

Quotations of Gandhi

CAPITAL/CAPITALISM

No doubt, capital is lifeless, but not the capitalists who are amenable to conversion.
I do not regard capital to be enemy of labor.

CHARACTER

Your character must be above suspicion, and you must be truthful and self-controlled.
The truest test of civilization, culture, and dignity is character, not clothing.
A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.
Men of stainless character will easily inspire confidence and automatically purify the atmosphere around them.
The real property that a parent can transmit to all equally is his or her character and educational facilities.
All your scholarship would be in vain if at the same time you do not build your character and attain mastery over your thoughts and your actions.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Civil disobedience is the assertion of a right which law should give but which it denies.
Civil disobedience presupposes willing obedience of our self-imposed rules, and without it civil disobedience would be cruel joke.
Civil disobedience becomes a sacred duty when the State becomes lawless or, which is the same thing, corrupt.
Civil disobedience means capacity for unlimited suffering without the intoxicating excitement of killing.
Disobedience to be civil has to be open and nonviolent.
Disobedience to be civil implies discipline, thought, care, attention.
Disobedience that is wholly civil should never provoke retaliation.
Non-cooperation and civil disobedience are different but [are] branches of the same tree call Satyagraha (truth-force).

COERCION

Coercion cannot but result in chaos in the end.
One who uses coercion is guilty of deliberate violence. Coercion is inhuman.

COOPERATION

Non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good.
Nonviolent action without the cooperation of the heart and the head cannot produce the intended result.

DEMOCRACY

Democracy necessarily means a conflict of will and ideas, involving sometimes a war . . . between different ideas.
The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation.
Democracy is a great institution and, therefore, it is liable to be greatly abused.
Democracy is an impossible thing until the power is shared by all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy.
Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep.
Democracy and violence can ill go together.
Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side.
Democracy, disciplined and enlightened, is the finest thing in the world.
The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.
My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest.
To safeguard democracy the people must have a keen sense of independence, self-respect, and their oneness.
Intolerance, discourtesy, and harshness are taboo in all good society and are surely contrary to the spirit of democracy.
In true democracy every man and women is taught to think for himself or herself.
The spirit of democracy cannot be established in the midst of terrorism, whether governmental or popular.
Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today.

DISCIPLINE

Conscience is the ripe fruit of strictest discipline.
Unless discipline is rooted in nonviolence, it might prove a source of infinite mischief.
Non-cooperation is a measure of discipline and sacrifice, and it demands respect for the opposite views.

FAITH/FEAR

Faith gains in strength only when people are willing to lay down their lives for it.
Faith is not like a delicate flower which would wither away.

Robust faith in oneself and brave trust of the opponent, so-called or real, is the best safeguard.
A living faith cannot be manufactured by the rule of [the] majority.
What is faith if it is not translated into action?
Faith is not imparted like secular subjects. It is given through the language of the heart.
Every living faith must have within itself the power of rejuvenation if it is to live. Just as the body cannot exist without blood, so the soul needs matchless and pure strength of faith.
Nonviolence succeeds only when we have a real living faith in God.
My effort should never be to undermine another's faith but to make him a better follower of his own faith.
My faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness.
Nonviolence is the first article of my faith. It is also the last article of my creed.
Even as a tree has a single trunk but many branches and leaves, there is one religion-- human religion--but any number of faiths.

FAST/FASTING

Fasting is an institution as old as Adam. It has been resorted to for self-purification or for some ends, noble as well as ignoble.
A complete fast is a complete and literal denial of self. It is the truest prayer.
A genuine fast cleanses the body, mind, and soul. It crucifies the flesh and to that extent sets the soul free.
What the eyes are for the outer world, fasts are for the inner.
My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray.
Fear is not a disease of the body; fear kills the soul.
A fear-stricken person can never know God, and one who knows God will never fear a mortal man.
Where there is fear, there is not religion.
It is weakness which breeds fear, and fear breeds distrust.
There would be no one to frighten you if you refuse to be afraid.
For a nonviolent person, the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him.
The golden rule is to act fearlessly upon what one believes to be right.
Fearlessness presupposes calmness and peace of mind.

FORCE

Love is the subtlest force in the world.
The force of nonviolence is infinitely more wonderful and subtle than the material force of nature, like electricity.
The truth is that God is the force. He is the essence of life. He is pure and undefiled consciousness. He is eternal.
The more efficient a force is the more silent and the more subtle it is.

FREEDOM/INDEPENDENCE

Freedom is like birth. Till we are fully free, we are slaves.
Freedom received through the efforts of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn.
No charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority.
No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom.
True nonviolence should mean a complete freedom from ill-will and anger and hate and an overflowing love for all.
This freedom from all attachment is the realization of God as Truth.
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.
Independence means voluntary restraints and discipline, voluntary acceptance of the rule of law.
Independence of my conception means nothing less than the realization of the "Kingdom of God" within you and on this earth.
Complete independence does not mean arrogant isolation or a superior disdain for all help.
If it is man's privilege to be independent, it is equally his duty to be inter-dependent.

JUSTICE

Justice will come when it is deserved by our being and feeling strong.
Justice does not help those who slumber but helps only those who are vigilant.

Peace will not come out of a clash of arms but out of justice lived and done by unarmed nations in the face of odds.

MACHINE/MACHINERY

The supreme consideration is man. The machine should not tend to make atrophied the limbs of man.
Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions.
What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such.

MORAL FORCE/MORALITY

Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints.
Moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort.
True morality consists not in following the beaten track, but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it.
To observe morality is to attain mastery over our minds and our passions.
Performance of duty and observance of morality are convertible.

NONCOOPERATION

Noncooperation means refusal both to help the sinner in his sin and to accept any help or gift from him till he has repented.
Non-cooperation is a measure of discipline and sacrifice, and it demands respect for the positive views.
Nonviolent Non-cooperation with evil means cooperation with all that is good.
Noncooperation is intended to pave the way to real, honorable and voluntary cooperation based on mutual respect and trust.
Noncooperation in [the] political field is an extension of the doctrine as it is practiced in the domestic field.
The avowed policy of Non-cooperation has been not to make political use of disputes between labor and capital.
Real Non-cooperation is Non-cooperation with evil and not with the evil doer.
Noncooperation is not a hymn of hate.
My Non-cooperation is with methods and systems, never with men.
Nonviolence is the rock on which the whole structure of Non-cooperation is built.

PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms.
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.
Passive resistance is a misnomer for nonviolent resistance.
Passive resistance, unlike nonviolence, has no power to change men's hearts.
The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard.
Jesus Christ, Daniel, and Socrates represented the purest form of passive resistance or soul force.

PATRIOTISM

My patriotism is not an exclusive thing. It is all-embracing, and I should reject that patriotism which sought to mount the distress or exploitation of other nationalities.
By patriotism I mean the welfare of the whole people; if I secure it at the hands of my opponent, I should bow down my head to him.

SATYAGRAHA/SATYAGRAHI

Satyagraha is a process of educating public opinion, such that it covers all the elements of the society and makes itself irresistible.
Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to search truth.
Satyagraha is an attribute of the spirit within.
Satyagraha has been designed as an effective substitute for violence.
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.
Satyagraha, of which civil-resistance is but a part, is to me the universal law of life.
Satyagraha is a law of universal application. Beginning with the family, its use can be extended to every other circle.
Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic, and moral.

Satyagraha and civil disobedience and fasts have nothing in common with the use of force, veiled or open.
A genuine Satyagraha should never excite contempt in the opponent even when it fails to command regard or respect.
Satyagraha thrives on repression till at last the repressor is tired and the object of Satyagraha is gained.
Satyagraha does not depend on the outside [for] help; it derives all its strength from within.
The method of Satyagraha requires that the Satyagrahi should never lose hope, so long as there is the slightest ground left for it.
In the dictionary of Satyagraha, there is no enemy.
Since Satyagraha is a method of conversion and conviction, it seeks never to use the slightest coercion.
For a Satyagraha brigade, only those are eligible who believe in ahimsa--nonviolence and satya--truth.
Satyagraha is a force that has come to stay. No force in the world can kill it.
Satyagraha does not begin and end with civil disobedience.
A clear victory of Satyagraha is impossible so long as there is ill-will.
Whatever may be true of other modes of warfare, in Satyagraha it has been held that the causes for failure are to be sought within.
What I call the law of Satyagraha is to be deduced from an appreciation of duties and rights flowing therefrom.
A Satyagrahi turns the searchlight inward relentlessly to weed out all the defects that may be lying hidden there still.
A Satyagrahi has infinite patience, abundant faith in others, and ample hope.
A Satyagrahi has no other stay but God, and he who has any other stay or depends on any other help cannot offer Satyagraha.
A Satyagrahi cannot go to law for a personal wrong.
A Satyagrahi loves his so called enemy even as he loves his friend. He owns no enemy.
A Satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to Satyagraha.
In the code of the Satyagrahi, there is no such thing as surrender to brute force.

STRONG / STRENGTH

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will.
A person who has realized the principle of nonviolence has the God-given strength for his weapon, and the world has not yet known anything that can match it.
A definite forgiveness would mean a definite recognition of our strength.
The greater our innocence, the greater our strength and the swifter our victory.
The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law, to the strength of the spirit.
If your heart acquires strength, you will be able to remove blemishes from others without thinking evil of them.

SUFFERING

Sorrow and suffering make for character if they are voluntarily borne, but not if they are imposed.
True suffering does not know itself and never calculates.
The only way love punishes is by suffering.
The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering, without anger and without malice.

TRUTH

Truth is what the voice within tells you.
Truth is the right designation of God.
Truth and nonviolence will never be destroyed.
Truth is like a vast tree which yields more and more fruit the more you nurture it.
Truth alone will endure; all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time.
Truth and untruth often con-exist; good and evil often are found together.
Truth is self-evident; nonviolence is its maturest fruit, it is contained in Truth, but is not self-evident.
Every truth is self-acting and possesses inherent strength.
Truth, which is permanent, eludes the historian of events. Truth transcends history.
Truth and nonviolence demand that no human being may debar himself from serving any other human being, no matter how sinful he may be.
Truth is the first to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you.
An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it.
Truth without humility would be an arrogant caricature.
The quest of truth involves self-suffering, sometimes even unto death.
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.

UNTOUCHABILITY

God never made man that he may consider another man as an untouchable.

I would far rather that Hinduism died than untouchability lived.

My fight against untouchability is a fight against the impure in humanity.

To say that a single human being, because of his birth, becomes an untouchable, unapproachable, or invisible, is to deny God.

Anger, lust, and such other evil passions raging in the heart are the real untouchables.

WOMEN

Woman is more fitted than man to make exploration and take bolder action in nonviolence.

There is no occasion for women to consider themselves subordinate or inferior to men.

Woman is the companion of man, gifted with equal mental capacity.

If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior.

If nonviolence is the law of our being, the future is with women.

Woman, I hold, is the personification of self-sacrifice, but unfortunately today she does not realize what tremendous advantage she has over man.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

#1 Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.

#2 Fear is not a disease of the body; fear kills the soul.

#3 The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems.

#4 We must become the change we want to see.

Always aim at complete harmony of thought and word and deed. Always aim at purifying your thoughts and everything will be well.

As long as you derive inner help and comfort from anything, keep it.

Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.

Hate the sin, love the sinner.

Honest differences are often a healthy sign of progress.

Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress.

I believe in equality for everyone, except reporters and photographers.

I cannot teach you violence, as I do not myself believe in it. I can only teach you not to bow your heads before any one even at the cost of your life.

I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.

I want freedom for the full expression of my personality.

In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light, and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is a long and arduous quest after Truth.

Indolence is a delightful but distressing state; we must be doing something to be happy.

It is better to be violent, if there is violence in our hearts, than to put on the cloak of nonviolence to cover impotence.

It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.

One needs to be slow to form convictions, but once formed they must be defended against the heaviest odds.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.

Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.

You must be the change you want to see in the world.

You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy?

Victory attained by violence is tantamount to a defeat, for it is momentary.

Mahatma Gandhi, 'Satyagraha Leaflet No. 13,' May 3, 1919

An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.

Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err. It passes my comprehension how human beings, be they ever so experienced and able, can delight in depriving other human beings of that precious right.

Mahatma Gandhi, 1931