

**Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need,  
but not for every man's greed**

**Mahandas Karamchand GANDHI (1869-1948)**

A Sasson Feeding tommooow's wolrd

UNESCO, 1990 S8.205

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# Mohandas Gandhi

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## [Mohandas Karamchand "Mahatma" Gandhi \(1869 - 1948\)](#)

*advocate of [nonviolence](#)*

### Attributed

- "You should be the change that you want to see in the world."
- "To believe in something, and not live it, is dishonest."
- **"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."**
- "I do not want my house to be walled in on sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible."
- "Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever."
- "I don't know which is the greater task: to decentralize a top-heavy civilization or to prevent an ancient civilization from becoming centralized and top-heavy. In both cases the core of the problem is to discover what constitutes a good civilization, then proclaim it to the people and help them to erect it."
- **"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need, but not every man's greed."**
- "I do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. The only real, dignified, human doctrine is the greatest good of all."
- "I have been known as a crank, faddist, madman. Evidently the reputation is well deserved. For wherever I go, I draw to myself cranks, faddists, and madmen."

### On Nonviolence

- "I am prepared to die, but there is no cause for which I am prepared to kill."

- "I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent."
- "Victory attained by violence is tantamount to a defeat, for it is momentary."
  - *Satyagraha Leaflet No. 13, May 3, 1919*
- "Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence."
- "Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used."
- **"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win."**
  - describing the stages of establishment resistance to a winning strategy of nonviolent activism
- "We must always seek to ally ourselves with that part of the enemy that knows what is right."

## On Truth

- "Use truth as your anvil, nonviolence as your hammer and anything that does not stand the test when it is brought to the anvil of truth and hammered with nonviolence, reject it."
- "It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our hearts, than to put on the cloak of nonviolence to cover impotence."
- "A 'No' uttered from the deepest conviction is better than a 'Yes' merely uttered to please, or worse, to avoid trouble."
- **"Truth alone will endure; all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time."**
- When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible, but in the end, they always fall - think of it, always.

## On Satyagraha

*Satyagraha was a term Gandhi coined for his overall activist strategy. One literal translation would be "truth force".*

- "The fight of Satyagraha is for the strong in spirit, not the doubter or the timid. Satyagraha teaches us the art of living as well as dying."
- "In the code of the Satyagrahi, there is no such thing as surrender to brute force."
- "In the dictionary of Satyagraha, there is no enemy."
- "A Satyagrahi loves his so-called enemy even as he loves his friend. He owns no enemy."

## On Love

- "I can combine the greatest love with the greatest opposition to wrong."
- "Whether humanity will consciously follow the law of love, I do not know. But that need not disturb me. The law will work just as the law of gravitation works, whether we accept it or not. The person who discovered the law of love was a far greater scientist than any of our modern scientists. Only our explorations have not gone far enough and so it is not possible for everyone to see all its workings."
- "A coward is incapable of exhibiting love; it is the prerogative of the brave."
- "All my actions have their rise in my inalienable love of mankind."
- "Hate the sin and love the sinner."

## On Religion

- "Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed."

- 1922, Opening words of speech in defense trial - Young India (Mar. 23, 1922.)
- "Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being ... When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the [Bhagavad Gita](#), and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of tragedies and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita."
- "I would far rather that Hinduism died than untouchability lived."
- "I call myself a Sanatani (ed.'s note: Eternal) Hindu, because I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, and all that goes by the name of Hindu scripture, and therefore in avatars and rebirth..."
- "In the secret of my heart I am in perpetual quarrel with God that He should allow such things [as the war] to go on. My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of the daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith even though I may break in the attempt."
- "The truth is that God is the force. He is the essence of life. He is pure and undefiled consciousness. He is eternal."
- "This freedom from all attachment is the realization of God as Truth."
- "Even as a tree has a single trunk but many branches and leaves, there is one religion —human religion— but any number of faiths."
- "When the missionary of another religion goes to them, he goes like a vendor of goods. He has no special spiritual merit that will distinguish him from those to whom he goes. He does however possess material goods which he promises to those who will come to his fold."
- "My effort should never be to undermine another's faith but to make him a better follower of his own faith."

## On The West

- "I think it would be a good idea!"
  - In reply to a reporter's question "*What do you think of Western Civilization?*"
- "It is my firm opinion that Europe does not represent the spirit of God or Christianity but the spirit of Satan. And Satan's successes are the greatest when he appears with the name of God on his lips."
- "I consider western Christianity in its practical working a negation of Christ's Christianity."
- "I do not consider Hitler to be as bad as he is depicted. He is showing an ability that is amazing and seems to be gaining his victories without much bloodshed"
  - In defense of Gandhi despite this admittedly naïve and appalling statement: it was made in May of 1940, when the battles of World War II were just beginning, when the military advances were indeed swift and relatively bloodless compared to those of World War One, and before Hitler's genocidal intentions and policies were widely known and had actually been implemented. At the time Hitler's and Mussolini's Fascist regimes still had some degree of appeal to those who imagined them to provide effective leadership to their nations, and this was just a few years after even so notable an adversary to Hitler as Winston Churchill, in his book *Great Contemporaries* (1937) had declared: "*One may dislike Hitler's system and yet admire his patriotic achievement. If our country were defeated, I hope we should find a champion as admirable to restore our courage and lead us back to our place among the nations.*"
- "Hitler killed five million [sic] Jews. It is the greatest crime of our time. But the Jews should have offered themselves to the butcher's knife. They should have thrown themselves into the sea from cliffs."
  - Comment to biographer Louis Fisher (June, 1946) Advocacy of such extremes of martyrdom as protest against brutal oppression is one area where many find fault with Gandhi's policies and ideas.