CHAPTER VII
MAHATMA GANDHI ON NON-VIOLENCE

Mahatma Gandhi's name is commonly identified with the concept of ahimsa, or nonviolence. It has been suggested that "Gandhi will be remembered as one of the very few who have set the stamp of an idea on an epoch. That idea is Non-violence."\(^1\) While nonviolence has been preached by religious prophets as a cardinal moral virtue, political philosophers have generally concentrated on the justification of force and the exercise of power. About this Professor Raghavan Iyer has raised several questions.\(^2\) Was Gandhi merely blind to the permanent gulf between moral ideals and social facts in believing that ahimsa is a political instrument and a social goal that can have immediate relevance and application? Or was Gandhi a dogmatic pacifist who could not grasp the actual nature of social and political conflicts? Neither is true, and if he has been much misunderstood, it is only because more attention has been generally paid to his partial success as a politician than to his innumerable attempts to formulate, clarify and qualify the doctrine of ahimsa. His statements at different times are not free from ambiguities, formal inconsistencies and other difficulties, but he did evolve a subtle and complicated doctrine that cannot be easily grasped or lightly dismissed, and the very word "nonviolence" has passed into the vocabulary of politics.

As early as 1916 Gandhi distinguished between the negative and the positive meanings of ahimsa.

In its negative form it means not injuring any living being whether by body or mind. I may not, therefore, hurt the person or any wrong-doer or bear any ill-will to him and so cause him mental suffering. This statement does not cover suffering caused to the wrong-doer by natural acts of mine which do not proceed from ill-will. \(\ldots\) ahimsa requires deliberate self-suffering, not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrong-doer. \(\ldots\) In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of ahimsa, I must love my enemy or a stranger to me as I would my wrong doing father or son. This, active ahimsa necessarily includes truth and

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fearlessness.³

In From Yeravda Mandir Gandhi held that ahimsa is not the crude thing it has been made to appear to be in India, that non-injury was only the least expression of ahimsa. Toward the end of his life, he regretted that in Indian politics as in religious life nonviolence was mainly taken to imply non-killing. Sometimes killing, he said, is the cleanest part of violence. Harassment could be worse than killing outright a mischief-maker.⁴

Gandhi thus extended the meaning of ahimsa beyond mere non-killing or even non-injury. The principle of ahimsa, he held, is “hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody, and by our holding on to what the world needs.”⁵ The path of ahimsa is the path of non-attachment and entails continuous suffering and the cultivating of endless patience. In its relatively narrower sense, it means not to hurt any living creature by thought, word or deed, even for the supposed benefit of that creature. Ahimsa implies not merely a certain attitude of detached sympathy toward an enemy, but also the denial of the very existence of an enemy. At times Gandhi equated ahimsa with innocence and declared that complete nonviolence is complete absence of ill-will, that active nonviolence is goodwill toward all life, that nonviolence in this sense is a perfect state and the goal toward which mankind moves naturally though unconsciously. At other times Gandhi identified ahimsa with reason and defended it in terms similar to the Golden Rule. The basic principle on which, the practice of non-violence rests is that what holds good in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe. All mankind in essence are alike. What is, therefore, possible for one is possible for everybody.⁶ Total ahimsa is a state of soul and mind, but the practice of nonviolence is a deliberate exercise that could be justified rationally.

It is true that Gandhi sometimes inflated the term ahimsa to include all the moral virtues; he equaled it with humility, forgiveness, love, charity, selflessness, fearlessness, strength, non-attachment, meekness and innocence. Similarly, he

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³ Modern Review, October, 1916.
⁵ Ibid. p.7.
stretched himsa or violence far beyond its ordinary usage to include “trickery, falsehood, intrigue, chicanery and deceitfulness—short, all unfair and foul means come under the category of himsa.”

Although at times Gandhi made ahimsa an all-embracing term, he was “also willing on occasion to sharpen his use of the word and to distinguish it from daya, or mercy, anasakti, or selflessness, and charily or love. "Ahimsa is a quality of the disembodied soul alone” and in its fullness belongs only to a man of vitaraga,; or detachment. Mercy is "ahimsa in the flesh." Ahimsa implies an inability to go on witnessing another's pain and from it thus spring mercy, heroism and all other virtues associated with ahimsa. Gandhi challenged the prevailing Indian view of detachment: "It is bad logic to say that we must look on while others suffer"; merely because we wish to take a detached view of our own suffering. Nonviolence had been too narrowly interpreted in India and in the West because of the extreme fear of death and the mistaken notion that the pain of death is always greater than the pain of living. Ahimsa, in Gandhi’s view, was a broader notion than daya but less exalted than anasakti. While the root of ahimsa is uttermost selflessness and complete freedom from a regard for one’s body, anasakti—the central teaching of the Gita—transcends ahimsa, which is a necessary preliminary, and is included in it.

The Gandhian concept of ahimsa is attended with ambiguity, not just because he used it in different senses, more restricted or more extended in different contexts, but mainly owing to the fact that he both commended it as a method of action superior in its moral and practical efficacy to violence, and also regarded it as an ethical injunction that is universally valid, as the supreme moral principle. Ahimsa, in the wider sense, means the willingness to treat all beings as one's very self (atmavat sarvabhuteshu), a standpoint repeatedly stressed in the Gita. But although such freely flowing love may be a worthy ideal, ahimsa (in the weaker sense of deliberate abstention from harm and from ill-will) is the minimal and mandatory demand of human morality. This is justified in terms of the Golden Rule, but also on the basis of the belief in the sanctity and oneness of all life and the identity of interests of all men

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7 Harijan, May 1939.
9 Ibid. p.109.
10 Ibid.110.
by virtue of their common dignity and their moral interdependence. Ahimsa is important not just as a desirable virtue or merely as the means for the purification and ennobling of the soul but even more as the fundamental and perhaps the only way in which one can express his/her respect for the innate worth of any human being. It is an essential and universal obligation without which one would cease to be human.

Ahimsa for Gandhi, is not a denial of power as influence or persuasion, pressure or moral, force, but only of power in its violent and compulsive forms. Far from denying the distinction commonly made between force and power, Gandhi emphasized it but continued to, talk of force when in fact he meant only non-physical force or the creative power in man, his capacity for constructive and non-aggressive action. In this sense it is called “soul-force” because it is independent of pecuniary or material assistance, usable by all men, women and children, applicable to all human relationships. It is to violence and to all tyranny and injustice what light is to darkness, “one of the world’s great principles which no power on earth can wipe out.”

Just as humility is the natural accompaniment of true heroism, ahimsa is the necessary correlate of fearlessness. In Gandhi’s vision, the maintenance of moral stature and spiritual dignity must be based upon the practice of ahimsa. He conceived of ahimsa as an integral part yajna or sacrifice, a concept rooted in the Indian conception of a beneficent cosmic order and a humane discipline requiring self-purification and self-examination. The moral force generated by ahimsa or non-violence was therefore held by Gandhi to be infinitely greater than any force founded upon selfishness. The essential power of non-violence was viewed alternatively by Gandhi as being ‘soul-force’ and ‘truth-force’. The two terms are fundamentally equivalent, and differ only in their psychological or ontological emphasis. For Gandhi, ahimsa represented not a denial of power but a renunciation of all forms of coercion and compulsion. He held in fact that ahimsa had a strength which no earthly power could continue to resist. Although Gandhi was noted for his advocacy of ahimsa in social and political arenas, its most fundamental and intimate use lay for him in the moral persuasion of free souls.

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Just as Gandhi sometimes inflated the word ahimsa to encompass all virtues, he equally broadened the notion himsa or violence to include all forms of deceit and injustice. Himsa proceeds from fear, which is the shadow of ignorant egotism. Its expulsion from the heart requires an act of faith which transcends the scope of analysis. Gandhi held, however, that just as intellect plays a large part in the worldly use of violence, so it plays an even larger part in the field of non-violence. The mind, guided by the heart, must purge all elements of egotism before it can embody ahimsa. Gandhi postulated that the willingness to kill exists in human beings in inverse; proportion to their willingness to die. This must be understood in terms of tanha-the will to live-which is present to some degree in every human being and reinforces the concept of the separative ego. As that ego is illusory and transitory in nature, it has a necessary tendency to fear for its own future, and with that an inevitable propensity towards violence. Gandhi held that ahimsa could be taught and inculcated only by example, and never by force. Coercion, indeed, would itself contradict ahimsa. The roots of violence and himsa lie in the mind and heart, and therefore mere external restraint or abstention from violence cannot be considered true ahimsa. Gandhi chose the term ahimsa because himsa or violence is never wholly avoidable; the word ahimsa stresses that which is to be overcome. Whilst acknowledging that some violence can be found in every being, Gandhi could never concede that such violence was irreparable or irreducible. He held that those who begin by justifying force become addicted to it, while those who seek the practical reduction of himsa in their lives should be engaged in constant self-purification.

Ahimsa, in the widest sense, means a willingness to treat all beings as oneself. Thus ahimsa is the basis of anasakti selfless action. It is equivalent to the realization of absolute Truth, and it is the goal towards which all true human beings move, naturally, though unconsciously, Ahimsa cannot be realized alone; it has meaning only in the context of universal human interaction and uplift. Like truth, ahimsa, when genuine, carries conviction in every sphere. Unlike many forms of love, however, ahimsa is embodied by a truth-seeker not out of longing or lack, but out of a sense of universal obligation. It is only when one takes the vow of ahimsa that one has the capacity to assess apparent failures in terms of one's own moral inadequacies. Ahimsa means, at the very least, a refusal to do harm. ‘In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity.’ Gandhi's refusal to set different standards for saints.
and ordinary men, combined with his concern to give ahimsa a practical social function rather than a purely mystical use, led him to extend and employ the word in novel ways. The political strength which ahimsa can summon is greater and profounder than the impact of violence precisely because ahimsa is consubstantial with the immortal soul. Any programme of social or political reform, including civil disobedience, must, therefore, begin with the heroic individual, for only when such pioneers radiate the lustre of ahimsa will all humanity be uplifted.

Anyone may practice non-violence in the absence of support and even in the face of hostility. Indeed, ahimsa in the midst of adversity becomes the sovereign means of self-purification and the truest road to self-knowledge. Ahimsa is the anti-entropic force in Nature and the indefeasible law of the human species. Just as unconditional commitment to Truth can lead to limited truth in action, so too the universal creed of ahimsa may yield an appropriate policy of non-violence. As a policy, non-violence is a mode of constructive political and social action, just as truth-seeking is the active aspect of Truth. Truth and Non-Violence are the integrated aspects of immutable soul-force, non-violence and truth together form, as it were the right angle of all religions.14

One must be sure, however, not to believe conveniently in ahimsa as a policy, whilst doubting the creed. Whether or not any specific policy is demonstrably effective, it is imperative to hold true to the creed. Gandhi distinguished, moreover, between policy and mere tactics. Some successful tactics might at times be inappropriate, but the policy itself continues to be apt, Gandhi marvelled at those who, conceding that his non-violent programme worked in the case of the British, insisted that it must inevitably fail against a Hitler or Mussolini. Such a view romanticized the benevolence of the British and altogether denied that tyrants are a part of the human species. Gandhi's own experience had shown him that the British could be utterly ruthless or devious, even though his firm faith forbade him from excluding anyone from the possibility of growth, change of heart, and recognition of necessity. Something more reasonable than subtle racism would be required to challenge the universal relevance of ahimsa.

14 Navajivan, 9 August, 1925.
It is in the application of ahimsa to the issues of war and peace, however, that Gandhi’s teachings can be seen to be uncompromising. Non-violence does not signify the unwillingness to fight against an enemy. But, he argued, the enemy is always ignorance and the evil which men do: it is not in human beings themselves. Even though he loathed war and violence in all its forms, Gandhi could not be classified as an orthodox pacifist. Indeed, he held that the courage and heroism often displayed by war-struck individuals reflected well upon their moral character, even if war itself was a dark moral blot on those who encouraged or allowed it to happen. For himself, he rejected indirect participation in war, and refused to let others fight his battles for him. ‘If I have only a choice between paying for the army of soldiers to kill my neighbors or to be a soldier myself, I would, as I must, consistent with my creed, enlist as a soldier in the hope of controlling the forces of violence and even of converting my comrades.’

Training for war demoralized and brutalized people, Gandhi believed, and its after-effects brought nations down to abysmal levels of dissolution and discontent. He therefore strove to show how non-violence was the cleanest weapon against terrorism and torture. He asserted that the man who holds to a high sense of dignity and brotherhood, even to the point of death, confounds aggression and may even shame his attackers. Whilst insisting that non-violence was the only means for bringing to an end the familiar vicious cycles of revenge, he recognized that this required expert timing. Poor timing could lead through foolhardiness to a form of suicide or martyrdom, and Gandhi held that there was a higher truth in living for non-violence than in inadvertently dying in its name. Witnessing the course of warfare from the Boer War through the Second World War, he only strengthened his conviction in regard to the basic creed of non-violence. Indeed, when he heard of the bombing of Hiroshima, he declared, ‘Unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell certain suicide for mankind.’ In a non-violent stale, it should finally be possible to raise a non-violent army, which could resist armed invasion without recourse to arms. However distant such a prospect, Gandhi refused to relinquish it, for he knew that violent triumphs guarantee nothing but the brutalization of human beings and the perpetuation of further violence.

15 Young India, 30 January, 1930, p.34.
16 Harijan, 29 September, 1946, p.333.
The individual who would strive to be fully human—to embody satya and ahimsa to the fullest possible extent—should not rely on others to display a moral courage which is the mature product of an inward transformation. Nonetheless like-minded seekers and strivers can offer each other moral support and mutual encouragement. If the political life of any nation is to be spiritualized, the process must begin in intentional communities. Gandhi's ashrams were such pioneering attempts—small communities committed to embodying the principles they upheld. Chief amongst these principles were the vows of satya and ahimsa. Self-restraint and purification involved mental, verbal, and physical continence, control of the palate, and the vows of non-possession and fearlessness. Also essential were non-thieving, in the broadest sense of the concept, and the vow of Swadhisti, self-reliance. The strength of the ashram lay not so much in the establishment of detailed rules for living as in the conscious effort to exemplify a shared perspective and to conduct experiments with truth.

The ashram may be seen as a sphere of fellowship in which one can test oneself, taking truth one step beyond oneself. Anasakii could be nurtured, errors corrected, solutions tried, tapas magnified. The fortunate could discover that the secret of happy life lies in renunciation. For Gandhi, the ashram was a microcosm which might come to mirror the full potential of the macrocosm, a minute drop that reflects the shimmering sea. The progressive renunciation of puny selfhood could, he felt, open minds and hearts to the Self of all humanity. Embracing the globe, Gandhi's hopes were addressed not only to his own generation but also to all posterity.

"It remains for those, therefore, who like myself hold this view of renunciation to discover for themselves how far the principle of ahimsa is compatible with life in the body and how it can be applied to acts of everyday life. The very virtue of a dharma is that it is universal, that its practice is not the monopoly of the few, but must be the privilege or all. And it is my firm belief that the scope of truth and ahimsa is world-wide. That is why I find an ineffable joy in dedicating my life to researches in truth and ahimsa and I invite others to share it with me by doing likewise."

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17 Ibid. 24 February, 1946, p.21.
18 Young India, 25 October 1928, p.357.
When once asked by a friend to write a treatise on the science of non-violence, Gandhi replied: "To write such a treatise is beyond my power. I am not built for academic writings. Action is my domain. What I understand, according to my lights, to be my duty, and what comes my way, I do. All my action is actuated by the spirit of service. Let anyone who can systematize Ahimsa into a science do so—if indeed it lends itself to such treatment .... There is no need at present for the treatise in question. Any such during my lifetime would necessarily be incomplete. If at all, it could only be written after my death. And even so let me give the warning that it would fail to give a complete exposition of Ahimsa. No man has ever been able to describe God fully. The same holds true of Ahimsa."¹⁹

Gandhi’s non-violence is not the outcome of learning or scholarship. Books have not contributed to his lore of non-violence. He unostentatiously says: “I am not a well-read man in any sense of the term. All I know of Ahimsa is in the first instance derived from my own experiences and experiments carried on in broad daylight in a humble scientific spirit and in the fear of God which is truth.”²⁰ Thus, non-violence of his conception has nothing to do with book-lore. It has grown out of his searching in the realm of truth. He makes his position all the more clearer in the following, statement:

“I do feel that I am a votary of Truth in spite of all my errors of unconscious omission and commission. But I hope, I have no policy in me save that of truth and Ahimsa. I will not sacrifice truth and Ahimsa even for the deliverance of my country.”²¹

In Gandhi’s estimation the scope of truth and nonviolence is world-wide. This universal aspect of truth and non-violence is all comprehensive in its nature and application. It does not range over imaginary territories. It appears that the impossibility of full realization truth in this mortal body led some ancient seeker after truth to the appreciation of non-violence. In the same way, Gandhi also realized the truthfulness of non-violence. Realization of truth is impossible without non-violence, says he. Truth is the path of non-violence.

²⁰ Young India, 11 October 1928 p.342.
²¹ Harijan, 23 June 1946 p.199.
Gandhi puts a question to himself in regard with the inter-relatedness of truth and non-violence; “Are not non-violence and truth twins?” He answers the question in an emphatic ‘No’, and elaborates the point in the following manner:

“Non-violence is embedded in truth and vice versa. Hence it has been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. Non-violence and truth in a person is a blessed state that is unattainable without perfect purity. Thus, purity leads to non-violence and truth and impurity to untruth and violence.”

Non-violence is the soul of truth. Man is mere animal without it. The difference between man and animal is due to lack of non-violence. Man survives on non-violence, while animal negates its law, and lives on brute force. The animality of man is reflected in the law of the brute. This is of great importance for the understanding and appreciation of non-violence.

The path of truth is as narrow as it is straight. Even so is that of non-violence. It is like balancing oneself on the edge of a sword. By concentration an acrobat can walk on a rope, but the concentration required to tread the path of truth and non-violence is far greater. The slightest inattention brings one tumbling to the ground. One can realize truth and non-violence only by ceaseless striving.

There is difference between violence and nonviolence. Non-violence is not the goal, while truth is the goal. There are no means of realizing truth in human relationship except through the practice of non-violence. Hence a steadfast pursuit of nonviolence is inevitably bound to truth, not so to violence. Since non-violence is the means of finding out truth, men are naturally more concerned with it in their everyday life. Thus the discovery of truth in human relationship follows from nonviolence as a natural end. This leads to education in truth through the process of non-violence. Therefore, education of the masses through non-violence is advocated. This method of educating the people is revolutionary in its conception but humanistic in its approach and application. It lays the foundation of a new human relationship on firmest ground of understanding, sympathy and co-operation.

Without non-violence, it is not possible to seek and find truth. Non-violence and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the two sides of a coin, or rather of a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse and which is the reverse? Nevertheless, non-violence is the means; truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so non-violence is our supreme duty, says Gandhi. If means are taken care of, the end is bound to be reached sooner or later.

Where there is non-violence, there is truth and truth is God. Wherever in the world truth and nonviolence reign supreme, there is peace and bliss. That these exist nowhere shows that they are hidden from man for the time being. But they, cannot disappear for ever. That faith must sustain the faithful. Gandhi sees a ray of hope for man in the emergence of truth and non-violence as positive forces of human conduct.

Gandhi draws a comparison between truth and non-violence in the following manner:

"Truth is positive; non-violence is negative. Truth stands for the fact; non-violence negates the fact. Yet nonviolence is the highest religion. Truth is self-evident; nonviolence is its maturest fruit. It is contained in truth. In the acceptance of truth, there is acceptance of non-violence."\(^23\)

In explaining the interrelatedness of truth and nonviolence, Gandhi is no less aware of the fact that it is difficult to understand the principle of religion without application of the principle of truth and non-violence. "I have come to the conclusion," he remarks, "that, if it is proper and necessary to discover an undying unity among all religions, a master key is needed. That master key is that of truth and non-violence. When I unlock the chest of a religion with this master key, I do not find it difficult to discover its likeness with other religions. Unless and until we realize the fundamental unity, wars, in the name of religion, will not cease."\(^24\)

The lesson of non-violence is present in every religion but perhaps it is in India that its practice has been reduced to a science. Innumerable saints have laid down their lives in tapashcharya. But all that practice of non-violence is nearly dead

\(^{23}\) Young India, 19 November, 1925, p. 397. 
\(^{24}\) Young India, 27 August, 1925, p. 293.
today. It is necessary to revive the eternal law of answering anger by love and violence by non-violence. This shows that India has evolved non-violence as a practical science of human conduct and it is now a forgotten lesson which Gandhi strives to revive. Therefore, non-violence is not a new science, yet the discovery, which he makes about it, is new to the age and, moreover, his experiments with non-violence have given it a stamp of his own.

Non-violence is the end of all religions. In Gandhi's estimation all religions teach non-violence. Therefore, an adherent of religion is an indirect follower of non-violence. If he lives his religion, he naturally lives non-violence. If he fails to love his religion, he is away from non-violence. This is the crux of the matter-

Non-violence is an integral part of every religion. He says: "Non-violence is in Hinduism, it is in Christianity as well as in Islam."25 If non-violence disappears, Hindu Dharma disappears. Islam does not forbid its followers from following non-violence as a policy. After having studied the Bhagavadgita against the background of Indian culture and tradition, he has come to the conclusion that the central teaching of the Gita is to follow truth and non-violence. When, there is no desire for fruit, there is, no temptation for untruth or violence. But it may be freely admitted that the Gita was not written to establish non-violence. That the central teaching of the Gita is not violence but non-violence is amply demonstrated begun in the second chapter and summarized in the concluding 18th chapter of Gita. The treatment in other chapters also supports the position- Violence is impossible without anger, without attachment, without hatred, and the Gita strives to carry us to the state beyond saliva, rajas and tamas, a state that excludes anger, hatred, etc. To one who reads the spirit of the Gita, it teaches the secret of non-violence, the secret of realizing the self through the physical body.26

The Rishis discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and laugh the weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence. In this way, the superiority of the law of non-violence is established over the law of violence. Violence is declared as useless and non-violence is the way of salvation.

Gandhi says that the Sage who realized Truth found non-violence out of violence raging all about him and said:

"Violence is unreal; non-violence is real." The power of non-violence to protect man is a realization against the law of violence to destroy life. It is a great achievement in the domain of human values.

Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law to the strength of the spirit. In the awakening of man through his obedience to a higher law of the spirit, his status or dignity is raised.

Non-violence does not work in the same way as violence. It works in the opposite way. An armed man naturally relies upon arms. A man who is intentionally unarmed relies upon the Unseen Force called God by poets, but called the Unknown by scientists. Non-violence without reliance upon this force is poor stuff to be thrown in the dust. Non-violence is a sham reality without divine guidance. It loses the sustaining force in its working. With this faith in man, the gospel of non-violence is preached. Thus, it is God-inspired force that moves the human heart to, face perils and even death calmly and peacefully. In the working of violence, there is a total absence of divine force. It is blunt, crude and cruel, with no, human or divine element.

Gandhi admitted times without number that what he had been preaching in essence was nothing new. He said: "Prophets and Avatars have also taught the lesson of ahimsa more or less. Not one of them has professed to teach Himsa. And how should it be otherwise? Himsa does not need to be taught. Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakens to the Spirit within he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards Ahimsa or rushes to his doom. That is why the prophets and Avatars have taught the lessons of truth, harmony, brotherhood, justice, etc., all attributes of ahimsa." Here, Gandhi brings out the difference between the functioning of animal and the Spirit as man. Both are diametrically opposite to each other. There is no partnership between them because of their different nature. What is required for the regulation of human relations is the law of

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27 Harijan, 9 September, 1936, p.201.
28 Harijan, 11 August, 1940, p.243.
the Spirit which the prophets have preached for human good. Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force. Thus, the superior claim of non-violence, as the rule of human conduct, is established.

Gandhi's argument is based on the postulate that "if we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards Ahimsa, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it be God Himself." If man has been evolving himself towards a higher level of existence in respect of his moral principles, then the law of progress will compel him to move higher and higher on the plane of human existence. There will be no question of his going back to a primitive state of existence. The law of progress indicates his emancipation from the bondage of senses to the freedom of the spirit in which non-violence as the law of life will be ushered in for the happiness of man.

History teaches the lesson of human progress from the stage of violence to the stage of non-violence. This is a strong pointer for Gandhi in the direction and adoption of non-violence for future human conduct. He writes:

"If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards Ahimsa. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and they began to live in chase. Next came a stage when man was ashamed of leading the life of a wandering hunter. He, therefore, took to agriculture and depended principally on mother earth for his food. Thus, from being a nomad founded villages and he settled down to civilized stable towns and from member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive Ahimsa and diminishing Himsa. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared." Non-violence is not a cloistered virtue confined to the saint and the cave-dweller. It is capable of being practised by the millions, not with full knowledge of its

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29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
implications, but because it is the law of our species. It distinguishes man from the brute but man has not shed the brute in him. He has to strive to do so. This striving applies to the practice of non-violence, not to the belief in it. One cannot strive to believe in a principle: he either believes in it or he does not. And if he believes in it, he must bravely strive to practice it. Gandhi’s advocacy of non-violence is based on the fact that, as it is the law of human species, it is capable of being practised with the realization of its implications. Since man is distinct from animal, the sense of cognition is there to impel him to shed the brute. In such human striving, Gandhi envisages the practice of non-violence.

Belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love. In other words, love in the form of non-violence affects all the phases of human nature equally and uniformly.

When non-violence is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts. Man's whole life is no departmentalized existence. It is one indivisible whole. Therefore, the law of non-violence applies to the whole life and not to acts committed in isolation.

If man is convinced that non-violence is the law of life, he has to practice it towards those who act violently towards him; and the law must apply to nations as to individuals. Training is no doubt necessary. In spite of the small beginnings and if the conviction is there, the result of non-violence will follow.

The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the saints. It is meant for the common people as well. The greatness of Gandhi lies in bringing non-violence within the reach of the common man. Thus, it loses its rarified atmosphere and becomes common property for the use of the common man, though his acquaintance with non-violence will be a long process of training in self-culture. It is brought to the common man to develop his hidden human qualities and powers for his moral upliftment. If a common man, believes in and practises non-violence, there can be no gainsaying that the nation will become non-violent in thought, word and deed.
Gandhi makes us believe in the greatness of non-violence as the law of destiny. He calls non-violence as “the ancient law of self-sacrifice.” Thus, the old and ancient law is propounded in a new garb and in a new spirit for his age to understand its significance and to live up to it. Sufferings of the non-violent have been known to melt the stoniest hearts. This is the record of human experience in the field of non-violent action. In Gandhi’s own experience he had witnessed such pathetic scenes of human suffering. Non-violence, in its dynamic condition, means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the pining of one’s whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration. Conscious suffering, without submission is potential non-violence. Its sole purpose is to end injustice and to establish justice. Thus, suffering is an attribute of the soul-force. In the estimation of Gandhi submission assumes its good or evil aspect according to the nature of human conduct. He says: “Submission to a courteous request is religion, submission to force is irreligion.” In the last analysis, “the gospel of non-violence can be spread only through believers dying for the cause”.  

The root of non-violence is uttermost selflessness which means complete freedom from a regard for one’s body. It deduces the duty of complete self-effacement. Self-effacement is not achievable without selflessness. Therefore in the phraseology of Gandhi, the human body loses all its dread and fears. It becomes a heaven of safety for others, but for itself its function is complete sacrifice for the good of man.  

The play of mixed motives is a normal phase in the life of man. But in non-violence it is an exception to the rule. If mixed motives are allowed to have a free hand, there would not be non-violence. There can be degrees of such motives in violence but not so in non-violence. Non-violence, on the contrary, is purged of all the element of enmity or hatred or malice or anger. According to Gandhi, there is no such thing as shooting out of love.

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32 Ibid.
Non-violence is no passivity in any shape or form, says Gandhi. It is the activist force in the world. Therefore, whether it is materialism or anything else, if non-violence does not provide an effective antidote, it is not the active force of his conception. It is distinctly clear that non-violence is meaningless, if it fails to produce effective results. In fact it is only effectiveness that counts in the appraisal of non-violence.

Mutual trust and mutual love are no trust and no love, says Gandhi. The real love is to love them that hate you, to love your neighbour even though you distrust him. The reciprocity in the domain of trust or love is no criterion of love. It is the simple expression of pure unselfishness. No mutual give and take is the dealing in love. It is unalloyed and pure; it is rewardlessness, it is motivelessness; it is all human in its simplicity and purity.

Non-violence extends as much to human beings as to lower animals. Gandhi extends the limits of non-violence and includes within its ambit all the living creation. It means the recognition of brotherhood of all living beings in which man has to play a pivotal role.

It is true that very few understand how to wield the mighty weapon of non-violence. It requires a lot of understanding and strength of mind. It is unlike what is needed in military schools and colleges. The difficulty one experiences in meeting violence with non-violence arises from weakness of mind. Therefore, non-violence is no physical phenomenon. It is rooted in the mind and out of it non-violence grows. In promoting the cause of non-violence the weakness of mind grows into the strength of mind. This is the result of understanding in the sphere of non-violence. Thus mental attitude is the crucial test of non-violence; it is not the sole test. In the whole philosophy of Gandhi, the force of thought predominates. It is thought alone that determines the nature of human conduct. It lays the foundation of human character. Gandhi gives expression to his ideas in support of the force of thought thus: “I believe in thought power more than in the power of the word, whether written or spoken.” Thus, in the technique of non-violence thought takes a prominent position as a
determining force. He says: “This much is certain that non-violence in action cannot be sustained unless it goes hand in hand with non-violence in thought.”

If one does not practise non-violence in one’s personal relations with others and hopes to use it in bigger affairs, one is vastly mistaken. Non-violence like charity must begin at home. One cannot be non-violent in one’s own circle and violent outside it. Or else, one is not fully non-violent even in one’s own circle; often ‘non-violence is only in appearance.

If one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself, says Gandhi. Non-violence is the means; the end for every nation is complete independence.

Mere mechanical adherence to truth and non-violence is likely to break down at the critical moment. Mechanical adherence is a purely simple physical attribute. It is soulless; it is devoid of inner strength; it is lacking in the element of integrated ness. It is a loosely joint contrivance with no adhesives. It is artificial in its bearing.

The application of non-violence is summed up in the following order:

“Non-violence in its operation against constituted authority is one field. We have exercised this up to now with a fair amount of success and I have always described it as nonviolence of the weak. The other field is the exercise of nonviolence in internal disturbances, Hindu and Muslim riots and the like. We have not been able to show visible success in the exercise of non-violence in this field. It requires soul-force moral courage of the highest type. The third field is the exercise of non-violence against external invasion. This is an entirely new experiment.”

“I hold,” Gandhi observes, “that for the full play of non-violence only one party need believe in it. Indeed, if both believe in it and live up to it, there is no appreciation or demonstration of it. To live at peace with one another is the most natural thing to do. But neither party gains the merit that the exercise of nonviolence carries with it.” Non-violence is ineffective in an atmosphere of non-violence. Non-violence verses non-violence is a zero point of action. It comes into play with resistance or oppression. As good fights evil so non-violence fights violence.

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33 Navajivan, 31 March 1928.
35 Ibid.
Gandhi says that so far non-violence was restricted to the sole purpose of offering civil resistance to the authorities. In his opinion non-violence, that goes so far and no further, scarcely deserves the name of non-violence. It can be called unarmed resistance.

Non-violence should never be used as a shield for cowardice. It is a weapon of the brave. Gandhi had witnessed the scenes of cowardice in, which the people, instead of dying fighting violently, had become helpless witnesses of atrocities. If he were in their place he would have laid down his life on the spot in non-violent resistance. To him a truly non-violent man would never live to tell the tale of atrocities.

In describing the scenes of cowardice in which the people failed to exhibit acts of bravery, he opens out the portals of his heart and brings home the supreme importance of bravery for upholding the cause of honorable living. He says: "Non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery."  

The act of cowardice, in the context, of religion or non-violence, is explained by him thus: "Running away for fear of death, leaving one's dear ones, temples or music, to take care of themselves, is irreligious, it is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Nonviolence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it."  

In his analysis of cowardice he arrives at the conclusion that "the remedy against cowardice is not physical culture but the braving of dangers." To him, the source of strength is not the physical strength but it is the indomitable will. Hence it is the strength of mind that is required to overcome the weakness of cowardice. Non-violence is not a cover for cowardice but it is the supreme virtue of the brave. Exercise of non-violence requires far greater bravery than that of swordsmanship. Cowardice is wholly inconsistent with non-violence. Translations from swordsmanship to non-violence are possible, and at times, even an easy stage. Non-violence, therefore, presupposes ability to strike. But striking ability of non-violence

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36 Young India, 28 May, 1924 p. 178.
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
is a conscious deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. In the phraseology of Gandhi, vengeance is a weakness which arises out of fear of harm, imaginary or real. It is considered by him superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission. But, he feels that forgiveness is higher still.

To take the name of non-violence, when there is sword in your heart, is, not only hypocritical and dishonest but cowardly. Carrying a false banner under non-violence is a deceitful act. Non-violence is freedom from all alloys and taints.

Indeed, life is made of compromises. Non-violence, simply because it is purest, unselfish love, often demands such compromise. But compromise lays down imperative conditions: no self in one's action, no fear, no untruth. It must be in furtherance of the cause of non-violence. Compromise must be natural to oneself, not imposed from without. There are no factors of selfishness that compel to effect compromise. It is a selfless act without fear or untruth.

The fulfillment of non-violence is impossible without utter selflessness. Self or self-interest is a vitiating influence in the conduct of non-violence. It is purity of motive, or freedom from self that regulates the action of non-violence. In activizing non-violence, it is the force of goodness and not of self-interest that is generated. The course of non-violence is determined by a series of human acts working towards the attainment of the goal without hankering after the result. The non-violent man is not concerned with victory or defeat, as his conduct is beyond the purview of both. Gandhi rightly says, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violent resistance, as an essentially nonviolent man does not calculate the consequences. Non-violent resistance is the best method under all conceivable circumstances.

That Gandhi's non-violence is made of sterner stuff is his, unfailing experience. It is firmer than the finest metal known to the scientists. It is never conceived as a weapon of the weak but of the stoutest hearts.

Non-violence is a plant of slow growth; it grows imperceptibly but surely. It progresses in its own natural way. It does not show off any trace of abrupt growth; it simply grows from within. It is only perceptible in its influence and action.

In, the analysis of non-violence, more importance is attached to the force of the heart than to that of the mind. He says, "Non-violence, which is a quality of the
heart, cannot come by an appeal to the brain. Therefore, what is required, is a quiet but resolute demonstration of non-violent strength. The opportunity comes to every one almost daily. Thus, nonviolent strength is inner strength the strength of the heart.  

Non-violence requires constant vigilance in order to make it progress towards its goal. Gandhi says: “We may never be strong enough to be entirely non-violent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep non-violence as our goal and make steady progress towards it.”

Non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like other virtues. Though society is largely regulated by the elements of non-violence in its mutual dealings, its social virtue needs much emphasis for the welfare of man and society. That non-violence which only an individual can use is not much use in terms of society.

If disorders take place, they will be a test of non-violence. Non-violence is a force that gains in intensity with the increase in violence that it has to deal with.

In non-violence there is no place for secrecy. Nonviolence is overt. Secrecy aims at building a wall of protection, while non-violence disdains all such protection. Non-violence functions in the open and in the face of odds. Secrecy is an appendage of violence. Gandhi says about himself that he has grown up from youth to 76 years in abhorrence of secrecy. He further says: “My life has been an open book. I have no secrets and I encourage no secrets.”

“I do justify entire non-violence,” Gandhi observes, and consider it possible in relation between man and man and nations and nations; but it is not resignation from all real fighting against wickedness. On the contrary, non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. To fight wickedness not on physical plane but on mental moral-plane, is Gandhian action. Mental-moral preparedness is required for fight against wickedness. He says, “I contemplate a mental, and therefore a moral, ordinary human being to which the moral and the mental are not inalienable qualities.”

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39 Ibid.
41 Young India, March 19, 1931. p.43. 

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opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant’s sword, not by pitting up against it a sharp-edged, weapon but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him.\textsuperscript{42}

The technique of non-violent action consists in isolating and sterilizing the instruments of evil. It is not possible to attain an iniquitous end by non-violent means. Non-violence, in its very nature, is of no assistance in the defense of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts. So long as one is not prepared to take the risks and to face the consequences one cannot be free from fear, and so long as a man has not shed all fear, he is ipso facto incapable of practicing non-violence. Freedom from fear is a step towards the practice of non-violence, which is full of risks. Where there is fear, there can be no non-violence. The word ‘fear’ can have no place in the dictionary of non-violence. Lack of fear qualifies a votary of non-violence for selfless service and suffering, even in a communal conflagration.

The very thought of pure non-violence leaves the, people cold and indifferent. It need not frighten anybody, says Gandhi. If we have a clear conception of it and have a living faith in, its matchless efficacy, it will not be found to be so hard to practise as it is sometimes supported to be. Fear is due to lack of appreciation of non-violence in its essentiality. Non-violence has no cause of fear. The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practise non-violence to perfection. The votary of non-violence has only the fear that is of God. Non-violence should not fear the secret or open hand of imperialists. The greatest enmity requires an equal measure of non-violence for its abatement. Thus non-violence regulates its force in proportion to the vehemency of violence. In one word, violence is a barometer of non-violence. Non-violence rules out interested destruction. That is why the killing of a human being out of self-interest can never find a place in the scheme of non-violence. To kill any living being or thing save for his or its own interest is violence, however noble the motive may otherwise be. And a man who harbours ill-will towards another is no less guilty of violence. Nonviolent resistance can only follow some real disinterested service, some heart-expression of love.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.

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In the estimation of Gandhi, the employment of the atom bomb for the wholesale destruction of men, women and children is the most diabolical use of science. Non-violence is the only thing that the atom bomb cannot destroy. In this age of the atom bomb unadulterated non-violence is the only force that can confound the tricks of violence put together. We are witnessing the tragic insolvency of military science and practice to-day.

Non-violence is disciplined conduct that rules man and society equally. It sets at naught the forces of destruction and establishes peace and harmony in the sphere of human relations. Non-violence can never lead to anarchy.

It is observed that "we pretend to believe that retaliation is the law of our being, whereas in every scripture we find that retaliation is nowhere obligatory but permissible. It is restraint that is obligatory. Retaliation is indulgence requiring elaborate regulation. It has so worked with US. But when it becomes a cloak for our weakness, it emasculates US. Far better than emasculation would be the bravery of those who use physical force. Far better than cowardice would be meeting one's death fighting. He further explains that our non-violence has not reached such heights. It would be wholly wrong to lower the standard of non-violence by reason of our own frailty or lack of experience. Without true understanding of the ideal one can never hope to reach it. It is necessary, therefore, to apply one reason to understand the power of non-violence."43

Our non-violence has not been of the strong. Weak people cannot develop it all of a sudden. But Gandhi says, "I have no other drug in my chest." I can only prescribe," he adds, "what I have and what has never failed." He is conscious of the fact that he is dealing with weak people who cannot use the weapon of non-violence of the strong. But his only remedy is the use of non-violence which he prescribes for all ills. Therefore, he thinks that the people, though weak, can be trained in the school of non-violence.

In 1947 India was partitioned as the last resort to keep peace in, the country. Gandhi felt differently, about the whole question of partition. He said that he would rather let the whole country be reduced to ashes than yield an inch to violence. But

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non-violence was his creed and it was not so with the Congress. He never realized that there was such thing as non-violence of the weak. To him, no violence and weakness were a contradiction in terms. Later, he harped on the theme of non-violence of strong in opposition to non-violence of the weak. This distinction between non-violence of the weak and of the strong was the result of bloodshed, man-slaughter, arson, loot, mistrust and suspicion on a countryside scale as a consequence of partition. Instead of declaring the impotency of non-violence as a weapon, he acclaimed that non-violence was the only weapon that could fight all ills successfully. Thus, non-violence of the strong came into being out of the chaotic, conditions.

The use of non-violence requires greater bravery, than that of violence. Non-violence is an attribute of the brave. Cowardice and non-violence do not go together any more than water and fire. In the composition of the truly brave, there should be no malice, no anger, no distrust, no fear of death or physical hurt. Non-violence is certainly not for those who lack these essential qualities. Thus, the brave, as defined by Gandhi, is of different calibre from the ordinary definition of the brave. Here, the brave is a humanized personality.

Man is not only born to live and die in ease and comfort but also to take risks in life. In the life of man, there comes a time when he has to protect himself or his relatives. He should be fully prepared to face such eventualities. This is his duty, which has to be discharged violently or non-violently, but in no case it can be ignored or neglected. Gandhi was of the opinion that he who cannot protect himself or is nearest and dearest or their honour by non-violently facing death may or ought to do so by violently dealing with the oppressor. He who can do neither of the two is a burden. He has no business to be the head of a family. In utterly failing to do the duty either violently or non-violently man loses his rightful status and becomes a burden to society. This is the despicable picture of a fallen man. Protection does not depend upon outside help. It comes from internal determination to protect it against the whole world. This is nonviolence in terms of protection.

The heroism of non-violence cannot be developed from cowardice. Bravery is essential to both, violence and non-violence. In fact, it is even more essential in the latter, for violence is nothing if it is not the acme of bravery. The minimum that is required of a person wishing to cultivate non-violence of the brave is first to clear
one's thought of cowardice and in the light of clearance regulate his conduct in every activity, great or small. Thus, the votary must refuse to be cowed down by his superior, without being angry. He must, however, be ready to sacrifice his post, however remunerative it may be. Whilst sacrificing his all, if the votary has no sense of irritation against his employee, he has non-violence of the brave in him. Thus freedom from cowardice and malice and refusal to surrender even at the cost of one's life are the characteristic features of the votary who has non-violence of the strong at heart.

In a non-violent struggle man has to depend mainly upon his spiritual or moral strength. It is the power of the heart that sustains human resources successfully ends the struggle. Gandhi says that the bravery of the heart is far greater than the bravery of the body. Non-violence is not the way of the timid or the cowardly. It is the way of the brave ready to face death. He who perishes, sword in hand, is no doubt brave, but he who faces death without raising, little ringer and without flinching, is braver. There can be no hope for the development of non-violence, the strong so long as we have not cultivated the strength to die with courage and love in our hearts. Non-violence takes birth in the heart of man which faces death with courage and love. Non-violence of the strong cannot be a mere policy. It must be a creed or a passion.

Consciousness of the living presence of God within one is undoubtedly the first requisite of non-violence of the brave. Acquisition of this consciousness does not require or mean temple going. The daily recitation, however, carries with it well-defined principles. One with a wicked heart can never be conscious of the all purifying presence of God. If it is non-violence of the strong, it must come from inward conviction. It is no imposition or duress. It has to grow from within. It is no artifice. It is above and beyond all that. It lies deep in the recesses of the human heart and becomes a potential in the sense of conviction from within.

Non-violent resistance will be purely and wholly non-violent in character and nature. There is no room for violence in any form or shape in non-violent action. Gandhi openly says that non-violent technique will be no armed assistance. The qualities of non-violence are described thus:

“When a person claims to be non-violent, he is expected not to be angry with one who, has injured him. He will not wish him harm; he will wish him well; he will
not swear at him; he will not cause him any physical hurt. He will put up with all the injury, to which he is subjected by the wrong doer. Thus non-violence is complete innocence. Complete innocence is absence of ill-will against all, that lives. It, therefore, embraces even sub-human life not excluding noxious insects or beasts. Non-violence is, therefore, in its active form goodwill towards all life. It is pure love. He read it in the Hindu scriptures, in the Bible, in the Koran.\textsuperscript{44}

The absence of ill-will and the presence of goodwill go to the promotion of the spirit of non-violence affecting the lives of all creatures human and sub-human. In the cultivation of the qualities of non-violence appears human innocence in thought and deed which is goodness without the trace of ill-will towards others. The books of religion also sanction such human conduct, says Gandhi.

Non-violence presupposes the acquisition of certain qualities in man who wishes to conduct himself on the path of non-violence. If one has pride or egoism, there is no non-violence. Non-violence is impossible without humility. There is no room for self-pitying in it either.

Wealth does not help in the promotion of non-violence. Anger is its enemy and pride is a monster that swallows it up. In this, strict and narrow observance of the religion of non-violence, one has often to know so-called violence as the truest form of non-violence.

\textbf{Non-Violence is a higher value than Life.}

Certain types of killing are regarded by Gandhi as acts of ahimsa. When Gandhi says this, however, what he really means is that ahimsa is to him a higher value than Life, and whenever a life has to be taken for the sake of ahimsa there would be nothing mineral in it. A lower value is being sacrificed for the sake of a not restrict such sacrifices of life only to cases where it is “necessary” for the sake of the victim. What is more important, a non-violent person must always lay down his life in the face of violence, provided he has true Non-violence within him, that is, if he is not afraid and bears no ill-will against the assailant.

To a large extent this line of thinking must have been the basis of Gandhi's belief, drawn from the Hindu tradition, that there is soul that is separable from the body, that it is the soul which really real and the body unreal or only a lower form of realities “The body itself,” says Gandhi, “is a house of slaughter, and the for moksha (salvation) and Eternal Bliss consist in perfect deliverance from the body, and therefore all pleasure, save the joy moksha is evanescent, imperfect.” 45 Since “all life in the exists by some himsa, it follows that “a votary of ahimsa always prays for ultimate deliverance from the boundage of flesh,”46 The realization comes, of course, from a knowledge of the Atman. He who seeks refuge in God ought to have a glimpse of the Atman that transcends the body; and the moment one gets a glimpse of the Imperishable Atman one sheds the love of a perishable body.”47

But one cannot investigate this theological aspect of death to the limitations of our tools. What is of importance for us to note that Non-violence demands the sacrifice of one's life, course, that the soul of the assailant would also be delivered from the bondage of flesh if he should be killed instead of being allow to kill, and that from the point of view of Non-violence it would be better to kill a violent man than the sacrifice of the life of harmless man, but Gandhi regards killing for one's own sake as form of himsa and, therefore, the negation of ahimsa. Therefore one's own life must always be sacrificed in the cause of ahimsa. “When a man is fully read to die,” says Gandhi, “He will not even proposition that the desire to die,” says Gandhi, “he will not even desire to offer violence. Indeed, I may put it down as a self-evidence proposition that the desire to kill is in inverse proportion to the desire to die.” In Gandhi’s view, therefore, “the fear of death thus the greatest obstacle in the way of our realizing the true nature of ahimsa.”48

It is time to pause and take stock of the situation. What is the meaning and implications of Non-violence as understood by Gandhi? Non-violence is an expression of love which is an attribute of the immanent and transcendental God; therefore, it is an ultimate value. Non-violence is also an ultimate value because (1) it is universally applicable, (2) it enhances all other values without detracting from any, and (3) it is unlimited in its application. As an ultimate value Non-violence is,
however, only an abstract ideal; it is always relative for praxeological purposes. On the praxeological plane, it is a synthetic value which can be broken up into the following values: (1) love, which is necessarily involved in Non-violence, (2) laying down in one's own life without violent resistance before a violent assailant, (3) killing for the sake of a victim in certain special circumstances, (4) courage, (5) respect and absence of ill-will in any form for the adversely, (6) non-possession, (7) truthfulness, (8) brahmacharya, and (9) bread-labour.

Gandhi was criticized by the orthodox Hindus on two grounds with regard to his views on Non-violence: first, that his views were opposed to the law of karma, and second, that he had introduced an artificial distinction between the life of human beings and that of animals which was not permitted by traditional Hindu religion or philosophy.

The first criticism was mainly voiced on the occasion of the killing of the agonized calf in Gandhi's ashrama in 1928. One of the criticisms made by a number of correspondents was summed up by Gandhi himself as follows: "If you believe in the law of karma, your killing of the calf was a vain attempt to interfere with the operation of that law." The argument is that the agonized condition of the calf was the result of its own karma and by killing Gandhi had interfered with that law (which was inherently rational and moral) and thus committed an immorality. Thus interpreted, the law of karma would also rule out any kind of purposive activity as believed, for instance, by extreme Buddhists) and especially "other-regarding" activity (since everyone enjoyed the fruits of his own karma and must not be helped or hindered and fatalism. This is, in fact, what had happened to Hindu society for many centuries and why the idea of social service was completely alien to the Hindus, Buddhists or Jains until the Renaissance-cum-Reformation of the Second half of the Nineteenth Century. The most powerful attack was brought about by Vivekanand on this interpretation of karma, and he was followed by Gandhi who, instead of deducing fatalisms from the law of karma, in fact based his entire programme of social transformation on it.

While one cannot investigate the so-called "law" of karma due to it essentially theological roots, fatalism does not necessarily follow from it, because while the
present is determined, according to this “law”, by past karma, the future depends entirely on the present acts of the subject. It might be argued, of course, that interference with the lives of others in any manner is an immoral act (since everyone enjoys the fruits of his own karma) and would, therefore, jeopardize the future of the doer, and this is the position that Gandhi seeks to fight against as we have seen, with the doctrine of nishkama karma (selfless action as propounded in the Gita. In the specific instance of the killing of the calf, critics also argued that Gandhi had imported his conception of Non-violence from the West. While Gandhi replied that I have learnt much from the West and I should not be surprised to find that I had learnt something about ahimsa too from the West”, he sought to justify his action in terms of the doctrine of nishkama karma of the Gita in the following words:

“I firmly believe in the law of karma, but I believe too in human endeavour. I regard as the summum bonum of life the attainment of salvation through karma by annihilating its effects by detachment. If it is a violation of the law of karma to cut short the agony of an ailing animal by putting an end to its life, it is no less so to minister to the sick or try to nurse them back to life. And yet if a main were to refuse to give medicine to a patient or to nurse him on the ground of karma, we would hold him to be guilty of inhumanity and himsa. Without, therefore, entertaining into a discussion about the internal controversy regarding predestination and free will, I will simply say here that I deem to be the highest duty of man to render what little service him can: 50

The second criticism, is more valid from the point of view of Vedantic Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, because none of these religious and philosophy traditions make a distinction between human and non-human life. Isavasyamidam sarvam yat kinehat jagatyam jagat, i.e., God pervades everything that is temporal in this world, says the Isavasyopanishad, and the Hindi who believes in the validity of this statement would regard human beings and animals as equally divine, the Vedantic doctrine that God is immanent as well as transcendental leads to the inevitable conclusion that human beings, lower animals, rocks and stones and trees are all equally divine and, therefore, occupy the same status in the “scheme of the universe”, unless, of course, it can be shown that God manifested himself in the lower animals,

50 Ibid.

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Plants and inanimate objects in order to be of use to the other aspect of his manifestation, namely, human beings. But this idea belongs to the Semitic tradition, not to the Hindu-Buddhist tradition. Buddhism and Jainis do not consider the assumption of the existence of God as essential for religion and morality, but they also believe in the unity and sanctity of all life. The Buddhist emperor or ancient India, Asoka, not only prohibited the slaughter of animals in his empire, but when he provided medical facilities for his subjects in the form of hospitals and distribution of medical herbs, similar arrangements were made for animals also. The Jains go to the extent of not killing even mosquitoes, poisonous snakes and carnivorous animals.

It was argued by cities at the time that Gandhi’s support for the killing of animals which are injurious to human beings was the result in his Western education. As one correspondent wrote: “You have been so much under the Western influences that you have learnt to think it proper to kill lower beings for the sake of man. It is better for you to confess your error and apologize to the world. You should have made up your mind in this matter after exhaustless sifting. Instead, you have passionately taken sides and discredited yourself.”

Gandhi denied that his idea was derived from the West or the East. The argument that Gandhi’s support for the killing of animals injurious to men was derived from the West is true to the extent that there is no justification, in theory, for such killing in the Vedantic, Buddhist or Jain traditions. The Vendantic tradition, of course, justifies the slaughter of animals for the purpose religious sacrifice, but that is very different from what Gandhi saying. Vivekanand was Gandhi’s forerunner in this respect also but he too had come in close contact with the West. The validity of his argument becomes clear when one sees Gandhi’s reasoning for his stand. In his opinion, “there is a fundamental difference between the monkey nuisance and the human nuisance. Society knows no means by which to effect a change of heart in the monkey and their killing may, therefore, be held as pardonable, but there is no evildoer or tyrant who need be considered beyond reform. That is why the killing of a human being out of self-interest never find a place in the scheme of chimsa.” Man is respondent the faculty of reasoning which an animal lacks. Referring to the killing of animals injurious to man. He observes “Such killing becomes a duty. The question

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51 Ibid., 18. November 1926, p. 395
52 Ibid.
may arise as to why this rule should also applies to human beings. It cannot, however bad they are as we are. Unlike the animal, God has given man the faculty of reason.”

Gandhi has cautioned against an utilitarian interpretation of his approach to the question of killing. “My fear, however is,” says he, “that proceedings on my analogy some people might actually take it into their head summarily to put to death those whom they might imagine to be their enemies on the plea that it would serve both the interests of society and the ‘enemies’ concerned, if the latter were killed. In fact I have often heard people advance this augment. But it is enough for any purpose to know that my interpretation of ahimsa affords no basis whatever for such an argument, for in the latter case there is no question of serving or anticipation of ahimsa afford no basis whatever for such an argument, for in the latter case there is no question of serving or anticipating the wishes of the victims concerned. Finally, even if it were admitted that it was in the interests of the animal or the enemy in question to be summarily dispatched, the act would still be spelt ahimsa because it would not be altogether disinterested.”

Although the motive is important, says Gandhi, it is not a sufficient condition for killing. The own interest of the victim is of the utmost importance, and, therefore, the circumstances in which the killing is done are as important as the motive. “A reference to both intent and deed,” he argues, “is thus necessary in order to finally decide whether a particular act or abstention can be classed as ahimsa. After all, intent has to be inferred from a bunch of correlated acts.”

As regards the killing of animals which are injurious to men, Gandhi observes that although there is a superficial resemblance between his position and that of the utilitarian, in reality there is an unbridgeable gulf between the two. The utilitarian would not justify the vivisection of animals or the heaping of the most destructive armaments for the “supposed greater good of man. While a votary of Non-violence would never do so. The utilitarian to logically will never sacrifice himself, but the believer in Non-violence. The destruction justified by the latter will always be

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53 Ibid. 18 October, 1928, p. 352
54 Ibid 15 November, 1928, p. 381.
55 Ibid. 18 October, 1928, p. 352.

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restricted to the narrowest possible sphere, while were would be no necessary limit to the destruction justified by the former."

Such being his ideal of Non-violence, it is natural that Gandhi would be opposed to the Soviet system of government, the Nazi rule in Germany, and the Second World War which was ostensibly fought for the sake of democracy.

Gandhi’s views on Communism and the Soviet Union are unambiguous and uncompromising. Referring to Bolshevism and the attempt of the Indian Communists to convert him to this ideal, Gandhi wrote as early as 1924: “I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. I have not been able to study it. I do not know whether it is for the good of Russia in the long run. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. I do not believe in short-violent-cuts to success. Those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realize that however much I may sympathise with and admire worthy motives. I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is, therefore, really no meeting ground between the school of violence and myself.”

Shapurji Saklatvala, who had come on a lecture tour of India, met Gandhi, tried to convert him to Communist methods, and unable to achieve immediate success, entered into a correspondence with him. With his usual courtesy and politeness Gandhi published Saklatvala’s appeal in Young India, and replied, inter alia: “Those who seek to destroy men rather than their manners, adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men. They do not know the root of the evil.”

In a critical reference to Communist methods as practised in Russia Gandhi observed soon afterwards: “from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force, but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective state ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik Government in its present form cannot state ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation last for long. For it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence.”

56 Ibid December1926, p. 432.
59 Ibid., p.165.
About the Russian experiment in state-controlled production and distribution he told an American journalist that if it had not been based on force, he would dote on it, but was unable to accept it since it was. Referring to the professed Communist ideal of a classless society and Equality, he observed that while accepting this ideal, he rejected the Communist methods. In fact he doubted the claim of those who said that Equality had been established in Russia, for he did not believe that inequalities could be eliminated, through violence. And about Russia achievements in general, he said: “I would be the last man to minimize the achievements to Russia, but the whole structure is based on force and violence.”

While dealing with the critical international situation in an article at the end of 1938 he wrote about the Soviet Union: “Russia has a dictator who dreams of peace and thinks he will wade to it through a sea of blood. No one can say what the Russian dictatorship will mean to the world.” In an interview with Louis Fischer in June 1942 he further observed that voluntary cooperation would produce real Freedom and a new order, vastly superior to the new order in Soviet Russia. Reverting again to the end-means question Gandhi observed: “Some say there is ruthlessness in Russia but that it is exercised for the lowest and the poorest and it good for that reason. For me there is very little good in it. Some day this ruthlessness will create an anarchy, worse than ever we have seen.”

Equally fundamental was Gandhi’s rejection of the Nazi system of government on account of its being based on force. Although he had sympathy for the German people and felt that they had been unjustly treated by the Great Powers in the past and that the Treaty of Versailles had been particularly unfair to the German nation, he did not by any means justify the reign of terror on which the Nazi regime was based. In his own words: “Germany is showing to the world how efficiently violence can be worked, when it is not hampered by any hypocrisy of weakness masquerading as humanitarianism. It is also showing how hideous, terrible and terrifying to looks in its nakedness.” So great was Gandhi’s indignation at the persecution of the Jews in Germany, that he went to the extent of saying that, had he believed in the method of war, he would have regarded as war against Germany for the sake of humanity to be

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62 Ibid.
63 Ibid. Vol. LXXVI p. 187
fully justified. As he put it: “If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of and
for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole
race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war. A discussion of
the pros and cons of such a war is, therefore, outside my horizon or province.”64

Similarly, Gandhi opposed the Second World War because he felt that the
violence of the Allies was not the real answer to the violence of the Nazis. The Allies,
he argued could win the war only by being more violent and ruthless than the
Germans. The net result would be an unprecedented rise in total violence in which
thousands would lose their lives. And Gandhi felt that “No cause, however just, can
warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that
a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today, cannot be
called just.”65 Since violence could only breed more violence, Gandhi felt that “... the
defeat of Nazism will be bought at a terrific price, namely, superior Nazism, call it by
name you like.”66

The Gandhian concept of Non-violence, especially in its relative aspect, is
considerably more complicated than is often supposed. It may be noted here,
however, Gandhi’s intellectual and ethical ancestry beyond any doubt. He belongs to
the long line of pacifists which is almost as old as history and has openly recognized
his debt to many of them, including Buddha, is a close resemblance between the
Gandhian concept of Non-violence and that of such pacifist anarchists as Godwin,
Thoreau the later Kropotkin and Tolstoy, although Godwin and Kropotkin were
unwilling, even at the level of personal belief, to associate religion with Non-violence.
Gandhi takes off from where the pacifist anarchists left it, and develops it into a
means of individual, group and mass resistance against authority in a manner and on a
scale unthought of by the latter.

THE THEORY AND THE PRACTICE

The theoretical arguments that Gandhi forwards in support of the doctrine of
Ahimsa are mainly two. The first is practical, the second ethical. On the practical
plane Gandhi argued that the coercive methods or the method of force could never

66 Ibid.
achieve lasting results, because that which is got by force can only be retained so long
as the superior force lasts. If therefore, one desired a permanent change, whether in
the economic, political or social field, one should resort only to the peaceful means of
persuasion and conversion. In other words, vested interests must be won over. To
forcibly subdue them is either to make them go underground or to foment discontent
at the future date when, it for some reason or other state-power declines, the vested
interests will again raise their ugly head. A continuous display of a show of strength
will thus become necessary. Sometimes the use of force to curb a sector of society or
a 'class' only tends to make matters worse by alienating good men and tending to
make neutrals go over to the support of that sector or class. History has several such
instances on its record. It was because of these implications of the use of force that
Gandhi advocated the non-violent method.

Ethically, violent and forcible means had to be ruled out because once one
admit that in all human beings there is a spark of the same divinity called God, to seek
to harm any man or destroy human life is to seek to injure the Divine Itself. Gandhi
fully agreed with the Gita dictum, "How can he who believes that God resides in all
commit violence unto another?" After all God is goodness personified. Therefore to
admit that God resides in all is at the same time to admit that a spark of goodness
resides in every breast. And if this is so, the possibility of reform even in the case of
the meanest of creatures cannot be denied. "The soul is one in all. Its possibilities are
therefore the same for everyone", wrote Gandhi in 1940;67 he repeated the idea in
1946: "Given the opportunity every human being has the same possibility for spiritual
growth".68 To destroy human life was thus to deny the existence of God and thus the
capability of reform in others.

When however one moves from the realm of theory to practice one is
immediately confronted with the questions: Is Ahimsa universal? Must everyone
practice it? And must it be practiced against everyone and under any and all
circumstances? To the first poser Gandhi's answer is clear and categorical. Non-
violence is not "a cloistered virtue confined only to the Rishi and the cave dweller". It
was to be practiced by each and all. It was the Law of Life the only thing that
distinguished man from the brute. Man, unless he happened to be perverted or a

67 Harijan, 18 May, 1940, p. 129.
68 Ibid., 15 September, 1946, p. 309.
sadist, enjoyed peace and abhorred violence. In this sense non-violent behaviour was the law of our species although at times one may not even be conscious of it. At the same time Gandhi was also aware of the brute in man. Hence his constant exhortation that man must ever strive to curb the beast in him and try to live up to what his true self demanded and with striking logical clarity Gandhi adds, "This striving applies to the practice of non-violence, not to the belief in a principle. I either believe in it or I do not. And if I believe in it, I must bravely strive to practise it."69

The second question is: should non-violence be practiced in respect of all forms of life? Even towards beasts and animals? As far as our attitude towards the animal world is concerned, Gandhi was against wanton cruelty; but where the question is one of choice between animals and humans, Gandhi had no objection to the destruction of animal life for the protection of human life. When a friend once enquired what behaviour non-violence dictated towards the monkeys which regularly ruined crops, spoilt fruits, removed articles and at times even kidnapped children, Gandhi replied to his Harijansevak of May 1946: "My Ahimsa is my own I am not able to accept in its entirety the doctrine of non-killing of animals. I have no feeling in me to save the life of those animals who devour or cause hurt to mean. I consider it wrong to help in the increase of their progeny. Therefore I will not feed ants, monkeys or dogs. I will never sacrifice a man's life in order to save theirs."70 And in the June issue of the same year Gandhi restated his attitude towards the animal world in no unambiguous terms- "The sacredness of sub-human life in Jainism is understandable. But that can never mean that one is to be kind to this life in preference to human life. While writing about the sacredness of such life, I take it: that the sacredness of human life has been taken for granted. The former has been over-emphasised. And while putting it into practice the idea has undergone distortion."71

The only other circumstance under which Gandhi permitted the taking of animal life was when the latter was in unbearable pain or suffered from some insurable disease. Once Gandhi happened to see a cow writhing in pain. His sensitive heart revolted and he opined that it would be kinder and more humane to shoot it rather than to let it so suffer.

69 Ibid., 4 November, 1939, p.325.
71 Ibid. p.66.
In all other cases one was to treat animals and even plants with gentleness. On one occasion Gandhiji took to task some of his Ashram inmates for having cruelly torn down the branches of a medicinal plant while trying to break a few leaves, leaves possessing medicinal qualities were necessary for human health; their breaking was therefore permissible violence. But to break down branches in the process or to pull the leaves with a rougher hand than required was unwanted cruelty. Similarly Gandhi advised the destruction of stray and harmful dogs. But when a Mysore resident informed him that the dogs in the Bangalore city pounds were being tortured, were not being properly fed and that often the crude and cruel method of poisoning was resorted to, Gandhi immediately clarified his position thus: But my advice can never include impounding such dogs and torturing them as those mentioned by the correspondent seem to have been. Humanitarian instinct demands destruction of such animals in an instantaneous and painless manner.72

Gandhi gave a reply on like lines when another correspondent objected to “innocent honey”, i.e. honey obtained without harming, hurting or killing the bee. “But can you call it absolutely non-violent? You deprive the bee of its honey as you deprive the calf of its milk,” the correspondent inquired. And Gandhi replied: “You are right, but the world is not governed entirely by logic life itself involves some kind of violence and we have to choose the path of least violence. There is violence even in vegetarianism, is there not? Similarly if I must have honey, I must be friendly to the bee and get it to yield as much honey as it will. Moreover, in the scientific bee-culture the bee is never deprived of its honey altogether.”73

Gandhi thus admitted that some himsa or violence was implicit in life. But where it was thus implicit it should be reduced to the minimum and should never be allowed to degenerate to cruelty. The type of unnecessary violence indulged in by priests in the name of religion Gandhi could never tolerate. In fact he refused to make Calcutta with its Kali Temple renowned for animal sacrifices the centre of all his activities, because. “I cannot bear the sight of it. My soul rises in rebellion against the coldblooded inhumanity that goes on there in the name of religion.”74

72 Harijan, 10 November, 1946 p. 392.
73 Prabhu R.K. This was Bapu. Ahmedabad, Navjivan Publishing House 1959 p. 57.
74 Ibid. pp. 57-58.
With regard to human life, however, Gandhi was in favour of Ahimsa being practised as an absolute creed. None of the rules which apply to the taking of animal life can apply to the human. "The question may arise as to why this rule should not apply to the human beings. It cannot because, however bad, they are as we are. Unlike the animal, God has given man the faculty of reason," The many statements and utterances of Gandhi testify to the view that, "in the background of all his thoughts and actions there had always been the cult of Ahimsa as an absolute value." In 1939, replying to a friend who wanted to know whether fighting with love of the enemy in one's heart was permissible, Gandhi wrote: "We do often have mixed motives. But that would not be non-violence. The constant effort of the votary of non-violence is to purge himself of hatred towards the so-called enemy. There is no such thing as shooting out of love in the way you suggest. Non-violence as the supreme law of our being could not admit of any exceptions, not even in the interest of a so-called higher interest or higher good. In the Yerwada Mandir it is written: "It will not therefore be a 'Yajna' (sacrifice), much less a 'Mahayajna', to wish or to do ill to anyone even in order to serve a so-called higher interest."

An attempt can also be made to bring out the absolute character of Gandhian doctrine of Ahimsa by examining the behaviour Gandhi advocated towards crime, viz., murder, theft and the like. Take the case of murder, first. Suppose a murderer with the clear intent to kill attacks one; what should be one's duty in terms of non-violence? The Gandhian answer is direct and simple. "Let your blood be spilt but do not spill that of the assailant. When it is a question of choice between killing oneself and the assailant, I have no doubt in my mind that the first should be the choice," Gandhi informed a correspondent who had sought his advice on this issue. Getting oneself killed without bearing any anger against the murderer but instead praying to God to forgive him, is the true test of Ahimsa. Some sixty I. N. A. officers, who once told the Mahatma, "Surely it is no breach of Ahimsa to use the sword in self-defense?" met with the same categorical reply. "Even Wavell Auchinleck, or Hitler does not use the sword without necessity. But that does not make it ahimsa. It is himsa whatever its justification."
What holds true for the murderer is equally true for the thief. What should you do if one fine night you suddenly find a robber in your room? If you have the ability you may knock him down. If you do not you may allow yourself to be robbed and then subsequently call in the aid of the law and the police. But Gandhi disapproved of both these for, to meet violence by counter-violence was only to feed the fire of violence, while those who died unhesitatingly were likely to still the fury of violence by their wholly innocent sacrifice. Self-sufferance may even bring the thief to his senses and make us realise that thieves are after all no different from ourselves; they are our own brethren, our friends and may not be punished.

In the forties when ‘goondaism’ was rampant almost all over the country and women were in constant danger of being molested by bad characters, several women appealed to Gandhi for guidance. And his message was that the ideal would be to resist the miscreant non-violently. Gandhiji had faith that if a woman stood up bravely against the ruffian her sparkling purity and courage would succeed in dissuading him. “I believe implicitly in the proposition that perfect purity is its own defence. The veriest ruffian becomes for the time being tame in the presence of resplendent purity.” When Gandhi was pressed with the question, "But what if the hooligan does not realise his senses", he responded with a "they ought to learn to die before a hair of their head could be injured" and by way of a helping hand suggested that the woman could put an end to herself by choking or biting the tongue. Dr. Sushila, then present, protested that no woman could thus kill herself and that the only effective way for instant self-immolation would be a strong dose of poison. To this protest Gandhi’s rejoinder was that in that case every woman running the danger of molestation should carry a small bottle of poison and gulp its contents rather than submit to dishonour. What if the woman’s relatives are present? Should they just stand and watch? Of course not. Non-violence is no synonym for impotency or cowardice. Hence the evil must be fought though not the evil-doer. “The brother or father or friend thus will stand between his protege and her assailant. He will then either dissuade the assailant from his wicked purpose or allow himself to be killed by him in preventing him. In so laying his life he will not only have done his duty, but given a new accession of strength to his protege who will now know how to protect her honour.”

Finally, says Gandhi, we must even resist foreign aggression non-violently.

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78 Young India, 8 October, 1925., p.452.
If a non-violent country was invaded there were two courses open to it. It could firstly send its unarmed non-violent army to face with bare chests the aggressors’ bullets. No doubt this would be inviting death. But then it would have its effects on the opposite ranks to. In an interesting interview with a New York Times correspondent, Gandhi suggested that the Allies should instantly disarm, and added; “I am certain as I am sitting here that this would open Hitler’s eyes and disarm him”.\textsuperscript{80} Even if this did not happen, “an army that dares to pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat that experiment”.\textsuperscript{81} But is not inviting the enemy to walk over corpses something beyond human experience and endurance? Gandhi did not think so. You may if you wish refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women, but then you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon of the weak, but of the stoutest hearts. But admitting that such non-violence is capable of practice, of what avail is it if it entails the defender losing his life? In replying to such queries Gandhi would fall back on the example of Christ and other saints. Did Jesus by losing his life allow the Roman Pilate to win? Not at all! On the contrary Jesus won, for, by his death he released in society the forces of good. Like Jesus we must learn to gain life by losing it.\textsuperscript{82}

The other course would be to let the army invade but subsequently refuse all co-operation. “Thus suppose a modern edition of a Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State will let him in but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people.” After all an invasion or conquest is planned for a particular purpose, say for exploiting either the land and other natural resources of a country or its manpower. If therefore by a complete and effective non-cooperative programme this very purpose of the invaders was defeated they would have little recourse left but to retreat. It was this second method that Gandhi himself employed against the British in India. It was the same that he recommended to China. “If the Chinese had the non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery of destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, Bring all your machinery, we present half our population to you. But the remaining two hundred millions won’t bend the knee to you. If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China’s slave.”

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
One Mrs. White once put an intriguing question to Gandhi. How would you use non-violence against the atom bomb? Fantastic, but in keeping with the general tenor of all his replies, Gandhi said, “I would run into the open field and looking up towards God pray with folded hands that God may make the pilot see reason; and seeing me in this prayerful posture the pilot would not have the heart to drop the bomb.” But high up in the sky the pilot would not, even be able to see you retorted Mrs White. In that case, said the Mahatma, my prayer will not fail to reach him and move him.

It was Gandhi's firm belief that if non-violence was genuinely and sincerely applied against an aggressor, it would yield the desirable results. In 1933 when Gandhi was in Peshawar, a Professor frankly asked him whether he sincerely believed that if Abyssinia had simply non-resisted and said to Italy. Do your worst the Italians would have been ashamed and desisted from the design. “I can answer to your question” replied Gandhi. “only in terms of active, resistant nonviolence. Now non-violence is the activist force on earth and it is my conviction that it never fails. But if the Abyssinians had adopted the attitude of the non-violence of the strong, that is, the non-violence which breaks to pieces but never bends, Mussolini would have had no interest in Abyssinia. Thus if they had simply said, you are welcome to reduce us to dust or ashes, but you will not find one Abyssinian ready to cooperate with you what could Mussolini have done? He did not want a desert. Mussolini wanted submission and not defiance and if he had met the quite dignified and non-violent defiance that I have described, he would certainly have been obliged to retire”.

But critics were not to be so easily silenced. They pointed out to the Jews, who, they said, had been practicing nonviolence for the last two thousand years. They received a rather harsh retort in the Harijan issue of 17-12-1938; “The Jews so far as I know have never practiced non-violence as an article of faith or even as a deliberate policy. Indeed it is a stigma against them that their ancestors crucified Jesus. Are they not supposed to believe in eye for eye and tooth for tooth? Have they no violence in their hearts for their oppressors? Do they not want the so called democratic powers to punish Germany for her persecution and to deliver them from oppression? If they do, there is no more nonviolence in their hearts. Their non-violence if it may be so called

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83 Harijan, 13 May, 1939, p. 121.
To be truly non-violent one must bear neither ill-will to the aggressor nor desire to defeat him or see him defeated. In this respect even China’s role in the war, according to Gandhi, was hardly non-violent. “Her putting up a valiant defence against Japan is proof enough that China was never intentionally non-violent.” Only the pure and unalloyed nonviolence which implies-self-invited self-suffering will succeed in converting the aggressor’s heart, however hard-hearted like Hitler or Mussolini he may be. Before the heat of nonviolence the hardest metal must melt and there is no limit, to the capacity of one violence to generate heat.

The Mahatma was of the definite opinion all society is held together by nonviolence, even as the earth is held in her position by gravitation. But when the law of gravitation was discovered, the discovery yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even so when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. Two pertinent questions are posed here: First, society is held together by non-violence. In other words, it functions through non-violence, though it may not be conscious of its non-violent functioning. Secondly, the pattern of society will change, if it is constructed on the law of non-violence. This means ultimately a new pattern of human culture.

Five simple axioms of non-violence as known to are laid down as follows:

i. Non-violence implies as complete a self-purification as is humanly possible.

ii. Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.

iii. Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e., the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent.

iv. There is no such thing as defeat in nonviolence. The end of violence is surest defeat.

v. The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality, where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.

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