

## Day 58

*“Just as fundamentally man and woman are one, their problem must be one in essence. The soul in both is the same. The two live the same life, have the same feelings. Each is a complement of the other. The one cannot live without the other's active help.”*

*M.K. Gandhi*

Gandhi was specifically speaking about the roles of men and women in the traditional family setting of the Indian culture. This statement, though, has far wider applications in today's world. Our age is one in which differences seem far more set in stone than at any time in the past. With the advent of the internet and other means of mass communication, especially social media, the exploitation of differences between all kinds of groups, including political, racial, and gender, is creating an atmosphere of “black and white” extremism that endangers the very idea of a just, nonviolent society. Nowhere is this more evident than in the differences between men and women.

When we look at the differences between men and women, what do we see? No spiritual tradition worthy of the label would disagree that, at the level of the soul, there are no differences between men and women. While there are important differences in the types of issues endured by the two genders, they have far more injustices in common. Personality and emotional patterns in men and women do differ, but those very differences are what make a combined effort in any endeavor, more important not less.

Gandhi was absolutely clear about this. In any true nonviolent struggle for justice and equality, the roles of both men and women are vital. The strengths of the two complement one another. Only when spiritually conscious and self aware men and women come together with deliberation and intent to overcome the differences between the genders, can a nonviolent world be hoped for. This does not mean we must both be the same. There is a synergy that occurs when men and women come together in an environment of mutual affection and respect. It is this synergy of true respect for each other's role choices, differences, strengths, needs and goals, that makes an unstoppable nonviolent movement and successful attainment of true justice in society inevitable.

### Affirmative Practice

*Today, I will meditate on my feelings about the opposite gender. Today, I will seek ways to cooperate and collaborate on solving some problem with a person of the opposite gender, from a position of trust and mutual respect.*

## Day 59

*“Truth is within ourselves. There is an innermost center of us all, where truth abides in fullness. Every wrongdoer knows within himself that he is doing wrong, for untruth cannot be mistaken for truth. Truth and righteousness must forever remain the Law in God's world.”*

*M.K. Gandhi*

One of the great awakenings of this path is this: except in very rare cases, those who do wrong still hear the voice of truth somewhere within them that they are wrong. This may lead us to be harsher in our judgments of them than if we thought they had no such voice. But the reverse should be true in every case. Those who do wrong, even though they hear that still, small voice, are acting from a place of deep fear and a feeling of being alone in an unloving world.

Compassion and love call us to recognize the fear, pain, and soul poverty that drive humans to acts of injustice against others. Feeling this compassion and love, we can refrain from meeting violence with violence and hate with hate. In this compassion and love, we are able to see that they fear injustice as much as we. The only difference is that they fear our actions will cause injustice to them.

With this understanding, we can see how the path of non-resistance can, and should, serve all, including those participating in the injustice. Thus, our eyes are opened and we advance on our path.

### Affirmative Practice

*Today, I will meditate on my path, “Is it true, is it just?” Today I will know that the wrong doers in my life know that they are doing wrong, but cannot help themselves. Today, I will love them with compassion in their fear.*

## Day 60

*In a strictly scientific sense, God is at the bottom of both good and evil.... "Good" and "Evil" is our own imperfect language. God is above both good and evil. It is we who entertain thoughts, and it is we ourselves who repulse them. We have, thus, to strive against ourselves."*

*M. K. Gandhi*

This is one of the most difficult truths we have to learn on this path. In the Divine consciousness which Gandhi refers to as God, there is no such thing as "Good" and "Evil". In the Divine Idea, a thing is just what it is. For example, a knife can be an instrument of life in the hands of a surgeon, or an instrument of death in the hands of a murderer. It is the human consciousness that determines its merit or lack of merit. A person's behavior may appear to meet our definition of "evil", but that is a value judgment and an opinion, not an absolute truth of the universe. It may be an opinion and judgment shared by the whole rest of the planet, but it is still human opinion. In the Divine Mind, it is simply an action, subject to the Law of Cause and Effect, like any other.

The very act of judging another, no matter what their actions may be, is a form of violence because we can never know the motivations that drive another. Instead of seeing the actions of others as good or evil, we should, rather, see them as actions that arise out of their life experience and which will have Cause and Effect, or karmic consequences in their lives. When we see them in this way, our nonviolent resistance to those actions becomes a gift to them, as well as to ourselves.

### Affirmative Practice

*Today, I will meditate on the violence of my judgments and opinions. Today, I will offer my passive resistance and non-cooperation as a gift to those I oppose. This is the path of nonviolence.*

## Day 61

*“Goodness must be joined with knowledge. Mere goodness is not of much use, as I have found in life. One must cultivate the fine discriminating quality which goes with spiritual courage and character.”*

*M.K. Gandhi*

In this statement, Gandhi lays out the recipe for every successful nonviolent resister. It really doesn't matter whether resistance is in some small personal matter or in changing the consciousness and conditions of a whole nation, these elements apply. Goodness, knowledge, spiritual courage and character are the ingredients that go into the recipe for success.

“Goodness” is the recognition of “Good”, the Divine. We need to recognize that God, by whatever name we call it, is always present in ourselves and our actions, and always in the condition we are attempting to change. “Knowledge” is the perception to see what must be done, but also whatever we need to know to do it. “Spiritual courage” is the fortitude to know that you are always Divinely guided and, even more, to know you have nothing to fear from any condition or experience of life. “Character” is the wisdom and inner guidance to do the right thing at the right time for the right reason and not take the easier softer path that leads to quick, but temporary victories.

Together, these traits will take us far down the road to peaceful, nonviolent changes of the conditions of our lives, our societies and our world. For each of us, these characteristics are possible. Indeed, they are inherent in us as the spiritual beings we are. They do not come easily to any of us. They are the result of practicing a spiritual and philosophical path that eventually leads us to this place. They may require us to look in many places before we find the one that leads us to our own “flavor” of the recipe. Gandhi, himself, this great Hindu saint, once considered converting to Christianity during his early work in South Africa.

This work is not only necessary, it is vital, to us, to our lives and to the work we have chosen to do, whatever that is. The interior work of cultivating these qualities within ourselves is as much a part of the nonviolent path as our work in the world. Indeed, without it, that work is impossible. If we would succeed, the interior work must be done.

### Affirmative Practice

*Today, I will meditate on my character. Have I done the work to cultivate these characteristics? Am I truly ready for the work I have set for myself? Today, I will observe my every action, measuring it against Gandhi's recipe to see where I yet need growth. This is the path of nonviolence.*

## Day 62

*“When we see that we have gone wrong, it is our duty to retrace our footsteps and proceed again by the right path.” M. K. Gandhi*

One of the painful realities of being human is that we make mistakes. It's really not a question of *whether* we make a mistake, it simply a question of *when* we make a mistake and *how* serious it will be. Then it's a question of what we do about it. If we are able to take responsibility for our mistakes and reverse course, no harm has been done. When we are unable to admit our mistake and take responsibility for it, that mistake can lead us down the wrong path in our work, in our lives, and in our relationships.

But Gandhi is telling us that taking responsibility for our error is not just a way to keep us “on the right path”, it is also our duty. When he talks about “the right path”, he is talking about the path of our lives, but he is also talking about the nonviolent path. When we make a mistake and admit it, we have returned to the nonviolent path. When we don't admit it, but continue on the path it takes us down, we have, for all practical purposes taken the path of violence. Making an error, and failing to admit it, amounts to a lie. Lying is always violence: violence to the truth, violence to those we lie to, and violence to the relationship. The worst violence, however, is the violence we do to ourselves.

When we lie to others about anything we are hiding the truth about ourselves from them. When people don't know the truth about us, we do not give them the opportunity to care about who we really are. When do that, we are doing violence to the very idea of the relationship that we think exists. This is true whether we are talking about personal relationships, social relationships, work relationships or any other. When we err and do not own our mistake, but hide it, we damage all the relationships involved.

The violence we do to ourselves in not retracing our steps and telling the truth about our error, always takes us even further off the right path. When this happens, whatever the goal we are seeking is further from our reach rather than closer. Only when we admit we have gotten off track, turn back and take the right path again, can we attain whatever goal we have been seeking.

### Affirmative Practice

*Today, I will meditate on my mistakes and how I have handled them. Today, I will admit when I have been wrong and make the amends that put me back on “the right path”. This is the path of nonviolence.*

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## Day 64

*“ My firm belief is that He (God) reveals himself daily to every human being, but we shut our ears to”the still small voice”.We shut our eyes to the pillar of fire in front of us. I realize His omnipotence.” M.K. Gandhi*

We are each born into physical existence as a spark of the Divine. More than that, we are born with a something that we are called to do. When we respond to that call, whether we know it or not, we are responding to the “still small voice”. We feel a profound sense of joy in the work, and that is our connection to the Divine. nonviolence is one of those “somethings” we are born to do. So we come to the work of nonviolence with a connection to the Divine, in each of us, as each of us, which daily reveals itself to us. In fact, it is not simply daily, but in every now moment of each day.

Unfortunately, most of us are sadly unaware of our connection. The “still, small voice” speaks, but we’re so hypnotized by the world of experience that we lose the willingness to listen, in our quest for “busy-ness”. This can be especially true for those of us with a gift and a cause. We bring our gift to the cause we have embraced, and in our passion for the the gift and the cause, we can forget the Source of both. This can take us into the ego, into the world of experience and draw us even further away from that Source. As our excitement grows for the successes we experience, our daily spiritual practices fade away, and with our practices, so does the “still, small voice”.

The “still, small voice” can only reveal itself to us when we listen. Listening for it can only occur when we set aside the time daily to listen, consciously, for it. When we do, our attachment to the outside world recedes, and we are guided, as Gandhi was, to new achievements in the work we do. Taking the time, daily, to consciously contact that still small voice, will always bear fruit, the fruit of joy, peace and success in our endeavors.

### Affirmative Practice

*Today, I will take the time to meditate, listening for the still, small voice within me. Today, I will follow its guidance in everything I do. This is the path of nonviolence.*

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## Day 65

*“He Rama (Oh God)” M.K. Gandhi (Gandhi's last words)*

Shot by an assassin, as he continued to find nonviolent means to end the conflict between Hindu and Muslim Indians, these were his last words. They were also his mantra, taught to him by his childhood nurse. Throughout his life, he repeated it to himself constantly. He had learned it originally to banish childhood fears. All his life he used it to banish the very real fears caused by his life's work. Fears, not just for himself, but for all those he served. It's been said that the difference between heroism and cowardice isn't the absence of fear. It is the brave one moving ahead in spite of fear. All his life, Gandhi proved that he was truly a hero.

In his dying breath, he uttered the heartfelt prayer that been in his consciousness all his life. These last words of Gandhi were a benediction, spoken for those around him, the assassin who still stood before him, his allies, those arrayed against him, and all humanity. In a larger way, however, it was his last blessing to the world, to the future, and to all who seek the spiritual path of nonviolence. It is his blessing to us.

His profound faith guided him throughout his life. Among other of Gandhi's amazing accomplishments was a book of his prayers he wrote later in his life. They, along with the Bhagavad Gita and the Ramayana, formed what Gandhi called, “These three shields to protect us....” He went on to say that he believed the reading of these to be more beneficial than letters from him, or even being in his presence.

In a very real way, Gandhi was a sane man in an insane world. Gandhi's path was the way of *satyagraha*, a term he coined that means “the path of nonviolent action, but in a deeper linguistic and spiritual sense, has a root meaning of “holding on to Truth”. This is what his final words call upon us to do. His message to us is clear, the path of nonviolence is mere “smoke and mirrors” unless, like Gandhi, we hold a profound faith in our own cosmology, our own belief in the Divine. If it does not guide us daily, through spiritual practices, prayer and turning for guidance daily, our nonviolence is an illusion. Gandhi tells us we should truly look at the challenges before us and say, “I don't know the answer here, but I know there is a Power and a Presence in the universe that does.” Then, releasing fear, releasing ego, we turn to that Source for the answer.

He Rama!

### Affirmative Practice

*Today, I will meditate with Gandhi's mantra, “He Rama”, “Oh God.” or “Oh Spirit” or whatever seems the best word to use. Today, I will remember this mantra, repeating it to myself as often as I can remember. Remembering that Power and Presence, I will turn to it today, for guidance in all my actions, great and small. This is the path of nonviolence.*