

How shall we put an end to war—*once and for all*?

So that it no longer hangs over our heads like the sword of Damocles!
This little *vignette* will put that large theme on our map.

Alfred Nobel had 355 patents registered to his name.

Some of them were used in warfare, and the legacy he'd leave behind worried him. Then he thought of a solution: He would use his fortune to help *other* creative people give *their* gifts. Peace was of primary importance; Nobel thought that only the Norwegians—those quintessential peacemakers—could be trusted to award the peace prize in his name.

But there was a rub: To recognize a creative contribution, *you yourself* need to be creative! And this is all the more a challenge when putting an end to *war* is the creative goal. You may have noticed that, as a rule, the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize contributed only *palliative* solutions, such as negotiating a peace treaty. Not surprisingly; because if I challenge *you* to name a creative contribution, even *hypothetical*, that *could* lead to the *conclusive* end to war—you too might be standing still!

But if I ask you to name a *person* who might have made such contribution—the name “Gandhi” will probably come to mind.

Gandhi was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize *five times* without receiving it; since empowering Gandhi in that way could have been perceived as a diplomatic slap to the United Kingdom, this was not considered opportune.

Even *the noblest* of our committees has not always managed to steer clear of *power structure*!

Finally in 1947 India became independent; and Gandhi was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize the following year; but he was assassinated in January of 1948! The Nobel Peace Prize was not at all awarded that year; so indirectly Gandhi *did* receive the honor.

But he didn't have a chance to give his acceptance speech; to deliver his *message* to the world!

So what was Gandhi's creative contribution to the cause of peace?

Arne Næss—Norway's most loved philosopher—undertook to find out.

His investigation resulted in a tiny paperback *Gandhi and Group Conflict* subtitled "An Exploration of *Satyagraha*; Theoretical Background". Although this little jewel of Western analytic philosophy applied to **federate** the message of an Eastern holy man and political reformer was issued by my home institution, by the University of Oslo Press, I would have surely ignored its existence—had I not received a signed copy from Kit Fai Næss, Arne's wife; when we met at a university's café for lunch; at the point when Arne was hospitalized for Alzheimer's.

Arne's conclusion surprised me.

Gandhi did not teach that violence had to be abolished because it's inherently wrong.

But because **non-violence works**—and works *better* than violence; when practiced in a certain specific way; by a certain *method*.

Furthermore, Gandhi reached this conclusion *empirically*; by making "experiments with truth" as he called them in his autobiography. In Arne's words:

"Gandhi, then, had a substantial experimental basis for his claim that the consistent, or pure, forms of *satyagraha* (strictly, 'method of holding on to truth') are more effective than the less consistent, or less pure, and that an increase in consistency or purity is especially favorable when a struggle is already well-ad-

vanced. He had, in other words, an argument for non-violence over and above the purely moral one, and this argument is strongly empirical and utilitarian.”

The core of Gandhi’s method was to put “truth” before and above *all* conventional “interests”; on page 64, while summarizing Gandhi’s method, Næss explains:

“If we take self-realization to be the ultimate goal, and a non-violent society to be a necessary condition for reaching supremely high levels of self-realization, all non-ultimate ends *and all means* must be judged in relation to self-realization and the non-violent society.”

“Self-realization”, or *wholeness* as I prefer to call it, is only possible in a *non-violent* society; in a society *without* in-built tension!

Gandhi was not liberating only India from United Kingdom; he was also liberating United Kingdom from an oppressive relationship with India; and also his compatriots from *themselves*—to prepare them for creating a non-violent society once India would become independent.

What qualities must one manifest to be a catalyst of non-violent resolution of group conflict; if non-violence is to be *more* effective than violence? Arne explained under the title “The self of egotism and the universal self”:

“The term ‘humility’ is used in many important connections in Gandhian writings, and not only to express ‘lack of arrogance or pride’. One sense seems relatively clear and acceptable to persons with different ideological backgrounds: a person lacks humility to the extent that he suffers from egotism (self-conceit). By ‘shedding the ego’ one then means shedding the egotism. To reduce oneself to zero – a phrase often used by Gandhi – is accordingly to be understood as reducing the egotism-self to zero, i.e. as eliminating it.”

Gandhi made it clear that his political work stemmed from (his devoted connection to) the *archetype*:

“He is a devotee who is jealous of none, who is a fountain of mercy, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike cold and heat, happiness and misery, who is ever forgiving, who is always contented, whose resolutions are firm, who has dedicated mind and soul to God, who causes no dread...”.