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Since the Jamnalal Bajaj Awards are given for constructive work in the Gandhian tradition, it seems most befitting to choose for my address the topic "The relevance of Mahatma Gandhi in the modern world." This gives me, a Western European by origin, and a Christian by faith, an opportunity to reflect on the lasting impact of the life and teaching of one of our greatest contemporaries, an Asian by origin, and a Hindu by faith, after more than forty years having passed since his untimely death by assassination in 1948.

I do not claim to be able to give any final or comprehensive judgement about the topic chosen for my talk. Rather, what I undertake is to select those items which to me personally seem to be of lasting importance in the modern world.

I shall begin with the principle of non-violent resistance, perhaps, because it is this principle which has earned the widest attention among the teachings of the Mahatma.

In the western world, we, too, have a tradition of non-violence. This tradition has two roots, one in the Christian Bible, and the other in the natural law-doctrine which developed, from Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas over the middle ages and during the modern times. Owing to the fact that today it is foremost the Catholic Church which has developed a whole system of natural law, these two sources, the biblical and the "natural", have been merged, so that there is only one theory on the duty of non-violence and the admissibility of the use of force.

The theory thereby evolved is based on two fundamental principles. The first is that force may only be used as a legal remedy. The second is that force may be used only by those who cannot have resort to peaceful settlement of dispute by appealing to a higher instance. Thus, the relationship of men within a certain community, and especially within the state, does not permit of any inter-personal violence, for he, who has a grievance against another can go the courts so that this grievance may be redressed. This, of course, rests on the assumption that the state will protect you against all unjust claims and from all violent attacks by your fellow-men, and that the state will also bring about the execution of your own justified claim against anyone who is not ready to fulfil it. According to modern Western theory, this protection against physical or legal injury is at the core of the *bonum commune* or common weal and constitutes the original *raison d'être* of, the primary justification for, the state's very existence.

The same pattern holds good on the international level. Until the first World War, every state had a right - an international instance for compulsory arbitration or conciliation lacking to resort to war if it believed to have a just cause to do so, or if it felt to be unjustly attacked by another state. This was based on the theory of *bellum justum* or just war, which permitted, although exclusively so, the use of force for the execution of a legal claim the fulfillment of which had previously been denied, or for the self-defense against an unjust attack. This right to resort to war, or to the use of force in general, was curbed, first by the Covenant of the League of Nation in 1919, then by the Briand-Kellogg-Pact of the

Renunciation of War of 1928, and, finally, by Article 2 Paragraph 4 of the Charter of the United Nations, which forbid the threat or use of any kind of international force, be it labelled 'war' or otherwise. Instead, Paragraph 5 of the same Article 2 enjoins the resort to peaceful means of settling international disputes. But the system of the United Nations, too, does not ban the use of force altogether. Rather, in analogy to intrastate devices, it grants the assistance of the international community to the victim of an international aggression, an assistance which, under Chapter VII of the Charter, may comprise not only economic and like "peaceful" sanctions but also military measures. Equally, the right to self-defence, individual and collective, is preserved as a "natural" one. And, finally, the Security Council may, if a state should not obey by a judgment of the International Court in the course of proceedings for the peaceful settlement of a dispute, decide on measures necessary to coerce the state in question to comply.

Compared with this systems based on natural justice, the notion of Christian love seems to be limited to the personal attitude of the individual, whether acting in isolation, or with others, especially in his capacity as the organ of the state or the community of states. Thus, Christian charity will permit, and in certain circumstances, enjoin the suffering of unjust treatment, in order to set an example and thereby convert him who has resort to set an example and thereby convert him who has resort to such unjust treatment; but this may not be done by sacrificing the rights of third persons whose protection takes precedence.

Gandhi has proclaimed his principle of "non-violence" seemingly as a counter-position to that just elaborated. The world-wide attention which his theory of "non-violence" and its application in politics, first in South Africa, and thereafter in India, received, seems also to support the view that it was something new, so far unheard of, revolutionary in a certain sense. While Gandhi himself insisted that this principle of "non-violence" was in accordance with the loftiest teachings of all great religions, people did not have the impression that this principle had found so far expression in intra-or inter-state relations.

Accordingly, different positions have been taken with regard to Gandhi's principle of "nonviolence" and its applicability to national and international affairs.

For some, the principle is just not practicable. If they still want to pay homage to the Mahatma, they have to insist that this principle was by no means a decisive part in Gandhi's teachings. Thus, even Ho Tchi Minh could be regarded a disciple of Gandhi, on the argument that Gandhi himself had claimed fearlessness rather than cowardice as the basis of "non-violence", and that it was therefore this fearlessness, and not "non-violence", what really counted in Gandhi's system.

For others, the principle is practicable only under certain, let's say, favourable circumstances, as was the case under the "sporting" and fundamentally humane spirit of the British administration in India. As it was stated more generally by a friendly observer, it "is true that the methods of nonviolence work best when they are used against adversaries in whom total fanaticism has not taken over the British Raj in India, the federal authorities (vis-à-vis the human rights movement) in the United States. Nazis, Stalinists, White Supremacists would have been and are - unreachable. "These views find support in the fact that Gandhi himself did not, on all occasions, exclude or condemn the use of force. For this reason, some have tried to prove that "non-violence" was not the basis of Gandhi's system at all; that he rather used it as an expedient means of political war-fare on the part of a self-sacrificing but then otherwise powerless nation.

In my opinion, Gandhi's theory of "non-violence" can be interpreted in accordance with the traditional Western system elaborated in connection with the lawful and unlawful use of force, although under one very important condition which I shall mention in a moment; and yet, in a certain manner it also transcends this traditional theory.

Let me first name the condition under which as I believe, the traditional Western views on violence and Gandhi's theory of "non-violence" converge. This condition is very simple and yet only rarely realized: practice would have to conform to theory.

More often than not, this was and is not the case. While men and states pay lip-service to a theory which makes force the maiden of law, the rule of the correspondence between right and strength has often prevailed, and still sometimes prevails, in national and international politics. It was for this reason, that Gandhi's theory, and especially his practice, of the principle of "non-violence" has made and is still making such an impression on his contemporaries as well as on the following generations. From this point of view, Gandhi has really - as he has avowed himself - proclaimed a very old truth.

Yet, it may be said that Gandhi's principle of "non-violence" transcends the traditional Western system by its radicality. In fact, it was Gandhi who proved for the first time that there exists another alternative to non-resistance to injustice than resistance by force, namely, resistance by "nonviolence". That "non-violence" might act as a moral force on your opponent, inducing him to give in and grant what he has so far denied, and that this may even apply to the relationship between a people and its government, had so far hardly entered the mind of Western scholars and politicians alike.

Non-violence, of course, carries its risks; and that is why Gandhi has insisted on its being expression of courage rather than weakness and timidity.

Violence is the law of the beasts, but non-violence is the law of human nature. Only by living up to this truly human standard, man can fulfil his proper vocation and come to the vision of God. It was this vision of God which Gandhi considered the highest and ultimate goal of man. This life on earth is no end in itself it should therefore not be rated higher than moral improvement which alone will finally permit a man to enter into the presence of the deity.

As a Christian, I find in this part of the mahatma's teaching an echo of the word of Jesus: "He who tries to preserve his life will lose it, but he who loses his life on My behalf, will find it "and there is another, stating: "You should not fear those who cannot kill but the body; rather fear Him who may hand over both body and soul to the eternal fire."

For Gandhi, with his Indian religious tradition, it was axiomatic that physical death does not mean the end of one's personal existence. This faith has been weakened, and to a certain amount lost, in the Western world, pervaded by scepticism and gradually, but constantly, secularized since the so-called Age of Enlightenment. It may be said that the prevailing system with us is materialism, theoretical and even more practical. The Liberalisms of the 19th century, and all forms of Socialism in the 20th century have fostered this attitude; and religion has become regarded by many a mere illusion. In contrast, Gandhi has recalled to the Indian people, but also to all peoples of this world, that man's conduct, whether as a private or as a political person, must be guided by religion, that, in fact, the highest good man can attain, is God Himself, and that he has to adjust his hierarchy of values accordingly. Personally, I think, this is the greatest contribution Gandhi has made to the modern world: to recall to mankind its specific vocation as a community of brethren under one common father, God himself. From this insight, all other teachings of the Mahatma are only conclusions, applications to specific circumstances. This is true even

for his principle of "non-violence". And therefore, great as it is, his "principle of religion" is greater by far.

Of course, it is just in this issue that Gandhi was not understood, and even challenged, by representatives of the so-called Western mind. A well-known Scandinavian Socialist, claiming Gandhi, evidently according to his own fashion, to have been an "enlightened radical liberal", gets uneasy when it comes to the question of the moral fundament. "To Gandhi," he states, "politics should be rooted in morals. There", she continues to insist, "He only emphasized truly liberal principles, from which too many writers, particularly among the economists, have tried to run away. More questionable", he finds however, "- from a liberal point of view - is Gandhi's insistence on basing morals on religion." Luckily, the good man finds a way out of this dilemma, by concluding that the "higher" ideals propounded by Gandhi, were in fact "generally humanitarian and rationalistic", a fact which- at least for him- evidently makes a reference to religion superfluous.

The appeal in Gandhi's religious teaching is, no doubt, partly due also to the complete absence of any kind of dogmatism.

In the West, the inclination to definitions and systematizations has, by and large, laid too great a stress on the institutional and dogmatic aspects of religion. All too often it has been forgotten that, according to the Bible, the greatest of the three divine virtues - faith, hope, and love - is the latter, and not the first. And Jesus has promised the Kingdom of Heavens not to the theologians, or, by the way, to priest, bishops, or even popes but to those who, during their lifetime, have served their fellowmen, for "whatever you shall have done to one of the most humble of my brethren, you shall have done to me".

It is worthy to note, in this connection, that the unidiomatic approach Gandhi took in religious matters has nothing to do with indifferent relativism. Here, as in other fields, where Gandhi was always prepared to amend his own position after having been convinced by better argument, he combined the trust in every man's capability to find the truth with the recognition of the limitedness of human insight into truth, and therefore the possibility, better: the necessity to develop such truth. "I am not afraid to change my opinion", Gandhi stated, "I proceed from truth to truth." This might sound strange in Western ears, where one is inclined to believe truth to be a static rather than a dynamic thing. When doing so, however, we forget that part of Western tradition which has always upheld the experience, derived from man's limited nature that into any truth there is by necessity mixed some error. Or, as the Bible puts it: "Here we see things only as through a mirror; only in next life we shall see from face to face." Actually, even we people from the West have recently started, step by step, to realize this. One of our greatest theologians who died only some years ago, has stated prophetically that the Christian of the 21st century will be a very mystique, or he will be no Christian at all.

The prominent role allotted by Gandhi to religion in private as well as social and political life, and at the same time his unidiomatic approach to religious matters, set an example for the practical Solution of one of the most crucial questions posed in modern society, namely the combination of ideological pluralism and religious conviction as the moral backbone of both the individual and the community. Gandhi has taught the modern world that it is possible to preserve the ideals of any pluralistic society - and in the end all human societies tend towards this pluralism which is the necessary result of man's limitedness on earth - 'namely freedom of conscience, of religion and of speech - 'without banning religion altogether from public life and reducing it to an insignificant aspect of the private sphere. In contrast to Karl Marx, Gandhi is not proclaiming the liberation of man by it its over-all importance. For it is religion which enables man to lead a truly human life. It is to these teachings of Gandhi that modern world is called upon

to listen. Certainly, it will not always be possible to copy exactly the models set by Gandhi. But here again it is, where a reference to the Bible comes in most usefully. What Jesus has demanded of his disciples, and is demanding of any Christian today, is not to imitate him in the narrow sense of the word but rather to follow his example under the special circumstances of the individual case. For Christians, therefore, it is not so important what Christ has done almost 2000 years ago, but rather what Christ would do himself today.

By the same token, it should be possible, *mutatis mutandis*, to find inspiration in the words and deeds of the mahatma even under circumstances completely different of those he was confronted with. In a certain way, Jammalal Bajaj, whose name both this respectable Foundation and the Prizes awarded today bear, has demonstrated how to do so, becoming himself a "Ghanaian capitalist". Let me thus conclude with expressing the hope that the modern world will follow his example and draw inspiration from the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi. It will then be a better world.

