

NONVIOLENCE AND ACTION

Vigilance

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, Disciple, suffer not, e'en though it be their shadow, to approach. For it will grow, increase in size and power, and then this thing of darkness will absorb thy being before thou hast well realized the black foul monster's presence.

The Voice of the Silence, p. 13

H.P. Blavatsky

How Should We Treat Others?

The subject relates to our conduct toward and treatment of our fellows, including in that term all people with whom we have any dealings. No particular mode of treatment is given by Theosophy. It simply lays down the law that governs us in all our acts, and declares the consequences of those acts. It is for us to follow the line of action which shall result first in harmony now and forever, and second, in the reduction of the general sum of hate and opposition in thought or act which now darkens the world.

The great law which Theosophy first speaks of is the law of karma, and this is the one which must be held in view in considering the question. Karma is called by some the "law of ethical causation," but it is also the law of action and reaction; and in all departments of nature the reaction is equal to the action, and sometimes the reaction from the unseen but permanent world seems to be much greater than the physical plane.

The untheosophical view is based on separation, the Theosophical upon unity absolute and actual... But if we are all united as a physical and psychical fact, then the act of condemning, the fact of resistance, the insistence upon rights on all occasions—all of which means the entire lack of charity and mercy—will bring consequences as certain as the rising of the sun tomorrow.

What are those consequences, and why are they?

They are simply this, that the real man, the entity, the thinker, will react back on you just exactly in proportion to the way you act to him, and this reaction will be in another life, if not now, and even if now felt will still return in the next life.

The fact that the person whom you condemn, or oppose, or judge seems now in this life to deserve it for his acts in this life, does not alter the other fact that his nature will react against you when the time comes. The reaction is a law not subject to nor altered by any sentiment on your part. He may have, truly, offended you and even hurt you, and done that which in the eye of man is blameworthy, but all this does not have anything to do with the dynamic fact that if you arouse his enmity by your condemnation or judgment there will be a reaction on you, and consequently on the whole of society in any century when the reaction takes place. This is the law and the fact as given by the Adepts, as told by all sages, as reported by those who have seen the inner side of nature, as taught by our philosophy and easily provable by anyone who will take the trouble to examine carefully...

The Master “K.H.,” once writing to Mr. Sinnett in the *Occult World*, and speaking for his whole order and not for himself only, distinctly wrote that the man who goes to denounce a criminal or an offender works not with nature and harmony but against both, and that such act tends to destruction instead of construction...

The opposite conduct, that is, entire charity, constant forgiveness, wipes out the opposition from others, expends the old enmity and at the same time makes no new similar causes. Any other sort of thought or conduct is sure to increase the sum of hate in the world, to make cause for sorrow, to continually keep up the crime and misery in the world. Each man can for himself decide which of the two ways is the right one to adopt...

Self-love and what people call self-respect may shrink from following the Adept’s view I give above, but the Theosophist who wishes to follow the law and reduce the general sum of hate will know how to act and to think, for he will follow the words of the Master of H.P.B. who said: “Do not be ever thinking of yourself and forgetting that there are others; for you have no karma of your own, but the karma of each one is the karma of all.”

Path, February, 1896

William Quan Judge

Inner Light & Law of Love

Sow kindly acts and thou shalt reap their fruition. Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin.

Thus saith the Sage.

Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvana one must reach Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child. (33–34)

Alas, alas, that all men should possess Alaya, be one with the Great Soul, and that possessing it, Alaya should so little avail them!

Behold how like the moon, reflected in the tranquil waves, Alaya is reflected by the small and by the great, is mirrored in the tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart of all. Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the priceless boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent! (26–27)

All is impermanent in man except the pure bright essence of Alaya. Man is its crystal ray; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface. That beam is thy life-guide and thy true Self, the watcher and the silent Thinker, the victim of thy lower Self. Thy Soul cannot be hurt but through thy erring body; control and master both, and thou art safe when crossing to the nearing “Gate of Balance”. (63)

Yet one word. Canst thou destroy divine COMPASSION? Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of LAWS — eternal Harmony, Alaya’s SELF; a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting Right, and fitness of all things, the law of Love eternal.

The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its BEING, the more thy Soul unites with that which Is, the more thou wilt become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE. (75–76)

The Voice of the Silence

H.P. Blavatsky

The Seven Portals

These Portals lead the aspirant across the waters on “to the other shore”. Each Portal hath a golden key that openeth its gate; and these keys are:

1. DANA, the key of charity and love immortal.
2. SHILA, the key of Harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action.
3. KSHANTI, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.
4. VIRAGA, indifference to pleasure and to pain, illusion conquered, truth alone perceived.
5. VIRYA, the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal TRUTH, out of the mire of lies terrestrial.
6. DHYANA, whose golden gate once opened leads the Narjol toward the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation.
7. PRAJNA, the key to which makes of a man a god, creating him a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyanis.

Such to the Portals are the golden keys.

The Twin Verses

All that we are is the result of what we have thought; all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain pursues him, as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the ox that draws it,

All that we are is the result of what we have thought; all that we are is founded on our thoughts and formed of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness pursues him like his own shadow that never leaves him.

“He reviled me, he beat me and conquered and then plundered me,” who express such thoughts tie their mind with the intention of retaliation. In them hatred will not cease.

“He reviled me, he beat me and conquered and then plundered me,” who do not express such thoughts, in them hatred will cease.

In this world never is enmity appeased by hatred; enmity is ever appeased by Love. This is the Law Eternal.

Ahimsa—Non-Violence

Truth and Non-Violence are like the two sides of a coin - one cannot exist without the other. Using another imagery, Ahimsa is the path along which one reaches truth. Violence leads to more violence and hampers the clear vision which is essential for the pursuit of Truth.

At a personal level; Ahimsa consists in not only forbearing from physical violence; in order to achieve non-violence it is necessary to remove from the mind all hatred, all jealousy and all desire to harm even those who harm us. The next step would be to extend our love to all living beings, including living beings like snakes, tigers, etc.

At a social level, the goal of Ahimsa is to create a society where there would be no need to act in an anti-social manner and hence no need for any punishment. This can happen only when the economic differences between the classes get considerably narrowed down and when the erring members of society are considered as their own brothers by the righteous.

Source: http://www.gandhi-manibhavan.org/activities/essay_elevenvows.htm M.K. Gandhi

Soul Force & Free Will

Ahimsa is soul-force and the soul is imperishable, changeless and eternal. The atom bomb is the acme of physical force and, as such, subject to the law of dissipation, decay and death that governs the physical universe. Our scriptures bear witness that when soul-force is fully awakened in us, it becomes irresistible. But the test and condition of full awakening is that it must permeate every pore of our being and emanate with every breath that we breathe.

But no institution can be made nonviolent by compulsion. Nonviolence and truth cannot be written into a constitution. They have to be adopted of one's own free will. They must sit naturally upon us like next-to-skin garments or else they become a contradiction in terms.

The Last Phase, II, circa, 1947

Mahatma Gandhi

Active Nonviolence

Ahimsa is not merely a negative state of harmlessness, but it is positive state of love, of doing good even to the evil-doer. *Young India*, August 25, 1920

Ahimsa is a weapon of matchless potency. It is the *summum bonum* of life. It is an attribute of the brave, in fact, it is their all. It does not come within the reach of coward. It is no wooden or lifeless dogma, but a living and life giving force. *Young India*, Sept 6, 1926

Ahimsa is not the way of the timid or cowardly. It is the way of the brave ready to face death. He who perishes sword in hand is no doubt brave; but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching, is braver. *Young India*, Oct. 11, 1928

Love is the strongest force the world possesses and yet it is the humblest imaginable.
Young India, August 6, 1925

Young India

M.K. Gandhi

Oneness

I believe in the absolute oneness of God and, therefore, of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot, therefore, detach myself from the wickedest soul nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous.

Young India, Sept 25, 1924

M.K. Gandhi

Means of Transformation

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. *Yeranda Mandir*, 1935

The spiritual weapon of self-purification, intangible as it seems, is the most potent means of revolutionizing one's environment and loosening external shackles. It works subtly and invisibly; it is an intense process though it might often seem a weary and long-drawn process, it is the straightest way to liberation, the surest and quickest and no effort can be too great for it. What it requires is faith—an unshakable mountain-like faith that flinches from nothing.

Young India, April 30, 1925

M.K. Gandhi

Compassion is Nonviolence

I consider nonviolence to be compassion in action. It is not a mere absence of violence. It is something more positive, more meaningful than that. Some people seem to think that compassion is just a passive emotional response, rather than a rational stimulus to action. But to experience genuine compassion is to develop a feeling of closeness to others, as Mahatma Gandhi did, combined with a sense of responsibility for their welfare. His great achievement was to show through his own example that nonviolence can be implemented effectively not only in the political arena but also in our day-to-day life.

Nonviolent action, when confronted with grave injustice, provocation and violence, needs a strong will and determination based on compassion and an awareness of the larger context. In today's interdependent world, since violence inevitably provokes further violence with unpredictable consequences, we need to begin with inner disarmament.

The 20th century was a time when many people thought that violence was the way to solve our problems. Although their motivation was often positive and good, the method – the use of force – was wrong, because invariably violence creates more problems than it solves. We should aim instead to create a demilitarized world, a peaceful world, based on dialogue. This would be a realistic aspiration for the 21st century.

The disturbing emotion that most often gives rise to violence is anger. A wise and experienced American psychologist, Aaron Beck, told me he had concluded that when we are angry, although the object of our anger appears to be completely negative, 90 percent of that negativity is, in fact, our own projection. This is an example of how we tend to rely on appearances rather than on reality. Neither prayer nor quiet meditation alone will defeat anger. What we need to do is analyze whether anger is of any value.

Negative emotions are our enemy. Foremost among them is ignorance. In order to see reality, we must look at things objectively with a calm mind. We also need to cultivate warmheartedness, for this is the basis on which we can make the world a happier, more peaceful place. And the first beneficiaries of such a strengthening of inner values will, no doubt, be ourselves. The time has come to begin a systematic effort to encourage more among the 7 billion human beings to be kindhearted whether they are followers of religion or not.

As children, we naturally receive tremendous love and affection from our mothers. We can cultivate this natural seed of affection to become warmhearted, not only towards our close friends and relatives but to all 7 billion human beings. When we dwell on the secondary differences between us, problems arise. We need to remember instead that as human beings we are all fundamentally the same. And to be fully inclusive we need to take a secular approach, secular in the sense it is used in India to mean unbiased respect for all religions, faiths and even the values of those who have none. We can change humanity by changing ourselves as individuals. By cultivating inner values, we can change our own lives and those of our families. This is how we can create a happier, more peaceful world.

Today, because the capacity for human destruction is so immense, because the threat to the environment is so great, people are developing a greater understanding of the importance of adopting nonviolence and compassion.

The Courier-Journal, May 19, 2016

Tenzin Gyatso, The XIVth Dalai Lama

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The Voice of the Silence, p. 52–53

H.P. Blavatsky