

SATYA - TRUTHFUL IN THOUGHT, SPEECH & ACTION

Gandhi devoted his life to truth, that is satya. He embraced what he called satyagraha, a holding on to truth, "a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth.". Satyagraha excludes the use of violence, it is gentle and it never wounds, it is never impatient. For Gandhi it is the opposite of compulsion and conceived as a substitute for violence. Satyagraha condones civil disobedience and nonviolent resistance for the vindication of truth.

Our capacity to make peace with another person and with the world depends very much on our capacity to make peace with ourselves.

Thich Nhat Hanh



Book Tour Send Off for John Dear

Join us on Sunday, March 1st
Coalesce Bookstore Garden Chapel
845 Main Street, Morro Bay, CA
1 to 3 PM

Peace activist, author, and lecturer John Dear will speak about how the Old Testament Psalms relate real peace and nonviolence. He will be sharing from his new book
"Praise Be Peace:
Psalms of Peace and Nonviolence in a Time of
War and Climate Change."

Hatreds do not ever cease in the world by hating, but by love. ... Overcome anger by love, overcome evil by good. Overcome the misers by giving, overcome the liar by truth.
Buddha

You can access John Dear's podcast "The Nonviolent Psalms of Peace" and on March 1st his podcast "The Nonviolent Sermon on the Mount" at www.paceebene.org and click on the link on the front page - "John Dear's Peace Podcast." You can also find John's podcasts on Apple at <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/podcasts-by-peace-activist-author-and-lecturer-fr-john-dear/id1485034295?ign-mpt=uo%3D4> and Google at <https://podcasts.google.com/?feed=aHR0cDovL2ZIZWRzLnNvdW5kY2xvdWQuY29tI3VzZXJzL3NvdW5kY2xvdWQ6dXNlcnM6Njg5NjAwNTM3L3NvdW5kcy5yc3M->

The Great Misunderstanding

By: Ruth Ann Angus

In the last issue of SATYA the “Truth of Nonviolence” described the difference between a hyphenated non-violence and a non-hyphenated nonviolence indicating that true nonviolence requires dedication and action on our parts, not just believing we are truly nonviolent because we do not do violent actions. It is a subtle difference but vitally important to understand.

Misunderstanding nonviolence is probably the biggest cause of misunderstanding peace. What is meant by a misunderstood peace? Kazu Haga, in her book *“Healing Resistance: A Radically Different Response to Harm”* gives true examples where violent incidents that have been stopped by means that were not justified have resulted in statements that peace has been restored. For instance, she cites the case of a black woman attending a southern university in 1956 causing riots to break out. Claiming the woman’s presence caused a threat to the safety of everyone on campus, the University’s solution was to expel her. Afterwards they stated that peace had returned to the campus. It begs the question as to how this can be called peace. If this can be so, then what is peace?

There appears to be different definitions of peace. I live in a peaceful neighborhood because it is quiet. The town I live in is peaceful; nothing very serious happens here in terms of violence. The sirens don’t sound too often. As a country we think we live in peace notwithstanding a terrorist attack, gun violence, mass shootings. Most people in the United States of America say we are at peace here. However, it’s okay to send our troops to middle eastern countries. It’s okay to round up everyone we think might cause trouble. Let’s not allow certain persons into our country to make sure we are safe. Now we can go about our days working at our jobs, going to the movies, socializing in the bars, watching the kids play sports -- eat, drink and be merry for this is a peaceful country. One wonders what it would take to make that belief change because it isn’t peace at all, it is complacency and toleration.

We tolerate a lot in this country. We’ve just tolerated a gross injustice allowing an acquittal of a president without a trial with witnesses. But, it’s okay. He can’t last forever. We’ll vote him out.

Really? Is it okay?

We tolerate a lot in this country. Send the troops to Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Palestine; drop the bombs. It’s okay, these countries are used to it. They’re always in conflict. We’re sorry if some of our boys get killed.

Really? Is it okay?

We tolerate a lot in this country. So, they raised our taxes, us, the little people, the ones who work in the stores, the servers in the restaurants, the little manufacturing company, the insurance office, the medical clinic. Not the wealthy, us. We tolerate it. Well, what can we do? We must pay our income taxes, right?? It's okay, just a few less dollars in our pockets.

Really? Is it okay?

But we live in a peaceful country.

Haga tells us that Martin Luther King, Jr. said this is "a peace boiled down to stagnant complacency -- a peace that describes the absence of tension at the expense of justice." Haga goes on to say how we think of peace as calm and quiet and have pleasant imagery in our minds, like waves breaking on a shoreline, a forest glade, a sunset. She writes, "This can be as problematic as thinking nonviolence is about not being violent. I guarantee you that the moment after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, things were really quiet."

We justify peace by marching off to war. Let's kill all the terrorists, then there will be peace. As Haga writes, "Let's just lock up all the protestors . . ." all the bad people," then there will be peace. We settle for a negative peace. We do it nationally and we do it personally in our home lives, with our loved ones, in our churches and schools. Anything to just keep the peace. Ignore it all, hold it in, it will go away eventually. It's okay.

Really? Is it okay?

Revile complacency and toleration! Use true nonviolence (not hyphenated) to confront violence and injustice. Do real peace building. March in the streets for justice sake. Hold those difficult conversations with family and friends. Perform acts of resistance. Disturb the peace? As Haga sums it up, "We cannot disturb something that does not exist in the first place." Do the difficult, hard work of nonviolence and social change. "We are not disturbing the peace. We are fighting for it."

You can read Kazu Haga's article "Why We Need to Move Closer to King's Understanding of Nonviolence" at www.wagingnonviolence.org or in the book "Healing Resistance: A Radically Different Response to Harm" published by Parallax Press.

Peace Podcast from John Dear

On the first day of each month, Pace e Bene is pleased to post a free, new podcast featuring Fr. John Dear reflecting on some aspects of nonviolence. John Dear has been studying, teaching and writing about nonviolence for forty years, given thousands of lectures and published over 36 books. We are happy to share his latest insights on nonviolence each month. They are specially recorded for Pace e Bene in an informal conversational style. We encourage you to listen to the whole show, or to break it up and listen to it over the course of a week.

