratikramaṇa Sūtra (Prabodha Tīkā)*, ed. Panyās Bhadrakar-vijaygai and *muni* Kalyāprabhvija (Bombay: Jain Sāhitya Vikās Maa, 1977), 2:120-121.
- <sup>137</sup> Wiley, *A-Z of Jainism*, 170, 188.
- <sup>138</sup> Kundakunda, *Samayasāra*, trans. A. Chakravarti (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 2000).
- <sup>139</sup> Jaini, “*Ahimsā*,” 17-18.
- <sup>140</sup> Cort, “Green Jainism?,” 74.
- <sup>141</sup> *Tattvārtha Sūtra*, 1.1-5.
- <sup>142</sup> Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (New York: Verso, 2010), xxix.
- <sup>143</sup> *Ibid.* 5.
- <sup>144</sup> See Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2006), 33.
- <sup>145</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, 5.
- <sup>146</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, 33.
- <sup>147</sup> Butler, *Frames of War*, xvi.
- <sup>148</sup> Dundas, “The Limits,” 98.
- <sup>149</sup> *Uttarādhyayana Sūtra* 29.17-18; in Jacobi, *Jaina Sutras*, 365.
- <sup>150</sup> Brett Evans, “Jainism’s Intersection with Contemporary Ethical Movements: An Ethnographic Examination of a Diaspora Jain Community,” *The Journal for Undergraduate Ethnography* 2:2, accessed March 1, 2014 at: <http://tinyurl.com/cpx2lnc>.

- <sup>151</sup> L.M. Singhvi, "The Jain Declaration on Nature," *Jainism and Ecology*, ed. Chapple, 217-224.
- <sup>152</sup> Dundas is skeptical of utilizing *anekāntavāda* as the basis for an environmental ethic as its historical use was to demonstrate the intellectual supremacy of Jain philosophy in relation to other Indian perspectives. Nevertheless, many are repurposing this concept at the ontological level as a way to revalue an irreducible multiplicity of life forms and valid perspectives. See Dundas, "The Limits," 101.
- <sup>153</sup> Ellison Banks Findly, *Plant Lives: Borderline Beings in Indian Traditions* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008), 480.
- <sup>154</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 122; author's emphasis.
- <sup>155</sup> Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 42.
- <sup>156</sup> Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1926/1996), 60.
- <sup>157</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 1.4.1.1–2, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, *The Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, *The Kalpa Sutra*, trans. H. Jacobi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1884), 36.
- <sup>158</sup> *Tattvārtha-sūtra* 7.8, in *Tattvārtha Sūtra: That Which Is*, trans. N. Tatia (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 173.
- <sup>159</sup> Cf. C.K. Chapple, *Nonviolence to Animals, Earth, and Self in Asian Traditions* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1995), 10.
- <sup>160</sup> *Sūtrakṛtāṅga-sūtra* 1.1.1.3, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part II, *The Uttarādhyayana Sūtra*, *The Sūtrakṛtāṅga Sūtra*, trans. H. Jacobi (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 236.
- <sup>161</sup> *Daśavaikālika-sūtra* 4.10, in *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, trans. K.C. Lalwani (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1973), 10.

- <sup>162</sup> *Pravacana-sāra* 2.70, in *Śrī Kundakundācārya's Pravacan-sāra (Pavayaasāra)*, trans. A.N. Upadhye (Agas: Parama-Śruta-Prabhāvaka Mandal, Shrimad Rajachandra Ashrama, 1984), 399.
- <sup>163</sup> Cf. P.S. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1998), 115.
- <sup>164</sup> Cf. Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, 124–127; P. Dundas, *The Jains* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 100.
- <sup>165</sup> P.S. Jaini, “Karma and the Problem of Rebirth in Jainism,” in *Collected Papers on Jaina Studies*, ed. Padmanabh S. Jaini (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2010), 126.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid. 123.
- <sup>167</sup> *Bhagavatī-sūtra* 1, *śataka* 2, *uddeśaka* 1, *sūtras* 3–7, in *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, Vol. 1, trans. K.C. Lalwani (Calcutta: Jain Bhawan, 1999), 146–147.
- <sup>168</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 1.8.1.11–12, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 80–81.
- <sup>169</sup> *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* 19.45, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part II, 93.
- <sup>170</sup> *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* 19.66 and 19.77, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part II, 96.
- <sup>171</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 1.1.5.6, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 10.
- <sup>172</sup> *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* 36.95–100, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part II, 215–217.
- <sup>173</sup> *Gommatsāra-jīva-kāṇḍa* 175, in *Gommatsāra Jīva-Kāṇḍa (The Soul)* by Shri Nemichandra Siddhanta Chakravarti, *The Sacred Books of the Jainas*, Vol. 5, trans. J. L. Jaini (Lucknow: Central Jaina Publishing House, 1927), 111.
- <sup>174</sup> *Gommatsāra-jīva-kāṇḍa* 193, in *Gommatsāra Jīva-Kāṇḍa (The Soul)* by Shri Nemichandra Siddhanta Chakravarti, 119.
- <sup>175</sup> Jaini, “Karma and the Problem of Rebirth in Jainism,” 127.
- <sup>176</sup> Dundas, *The Jains*, 106.



<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. K.L. Wiley, "The Nature of Nature: Jain Perspectives on the Natural World," in *Jainism and Ecology: Nonviolence in the Web of Life*, ed. Christopher Key Chapple (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2006), 40.

<sup>179</sup> *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* 19.67, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part II, 96.

<sup>180</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 1.1.2.5, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 4–5.

<sup>181</sup> *Uttarādhyayana-sūtra* 36.71–126, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part II, 213–218.

<sup>182</sup> Wiley, "The Nature of Nature," 41.

<sup>183</sup> *Bhagavaṭi-sūtra* 4, *śataka* 9, *uddēśaka* 34, *sūtras* 9–25, in *Bhagavaṭi Sūtra*, Vol. 4, trans. K.C. Lalwani (Calcutta: Jain Bhawan, 1985), 114–117; cf. Wiley, "The Nature of Nature," 42.

<sup>184</sup> *Daśavaikālika-sūtra* 10.5, in *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, 202.

<sup>185</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 1.2.3.4, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 19.

<sup>186</sup> Dundas, *The Jains*, 158.

<sup>187</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 2.15.1.1, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 202.

<sup>188</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 2.3.1.12, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 138–139.

<sup>189</sup> Dundas, *The Jains*, 2.

<sup>190</sup> Jaini, *The Jaina Path of Purification*, 242.

<sup>191</sup> *Daśavaikālika-sūtra* 5.1.33, in *Daśavaikālika Sūtra*, 71–73.

<sup>192</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 2.1.1.1, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 88.

<sup>193</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 2.4.2.11–12, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 154–155.

<sup>194</sup> *Ācārāṅga-sūtra* 2.4.2.15–16, in *Gaina Sūtras*, Part I, 155.

<sup>195</sup> W.J. Johnson, *Harmless Souls* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995), 25.

<sup>196</sup> Dundas, *The Jains*, 191.

<sup>197</sup> R. Williams, *Jaina Yoga* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 100.

- <sup>198</sup> Ibid. 99–102.
- <sup>199</sup> Ibid. 117–121.
- <sup>200</sup> Dundas, *The Jains*, 171.
- <sup>201</sup> The International Bill of Human Rights consists of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- <sup>202</sup> Flagging down passing private cars as a taxi for a negotiated price is still a regular practice in many (though not all) Russian cities and rural areas.
- <sup>203</sup> Vladimir Soloviev, *Three Discussions*, trans. Alexander Bakshy (London: University of London Press, 1915), 35–37.
- <sup>204</sup> Ibid. xxvi.
- <sup>205</sup> The question is precisely about suppression of a wrongdoer, i.e., the one who is doing evil or has an intention to do it. Suppression is not killing. Meanwhile, the supporters of absolutist ethics of nonviolence, following Leo Tolstoy, deny the mere possibility of using force against a wrongdoer, unreasonably identifying the resort to force as killing. Killing is an exclusive, extreme means of suppressing a wrongdoer, resort to which is admissible only after all means – non-forceful and non-exclusive – have been exhausted.
- <sup>206</sup> The study was prepared within the framework of the Academic Fund Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2015 (grant No. 15-05-0069) and supported within the framework of a subsidy granted to the HSE by the Government of the Russian Federation for the implementation of the Global Competitiveness Program.
- <sup>207</sup> Probably the best explication of Tolstoy's teaching is revealed in his letter to Ernest Howard Crosby. [www.nonresistance.org/docs-pdf/Tolstoy/visited](http://www.nonresistance.org/docs-pdf/Tolstoy/visited) on 0.07.2016.

- <sup>208</sup> Peter Brock, *Pacifism in Europe* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), 34.
- <sup>209</sup> Hannah Arendt, *On Violence* (London: A Harves Book Harcourt, 1970).
- <sup>210</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 107.
- <sup>211</sup> On the distinction of divine and mythic violence see, Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, Vol. 1, 1913-1926 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- <sup>212</sup> See Benjamin Ginsberg, *The Value of Violence* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2013).
- <sup>213</sup> On the idea of religious revolutionary violence, see Jan Assmann, *Religion and Cultural Memory* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006). On the mutual dependency of torture and terror, see: Paul Kahn, *Sacred Violence: Torture, Terror and Sovereignty* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008).
- <sup>214</sup> John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).
- <sup>215</sup> Quoted from Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1968), 192.
- <sup>216</sup> Gandhi, *Nonviolence in Peace and War* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 131.
- <sup>217</sup> Robert Holmes, "Pacifism for Nonpacifists," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 30:1999, No. 3, 398.
- <sup>218</sup> *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* No. 155 (5918), July 29, 2013.
- <sup>219</sup> See Michael Gross, *Moral Dilemmas of Modern War. Torture, Assassination, and Blackmail in an Age of Asymmetric Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- <sup>220</sup> Kahn, *Sacred Violence*, 4.
- <sup>221</sup> Ross, *Violent Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 148.

- <sup>222</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 13.
- <sup>223</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society. A Study in Ethics and Politics* (London: Westminster John Know Press, 1932), 43.
- <sup>224</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Knopf, 1948).
- <sup>225</sup> Ivan A. Ilyin, *O soprotivlenii zlu siloyu* (Moskva: Respublika, 1993), 114.
- <sup>226</sup> Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, sec. ed. (London: Routledge, 2011), 88.
- <sup>227</sup> Gandhi, *Nonviolence in Peace and War*, 141.
- <sup>228</sup> See James R. Martel, *Walter Benjamin and the Eschatology of Sovereignty* (London: Routledge, 2012).
- <sup>229</sup> Daniel Ross, *Violent Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 2.
- <sup>230</sup> Kahn, *Sacred Violence*, 17.
- <sup>231</sup> Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 54.
- <sup>232</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy at the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004).
- <sup>233</sup> The fullest formulation of the *talion*: “A life for a life, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burning for a burning, a wound for a wound, a stripe for a stripe” (Exodus 21:23–25). Cf. Matthew 5:38–39.
- <sup>234</sup> The commandment of love is composed of two inseparable commandments that impute love of the Lord and love of one’s neighbor: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”; “Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments” (Matthew 22:36–39).

- <sup>235</sup> For further discussion, see R. Апресян, “‘Revenge is Mine, I Will Repay’: On the Normative Contexts and Associations of the Commandment ‘Resist Not Evil’,” in *Russian Studies in Philosophy*, 48: 2009, No. 2, 8–27.
- <sup>236</sup> Joseph Brodsky, “A Commencement Address,” in Brodsky, *Less Than One* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1986). All further quotes from Brodsky are from this Address.
- <sup>237</sup> Leo Tolstoy, “Letter to N.N. (to Engelhard),” *The Complete Works of Count Tolstoy*, Vol. XVII, trans. Leo Wiener (Boston: Dana Estes & Company Publishers, 1904), 380.
- <sup>238</sup> Ibid. 379.
- <sup>239</sup> Leo Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You: Christianity not as a Mystic Religion but as a New Theory of Life*, trans. Constance Garnett (New York: Cassel Publishing Company, 1894), 107.
- <sup>240</sup> Ibid. 14.
- <sup>241</sup> Tolstoy, “Letter to N.N. (to Engelhard),” 390.
- <sup>242</sup> Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, 94.
- <sup>243</sup> See Leo Tolstoy, *What Then Must We Do?*, trans. Aylmer Maude (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), 105–110.
- <sup>244</sup> Ibid. 49.
- <sup>245</sup> Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, 44.
- <sup>246</sup> Gandhi, Mahatma, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Publications Division Government of India, 1998). Available online at: <http://www.gandhiserve.org/e/cwmg/cwmg.htm>; 1998 [1934], Vol. 65:318.
- <sup>247</sup> See Colm McKeogh, *Tolstoy’s Pacifism* (Amherst, MA: Cambria Press, 2009), 165–166.
- <sup>248</sup> Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1940], Vol. 79:122.
- <sup>249</sup> Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1942], Vol. 81:424. See Ruth Lane, “Standing ‘Aloof’ from the State: Thoreau

on Self-Government,” *The Review of Politics*, 67:2005, 283-310; Leigh Kathryn Jenco, “Thoreau’s Critique of Democracy,” in *A Political Companion to Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Jack Turner (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky: 2009), 68-96.

- 250 Most of Gandhi’s textual references on “Village *Swaraj*” were compiled in 1962 by H. M. Vyas in a single volume under the same title. The volume is conveniently available online at: <[http://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/village\\_swaraj.pdf](http://www.mkgandhi.org/ebks/village_swaraj.pdf)>.
- 251 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1988 [1925], Vol. 32:258.
- 252 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1988 [1939], Vol. 75:176.
- 253 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1946], Vol. 91:325.
- 254 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1942], Vol. 81:113.
- 255 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1942], Vol. 81:113-114.
- 256 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1948], Vol. 98:333-334.
- 257 See Crispin Bates, “The Development of *Panchayati Raj* in India,” in *Rethinking Indian Political Institutions*, ed. Crispin Bates and Subho Basu (London: Anthem Press, 2005), 169-184, especially 177-178; and Pratap Chandra Swain, *Panchayati Raj* (New Delhi: APH Publishing, 2008), 8.
- 258 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1939], Vol. 77:43.
- 259 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1927], Vol. 38:210.
- 260 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1946], Vol. 91:390, 56-57.
- 261 Gandhi, *Collected Works*, 1998 [1947/48], Vol. 98:88, 289.
- 262 Ted Trainer, *The Transition to a Sustainable and Just World* (Canterbury: Envirbook, 2010), 285. Sāhitya Vikāś Maṇṣai, 1977), 2:120-121.