[**http://www.mkgandhi.org/nonviolence/phil2.htm**](http://www.mkgandhi.org/nonviolence/phil2.htm)

**The Power Of Non-violence**

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the pitting of one's whole should against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

**Active Force**

The non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental and, therefore, a moral opposition to immoralities. 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 should 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 him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this again is an ideal state. And so it is. The propositions from which I have drawn my arguments are as true as Euclid's definitions, which are none the less true because in practice we are unable to even draw Euclid's line on a blackboard. But even a geometrician finds it impossible to get on without bearing in mind Euclid's definitions. Nor may we...dispense with the fundamental propositions on which the doctrine of Satyagraha is based.  
I admit that the strong will rob the weak and that it is sin to be weak. But this is said of the soul in man, not of the body. If it be said of the body, we could never be free from the sin of weakness. But the strength of soul can defy a whole world in arms against it. This strength is open to the weakest in body.33  
Nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man. Destruction is not the law of the humans. Man lives freely by his readiness to die, if need be, at the hands of his brother, never by killing him. Every murder or other injury, no matter for what cause, committed or inflicted on another is a crime against humanity.  
Nonviolence is like radium in its action. An infinitesimal quantity of it embedded in a malignant growth acts continuously, silently and ceaselessly till it has transformed the whole mass of the diseased tissue into a healthy one. Similarly, even a little of true nonviolence acts in a silent, subtle, unseen way and leavens the whole society.

**Matchless Bravery**

An armed soldier relies on his weapons for his strength. Take away from him his weapons--his gun or his sword, and he generally becomes helpless. But a person who has truly realized the principle of nonviolence has the God-given strength for his weapon and the world has not known anything that can match it.  
A small body of determined spirits fired by an unquenchable faith in their mission can alter the course of history.  
Nonviolence of the strong is any day stronger than that of the bravest soldier fully armed or a whole host.

**Exercise in Faith**

The hardest metal yields to sufficient heat. Even so the hardest heart must melt before sufficiency of the heat of nonviolence. And there is no limit to the capacity of nonviolence to generate heat.  
Every action is a resultant of a multitude of forces even of a contrary nature. There is no waste of energy. So we learn in the books on mechanics. This is equally true of human actions. The difference is that in the one case we generally know the forces at work, and when we do, we can mathematically foretell the resultant. In the case of human actions, they result from a concurrence of forces of most of which we have no knowledge. But our ignorance must not be made to serve the cause of disbelief in the power of these forces. Rather is our ignorance a cause for greeter faith. And nonviolence being the mightiest force in the world and also the most elusive in its working, it demands the greatest exercise of faith. Even as we believe in God in faith, so have we to believe in nonviolence in faith.  
Violence like water, when it has an outlet, rushes forward furiously with an overwhelming force. nonviolence cannot act madly. It is the essence of discipline. But, when it is set going, no amount of violence can crush it. For full play, it requires unsullied purity and an unquenchable faith...

**A Science**

Ahimsa is a science. The word 'failure' has no place in the vocabulary of science. Failure to obtain the expected result is often the precursor to further discoveries.  
If the function of himsa is to devour all it comes across, the function of ahimsa is to rush into the mouth of himsa. In an atmosphere of ahimsa one has no scope to put his ahimsa to the test. It can be tested only in the face of himsa.  
Violence can only be effectively met by nonviolence. This is an old, established truth...that the weapon of violence, even if it was the atom bomb, became useless when matched against nonviolence. That very few understand how to wield this mighty weapon is true. It requires a lot of understanding and strength of mind. It is unlike what is needed in military schools and colleges. The difficulty one experiences in meeting himsa with ahimsa arises from weakness of mind.

**The Deed, not Doer**

'Hate the sin and not the sinner' is a precept which, though easy enough to understand, is rarely practised, and that is why the poison of hatred spreads in the world.  
This ahimsa is the basis of the search for truth. I am realizing every day that the search is vain unless it is founded on ahimsa as the basis. It is quite proper to resist and attack a system, but to resist and attack its author is tantamount to resisting and attacking oneself. For we are all tarred with the same brush, and are children of one and the same creator, and as such, the divine powers within us are infinite. To slight a single human being is to slight those divine powers, and thus to harm not only that Being but with Him the whole world.  
Man and his deed are two distinct things. Whereas a good deed should call forth approbation and a wicked deed disapprobation, the doer of the deed, whether good or wicked, always deserves respect or pity as the case may be.  
Those who seek to destroy men rather than manners adopt the latter and become worse than those whom they destroy under the mistaken belief that the manners will die with the men. They do not know the root of the evil.  
It is the acid test ofnonviolence that, in a nonviolent conflict, there is no rancour left behind, and in the end the enemies are converted into friends. That was my experience in South Africa, with General Smuts. He started with being my bitterest opponent and critic. Today he is my warmest friend.  
The principal implication of ahimsa is that the ahimsa in us ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponents' attitude to us; it ought to melt him; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart.  
As ahimsa-its, can you say that you practice genuine ahimsa? Can you say that you receive the arrows of the opponent on your bare breasts without returning them? Can you say that you are not angry, that you are not perturbed by his criticism?  
By reason of life-long practice of ahimsa, I claim to be an expert in it, though very imperfect. Speaking in absolute terms, the more I practice it the clearer I see how far I am from the full expression of ahimsa in my life. It is his ignorance of this, the greatest duty of man in the world, which makes him say that in this age nonviolence has little scope in the face of violence, whereas I make bold to say that in this age of the Atom Bomb unadulterated nonviolence is the only force that can confound all the tricks put together of violence.

*Source: The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*

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| **India And The Violent Way** |
| IF INDIA takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to service of India through the religion of non-violence.... If India makes violence her creed, and I have survived, I would not care to live in India. She will cease to evoke any pride in me. My patriotism is subservient to my religion. I cling to India like a child to its mother's breast because I feel that she gives me the spiritual nourishment I need. She has the environment that responds to my highest aspirations. When that faith is gone, I shall feel like an orphan without hope of ever finding a guardian.  **Unarmed Victory**  This I know that, if India comes to her own demonstrably through nonviolent means, India will never want to carry a vast army, an equally grand navy and a grander air force. If her self-consciousness rises to the height necessary to give her a nonviolent victory in her fight for freedom, the world values will have changed and most of the paraphernalia of war would be found to be useless. Such an India may be a mere day-dream, a childish folly. But such, in my opinion, is undoubtedly the implication of an India becoming free through nonviolence... Hers will be the voice of a powerful nation seeking to keep under restraint all the violent forces of the world. What policy the National Government will adopt I cannot say. I may not even survive it much as I would love to. If I do, I would advise the adoption of nonviolence to the utmost extent possible and that will be India's great contribution to the peace of the world and the establishment of a new world order. I expect that, with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character. I shall certainly hope that all the effort...to show the efficacy of non-violence as a political force will not have gone in vain and a strong party representing true non-violence will exist in the country.  **Path of Militarization**  What place will India have in the comity of nations? Will she be satisfied with being a fifth-rate power...? India will have long to wait before she can become a first-class military power. And for that she will have to go under the tutelage of some Western power. ....India will have to decide whether, attempting to become a military power, she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message...or whether she will, by further refining and continuing her nonviolent policy, prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden [of violence] which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory [of the Allies]. A free India wedded to truth and nonviolence will teach the lesson of peace to the inhabitants of South Africa. But it will be for us and the Congress to decide whether a free India will follow the way of peace or the sword. It is bad enough that she small nations of the earth should denude humanity of its precious heritage; it will be awful if a sub-continent of some four hundred millions were to take to gun-powder and live dangerously. Will the war-weary Asiatic countries follow in the footsteps of Japan and turn to militarization? The answer lies in what direction India will throw its weight....Will a free India present the world a lesson of peace of of hatred and violence of which the world is already sick unto death? If the whole of India accepted [the eternal law of love], India will become the unquestioned leader of the whole world. I am only hoping and praying [that....there] will rise a new and robust India not warlike, basely imitating the West in all its hideousness, but a new India learning the best that the West has to give and becoming the hope not only of Asia and Africa, but the whole of aching world.... In spite, however, of the madness and the vain imitation of the tinsel of the West, the hope lingers in me and many others that India shall survive this death dance and occupy the moral height that should belong to her after the training, however imperfect, in nonviolence for an unbroken period of thirty-two years since 1915. An India reduced in size but purged in spirit may still be the nursery of the nonviolence of the brave and take up the moral leadership of the world, bringing a message of hope and deliverance to the oppressed and exploited races. But an unwieldy, soul-less India will merely be an imitation, and a third-rate imitation at that, of the Western military States, utterly powerless to stand up against their onslaught. I have no desire to outlive the India of my dreams. |