

## The Philosophy of Non-Violence—A Scientific Approach

Mahatma Gandhi—*Essays and Reflections on his life and work—presented to him on his Seventieth Birthday, October 2nd, 1939.* Edited by S. Radhakrishnan. (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., Museum Street, London), 1939. Pp. 382. Price 7sh. 6d. net.

**B**ETWEEN scientific pursuits determined strictly under the rigorous conditions of laboratory control with perfected weapons of verification or demonstration, and hero-worship religious and political essentially and basically grounded on emotional admiration which is at the very antipodes of rational reflection and balanced judgment, a wide and practically unbridgeable gulf yawns, and from the scientific standpoint represented by a distinctive periodical like the *Current Science*, unique in the history of Indian technical journalism, it is undoubtedly difficult to review a volume like the present one in which sixty-three persons distinguished in their own way, men and women, Indians and Europeans, have paid eloquent tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. The Press in both hemispheres has welcomed the volume as one calculated to alter altogether the face of modern civilization built on force, exploitation and armament on a colossal scale. The volume is edited by Sir S. Radhakrishnan of the Calcutta and the Oxford Universities, now appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Hindu University at Benares. The Editor has contributed an "Introduction" on "Gandhi's Religion and Politics" (Pp. 13-40). The others, sixty-two in number, have not only paid their tribute to Mahatma Gandhi as an apostle of non-violence in thought, word and deed, but also commended non-violence as the only weapon of adjustment of individual, national and international relationship in a distracted modern world, the tributes varying in length from a short paragraph to a number of pages.

The publication of the volume would afford the occasion for discussing the philosophy of non-violence as a weapon of adjustment of secular affairs. In addition to the entire mass of Gandhian literature now available, the volume under notice should be studied against the background supplied by a sensational work like "Gandhi and Anarchy" written by the late lamented Sir C. Sankaran Nair. To-day poor Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar seems to be the solitary person who, day in and day out, tirelessly tells audiences steeped to the point of

saturation in Gandhi-worship that Religion and politics should be separated from one another. Political memory is so conveniently short. In a way, Nemesis appears to have overtaken Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar. For, it was he who, once upon a time wanted the spiritualization of politics.

Be that as it may, what is the philosophy of Non-Violence? Is it possible to proceed along a strictly scientific approach? There is universal agreement on what constitutes scientific verification. A suggested law or hypothesis should be verified in reference to Positive test-instances as well as Negative test-instances. Then alone the hypothesis would rank as a verified Universal Law. Pure psychological analysis would reveal the existence of *three* types of conflict: (1) Individuals come into conflict with one another in the matter of their rights and privileges. (2) Individuals come into conflict with the State. (3) States and Nations come into conflict with one another. Other types may easily be subsumed under these. Since the dawn of reflection, a life of love based on non-violence has been commended as the ideal by all thinkers and seers. The Vedantic system-builders, Christ, Buddha, and others have all proclaimed and praised the gospel of non-violence. Latterly, Tolstoy added emphasis to it. Mahatma Gandhi, thus, by no means is the first to have proclaimed the gospel.

Non-violence in *thought* will never admit of laboratory verification. Thoughts violent and non-violent, being too subjective, will never lend themselves to verification under laboratory control. Non-violence in word and deed being objective or involving consequences and effects in the objective world from which appropriate responses must be elicited, would be capable of verification. Before Non-violence is admitted to be a gospel universally applicable and universally valid, positive and negative test-instances should be furnished. That is to say, Non-violence and the promised millennium or even limited returns in material and spiritual currency should be shown to be casually connected with one another in a number of positive instances. Even so, it should be shown that *absence* of non-violence is invariably and unconditionally linked with the *elimination* of the consequences, namely, the millennium or the limited returns. Then, and then alone, would verification be complete. Proceeding along this line of

investigation, it would not be difficult to demonstrate that Non-violence can *never be universalized*. If, to err is human, a certain amount of violence is included in the error. To be violent is human.

If emotionalism, sentimentalism and time-serving loyalty to this or that creed be eliminated, the reason why Non-violence *cannot* be universalized would be immediately apparent. Unless both the parties to the conflict or controversy admit the validity of non-violence, its one-sided exercise would mean victory for one and total extinction or annihilation for the other. I do not know if it is at all true. Mr. George Bernard Shaw is believed to have administered a knock-out blow on the head of the doctrine of non-violence. He seems to have emphatically stated that the non-violence of the Cow would never convert the Tiger into a vegetarian.

The argument that if Belgium had remained *strictly* non-violent in thought, word and deed, if Abyssinia had followed suit, and if to-day the Jews and the Poles had remained non-violent in thought, word and deed, the war-mongers would have been discomfited, can be advanced only by those whose kith and kin, person and property are all protected and guarded by others. Mr. Arthur Moore, Editor of the *Statesman*, Calcutta, an ardent admirer of Gandhi and Radhakrishnan, observes that the Pacifist argument was refuted by Krishna in the *Gita*, and that Gandhi held the argument of the *Gita* did not apply to physical war. Both views are untenable. The Lord Krishna has definitely stated that War is used by Him to rid mother earth of the burden of arrogant mankind. Yet, pacifism is the ideal of all who aim at realization of the Supreme Self Immanent in Reality. Pacifism can never be a political prophylactic or panacea. Nobody could have forgotten Gandhi's great argument that the Behar Earthquake was due to the treatment meted out to untouchables. If war, even as evil, is a permanent factor of the cosmos which God Himself employs to rid mother earth of her burden, and if the pseudo-pacifists advocate the turning of the left cheek in all crises and emergencies, they must be deemed to be working against God. Let there be no illusions, however. I am afraid within the limits of this notice, the philosophical problems cannot be argued out. In God's universe, there is as much place for war as for peace, as much for good as for evil. One thing is certain. Unless politics and religion are kept rigidly separate from one another

there would be only pinchbeck politics, simulacrum of spirituality and rope-snake religion.

Amusing errors occur in the volume, citational, interpretational, and typographical. I leave it to the readers to discriminate which is which. (1) On page 32 occurs the citation *Frano Virat*, which a distinguished person in Madras, one very near the Rose if not the Rose itself, read as *Franco Virat* in view of the recent successes of General Franco in Spain! It is a pity the Editor did not give the exact reference. It is from the Whitney's translation of *Atharva Veda*. It should be "*Prano*", and not as actually printed. The text in the said context means something which has absolutely no connection with Satyagraha, Love, etc., in support of which it is cited. (2) A truncated sentence is cited from the *Isavasya Upanishad* on page 19. No reference is given. It is cited to support the dictum "love thy neighbour as thyself", "*atmaiva*". In a book intended to inculcate non-violence as a Universal Gospel, I submit it is a violent outrage to translate or interpret "thyself" into "*atmaiva*". The text sings the glory of the spiritual vision of the blessed "*Adhikari*" who sees God in all, and all in God. (3) A. Berriedale Keith who divides his researches between Panditry in interpreting Indian and other Constitutions and Panditry in Sanskrit Literature, does great violence indeed to a popular Sanskrit stanza which every school-boy is expected to know. The correct quarter is "*Ayam...Nijah...paroveti*" and not as actually printed. (4) But, the funniest error is that Srimati Sophia Wadia is said to be the founder in India and Editor of the Indian P. E. Z.! (P. 295.) It should be P. E. N. (5) Finally, Dr. Muirhead, General Editor of Library of Philosophy series, in which Sir S. Radhakrishnan's volumes on "Indian Philosophy" have appeared, writing on the "Hindu Idea of Truth" again, does great violence to the Vedantic Concept of Truth and Reality. Propositional quibbles and legerdemain like "Truth is God", "God is Truth", will not bear a moment's metaphysical scrutiny. The Vedanta long ago rendered a most satisfactory answer to the problem in question. God was deliberately and definitely defined as the Creator of the World, its protector, destroyer, etc. ("*Janmadyasya Yatah*"). The God of Philosophy thus defined has nothing to do with the Truth that H<sub>2</sub>O is water or that Philosophers care as much for their monthly salary as others.

In any scientific study of the philosophy of non-violence, the following facts should be borne in mind: (1) Rama admitted to have been God incarnate had to wage war. (2) Krishna did the same. It is recorded in the epic that even the exhibition of the Lord's cosmic form did not move Duryodhana. Balarama, unable to prevent war, went on a long pilgrimage. Vyasa did not prevent the Mahabharatha War. He was God incarnate. Krishna did not. Indian philosophy may be good, bad, or indifferent. If hopes are entertained in any quarters, and if the claim is seriously advanced that International dispute and dissensions should be settled by reference to any Indian or

European Panchayat of Pacifists, those who urge such claims and those who lend their ears to them cannot but be considered to be doped denizens of *limbus fatuorum*. Modern countries which, for whatever reasons of ideology and whatever causes of equipmental incapacity, fail to arm themselves to the teeth as it were, fail to keep the powder dry, of course with plenty of faith in God, and fail to adopt modern methods and weapons of warfare, would be permanently at the mercy of the aggressors. If modern governments have paid police to protect persons and property they should have paid Military Units as well. On the plane of reason, there is no escape from this conclusion.

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### Sugar Industry of India, 1937-38\*

THE year 1937-38 was an eventful one for the world sugar industry. The International Sugar Conference allocated export quotas among the various sugar-producing countries. No quota was however allotted to India, this country having agreed not to export sugar to any other country except Burma. The world sugar production during this year was 30,991,000 tons, showing an increase of 173,000 tons over the previous year while the sugar consumption during the same period was 29,757,000 tons showing a decline of 792,000 tons.

In India the total area under sugarcane during 1937-38 was 3,815,000 acres showing a decrease of 14% from the last year and similarly, the total cane grown was also less by 17.4%. The season was not quite favourable as the crop suffered from insufficient rain in its initial period. Owing to shorter duration of the season and inadequate supply of cane there was a large decline in the production of white sugar which was 930,700 tons as against 1,111,400 tons of last year. The total number of factories that operated this year was 136. White sugar production by the indigenous process was 125,000 tons as against 100,000 tons of the previous year.

During the year 1937-38 there were no changes in the rates of excise duty on sugar or on the import duty on foreign sugar and molasses. Export of sugar from India by sea was 14,296 tons as against 521 tons of the previous year. Imports of foreign sugar showed a sharp decline to 13,715 tons from

23,100 tons of last year. Only a small portion of the sugar required for consumption in India was thus imported because the production in the country almost balanced consumption.

There was a decline in the 'gur' production from 4,268,000 tons last year to 3,364,000 tons—about 21%. The total production of molasses in the Central Sugar Factories, working directly with cane amounted to 349,600 tons. Though separate figures for export of molasses by sea are not available, the total export of molasses, palmyra and cane jaggery during 1937-38 was 79,167 tons while the figure for the previous year was only 24,195 tons.

The record production of sugar in the year 1936-37 brought with it a phenomenal decline in sugar prices which led to a drastic reduction in the area cultivated for cane and sugar produced in the following year 1937-38. This curtailment, in its turn, resulted in a rise of price in Indian factory sugar till they reached the parity level with imported sugars, which is acting again as an incentive to the growers for planting more cane. With the continuation of these conditions, there is always the danger of overproduction with its attendant difficulties following a period of prosperity. It is desirable, therefore, in the interest of the stability of the Indian Sugar Industry, that any future programme of cane cultivation and sugar production must be so planned as to assure both the grower and the manufacturer a fair margin of profit over a number of years while the consumer also pays no more than a reasonable price for sugar.

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\* Review by R. C. Srivastava, Supplement to the *Indian Trade Journal*, November 2, 1939.