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## **GANDHI'S NONVIOLENT POWER PERSPECTIVE**

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*If we become free, India is free. And in this thought you have a definition of swaraj. (Hind Swaraj, 73)*

Gandhiji's *Hind Swaraj* can be understood from a number of different angles. As someone trained in political science — a discipline devoted to the study of power relations in the public arena — I think it might be useful to compare Gandhiji's concept of power as I perceive it to be expressed in the basic writing of *Hind Swaraj* with the way power relations are envisaged by most political scientists and proclaimed and practiced by most politicians. A third group to consider would be the pragmatic strategists of nonviolence influenced by the writings of Gene Sharp.

On the basis of extensive empirical exploration and direct personal experience, I have come to the conclusion that western political scientists are less inclined to take nonviolent politics seriously than their colleagues in the other social sciences and humanities. Indeed, it is not unusual to find political scientists expressing ridicule and even hostility toward their fellow academics in the other disciplines — that is, if they deem nonviolence worthy of any comment at all. Perhaps this concealed or open animosity is

not too surprising, given the fact that there is an endemic tension built into the different way nonviolent and conventional politics are conducted. The difference begins in their underlying assumptions of power.

### **Power Paradigm of Political Science and Conventional Politics**

The established orthodoxy dates back to Plato, Aristotle and the other classical theorists and politicians. Plato's model society in *The Republic*, for instance, advanced the view that the philosopher-kings exercised their 'power to' or authority in securing societal order, but when stability weakened to the point of threatening the republic's existence, 'power over' or domination was justified in the three-class system of auxiliaries or military, the artisans or workers, and any rebellious faction of the philosopher-kings. Thus from the beginning of western civilization there existed two types of perceived power: the 'power to' that depended on the ruler gaining sufficient authority to enjoy the loyalty of his subjects, and the 'power over' that occurred when the process of conflict resolution broke down over a supposed vital interest. On such an occasion an attempt would be made to dominate the other party (domestic or external) with some type of violence.

Such a model of power has prevailed to the present day. Highlights of this line of thinking include the 'power over' exercised in creating and maintaining the Roman Empire, and the 'power to' exercised by the papal authority during the reign of the Holy Roman Empire. In the case of the institutional Church, when it was challenged by the forces of the Reformation, it did not hesitate to employ direct physical violence as in the Thirty Years War and the Inquisition.

Among the theorists who continue to affect the thinking of modern-day political scientists is Niccolò Machiavelli whose basic advice to his Prince entailed treating everyone as a potential rival, so one acted with the cunning of a fox, but when manipulative skills proved insufficient, one should be prepared to strike with the lethality of a lion. A century later, in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, another renowned theorist, Thomas Hobbes, worked from the premise that the nature of humankind was ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’ leading to a constant state of war and insecurity. To escape this anarchic state of nature people entered into a social contract that ceded their natural rights to a sovereign who offered the protection of a secure life through a civil contract upheld by his superior power of domination. When that power waned or the sovereign abused his subjects, only under those conditions could the subjects turn to another figure of ‘power over.’

Far less stark in their assessment of reality but still operating from a premise of the necessity of outright elite control (not disguised by representative democracy) were the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian school of conservative elite theorists: Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, and Robert Michels. Sometimes they are referred to as the ‘New Machiavellis’ due to their insistence on the inevitability of political elites being set against the irrational masses. Pareto spoke in terms of a constant ‘circulation of elites’ that were either co-opted or defeated by rising new elites; Mosca observed that every complex social order was ruled by an organized minority who exercised authority over the majority, and this ruling elite’s power was not necessarily derived from its control of the economy as claimed by Marx and the socialists; and Michels introduced the popular phrase ‘iron law of oligarchy’ to describe how political parties, although originating with a set of high-minded principles, soon discarded them in favor of the leadership’s material competitive

interests, thereby creating hierarchies. With the Italian triumvirate the key political dynamic came down to who was able to mobilize the greatest 'power over.'

The theorists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century subscribing to the paradigm of 'power to' and 'power over' represent virtually the entire discipline of political science. However, the names of a few are especially worth singling out for their influence. The sociologist Max Weber had a particularly influential impact on political scientists around the turn of the century when the term science was first associated with the study of politics. In a famous lecture to his students he warned them about entering the field of politics if their aim was the well-intended one of contributing to the creation of a better world, because politics led to the sordid business of sacrificing principles to power interests in compromise after compromise. While Weber later slightly modified this austere view of political interaction, it was the earlier version that was universally adopted by the discipline and continued by the politicians.

When it came to international relations and strategic studies at the time of the Cold War, the power position was predicated on the bleak Hobbesian world view adopted by Hans Morgenthau (*Politics of Nations*). He contended that the 'drives to survive, to propagate, and to exercise power over others were common to all men (sic).' Negotiating from strength and maintaining a balance of 'power over', mixed occasionally with astute measures of 'power to', would preserve the peace. This was exactly the grand strategy of so-called realism that brought the world to the brink of nuclear exchanges on a number of occasions. In more recent years the realist school has been largely abandoned and replaced by the dominant school of

neo-realism, headed by Kenneth Waltz (*Theory of International Politics*). The neo-realists place far more emphasis on structural and cultural factors, and tend to reject the essentialism of the realists (e.g., their stark view of human nature). Political actors, representing the advancement of national interests in an anarchic international system, are compelled to take note of the structures that inhibit motivations and policymaking practices. While a greater focus is directed at the exercising of authority ('power to'), the commitment to upholding the sovereignty of the nation state means that 'power over' or domination must always be held in abeyance.

The theoretical formulation of both realists and neo-realists is based on the evidence of what they observe – an empirical method. Hence their responses to creative initiatives that call for more experimental and dissenting approaches to how power is exercised are rejected out of hand. This is the fate that nonviolence encounters in dealing with political elites or autocrats, and it poses the questions whether the different power paradigms can ever be bridged, and, if so, how?

### **Power Paradigm of Gene Sharp and Nonviolent Political Action**

Gene Sharp is generally acknowledged for elevating the theory and dynamics of nonviolent political action to the level of a finely tuned science. He starts from the proposition that no ruler or elite can rule without the consent of the ruled. Gandhiji would agree. If the ruled collectively and nonviolently withdraw their support in large enough numbers – that is, refuse to accept an unjust law, policy or direction – the ruler will in all probability be compelled to concede on the issue or else attempt to intimidate the resisters with violence. The violent option ultimately depends on the loyalty of police and military troops to fire on well disciplined

resisters, an order which may not be obeyed. Furthermore, when this kind of extreme ‘power over’ is exercised — if the brutality is widely known within and outside of the society — it will usually prove counter productive. Such an action, as Hannah Arendt has pointed out, is indicative of weakness.

‘Power and violence,’ she notes, ‘are opposites: where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent.... Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it’ (*On Violence*, 56).

The only way the desperate ruler will create power is if the ruled submit to his violence. However, as Sharp and other nonviolent exponents have shown, there are multiple nonviolent ways to counter the violence without needless human sacrifice. Sharp noted in his three volume seminal work of 1973, *Politics of Nonviolent Political Action*, that there were some 198 nonviolent methods to draw upon, and he has subsequently been informed of about at least another two hundred.

In most cases the nonviolent votaries do not represent a majority of the ruled. If this minority is lacking the power to make the ruler dependent on its support, its members are at the mercy of the ruler who can either ignore their pleas for justice or punish them at will. However, the resisters’ response may evoke sympathy from other sections of the society that are able to take ‘power from’ the ruler through disobedience. Sharp has called this process political *ju-jitsu* since the power of the ruler has rebounded against himself.

Another way in which powerless minorities can take ‘power from’ an unjust ruler is by appealing to a third party that does have the ability to evoke a dependency relationship with the ruler. The third party can be induced to act on behalf of the powerless minority, because the latter does hold a

dependency relationship with the former, either in the form of a material interest or moral compassion. The well-known peace researcher Johan Galtung has referred to this process as the ‘Great Chain of Nonviolence.’ It may be possible to extend the process through fourth, fifth or even more parties.

The power formula behind successful nonviolent action is for the aggrieved party to undermine the opponent’s human and material sources of power (taking ‘power from’ him), while simultaneously engaging in ‘power with’ – that is, building up the strength of the nonviolent forces. Strengthening a movement entails such actions as fostering solidarity, maintaining morale, developing nonviolent discipline, creating affinity group structures, and promoting an independent culture through music, theatre, art, novels and comedy. Thus the strategic aim of the nonviolent actors is to increase the ruler’s dependency on them (‘power from’), and at the same time to increase their independence (‘power with’). If one carefully studies Gandhiji’s campaigns, their successful or failed outcome is directly related to one or a combination of these factors.

Despite recognizing the important contribution of the Sharpians to the development of nonviolent strategy, the more radically inclined advocates of principled nonviolence — like the Gandhians — are often critical of the limited and short-term pragmatism that Sharp and his adherents promote. Their main criticism is related to the fact that the goal can be reached by any means as long as it is nonviolent. What counts is securing success as soon as possible.

**Gandhiji’s Power Paradigm as Enunciated in *Hind Swaraj***

Examining Gandhiji from the perspective of power poses three interrelated questions: (1) what type of power did he use? (2) How was this power exercised? (3) What purpose or use was the power put to?

First, Gandhiji's template of power begins with the 'power within' and radiates outward to all the other forms of power. Thus he also subscribes to a 'totality of power', encapsulating Sharp's 'power from' and 'power with', and the political scientists'/politicians' 'power to' and even 'power over'. The character of the 'power over', of course, excludes physical violence, and contains some other characteristics that differentiate it from the other two groupings (to be discussed later).

Second, how Gandhiji exercises the power is different from the other two groupings. As already suggested, Sharp and Gandhiji (whose principled perspective is premised on the four cardinal virtues of truth, love, nonviolence, and sacrifice of self) stand directly in opposition to each other on the means/end debate. For Gandhiji and the *satyagrahi*, the means shape the end, so it becomes critical if one is striving for an enduring and long-term goal to ensure that the two converge. As Gandhiji expresses the point in *Hind Swaraj*, 'There is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.... We reap exactly as we sow' (64).

Gandhiji is also resolute on the issue of courage and fearlessness. The *satyagrahi* must be prepared to sacrifice his/her life, walking into the face of a cannon if need be. Since the English triumphed in India due to the people's fear, their slavery can only end by rising up with the strength of fearlessness. 'What is granted in fear can be retained only so long as the fear lasts' (62).



Mental and moral commitment will prove decisive over bodily force, because, '(s)trength,' he reminds the reader, 'lies in absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies' (40).

His point was subsequently driven home when well trained and disciplined *satyagrahi* marched courageously in wave after wave on the Dharasana Salt Works. When one wave was beaten back mercilessly with the *lathi* sticks of the police, another wave would take their place to receive the same fate. The bloody massacre was witnessed and telegraphed to the *Chicago Tribune* by its news reporter, so that soon the British excessive response to the *satyagraha* protest was known throughout most of the western world. The process of the great chain of nonviolence had gone into operation, so that the opponent ended up suffering a grave moral defeat for having repeatedly struck down unarmed passive resisters.

The charge is often leveled at Gandhiji that he did not hesitate to resort to 'power over'. His willingness to use coercion not only marked most of his campaigns but was frequently featured in his speeches. For instance, he openly informed the British in *Hind Swaraj*:

If you do not concede to our demand, we shall be no longer your petitioners. You can govern us only so long as we remain the governed. We shall no longer have any dealings with you (67-8).

While Gandhiji called this soul-force or truth-force (popularly at the time referred to as passive resistance), the British interpreted such language as coercive threats. For someone like Sharp, throwing down the nonviolent gauntlet at the opponent did not raise any logical inconsistency. He made no pretense at linking means to end. However, with Gandhiji's philosophical

position there was an ‘inviolable connection.’ To circumvent the apparent contradiction between his philosophy and action, Gandhiji argued that in the long run the ultimate result would be a win/win for both parties – that he would never undertake an action that humiliated an opponent and stripped him of his dignity. He also insisted that his primary purpose in submitting an opponent to ‘power over’ involved bringing him to the negotiating table where the issue at stake could be discussed in the civilized manner of a dialectic, with persuasion replacing coercion or disintegration of the regime. Whether these were justifiable explanations I leave to the reader’s consideration.

It needs to also be remembered that Gandhiji was not opposed to the building of defense and police forces to protect the citizenry of the state. If it is attacked, he claimed that it is sometimes necessary to resort to the violence of ‘power over’ on the grounds that security and stability are essential in creating and maintaining the just nonviolent society. Had he been around at the time nonoffensive defense (NOD) was launched by Bjørn Møller and Anders Boserup in 1985, he would have, in all probability, incorporated its major provisions into his vision along the path of truth.<sup>1</sup>

The third factor to consider about Gandhiji’s power perspective is the purpose to which the power is put. This is unequivocally stated in *Hind Swaraj* in a series of negatives as to what India should not do. It should not follow western civilization down the path of ‘mak(ing) bodily welfare the

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<sup>1</sup> According to Møller there are two main definitions of NOD: structural and functional (*Dictionary of Alternative Defense*, p 243). The former relates to the size of a state’s arsenal, type of weapons, nature of military training, logistics, doctrine, operational manuals, war games, maneuvers, and text books used in military academies, etc. The functional definition, instead of attempting to record the nature of a long list of military factors, focuses on broad options: for example, ‘The armed forces should be seen in their totality to be capable of a credible defense, yet incapable of offense.’

object of life' (32); it should not emulate the institution of parliament, for it 'does not serve the interests of general population' (29). 'Parliaments are really emblems of slavery' (34). They represent the apogee of western civilization's folly. India should not use the 'instrument' of education to advance its knowledge of liberal arts. Its focus should center on that which enables us to do our moral duty (77-82). For the peasant this meant an education appropriate to his basic needs – one that eschewed most machinery because it detracted from his moral welfare. As for the workers in the mills of Bombay, especially the women, machinery turned them into slaves, whereas formerly 'there were no mills, these women were not starving. If,' he predicted, 'the machinery craze grows in our country, it will become an unhappy land' (83).

Eliminating the negatives is for Gandhiji the *sine qua non* of creating the new society. He knew what it would look like. It would feature the spiritual and moral principles of soul-force, love-force, truth-force and nonviolence. Human relations would prevail over surplus material wants. And the new society would emerge in the process of replacing the old. Beyond that minimal suggestion he offered no detailed schema for effecting a revolutionary transformation of India's institutions and culture nurtured under the British raj. That momentous task was left to his successors after his death who chiefly turned out to be Vinoba Bhave (*Bhoodan* and *Gramdan*) and Jayaprakash Narayan (4 vols of *Towards Total Revolution*). Instead, over the last decade of his life Gandhiji's full attention and energies were directed towards the Quit India campaign and the subsequent communal riots that besieged the new nations.

Shortly before his assassination, however, he was led to reflect that his life had been a failure. The new society did not appear to be part of the vision held by India's masses, preoccupied as they were with daily survival; nor was it incorporated into the thinking of many members of his inner circle, including his beloved associates, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Rajendra Prasad. Nevertheless, I am convinced that Gandhiji's perennial faith in humankind would have assured him that once events stabilized, the job of building the new society of *satyagraha* could commence. A new India would be a guiding light to the other nations of the world, especially those emerging from colonial conquest.

To the very end of his life he advised inquirers into his moral and political philosophy to consult *Hind Swaraj*. Therefore it might be fitting to cite the succinct summary that his secretary, Mahadev Desai, gave to the central theme of Gandhiji's philosophy – namely, how nonviolence (as both the means and end) was to be integrated into Indian Home Rule. Concluded Desai:

It will take long to standardize the meaning and content of this term (non-violence). But the means thereof is self-purification and more self-purification. What Western thinkers often lose sight of is that the fundamental condition of non-violence is love, and pure unselfish love is impossible without unsullied purity of mind and body' (Preface to the New Edition, 1938 (1990), 7).

Thus Gandhiji was not just calling for a total transformation to a nonviolent society, but to achieve that goal it was necessary for a critical mass of the society's members to go through a process of self-purification. With the society's norms then reinforcing the self-purification process, a mutuality of

radical conversion would be generated between the society and the individual. This was the closest Gandhiji came to setting out what could be called a grand strategy. Certainly no details were provided.

### **Relevance of *Hind Swaraj* to Contemporary India and Beyond**

Is this call for the self-purification of a critical mass a realistic possibility in today's globalised society? Gandhiji may well be revered on the public platform, but his ideas are constantly ignored by those same self-proclaimed idolaters when they set their public agenda.

Ironically India is a prime example of a nation moving away from Gandhian principles. Politicians, with their eyes on electoral returns, know that the discipline and sacrifice that Gandhiji called for contravene the priorities in most people's lives. Even if potential *satyagrahi* could be found who were not seduced by the global media's siren-song to constantly acquire more and more wealth as the road to ever greater happiness, many people are committed to other interests. Some have family obligations that take precedence over any other endeavor. Others find purpose in life through fulfillment in pursuits that provide little time for building a nonviolent society.

Despite Gandhi's great charisma and his dedication to the uplifting of the Indian peasants and workers, neither he nor any of his successors were able to make significant and lasting inroads into improving their condition. Indeed, were he alive today Gandhiji would be appalled at how westernized India has become. *The Economist* recently reported some startling economic figures: (31 October 2009, p. 83)

India is steadily becoming more financially stitched in to the rest of the world. Its foreign assets and liabilities add up to over 60% of GDP. In the 1990s that ratio was only about 40%.... In March 2009 India's stock of direct investment abroad was worth over \$67 billion, more than twice the figure in March 2007.

As more big Indian firms like Tata Steel and Bharti Airtel apply pressures to buy and merge with companies abroad, counter moves by the Reserve Bank of India and the politicians to contain overseas economic investment will most likely fail. Thus not only has the Indian raj replaced the British raj, but the former's throne is now being threatened by a global raj — the very worst scenario Gandhiji could have imagined.

As we have already seen in the preceding section, Gandhiji expressed in *Hind Swaraj* unmitigated aversion to the idea that India should emulate the British form of government as well as the values and practices of western civilization. Today's Gandhians are confronted with an even greater problem. The non-moral and non-spiritual western society that Gandhiji so deplored is now becoming the global society, and India is joining it.

Nevertheless, despite Indian society's rejection of the moral and spiritual life for the accumulation of wealth and unlimited 'power to' and 'power over', some progress continues to be made in alleviating the oppression and suffering of a small minority of Indian farmers. But as heroic and determined as the modern-day Gandhian workers may be in eliminating pockets of the on-going cycle of poverty, they have only managed to introduce self-sufficient measures into a very small proportion of India's half million villages. The task required to reach larger numbers — an effort

that would be necessary in order to register a national impact — beggars one's imagination in the current political and economic climate.

Back in the sixties and seventies there might have been some promising signs. Vinoba (spiritual) and J.P. (political) were performing what appeared to be Gandhian miracles. Two westerners, E. F. Schumacher (*Small Is Beautiful*) and Ivan Illych (*The De-Schooling Society* and *Tools for Conviviality*), were engaged in research along the lines espoused by Gandhiji. They came to the Gandhian Institute for Peace at Varanasi, a research center set up by J.P. under the directorship of Sugata Dasputa to inquire scientifically into the issues entailed in creating a nonviolent society. The success of their books and the world-wide popularity of their ideas, however, did not translate into the type of communities they were advocating. The impetus for radical change on a grand scale awaited a new era.

Hope was one quality that Gandhiji had in abundance. He would have known that macro-economics is about an inescapable uncertainty that lies beyond exact human prediction. Perhaps a charismatic leader (or leaders) would appear to arrest the drift to the 'bodily' attractions of a westernized global society; a critical mass of Indian society would be converted to *satyagraha* principles. In the end, India's renowned ability to co-opt and absorb new values into the status quo would take place. It was possible. But is such a Gandhi-like article of faith justified? To most political scientists and politicians the proposition does not even merit consideration. Sharpians, while more sympathetic, would also be inclined to take a negative view, opting for the stance that 'half a loaf is better than none.'

Another question to consider (a topic discussed in the previous section): Is it empirically the case that Gandhiji's use of the full complement of power techniques produces results different from those of other groupings, simply because he has inserted *satyagraha* values into the equation? When exercising 'power over', as in the Quit India' campaign, his humane outreach did not melt the hearts of most of the English elite. General Smuts of South Africa and Lord and Lady Mountbatten of Great Britain represent notable exceptions. At the time of Indian independence British opinion was more representative of that of Prime Minister Clement Atlee. He commented on the way India was draining the British purse rather than acknowledging the virtue of ceding independence to the 'jewel of the empire.' In other words, a mixed reaction from his opponent meant there was no win/win outcome. Only later did more cordial tributes ensue about Gandhiji and the gaining of independence.

Beyond dispute has been Gandhiji's skill as a masterful strategist — a point Gene Sharp stressed in an early book (*Gandhi as a Political Strategist*) and recently confirmed in an informal discussion with the author. Gandhiji's shrewd strategic timing in leading the most populous colony to independence has been acknowledged and emulated by virtually every great nonviolent practitioner. He represents the font of nonviolent knowledge and experience to which they have all deferred from every corner of the world: Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama, Danilo Dolci, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Petra Kelly, Thomas Merton, Cesar Chavez, Dorothy Day, Aung San Suu Kyi, Helder Camara, A.J. Muste — to name just a few. As an inspiring symbol of nonviolence, Gandhiji has no equal. His name and picture are instantly and universally recognizable. From the well-spring of his teachings and campaigns have emerged new teachings and many more



campaigns. Today, when people feel unjustly treated and the path to righting the injustice is barred through conventional politics, they are no longer confined to the limited options of violence or submission. A third option of nonviolence is available — a political method that has been tried, tested and often proven successful, but never on a more self-conscious, dramatic and larger scale than in the independence campaign that Gandhiji led.

Gandhiji also left a legacy that reminds us of the importance of love in all our human relations and the futility and unhappiness attached to the endless pursuit of material wealth. Many people have found his philosophy of truth attractive — the proposition that the individual's life can be a journey striving toward Absolute Truth which he equated with God. 'Truth is God,' he said. Finally, Gandhiji exemplified through his 'experiments of life' the high value to be gained by accepting the responsibility or duty to make the existential moral choice rather than allow oneself to be buffeted aimlessly about by the winds of social/political injustice. The appeal to the moral 'power within' (the love force, etc.) to permeate the wider societal structures pervades every single line of *Hind Swaraj*, and has a relevancy in today's critical times that we ignore at our peril.

However, a ubiquitous problem persists. How do we take the messages that Gandhiji bequeathed to us to the next level? How do we forge the structures and culture that will create and sustain a nonviolent global society? Is a world of interlocking *panchayat rajs*<sup>2</sup> a realistic choice? Or are the 'power to' and 'power over' societies that currently exist beyond the pale of fundamental change? While people like Vinoba Bhave and Jayaprakash

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<sup>2</sup> A *panchayat* comprises a village council of usually five members who resolve disputes without recourse to the official state judicial system.

Narayan once made inroads toward the Gandhian vision, those kinds of distant events have not recurred on the same scale, and now fade into hazy historical memories.

## **Conclusion**

Interwoven throughout this essay have been four themes. They are designed to look at Gandhiji's principled nonviolence, as expounded in *Hind Swaraj*, through a prism of power. The first theme seeks to explain the antipathy that political scientists, along with establishment personnel in general, have for nonviolence — whether it is the anti-elitist strategy of nonviolent political action featured in the writings of Gene Sharp, or the more radical proposal of Gandhiji to effect a revolution through the creation of a nonviolent society.

As a political scientist trained in the discipline's currency of power, I have looked at the power templates that the different parties bring to their analyses of politics to explain the antagonism. It soon became apparent that the underlying power perspectives of the nonviolent votaries — particularly Gandhiji's call for the power of self-rule to foment a revolutionary cultural transformation — openly challenge the authority ('power to') and domination ('power over') by which elites function. Therefore to make the nonviolence of either the Sharpian or Gandhian kind credible to the elites of western societies, there will have to be an inordinate shift in the way the society as a whole construes power. Which raises the question of how to break through the pervasive cultural hegemony of the elite...?

One suggestion is to operate on the premise that one is dealing with a culture steeped in pragmatism. Almost any means or method that will bring success

has virtually become a global norm. Therefore widely disseminating information about the successes of nonviolence should be a first priority. If elites become familiar with the full panoply of nonviolent methods — extending from interpersonal mediation skills to political techniques of nonviolent coercion — and realize the tool of nonviolence is available to all parties, they might be prepared to incorporate it into their political armory. While attaining political legitimacy might be seen as a way of perpetuating elite control, substituting nonviolence for violence and oppression can only be viewed as a major step forward in the written history of humankind. Indeed, for the cultural and structural chasm to close even marginally would constitute remarkable progress after approximately ten thousand years of intra species physical violence.

The second theme looked at and compared how the three groupings of political scientists/politicians, Sharpians, and Gandhians exercised their power. Gandhiji and Sharp differed widely on the philosophical front. Sharp was not hesitant to use the nonviolent mechanisms of coercion and disintegration, whereas Gandhiji sought to justify how the ‘power over’ also worked to the advantage of his opponent in the long run whenever he strategically deemed it was necessary to resort to these mechanisms.

The third theme noted that Gandhiji led the only grouping dedicated to a purpose that was spelled out in its actions. The other groupings might aim for a noble goal, but any means (apart from physical violence in the case of the Sharpians) that did the job would suffice. The purpose advanced by Gandhiji — namely, living in a society based on soul-force, truth-force, love-force and nonviolence — could only be fashioned out of tools that bore the same mark. Every action had to be tested against an ideal. Thus the

British parliamentary system was caustically denounced and considered inappropriate for the new state that he envisaged for India. Western civilization failed the 'true test' because it put material bodily welfare above the welfare of people relations and their spiritual needs. And if Indians failed the fearless test or were not dedicated to self-purification the nonviolent society would never emerge.

The fourth theme raised a series of questions. Most importantly, do the objectives Gandhiji set forth in *Hind Swaraj* 100 years ago have relevancy in a world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Many of the specifics that he proposed and demonstrated, such as relating education to people's immediate needs, advocating celibacy to sharpen awareness, and sleeping with virgins to test will power, open up topics to be discussed. On the other hand, his general positions and actions tend to be less debatable. His sharp criticism of materialism and the need to take seriously the quality of love not only made sense in his time but speak directly to another world 100 years later.

In conclusion, while Gandhiji's grand dream may not have been realized, on a less ambitious but very significant note, he played a key role in making people aware of the nonviolent option to conflict resolution. People have taken from the Gandhian legacy what has seemed most relevant to their needs and the attaining of their dream. *Hind Swaraj*, although frozen in the time and place of one man's journey in relative truth, offers an extraordinary assortment of thoughts and impressions that people can call on selectively. We choose our history, Gandhiji pointed out, as long as we reject the superstition that people should obey unjust laws, and we nonviolently create just ones in their place (70,72). This call to produce justice wherever there is

injustice can be considered the overriding theme to be derived from *Hind Swaraj*.

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