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## *Book Reviews*

**Suman Khanna Aggarwal, *The Science of Peace* (New Delhi: Shanti Sahyog Centre for Peace & Conflict Resolution, 2019), with a foreword by Richard A Falk ISBN:978-81-7139-738-9, pp.170, Price Rs. 699**

In his foreword to the book, Richard Falk says that the author “highlights in an original and illuminating manner the importance of Gandhi’s fundamental belief that politics and transformative change are subjects of ‘science’ and should not be treated as questions of feelings and sentiments untestable by the laws of life”. This book by a Gandhian scholar is organized into four sections and spread over twelve chapters. The first section looks at the meaning of conflict, violence and war, the second deals with science and practice of nonviolence, the third is focused on satyagraha or the Gandhian method of nonviolent action and final section discusses the idea of people’s power. In the first chapter, Suman Khanna compares incompatibilities arising from conflict to different perceptions of truth exemplified by the Jain principle of *anekantavada*. She discusses different kinds of violence. In addition to direct, structural and cultural violence, there is reference to subtle, mental, sexual and spiritual violence. In chapter three, the author discusses the causes and consequences of war. The role played by military-industrial complex, the logic of deterrence, nationalism of a jingoist kind, religious fundamentalism and individual war mongering as systems which prop up war are dealt with in the chapter. The author thinks that change should begin with introspection.

In chapter four, the author defines nonviolence and discusses why it deserves to be called a science. In the next chapter, she examines why one should choose nonviolence and the principles that are commonly followed in nonviolent action. Chapter six focuses on the principled and strategic forms of nonviolence. Chapter seven is on the meaning and origins of Satyagraha. The chapter that follows makes

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an analysis of salt Satyagraha. Then, there is a discussion on Satya. While discussing power in the section on people's power paradigm, the author should have looked at its relationship with consent and the contributions of people like Gene Sharp to illustrate it. Also, a treatment on Gandhi's understanding of generating parallel power built on self-less service as a check on extant power holders would have been useful. There is a chapter on *Shanti Sena* as an alternative to military defence. The book's final chapter deals with strategies to go beyond violence and war.

The book has also several pictorial illustrations which add to greater comprehension of the author's ideas. There is also a personal side to the book because the author tries to provide an account of her own experiences in organizing workshops on nonviolence. Occasionally, one gets a feeling that the author is also trying to highlight the activities of the organization committed to peace and nonviolence to which the author belongs. There is also considerable repetition of ideas. One cannot be very fussy about it beyond a point given the highly inter-related manner in which Gandhian ideas are strewn together. There are some problems relating to the organization of the materials in different chapters. Some well known commentators on Gandhi like Bhikhu Parekh, Anthony Parel, Jean Bondurant, Paul Wehr, Mark Jurgensmeyer and proponents of nonviolence like Michael Nagler, Stephen Zunes and Brian Martin have not found a place in the book. The book nonetheless covers considerable ground, and would be a boon for students, particularly for those who would like to take notes since a substantial part of the material is available in bullet format.

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