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GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY OF NON-VIOLENCE (Gandhi's Philosophy of Education)

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ABSTRACT

The conducted research study is an exploration of some of the interconnected philosophical and other contentions in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. This study was conducted to analyze some of the interconnected philosophical and other contentions in the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi. The research method used is analytical, exploratory and descriptive primarily a textual interpretation of the Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mohandas Gandhi incited a movement grounded on satyagraha, a strategy depicting social justice through civil disobedience grounded on natural law. The configuration of satyagraha constitutes three elements: truth, non-violence or ahimsa and sacrificial love. Satyagraha is adherence to truth in all matters. It is the non-violent defense of truth and the willingness to prayerfully endure suffering, injury, and even death in defense of that truth. Such symbolic events also convey poverty, purity, abstinence, swadeshi, swaraj (political liberation), the non-cooperation to tyrants. He showed another path: the path of violence accumulating an eye for an eye making the whole world blind. Evidently, Satyagraha method of dispute resolution may offer humanity the only way out of the current quagmire of violence engulfing the world.

Hence, Non-violence is the power of the Godhead within us, the largest love, the greatest charity.

KEYWORDS: *Non-violence, satyagraha, swadeshi. Swaraj, non-possession*

INTRODUCTION

Mohandas Gandhi can be depicted as the most remarkable individual, a person of conspicuously eminent dissimilitude, unceasingly challenges anyone's endeavors to categorize him. He was a man who deliberately popularized freedom to India by enticing political adversaries to put him in jail. He was an ardently mirthful man who incited a movement grounded on suffering, an unrestricted affliction. He was an intense Indian Nationalist who declined to seize unjust advantage of his British rulers; a born peace maker who was also a natural

fighter; an apparently socialist whose painstaking dedication to economic self-reliance and local economic progress establish him to look simply like a capitalist; a man with a permeating mental perception of the sacredness of all life but also a man who was inclined and frequently staked his own life and defied others to do the same; a leader whose political strategies perplexed not just his adversaries but also his associates and disciples. These seemingly paradoxes, however, commence to resemble more like in peaceful concordance when one ascertains the truths to which Gandhi remained obstinately

trustworthy throughout his long and eventful journey.

SATYAGRAHA

The substance of Gandhian Philosophy can be concisely presented in just one word: *Satyagraha*. Employing Sanskrit (ancient language of India) roots, *Satyagraha*, from *Sat* (truth) and *Agraha* (firmness or force), Gandhi devised these words as an aspect of stating definitely what he had grasped in his quest for *truth* during his contention for the rights of Indians in South Africa. *Satyagraha* can be interpreted as “*Truth – Force*” or *the adherence to truth in all matters*. In profound perspective, *Satyagraha* is precisely a hush, intense but unyielding act of chasing truth. The configuration of *Satyagraha* is a composition of three features: Truth, Non-violence (*ahimsa*) and Personal Sacrifice. Gandhi accentuated also on the vow of chastity and non-possession as indispensable element in living the *satyagraha*.

The follower of the way of *Satyagraha* is consecrated to the nonviolent defense of truth and is, wherefore, willing to prayerfully endure suffering, injury, even death in defense of that truth. The discipline of *Satyagraha* can also be depicted as a strategy for conveying about social justice through civil disobedience. The consequence of *Satyagraha* are acts of civil disobedience usually are boycotts, strikes and marches. Such outcome of *Satyagraha* is *not primarily* its substance. Non-violent protests are not the essence of Gandhi’s philosophy. Indeed, the design and meaning of *Satyagraha* goes beyond the progressive course of political liberation briefly called “*swaraj*.” What is Civil disobedience? : The rationalistic presupposition on law in the Catholic Tradition, together with its long-standing concurrence of “*epikeia*” as an aspect of engaging with the restrictions of law, certifies that blind yielding to law is not a virtue. Laws, while essential for civil disorder, must be ascertained in engagement to their rationality for obtaining their purpose of shielding public order, and law formulators must be evaluated in light of their due ken as a depiction to their decisive discretion to assist the community, and not to dominate it. For the benefit of civil order and with good faith in the political processes which formulates laws, we ought to approximate laws and the human authorities answerable for construing them with the unwarranted assurance in their regard. Our first reply ought to be willing to cooperate. In some circumstances, however, this unjustified assumption gives way to the weight of new evidence. Some laws are not furnishing justice; some authorities are not

servants but despots. In such typical cases, answerable sharing in the community demands criticism and the fearless decline to corroborate. When this occurs we cross the line into civil (or ecclesiastical) disobedience.

The very foundation for civil disobedience lies in the ultimate moral obligation of natural law: to seek and to do the good and evade evil. If a law does not serve the good, then we are morally constrained to abrogate the law. Moreover, as we envision in the Thomistic tradition, the law is detached from the lawgiver so that we live with the law, not because it is enjoined, but only insofar as it serves public order. Citizens should have discretions, if this is the case. The oppressive and heavy load of corroborating the law and human authority or of acting with civil disobedience fundamentally falls on the person who acknowledges that the law is defensible and excusable or not.

Morally responsible civil disobedience, however, must not be perplexed with mere law – breaking activity. Briefly put, the distinction is that civil disobedience is done publicly for the intention of reforming the law and promoting public order. Mere law-breaking activity is not. What is at stake is an act of civil disobedience. According to Gula,¹ we need to consider the following:

First, *Count the Cost*

A civil disobedient pursues a law-breaking activity fully conscious and prompt to assume the penalty which accompanies it. The civil disobedient must be anti-skeptic e.g., urged and influenced that the damage brought to persuade that the injury brought to oneself is less than the damage being perpetrated by ensuing the law. The willingness to receive with approbation the penalty for breaking the law is an efficacious affirmation contrary to the wrong as a subject of dissent and the sort of attestation, which may cause others to rethink their position on the issue being brought to public attention.

Second, *Affirms the Law*

While civil disobedient is clearly law-breaking activity, it does not neglect and discard the law but is done in the manner of the law. It is oriented toward improving the law in order to shield the public order.

Third, *Is a Last Resort*

Civil disobedience comes only after other ways of exhibiting the unjustifiable actions to public attention have been tried and found ineffective. Some of these other means are petitions, boycotts, legislative

The Configuration of Satyagraha

Truth The faithful pursuit of truth, courage, both personal and universal.	NonViolence The rejection of violence in thought, prayer and a willingness to endure suffering, injury even death.	Personal Sacrifice Discipline, word and deed
Brahmacharya	→ The Vow of Chastity	
Aparigraha	→ The Vow of Poverty and Non-Possession	
The Outcome of Satyagraha are acts of civil disobedience		
Hunger	Fasts	Demonstrations
Marches	Boycotts	Strikes

*Non-cooperation with
oppressive institutions*

activity, letter-writing campaigns, and the like. Since publicly ravishing the law can be so alarming and threatening to the order of the community, the civil disobedient would not prefer it when the same objective can be attained by less disruptive means.

Fourth, *Identifies a Specification*

Civil disobedience is not just a pessimistic reaction to the established order, but has some cause or principle in mind. Civil disobedience grows out of an analysis of some specific wrong and acts in a way to clarify what the wrong is.

Fifth, *Is Concerned for the Means*

The most difficult aspect of civil disobedience is conclusive discretions and its designated means. The Christian bias is in favor of non – violence. Since violent means are so destructive and so difficult to control, they can too easily go beyond the intended objectives and weaken the values being upheld.

Sixth, *Respects the Structures of the Community*

Civil disobedience does not seek to overthrow the government. It is not revolution. It works within the structures in order to improve them. Accepting the appropriate penalty for ravishing the law is an example of respecting the structures of the community.

Seventh, *Contributes toward Reordering the Community*

The civil disobedient does not end his or her relationship to the community once the penalty is paid. Rather, now that serious wrong has been exposed to the attention of the community, the civil disobedient must work to heal the disruption in the community and help to create the structures, which will correct the wrong.

Here, what Gandhi would like to typify is that responsible citizenship calls for the onus of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is morally responsible when it is done as a last resort and in hope that a better future can be had through non-violent dissent. From a Christian point of view, civil disobedience participates in the “already but not yet” compulsion of the reign of God. The “not yet” fullness of the reign of God relativizes everything existing at the present time and stands in criticism of our tendency to absolutize historically conditioned structures of society. Such inauthentic conservation easily ascends out of a severe, exacting law and order mental capacity and is deficient to observe the impiousness existing in social structures. It intends to identify the existing order as the perfect image of the reign of God.

The Christian living and desiring in the coming fullness of God’s reign can never be convinced/satiated in the present order. Rather, the hopeful Christian must perceive not only personal impiety and the need for ongoing conversion, but also social wickedness and the exigency for alternations in social structures as well. In light of the path into the future of the reign of God, laboring to transform social structures is an imperative for Christians. Responsible civil disobedience reminds us that the fullness of the reign of God has not yet arrived and will not come easily or quickly. Moreover, the hope for the Christian living is an imperfect realm with ongoing renewal depends not in achievements already attained as significant as these but fundamentally in the promise God has made

through Jesus in the resurrection. Such promissive linguistic philosophy as accentuated on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus is the paradigm not only of personal gradual development in the Christian life but also of social progress. It is a reminder to a Christian civil disobedient that only through suffering and death comes the engendering of the fullness of life.

Gandhi always claimed that he was inspired by Thoreau's essay on civil disobedience concerning refusal to support the American government (1849) because of slavery and the Mexican war. He also learned non-cooperation from Tolstoy and non-violence from the New Testament. Gandhi was touched by its freedom constitutive in Jesus' teaching on forgiveness because it provides a way out of the perpetual cycle of violence. Then, he coined the term "*Satyagraha*." As discussed earlier, *Satyagraha* is a configuration of three elements: **Truth, non-violence and personal sacrifice**. These three pillars of *Satyagraha* are indispensable to comprehending Gandhi's philosophy. Those who followed his line of action – voluntary sacrifice is a better terminology for it is English than "civil disobedience" or "passive resistance" – were called *Satyagrahis*. A *satyagrahi* had to struggle toward poverty, purity, abstinence, and restraint in order to be worthy to offer the sacrifice. The consequence of *Satyagraha* is the legalization of the Indian Relief Bill. It declared Indian marriages (Hindu, Moslem, and Parsee) legal. It abolished the three-pound poll tax on indentured laborers canceling all arrears. The system of importing indentured laborers from India must cease in 1920. It proved that albeit Indians could not leave one province from another without permission, those born in South Africa might enter the cape colony.²

Gandhi was filled with a lackadaisical and lifelong quest for truth. In fact his autobiography was entitled, "The Story of my Experience with Truth." The formula "Truth is God" was the principle that governed and became a compass of his life as he struggled to perceive that truth through "praxis" prayer and action. This truth-God is not an abstract God. This God plays an active role in Satyagrahi's life. Prayer is not merely recitation of mantras or reiterating memorized verses but the competence for vigilant introspection, discernment and self-examination. It is a constant reevaluation of the truth in thought, speech and action. It is not simply affirming their conviction in God but persevering to make him the object of their personal prayer. Prayer is the first attitude of man acknowledging God. To pray to God is to acknowledge, in respect and absolute submission. God is truthful, he can neither be deceive nor deceive us. To pray is to practice detachment from self. It is demanded by love for others. Gandhi alludes to

conversion of heart, as indispensable to the interior transformation that elicits the desire to change one's life. It is shunning from disordered covetousness by banishing envy, flattery, adulation or complaisance, boasting and the likes that indicates a refusal to love. Truth is the evidence of charity for which we must pray. A satyagrahi must have a humble and a trusting heart ready to forgive others and make them see the wrong they inflicted if there's any. Men could not live with one another without the presence of mutual confidence that they were being truthful to one another. For Gandhi, a satyagrahi must practice an exhaustive gathering of facts and datas. Such contentions must be clear and substantial. The indispensability of satyagraha is also best exemplified through its prodigious communicability. Gandhi applied this through speech, television appearances, radio, letters, talks, interviews, and news papers. Gandhi's viewpoint is in concurrence with the prevailing Catechism of the Catholic Church

Within modern society the communications media play a major role in information, cultural formation and formation. This role is increasing as a result of technological progress, the extent and diversity of the news transmitted, and the influenced exercised on public opinion. The information provided by the media is at the service of the common good. Society has a right to information grounded on truth, freedom, justice, and solidarity. The proper exercise of this right demands that the content of the communication be true and within the parameters set by justice and charity. It must be communicated honestly and properly. This tells us that in gathering and in the publications of news, the moral law and the legitimate rights and dignity of man must be upheld. It is necessary that all members of society meet the demands of justice and charity in this domain. They should help, through the means of social communication in the formation and diffusion of sound public opinion. Solidarity is a consequence of genuine and right communication and the free circulation of ideas that further knowledge and respect for other [CCC 2493, 2494, 2495].

Mahatma (a name meaning "Great Soul" given to Gandhi by the masses in India) was intent on shunning a dogmatic or non-pliant perspective of truth because he was convinced that truth and the pursuit of truth must remain open and fluid. Conclusively, Gandhi came to concur that the pursuit of truth is both a personal and universal project. Beneath the seemingly inner moral struggles and divisions of life, he maintained, there resides an underlying principle of truth, or love, a universal principle common to the spiritual traditions of both East and West. He declined paths to truth that highlights only on personal salvation or individual enlightenment:

The inner life of one person is not an exclusively private domain but a forum where the

lives of all persons are made manifest. I am part and parcel of the whole and cannot

find God apart from the rest of humanity.

For Gandhi, God is the source of truth. His law is truth and so all human beings are called to live in the truth. Gandhi admitted, in reading the Scriptures, he really like Jesus but does not like the ways of Christians. It is adherence to the truth and directing entire lives with the demands of the truth. Gandhi's viewpoint on truth is totally patterned from the teachings of Jesus. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that in Jesus Christ, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest. Full of grace and truth, he came as the light of the world, he is the Truth. Whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. Gandhi was in love with this unconditional truth that Jesus teaches. The Catechism of the Catholic Church also teaches that truth as uprightness in human action and speech is called truthfulness, sincerity or candour. Truth or truthfulness is the virtue which consists in showing oneself true in deeds and truthful in words, and in guarding against duplicity, dissimulation and hypocrisy [CCC, 2466, 2468].

Gandhi abhorred offences against the truth. He gives me the impression that he really wanted to value the teachings of Jesus, despite not being a Christian. Jesus demands his disciples to live in true righteousness and holiness by putting away falsehood, malice, all guile and insincerity, envy and slander [Eph 4:25]. Jesus denounces lying or falsehood with the intention of deceiving. It is the work of the devil. Lying is the most direct offense against the truth. To lie is to speak or act against the truth in order to lead someone into error. By injuring man's relation to truth and to his neighbor. A lie offends against the fundamental relation of man and of his word to the Lord {CCC 2483}. The gravity of a lie is measured against the nature of the truth it deforms, the circumstances, the intentions of the one who lies, and the harm suffered by its victims. If a lie in itself only constitutes a venial sin, it becomes mortal when it does grave injury to the virtues of justice and charity [CCC 2484]. Gandhi being a non-Christian was silent about mortal or venial sin. The Catechism of the Catholic Church further teaches that lying is to be condemned for it is a profanation of speech, whereas the purpose of speech is to communicate known truth to others. The deliberate intention of leading a neighbor into error by saying things contrary to the truth constitutes a failure in justice and charity. The culpability is greater when the intention of deceiving entails the risk of deadly

consequences in those who are led astray [CCC 2485]. A lie violates the virtue of truthfulness. It does real violence to another. It affects his ability to know, which is a condition of every judgment and discretion. It contains the seed of discord and all consequent evils. Lying is destructive of society just freedom of information. Moral judgment must condemn the plague of totalitarian states which systematically falsify the truth, exercise political control of opinion through the media, manipulate defendants and witnesses at public trials, and imagine that they secure their tyranny by strangling and repressing everything they consider thought crimes [CCC 2286].

For Gandhi, in satyagraha, "There must be no impatience, no barbarity, no insolence, no undue pressure. If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause."

Satyagraha is the 'force' of truth and love: The Goal is to end antagonism without harming the antagonists by transforming the antagonist. The Means & End is Truth and love. The Focus is moral power. Gandhi declined "Duragraha or duragraha".

Duragraha is the "force of bias." Passive resistance. The Goal is to end antagonism even if that means harassing the antagonists without personal transformation of truth and love. The Means & End is Selfish Obstinacy. The Focus is Physical Power.

AHIMSA

Gandhi acceded that by the only path to truth is the path of non-violence: "without non-violence, it is not possible to discover truth." Non-violence is the only means for the realization of the truth. To find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, non-violence. The Sanskrit word for non-violence is *Ahimsa*. It is an ancient Hindu maxim that indicates all the dimensions of the way of non-violence. A satyagrahi would rather be the one killed or tortured and the likes rather than the one doing the killing, torturing and the like. In Gandhian terminology, *Ahimsa* is often conceived and interpreted as the decline to do harm or injury. In a profound aspect, it implies a reverence for all life. Ahimsa could also be depicted as goodwill. Even with the presence of unceasing contentions and disagreement, ahimsa is a way for continual dialogue rather than bloodshed or violence. It is commitment and courage not to do harm or injury to others rather than a submissive cowardice. Because Gandhi concurred fervently that non-vehemence was the supreme litmus test for truth, he discounted any moral or religious system that fall short to value the principle of non-violence.

The authentic non-violent withstander, Mahatma sustained, is called to repudiate impetuosity in thought, word and deed. Truth must

be profess without equivocation. Non violence is a transmission of truth and act of justice that establishes the truth or makes it known. Non-violence is bearing witness to the truth even unto death. He endures death through an act of fortitude. Misrepresenting the truth in word or deed is a refusal to commit to moral uprightness and a fundamental infidelity to God. But without a supernatural valor and a willingness to endure great personal sacrifice, it is not possible to adhere to the ways of non-furiousness. In the end, he uttered, we might suffer and die for our interiorizing of truth but one thing we cannot do: we cannot deprive life for it. There are many considerations why Gandhi was so repugnant and repulsed by violence. At the core of these was his perception that vehemence bestowed on us a picture of absolute transgression and irreverence of truth. Truth and the pursuit of truth were, in fact, the fundamental values that directed his life. For Gandhi, truth and violence are totally incongruous.

Ahimsa, Gandhi argues, configures the entire creation, and not only human. It includes the order and harmony of the cosmos. It is a matter of evoking what is beyond words such as the depths of the human heart and the mystery of God. To the extent that it is inspired by truth and love of beings it bears a certain likeness to God's activity. Non-violence is "*soul-force*" or the power of the Godhead within us. We become God-like to the extent we realize non-violence. *Ahimsa* means the largest love, the greatest charity. It includes truth and fearlessness. Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force. It does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of love. Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honor. Non-violence configures sacrifice. It is a power, which can be wielded equally by all. Non-violence is the law of life.

Ahimsa is, for Gandhi, the basic law of our being. He ardently affirmed that non-violence was more natural to humanity than viciousness. This conviction was grounded in his assurance in humanity's natural disposition and conviction to love. Unfortunately, humans in their most profound wounded state are not fully authentic to their deepest interior dispositions. Therefore, they often opt for impetuosity, opacities and agitated resentments. In the scriptures, violence was very much part of the Palestine in which Jesus lived. The vast majority of the people were destitute. They were brutally restrained by the filling intensity of the Roman army. They were further demeaned and exploited by their own religious leaders who manipulated the law to further their own force and valuable possessions. In all this, the demands of Jesus were to "turn the other cheek." He chastises the disciples who want to call

down God's wrath on their foes. He evidently persuades Peter to put down the sword to its scabbard. He delivers himself over, submitting like a lamb to his executioners.

Non-violence is practical. The non-violent currents are multiple, from absolute non-violence in all fronts to non-violent resistance. As far as reckoning is concerned, the reality of the menace and of the self-assertiveness in the world, this latter current declines surrender and peace at any price. Christians locate here a resonance with the Gospel. The non-resistance of Christ, the remission of sins that he bestows, is the salt which alone can save the world from the contamination and impurity of violence. In the sphere of vehemence and of injustice, politicians have the right to safeguard the common good of the state over which they practice a responsibility. Peace is a constituent of this common good, but so also, inseparably, are justice, solidarity and liberty. In order to attain this, they may have the means to lessen and dishearten, as much as possible, an eventual aggriever. The state has the monopoly of force over its own territory. It is better to expose this monopoly rather than to have to exercise it. In cases of necessity, however, the state can have an appeal for assistance to it: a just and ascertained recourse still is at the service of peace and the common good, for it dissuades citizens from attaining justice into the use of force. In the circumstance of vehemence and viciousness, which is that of the world in which we live, politicians and military personnel have a duty in justice to reject, to give in to which the nation would be subjected. Charity is not a substitute for law. Love even demands the heeding and exercise of human rights as the basic rights of every society. Recognition of these rights forms concordance to peace and freedom, both interiorly and exteriorly.

The Church does not inspire exaggerated pacifism. She has never taught unilateral disarmament, knowing full well that this could be a signal for vehemence on the part of an aggrieving military, political and ideological complex. But she acknowledges the very message of the Gospel in its call to non-violence. This is a prophetic call considering the venom and vindictive nature of violence. Even when legitimate, violence can be dreadful. It is horrible, brutal or elusive, vivid and vague, petrifying and subtle. It is sly, roguish, artful cunning, incongruous and bizarre. The great extent and approximation is a matter of the suicidal spiral. Non-violence must not be grasped as simply the refusal of violence. Non-violence is an attitude, a mentality that draws all its intensity from the beatitudes. The non-violent are engaged in bearing attestation/testimony in the midst of man who are otherwise resigned to an ever-present aspect of vehemence.

The safeguarding and promoting of peace constitute central tasks in politics. A soldier who serves in order to safeguard peace must withstand the tension of knowing that he is arming himself on behalf of the state, preparing to fight and learning to do something which he hopes that he will never have to perform, because there is nothing that he desires more resolutely than to preserve peace without the use of force and to resolve conflicts by means of negotiation.³

Those who refuse to perform military service for reasons of conscience have also to live to an equal extent with another strain: If everyone were to follow their example, this would create a vacuum of power which can lead to vulnerability to political blackmail...

If and as long as security prolong pursues ethically permissible and Indeed, obligatory goods, prevention of war, defense of ethical and Political values against totalitarian threats and the promotion of disarmament and avails itself in this life ethically acceptable methods and means, then the service rendered by soldiers is both indispensable and morally justified.⁴

Non-violence is a fundamental option that individuals may decode to prefer. Both scrupulous objection and selective conscientious objection are provided for by Catholic teaching⁵ (cf., just war theory and legitimacy of non-violence). Non-violence demands a lucid dedication to withstand injustice and an intention to advance human rights and the common good. Thus, non-violence is grounded on the freedom of the human person and the rights of individual conscience. It is not a duty for all but a privilege, says Gandhi, for those who discern a moral call to withstand/resist all tempestuousness.

In this century, Mohandas Gandhi is one of the greatest teacher and example of non-violence. It was the innermost part of his philosophy. He affirmed it; he taught it and lived it. For Gandhi, a non-Christian, Jesus was the most extremely good example of non-violence: "the name Jesus at once comes to the lips," Gandhi uttered. "It is an instance of brilliant failure. The adjective passive was a misnomer, at least as applied to Jesus. He was the most active resister known perhaps to history. He was non-violence par excellence."

Gandhi also insisted: "poverty is the worst

form of violence." Violence debased, depraves and disrupts humans. When force is met with force and bitter aversion with malevolence, both parties descend into a state of progressive degeneration or deterioration. But in Gandhi's perspective, this is not a natural path and direction for humanity. The way of non-violence is really the natural and normal path. Gandhian non-violence confers and bestows a methodology that is rooted in the nature of reality itself. Thomas Merton accentuates, "That is why it (non-violence) can be used as the most effective principle for social action, since it is in deep accord with the truth of man's nature and corresponds to his innate desire for peace, justice, freedom, order and personal dignity.

Non-violence reinvigorates human persons and restores humanity to its natural state. And this consists of the restoration of peace, order and social justice. The restoration of justice would not be possible through the seizure of power. Only a non-violent transformation of the relationship between the oppressed and oppressor will generate true peace and justice. And such a correlation is impossible without an inner conversion in the oppressor. Thus, Gandhi's precept on non-violent tactics and on the efficacy of a truth enunciated compassionately (*Satyagraha*) stands today as the cornerstone for all that has ensued and all that will succeed in several transformations of non-violence that are happening throughout the world. In teaching us to love our unbeatable foes, to do good to those who detest and abominate us, to bless those who curse us, to pray for those who mistreat and revile us, Jesus permeates us to grasp that only love was efficacious enough to win the hearts and minds of men and women. Gandhi conceived and taught this as well. His long experience succumbed him to grasp that violence did not work, that it only pursued an ever-deepening cycle of vehemence. It is a spiral. Gandhi teaches us that "Truth is God and there is no way to find truth except the way of non-violence." "Jesus teaches us that it is the truth that sets us free."

Previous to Gandhi there had always been individuals who exercised non-violence as a personal or religious discipline. Gandhi was remarkable in his capability to extend the principle of non-violence into the sphere of political struggle. Indeed his intensely personal philosophy of non-violence became an instrument of mass dissent that brought the British power in India to its knees.

Gandhi asserted that non-violence was the only sane and realistic response to violence. But more than this, he became convinced that non-violence was the noblest, the most valiant and dauntless, and the most impressive and efficient manner of defending one's rights. He was never uncertain that non-violence was the only hope for the

modern world, the only path to unity, peace and justice. His lifelong quest for meaning and truth emerged amidst ardent racial, religious and political discord. And it was experience in this environment that let Gandhi to dedicate himself to consistent non-violence as a way of life.

Violence in Gandhian perspective alludes not just to physical violence. Violence consists of the vituperated efficacy of any form. The practitioner of non-violence willingly repudiates violence in thought, word and deed. Non-violence becomes then, a total spirituality, an unconditional sacrifice, a complete way of life in which the practitioner is wholly committed to the loving conversion of self, of foe and of society. In the context of a political fight for supremacy, non-violence comprises the practice of influence in a way that brings about societal transformation without damage to one's adversary. To the end, Gandhi remained convinced that truth and the non-violent pursuit of truth were more powerful than guns, blows and prison bars. But there was another reason – a very practical reason – as to why Gandhi declined violence. To his mind, violence simply did not work.

In the Gandhian presupposition, a violent resolve does injury to both parties in a dispute. Such a resolve creates an ethos of every triumph and vanquishment: a “win-lose” dynamic between the two antagonists whose relationship remains unhealed. The only legacy of violence is an endless trail of distress, stinginess and suffering. I do not believe in armed risings. They are a resolve worse than the disease sought to be cured. They are a token of the spirit of revenge and impatience and anger.” It is simply dehumanization. Thus, for Gandhi, the spirit of avenge, retaliation, inforbearance and indignation degrades. A violent alteration corrupts and debased both parties. It also produces new cycles of unjust severity and violence, thus deteriorating the original indignant dispute scenario. The indispensability's of a moral concordance between the ends desired and the means employed is an ultimate axiom of Gandhian philosophy. Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi's affable and amicable longtime acquaintance and colleague, said: “Gandhi never tired of talking about means and ends and of laying stress on the importance of the means. The moral approach thinks in terms of ends only, and because means are forgotten, the ends aimed at escape one. Conflicts are, therefore, seldom resolved. The wrong methods pursued in dealing with them lead to further conflict.”

Gandhi cogently accentuates all this in a more succinct manner: “If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end, sooner or later.” Thus, methods involving deception, guile, chicanery and manipulation are totally incongruous with the non-violent pursuit of truth. Gandhi did not kept in

concealment from his political adversaries. Secrecy implies misrepresentation and falsehood and therefore contradicts truth. Gandhi, for example, informed the British about his several circumstantially strategies even though the larger purpose of these same strategies was to end British force in India.

For Gandhi, the pursuit of truth is more than a personal or individual affair; Satyagraha is also meant to address the corporate or universal reality. The personal quest for truth, for God, from self-struggle, cannot be detached from the very public struggle for justice. Truth must be examined and lived out amidst such excruciating social realities as racism, imperialism and war. In the Gandhian perspective, a vehement and unjust society is a society characterized by tenacious and constantly recurring disorder and moral bewilderment. At a more profound aspect, such a society harbors a deeper orientation to untruth, to misrepresentation and deception. The Gandhian call for freedom and justice is truly an endeavor to name, to challenge and to unmask social un-truths – to make them visible to all. The discipline of *satyagraha* is patterned to bring to the surface that principle of truth or love that Gandhi typified lurks beneath society's disputes and divisions. But this is no small task. To actively withstand the societal powers of untruth and to make the truth perceptible and remain lucid is tantamount to perilous suffering, injury and even death.

The *Satyagraha* method of truthfulness, non-violence and suffering love consists of more than an endeavor to make injustice visible. It is also a technique whereby the oppressed seek to transform and convert the oppressor so that the tyrant comes into an experience of truth, even a glimpse and an inkling of truth. And if in the process the absolute ruler realizes the full humanity of the suffering victim, violence becomes impossible. How, for example, can one humiliate, harm or injure a person whom one values and esteems. As well, the oppressed are also subject to conversion in this presupposition as one's suffering can serve to both redeem one's adversaries and also to purge oneself of hatred. By transforming interior attitudes, then, *Satyagraha* strives to transform relationships between people and also restructures the very situation that led to the original dispute.

SACRIFICIAL LOVE

Gandhi was rendered evidently as an idealist, but he was also a deeply practical individual who perceived that one should not hold out hope for an immediate conversion on the part of one's despot. For this reason, he rooted his non-violent faith in voluntary suffering without restriction: “rivers of blood may have to flow before we gain our freedom,

but it must be our blood.” The way of non-violence is really the way of suffering...suffering love: sacrificial love “*tapasya/tapascharya*.” The consequence of *tapasya* was amplified to the emotive sphere such as feelings or sensations, which are painful and excruciating. It is experienced as a consequence of heat or fervor. Such excruciating pain or suffering is voluntary and self-afflicted, as in austerities or particular practices. It could also be exemplified specifically to penance austerity, devotion, self-suffering and self-sacrifice. Asceticism was also anchored to or synonymous to *tapasya* or austerity or renunciation. When austerity is employed to mean as *tapasya*, it points to physical endurance or harsh treatment of the body by fasting and fastidious renunciation of pleasure or comfort of life. In ascetic parlance, it depicts self-torture and self-mortification. Satyagrahi’s submission to *tapasya* awakes the dormant goodness in the opponent leading him to a sphere of moral reawakening or purgation by seeing the evil he committed. Such inflicted pain and voluntary acceptance of affliction without offering any retributive or violent resistance to the pain afflicted by the opponent reinvigorizes the satyagrahi to constantly forgive the injury inflicted to him by the opponent. The consequence in the long run is the least loss of lives and ennobles those who lost their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice.

When the oppressor undergoes an interior conversion, this, in the Gandhian presupposition, is actually a faith experience. Gandhian non-violence truly accumulates to a method of persuasion and conviction by suffering. There are those who urge that Gandhi’s approach to resolve disputations and conflicts is an increment masochistic and passive surrender and submission to the gratuitously violent excuses of the adversary. This is specifically not how Gandhi grasped it: “Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean modest submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting one’s whole soul in contrary to the will of the tyrant.” For Gandhi, authentic pacifism was not “non-resistance to evil” but “non-violent resistance to evil.” One of Gandhi’s most popular disciples, Martin Luther King claimed that genuine pacifism is not some unrealistic submission to evil and pain; it is, rather, “a valorous confrontation of evil by the efficacy of love, in the faith that it is better to be a recipient of violence than an inflictor of it.”

Authentic non-violence has nothing to do with passivity; rather the oppressed become active antagonists who have decided to prefer to lovingly withstand those who will not acknowledge them as human. Non-violence requires a supernatural valor, a willingness to consciously suffer without an appeal to

assistance to retaliation, to voluntary risk injury, even death, and to do all this without any entanglement to tangible consequences. In Gandhi’s own words: “Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence.” The issue, finally, is one of bringing truth to bear upon all matters human. The non-violent withstander is really struggling for universal truth.

Gandhi asserted that, at the most profound aspect; the evil of viciousness and vehemence was grounded in the deficiency of a living faith in a living God. Gandhian non-violence is insignificant, obnoxious, opaque and impossible without a belief in God. In fact, Gandhi, in a lackadaisical context, felt that one could not really discover God apart from the discipline of non-violence. Between 1917 and 1948 hundreds of group *Satyagraha* actions were conducted in India. These accentuations typified the struggle for Indians self-rule and a quantitative other social issues. In exactly Gandhian perspectives and terminologies, however, the ultimate end of these activities was not to win a political campaign, but to service truth. Gandhian non-violence is about the triumph of truth and not the triumph of power.

Gandhi reiterated many times that satyagrahi must bear witness to the truth. It is a sort of “Testimony” to the truth. Gandhi understood testimony as alluding to words, works, actions and to the lives which attest to an intention, an inspiration, an idea of the heart of experience even unto death and history. Gandhi mentioned a lot of viewpoints about reflections, maxims, praxis and so on but he is silent concerning practical liturgical praxis simply because he’s not Christian. So, I decided to adopt his viewpoint and adjunct my very own formulated simple thesis that is exigent to improve my relationship with God.

My thesis is: In such a disoriented existence is a life in search of a story, in need of reception, in need of justice and in need of healing. In telling the story of the suffering God, we find it possible if not imperative to tell our own stories of pain and reconciliation. Through practical liturgical praxis, it is possible for us to name God and to truly bestow the language of testimony. We are transformed by an encounter with human others and their story telling.

What is **practical liturgical praxis** I am alluding to? This requires surrendering our speech, words, thoughts, actions and deeds to God, practical, concrete and narrative with the Liturgy and the Sacraments as the very core. It is a kind of onto-theology or practical theology, praxeology, pastoral theology and liberation theology. Living a truthful life requires more than simply correlating words and reality, matching our words against what we consider to be the facts. It requires, in addition, a judgment

concerning the fittingness, appropriateness or fidelity of our actual discourse to the situation at hand. In short, telling the truth is coextensive with moral discernment and both demand a life of integrity, self-sacrifice and ethical wholeness even unto death.

I like Gandhi because even if he's not Christian, his viewpoints and ways were patterned from Jesus. He lived it. As a Catholic, I prefer the liturgy and the sacraments to be the compass and the very core for me to follow Jesus. The Catechism taught me that the duty of Christians to take part in the life of the Church impels them to act as witness of the Gospel and of the obligations that flow from it. All Christians by the example of their lives and the witness of their word, wherever they live, have an obligation to manifest the new man which they have put on in Baptism, and to reveal the power of the Holy Spirit by whom they were strengthened at Confirmation. The martyrs bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. The martyrs bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. The acts of martyrs form the archives of truth written in letters of blood [CCC 2472, 2473, 2474]. For many decades, my life was always on the verge of death, totally helpless but Jesus never abandoned me. In my most excruciating experiences and darkest moment, the blessed sacrament, the liturgy and the sacraments became the compass of my life for me to survive. Many times those were matters of life and death. It is a beautiful blessing of the Lord for us all.

THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Catholic prayer / worship is tied with the Holy Spirit and the Church. It is the Spirit who inspires both authentic personal Catholic prayer and the church's liturgical prayer, her sacramental worship. Through the Spirit, both types of prayer flow from Christ, the primordial sacrament and the foundational statement.

Inculturation is indispensable in the life of a christian. It addresses that Christian faith must take root in the matrix of our being so that we may truly believe and love. To inculturate our faith is primordial for the Catholic Church. *Inculturation* is essential for the sake of the Church itself. It enriches the Church. This process of inculturation respectfully draws the good elements within a culture, renews them from within and assimilates them to form part of its Catholic unity. The Catholicity of the Church is more fully realized when it is able to assimilate and use the riches of a people's culture for the glory of God.

The renewal of popular piety that involves critical and fervent use of popular religious practices. These are to be fostered in such a way that they do

not distort authentic Christian faith, nor remain superficial forms of worship, but rather truly express the faith. The Bishops are often confronted with the main problem with our prayer and worship. They pointed out that our prayer and worship are often disengaged from our daily living. This means that they are often reduced to mere external observance of religious conventions, lacking any authentic commitment. The Bishops teaches what a personal Christian prayer should be. They held that a Christian prayer is our personal faith response to God. It is a loving relationship with God our all-loving Father through Jesus Christ, the Son in the Holy Spirit. Consequently, Prayer is an intimate dialogue with God who loves us.

The basis of prayer is on the interrelation of two realities: who God is and who we are. Based on this relationship, there are five **distinctions of prayer (5 Types): adoration, thanksgiving, petition, contrition and offering.** It is the Holy Spirit who teaches us **how to pray:** from his interior inspiration, through His inspired Scripture, especially the gospel teaching and example of Christ, from the teaching of the Church, and the witness and the teaching of the saints.

Jesus himself taught his disciples how to pray by his own example of communion with his Father, He emphasized: interior sincerity of the heart, love in action, especially the enemies, and the significance of the Holy Spirit as guide and inspirer. The Bishops further added that the very heart of our Christian prayer is our communion with Christ himself, through his Spirit indwelling in us, so we can "make our own mind of Jesus Christ" (Phil 2:5) and "live by faith in the Son of God who loved us and gave himself up for us" (Gal 2:19).

Worship, Ritual and Liturgy [PCP 11]

Authentic Christian prayer, like Christ's own prayer, is always "personal". It is essentially relational, and thus open to the communal. Our personal devotions must, as truly Christian, constitutes the communal as their proper context. Church liturgies must comprise the personal depth and participation of the faithful. Christian prayer is personal communion with God our Father, through Jesus Christ in the Spirit, within the Church, centered around the eucharistic table, in our pilgrimage of faith, hope and loving service of neighbor. The foundation of Christian prayer is the Sacred Scripture and the Church's liturgy, actively drawing on our concrete human context, and consciously seeking to follow the Spirit's movement directing us to personal spiritual flourishing and communal faith-commitment.

Worship is interior reverence and homage offered to the divine majesty through words and

actions in public ritual. Authentic worship “in Spirit and Truth” is never empty ritualism, but includes rendering justice to the poor, the widow and orphans. It occurs in the individual Christian’s personal prayer, in-group prayer, and especially in the Church’s liturgical prayer. *Ritual*, whether secular or religious, is a social, programmed symbolic activity that can create, communicate, criticize, or transform the basic meaning of community life. It creates our fundamental bonding with others, grounding the structure of social engagements that provide our basic identity. Catholics are vigorous on religious rituals, especially those establishing the great feasts of Christmas and Holy Week. Authentic religious rituals exhibit for constant traits: *symbolic, consecratory, repetitive and involving remembrance.*

Liturgy is deduced from the Greek *leitourgia*, a word in turn compounded from two other Greek words – *laos* (people, cf. laity) and *ergon* (work cf. metallurgy). In pre-Christian use, it alludes to whatever public works were judged essential to foster the public well-being. In its Christian use, it designates the public worship of the Church. *Liturgy is an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ, centered in the eucharist which commemorates Christ’s Paschal Mystery, so that “full public worship is performed by the Mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, by head and members.”*

The Essential Characteristics of Catholic Liturgy are as follows: [PCP 11]

1. **Trinitarian and Paschal:** directed to the Father, through His Son’s Paschal Mystery, in their Holy Spirit.
2. **Ecclesial:** celebrated by the whole Church, head and members, actively involved in numerous roles;
3. **Sacramental:** celebrated through symbolic rituals, words and gestures by which the faithful both articulate Faith in Christ and share in the salvation symbolized.
4. **Ethically oriented:** directly anchored to moral life by empowering full accountable Christian discipleship;
5. **Eschatological:** making present God’s kingdom already begun but not yet fully accomplished.

Today the Church accentuates on **full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgy** which is required by the very nature of the liturgy itself, and to which the Christian people “have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism.”

THE VOW OF CHASTITY AND NON-POSSESSION

The most crucial to a satyagrahi is brahmacharya or vow of chastity, non-violence,

poverty and non-possession. Human beings in flesh and blood are subject to mundane and temporal desires and cravings. There are many passions and here Gandhi specified mundane passions wherein the apprehension of evil causes hatred, aversion and fear. The heart is the seat of moral personality. Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, concupiscence of the flesh and disordered desires and the likes. The consequence of this movement is sadness and gloom or in the anger that resists it. Passions are evil if love is evil and good if it is good. So Gandhi commended the indispensability of the vow of chastity ‘Brahmacharya’ and the vow of non-possession ‘Aparigraha’. Gandhi accentuated on the indispensability of devoting service to the community by relinquishing children and wealth and live the life of one retired from household cares. Here, one’s sexual urges and drives are sublimated. The vow of chastity enables a satyagrahi to love with upright and undivided heart. It is disciplining their feelings and imagination by declining all complicity in impure thoughts that incline a satyagrahi to turn aside from the path of God’s commandment. Gandhi stressed the indispensability of pure detachment to engender truth in non-violent manifestation. It gives the satyagrahi the inner strength that reinvigorizes him to attain his goal. Gandhi’s vow of chastity is congruous to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The church teaches that the chaste person maintains the integrity of the powers of life and love placed in him. This integrity ensures the unity of the person. It is in contradictory to any behavior that would impair it. It tolerates neither a double life nor duplicity in speech. Chastity includes an apprenticeship in self-mastery which is a training in human freedom. Either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy. Man’s dignity requires him to act out of conscious and free choice, as moved and drawn in a personal way from within, and not by blind impulses in himself or by mere external constraint. Man gains such dignity when, ridding himself of all slavery to the passions, he presses forward to his goal by freely choosing what is good and, by his diligence and skill, effectively secures for himself the means suited to this end. It is through chastity that we are gathered together and led back to the unity from which we were fragmented into multiplicity [CCC 2338, 2339].

Gandhi also teaches that it is not power or possession of limitless arms but purity of life, vigilance and unceasing application of *satyagraha* generates. The struggle in opposition to carnal covetousness entails purifying the heart. It is forming their intellects and wills to be attuned to God’s holiness in charity, chastity, and love of truth. Purity

of hearty enables the satyagrahi to accept others as neighbours. Gandhi amplified non possession 'aparigraha' to emotive sphere such as the emotional bonds as those in families. Breaking away from family attachments engender in the long run benefits for the entire family because of the calling of **satyagraha** with no other desire left. The precept of detachment from riches is indispensable for a satyagrahi's pursuit of perfect charity. All worldly things and adherence to riches is in contradiction to the spirit of evangelical poverty. In the scriptures, the Lord grieves over the rich, because they find their consolation in the abundance of goods. Let the proud seek and love earthly kingdom, but blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Lk 6:24). Gandhi also accentuated on a satyagrahi's relationship with women as filial or fraternal. It is not seeking the company of women but does not flee from the company of women for a satyagrahi is bound to give his service to women. Gandhi believes that a woman is a living testament of *ahimsa* and *tapasya*.

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND LIBERATION AS SWARAJ

Each of Gandhi's political acts can be valued on at least three aspects of meaning. His actions in the political sphere were, first of all, acts of worship. Secondly, they were symbolic events with educational goals. Mahatma awakens to bring the people of India to an awareness of their true necessities and their actual situation in the life of the world. On a 3rd aspect, Gandhi's act of dissent was meant as attestations to universal truths. His many fasts, for example, were public, political acts. But they were conceiving with meaning on other aspects. The fasts were acts of worship and self-purification. They were also efficaciously symbolic acts of attestation that were meant to disclose several indispensable truths relevant to all persons. Thus, Gandhi's general political philosophy furnishes insights into his perspectives about world affairs. This philosophy lies on his premises about absolute truth (*satya* - the divinity, the essential being, and the supreme good), law or duty and non-violence, and his ultimate conceptions about man, society and the state.

John XXIII teaches us that the human society must primarily be considered something pertaining to the spiritual. Through it in the bright light of truth, men should share their knowledge, be able to exercise their rights and fulfill their obligations, be inspired to seek spiritual values; mutually derive genuine pleasure from the beautiful of what order it be; always be readily disposed to pass on to others the best of their own cultural heritage; and eagerly strive to make their own the spiritual achievement of others. These benefits not

only influence, but at the same time give aim and scope to all that has bearing on cultural expressions, economic and social institutions, political movements and forms, laws, and all other structures by which society is outwardly established and constantly developed [PT 36, cf. CCC1886]. This is what Gandhi longs for.

Gandhi was hopeful that the good of Indian people is indispensably the common good that would allow them to reach their goals in life. Gandhi understood very well the social teachings of the church on the common good and solidarity; first, the respect for the person and that public authorities are bound to respect the fundamental and inalienable rights of Indian people. Gandhi saw the British in their country as behaving in opposition to the common good. He wanted the Indian people to exercise their freedom especially in matters of religion and act in accordance to the moral norm of their conscience, and safeguard their privacy indispensable for the fulfillment of their vocation. Development is the epitome of all social duties. The proper function of authority must to make accessible to each what is needed to lead a truly human life: food, clothing, health, work, education and culture, suitable information, the right to establish a family and so on. Authority must also ensure the security of society and its members. This demands peace [cf. CCC 1905, 1906, 1907, 1908, 1909]. But for Gandhi, the British authority in their country were not transparent at all concerning the common good of the people.

So, Gandhi incited a political movement to make the British see of their shortcomings. Gandhi encouraged people in their place to participate voluntarily, assumes their responsibility and engage in activities that could foster the common good. For Gandhi, their socio economic problems could only be resolved by all forms of solidarity. He encouraged them to do the spinning wheel, which he showed the people, he's doing it too.

For Gandhi, God (*satya*) equals truth. His first cause is both merciful and just. These attributes are reflected in his emphasis on the means of pacifism and political reform. Allied to *Satya* is the conception of law or duty i.e., *dharma* (higher law), *artha* (power or wealth), and *Kama* (pleasure or aspiration). Gandhi equated the living of non-violence to his ethic of non-injury patterned from the upright and equitable living of Buddhism. It comprises faith in absolute truth or God; physical or psychical valor, non-violence, *swadeshi*, loyalty to one's native institutions, dietary self-control, honesty, chastism, belief in religious equality, manual labor and the removal of untouchability. Thus, Gandhi's political means to God – realization is non-cooperation to the British empire and constructive

programs such as weaving (spinning wheel) “*Khadi*” and *Charkha*, Removal of untouchability and Hindu Moslem Unity etc. through the salt of *satyagraha*, the *Pooma* “fast unto death” in 1932 and the Last Fast for Hindu-Moslem Unity

Swaraj is Gandhi’s Indian terminology for liberation. It is an all-satisfying goal for all time. Gandhi longs not for independence but for freedom. Gandhi’s preference for *Swaraj* was grounded on the meaning of Independence as *swaraj*. That independence must vary with India’s varying necessities and incremental accumulating capacity. Thus, *swaraj* alludes to freedom, the indispensability of the spinning – wheel and the salt *Satyagraha*, the removal and discard of untouchability, the Hindu-Moslem unity, civil disobedience, mass education, faith and works, and *swaraj* as the kingdom of God. *Swaraj* is the end of the British Empire. The very foundation of *swaraj* is non-cooperation to the tyrants. The internal dimension of *swaraj* is the argumentation and the meaning of *Swaraj* from within the geopolitical context of India’s own enslavement and *Swaraj* as freedom, a state of mind and self-control.

In 1908, Gandhi wrote a book called *Hind Swaraj*. Here, he expressed his objections to the capitalistic form of industrial civilization. His philosophy is exhibited as follows: First, the worthwhile-ness of freedom. Freedom consisted only in the freedom of the “working classes.” Gandhi exhorts the people to be patriotic. For Gandhi, patriotism is the prosperity and well-being of the entire people; second, non-violence would never engage power to the masses and construct a large number of perfect or semi-perfect men and engage in the experiment to build up a new society. In non-violence, there can be no defeat. In violence there can be defeat. Third, the right to live is to live by manual labor. Lastly, non-belief in the general sense of nationalism. For Gandhi, nationalism was the resources of the country should be placed at the disposal of the whole of humanity.

In 1906, Gandhi delivered a speech in Johannesburg, South Africa: Gandhi reiterated: “We cannot lose. In this cause I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill. Whatever they do to us, we will attack no one, kill no one. They will imprison us, they will fine us, they will seize our possessions but they cannot take away our self-respect if we do not give it to them. I am taking you to fight, to fight against their anger. We will not strike a blow. But we will receive them, and throughout pain we will make them see their injustice and it will hurt as all fighting hurts but we cannot lose. We cannot. They may torture my body, break my bones. Then they will have my dead body, not my obedience.”

CONCLUSION

Gandhi’s concept of *Satyagraha* – grounded in truth, *Ahimsa* (non-violence), *Tapasya* (personal sacrifice and self suffering), *Brahmacharya*, *Aparigraha*, *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj* etc. – may evidently demonstrate to be one of the greatest discoveries in the 20th century. The *Satyagraha* method of dispute resolution may, in fact, offer modern humanity its only way out of the current quagmire of violence that seems to be engulfing the world. Truly, Gandhi has demonstrated us with a path that is sane and holy, albeit intensely and ardently demanding.

It could be argued that Gandhi’s methods for bringing about peace and justice are naïve, ingenuous, unsophisticated, unrealistic, and, in the end, ineffective. But when we look around our modern world and critically examine the “realistic” alternatives to non-violence, we find that they are none too many and none too enticing. Gandhi has showed us another way. The path of violence, he acknowledged, accumulates finally to “an eye for an eye, making the whole world blind.” It would be prolific and fruitful if we ponder the following remarks of Thomas Merton:

“Gandhi does not envisage a tactical non-violence confined to one area of life or to an isolated moment. His non-violence is a creed, which embraces all of life in a consistent and logical network of obligations. Genuine non-violence means not only non-cooperation with glaring social evils, but also the renunciation of benefits and privileges that are implicitly guaranteed by forces which conscience cannot accept.”

ENDNOTES

- 1 The entire concept of civil disobedience is taken from Richard Gula, *Reason Informed by Faith* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1989). Laws, while essential for civil order, must be ascertained in engagement to their rationality for obtaining their purpose of shielding public order, and law formulators must be evaluated in light of their due ken as a depiction to their decisive discretion to assist the community, and not to dominate it. For the benefit of civil order and with good faith in the political processes which formulates laws, we ought to approximate laws and the human authorities answerable for construing them with the unwarranted assurance in their regard. Our first reply ought to be willing to cooperate. This unjustified assumption gives way to the weight of new

- evidence. Some laws are not furnishing justice; some authorities are not servants but despots. In such typical cases, answerable sharing in the community demands criticism and the fearless decline to corroborate. When this occurs we cross the line into civil (or ecclesiastical) disobedience. From a Christian point of view, civil disobedience participates in the “already but not yet” compulsion of the reign of God. The “not yet” fullness of the reign of God relativizes everything existing at the present time and stands in criticism of our tendency to absolutize historically conditioned structures of society. It intends to identify the existing order as the perfect image of the reign of God.
- 2 Mahatma Gandhi, *A Great Life in Brief* (Government of India Press, 1954), 68,72. Mahatma (a name meaning” Great Soul” given to Gandhi by the masses in India) was convinced that truth must remain open and fluid. It is both a personal and universal project. He maintained a universal principle common to the spiritual traditions of both East and West. He declined paths to truth that highlights only on personal salvation or individual enlightenment: For Gandhi, God is the source of truth. His law is truth and so all human beings are called to live in the truth. Gandhi admitted, in reading the Scriptures, he really like Jesus but does not like the ways of Christians. It is adherence to the truth and directing entire lives with the demands of the truth.
 - 3 German Bishops Pastoral Letter “*Out of Justice, Peace*” nos. 199-209. The safeguarding and promoting of peace constitute central tasks in politics. A soldier who serves in order to safeguard peace must withstand the tension of knowing that he is arming himself on behalf of the state, preparing to fight and learning to do something which he hopes that he will never have to perform, because there is nothing that he desires more resolutely than to preserve peace without the use of force and to resolve conflicts by means of negotiation. The Church acknowledges the very message of the Gospel in its call to non-violence. This is a prophetic call considering the venom and vindictive nature of violence. Even when legitimate, violence can be dreadful. It is horrible, brutal or elusive, vivid and vague, petrifying and subtle. It is sly, roguish, artful cunning, incongruous and bizarre.
 - 4 If and as long as security prolong pursues ethically permissible and Indeed, obligatory goods, prevention of war, defense of ethical and Political values against totalitarian threats and the promotion of disarmament and avails itself in this life ethically acceptable methods and means, then the service rendered by soldiers is both indispensable and morally justified. When force is met with force and bitter aversion with malevolence, both parties descend into a state of progressive degeneration or deterioration. This is a contradiction to the way of ahimsa: a natural path and direction for humanity. Non-violence reinvigorates human persons and the restoration of peace, order and social justice. It is not possible through the seizure of power. Only a non-violent transformation of the relationship between the oppressed and oppressor will generate true peace and justice. A correlation is impossible without an inner conversion in the oppressor. In teaching us to love our unbeatable foes, to do good to those who detest and abominate us, to bless those who curse us, to pray for those who mistreat and revile us, Jesus permeates us to grasp that only love was efficacious enough to win the hearts and minds of men and women. Gandhi conceived and taught this as well.
 - 5 Ibid. Non-violence demands a lucid dedication to withstand injustice and an intention to advance human rights and the common good. Non-violence is grounded on the freedom of the human person and the rights of individual conscience. It is not a duty for all but a privilege, says Gandhi, for those who discern a moral call to withstand/resist all tempestuousness. Gandhi affirmed ahimsa; he taught it and lived it. Gandhi insisted “poverty is the worst form of violence.” Violence debased, depraves and disrupts humans. Violence pursued an ever-deepening cycle of vehemence. It is a spiral. “Truth is God and there is no way to find truth except the way of non-violence.” “Jesus teaches us that it is the truth that sets us free.” Gandhi applied this teaching as well Violence alludes to physical violence and the vituperated efficacy of any form. The practitioner of ahimsa willingly repudiates violence in thought, word and deed. Ahimsa becomes a total spirituality, an unconditional sacrifice, a complete way of life in which the practitioner is wholly committed to the loving conversion of self, of foe and of society..
 - 6 Ibid.

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