GANDHI AND THE ETHIC OF ACTIVE NON-VIOLENCE[1]

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Abstract

This paper argues that Gandhi's active non-violence is an ethic that (a) resists the use of illegitimate violence to solve conflict and (b) seeks to remove the material and moral conditions that engender conflict. It gets its ultimate strength from "soul-force" as Gandhi calls it. Its effectiveness depends on the deep spiritual life of its practitioners, the respect for human rights and social justice. A society can be governed by non-violent means only if the vast majority of its members are already non-violent in their civic behavior. Gandhi does not advocate radical pacifism as he recognizes the right of self-defense, and the legitimacy of the constitutionally limited state. The reduction, not the elimination, of violence is its general policy.

Mahatma Gandhi is universally admired for his philosophy of non-violence. At the same time the meaning of his non-violence is not always well understood. Some identify him as a radical pacifist while others dismiss him as being too impractical. I argue that he is not a pacifist or even a conscientious objector but a moderate realist who firmly believed that the ethic of non-violence was not only practical but also necessary for lasting peace in the world.

Let me begin with a brief description of Gandhian non-violence. It is an ethic that disposes one (a) to resist social and political violence by peaceful means, and (b) to take positive

measures to remove the material and moral conditions that foster violence. As you can see, there are two aspects to this ethic. The first stresses the need to resist violent social and political practices and institutions. It is not enough personally to abstain from acts of violence; it is necessary to take steps to resist violence wherever it is found, whether in society or in the State. In this respect Gandhian non-violence is different from Buddhist non-violence, as traditionally understood, which is preeminently the ethic of the monk and the nun, who are in search of *nirvana*. The Buddhist practitioner of non-violence would rather leave the active world of politics and social reform for the safety of the monastery, being content to focus on self-perfection. Gandhian non-violence, by contrast, is the ethic of the citizen whose end is not only the well being of the individual but also the good of society taken as a whole. And the good of society requires active, non-violent resistance to violence. The most well known form of such resistance is civil-disobedience or *satyagraha*.

The second aspect of Gandhian non-violence is that it is not content with offering resistance. Resistance is necessary but not sufficient. In addition to resistance you need to take positive steps to reform society and polity. That is to say civil disobedience should be matched by social reform. This insistence on social reform distinguishes Gandhi's civil disobedience from the other well-known forms of civil-disobedience, such as those of Socrates and Henry David Thoreau. The great Socratic motto was that it was better to suffer violence than to inflict it. According to Plato's *Apology*,[2] Socrates accepted the punishment meted out to him by Athens, but it is not known whether he took any measures that would reform Athenian society. Likewise, Thoreau[3] gladly went to jail to protest against the policies of the government, but he did not initiate any social reform movement in the United States. Gandhi however not only went to prison, he also launched major social and political reform movements. In his view civil-

disobedience and social reform were two sides of the same coin. As he put it, civil disobedience without social reform would be like a paralyzed hand attempting to lift a spoon. We may compare Gandhi's approach to that of the Good Samaritan: far from ignoring the victims of violence, they both took active measures to help them and to alleviate their suffering.

The Underlying Philosophy[4]

There is a philosophy underlying Gandhi's non-violence. To begin with, there is a specific view of human nature, society and the State. Humans in Gandhi's philosophy are body-soul creatures. The body-soul combination, or embodied existence is the key point. The body or the materiality of our existence is the root of violence. The soul, in contrast, is the source of non-violence, of sociability, compassion, natural justice and spiritual awareness. In the embodied existence, both body-force (*sharer bal*) and soul-force (*atma bal*) are at work. The ego, which is the agent of material interests, is in potential conflict with the soul, which is the agent of ethical principles. The ego is the source of radical individualism, while the soul is the source of sociability. There is therefore an existential struggle between the passions of the ego and the aspirations of the soul. How to resolve this inner struggle is the key to the ethics of non-violence.

This inner struggle should be solved in terms of the aspirations of the soul. At the same time, Gandhi accepts violence as a fact of life, though not as its norm. And he is very clear on this. "All life in flesh exists by some violence. The world is bound by a chain of destruction . . . violence is an inherent necessity of life in the body. None while in the flesh can thus be entirely free from violence because one never completely renounces the will to live."[5] "No doubt destruction in some form or other is inevitable. Life lives upon life. I cannot become wholly

free of violence as long as the feeling that this body is mine."[6] That is to say, perfect non-violence is not possible in the embodied existence; it is possible only in the disembodied state. Accordingly, what his ethics seeks to achieve is not the total elimination of violence but the reduction of its intensity and frequency.

That is why the ethics of Gandhian non-violence does not require the absence of all forms of violence. That is why it is compatible with the exercise of legitimate self-defense. While we have an obligation not to use violence against others, we also have a duty to protect ourselves from the violence of those who do not act according to the requirements of sociability. This also applies to the State. It has the right and the duty to provide for internal order and external security. But the State that Gandhi approves of is morally bound by the principles of ethics or natural *dharma*. According to these principles, the State may not exceed the limits of natural justice. It may not assume absolute or totalitarian power to itself. When it assumes such power it becomes aggressive and oppressive, and citizens have the right and the duty to disobey it through non-violent civil disobedience.

It is crucial to emphasize that Gandhi's ethic of non-violence grants the State the right to self-defense even by military means. This too is consistent with the natural necessities of embodied existence. No doubt this right has to be exercised within the bounds of *dharma* or natural moral law and international conventions. His positive attitude towards the State makes him a moderate realist, and not at all a utopian. In this respect he differs from Leo Tolstoy. Tolstoy, as is well known, was a radical pacifist and a utopian, who denied the legitimacy of the State. According to him those who wanted to live a non-violent life had no option but to withdraw from the State and retreat into small self-contained communes—like the Dukabhors.

Gandhi by contrast accepts the State: instead of withdrawing from the State he wanted to struggle for its betterment.

There is no question that Gandhi took the need for self-defense very seriously. For evidence we need only to refer to his formal statement on this matter at the Constitutional Conference (the Second Round Table Conference) held in London in 1931 . . . "I think that a nation that has no control over her own defense forces and over her external policy is hardly a responsible nation. Defense, its Army, is to a nation the very essence of its existence, and if a nation's defense is controlled by an outside agency, no matter how friendly it is, then that nation is certainly not responsibly governed." It was his "dream" and "ambition," he said, to have an India that was capable of defending itself from external aggression. "That is really my ambition, and therefore, I say I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of Defense. I refuse to deceive myself that I am going to embark upon responsible government although I cannot control my Defense."[7]

Let me very briefly sum up the philosophy underlying Gandhi's non-violence. It involves a definite view of human nature: humans are body-soul composites. Though the soul is guiding principle of life, the body has its own legitimate claims. In the embodied state there is a struggle between the body and the soul, material interests and moral duties, which should be resolved according to the principles of natural sociability, justice, and compassion. The State is a necessary institution, and its acts are legitimate so long as they are in harmony with the principles of dharma or natural moral law. When illegitimate, the citizen has the right and the obligation to disobey and to take such steps as are necessary to reform society.

Two Major Challenges

Here we must consider the two great challenges that Gandhi's philosophy faces today. They are radical secularism and radical Islamism. I distinguish between radical secularism and moderate secularism: the one is totally opposed to religion and a spiritual vision of reality, whereas the other is compatible with them. The source of radical secularism can be traced to the 17th century, to the philosopher Thomas Hobbes.[8] He eliminated the soul from his scientific analysis of human nature, and with it, natural sociability was also eliminated. Humans are basically animated bodies, led by hostility towards one another. They are asocial, and in their natural condition, are in a state of war of all against all. Reason, considered as the slave of the passions, replaces reason considered as capable of transcending passions. In such a society only the greater violence of the State can keep peace between naturally violent human beings. This violent view of life is reinforced by later thinkers such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and the social Darwinians. According to the radical secularists, human progress depends on revolutionary violence. The French Revolution with its reign of terror, the Russian Revolution and its Gulags, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution (in which reportedly about 70 million perished)[9] are regrettable but necessary means of human progress. Violence must be judged by the good it produces, and not by its moral evil. The end always justifies the means.

There is a paradox in the radical secularist position: on the one hand, violence is taken to be natural; and on the other hand, it is regarded as irrational, something to be restrained by the greater violence of the State. There is no place for spiritual values in the restraining of violence. And this is because radical secularism has removed the soul from the human equation. The physical brain has replaced the soul. Hobbes, Marx, Freud, and Darwin, inaugurated a vision of the universe that is inherently violent.

The challenge from modern *jihadism* is different and in one respect even more serious. It is more serious because it is based on specific notions of God and spirituality. To put it bluntly, it is based on the fundamentalist interpretation of the will of Allah, as revealed to the prophet Muhammad. According to that revelation, as a condition for peace, humanity as a whole should accept Allah's will. All those who resist it will be dealt with according to the requirements of *jihad*. There are of course two kinds of jihad: the first is called inner *jihad*, which is basically individual spiritual self-improvement. The second kind is called the outer *jihad*, which is a form of warfare directed against those who threaten or flout Allah's will.

I mention the challenge to Gandhi from modern *jihadism*, not only because of its contemporary relevance but also because of its historic connection. The chief philosopher of modern *jihad* was Abul Ala Mawdudi, an Indian Muslim and a contemporary of Gandhi.[10] In his early days he was an admirer of Gandhi, having written a short laudatory biography of the Mahatma. But he underwent a sudden religious conversion which led him to embrace militant Islam. His treatise *Jihad In Islam*, published in India in 1927, remains to this day the universal reference book of modern *jihadism*.[11] Mawdudi became convinced that Gandhi and the Hindus in general posed a threat to Islam and therefore had to be opposed. Lasting peace could be reached only if the whole of India was converted into Islam.

The frightening challenge of *jihadism* comes from its spirituality, and from Mawdudi's interpretation of Muslim theology. Whereas Gandhi argues that God is Truth and therefore can be reached only under conditions of freedom, Mawdudi argues that those who oppose God would have to pay a price here and now. It may well take the form of *jihad*. Gandhi's position, on this matter, is not unlike that articulated recently by Pope Benedict XVI in his Regensburg

address. The Pope spoke of the incompatibility of God and the Logos on the one hand and violence on the other.

Briefly, Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence faces two formidable challenges. The radical secularists challenge its notion of spirituality—on the ground that it is ineffective and only the greater violence of the State is capable of managing violence. And the *jihadists* challenge it on the ground that *jihad* is a legitimate form of defending Allah's will.

Four Ways of Making the World Less Violent

Gandhi's philosophy outlines four ways for making the world less violent. They are the promotion of (1) human rights, (2) social justice, (3) religious pluralism, and (4) a deep spiritual life.

The violation of human rights is perhaps the most prolific source of violence in the world today. The main culprit here is the modern State, the symbol of institutional and structural violence. I am not talking about the liberal democratic State, which is the least violent of all the state-forms available to us. I am talking about States that are totalitarian or authoritarian in character, military dictatorships, states that are based on communist, fascist, quasi-theocratic, ethnic or Islamist ideologies. Gandhi's non-violence became famous because it developed the non-violent techniques of *satyagraha* or civil disobedience of resisting the State. He developed them at the turn of the 20th century against the State in South Africa, and later against the colonial State in India. His example has been followed by others in other countries, most notably in the United States by Martin Luther King, Jr..

If we look around the world today, we notice that it is the denial of human rights that is at the root of most instances of violence. And these rights include the right to religious freedom,

freedom of conscience, economic liberty, social equality, and civil liberty. But Gandhi's defense of human rights is quite different from the defense of the same by radical libertarians. Radical libertarians place rights above duty, whereas Gandhi considers rights and duties as correlated. According to him there can be no rights without their corresponding duties. If I have a right to be protected from violence, I also have a duty not to inflict violence on others. And so on with the other elements of human rights. In liberal societies, however, such as Canada, the emphasis is primarily upon rights. And unless the emphasis is placed on both rights and duties, there is little chance of reducing the intensity and frequency of violence.

The second way of reducing violence is through the promotion of social justice. Although too broad a subject to be adequately treated here, Gandhi's perspective explains why social justice is critically important to the ethic of non-violence. The basic goal of social justice is to fight social injustice in all its forms, whether hidden or open—whether economic, racial, ethnic, religious or ideological. Here the worst culprits are social institutions that perpetuate or hide forms of injustice.

Of all the forms of injustices, it is perhaps economic injustice that is the most obvious. No society, whether developed or underdeveloped, is free from it. Gandhi has a well thought out economic philosophy. It is opposed to both radical capitalism and Marxism. By radical capitalism is meant a form of capitalism that considers wealth as more important than people. Gandhi favors a moderate form of capitalism that recognizes the right to private property. This right is not absolute but conditional to meeting the needs of society at large.

He was critical of radical capitalism for making enlightened self-interest the sole motivation at work in economic relations. Such a view takes humans merely as bodily creatures, or "money-making machines," to use his phrase,[12] denying or at least ignoring the fact that they

are also embodied souls. Because they have a soul, they are capable of acting out of motives of compassion and natural justice. Moderate capitalism combines legitimate self-interest with natural justice and compassion.

Gandhi's economic philosophy was greatly influenced by two parables from the Gospels —the parable of the workers in the Vineyard and the parable of the rich young man. The parable of the workers in the Vineyard is a parable about economic justice in labor relations. The workers in the parable came to work at different times of the day. Yet they all received the same wage. Even the worker who came last got a just wage. The point is that everyone who engages in an honest day's work has a right to a living wage. John Ruskin had written his famous book *Unto This Last*, based on this parable. Gandhi's economic philosophy was inspired by this work, which he regarded so highly that he translated it into Gujarati under the title *Sarvodaya*. *Sarovodaya*, meaning the welfare of all, was deliberately chosen to indicate his dissatisfaction with Benthamite concept of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.[13]

The parable of the rich young man also had a great influence on Gandhi's economic thought. This parable is about a rich young man who comes to Jesus for advice. He was no ordinary rich man, for he had acquired his wealth honestly, without cheating others. Still he felt an inner vacuum that the ethical life by itself could not fill. It was that inner emptiness that prompted him to come to Jesus. Jesus intuited his problem and advised him that if he was serious about his inner life, he should be prepared to give up his wealth, at least be detached from it. At this the young man grieved and went away, for he loved his wealth more than his soul. Gandhi used this parable to argue that economic justice by itself cannot satisfy our spiritual needs. Wealth is not a reliable index of happiness. Spiritual progress does not come in the same proportion as economic progress. There is no strict correlation between economic development

and spiritual development. On the other hand, without spiritual development, economic development leaves us empty. This parable exposes the shallowness of modern policy makers who argue that the solution to all the problems of humanity is economic in nature. Economic prosperity, if it is to lead to genuine human prosperity, would need the support of spiritual detachment. Otherwise it could become an end itself, perhaps the ultimate end of life, which it could not possibly be.

Gandhi's point is that the field of social justice is broader than that of economic justice. For every society has its blind spot. This is especially true of economically well-advanced societies. Social reform in the broad sense is needed to find out what these blind spots are. And social reform in Gandhi's view should not be left to the State alone. The responsibility for social reform should be borne by both the State and non-governmental agencies.[14] The more the State shares its power with voluntary organizations, the better the chances of success of social reform. The more vigorous the voluntary agencies, the less violent would society be.

Turning now to the third way to reducing violence in the world. This involves religion and the violence arising from religious conflicts. Contemporary radical secularists such as Christopher Hitchens accuse religion as the source of all violence in the world. Gandhi, in his day, was aware of such accusations.[15] His response was that the use of violence as a means of religious propaganda is pathological, that the pathology of religion should not be confused with religion itself. Moreover, there is such a thing as development in religious consciousness, which now seeks to cure the pathology, by admitting the mistakes of the past and attempting to make religion as free of violence as possible. Radical secularism by contrast makes no effort to disown its gory past and still justifies the Revolutions of the past and the present as salutary.

Gandhi offers two cures to religious pathology. The first is the norm of de jure religious pluralism. The denial of the legitimacy of one religion by another is one of the major sources of religious intolerance and persecution. In this regard there is a developing field of the theology of religious pluralism, which is worthy of serious study. Here I recommend two very important books by Jacques Dupuis, a Belgian Jesuit, who taught theology in India for many decades and who ended his illustrious career as a professor at the Gregorian University in Rome. His *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* and *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue* are indispensable for gaining a Christian perspective on religious pluralism.[16]

Gandhi's second solution is to place more emphasis on religious ethics than on theology. All religions teach a basic code of ethical behavior—fairness, honesty, truthfulness, compassion and the like. It is easier to establish contact with people professing another religion on the basis of ethics than on the basis of theology. Theology is concerned with beliefs, while ethics is concerned with actual practice. Theology is for the internal life of religions while ethics is for external relations. This is not to diminish the importance of theology, for theology is necessary for pointing out the internal coherence of religious beliefs. At the same time it is easier to agree on ethical principle than on theological principles. Ethics will dispose people belonging to different religions to interact with each other, in spite of their theological differences. Interestingly, in recent times Hans Küng, the Catholic theologian, has come close to the position taken by Gandhi several decades ago.

Finally, we come to the fourth and final way of reducing violence in the world. It is the way of the spiritual life. As we saw in Gandhi's interpretation of the parable of the rich young man, human development can never be complete without spiritual development. Each religion

has its own tradition of spirituality. As in the field of ethics, so in that of spirituality, there is plenty of common ground between religions. The spiritual life requires daily readings of the scriptures, the practice of prayer and meditation, and appreciation of religious art and music. Throughout his busy schedule Gandhi maintained a very strict prayer schedule. One day a week was set aside as the day of silence. Prayer for him was a means of gaining the truth about ourselves as contingent creatures, depending on God. It also was a means of self-purification, of taming the ego which is in struggle with the soul. Prayer makes us realize that a major source of violence in the world is the unregenerate state of the ego. Without a deep spiritual life it is virtually impossible to manage the ego.

The Four Fields of Non-Violence

Nothing illustrates Gandhi's ethical realism more vividly than his concept of the *fields of non-violence*. By "fields" he means the "communities" in which the ethics of non-violence was practiced. He distinguished four such fields. They are the family, the political community, the religious community, and the international community. The underlying idea is that though non-violence is a universal norm, it operates differently in different communities. What works in one community may not work in another. Thus what works in the family may not work in the political community. The point is that the ethic of non-violence has to remain adaptable to the nature of the community in question.

Let us take the family first. Gandhi calls it "the best field"; the "nursery" in which the alphabets of non-violence are learnt.[17] What are these alphabets? They are of course the habits of kindness, mutual appreciation, forbearance, forgiveness, and unconditional love—all cultivated in normal families and all necessary for a non-violent life. If these habits are not acquired at

home, they will most likely not be acquired in later life. The norm is clear enough: violence has no place in the family. Yet the facts speak otherwise. We have therefore to examine what threatens the family today. Is the very concept of the family under threat? How about monogamy? Sexual ethics? Alcohol and drug abuse? Parental neglect? The list is too long to be comfortable. Gandhi's point is simple: if we make the family less violent we make a real contribution to world peace.

Let us move on to the second field—the political community. This "field" includes constituted public authority. Here the norm is different from that of the family. For the State is permitted to exercise minimum necessary violence for the sake of internal order. But the fact is that often the State exceeds this limit. The worst culprits here are authoritarian, fascist, communist, theocratic and other forms of totalitarian States. The least offending are the democratic States. The conclusion is clear enough: the larger the number of democracies in the world, the greater the chance of peace in the world.

Let us now turn to the third "field"—the religious community. Here, as in the family, the norm is non-violence. But facts prove otherwise. For historically and psychologically religions have often acted violently. We saw earlier why this was so. This was so because the norm of religious pluralism had not come into vogue. But today two new sources of religious violence have been added—religious nationalism and the new interpretation of *jihad*. The conclusion is clear enough: the more religions dissociate themselves from nationalism, the better. And the more Islam disinherits *jihadism*, peace has a better chance.

Finally, we turn to the international community of States. Here the norm is that States have a right to self-defense even by military means. But the exercise of this right is limited by the generally accepted rules of war. But we are faced with a new phenomenon. Non-state

organizations such as Hamas, the Taliban and the al-Quaida do not recognize the existing rules of war. What this will do to international peace has become the critical question of the 21st century.

What drives these groups is the belief that they have the approval of Allah behind them. For it is Allah's will that the whole world should accept Islam, and that those who do not should be overcome by war. This fits in with the old Islamic notion that the world is divided between the land of peace (*dar ul Islam*) and the land of war (*dar ul hurb*). And it is Islam's mission to convert the land of war into the land of Islam. The major obstacle standing in the way is the West, which therefore must be defeated in every way possible.

As for the rest of the world, wherever Muslims are in a majority, they have a right to form a Muslim State. This is their position in Southern Philippines, Southern Thailand, Kashmir, Chechnya, and Kosovo. India was a test case. Because certain parts of India had a Muslim majority, those parts had to form a Muslim State. This had the sanction of the *shariah*. Gandhi knew all this firsthand in his dealings with the Muslim separatist movement in India.

It must be made clear that the leaders of most Muslim States today do not support the interpretation of *jihad* that the Hamas, the Taliban and the al-Quaida have given to it. But public opinion in those countries favors fundamentalism. In any event, it does not actively oppose it.

Under these conditions what chance of success has Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence? Very little, it would seem. However, Gandhi has a fall back position. It is expressed through one of the most important principles, viz. the "vast majority principle."

The Vast Majority Principle

The principle is simple enough. Unless the vast majority in a country is ready to live non-violently, it is virtually impossible to govern that country non-violently. Gandhi writes: "I believe that a state can be administered on a non-violent basis if the vast majority of the people are non-violent."[18] Only "when a large majority of people are willing to abide by the law of *ahimsa* [non-violence]" could State policies become non-violent. "When this happy state prevails, the spirit of violence will have all but vanished and internal order will have come under control." "Quarrels between labor and capital will be few and far between in a non-violent state, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society."[19]

This is ethical realism at its best. The implications of this principle are worth close scrutiny. The first implication is that peace is everyone's business. The common tendency is to put the onus on the leaders of a country. The vast majority principle shifts the burden of peace from the leaders to the people, or at least distributes it equally between the leaders and the people. The leaders of a country can promote peace only to the extent that the vast majority of that country is peaceful. And the vast majority can be peaceful only to the extent that they eliminate violence in their private lives as well as in the structures of their society. It is not enough for the vast majority to abstain from violence on a personal basis; it is necessary for them to be actively non-violent in opposing the violent minority.

Applied to the Muslim countries, this means that the vast majority should become active in opposing violent religious fundamentalism. This they can do only if they are willing to re-examine the prevailing violent structures of Islamic society. Just imagine what would happen if the vast majority of Muslims in Muslim countries were to become really fed up with fundamentalist violence.

The same principle applies to non-Muslim countries. The vast majority in those countries would have to examine to what extent they passively tolerate the violent structures of their own societies. Just imagine what would happen if the vast majority of consumers in the developed countries were to become fed up with the behavior of the international corporations towards the environment and towards the developing countries.

What Gandhi's vast majority principle asks for is a change in the moral awareness of the vast majority in every country. They have to cease to be passive and have to become active in their non-violence. His appeal is directly to the people and only indirectly to the State.

Gandhi's vast majority principle is comparable to Immanuel Kant's "republican principle." Kant in the 18th century had proposed a program of "perpetual peace." If the States were to have a republican constitution they are likely to be peaceful, and if there is a circle of republican States, then relations between them are likely to be peaceful too. But Gandhi goes one step beyond Kant. He places emphasis on 'the people' themselves rather than on their 'constitution.' His position is that only if the vast majority of the people of a country are actively non-violent, can the ethic of non-violence really succeed.

Conclusion

The question then is how to make the vast majority habitually non-violent? We can answer this question by way of summarizing what we have been discussing.

To begin with, the vast majority would have to take an active interest in human rights, social justice, religious pluralism, the spiritual life and the family life.

Secondly, the vast majority will have to re-think the meaning of spiritual life. It is not enough to say that I lead a spiritual life. It is now necessary to ask what sort of spiritual life I

lead. What are the social implications of my spiritual life? Does my spiritual life lead to my involvement in the political issues of the world or does it cause me to withdraw from them? Does my involvement in politics make my politics more violent or less violent? These questions are very relevant today because of the Islamist claim that certain acts of political violence are compatible with deep spirituality.

Gandhi's response to such an interpretation of spirituality is well known: God is truth and therefore could not be reached by violent means. The search for Truth and violent behavior are incompatible. Indeed, the search for Truth is precisely the best means of making our behavior less violent. In this connection, I refer once again to the similarity between Pope Benedict XVI's position and Gandhi's position on the incompatibility between violence and spirituality. In Christian thought, as the Pope stated in his Regensburg lecture, not acting with the Logos, was acting contrary to the nature of God. This is comparable to Gandhi's position that not acting according to Truth is contrary to the nature of God.

What the vast majority in every country needs, then, is a renewed understanding of the true meaning of the spiritual life. Gandhi can be, and indeed is, a great help here. For his philosophy stands for the harmony of all human strivings—political, economic, ethical, and spiritual. It is this harmony that both radical secularism and radical Islamism seek to threaten. But it is this harmony that the vast majority everywhere aspires to.

Gandhi makes his appeal directly to the vast majority and only indirectly to the State and the community of States. It is the vast majority that shapes the character of culture at any given time, and it is culture that shapes the nature of society and its institutions. And in order to shape or transform culture, the ethic of non-violence has to become truly active. Peace depends of activity, not passivity.

And if we want to sum up Gandhi's position in one sentence, what would it be? It would be, I think, something like this: there can be no peace in the world unless the vast majority in each country stops being merely passive, but becomes active in their non-violence.

ENDNOTES

1. This is the text of a lecture that I delivered at St. Mary's University College, Calgary, Canada, on 23 November 2006. I thank the President and Fellows of the College for their kind invitation.

2. In 1908 Gandhi paraphrased *The Apology* and published it under the title *Story of a Soldier of Truth*. See Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, 100 vols., 1958-1994, New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India (hereafter CW), vol. 8.

3. Gandhi was greatly influenced by Thoreau's *On the Duty of Civil Disobedience* and *Life Without Principle*. They were put in Appendix I of his seminal work *Hind Swaraj*. See A. Parel (ed.), *Gandhi: Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* (hereafter HS), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 120.

4. For a full account of Gandhi's philosophy, see A. Parel, *Gandhi's Philosophy and the Quest for Harmony*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

5. Gandhi, CW, 37: 314.

6. Gandhi, CW, 34: 130.

7. Gandhi, CW, 48: 304-07.

8. See Thomas Hobbes, *The Leviathan*.

9. See *The Times Literary Supplement*, 22 July 2005, p. 22. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, the revolutionaries could fetch 20 yuans for killing suspected young boys, 50 yuans for killing senior counter-revolutionaries. In Mao's own province, revolutionaries were paid only 3 yuans per killing; see *The Times Literary Supplement*, 20 October 2006, p. 11. For a full account of the atrocities of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, see Jung Chang and Jon Halliday,

Mao: The Unknown Story, London: Cape, 2005, and Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, London: Belknap Press, 2006.

10. For an account of Mawdudi's role in contemporary Islamic revivalism, see Syyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996; John L. Esposito, *Unholy Wear: Terror in the Name of Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002; and Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

11. Mawdudi, 1986 reprint, Lahore: Idarah-I Tarjumanu'l Quran.

12. Gandhi, CW, 8: 241.

13. Ibid.

14. Gandhi developed his ideas on the role of non-governmental agencies in his important work called *Constructive Programme*. See CW, 75: 146-66.

15. See Gandhi, HS, ch. 8.

16. Jacques Dupuis, S. J., *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997; and *Christianity and the Religions: From Confrontation to Dialogue*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003.

17. Gandhi, CW, 72: 271.

18. Gandhi, CW, 71: 407.

19. Gandhi, CW, 72: 403.