

# Satyagraha

## Introduction

Approached with a limited understanding of the psychology of the disputing process, violence appears to be a superior technique of solving conflicts to nonviolence because it has obvious and tangible strategies and weapons. Non violent means are far more difficult to visualize. Also, skeptics can, and often do, present moral dilemmas as ways of debunking nonviolence as method of resolving conflicts. Neither ignorance as to these techniques nor the criticisms of them prove that conflicts cannot be solved creatively by nonviolent means.

Given that conflicts and clashes of interests will always occur, nonviolent ways of resolving these conflicts have a far greater chance than other methods of falling within Deutsch's definition of "productive", rather than "destructive". Conducting a conflict in a nonviolent non-threatening way prevents the opponent "from reacting out of fear in the mindless reflex action".<sup>1</sup> Violence in any of its many forms also has the tendency to become self-perpetuating through the cycle of vengeance and counter vengeance. A productive resolution of conflict is more likely to be achieved if it is based on nonviolence (and this is further increased if conversion is successfully carried out) because, in words of Gregg, it leaves "no aftermath of resentment, bitterness, or revenge, no necessity for further threats of force".<sup>2</sup>

What has been said about violence begetting violence also applies to behaviour that humiliates the opponent. Such humiliation is likely to produce the hatred that may turn to violence. There are, however, other reasons for not using violence or threatening actions in conflict situations besides their self-perpetrating characteristics. Naess claims :

It is ethically unjustifiable to injure an opponent if it is not verified that he is wrong and you are right. Now, it is always more or less unverifiable that he is wrong and you are right. Therefore, it is always unjustifiable to injure an opponent.<sup>3</sup>

Gandhi himself summed up this position when he remarked that violence is to be excluded " because man is not capable of knowing absolute truth, and, therefore, is not competent to punish."<sup>4</sup> This reminder is essential since, as Erikson notes, when we are tempted to violence we parade as the other's

policeman, convincing ourselves that regardless of the quality of their actions the other "has it coming to him". However, those who act on such righteousness implicate themselves in a mixture of pride and guilt which undermine their position both "psychologically and ethically."<sup>5</sup>

### Types of nonviolent action

In conflict situations success through nonviolent action can be achieved in three separate ways: (1) accommodation, where the opponent does not believe in the changes made but nevertheless believes that it is best to give in on some or all points to gain peace or to cut losses; (2) nonviolent coercion, where the opponent want to continue the struggle but cannot because they have lost the sources of power and means of control; and (3) conversion, where the opponent has changed inwardly to the degree that they want to make the desired by the nonviolent activist<sup>6</sup> (or indeed, the nonviolent activist them self has so changed). Although preferable to coercion based on physical force or threat, the first two modes of nonviolent conflict resolution are based on power that respective parties can exert on each other. Powerlessness of one party to a conflict means by necessity that a truly productive outcome will rarely be arrived at. Conversion, on the other hand, operates outside the framework of the interplay between power and powerlessness - the touching of the conscience involves a totally different dynamic.

All three of the forms of nonviolent action in Sharp's typology may succeed in "solving" a conflict. As noted in the previous chapter, accommodation in its common forms of "lumping it" and avoidance has its problems. Both accommodation and nonviolent coercion may resolve conflicts productively in the long term however, because behaviour change may lead to changes in attitude. In the case of nonviolent coercion especially, the opponent ,may be induced to re-examine their attitudinal position. The coercion will force them to make a decision about whether or not to comply and perhaps further, whether or not they should have complied. The more the coercion, however, the more likely it becomes that the opponent will comply without rethinking his position.<sup>7</sup>

The Gandhian technique of Satyagraha rests on the belief that the striving for conversion is the most effective method of conducting a struggle on a pragmatic assessment of the

outcome, but more than that Gandhi believed that it is the morally correct way to conduct conflict because only through a dialectical process can truth be arrived at, or at least approached, and such quest for truth is, according to him, the aim of human life.<sup>8</sup>

### The dialectics of Satyagraha

Violence to persons and property has the effect of clouding the real issues involved in the original conflict while non-coercive, non-violent actions invites the parties to a dialogue about the issues themselves. Gandhi, therefore, warns that we must "Hate the sin and not the sinner."<sup>9</sup>

When opponents are seen as the valuable human personalities that they are and through nonviolent, non coercive means the conflict is conducted in such a way that opponents are allowed or encouraged to realize their own human potential, existential rewards also accrue to the Satyagrahi. Bondurant summarizes this proposition admirably when she states that Gandhi

fashioned a method of conflict in the exercise of which a man could come to know what he is and what it means to evolve. In satyagraha dogma gives way to an open exploration of context. The objective is not to assert propositions, but to create possibilities. In opening up choices and in confronting an opponent with the demand that he make a choice, the Satyagrahi involves himself in acts of "ethical existence". The process forces a continuing examination of one's own motives, an examination undertaken within the context of relationships as they change towards a new, restructured, and reintegrated pattern.

The dialectical process is essentially creative and inherently constructive. Its immediate objective is a restructuring of the opposing elements to achieve a situation which is satisfactory to both the original opposing antagonists but in such a way as to present an entirely new total circumstance... through the operation of non-violent action the truth as judged by the fulfillment of human needs will emerge in the form of a mutually satisfactory and agreed - upon solution.<sup>10</sup>

The concept of Satyagraha has been defined in many ways. Vincent Sheean says ("a little more boldly than Mr. Gandhi himself ever did") that it means in essence that "what a man can do is to declare his truth and die for it". This any man can

do; and there is no power on earth that can prevent it."<sup>11</sup>In Gandhi's words : "The essence of nonviolence technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists themselves"; "Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth"; and "The Satyagrahi's object is to convert, not to coerce, the wrong-doer".<sup>12</sup> In conflict situations satyagraha merely means that the Satyagrahi follows no other plan than the adherence to nonviolence and has no other goal than to reach the truth. The truth being the end of the process, nonviolence the means to achieve it. Because good ends can never grow out of bad means, the opponent (for the Satyagrahi there may be opponents but there are never enemies) is forced to expose them self to loss. There is no threat, coercion or punishment. The person offering the satyagraha instead undergoes self-suffering with the optimistic belief that the opponent can be converted to see the truth of his or her claim by touching the opponents conscience, or that a clearer vision of truth will grow out of the dialectical process for both parties. While satyagrahi's try to convert, they must themselves also remain open to persuasion.

Many regard a technique of conflict resolution based on such moral appeals as a political absurdity. They may fail, but if it were otherwise they would in fact cease to be moral. The essential nature of such moral appeals is that they call for a response that can be either given or withheld by those towards whom they are directed. Gandhi however believed that nobody was entirely out of reach of such appeals "especially if one's goodwill is made sufficiently manifest and ones willingness to suffer for the truth is clearly demonstrated."<sup>13</sup>

Satyagraha in its pure sense aims not so much at changing the behaviour of the opponent as at changing their attitudes so that they may change their behaviour. Changed behaviour without changed attitudes can only be maintained through coercion, which is fundamentally opposed by the philosophy of satyagraha. Satyagraha, then, goes beyond redressing merely the immediate grievance that has surfaced as conflict, but aims to resolve the distrust and friction that are the underlying sources of conflict. In order to achieve this:

Satyagraha is gentle, it never wounds. It must not be the result of anger or malice. It is never fussy, never impatient, never vociferous. It is the direct opposite of compulsion. it was conceived as a complete substitute for violence. The reformer must have consciousness of the truth of his cause. He will not

be impatient with the opponent, he will be impatient with himself ....<sup>14</sup>.

### The principles of Satyagraha

Satyagraha is far more than a set of actions. It is also an attitude, for example, a boycott may be part of a satyagraha campaign but if the underlying principles of satyagraha are not present then a boycott alone cannot accurately be described as satyagraha. It becomes what Bondurant has termed "duragraha". Unlike satyagraha, Duragraha starts off with prejudgments aimed at overcoming and destroying the position of the opponent.<sup>15</sup> It is not concerned with the initiation of a dialectical process.

The basic precepts and rules of a satyagraha, as opposed to a duragraha, campaign can be systematized in the following ten points:<sup>16</sup>

(1) Violence is invited from opponents if they are humiliated or provoked. "It is never the intention of a satyagrahi to embarrass the wrong-doer. The appeal is never to his fear; it is , must be always his heart."<sup>17</sup>

(2) A violent attitude is less likely on the part of a would-be satyagrahi if they have made clear to themselves the essential elements of their case and the purpose of the struggle. The sincere undertaking of a conflict along Gandhian lines requires an affirmative answer to the question: "Is my motive when starting this new direct action unmixed - is it just to realize the goal of the campaign, and not also to wish to injure the opponent or due to other deviant motive?"<sup>18</sup>

(3) Opponents are less likely to use violent means the better they understand the satyagrahi's case and conduct.

As a satyagrahi I must always allow my cards to be examined and re-examined at all times and make reparation if an error is discovered.<sup>19</sup>

. . . an essential ingredient of non-violent persuasion is the honest and straight-forward dissemination of information... the withholding of information, the making of unsubstantiated charges... the packaging of an issue, and appeals to greed, prejudice and hatred cannot under any circumstances be reconciled with the philosophy of nonviolence.<sup>20</sup>

(4) The essential interests which opponents have in common should be clearly formulated and co-operation established on this basis. This is an extension of Rapoport's idea of "debate" - it explicitly avoids his definition of the "game" mentality. Pelton notes that disputes between friends differ from those between strangers or those who have enmity towards each other. In the former case, the dispute occurs within a framework of much mutual agreement, ties and friendship. In the latter case, the disagreement itself becomes the most salient source of information that one party has of the other. This can "become the primary base of development of inferences and constructs by and about the disputants". Unchecked by further information from other sources "they can balloon into undifferentiated negative images that can only generate fear and distrust".<sup>21</sup> Many times when Gandhi found himself in a deadlocked position, he tried to interview his critic or antagonist personally.<sup>22</sup> In all cases, whether the dispute is between friends or strangers, whether the parties met face-to-face or not, the most important principle in satyagraha is to attempt to see the validity in the opponents position:

Immediately we begin to think of things as our opponent thinks of them, we shall be able to do them full justice. I know that this requires a detached state of mind, and it is a state very difficult to reach. Nevertheless, for a satyagrahi it is absolutely essential. Three-fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably.<sup>23</sup>

(5) Opponents should not be judged harder than the self:

The golden rule of conduct. . . is mutual toleration, seeing that we will never all think alike and we shall see Truth in fragment and from different angles of vision. Conscience is not the same thing for all. Whilst, therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everyone's freedom of conscience.

We must refrain from crying "shame shame" to anybody, we must not use any coercion to persuade other people to adopt our way. We must guarantee to them the same freedom we claim for ourselves.<sup>24</sup>

(6) Opponents should be trusted. Satyagraha is based on the principle "that the only way to make a man trustworthy is to

trust him and the surest way to make him untrustworthy is to distrust him":<sup>25</sup> "I believe in trusting. Trust begets trust. Suspicion is foetid and only stinks. He who trusts has never yet lost in the world."<sup>26</sup> Pelton, however, notes that trusting behaviour does not unequivocally beget cooperation, it may in fact lead to exploitation. Experiments in this area tend to support this somewhat depressing conclusion; however, the experimenters gave no values to the important subjective payoffs of living by one's personal morality (for example, by standing one's ground in the face of coercion and refusal to comply with injustice<sup>27</sup>):

It is true that I have often be let down. Many have deceived me and many have been found wanting. But I do not repent my association with them. . . The most practical, the most dignified way of going on in the world is to take people at their word, when you have no positive reason to the contrary.<sup>28</sup>

This, however, does not imply a martyr complex, for, as Gandhi points out, as a final measure, non-cooperation can be resorted to. The Satyagrahi need not wait endlessly for conversion to occur. "When therefore the limit is reached he takes risks and conceives plans of active satyagraha which may mean civil disobedience and the like. His patience is never exhausted to the point of giving up his creed."<sup>29</sup>

(7) An unwillingness to compromise on non-essentials decreases the likelihood of converting the opponent. Satyagraha requires that demands made be the "irreducible minimum"; they should never be lowered just to please the adversary, but both parties should be prepared to "make large concessions on all points except where a principle is involved", in fact in cases short of matters of principle "A Satyagrahi never misses, can never miss, a chance of compromise on honourable terms". Gandhi claimed that he himself was essentially a man of compromise "because I can never be sure that I am right".<sup>30</sup> Fundamentally, however, as Bondurant rightly points out, satyagraha is a process of synthesis rather than compromise." The satyagrahi is never ready to yield any position which he holds to be the truth", but "he may be persuaded that he is in error in so holding them."<sup>31</sup>

(8) The conversion of an opponent is furthered by personal sincerity. Opponents are more likely to resort to violence if they believe that the satyagrahi's case is unjust and they are more likely to think this if they see their "own point of view distorted and caricatured, and your case described without

regard to your actual, far from perfect, behaviour".<sup>32</sup>Genuine satyagraha, however, by definition being a quest for truth, cannot be used in an unjust cause.

(9) The best way of convincing an opponent of the sincerity of the satyagrahi is to make sacrifices for the given cause.

(10) A position of weakness in an opponent should not be exploited. Intrigue and manipulation of opinion are to be rejected, as is surprise "in so far as this takes the form of exploiting temporary advantages in order to embarrass or to bring undue pressure upon one's opponent".<sup>33</sup> Advantage should not be taken of an opponent's weak moments "if they have not been the result of satyagraha, but due to extraneous reasons".<sup>34</sup>

In a pure fight the fighters would never go beyond the objective fixed when the fight began even if they received an accession to their strength in the course of the fighting, and on the other hand they could not give up their objective if they found their strength dwindling away.<sup>35</sup>

Besides the obvious moral reason, such weakness should not be exploited because surrender caused by some misfortune suffered by the opponent making it necessary to call off the struggle may leave them, after their surrender, as opposed to the position of the satyagrahi as before the struggle commenced. Surrender without conversion is not the ideal way of terminating a struggle. Conversely the demonstration of goodwill by not taking advantage of his position may induce the opponent to trust the sincerity of the satyagrahi and "prepare a suitable atmosphere for a settlement".<sup>36</sup>

There have been several examples of such chivalrous action being shown by satyagrahi's under Gandhi's generalship. The moral is clearly illustrated in the action and aftermath of a long struggle in South Africa. Gandhi was about to launch a mass satyagraha against the government in January 1914 when a general strike of European employees of the Union railways "made the position of the government extremely delicate". Gandhi called off the protest declaring

that the Indians could not thus assist the railway strikers, as they were not out to harass the Government, their struggle being entirely different and differently conceived. Even if we undertook the march, we would begin it at some other time when the railway trouble had ended. This decision of ours created a deep impression . . . . One of the secretaries of



General Smut jocularly said: "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 you took to violence like English strikers, then we would know at once how to dispose of you. But you will not injure even the enemy. You desire victory by self-suffering alone and never transgress your self-imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is what reduces us to sheer helplessness". General Smuts also gave his expression to similar sentiments.<sup>37</sup>

### The process of Satyagraha

The success of a satyagraha campaign to resolve any conflict rests upon three basic assumptions. They are :

- (1) that there can always be found some elements of common interests to all the contending parties;
- (2) that the parties are, or at least might be, amenable to an "appeal to the heart and mind"; and
- (3) that those in position to commence satyagraha are also in a position to carry it through to the end.<sup>38</sup>

If these prerequisites are fulfilled the scene is set for the process aimed at the required conversion to be initiated. This can involve several steps, firstly reasoning with the opponent, then persuasion through self-suffering "wherein the satyagrahi attempts to dramatize the issues at stake and to get through to the opponents unprejudiced judgment so that he may willingly come again onto a level where he may be persuaded through natural argument".<sup>39</sup> This process of moral appeal through self-suffering in lieu of violence or coercion, Ricard Gregg has aptly termed "moral jiu-jitsu". A moral choice is demanded of the opponent which they otherwise may not even contemplate. Gregg summarises the dynamics of this position by explaining that the attacker loses his or her moral balance:

He suddenly and unexpectedly loses the moral support which the usual violent resistance of most victims would render him. He plunges forward, as it were, into a new world of values. He feels insecure because of the novelty of the situation and his ignorance of how to handle it. He loses his poise and self-confidence. The victim not only lets the attacker come, but, as it were, pulls him forward by kindness, generosity and voluntary suffering, so that the attacker loses his moral balance.<sup>40</sup>

Gandhi himself summarizes this process thus:

I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper 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. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him which recognition would not humiliate but uplift him.<sup>41</sup>

If the attempts at conversion through these measures fail the tools of non-cooperation or civil disobedience may be brought into play.

### Concepts fundamental to Satyagraha

The concepts which are the fundamental components of satyagraha and the necessary attributes of the satyagrahi have been either noted or implied above. Often these elements, that is, faith in human goodness, truth, nonviolence, self-suffering, the relationship of the means to the end, a rejection of coercion, and fearlessness, take on a particular meaning when viewed from the Gandhian perspective. The interrelationship between them is what is meant by satyagraha - therefore an understanding of satyagraha as a method of conflict resolution and as a way of life, its *raison d' être* and its operation, rests upon the understanding of these concepts.

(a) Faith in human goodness. The entire rationale of a method of nonviolent conflict resolution which sees conversion of the opponent as its aim must rest upon the assumption that the opponent is open to reason, that they have a conscience, that human nature is such that it is bound or at least likely, "to respond to any noble and friendly action".<sup>42</sup>

Gregg maintains that we need neither to go as far as Rousseau in believing that all persons are inherently good from the beginning of their lives, nor can we believe that they are inherently bad with only sporadic aspirations to goodness as does Calvin, in order to maintain a credible belief in the efficacy of nonviolence. It is enough, he claims, to take as our starting point that "each person has inherently all the time both capacities, for good and for evil, and that both potentialities are plastic".<sup>43</sup>

Gandhi himself echoes this analysis of human nature when he says that "everyone of us is a mixture of good and evil. . . . The difference that there is between human beings is a difference of degree."<sup>44</sup> This belief must not only be held in the abstract as a generalization for humanity but it must be remembered in times of conflict and applied to the opponent in such a way that their dignity as a person and the respect it commands is not infringed, that the opponent is given the same credit in this matter that the satyagrahi would demand for themselves. If this assumption is not made with respect to an opponent they are being classified as inferior or even less human, and this to Gandhi was violence (see below) - a violence that is the direct cause of the grossest forms of physical violence: "Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking."<sup>45</sup>

A belief in human rationality is as important to satyagraha as is the belief in human goodness. Gandhi himself was certain of this, and his utterances contained many statements of faith such as "Every man may know and most of us do know what is a just and an unjust act"; "Everyone can think for himself;" and "unlike the animal, man has been given the faculty of reason."<sup>46</sup> This, however, need not imply that large areas of non-rationality do not occur in human motivations or behaviour. It merely requires "the assumption that man is endowed with reason, that man can utilize reason to direct his actions, and that a technique for conducting conflict can appeal to the rational in man".<sup>47</sup>

A belief in this combination of reason and goodness allows for a faith in the possibility of conversion, and although this process may take considerable time. A Satyagrahi bids good-bye to fear. He is therefore never afraid of trusting his opponent. Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the Satyagrahi is ready to trust him for the twenty-first time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed.<sup>48</sup>

Religious mythology and the Gandhian legend are resplendent with stories of how self-suffering has brought out the good and the reasonable in an opponent leading to their conversion. There are conversely just as many stories of failure and disillusionment.

In a study looking at the social interactions of competitors and cooperators Kelly and Stahelski concluded that, although competitive people are often faced with social relationships where cooperation rather than competition is more effective, they may "learn something about the properties of these situations and nothing about the persons involved. Thus, it is entirely possible for [them] to know that there are cooperative situations but still to believe that most persons are competitively predisposed".<sup>49</sup>

Whether these responses are universal or confined to the culture in which the study was conducted is not clear. These results, however, do not augur well for the success of satyagraha as the prime method of nonviolent conversion. The implication of this study, according to the authors, is

that two types of persons exist in the world whose dispositions are so stable and their interactions so "programmed" by these dispositions that (a) they do not influence each other at the dispositional level, and (b) they do not influence each other's world views.<sup>50</sup>

Satyagraha rests on the belief that opponents can in fact be influenced to alter their dispositions and their world views. This will be discussed further in "self-suffering" below. It should be noted, however, that, as with religious beliefs, belief in the goodness of human nature and the operation of reason ultimately is the optimist's act of faith in the empirically untestable.

(b) Truth. Gandhi believed in the need for absolutes by which to orient one's life. He explained this towards the end of his life by noting that "A mere mechanical adherence to truth and nonviolence is likely to break down at the critical moment. Hence I have said that truth is God."<sup>51</sup> Truth for him, however, was more than a beacon to keep one on the correct path - Truth Satya<sup>52</sup>) was the very reason for existence, the search for Truth being a search for God, "Truth is that which you believe to be true at this moment, and that is your God." In fact Gandhi came "to the conclusion that, for myself, God is truth. But two years ago, I went a step further and said that Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements . . ." <sup>53</sup>

The metaphysical nature of the connection between "Truth" and "God" is explained by Gandhi in a private letter:

In "God is truth " is certainly does not mean "equal to" nor does it merely mean, "is truthful". Truth is not a mere attribute of

God, but He is That. He is nothing if he is That. Truth in Sanskrit means Sat. Sat means Is. Therefore Truth is implied in Is. God is, nothing else is. Therefore the more truthful we are, the nearer we are to God. We are only to the extent that we are truthful.<sup>54</sup>

Iyer further summarizes Gandhi's position of man's relationship to truth in the following paraphrase of various quotations from Gandhi:

As truth is the substance of morality, man is a moral agent only to the extent that he embraces and seeks truth. By truth is not merely meant the abstention from lies, not just the prudential conviction that honesty is the best policy in the long run, but even more that we must rule our life by this law of Truth at any cost. We must say No when we mean No regardless of the consequences. He who ignores this law does not know what it is to speak and to stand for the truth, is like a fake coin, valueless. He has abdicated from his role and status as a moral being. Devotion to truth is the sole reason for human existence, and the truth alone really sustains us at all times. Without truth it would be impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.<sup>55</sup>

It should be noted that Gandhi makes a distinction between "Truth", that is Absolute Truth, and "Truth" being relative truth. Gandhi was not a monotheist, he did not believe in a personal God. Regardless of the devotional elements in his religious belief he was in essence a monist. For him God was an impersonal all-pervading reality ("I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter all lives."<sup>56</sup>). This reality is the Absolute Truth, discoveries on the way to the realization of Truth he called relative truth: "As long as I have not realized this Absolute truth, so long must I hold to the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must meanwhile be my beacon, my shield, my buckler."<sup>57</sup>

While such a quest for truth, the foundation of the satyagrahi lifestyle, leads to a more honest appreciation of shared humanity, or more directly in Erickson's words "to the next step in man's realization of man as one all-human species, and thus to our only chance to transcend what we are",<sup>58</sup> it may, paradoxically, also lead to conflict. So, how is one to decide whose truth is nearer to Truth? The final arbiter in times of such conflict must remain "The 'Still Small Voice' within." We have duty to live up to truth as we see it at the time. This call of the "Voice of Conscience" is the highest call of all, and it must

be obeyed at all costs as this "obedience is the law of our Being".<sup>59</sup>

Because "the human mind works through innumerable media and. . . the evolution of the human mind is not the same for all. . . what may be truth for one may be untruth for another." No one, therefore, "has the right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth". These differences would be greatly reduced with discipline and humility - two very important qualities for satyagraha:

It is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever that there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world . . . Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility.<sup>60</sup>

While truth is the goal, ahimsa or nonviolence becomes the necessary and only means of realizing it. Because of the conflict that may result from the differing conceptions of truth, nonviolence and self-suffering become very important elements in ensuring that coercion does not occur. Gandhi explained this in his testimony before the Disorders Inquiry Committee in 1920 presided over by Lord Hunter. Although this interchange concerned the outbreak of physical violence during mass civil disobedience campaigns it is also applicable to interpersonal conflict where the words "violence" and "nonviolence" take on very broad definitions:

Sir Chimanlal: However honestly a man may strive in his search for truth, his notions of truth may be different from the notions of others. who then is to determine the truth?

Gandhi : The individual himself would determine that.

Sir Chimanlal: Different individuals would have different views as to truth. Would that not lead to confusion?

Gandhi: I do not think so.

Sir Chimanlal: Honestly striving after a truth differs in every case.

Gandhi: That is why the nonviolence part was a necessary corollary. Without that there would be confusion or worse.<sup>61</sup>

Ruskin, a writer who had great impact on Gandhi, claimed in a masterful prose that most of us dislike untruth only when it has an immediate detrimental effect upon us, at other times we may welcome it.<sup>62</sup> Even in its immediate and obvious sense,

that is as alien (i.e. an intentionally deceptive message which is stated), untruth is often harmful in more than the existential sense discussed above. Bok notes that lying harms liars themselves and causes social separations by doing harm to the general level of trust - both being cumulative and hard to reverse. The harm done to the self includes the fear that lies will be discovered and consequently relationships altered. Lying may even alter the liar's own conception of their integrity - the need to shore up lies with further lies may assist in breaking down the psychological barriers against untruth and consequently lower moral standards.<sup>63</sup>

Untruth is often justified on one of two grounds - both of which the Gandhian formulation of truthfulness rejects completely. Firstly :

False notions of propriety or fear of wounding susceptibilities often deter people from saying what they mean and ultimately land them in the shores of hypocrisy. But if nonviolence of thought is to be evolved in individuals or societies or nations, truth has to be told, however harsh or unpopular it may appear to be at the moment.<sup>64</sup>

Secondly, that when dealing with opponents, ends justify the means at least at this level. Lies may aid victory in conflict situation, at any rate opponents "should receive the treatment that their behaviour deserves", and opponents through their actions often forfeit "the ordinary right of being dealt with fairly".<sup>65</sup> Satyagraha, being a search for Truth, rejects these justifications. Its method of nonviolence insists that satyagrahi's "magnify the mole-hills of our errors into mountains and minimize the mountains of others' errors into mole-hills".<sup>66</sup>

The practical steps towards living the truth include the public admission of mistakes. The confession of an error, Gandhi points out, " is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before" but," it is a million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves".<sup>67</sup> Gregg, the noted writer on nonviolent techniques, also believes that if it is necessary for others to point out our mistakes our honesty comes under doubt while public confessions of faults promote trust.<sup>68</sup>

The most important practical way to live the life of truth that satyagraha requires is that "A lover of truth will not appear different from what he is. His thoughts, words and actions will be harmonious."<sup>69</sup> Lanzo Del Vasto, the most prominent

European follower of Gandhi, defined truth in this context at a UNESCO symposium on the position of truth and nonviolence in Gandhi's humanism, by stating that it means

"The outside as the inside." It is obvious that with the inside of others we have no direct contact, but only through the outside. We have contact with the inside only within ourselves. Thus, to live and be in truth means that our appearances and our actions should correspond to what we have within us.<sup>70</sup>

(c) Nonviolence. Violence arise from ignorance or untruth, truth conversely arises out of nonviolence:

. . . without ahimsa (nonviolence) it is not possible to seek and find Truth. Ahimsa and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to distangle and separate them. They are like two sides of a coin or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which the reverse? Nevertheless, ahimsa is the means, Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so ahimsa is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means we are bound to reach the end sooner or later.<sup>71</sup>

The discovery of truth is not dependant upon violence; it is in fact obscured by violence. Iyer, for example, notes that the need for violence is often a sign of insecurity and incomplete conviction and that through it victory becomes more important than truth.<sup>72</sup> If violence is used in a conflict situation the sin and the sinner can no longer be separated.

The influence of the New testament, particularly the Beatitudes, and of Tolstoy's work upon Gandhi's concept of nonviolence is well known. The importance of ahimsa for Gandhi echoes Tolstoy when the latter asks:

. . . how are we to harmonize the conflicts of men, when some consider an evil that others consider to be good, and vice-versa? And so, to consider that an evil which I consider an evil, although my adversary may consider it good, is no answer. There can be but two answers: either we have to find a true and indisputable criterion of what an evil is, or we must not resist evil with violence.<sup>73</sup>

The arguments against violence often revolve around the assumption that it does not work, that there are inherent laws governing violence that prevent it from producing positive results. These may be summarized<sup>74</sup> as follows: (1) Continuity, that is, once you start using violence you cannot escape it. (2) Reciprocity, that is, violence creates, begets and procreates



further violence. On this point Gandhi warned that "to answer brutality with brutality is to admit one's moral and intellectual bankruptcy and it can only start a vicious circle . . ."75 (3) Sameness, that is, it is impossible to distinguish between justified and unjustified violence, between violence that liberates and violence that enslaves. No matter how high the goal, violence reduces all practitioners to the same level. Or again in Gandhi's words "counter-violence can only result in further brutalization of human nature"<sup>76</sup> (4) Violence begets only further violence, that is, the ends grow out of the means used; and (5) violence needs to be justified, but such justification is hypocritical; there is no "pure" violence - violence and hatred are always linked.<sup>77</sup>

All of the above points have their critics among the justifiers of "necessary" violence; however, the third point has been scrutinized by some well-known contemporary writers. Violence has on occasion been viewed as more than unmitigated evil, necessary evil or even as a positive action in certain circumstances. It has been cited as occasionally being as existential necessity. Oppressed persons may have to fight their oppressors for their own autonomy and in this way "life - destroying violence becomes life- giving violence".<sup>78</sup>

This line of argument has been forcefully put by Sartre and Fanon when they discuss the apathy and lack of dignity of those oppressed by colonial exploitation. Such people, in the words of May, "spend their lives as only partially formed human beings". For them "to become alive psychologically and spiritually, some violence is necessary". In other words, powerlessness leads to frustration, which in turn leads to violence and the violence overcomes the powerlessness. Such violence "creates the self", it is "a risking all, committing all, asserting all".<sup>79</sup>

Sartre in his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, states that

no gentleness can efface the marks of violence; only violence itself can destroy them. The native cures himself of colonial neurosis by thrusting out the settlers through force of arms. When his rage boils over, he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself in that he creates himself.

Fanon himself maintains:

At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force; it forces the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair

and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect.<sup>80</sup>

Gandhi, who was instrumental in dismantling the mightiest colonial empire ever known by nonviolent means, could not believe in violence as a "cleansing force"; however, like both Sartre and Fanon, he saw the need for self-respect, going so far as to say that "where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence." The crux of his message was that generally these are not the only two alternatives - "nonviolence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment".<sup>81</sup> To the degree that this further alternative is realized Sartre and Fanon are advocating revenge rather than a means of productively resolving conflicts.

When reviewing Fanon's work, pacifist Quaker writer Barbara Deming remarked that whenever Fanon used the word violence, one could read nonviolence and the meaning would be the same.<sup>82</sup>

For Fanon "cleansing violence" may be a means for providing, or restoring, dignity and self-respect, whereas for Gandhi "nonviolence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property." For nonviolence, however, some self-respect must be present before a conflict situation can be dealt with because only with such self-respect can one be strong enough voluntarily to endure suffering that, it is to be hoped, will cause the change of heart in an opponent, which is the goal of satyagraha: "Individuals or nations, who practice nonviolence, must be prepared to sacrifice . . . their all except their honour".<sup>83</sup>

For Gandhi nonviolence means far more than what is implied by the negative terminology used in English. Ahimsa (for which there appears to be no better translation than "nonviolence") means more than not doing physical harm to an opponent. It embodies a positive concept - it requires doing, not merely the refraining from injury. Ahimsa

is not merely a negative state of harmlessness but it is a positive state of love, of doing good to even the evil-doer. But it does not mean helping the evil-doer to continue the wrong or tolerating it by passive acquiescence. On the contrary, love, the active state of ahimsa requires you to resist the wrong-doer.<sup>84</sup>

Gandhi in fact defined ahimsa as "love" in the Pauline sense, "and yet" it is "something more than the love defined by St. Paul, although I know St. Paul's beautiful definition is good enough for all practical purposes".<sup>85</sup>The principle of ahimsa, therefore, "is hurt by every evil thought, by undue haste, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. It is also violated by holding on to what the world needs".<sup>86</sup>

As a Hindu, Gandhi had a strong sense of the unity of all life. For him nonviolence meant not only the non-injury of human life but of all living things. Injury of living things is bad per se, but in order to eat some such injury must take place. It is an evil but a necessary evil. It is, he believed, also warranted in the case of dangerous snakes, rabid dogs and monkeys "where they have become a menace to the well being of man". To the dismay of orthodox Hindus, he even advocated the killing of cows under certain circumstances and appeared to be in favour of euthanasia in extreme cases of suffering.<sup>87</sup> He also realised the possible need for physical violence directed at other humans in rare cases of self-defence of third parties.

In interpersonal relationships, Gandhi constructed the word ahimsa in such a way that its meaning was very wide. His definition included not treating another with less dignity than was warranted by a shared humanity. Not only does dehumanisation pave the way for violence, but dehumanization is violence.

Violence in a relationship is characterised as relating to another thing, relating, to us Martin Buber's phrases, as "I - It" rather than "I - You". Other people must always be treated as ends rather than as means. As Kaufman points out in the introduction to his new translation of the Buber classic, there are many ways in which we treat each other as means - in business transactions, seeking help or a cure for loneliness, etc. In these situations where the other is a means by the very nature of the interaction, they can nevertheless be treated as an end also. An "I - It" situation can be transformed in this way through politeness, the showing of respect, affection, admiration "or one of the countless attitudes that men call love".<sup>88</sup>

"The way of violence works as a monologue", states Ramana Murti, "But the nature of nonviolence is a dialogue"<sup>89</sup> Violence and injustice, even at this level, are only committed against others to extent that they are not regarded as fully human. The refusal to use violence indicates a respect for both the

personality and moral integrity of the opponent. It aims at establishing a realisation of an existing mutually shared humanity. Satyagraha is capable of, indeed aims at, creating the conditions necessary for such a dialogue in Buber's sense: "There is necessarily a dialogue in nonviolence, because through it you wish to convince the other party and to bring him to discover in you not his adversary, but a man like him."<sup>90</sup>

Gandhi firmly believed that such nonviolence must be lived day by day: "It is not like a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart and it must be an inseparable part of our very being." In other words, it should become a creed rather than a policy, and to be a creed nonviolence "has to be all-pervasive". One "cannot be nonviolent about one activity ... and violent about others". Practicing nonviolence as a policy, however, may be useful in that there is always a hope of the policy developing into a creed:

Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I cannot do a thing, it is possible that I may end by becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I can do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning.<sup>91</sup>

In its practical application this may mean that in a situation where one finds it difficult to actually love an opponent it is still possible to act towards them "on the assumption that all men's lives are of value, and that there is something about any man to be loved, whether we can feel love for him or not".<sup>92</sup>

According to Gandhi, the best training ground for nonviolence is the home:

The alphabet of ahimsa is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere. For the nonviolent person the whole world is one family.

It should begin "with our children, elders, neighbours and friends. We have to overlook the so-called blemishes of our friends and neighbours and never forgive our own." He further points out that "The very first step in nonviolence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility, tolerance, loving kindness", and adds quite emphatically that "Nonviolence is impossible without humility."<sup>93</sup> Dhawan notes further that the connection between occupation and nonviolence should not be overlooked, that "one must engage in occupations that involve the least

violence". These "occupations should be fundamentally free from violence and should involve no exploitation of others."<sup>94</sup>

(d) Creative self-suffering.

...the individual seldom changes his life merely in accordance with the indications of reason, but as a rule, in spite of the new meaning and the new aims indicated by reason, continues to live his former life and changes it only when his life becomes entirely contradictory to his conscience, and therefore agonizing ...<sup>95</sup>

With these words Tolstoy encapsulates one of the reasons that self-suffering is so important for satyagraha. The role of self-suffering is to break a deadlock, to "cut through the rationalised defenses of the opponent."<sup>96</sup> "Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding", because an "appeal of reason is more to the head but penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding of man".<sup>97</sup>

Pelton claims that this idea of self-suffering "melting the heart" of the opponent is a gross oversimplification, that it may even "elicit a negative reaction towards the victim".<sup>98</sup> Gandhi, however, insisted on retaining a faith in human nature that maintained that such a process does work. Gandhi warned that the suffering or hardship undertaken had to be functional, he "was not in favour of martyrs or suffering not caused by acts conducive to the solution of the present conflict or future conflicts".<sup>99</sup> "Let us all be brave enough to die the death of a martyr", intones Gandhi, while warning in the same breath that no one should "lust for martyrdom". The opponent must not be encouraged to act against the satyagrahi to bring on self-suffering because "brutalising the adversary can but make his conversion the more difficult". This brutalisation must be avoided so that the opponent is not compelled to inflict punishment - "the secret of satyagraha", according to Gandhi, "lies in not tempting the wrong-doer to do wrong".<sup>100</sup>

Gandhi's civil disobedience campaigns generated many instances which appeared to be eliciting the negative reaction Pelton warned against. However, eventually a positive attitude change was often forced on the attacker. Negley Farson, a correspondent for the Chicago Daily News, reported in 1930 one such incident he was eye-witness to. A large and powerful Sikh leader was offering no resistance to a savage lathi (steel tipped bamboo stick) beating:

He was being struck on the head. I stood about six feet from him and watched. He was hit until his turban came undone and his topknot was exposed. A few more blows and his hair came undone and fell down over his face.... A few more and the blood began to drip off his dangling black hair. He stood there with his hands at his sides. Then a particularly heavy blow and he fell forward on his face.....I could hardly hold myself back..... I watched him with my heart in my mouth. [The police officer] drew back his arm for a final swing.... and he dropped his hands down by his side. "It is no use", he said, turning to me with half an apologetic grin. "You can't hit a bugger when he stands up to you like that". He gave the Sikh a mock salute and walked off.<sup>101</sup>

Such action, explains Gandhi, " does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil -doer... it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant." Self-suffering aims to demonstrate the sincerity of the sufferer as an appeal to the opponent and also aims to purify the sufferer by proving their own sincerity to themselves. Gandhi mentions both these practical and existential benefits of self-suffering (in this case when talking of the extreme position of a nonviolent state involved in a violent international conflict ) when he says:

Suffering injury in one's own person is .... of the essence of nonviolence and it is the chosen substitute of violence to others. It is not because I value life low that I can countenance with joy thousands voluntarily losing their lives for satyagraha, but because I know that it results in the long run in the least loss of life, and, what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice.<sup>102</sup>

Both the sufferer and the opponent are transformed. The opponents by being forced to confront their views on the nature of the truth of the given situation and possibly by being converted, and the sufferer by being morally enriched in notcompromising fundamental principles.

Even where self-suffering does not touch the conscience of the opponent it can have objective benefits in a conflict situation, especially in social conflicts. The opponent may be converted indirectly (or coerced by nonviolence) if the endured suffering moves public opinion to the side of the satyagrahi(s). Gandhi has on occasion claimed that "the method of reaching the heart is to awaken public opinion".<sup>103</sup>

Care must be taken that self-suffering does not change satyagraha into duragraha through coercion or violence

against an opponent. Self-suffering by an adult against a child for instance can become moral vindictiveness and thus "do violence" to children by forcing "on them decisions for which they are not ready". Erikson (pointing an accusing finger at Gandhi) explains that nonviolence may not be enough:

the possibility that here self-suffering could harbour the despotism of a cruel (of "cruelly kind") father who, by his self-suffering hurts ever so much more unfathomably than an outright angry one; whereupon the children feel punished, if not "crushed" - but by no means persuaded.

Care must be taken to ensure that "self-abnegation become self-affirmation and a tool of truth rather than a weapon of revenge".<sup>104</sup>

Besides the hoped for efficacy of self-suffering to appeal to the reason of an opponent it has one other very important function - "if this kind of force is used in a course that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes".<sup>105</sup>

Finally, it should be remembered that self-suffering is a necessary part per se of any nonviolent action, because, as Sharp points out, it is the price paid for maintaining resistance in a nonviolent way.<sup>106</sup>

(e) Means and ends. Alinsky, in a cynical appraisal of Gandhi as a leader of nonviolence movements, asks rhetorically whether Gandhi's stance on means and ends "was not simply the only intelligent, realistic, expedient program which Gandhi had at his disposal". Showing little understanding of the central importance of the relationship of means to ends as an essential principle of Gandhi's thought, he claims that if Gandhi "had guns he might well have used them in an armed revolution against the British which would have been in keeping with the tradition of revolutions for freedom through force". In total opposition to Gandhi, he claims that the real question is not "Does the end justify the means?" but whether this particular end justifies this particular means.<sup>107</sup>

Along with Huxley, who asserted that " Good ends . . . can only be achieved by the employment of appropriate means", and that "The end cannot justify the means, for the simple and obvious reason that the means employed determine the nature of the ends produced,"<sup>108</sup> Gandhi maintained:

The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree: and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.

The say "Means are after all means". I would say, "means are after all everything". As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between means and ends.

....if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself.<sup>109</sup>

These principles for Gandhi were not merely a reflection of the Hindu belief in Karma . The law of reaping what you sow applied as much in this life as it affected future lives :

There is a law of nature that a thing can be retained by the same means by which it has been acquired. A thing acquired by violence can be retained by violence alone...<sup>110</sup>

Three days before his death, in an interview with Vincent Sheean, Gandhi claimed: "No good act can produce an evil result . Evil means, even for a good end, produce evil results".<sup>111</sup>

Huxley notes that the almost universal desire to believe in short cuts to Utopia makes us less than dispassionate when looking at means "which we know quite certainly to be abominable".<sup>112</sup> Satyagraha, being a search for truth requires such dispassion, and being nonviolent insists that satyagrahis do more than merely focus on the means of an opponent" and condemn him for his inhumanity" while focusing only on their own ends and reveling in their righteousness.<sup>113</sup>

Quoting the line "All men desire peace, but very few desire those things which make for peace" from Thomas A Kempis' Imitation of Christ, Huxley adds: "the thing that makes for peace above all others is the systematic practice in all human relationships of nonviolence." It is the primary means to this important end, and echoing Gandhi he adds that it is also the primary means to the most important end of Truth:

If violence is answered by violence, the result is a physical struggle. Now, a physical struggle inevitably arouses in the minds of those directly and even indirectly concerned in it emotions of hatred, fear, rage and resentment. In the heat of conflict all scruples are thrown to the winds, and all the habits of forbearance and humaneness, slowly and laboriously formed during generations of civilized living, are forgotten. Nothing matters any more except victory. And when at last victory comes to one or other of the parties, this final outcome



of physical struggle bears no necessary relation to the right and wrong of the case; nor in most cases, does it provide any lasting settlement to the dispute.<sup>114</sup>

If techniques employed by Satyagraha are used as means to an end in a conflict situation, that is, to secure victory, the process becomes one of *duragraha*. The users lose their integrity and purity of intention and the "campaign is essentially futile even if victorious in some superficial way".<sup>115</sup> Gandhi made it clear that he believed his energies had to be devoted to looking after the purity of the means rather than to seeing if they would be the most expedient way of achieving the immediate goal:

I feel that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means. The method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest.<sup>116</sup>

In line with these principles Gandhi called off a major civil disobedience campaign in early 1922 after twenty-two policemen were murdered in the town of Chauri Chaura. He had pledged that the campaign would be nonviolent and this incident was the final straw forcing him to totally reverse the agitation against the British.<sup>117</sup> He did not mind that the opponent had the opportunity to "glory in our humiliation and so-called defeat". It was better, he claimed, "to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of denial of our oath and to sin against God".<sup>118</sup> Fischer noted the significance of this move (the rationale being one that Alinsky would, it appears, not understand), when he remarked that had Gandhi not been nonviolent by creed he could have championed an uprising that may have driven the British from India.

But Gandhi would not purchase independence at the price of national blood drenching; a free India born in murder would bear the mark on her forehead for decades. He sacrificed the end, doubtful in any case at the time, because bad means would poison it.<sup>119</sup>

Means can be chosen merely by deciding to live by certain rules. If the ethics of these rules are not shared by others, conflicts are bound to arise. When dealing with these conflicts the principles with which the satyagrahis started still serve as guidelines for their actions.<sup>120</sup> Huxley suggests that the golden rule to be kept in mind when ends and the means to achieve them are chosen is to ask whether the result will be to transform the society to which they are applied "into a just,

peaceable, morally and intellectually progressive community of non-attached and responsible men and women".<sup>121</sup>

(f) Reflection of coercion. Because perceptions of truth vary from person to person and no one can be absolutely certain that their perception is the correct one, Gandhi cautions against the use of coercion. He makes it clear that "there is no such thing as compulsion in the scheme of nonviolence. Reliance has to be placed upon the ability to reach the intellect and the heart"; and makes the policy statements that "nonviolence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion", and that "coercion is an offspring of violence. Conversion is the fruit of nonviolence and love."<sup>122</sup>

Nonviolent coercion is not to be seen as a just means of settling conflicts because it not only militates against the moral development of the parties to the conflict, or because it fails to express the respect which nonviolence claims for an opponent, but also because it does nothing to clarify the Truth, to confirm the justice of the objectives sought.<sup>123</sup>In short, it does not encourage a dialectical process.

The problem of deciding just what coercion is, however, is not an easy task. It can be defined as the use of force, including moral force, to compel an opponent to act in a way that is contrary to either their will or judgement.

Despite his insistence on a principle of non-coercion, and on a broad definition for the term, at times Gandhi himself was guilty of it. Some of his interpreters, for example Bondurant, claim that as a method satyagraha itself contains a positive element of coercion. She points out that the tools of non-cooperation, boycott and strike, which can be used in satyagraha, do involve elements of compulsion which may effect a change on the part of the opponent which was originally against their will.<sup>124</sup>Case meanwhile asserts that satyagraha is "explicitly nonviolent and implicitly coercive",<sup>125</sup> and Shridharani likewise claims that satyagraha does contain an aspect of coercion, albeit in a modified form, which he prefers to call the compelling element.<sup>126</sup> Occasionally, such distinctions are difficult to make, and the question of just where to draw the line and remain within the spirit of satyagraha is equally perplexing. Naess attempts this task in the following hypothetical situation:

Suppose, for a moment, that M carries P against his will into the streets where there is a riot, and that as a consequence of what he sees P changes some of his attitudes and opinions.

Was the change coerced? We suggest that the change of P's opinions or attitudes was not coerced, but that P himself was coerced into seeing something that caused the change. The distinction is relevant, because satyagraha is certainly incompatible with coerced changes of opinions.<sup>127</sup>

The most illuminating examples in this area also gave rise to some of the greatest controversies in Gandhi's life, that is, to his use of the fast. Gandhi held that "fasting for the sake of personal gain is nothing short of intimidation". A fast amounts to coercion or undue influence if an opponent in a conflict gives in because they did not want the person fasting to die rather than because they had been converted. In such situations Gandhi unhesitatingly advocates resistance to such undue influence. He claimed, in keeping with his belief that self-suffering in an unjust cause should affect only the sufferer, that "there is no occasion...at any time"<sup>128</sup> for yielding to the pressure of such a fast.

Many of Gandhi's own fasts, for example his last, in January 1948 for communal peace, had no selfish motive but did have a coercive element. The leaders of the warring religious communities gave assurances of peace on Gandhi's terms because they did not want the death of the Mahatma on their hands. In some of his other fasts the element of coercion was even more blatant. The 1918 fast during the Ahmedabad textile mill workers' strike upheld the strikers' resolve and pressured the owners to give in to their demands. The two fasts in Yervada prison during 1932 saw the Government give in on the question of separate electorates for Harijans and the prison officials give in on a stand concerning the type of work prisoners could do. In 1939 a fast against the civil liberties record of the ruler of Rajkot forced government intervention, not the conversion of the ruler. Regardless of these doubtful examples, Gandhi has warned against a general use of this weapon in satyagraha.<sup>129</sup>

Coercion very rarely leads to conversion. Gandhi himself had "observed that things done under the pressure of a fast have been undone after the fast is over. If such a thing happens it would be a tragedy of the highest degree." If a fast, however, convinces an opponent and converts them by forcing them to think about the issues, thus enabling them to see the justice in the position of the person undergoing the fast, then that is not coercion. This outcome cannot, however, be predicted without fail and so Gandhi warns that such measures can only be used against those who are near and dear and then "not to extort

rights but to reform him, as when a son fasts for a father who drinks". Because the fast can so easily become a weapon of violence Gandhi warns against its use "unless it is used by one skilled in the art".<sup>130</sup>

Coercion in any form is not in keeping with the spirit of satyagraha; moral coercion, however, is always preferable to physical coercion. It can galvanise public support and has a greater chance of leading eventually to conversion than has physical coercion. It is generally also more indicative of sincerity than a mere reliance on strength would be.

(g) Fearlessness. A certain amount of courage is obviously necessary to endure self-suffering and to Gandhi it was an axiom that "nonviolence and cowardice are contradictory terms". The path of true nonviolence", he points out, "requires much more courage than violence"; however, he firmly believed that it was possible for a violent person to some day become nonviolent, there being no such hope for cowards. The possession of arms was, for Gandhi, a sign of fear and cowardice,<sup>131</sup>and cowards could never be moral.

Along with his famous dictum that violence was preferable to cowardice, Gandhi explained that, although "violence is not lawful, when it is offered in self-defence or for the defence of the defenceless, it is an act of bravery far better than cowardly submission". In fact:

If you feel humiliated, you will be justified in slapping the bully in the face or taking whatever action you might deem necessary to vindicate your self-respect. The use of force, in the circumstances, would be the natural consequence if you are not a coward. But if you have assimilated the nonviolent spirit, there should be no feeling of humiliation in you.<sup>132</sup> An atmosphere of fear and impotence makes people helpless even to accomplish the simplest of things. Without fearlessness the growth of other noble qualities becomes difficult - "how can one seek Truth, or cherish love, without fearlessness", asks Gandhi rhetorically. The courage that satyagraha calls for is not dependent on physical strength, "it is not a matter of muscle, it is a matter of the heart. The toughest muscle has been known to tremble before an imaginary fear".<sup>133</sup>

How then is one to find this element of fearlessness? Even trying to be fearless out of a policy rather than a creed can work; however, care must be taken that it does not become an emasculating cloak for weakness. In the end such courage must

come from "determined and constant endeavour ....by cultivating self-confidence,134 and "from an indomitable will".

[Adopted from a book written by Thomas Weber]

## Sources

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2. Gregg, The Power of Nonviolence, p. 109.
3. Naess, Gandhi and Group Conflict, p. 32.
4. Young India, 23 March 1921.
5. Erikson, Gandhi's Truth, p. 412.
6. Sharp, The Politics of Nonviolent Action, p. 706. For a detailed analysis of "accommodation" and "nonviolent coercion" see pp. 733-55.
7. Pelton, The Psychology of Nonviolence, p. 224.
8. Satyagraha will not always be successful. As with all other methods of conflict resolution it will have its share of failures, however Gandhi firmly believed that the greater the degree of nonviolence exhibited by the satyagrahi the greater the chances of success. In the case of the theoretically totally nonviolent person it would invariably succeed - "with no rancour left behind, and in the end the enemies., converted into friends". Harijan, 12 November 1938.
9. Gandhi, An Autobiography, p. 230.
10. Bondurant, Conquest of Violence, pp. vi-vii, 192, 195.
11. Sheean, Lead, Kindly Light, p. 118.
12. Harijan, 25 March 1939, 29 April 1939, and Young India, 19 March 1925.
13. Horsburgh, Mahatma Gandhi, p. 36. See also Horsburgh, Nonviolence and Aggression, p. 161.
14. Harijan, 15 April 1933. Conversion of an opponent may take a far greater time than bringing a conflict to a head through violence. Attempts may be met by unresponsiveness. Therefore patience and understanding are two important qualities that need be cultivated. For further discussion of this topic see Horsburgh "Nonviolence and Impatience", Gandhi Marg.
15. Bondurant, "Satyagraha Versus Duragraha", P. 101. Gandhi, p. 101
16. Adapted from Nasess, Gandhi and Group Conflict, PP. 70-84.
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20. Pelton, The Psychology of Nonviolence, P. 86.
21. Ibid., p. 221.
22. See Shridharani, War Without Violence, P. 211.
23. Young India, 19 March 1925.
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26. Young India, 4 June 1925.
27. See Pelton, The Psychology of Nonviolence, pp. 22-5.
28. Young India, 26 December 1924.
29. Young India, 6 February 1930.

30. See Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, p. 115; Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 146; *Young India*, 16 April 1931; and Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, P. 102.
31. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, pp. 197, 220. According to Gandhi, however, "essentials" or "eternal principles" were to be defended unto death. *Harijan*, 5 September 1936.
32. Naess, *Gandhi and Group Conflict*, P. 104.
33. Horsburgh, *Nonviolence and Aggression*, P. 36.
34. Bose, *Studies in Gandhism*, P. 116.
35. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 247.
36. Naess, *Gandhi and Group Conflict*, p. 104.
37. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 295.
38. Adapted from Naess, *Gandhi and the Nuclear Age*, pp. 60-2.
39. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, p. 11.
40. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, P.
41. Elsewhere Gregg points out that this induced loss of self-confidence is not to be interpreted in the sense that the opponent becomes despondent - "Nonviolent resistance does not break the opponent's will but alters it; does not destroy his confidence, enthusiasm and hope but transfers them to a finer purpose." *Ibid.*, P- 76.
42. *Young India*, 8 October 1925.
43. *Young India*, 4 August 1920.
44. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, P. 131.
45. *Harijan*, 10 June 1939.
46. *Harijan*, 16 May 1936.
47. Gandhi's paraphrase of Ruskin's *Unto This Last* in *The Selected Works*, vol. IV, p. 46; *Harijan*, 11 August 1940, and 5 May 1946.
48. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, p. 194.
49. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 147.
50. Kelley and Stahelski, "Social Interaction Basis...", p. 89.
51. *Ibid.*
52. Quoted in Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 156.
53. Satya means mote man a narrow interpretation of the English word - it includes the connotations "real, sincere, existent, pure, good, effectual, valid". Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit - English Dictionary*, quoted in Iyer, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
54. See *Harijan*, 21 September 1934; Desai, *The Diary of Mahadev Desai*, p. 249; and *Young India*, 31 December 1931.
55. Letter to P. G. Mathew, 9 July 1932, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi (CWMG)*, vol. L, p. 175.
56. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 157.
57. *Young India*, 4 December 1924.
58. Gandhi, *An Autobiography*, p. xiii.
59. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth*, p. 413
60. *Young India*, 4 August 1920; *Harijan*, 24 November 1933; and Gandhi, *God is Truth*, pp. 33-4.
61. *Harijan*, 24 November 1933, and *Young India*, 31 December 1931.
62. Quoted in Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, vol. 1, p. 282.
63. See Ruskin, "The Lamp of Truth", p. 64.
64. Bok, *Lying*, pp. 13, 24-5.
65. *Harijan*, 19 December 1936.
66. Bok, *Lying*, p. 135-6.
67. Quoted in Bhattacharyya, *Evolution of the Political Philosophy of Gandhi*, p. 295.

68. Young India 16 February 1922.
69. Gregg, *The Power of Nonviolence*, p. 140.
70. Quoted in Desai, *The Diary*, p. 249.
71. Quoted in Mahadevan (ed.), *Truth and Nonviolence*, p. 60. Shukla notes that of "Gandhi repeatedly asked men and women to appear as they are and never let it be said them that they 'are not what they seem'. This naturalness or absence of pose, too, was, in his view, a part of truthfulness". Shukla, *Gandhi's View of Life*, p. 3.
72. Gandhi, *From Yeravda Mandir*, p. 6.
73. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 249.
74. Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, p. 55.
75. Adapted from Ellul, *Violence*, pp. 94-104.
76. Harijan, 1 June 1947.
77. Harijan, 20 October 1940.
78. Ellul, *Violence*, p. 103-4.
79. May, *Power and Innocence*, p. 96. Curle makes the important point that while "some may maintain that violence ennoble the perpetrator ....no one can say that in regard to the product of his violence - a man dead or maimed. If peace signifies a condition in which the potential evolution of each individual is more highly realized, then violence is its antithesis". Curle, *Making Peace*, p.200.
80. May, *Power and Innocence*, pp. 187-8, 192-3.
81. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 18, 94.
82. Young India, 11 August 1920.
83. See also Deming, *Revolution and Equilibrium*, pp. 194-221.
84. Harijan, 5 September 1936.
85. Young India, 25 August 1920. Gandhi adds: "It is no nonviolence if we merely love those that love us. It is nonviolence only when we love those that hate us." From a private letter, dated 31 December 1934, quoted in Bose, *Selections from Gandhi*, p. 17.
86. Harijan, 14 March 1936. St. Paul's definition states that "Love is patient and kind, it is not jealous or conceited or proud; love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable; love does not keep a record of wrongs; love is not happy with evil, but is happy with the truth. Love never gives up; and its faith, hope and patience never fail". 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
87. Gandhi, *From Yeravda Mandir*, p. 5.
88. See Gandhi, *Ashram Observances in Action*, p. 39; Harijan, 5 May 1946, 9 April 1946, and 20 March 1937; and Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy*, p. 65.
89. Buber, *I and Thou*, pp. 16-17.
90. Ramana Murti, "Buber's Dialogue and Gandhi's Satyagraha", p. 608.
91. Eteki-Mboumoua in Mahadevan (ed.), *Truth and Nonviolence*, p. 135.
92. Young India, 12 August 1926; Harijan, 12 October 1935, and 1 September 1940.
93. Deming, *Revolution and Equilibrium*, p. 204.
94. Harijan, 21 July 1940, 18 January 1942, 2 April 1938, and 6 May 1939. Besides humility nonviolence also requires enterprise. Gandhi notes: "In order to test ourselves we should learn to dare danger and death, mortify the flesh, and acquire the capacity to endure all manner of hardship." Harijan, 1 September 1940.
95. Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy*, p. 69. See also Lanza del Vasto, *Warriors of Peace*, pp. 23-4.
96. Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, p. 117.

97. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, p. 228.
98. *Young India*, 19 March 1925; and Gandhi quoted in Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, p. 709.
99. Pelton, *The Psychology of Nonviolence*, p. 143.
100. Naess, *Gandhi and Group Conflict*, p. 85.
101. Quoted in Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy*, p. 143.
102. Farson, "Indian Hate Lyric", p. 144.
103. *Young India*, 11 August 1920, and 8 October 1925.
104. *Young India*, 19 March 1925; see also *Young India*, 8 October 1929
105. Erikson, *Gandhi's Truth*, pp. 242, 248-9.
106. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, p. 79.
107. Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, p. 709.
108. Alinsky, *Rules for Radicals*, pp. 24, 38-9. See also Lewis, *The Case Against Pacifism*, pp. 23-41.
109. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 9.
110. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 71; *Young India*, 17 July 1924, and *Harijan*, 11 February 1939.
111. Gandhi, *Satyagraha in South Africa*, p. 306.
112. Sheean, *Lead, Kindly Light*, p. 197.
113. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 25.
114. Pelton, *The Psychology of Nonviolence*, P. 44.
115. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 138-9.
116. Naess, *Gandhi and the Nuclear Age*, p. 59.
117. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 17 September 1933.
118. See Gandhi's letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, dated 19 February 1922. CWMG, vol. XX, p. 435.
119. *Young India*, 16 February 1922.
120. Fischer, *Gandhi*, p. 71.
121. See Horsburgh, *Nonviolence and Aggression*, pp. 49-51.
122. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 32.
123. See *Young India*, 23 September 1926; *Harijan*, 23 July 1938, 25 March 1939; and *Young India*, 26 November 1931.
124. See Horsburgh, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 33.
125. Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, p. 9.
126. Case, *Non-Violent Coercion*, p. 379.
127. Shridharani, *War Without Violence*, p. 264.
128. Naess, *Gandhi and Group Conflict*, p. 92.
129. *Young India*, 30 September 1926; *Harijan*, 6 May 1933, and 25 January 1948.
130. For an uncomplimentary analysis of Gandhi's fasts see Raman, *What Does Gandhi Want?* pp. 107-13.
131. *Harijan*, 25 January 1948; *Young India*, 1 May 1924; and *Harijan*, 1 March 1939.
132. *Young India*, 31 October 1929; 4 November 1926, 16 June 1927, 31 October 1929; *Harijan*, 15 July 1939, 4 August 1946.
133. *Harijan*, 27 October 1946 and 9 March 1940.
134. *Young India*, 6 June 1929; Gandhi, *From Yeravda Mandir*, p. 19; and *Young India*, 16 July 1931.
135. *Harijan*, 2 April 1938; Gandhi, *From Yeravda Mandir*, p. 19; and *Young India*, 11 August 1920.