

Non-Violence – to What Extent?

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On the .mp3 file there is a brief musical duet by Mrs. Kennell on the organ and Mrs. Gonsullus on violin.

“Non-Violence – to What Extent?” is the subject this morning. “Non-Violence – to What Extent?”

I think the key to the situation, which we should remember, is that we must be reasonable in considering the subject of non-violence. In other words, non-violence is a very high ideal. There’s no question that it takes one nearer the Soul. But there is also another aspect to our lives, and that is that we have a part to play in this Drama of Life, and if each and every one of us has that part to play, so has every Nation, that particular part to play, including, especially America and India.

Of course, non-violence is practiced for what: for peace. But political peace is not lasting peace. The only lasting peace comes, when you change the hearts of men. When they see the one common Father, the Great Light of God, from which all have come. When you see and now that, then you will have the proper feeling, the proper relationship with each and every other child of God. Until that comes, peace will not come. And so, non-violence should be looked into with that in mind. That is, to bring about the real, lasting peace of the Souls of all – not just one Nation – but the Souls of all.

As I read from the [Bhagavad] Gita, shortly, you will see that when you have a clearer understanding, a deeper vision, as to the purpose of life, it will change your idea of non-violence. And so I will read that just in a moment. First I wanna point out an interesting incident that happened back in Massachusetts in 1919.

Calvin Coolidge was Governor then, and there was a police strike, which came about in Boston. It had been brewing, and finally, it broke forth, and what happened? The policemen left their jobs, and the people were without protection. Now, non-violence wouldn’t help in a situation like that. The good

of the people was at stake; the good of the great percentage of the people throughout all the land, by that one incident of striking against the public safety.

Now, Mr. Coolidge, in the face of losing his prestige, and perhaps his election, which was coming up shortly, what did he do? He called out the entire militia of Massachusetts, and took care of the situation. Because he said, he said, "If you present the truth to people they will accept it." Now whether he was a Democrat or Republican doesn't make any difference. The fact was, that he understood one of the principles, especially of America, that each and every one of us has a right to freedom, and that freedom would be impaired, if he allowed that strike to go on. And so he said these wonderful words. He said, "There is no right to strike against the public safety of anybody, anytime, anywhere."

So you see, in that case, non-violence would not help. But he had to take a firm attitude. Resist. And, as I read from the Gita, you will see that that is just what we have to do. We have to practice non-violence up to a certain point. But when our conscience comes in and says, "Now listen – enough of that. Resist – fight." Then, we have to do it, because there are two aspects of our existence here. One is to maintain our peace with God, and that will not come unless we perform the second, which is to perform our duty dictated by God and conscience. Now, if we remember that Law, we'll have no trouble in answering the questions about non-violence.

I'd like to read from the Gita¹, in the Preface, the 13th and 15th Pages. "In the midst of turmoil, he must rest in the Lord of peace." You see, in spite of the wars, in spite of all things, we must rest in God, in the Cosmic Sphere of which I spoke a few minutes ago. "In the midst of turmoil, he must rest in the Lord of peace, discharging every duty to the fullest, not because he seeks the result of his actions, but because it is his duty to perform them."

Now we cannot, we cannot have and retain the Peace of God, unless we perform our duty according to our position in this Drama of Life. Now that's very important. Every Nation, every Nation, especially India and America of which I'll speak, has a certain position in this Drama of Life. America has a position; India has a position; all other countries. It is up to us to do our duty to preserve that position in which God has placed every Nation. Unless we do that duty, we will not carry out one of the two important things. The first, perhaps, the greatest: to maintain our peace with God.

¹ The Bhagavad Gita or The Lord's Song, translated by Annie Wood Besant, 1939

Then it goes on, "As though to make the lesson more impressive, it was given on a field of battle. Arjuna, the warrior-prince, was to vindicate his brothers' title to destroy a usurper who was oppressing the land, because his duty as a prince, a warrior, to fight for the deliverance of his nation, and to restore order and peace. To make the contest more bitter, loved comrades and friends, stood on both sides..." this is the hard thing to reconcile, "ringing his heart with personal anguish and making a conflict of duty as well as physical strife. Could he slay those to whom he owed love and duty and trample on ties of kindred, to break family ties was a sin; to lead the people in cruel bondage was a sin; [where was the right way] which was right? Justice must be done, else the law would be disregarded, but how to slay without sin?"

In Boston, justice must be done. The law certainly would have been disregarded then. Now here is the answer. "Have no personal interest in the event..." Have no attachment of possession, or personal interest in the event. "...carry out," carry out, "the duty imposed by the position in life..." Now he was there, in that position. It was his duty to fight. We, being here in America, have a certain duty to perform because of the position America is placed. "...carry out the duty imposed by the position in life, realize that [Isvara], "God the Father, "[at] once the Lord and the Law, is the doer, working out the mighty evolution that ends in Bliss and Peace..." Even, in spite of all these discrepancies, paradoxes, what's the end? Bliss and Peace in His Presence. That's what we have to realize. The vision must not be narrowed, like the conscientious objector. We must see beyond, and to the end, to do God's Will.

Then he goes on. "...be identified with Him by devotion," these are the two important things, "...be identified with Him by devotion, and then perform duty as duty, fighting without passion of desire, without anger [or hatred; thus activity forges no bond]," attachment. If we do that, that "activity fords, forges no bond, Yoga," or union with God, "is accomplished and the soul is free."

So, there are the highlights in how we should act. We should take a wider vision, a deeper vision, and see that this Drama of Life is a Play of God. We have to do that. We have to do that duty, because God has placed us, especially in America, in a certain position, as I will come to shortly.

Now half of the world is destroyed. Half of the world has been destroyed by wars. For what reason: in search of peace. So, something must be done about it. There's something wrong. But non-violence is not the answer. Non-violence

will help. Non-violence, especially, in the beginning, when controversies arise, will help to smooth them out before the anger comes and nations fight. Non-violence will help. It is not the answer. The answer, as I have said is it comes when, when you change the hearts of men. As they feel the Peace of God, by realizing the oneness of the common Father, that we are all His children, then, lasting peace will come, and not until then. When people, and Nations, through such effort as the Master has brought here, Self-Realization, whereby you have the means, and the ends, to contact God, realize the One Common Father – then, naturally, peace must come. And so remember, non-violence is good. But, it is not the final answer.

We should realize that, we should practice non-violence, as much as possible, to keep from starting the trouble. But, we must also, and this is very important, be ever watchful. Ever on the watch, for what God has given us. We must never forget that God has given us this Country. We must never forget that. The Master was very adamant in that position. When you ask those who have come from other countries, Europe, and other places, ask them about America. Ask them, “What’s the difference?” They’ll tell you. The difference is this – in America, God has placed this Country in a position. It has made America the Land where the consciousness of freedom is predominant. That’s what we must not forget. Once more – God has placed America in a position. She is the Land where the consciousness of freedom is predominant. Go in the other countries and see how you feel. See if you feel this freedom. We must not ever forget that.

Look at the Bill of Rights. Freedom – freedom of speech. Freedom, you know; the, the different freedoms. That’s what America was placed here by God to do; just that, to give the world a consciousness of freedoms. Therefore, we must, we must preserve it. Why? Because God has made it that way, that’s why. So remember – America, in America it is the consciousness of freedom.

Now in India, India is the Land where the consciousness, Spiritual Treasure, has been held and sustained throughout the ages. It is the Land where the transcendental consciousness is predominant. And that’s why India should be preserved, just the same as America, because that transcendental consciousness has been there throughout the ages. That is the hope of the world from a Spiritual aspect. But America is the hope of the world from the political aspect. The freedom is there in America. We must preserve it. It is our duty. If we do not, if practicing non-violence will come to a point where it will not be of any avail, then we must resist, and fight, to preserve what God has given us, and the world. That’s an important thing in considering this question of non-violence.

People come here. Why? Why did they come? Because for freedom, freedom, freedom from oppression, religious freedom. And so, it is our duty to preserve that. If America falls, the rest of the world would be in dire straits, without question, because, remember America has been placed in that position, as I read in the Gita. According to your position, perform your duty. And so, America is placed in that position, and we must preserve it. We must perform our duty, according to the position of the Land, America, in which we find ourselves. To retain the consciousness of freedom, is, of America, is just as important as to retain the consciousness of Spiritual change, transcendental consciousness, which is found in India.

As the Master has said, he said about war, he says, "Fight the war of defense, but not a war of aggression." Fight a war of defense. Think of your own family, and your own home. If someone came there to take them away, to do them bodily harm, what would you do? Stand there and practice non-violence? You would for a little while. Then you'd say, "Get out of here before I get after you," naturally. God is not a weakling. God is strong. And so, remember, fight for defense. Sure. Not for aggression. Not to attain things. Not for possession. That's the key. It's when possession enters into it, when attachment enters into the war, which it has been doing for centuries, that's why peace does not come.

Try by all methods; try by all methods, including non-violence, to prevent strife and wars, but when your conscience dictates to you that that's far enough, now, you must resist – you must resist. You must fight. Then fight. Otherwise, you will not have that first requisite I read in the Gita. You will not have that communion, that relationship with God, of Peace and Joy. We must do that. We lose that relationship why? Because we do not follow the dictates of our conscience; we must follow that, we must follow that.

Now conscientious objector; he doesn't go far enough, he doesn't have the wide vision. The regular fellow may be a rough fellow, but he feels something that that conscientious objector does not. So, we can look about us in nature, and we can see where one thing kills another, and all that. But we must look beyond that, and see that we are puppets in the Show of God. And no matter what we do, no matter what position we carry out, as long as we do our duty, we will have His Grace and His Protection, we will have His Peace and His Joy. We should consider these things in non-violence.

Now going on just a little bit, and then I'll be through. I do not believe, and I, I'm sure all of you do not believe, that non-violence will work in the case of communism, because communism is founded on what? On force – on force. Jesus preached and taught real communism. It is quite different. But this communiss, communism of Russia is not the same. Russian communism is a disease. It is a disease.

Speaking about Russian communism I thought of a little story. Someone came from there, and they said they had beds 12 feet long. One fellow says, "That's, that's quite some bunk." I thought that was quite expressive. "Quite a bunk."

But we, remember, Russian communism is a disease, and we must fight the disease. Just like in drunkenness. We shouldn't have any animosity towards the person who is intoxicated. We should have our hatred towards the disease itself. And so the same with communism, we fight the disease, not the Russian people. They're just the same as we are – children of God. But the disease, we must fight. We can hate the disease. We can hate the disease, especially, if it will arouse us to resist and fight – not with attachment. Karma comes in. You can hate a thing all right, but the karma comes in when you retaliate with feeling, and feeling and attachment. That's when the karma comes in. But, if you retaliate, treating it just as a duty, which God has imposed upon you, there is no karma. Remember that.

It's when that feeling enters in – possession as the Nations all have; hate; possession; hate with attachment. But when you realize that God has placed you in America to preserve the freedom which America stands for through His Will, and you act that way, as a duty. There is no karma. And you'll be nearer to God, even though you have to go to war and fight, and, if you resist, and do not have the deeper vision to realize God's Great Plan. And so, let us remember, that in talking about this question of non-violence, we should remember these things about karma and hate.

Use non-violence as much as possible; especially, in the beginning, because, if you immediately start the fight with a person, then everything's lost, and the fight is on. But, if you use non-violence – bringing out the good of those people, rather than increasing their hate – that will help. But when it comes to a point when your conscience says to you, "Now listen, that's enough, you must resist now, and fight," then do just that. Fight. Fight – realizing that God and conscience are on your side.

I think the Master had a wonderful approach to these things. I used to hate to think about war. Naturally, we all do. But when I talked to him, and he pointed these things out, especially, about a war of defense – of course, he came from a foreign land where three of them couldn't talk on a corner even but they were watched – and he felt the freedom of America, and he said, "You must preserve America. Fight for defense." Then I began to wake up. I could see that he, being a saint even, had a much deeper, and broader, vision than I ever had.

And so, to sum the whole situation up, we must do all those things that we can to change the hearts of men, because that is when real lasting peace will come. Do all those things, including non-violence. But you have a far greater and positive method, through the teachings and the techniques of Self-Realization, which the Master has brought to you.

You know yourself when you practice, and meditate, and feel the Great Love of God, and see His Infinite Light. You know your heart is filled with Peace. You know you could hardly fight with anyone. Sometimes people get after me and I, I should say something; I just can't, because I realize that it's just a Play of God's Great Light. We should do that. We should try to preserve the peace of the world, especially, the peace which will, which will be lasting to all Souls wherein the heart is changed. We should do that. And we should practice non-violence with that purpose. But, when the time comes, when the time comes that your consciousness, your conscience says, "Fight," then fight. Then resist. Resist with all your strength and Soul. Why? Because God and conscience are on your side, and by so doing, you will retain, first and greatest thing, your Peace with God, because you will carry out the duty which God has imposed upon you, as you take your place in the Drama of Life, which duty is presented to you by your own small voice of conscience.

So, let us realize, non-violence is good. But when God says, through conscience, to do this, to do that, to resist – then let us resist, because the first and Greatest Commandment is what? To love God with all our strength and Soul, and, therefore, to do His Great Will.

Mr. Cook makes the announcements for this service. This was left on the lecture as an historical reference.

We invite you to attend the full order of our regular weekly services for inspiration and guidance and the teachings of Self-Realization. Reap the harvest of eternal bliss through a lack of consecrated spiritual devotion to God.

Attend our evening and meditation with us here at the church each Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Join with us each Thursday evening at 8:00 p.m. at the hermitage at Encinitas and a study and meditation class. This is an inspiring evening given to Bible interpretations and the Bible teachings of SRF that will bring the joy of God to you as a reality.

An outstanding book that is catching the attention of readers throughout the world from continent to continent is Autobiography of a Yogi by Paramhansa Yogananda. It is a book written by our own Yogi Master about yogis, the subtle and definite spiritual laws by which they perform miracles and attain complete self-mastery. The thoughtful reader will lay this book aside only to open it again and again for inspiration and guidance in daily life. Ask to see a copy of this unusual life document this morning after the service at our book table.

Fading into obscurity, reappearing momentarily, then playing delusive, just behind the veil we endeavor to lift and perceive the luminous splendor of one who is eternal. Responsive to our call made earnestly, yet will He not reveal Himself. How long prays the devotee, will this masquerade endure? This brief resume of the cosmic masquerade will be explained in more revealing terms here at the church next Sunday morning at 11:00, by Dr. Lewis.

The invaluable SRF Praecepta Lessons furnished to all members is used as his guide in forming all lectures, coupled with scriptural interpretations and realization. Those of you who are here for the first time today may possibly have many questions concerning the nature of this work or of the advantages of becoming a member in Self-Realization Fellowship.

Won't you stop at our book table after the service this morning and get acquainted with the attendant who will supply you with information concerning membership and other related material.