

- a. First, the hostile impulse he feels is not righteous indignation, as he would like to believe, but rather proves the presence within himself of the same evil that he is so eager to destroy in his enemy.

The consequence of this first realization is that if one is to treat any other person as an enemy, he ought by the same token to treat himself as an enemy when he hurts himself by mistake or even deliberately. But people don't usually treat themselves as enemies. If we don't treat ourselves as enemies when we hurt ourselves, then we should not treat others as enemies when they hurt us.

- b. Secondly, the inevitable effect of violence in human relations is more violence, so that the net result is more tragic than before, whereas it is possible for love to overcome hatred and to build in its stead enduring friendship.

The consequence of this second realization is that if one wishes his action to be truly creative, he must commit himself absolutely to the way of non-violence, whatever consequences this may entail for himself.

- c. Gandhi believes that non-violence is the greatest force as the disposal of humanity. "It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction ever devised by the ingenuity of man."

D. Summary statements on truth and love:

1. The truth for Gandhi is that all humans participate in God; truthfulness and the commitment to truth are the searching, open-minded aspect of love.
2. Love is truthfulness in feeling and action; since the truth is that all participate in God, the attitude of love lets this truth be realized.

Satyagraha: Non-Violent Resistance or Civil Disobedience

The literal English equivalent to the word satyagraha is "firmness in devotion to the truth." The basic idea follows from Gandhi's concepts of truth and love. Truthfulness and loving rejection of violence form, not merely a valid guide in one's personal relations, but also a power for the regeneration of social institutions. As Gandhi tells us, satyagraha is the extension to social-political life of the law of love which we take for granted as validly applicable with the life of the family. "It is this law of love that silently but surely governs the family for the most part throughout the civilized world. . . . The doctrine of satyagraha is merely an extension of the rule of domestic life to the political."

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The idea of non-violence is familiar to us from Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, but the idea of non-violent resistance to evil is not familiar in political life. Gandhi had read Tolstoi and Thoreau and agreed with them that evil must be resisted in such a way that greater justice can be achieved which will be stable and enduring through non-violent civil disobedience. When one is confronted in an unbearable situation by any agent armed with social authority and power, one should practice nonviolent resistance. There is resistance because there is unqualified refusal to accept the evil or to cooperate with it. There is non-violence because the resistance involves no use of force. The resister is prepared to suffer himself whatever pain or loss may come as a result of his refusal to submit to wrong. Because the resistance is non-violent, there is a good chance that one's opponent can be eventually won over to friendship and willing acceptance of the truth of justice and love.

Satyagraha requires the same courage that soldiers have in war. Satyagraha cannot be followed by the weak but only by the strong. So crucial in Gandhi's mind was this truth that he insisted many times that violence is morally better than passive submission. In any situation where the only practicable alternatives are violent struggle and weak acquiescence in evil, violence is the preferable way. Gandhi said: "I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. But when one becomes capable, without reservation, of expressing truth and love in action, and sees clearly the inevitable consequence of resorting to violence, he will no longer need to choose that alternative."

The belief behind Gandhi's satyagraha is that no humans are irredeemably evil; consequently, resistance to intolerable injustice must express no hostility toward those who are instruments of social authority; they are capable of being transformed and won to willing cooperation and should be treated on that assumption. One is saying to them: "I cannot and will not accept your unjust acts, but I am ready for the consequences of my resistance to fall on me rather than on you, for I have faith that you are better than your acts, and even in my resistance I shall always treat you with friendliness and love."

Gandhi's trust was fulfilled: One politician said to him in Africa: "I do not like your people and do not care to assist them at all. But what am I to do? You help us in our days of need. How can we lay hands upon you? I often wish that you took to violence like the English strikers, and then we would know at once how to dispose of you. But you will not injure even your enemy. . . . And that is what reduces us to sheer helplessness." (from Chester Bowles, New Dimensions of Peace p. 144)

Gandhi helped to bring about a change of attitude towards Karma. According to the concept of karma, the present position of any person in a caste system is part of

the inevitable effect of one's conduct in previous forms of existence, hence it should be accepted rather than changed; it does not matter how much misery and humiliation that position in the caste might bring to an individual. In the traditional sense of karma, it would be morally wrong to change any social institutions. But Gandhi rejects the notion that one must passively accept one's social-political-economic status. There are social conditions so completely incompatible with the personal dignity of everyone involved that the first step to achievement of the moral ideal is to refuse to accept such conditions such as untouchability. Spiritual growth in the individual and the reform of society toward the ideal of a loving community should not be separated.

Some quotations from Gandhi, with commentary:

"I believe in the supremacy of the moral law, the law of truth and love." Behind all faiths there is common ethical basis, a universal religion. "It means a belief in the ordered moral government of the universe....This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and others. It does not supersede them. It harmonizes them and gives them reality."

"True religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other." "Religion is to morality what water is to the seed that is sown in the soul." This comparison suggests that although morality is possible without religion, its growth is greatly helped by religion. The point can also be made that moral practice purifies the religious self for union with God.

Attitude toward the different religions" "(1) All religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them; (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore, no thought of conversion is possible. The aim of the Fellowship should be to help a Hindu to become a better Hindu, a Muslim to become a better Muslim, and a Christian a better Christian. . . . Our prayer for others must be not 'God, give him the light thou hast given me,' but 'God, give him all the light and truth he needs for his development.' Pray that your friends may become better men, whatever their form of religion."