

Love-force as Educator

By Pablo Ouziel

Introduction

The Spanish novelist Miguel Delibes, once wrote the following words: “I would shout right now, like the protagonist of a well-known American song: Stop the world, I want to get off!” These words were part of his acceptance speech as member of the Royal Spanish Academy, the title of his talk was: *A world in agony*. In the text I recall little room for hope. I remember clearly, nevertheless, that I embraced his lucid message and despite its seemingly dark ending, which I refused to embrace, I felt drawn to his vision. I first came across this text in 2002. At the time, I lived in New York City and had just witnessed with my own eyes, first, the collapse of the Twin Towers, and subsequently, the extreme and collective radicalization of a whole people, thirsty for war and embracing racism and persecution of people of Muslim and Arab descent. The experience came as a shock to me. I was twenty-five years old and completely imbued in the language of freedom, equality and justice for which I had moved from Europe to the United States. Throughout my childhood, adolescence, and time as a young adult, the history I had learnt was the history of western mainstream thought. For me, the American dream was a reality, those of us who wanted to, could be rich and therefore be ‘good’ by giving through philanthropy. Wars were a necessary requirement in order to keep the ‘bad’ people away, and had to be fought because ‘we’ were constantly being attacked. Although the environment was being destroyed, ‘capable’ men were working tirelessly to solve the problem. Our wonderful scientists with their corporate and governmental sponsors were going to fix everything for us, so that we could continue ‘prospering’ and ‘humanizing’ our planet. Although the Barbarians were present – in fact the majority of

the planet was Barbaric – I was lucky enough to be born into the world of the civilized, and with my education, race, position, and example, I like many more represented hope for the species. The key to this, was for me to remain productive in the capitalist enterprise, to embrace one of the large political parties to govern over me, to respect the law at all times, to focus on personal prosperity, and to denounce the violence of minorities in the West and the violence of non-western states, while supporting ‘our’ own institutionalized violence. How ignorant I was! And yet, how ignorant I remain.

Following the September 11th terrorist attacks my world changed, not because I began to fear the ‘terrorists’ – which of course anyone walking in the downtown area of any major city of the industrialized world is at least weary off – but because somehow the magnitude of the event and the response by my fellow citizens, governments, corporations and militaries, forced me into a deep exploration of my own moral values and acquired knowledge. Since then, the task has been a personal struggle with myself, my beliefs, conditionings, dogmas, and with the human-structured apparatus of exploitation I was trained to serve. It is that dark ‘event’ of 2001, which I must thank for having incited me towards discovering alternatives to the propaganda with which I had been falsely educated. I can safely say at this point, with full trust in my reason, and after having worked very hard to question my personal beliefs, that I was living a lie. I personified the lie which billions of people around the world are enticed towards everyday through numerous institutionalized means of deception. For this reason, once I realized the conundrum that I faced, I was paralyzed. I could no longer morally justify my own existence to myself, and yet, I had nowhere to go and not many people eager to offer much guidance. More importantly, going against the dogmatized beliefs of a

‘whole’ people whom I felt were ‘my’ people, offered terrifying prospects for a lost-soul whose family and friends considered apt for joining an asylum for the insane.

Nevertheless, unable to close my eyes to the disparity between my moral beliefs and my living truth, I somehow found the courage to swim against the current of mainstream thought and plunge into the abyss of alternative possibilities. I packed my backpack, terminated all my responsibilities in Manhattan, and left the ‘civilized’ world aiming to never come back. Why come back to a Western civilization, which to me represented a very dangerous and exploitative deceit?

This abrupt break led me to Asia, there I thought I would find the greener pastures which I longed for. Nevertheless, that utopia quickly vanished, and although I met remarkable educators whose message was always the same – “be the change you want to see” – after two years living with the indigenous peoples of a remote island on the Andaman Sea, the time arrived for me to come back to the West. Having during my absence, limited my interaction with the western world to the writings of ‘great’ men and women, the task that I envisioned for myself as a way of life was slowly crystallizing. I would cultivate my intellect, and work deeply on myself morally and spiritually, in order to gain the strength and skill necessary, to first awaken myself, and then contribute to the awakening of human consciousness to the atrocities being committed around the globe. It would only be much later on that I would realize my work was truly aiming towards the unhinging of the ‘collective’ mindset from its thirst for violence and power – a truly necessary transformation if the human family is ever to live in peace.

The years have passed since that initial plunge into the abyss in 2002, and I am grateful to a long list of educators for having offered guidance throughout this pilgrimage into myself. Their visions and insights throughout this personally transformative exploration have been key, and yet, there is nobody I owe more to, than to Mahatma Gandhi. It is he, who has brought me to myself and made me realize that the change I envision is not a Utopia. That it is instead a real possibility already in motion, to which I contribute by remaining true to myself. It has been Gandhi that has helped me crystallize the meaning of love-force and its possibilities for the achievement of political and social transformation. Subsequently, this love-force has become my educator on this revolutionary path that is slowly but surely redefining the way we live in this world, between ourselves and in our interaction with non-human nature. For this reason, in this paper I want to explore the power of love-force, the kind of force, that for me represents the most reasonable option for abandoning the current path of violence – this catastrophic path adopted obstinately and blindly by such a large portion of the human family.

In order to explore the power of love-force, I first present Gandhi as an educator whose pure intent has allowed me to identify him as my peer. I then proceed to explain love-force's educational traits, and I conclude with an urgent call to action while acknowledging the difficult task ahead. Throughout the paper, as a reader you will frequently encounter recurring terms such as *love*, *(t)ruth*, *(T)ruth*, and *peace*, for which you might feel no convincing definition has been offered. Although I have attempted to give as much description as possible to the essence of these important yet ambiguous

terms, my presentation of them can only be an evaluative description¹. It is my belief, that through sincerity², any plurality of meanings usually attributed to such terms can be dialogically resolved, thus allowing us to accommodate the “otherness of the other” under the auspice of some common Truths³.

Gandhi the Peer

It is often difficult to avoid seeing Gandhi as a semi-God whom one need not compare oneself with. The portrayal of him as a mystical figure helps rid us of our responsibilities as we observe him doing the work, which billions of us should today be carrying out in order for our planet to live in peace. Seeing Gandhi as a messenger, placing him next to Jesus or Buddha, separates him from us, and helps nullify him as a potential educator by turning him like the others into a shrine. Divinity is frequently used to buffer-out our own conscience. “Only special beings can do what Gandhi did”, is the kind of justification divinity usually generates. Yet, in order to facilitate the comprehension of his life’s work, in coming face to face with Gandhi’s thought one must demystify this abstract idea. Gandhi was like you and I, no more Godly, no more Human. What made him unique was that he clung to the truth, his truth, like few rarely do. It is

¹ In the unpublished draft-essay *Thinking Along With Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, James Tully explains how “public judgments are ‘evaluative descriptions’ of public problems and the aspectival field in which they arise” (page 8).

² For my understanding of the word ‘sincerity’ I am using Nietzsche’s explanation and example: “Everything that can be denied, deserves to be denied; and real sincerity means the belief in a state of things which cannot be denied, or in which there is no lie” (Nietzsche 1874/1914, 142-143).

³ Also in *Thinking Along With Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*, Tully mentions that “[p]lurality is not something to overcome but to celebrate. It ‘enlarges’ the perspective of each as they try to move around and see the problem from the stand point of others” (page 10). Tully is summarizing Wittgenstein’s later philosophy. In addition Tully tells us, that “relationships... understood as ongoing practices of critical judgment, create a kind of plural ‘we’ in which the otherness of the other is not overcome but recognized and accommodated” (page13). “Under the auspices of some common Truth” is my own interpretation of what allows this otherness to be accepted.

my conviction that the more people that cling to their truth, the safer our world will become. If we can reach similar conclusions to those reached by Gandhi, if we accept that “immorality is often taught in the name of morality” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 37) and that our corrupt states with their many inhumane laws should not evoke loyalty, we may have found fertile ground from which to cultivate an alternative paradigm. But in order to follow such a path, western citizens in particular, must first realize that we often speak and brag of freedoms and rights which in essence are only “luxurious margins allowed us by the ruling group” (Gregg 1966, 127). Granted to us, so that we can be walked silently to the slaughterhouse, without a single complaint. It has become perfectly clear in today’s reality, that under the guise of fighting potential threats and managing depressionary economies our freedoms and rights are rapidly dwindling.

Nevertheless, if we are able to comprehend the implications of such acknowledgments, once the initial shock is overcome, our options broaden and our responsibility becomes clear to us as something to be pursued. We are no longer able to forget ourselves and become compliant to such a degrading state of affairs. From such a mindset, we understand that we are slaves because of “the superstition that men should obey unjust laws” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 92), and therefore, we know that by clinging to our truth and abandoning such superstition we are able to break our chains. That is the course we must take, if we are interested in abandoning what Russell Johnson called the “violence of the *status quo*” (quoted in Deming 1971, 195) – a *status quo* from which billions of human-beings (and the whole planet) suffer, so that a few can increment their selfish and exploitative gains.

It is in the way that Gandhi approaches the breaking of this *status quo*, that one can learn the most from him as a political and social justice activist. It is true that he embraces violence over cowardice when it comes to fighting injustice and immorality. It is also true that he understands the need for eruptions of violence to vent rather than be suppressed. But he has reasoned “the uncontrollable nature of violence”⁴, he understands the resentment and urge for revenge that it generates, and thus sees violence as counterproductive. He does not consider violence a necessary act in an emancipatory struggle. Under circumstances of extreme urgency, such as the ones we are currently facing, with such institutionalized and sustained inhumanity, in order for things to change, normal activities must be suspended and we must concentrate full-heartedly on recapturing our spiritual and moral equilibrium. It is under such conditions, that Gandhi feels “it is our duty to say exactly what we think and face the consequences” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 117). Of course he understands that the powerful ruling groups will vilify those who resist, in an attempt to divert attention from the truth and discredit the actions of the resisters. But he also sees that rulers can only truly be the servants of the people, or they are bound to find in the long-run, noncooperative responses from those being ruled without consent. For this reason, Gandhi states that it is not the violent response that should be encouraged, this can only give authorities more leeway in taking repressive measures. Furthermore, even if a battle is won through violence, it will not lead to victory but to defeat. Violence will always reproduce itself in violence. Instead, he proposes a nonviolent solution in which every participant has a personal stake, a new mindset in

⁴ Phrase used by Joseph Kosek to describe the discovery both Gandhi and Gregg had made. Kosek, J.K. (2005) ‘Richard Gregg, Mohandas Gandhi, and the Strategy of Nonviolence’ in *The Journal of American History*, March 2005, page 1323.

which the population regains political participation by boldly refusing to limit their say to the registration of a vote at the ballot box.

Of course taking into consideration the greed and violence which has broken the social fabric of society over centuries, and understanding the entrenched interests at stake in the battle for emancipation, it seems doubtful that a “gentle resistance plus love could either effectively sap such power or overcome or divert such energy” (Gregg 1966, 113). Yet, that is exactly what Gandhi suggests, he argues that a majority must transcend a violent state of being and become something else. With patience and tolerance we must allow good to filter slowly through the cracks of aggression and thus neutralize it, eliminate it. Instead of demanding rights, we must focus on our duties, “real rights are a result of performance of duty” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 82). Once duties are defined, we can work towards evolving “the spirit of democracy out of slavery... [by being] scrupulously exact in our dealings with opponents” (Gandhi 2008, 337). Because we seek justice, we must be just; we must gain the trust and confidence of our enemies while agitating their minds if we want “real order to be evolved out of this chaos which is misrepresented” (Gandhi 2008, 354). For Gandhi, love and truth are the only possible peace, and he names this philosophy *Satyagraha* – love-force, soul-force or nonviolence. For pragmatic reasons he also accepts the more popular western label of passive resistance, but acknowledges it is not really the same, passivity lacks the active nature of this powerful force, he claims.

Gandhi in essence makes a plea for action based on principle, knowing full well that the final outcome of love-force is inconceivable, and that such radical change comes at a great inconvenience and loss to those participating in the struggle. But if we are to

prosper, we must broaden our conception of freedom from that which is granted to us by our masters, and know that we will only attain the kind of freedom written about by poets, through intense suffering. When the spirit of love-force dominates the billions we will be free and we will have peace. We will substitute “the struggle for existence by the struggle for mutual service, [and] [t]he law of the brute will be replaced by the law of man” (Gandhi 2008, 90). This process, he argues, will require the reconstruction of the entire social order, but once the human mind has turned “towards this way of life, there will come about a peaceful revolution in society, and that without any bitterness” (Gandhi 2008, 95).

Gandhi believed so much in the truth of love-force, that like a true ‘Peace-Creator, Giver of Calm’⁵ he argued that the unconditional renunciation to war by just one great nation, would allow many of us to “see in our lifetime visible peace established on earth” (Gandhi 2008, 42). He was so confident of this truth that while the world was engulfed in the spirit of violence of the coming Second World War, he advised the German Jews to adopt love-force to arouse the world and the people of Germany to Hitler’s oppression. This was in 1938. In 1942, he continued to believe in the spirit of love-force and suggested that a Japanese invasion should be stopped nonviolently although millions of people would certainly be killed⁶. In addition, in the midst of the war, he wrote a letter to Hitler emphasizing that although his acts were “monstrous and

⁵ “[P]eace-Creators; Givers of Calm” a quote from the Bible, James iii. 18, which Ruskin uses in *Unto this Last* to describe the kind of human who can bring peace to the world. Ruskin, J. (1862/1997) ‘Unto This Last’, in *Unto This Last and Other Writings*, edited by Clive Wilmer, London: Penguin Classics.

⁶ This information is derived from an article in which George Orwell is critiquing Gandhi. Orwell, G. (1949) *Reflections on Gandhi*, available online at: <http://www.online-literature.com/orwell/898/>

unbecoming of human dignity” (Gandhi 1994, v.73, 253-255)⁷ he did not believe him to be the monster described by his opponents. Although the British suppressed its publication, Gandhi always claimed he had written a “good letter” (Gandhi 1994, v.73, 288). The power of his conviction was too strong, and by the last-phase of the War, when Britain was simply waiting to be invaded, he suggested to the British people to lay down their arms and “invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take... possession of [their] beautiful island” without giving them a chance to steal their “souls” nor “minds.”⁸ These public statements showed, that despite the whirlwind of criticism and blind nationalism, Gandhi was able to verbalize what many felt and dared not say, thus confirming his deep belief in the power of love-force. Even after the war, for Gandhi, what had happened was not a victory, “Hitlerism had only been destroyed by super-Hitlerism” (Gandhi 1994, v.86, 246-48) and Gandhi was not sure who to pity more, “the Allies or the enemies” (Gandhi 1994, v.86, 436).

It was these kinds of opinions that made Gandhi the unpopular figure that he was amongst the ruling elites. He was neutralizing their power by discrediting their methods of coercion and they were not sure how to respond. But the antagonism he received did not detract him from his commitment to truth, he was used to it. Years of struggle through love-force had strengthened his convictions and determination. The numerous imprisonments and beatings he endured, the censoring of his work (on March 1910 the

⁷ The Gandhi quotes on this page and the next from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (1994) are drawn from an unpublished paper by professor Norman G. Finkelstein (2010 unpublished) *Resolving the Israeli-Palestine Conflict: What we can learn from Gandhi*.

⁸ Gandhi quoted in page 109 of Agarwal, S.N. (1946) *Gandhian Constitution for Free India*, New Delhi: Khama Publishers.

government of India banned *Hind Swaraj* for fear of sedition)⁹ and his fasts, together made him understand the power of self-sacrificing love-force and its threat to the *status quo*. Sadly, because of his determination, many saw him as “a wandering hermit... dropped by chance into his age” (Nietzsche 1874/1914, 178)¹⁰. Because he knew humans rather than books and worshiped truth before all else, he was incomprehensible to those imitating the dogmatic and violent ideas of their oppressors. But Gandhi’s genius shun away from burrowing “among the innumerable strange and wrong-headed opinions” (Nietzsche 1874/1914, 189), and kept him committed to his shallow but true-truth. He was committed to living his philosophy, hoping to serve as an exemplar to his fellow humans, hoping to provoke at every turn. He resisted being mimicked and refused Gandhism, to Gandhi, an ism behind his name would not endure and if it did, it would not be Gandhism (Gandhi 2008, 20). He was adamant on this point. His example showed a method, an approach, a philosophy, but not a dogma. The love-force that he preached and lived required the cultivation of one’s higher self. It was an example of that true philosophy of which Nietzsche had spoken, that “of the Grecian philosophers, whose doctrine was in their dress and bearing and general manner of life rather than in their speech or writing” (Nietzsche 1874/1914, 118). And it was the purity of his example, which led even those who mocked his views –such as George Orwell –, to acknowledge the clean “smell he has managed to leave behind!” (Orwell, 1949).

⁹ This is explained in Anthony Parel’s introduction to *Hind Swaraj* in Gandhi, M.K. (1909/2009) *Hind Swaraj and other Writings*, edited by Anthony J. Parel, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

¹⁰ Throughout the paper, to speak of Gandhi and love-force I am frequently using quotes by Nietzsche that he used to describe Schopenhauer and Genius. I think the exactness of his language fits perfectly the descriptions I am trying to make. I am confident that although I change their context, I am not in anyway disrupting the essence of the points Nietzsche makes.

For Gandhi, it was out of Truth that love emerged and it was through love that one found Truth, they were two sides of the same coin. Thus “one who would scrupulously cling to Truth, must be utterly humble” (Gandhi 2008, 54). The more genuine the observance of truth the humbler one would become, since through truth one would be experiencing pure knowledge, the realization that “[t]he sum total of all that is true is Truth”, while one cannot “sum up all that is true” (Gandhi 1994, vol.84, 266)¹¹. He was able to reach this level of clarity because he did not allow others to keep his genius from him, and thus, came face to face with it unobstructed by dissuasionary propaganda. From this attained plane, for which he had fought only with himself, he found himself not fearing a fight to the death against injustice, and began to redefine our standard values. Through the metamorphosis of his being, he showed us the Truth of the meaning of life. Under the guise of this ‘new’ man that had been reborn within the skin of its previous self (Gandhi the lawyer transformed into Gandhi the searcher of truth), he denied everything that deserved to be denied, and refused to accept any lie. This was the sincerity of his truth, this was the core of his love-force, but it was so simple an idea, that it acquired a metaphysical air that the majority of humanity failed to comprehend. It was because of this, that Gandhi set out to become the educator, to “offer himself as the first victim of the truth he ha[d] won, with a deep consciousness of the sufferings that must spring from his sincerity” (SE, 143). Receptive to the knowledge of others, as a truth-seeker, he set out to ‘be’ love-force, to him, the deepest truth at the core of life. His clarity led him to proclaim: “Truth is God” (Gandhi 2008, 44), and he followed such a statement, by explaining that although he had doubted “the existence of God”, he had never doubted

¹¹ This Gandhi quote is drawn from Skaria, A. (2002) ‘Gandhi’s Politics: Liberalism and the Question of the Ashram’ in *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101:4, Fall 2002, page 970

“the existence of Truth”. This Truth was to him “pure consciousness” (Gandhi 2008, 46). For Gandhi, “Truth should be the very breath of our life” (Gandhi 2008, 45), there should be Truth in thought, speech, and action. He longed for the day when “the sun of truth” would blaze “in all its glory in a person’s heart” so that “every word uttered by him” would “be charged with such power, such life, that it [would] produce an immediate effect on the people” (Gandhi 2008, 47). He understood he was not the holder of that Truth, but nevertheless, he adamantly clung to his own, and argued that without love-force, there could only be destruction for humanity. Love-force’s persistent search for truth was to him, “the surest method of discovering the truth and... the quickest because there is no other” (Gandhi 2008, 56).

With such beliefs, Gandhi touched my youthful soul and stirred my conceptions, the admiration I felt for him led me to inner change. Following him, I felt I was faithfully following my own footsteps. His essence was that of genius, in that it made me realise I did not need genius to instigate social change, I could just work hard on myself. He showed me the way into answering the question of how I should live. Gandhi once wrote of Tolstoy what I am confident, one could easily say about him: “There is no doubt that there is nothing new in what [he] preaches. But his presentation of the old truth is refreshingly forceful. His logic is unassailable. And, above all, he endeavours to practice what he preaches” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 138).

The Power of Love-force

On May 3rd 2009, Howard Zinn spoke at a conference marking the 100th Anniversary of *The Progressive* magazine¹². The title of his lecture was the *Three Holy Wars*, and in it, he urged his audience to rethink the “whole idea of war”. He argued that war could not be accepted no matter what reasons were given as justification. By definition he said, “War is the indiscriminate killing of millions of people for ends which are uncertain.” He then went on to suggest that although disputes needed to be resolved, “in between war and passivity, there are a thousand possibilities.” For me, love-force fits somewhere within those thousand alternatives, yet, “the consent of mankind has always, in spite of the philosophers, given precedence to the soldier” (Ruskin 1862/1997, 175). This is because violence is viewed as the way for change, but those who have exemplified love-force, explain to us that while violence obtains reform by external means, love-force obtains it by growth form within. An internal force, “which in its turn, is obtained by self-suffering [and] self-purification” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 146). Love-force is the moral weapon which is never cruel and which fights to win by obtaining mastery of the self. Love-force negates the use of violence in its practitioners and seeks to influence those conducting a violent attack. Love-force is a choice which one makes to renounce violence courageously. Its main supportive argument being, that armed peace is fake love under the auspices of hatred and fear, and thus breaks down under the slightest form of pressure. Seen through this lens, “war will only be stopped when the conscience

¹² Howard Zinn, Lecture: *The Three Holy Wars* at Monona Terrace, Madison, marking the 100th Anniversary of *The Progressive* magazine. Available online: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XUBYI97cUgU>

of mankind has become sufficiently elevated to recognize the undisputed supremacy of the Law of Love in all the walks of life” (Gandhi 2008, 57).

The difficulty with popularizing this means for conflict resolution – this way of being – is that this “courageous self-consciousness” cannot be given to others because of the impossibility of teaching love (Nietzsche 1874/1914, 157). Yet, the understanding of its ways can help us “emulate”¹³ them. If we understand that love never makes claims and always gives, that it is always willing to suffer without resentment and that it never seeks revenge, we will understand it as “the one constructive process of Nature in the midst of incessant destruction going on about us” (Gandhi 2008, 56). Yet, it cannot be taught. We can only be directed towards its magic within ourselves. Because its very principle is the continuity of life, love offers the energy that violence destroys. For this reason, love-force is in essence, the constructive exploitation of the human traits of courage, honesty, humility and love, inherent in our being. It is the only force struggling for a peaceful and just human family, between each other and with non-human nature. Yet, because we have come to accept violence as the main pattern of human interaction, self-training and discipline are key if love-force is ever to function at a mass scale. After all, only when military glory becomes military shame will peace be attained, and such a process requires the arduous deconstruction of our current worldviews. This law of love which is the path to peace, is the “hallucination, if it is one,” under which Gandhi and all other practitioners

¹³ In his reading of *Schopenhauer as Educator* James Conant explains how for Nietzsche when one thinks about how to live a meaningful life we first attempts to emulate (as opposed to imitate) our exemplar until eventually we learn to answer the question ourselves. Conant, J. () ‘Nietzsche’s Perfectionism: A Reading of Schopenhauer as Educator’ in *Nietzsche’s Postmoralism: Essays on Nietzsche’s Prelude to Philosophy’s Future*, edited by Richard Schacht, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (page 196).

of love-force are labouring (Gandhi 2008, 61) – a path to inward purity which requires committed work if its practitioner is to avoid “falling into a delusion” (Gandhi 2008, 62).

In practice, love-force used in conflict resolution, is “a method of securing rights by personal suffering,” by refusing “to do a thing that is repugnant to [ones] conscience” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 90). It is a way of making demands to those inflicting violence upon us without returning violence, but with a refusal to cooperate. It is an “intelligent kindness” (Gregg 1966, 109) whose strength does not come from physical strength but from “an indomitable will” (Gandhi quoted in Juergensmeyer 1984, 50). It is really the materialization of an individualist philosophy which operates “[f]or one’s self only, in the first instance; and finally, through one’s self, for all” (SE, 126). A false dichotomy that is useful for explaining a temporal process, but which is quickly demystified when we come to realize that “all is one, though we *seem* to be many” (Gandhi 2008, 65). It is in this holistic conceptualization, that the materialization of love-force represented by acts of nonviolent-noncooperation seeks honourable alliances with fellow human beings, and lacks all desire to destroy. Love-force presents itself as an intensely active and risk-taking constructive resistance to the universal inhumanity and moral degradation implicit in oppression – without leaving aside, the immutable relationship between means and ends (treating all that is ‘life’ as an end and not a mean). This is its revolutionary nature. This is the change. It revolutionizes our means of interaction, and thus opens us up to an abyss of opportunity in our politics and social life. Of course there is no “complete science of nonviolence” to support such statements – as with its antagonist the science of violence – most of its categorical truths could only be mythical. For this reason, love-force does not

hinge its Truth upon the habit of scientific reduction, relying instead on inner exploration and outer experimentation.

Unfortunately, in practice a love-force advocate today explores this “partially tried remedy... in an atmosphere surcharged with violence” (Gandhi 2008, 368), yet, this force by eliminating inner conflict and fear, allows its experimenter to willingly “surrender all unjust advantages and privileges” (Mashruwala 1946, 30) and enter a state of conscious suffering. This causes attackers to lose their moral balance and plunges them forward “into a new world of values” (Gregg 1966, 44). It converts without coercion, but it does this after endured hardship. In conflict, love-force “is open to all the risks of war [but] without any retaliatory heroism to boast of” (Mashruwala 1946, 31). It is really not an easy philosophy to experiment with. Perhaps with sensitive opponents positive and visible results can be obtained rapidly, but when dealing with a hardened soldier, an armchair warrior, a money hungry capitalists, or a corrupt politician, anyone approaching the conflict through love-force, must be willing to face intense suffering and the possibility of death before a visible transformation takes place. It is in this willingness to face death for truth and through love, that the guidelines for an explorer of love-force are set. It is in this ultimate potentiality of losing ones own life, that love-force educates us about its nonviolent nature. It is in the understanding of this maxim that the advocate-explorer can begin a nonviolent path. First in relation to himself or herself, and then expanding outwardly to family, friends, neighbours, and society and nature at large. Cultivating only relationships of love and nonviolent mutual cooperation.

Ideally, the whole of humanity will adopt such practices over the coming decades, if that happens we will be able to end the century differently to how it begun, but habits

and interests are deeply ingrained, and the fear of pain, suffering and death are common, so those exploring with love-force must realize that it is not necessary for everyone to practice it in order for it to be effective. Apart from what the hostile oppressor might do, it might be the case that some people in a particular society although not willing to risk their life for what they identify as a noble cause, might instead willingly support those experimenting with love-force against the oppressor. If that is the case, disciplined love-force practitioners backed by momentous support from a peoples, are likely to achieve noticeable success through their nonviolent and non-cooperative responses to immoral injustice. A success based on the rejection of the three possible outcomes of successful power politics; voluntary submission of one side, victory of the other, or compromise¹⁴. Necessary rejections from which derive the natural rules of engagement (steps) logically adopted during love-force experimentation in the midst of violence. First, the thorough exploration of the principles of both sides, second, the creation of a nonviolent alternative which enhances the point of view of both sides, and third, the beginning of work on this new alternative (Juergensmeyer 1984, 9-10).

The aim of love-force is always to secure “a settlement truly amicable and truly satisfying to both sides” (Gregg 1966, 51), therefore, it is always the role of the explorers of this method, to make it easy and reasonable for their assailants to adopt these alternative ways. In dramatizing the idea of “essential human unity” (Gregg 1966, 57) there must be a true attempt at unification, any “inconsistencies, weaknesses, temptations and corruptions” (Gregg 1966, 140), in this respect, committed by those claiming to practice the force of love, will weaken the struggle by vanishing its true love-force. Yet,

¹⁴ In an unpublished email exchange with peers, James Tully reminds us that this is the success Richard Gregg is referring to in *The Power of Nonviolence*.

one must acknowledge that not all engaging in this kind of struggle will be “free from vindictiveness and the spirit of hatred” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 148), and therefore, the power of love-force will not often be absolute and consistent. It will always remain an experiment. Nevertheless, since humans are inherently creatures of habit, the right learning processes and habit formation tactics in the spirit and philosophy of love-force, will allow nonviolent responses to become habitual processes. Disciplined training aimed at strengthening body and mind will aid our soul in the embrace of love-force, and if an emancipatory movement adopts such force, once successful it will have liberated the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

Of course many consider love-force suicidal, but those who feel this way must ask themselves if collective suicide is not what we are in the midst of committing with our consent, approval, and participation, in violence and war. If those who indeed see love-force as suicidal can drastically readjust their vision, and those practicing love-force can “learn to challenge more boldly those institutions of violence that constrict and cripple our humanity” (Deming 1971, 221), my hypothesis is, that the human family will eventually unite and live in peace.

Conclusion

From Gandhi I understood that in order to ‘be’ love-force I needed only to control my mind. So throughout the process of honing in my intellect, I examined closely Gandhi’s preferred term for describing his love-force, *Satyagraha*, clinging to the truth. During my analysis, I found myself agreeing with Barbara Deming’s assessment of the term, in which she reminds us of the fact that this clinging to truth refers to clinging to

our truth with our full weight. If we feel we have a right to sit somewhere and it is being denied, we sit there and we do not move. If we do not agree with a war we do not fight it and we do not support it, we refuse to cooperate. We refuse to pay for it with our taxes, we refuse to manufacture its weapons, and we refuse to accept the drums of war. As Tolstoy indicates it: ‘Do not resist evil, but also yourselves participate not in evil, in the violent deeds of the administration of the law courts, the collection of taxes and, what is more important, of the soldiers, and no one in the world will enslave you’” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 137). Through love-force, I have come to understand that a prerequisite for my own freedom is the freedom of those oppressed under my acknowledgment and implicit consent. When I know that a nation, organization or group from which I attain all my privileges is committing inhumane acts on a daily basis, I am catapulted onto the stage so that I can denounce such actions. If I do not, and my privileges keep coming, I can only see myself as a selfish coward. I refuse to be that man. I consider myself a patriot of all countries, nations and peoples and therefore like Gandhi’s, “my patriotism is nothing if it is not always in every case, without exception, consistent with the broadest good of humanity at large” (Gandhi 2008, 19). For this reason, the power of love-force has convinced me of the need to boycott all inhumane laws, and yet, do so humanely.

Although I realize that I am yet far from attaining the purity of love-force that Gandhi describes, the kind of love-force whose “very glance withers the enemy” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 94), I find the strength for adopting this philosophy, in the conviction that our *status quo* is insane and catastrophic, and I cling on to the historical truth of love-force’s exemplar. Richard Gregg reminds us in his book *The Power of Nonviolence*, of the fact that love-force has been used successfully by all kinds of people, “by illiterate peasants

and city-bred intellectuals, by saints and the ordinary run of mankind, rich men and poor, property owners and homeless vagabonds, women as well as men, by meat eaters and vegetarians, Europeans and Americans, Negroes and whites, Chinese and Indians, by the religious-minded and those not so accounted” (Gregg 1966, 42). Despite the fact that the history we have recorded does not show love-force being adopted by a whole society, it has been successful in economic, political and social conflicts around the globe¹⁵. Of course more large-scale experiments are needed in order for us to see its full potential. But from Gregg’s work – who in the west was arguably one of its most prolific scholars and practitioners –, I understand that many of the failures of past love-force experiments, have been a consequence of lack of discipline, and a failure to understand its full implications and requirements. In addition, from Barbara Deming I grasp that many of those failures are also a consequence of lacking sustained love-force campaigning. People expecting too much from the powerful, have often stopped short of widespread nonviolence-noncooperation, she says (Deming 1971, 205).

It is due to our present and pitiful state of affairs, and through love-force’s exemplar – its internal effects in me, its historical successes and failures and the explorations and experimentations by its practitioners and theorists – that I am inclined to call for a full boycott of war and for a global strike for peace. At this point, anything short of such experimentation will create no major change. We need to ‘be’ love-force so that we can construct a global cooperative movement of nonviolent-noncooperation that can “paralyze the mightiest government on earth” (Gandhi 2008, 349). Our states, our democracies, our free-market economies and our military industrial complex are so

¹⁵ For some historical examples of successful applications of love-force in economic, social, and political conflicts read chapter one of *The Power of Nonviolence*, by Richard B. Gregg (full citation available in the bibliography at the end of this paper).

inhumane that the time has approached to “refuse obedience to every single State-made law, even though there may be a certainty of bloodshed” (Gandhi 2008, 356). The time has come for a nonviolent revolution in which we become outlaws, and through which we do not seek to seize power, but to transform social relations through a peaceful balancing of duties and rights between those oppressing and those being oppressed. That is the *Satyagraha* that I envision, the one that seems to make the most sense if through love-force we are to cling to our truth and to any sense of personal and collective dignity. Yet, I understand that we are far from such a moment and that I personally find myself far from being a pure *Satyagrahi*¹⁶. Although I intellectually understand what the term means and what nonviolent-noncooperation through love-force is all about, I am still angry. I am still infuriated by the injustices that I see being blatantly committed everyday; the banks stealing from the people, the corporations destroying the environment, our governments waging never ending wars, and the people caught in this intricate web of lies being selfishly and ignorantly passive and submissive. All this, angers me, frustrates and terrifies me. For this reason, although I seek to interiorize love-force in its entirety, and thus attempt to follow a nonviolent path, I often find myself sympathizing (in silence) with those who would happily see Obama, the CEO of BP, the CEO of Goldman Sachs, and General Petraeus tried and hanged. These characters, like many others are responsible for crimes against humanity and against the planet at a mass scale, and therefore, one could argue under the auspice of the violent philosophy currently popular in our societies, that such punishment would be justified and would serve as exemplar. But as I ponder on this thought, I realize that this is not the exemplar that I am interested in following or promoting, since this would not transform

¹⁶ A practitioner of Satyagraha or love-force.

substantially our societies, and would only nurture the cycle of violence we must full-heartedly strive to end.

We all grow up, I am thirty-three years old now, and eight years have passed since that initial awakening I experienced in New York to the immoral inhumanity of our time. I know that I am far from that initial violent philosophical position I absorbed at home as a child, at school, at university, at work, in my interaction with violently minded friends. I do understand that violence is not the way, and I am certainly committed to the absolute exploration of love-force and its possibilities. Nevertheless, although I understand love-force as the logical antidote to violence, I admit, that it could simply be wishful thinking. As a nonbeliever in the *One Almighty-Creator Holder of Truth*, faced with the unknown I can only speculate and hope. So it is with hope in one hand, and in the other, with the truth that our societies are currently immoral and inhumane, that I cling to love-force and continue to experiment.

In this paper I began with a quote from Miguel Delibes, in which he asks for the world to stop so that he can get off. He wrote these words because he saw a world in agony that saddened him dearly. I also am saddened by what I see, but after overcoming my fears I am certain it is not the world that must stop, but the people inhabiting it. All of us, must sit down, relax, hug each other, talk to each other earnestly and ask ourselves whether the world we have is the world that we want. Perhaps then, after a prolonged dialogue, our honesty will lead us to agree with Gandhi, and we will understand that “there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the ends as there is between the seed and the tree” (Gandhi 1909/2009, 81). If we truly understand this, our interaction with each other will be radically transformed. I make no claim to originality

with any of these words, but yet, I see love-force as my only true philosophical choice, and I drink from the fountain of its wisdom while planting its seed of continuity. I aim for the day when those nations “renowned in wars and victories, distinguished by the highest development of military order and intelligence, and accustomed to [making] the heaviest sacrifice to these objects, will voluntarily exclaim, ‘We will break our swords,’ and will destroy [their] whole military system, lock, stock, and barrel” (Nietzsche 1878/1914, 337). I speculate and hope that this day will come, and I intend to be alive to witness it.

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