

# GANDHI AND LEADERSHIP

GANDHI AND LEADERSHIP  
NEW HORIZONS IN  
EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP

Satinder Dhiman

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For my esteemed mother  
Shanti Devi  
the embodiment of peace  
and selfless service  
whose love and blessings  
have been my strength

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## PROLEGOMENA: A FOREWORD BY ARUN GANDHI

It is amazing how simple words can carry a powerful message and an incentive. Some months ago I read a sentence that made a profound impact on me. For a long time I had it under my email signature and when I took it off there were many protests. The message was simple: “If you think you are insignificant, try sleeping in a room with one mosquito.” Indeed, we all know that one mosquito can give a room full of people a sleepless night.

It was possibly something like this that inspired M. K. Gandhi, my grandfather, to coin the phrase: “We must become the change we wish to see in the world.” In fact, I would go so far as to say that the whole philosophy of nonviolence hinges on this phrase. Nonviolence may seem to succeed in certain situations like the independence of India, the granting of human rights to the South Africans and the Civil Rights struggle in the United States. But, if we examine each of these cases we will find the victory was not complete. India became free of British colonialism but it is not free of the internal exploitation, in every sphere of life, which creates conflict and chaos. South Africa is facing the same problem and so is the United States. The law has enabled integration, but not equality and respect.

The reason for this is that we tend to ignore the fact that over the centuries we have created a Culture of Violence designed to control people through fear. At every level, starting from parenting at home to controlling nations, it is always FEAR that plays an important role. Fear is the first step towards violence. So, the question we need to ask ourselves is, if FEAR AND VIOLENCE permeate entire societies how can conflicts be avoided peacefully? Another effect of control through fear is that we have become adept at “crisis management.” The tendency is to wait until a crisis explodes in our face and then we seek a quick solution which, inevitably, is violence. We seek to put an end to violence with more violence, increasing violence manifold instead of reducing it.

Gandhi's nonviolence was, therefore, much more comprehensive. If we truly believe in nonviolence we need to begin by acknowledging that we are all individually guilty of committing violence all the time. I know we have become so accustomed to looking at and experiencing violence in the physical form that we have learned not to regard violence in the passive form as violence at all. There are so many things we do, and so many ways we live, which hurt people somewhere or the other. The amount of food that we waste in the United States runs into billions of pounds a day, enough to feed an entire developing country. It is not just the food that we waste in our homes but the tonnes of food that are destroyed or dumped into the ocean to keep up the market prices. A recent newspaper report said the glut of tomatoes in The Netherlands, caused by Russia's refusal to import from countries that object to its policies in the Ukraine, was resolved by organizing a tomato fight in the streets of Amsterdam. The people and the streets were plastered with tomato pulp which must have taken even more tonnes of water to clean up.

Socrates said: "An unexamined life is not worth living." We never do examine our lives. We just live the way we want to with little or no concern for others, creating all sorts of disparities. Disparities lead to conflict and conflict to violence. In other words the passive violence that we commit consciously and unconsciously every day causes the victims of passive violence to get angry, and their anger ignites the fire of physical violence.

In a Culture of Violence even Justice has come to mean revenge. Our justice system is based on punishment and revenge and we practice the same kind of justice at home with our children when we use punishment to discipline them. What we need is reformative justice and not retributive justice.

Since the seeds of violence are planted in our children at home, it is here that we need to bring about a change to replace the Culture of Violence with a Culture of Nonviolence. This alone will save the world from perishing in a bloodbath of violence. What we are experiencing today is the beginning of World War III. History has shown us that wars have not resolved any problems, they have simply postponed them.

Gandhi provided us with the parameters of introspection which are:

Wealth without Work,  
Pleasure without Conscience,  
Knowledge without Character,  
Commerce without Morality,  
Science without Humanity,  
Worship without Sacrifice,  
Politics without Principles, and  
Rights without Responsibilities.

These, according to Gandhi, are the ingredients that make up the Culture of Violence. A study of these universal mistakes with a truly open and enquiring mind will show us a way out of the mire of violence.

Meanwhile Dr Satinder Dhiman, in his book *Gandhi and Leadership: New Horizons in Exemplary Leadership*, has done a commendable job of projecting Gandhi's philosophy in simple, lucid, understandable terms. The book is eminently readable and contributes substantially to a better and deeper understanding of Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence which not only offers a positive way of conflict resolution but also takes us along the road to personal transformation so that our existence may contribute to making this world a better place for future generations.

*Arun Gandhi*  
*Founder and President*  
*M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence*

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