

7<sup>th</sup> REVIEW of Dr. Aggarwal's book: *The Science of Peace*

in homepage of [www.laraforfred.se](http://www.laraforfred.se). (*Teachers for Peace, Sweden*)

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**English Translation** of Review written in Swedish:

Suman Khanna Aggarwal: *The Science of Peace* –  
A book on Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent philosophy and practice

Professor Suman Khanna Aggarwal's professional life spans teaching Philosophy at the University of Delhi, giving Courses on Gandhian Philosophy in foreign Universities and conducting trainings and workshops around the world, on Gandhi and Nonviolent Conflict Resolution. She is also dedicated to improving the living situation of the underprivileged in slums and villages in Delhi, through her Gandhian NGO – Shanti Sahyog. She has now aced her career by writing a book that involves a kind of will with an in-depth description of Gandhi's life, thought and social philosophy: *The Science of Peace*. It is designed as a kind of self-help book for those who want to learn about and participate in nonviolent actions and will also serve as an excellent handbook for Courses in Peace and Conflict Resolution.

Suman Aggarwal, like Gandhi, wants to spread knowledge of non-violent conflict management as a science, to fight injustice. She repeatedly quotes Gandhi's words: *"The Law of Nonviolence, which is the Law of Love is the Law of our Species."* The book shows Gandhi as a role model who with love and compassion fights against the injustice he sees around him. It points to historical experience that such non-violent struggle is the most effective in the long run.

In addition to how Gandhi succeeded in achieving India's independence, Suman Aggarwal highlights Martin Luther King's successful non-violent struggle for black rights in the United States. Gandhi built on the concept of *Ahimsa*, which means 'non-killing' in Hindi and expanded it to include all non-violent methods based on love for all people. Here Gandhi referred to Jesus's message: Love all people and turn the other cheek if you are beaten.

Gandhi created for his non-violent struggle with civil disobedience the tool of *Satyagraha* where *Satya* means truth and *agraha* - to hold on, insist. He preferred using the word *satyagraha* over the previously used term, 'passive resistance', for non-violent struggle, because the latter is anything but passive! Those who took part were always prepared to bear the consequences. Gandhi himself used fasting to awaken his opponents' conscience. He distinguished between two types of non-violent struggle:

1. Non-violent struggle **as a means** to achieve results and
2. Non-violent struggle **as both end (goal) and means** and as an absolute principle.

The first he termed, '**Non-violence of the Weak**' and the second, '**Non-violence of the Strong and Brave**'. And he was committed to the second type of non-violence.

Gandhi's entire life was a search for truth. He distinguished between relative truth that could be compromised and absolute truth that he knew came from God. He said: God is Truth but also: Truth is God. He called his autobiography *My Experiments with the Truth*. Gandhi felt that love for people required a fight against injustice. But he was careful to point out that this struggle was directed against evil and not against the people who perpetrated the evil! An important part of his non-violent struggle consisted of disobedience campaigns and civil disobedience. He believed that there was something good in every human being and that by showing love he could influence the conscience of all human beings. The book exemplifies Gandhi's Salt March *Satyagraha* in 1930. England had acquired a monopoly on the production of salt, which was an important commodity for all Indians. A mandatory salt tax had also been introduced. Gandhi found this salt tax unfair and organized a 24-day march from the interior of the country to the Dandi coast, where he made salt. He was then arrested and imprisoned. To support Gandhi, his followers organized extensive disobedience campaigns leading to his eventual release from prison after about a year. It can be said that this Salt March had admirable effect in that it succeeded in uniting India with its then 500 million inhabitants into a nation. But it was not until 1947 that India became independent, divided into two nations - India and Pakistan - leading to bloody clashes between Hindus and Muslims. This went against everything Gandhi had stood for

and made him very unhappy. He was assassinated by a Hindu nationalist the following year, 1948. The book describes in engaging detail the play and interface of political, moral and religious elements in Gandhi's non-violent struggle.

*The Science of Peace* also throws light on how Gandhi formed a Peace Army, **Shanti Sena**, with volunteers who intervened in conflict situations, especially between Muslims and Hindus, to prevent further escalation of violence and riots. Finally, Suman Aggarwal explains how Gandhi's non-violent methods have gradually been adopted around the world with many elements of what is called Civilian-based Defense. She also presents her own proposal/initiative – an outcome of her international workshops.

The initiative **The aim of the initiative is to politically legitimize Non-violent Conflict Resolution in nation states globally.**

Towards this end it urges nation states and the UN for the following:

- ❖ **Non-violent Defense be made mandatory to supplement the present Military Defense worldwide;**
- ❖ **That young people who are to do military service should be able to choose whether they would like to be trained in Non-violent Defense or the existing Military Defense;**
- ❖ **She also suggests that citizens should have the option to pay taxes, either for Non-Violent Defense or the current Military Defense.**

It is also worth mentioning that imbued with the vision of, **A World Beyond Violence & War**, the author has founded Shanti Sahyog Center for Nonviolence (formerly known as Shanti Sahyog Centre for Peace & Conflict Resolution), for advocacy of Non-violent Conflict Resolution in all spheres of life, to counter the reliance that many have on violence in resolving conflicts; and for World Peace.

The Science of Peace is available on Amazon:

<https://www.amazon.es/dp/B083XXR1N9> EUROPE