

# NON-VIOLENCE – A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: ETHICS, GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS AND NON-VIOLENCE

‘Ethics and Indian civilizational / political thought: Global implications’ is a valid search into the global implications of the ethics grounded in the national ethos of the ideological, political, religious, social and cultural dimensions of the great civilization the word India stands for.

‘Diversity’ is the singular character of the country and ‘unity’ is its genius as a nation. Considering the entire earth as ‘one family’ (vasudhaiv kutumbakam)<sup>1</sup> is the magnitude of its sentiment and ‘let all be happy’ (sarve bhavantu sukhinah)<sup>2</sup> is its characteristic aspiration, as well.

The Constitution of India requires its citizens to be ever in the process of being secular in mindset and be ‘all-inclusive’ in the style of conducting oneself, in relation to others as well as to one’s own self. Making this fundamental duty of the citizens a reality, in its turn, would call for a deep sense of commitment to the sublime goal of ‘nishkaam karm’<sup>3</sup>, to one and all.

Performing one’s noble and humane duty (dharma), with attention to the details, to oneself, to the other, to the nation and to the global society is the core faith that emerges from all religious traditions and ideologies. Such an interactive and harmonious way of living with all affiliations, ideologies, traditions, cultures and communities is an ‘ethic’ that has immense universal implications.

The spirit of ‘non-violence’ crisscrosses all traditions and situates such an ethic in the mind of the humans. This article highlights the nuances of the idea of non-violence in the eyes of Jesus, the Bible and the Christian tradition. The methodology applied in this article, for the most part, is allowing the text to speak for itself. Obviously, the implications of the message that emerges refuse to admit any boundaries and are capable of gathering the humans into one fold under the same divine-human dynamics of life.

## 2. INTRODUCTION: FROM VIOLENCE TO NON-VIOLENCE

The system of language has ‘violence’ as a direct word and ‘non-violence’ as negatively worded. It sounds ironical, certainly so. For that matter, the question that arises is, ‘has violence been part of human life as a natural reality and non-violence a later addition to human culture? It could be a point of dispute among ideologues as well as linguists. To say the least for our purpose, the implication of the word ‘non-violence’ is positive.

Violence<sup>4</sup>, on the one hand, is a compelling action, force or aggression geared against another person, community or entity. It can be verbal, physical, mental, moral, social, psychological or spiritual. It can be domestic or public, too.

Violating the will of the other is the essential component of violence. Intention to cause pain or harm makes the act graver. The aftermath of violence, especially when it is on a large-scale, obviously, is incalculable.

Violence could be justified, to a certain extent, when it is a question of one's survival and self-defense. It could be accommodated when aimed at the ultimate good and as a preventive measure, too. As an antidote to shame or humiliation and as a reaction against scapegoat victimization, it could be tolerated, as well.

Non-violence<sup>5</sup>, on the other hand, is the negation of violence or aggression. It espouses a reluctance to cause soreness or damage to others and a decision to refrain from it. It would mean being sensitive to the wellbeing of others. Redress of wrongs through overcoming evil by good or discord by concord is its mould of behaviour.

Non-violence is a positive philosophy that advocates peaceful ways of life. It is an effective substitute for violence, especially in the long run, and is a powerful strategy for social change. Moral, religious, spiritual, social and political reasons could be motivating factors to the above effect.

Non-violence is and has to be the essential spirit of the human culture. Violence is a blot on the human character and is a challenge to the sublime divine dynamics alive in the humans. Non-violence evolves from and composes the higher human self, at the same time. It upholds the dignity of the human person and protects human rights. It refers to the best of the spiritual ideals and values of human life, as well.

Moreover, all enlightened voices and elevated ideologies as well as Sacred Scriptures present a strong advocacy for non-violence. Non-violence is definitely geared towards a harmless and peaceful manner of co-existing, one with another. Much more than that, it advances an interactive, mutually enriching and harmonious style of having one's being on earth.

### **3. THE NON-VIOLENT SETTING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

The word 'non-violence' is not found in the Bible. But, there are lots of instances in the teachings of Jesus that highlight the implications of non-violence, in an exceptional manner. The message of Jesus is totally oriented to the spirit of nonviolence, par excellence.

#### **3.1. God as father and loving father (Vertical-filial implications)**

The word 'father' symbolizes the basic relational dynamics between the creating and created realities. It is the widest relational category in life, too. It is like a large umbrella that brings together the entire creation in one single fold. It makes it possible for human beings to relate to the divine in a very personal, familial and familiar manner.

The personal experience of Jesus is the basis of the above idea. The filial experience of Jesus reveals the dynamics between father and son, applied to the divine-human context<sup>6</sup>. This is a spirituality of freedom and responsibility, along with a legitimate share in the divine heritage the humans are given to possess. It is a pleasant combination of depth and height, as well.

The filial experience of Jesus is not a private affair. It includes all human beings<sup>7</sup>, beyond the borders of gender, caste, class, creed, ideology, profession, language, culture, and the like. It articulates the spirit of 'vasudhaiv kutumbakam', which the great seers of India unearthed. The setting of the 'family' is a universal language that is dear and popular among all the humans.

The God Jesus Christ experienced in terms of 'son and father' is one who 'causes his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous'<sup>8</sup>. The idea of a God, who doesn't discriminate his children on any ground, highlights a sublime sense of justice that lovingly sees all at a

glance. The command of Jesus ‘be perfect as the heavenly father is perfect’<sup>9</sup> applies to this non-discriminative character human beings as the children of God are supposed to achieve in life.

The ‘parable of the lost son’ draws the picture of a father, who is generous and who overflows with love and who forgives unconditionally, even to the point of overlooking the failings of his son<sup>10</sup>.

The ‘parable of the lost sheep’<sup>11</sup> and the ‘parable of the lost coin’<sup>12</sup> portrait the compassionate and loving heart of the heavenly father, as well.

Evidently, the New Testament idea of God emerged from the experience of Jesus Christ. That’s all what is Christian about it. It is a universal ‘God of goodness and love’ and therefore, without doubt, non-violent, to the core.

### **3.2. Human beings as brothers and sisters (horizontal-fraternal implications)**

The vertical relation of filial experience expresses itself in a horizontal and fraternal one, as a perfect blend of theory and practice. Resultantly, all human beings are brothers and sisters, in a universal manner, by virtue of their being ‘sons and daughters of the same God’, who is like Father, who is overwhelmingly benevolent.

Such a spiritual approach to faith creates a divine network on earth that renders human life a divine and eternal dignity. Remaining above all discriminative and divisive tendencies, as a ‘mark of perfection’, is the criterion for belonging to the sacred family of the Creator. It is this familial mindset that enabled Jesus on the cross to consider even the enemy a friend and celebrate a freedom of the highest altitude in life.

The mysterious reality of rising from the dead<sup>13</sup> that is attributed to Jesus is the most tangible and powerful sign for the fact that the non-violent way will ultimately prevail. Violence dies for ever and non-violence dies to rise for good. This fact resembles the national motto of India ‘satyamev jayate’<sup>14</sup>, which means ‘truth prevails’.

Non-violence is a positive alternative of reaction. ‘There is an equal and opposite reaction to any action’<sup>15</sup>, goes the dictum of science. Reaction is a physical phenomenon and it is un-reflected. Human action, in the right sense of the word, has to be a well-thought out ‘response’ and so is positive. Punishment and retaliatory measures are negative. Non-violent way responds the best, always so.

### **3.3. Inter-twining the divine-human relations**

The New Testament of Jesus has inter-twined the divine-human relations into a single reality. The divine and human directions of human life are not like parallel lines that do not meet each other. The vertical and the horizontal are complementary to each other, like two sides of the same coin.

Paul, the major writer of the New Testament, articulates the law of Jesus thus, ‘if anyone says ‘I love God’, yet hates his brother, he is a liar. If anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen’<sup>16</sup>; ‘anyone who hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him’<sup>17</sup>.

The parable of Jesus on the last judgment is superbly eloquent -- ‘come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a

stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me'... 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers (and sisters) of mine, you did for me'<sup>18</sup>. Those who failed in doing likewise received punishment, as well<sup>19</sup>.

At the end of the day, one's devotion to God in life can be weighed only in terms of what one has done to human beings. Violence done to human beings is violence done to God and non-violence measured out to one's fellow human beings is non-violence measured out to God. Good deeds, as described above, characteristically go much beyond not being violent. The above words of Jesus summarize worth of the entire human life as well as non-violence, according to the Christian perspective.

### **3.4. The dignity of the human person**

Human being bears the privileged dignity of being the abode of God as well as being the image and likeness of God. The innate sense of the sacred in the humans is the foundation for the spirit of non-violence, as a blend of rights and duties towards each other.

The first chapter of the first book of the Bible affirms, 'God created man in his own image'... 'male and female he created them'<sup>20</sup>.

Paul asks, 'don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple'<sup>21</sup>.

The divine dignity human beings have inherited is grounded in the image and likeness of God they bear and their being the living temples of God. If so, violence is out of question. Non-violence is not enough, either. It requires one to go far ahead of it in one's perceptions, attitudes and ways.

## **4. NEGATIVE MOTIVATIONS FOR NON-VIOLENCE**

### **4.1. Violence recoils on itself**

The book of Proverbs states, 'if a man digs a pit, he will fall into it; and if a man rolls a stone, it will roll back on him'<sup>22</sup>.

The book of Psalms adds, 'he, who digs a hole and scoops it out, falls into the pit he has made. The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head'<sup>23</sup>.

It is too obvious that violence begets violence. It generates even a much larger violence. A slight violence may be retaliated for in a very outsized quantity. Verbal violence can ignite physical violence. Wounding one organ of a body can be paid for by even the loss of life. Aggression with one individual can cause the destruction of the entire family or clan. One violent act can cause a series of violent acts and normally one pays a huge price for even smaller forms of violence.

These profound insights assert categorically that violence is not the means for redressing any problem, including dissatisfaction on account of injustice, oppression, etc. It only can cause graver violence, discord and misery and ultimately hurt one's own self profusely. It may even ransack the entire society in different ways, out of all logic and proportions.

### **4.2. Prohibition of violence by Jesus**

Jesus commanded his disciples, when they proceeded to defend his Master through violent means, ‘put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword’<sup>24</sup>.

Jesus was being seized and arrested and one of his companions could not stand the sight. He reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. And Jesus made the above command and caution.

It is said, surprisingly so, that Jesus even touched the ear of the wounded man and healed him. Restoring the original state is certainly a very advanced form of non-violence.

### **4.3. Revising the ‘tit-for-tat’ laws of the Old Testament by Jesus**

Jesus could not accommodate the Old Testament stipulations of severe justice and retaliation, such as ‘eye for eye’, and ‘tooth for tooth’<sup>25</sup>. He shed a focus light on the severe flaws of the street-level justice, its remedial failure and the unruly havoc that is caused by such un-reflected measures.

He reinterpreted the laws that were geared only towards fulfilling the letter, like ‘do not murder’<sup>26</sup>, ‘do not commit adultery’<sup>27</sup>, ‘anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce’<sup>28</sup>, ‘do not break your oath’<sup>29</sup> and ‘love your neighbour and hate your enemy’<sup>30</sup>. He placed a great stress on the ‘spirit’ of the laws, highlighted their inner demands, drew attention towards its larger implications and shed light on its higher prospects.

## **5. NT MANIFESTO OF NON-VIOLENCE IN SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

### **5.1. Beatitudes for the righteous and the violated**

As a great teacher of his own right, Jesus lived to the core and taught to the details a new law, a new way of life, the divine way, the way of love, with a supplementary concern for the deprived humans. And that law takes care of non-violence in all its implications but even goes far ahead of it.

The Sermon on the Mount forms the centrepiece of the teachings of Jesus. It is the foundation of a ‘great ethic of non-violence’ lived and advocated by Jesus. An overwhelming ethical fibre is its unshakeable foundation. It is highly humane and spiritual in its character. The privileged prospects for the vulnerable are the most brilliant merit of the same, as well.

It showers ‘beatitudes’ on ‘the poor, the mournful, the meek, the hungry and thirsting for justice, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemaking and the persecuted. He declares them ‘blessed’ and ‘eligible for great and estimable reward in heaven’<sup>31</sup>.

Jesus argued further, the above qualities of non-violence possess the spiritual stamina to transform the imperial culture of violence in the world. The non-violent way of life is also geared towards establishing God’s reign on earth as in heaven<sup>32</sup>.

### **5.2. Creative and positive alternatives presented by Jesus**

Jesus does not advocate a passive surrender to violence or its consequences, but proposes a non-violent resistance to evil. The antithesis of Jesus is an abiding command to practice ‘unconditional love’ as a ‘pro-life measure’. ‘Rejecting evil and accepting the evil-doer’ is the motivating maxim. ‘Throwing the baby with the bath-tub’ would be an act that is unwise and even suicidal.

The teachings of Jesus go to the details -- ‘but I tell you, anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment’<sup>33</sup>, ‘do not resist an evil person. If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles; Give to anyone who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you’<sup>34</sup>.

Jesus adds, ‘love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you’<sup>35</sup>, ‘all men will hate you because of me (because of such teachings), but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another’<sup>36</sup> and ‘do not look lustfully at another woman’<sup>37</sup>. Manifestly, the teachings of Jesus cover almost the entire gamut of life.

### **5.3. Total surrender to God**

Jesus exhorted, ‘love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with your entire mind and with all your strength’<sup>38</sup>.

Jesus seeks the will of the Father, ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done’<sup>39</sup>.

Jesus surrenders himself to the Father totally, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit’<sup>40</sup>.

It doesn’t need any mention that the spirit of total surrender has zero content of violence and exceeds all that the word non-violence can ever contain.

### **5.4. Examples for Non-violent mindset**

Non-violence is a mindset that is invariably found in children, who are innocent, spontaneous, simple, humble and straight forward. They have no sense of vengeance. Non-violence emerges from child-like qualities. Jesus says, ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven’<sup>41</sup>.

Non-violence is a narrow path and violence is a wide path. Jesus insists, ‘enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it’<sup>42</sup>.

Non-violence means losing oneself from the angle of the world and gaining from the angle of God. Jesus states thus, ‘if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it’<sup>43</sup>.

Jesus further says, ‘I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds’<sup>44</sup>.

Non-violence is a mindset as well as an attitude that becomes eloquent in the examples cited above.

### **5.5. Non-violence – a powerful voice against violence**

Non-violence has not to be understood as an idea that promotes passivity, especially as per Jesus. In fact, non-violence is a powerful voice against violence of any sort.

Jesus could not stand the sight of the desecration of the temple of God that was in vogue then. 'He entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. He denounced their defiling of the temple and said, 'my house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers'<sup>45</sup>.

He questioned the soldier who unjustly struck him on the cheek and did not submit meekly to the unjust act, 'If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if spoke the truth, why do you strike me?'<sup>46</sup>.

He denounced the Pharisees as 'blind guides, fools, hypocrites and a brood of vipers'. He uttered harsh public words condemning them for their many errors, including their preoccupation with tithing on small matters and their neglect of more important things such as justice and mercy<sup>47</sup>. He meant exposing the emptiness of the Pharisees even as they were public persons.

All the same, Jesus has a soft corner for the offenders. He hates sin but loves the sinner. He offers the one who engages in violence an opportunity that is conducive for an attitudinal change. He argues for a preferential consideration in favour of the evil-minded and the sinful. It is directly geared towards the repentance and conversion of the violator and the evil-doer.

The cross of Jesus is the foundation and sign for the non-violent revolution of the New Testament. Non-violent resistance would mean challenging the oppressor with a gentle firmness that underlines God's love even for him and inviting the oppressor to repent and change, even while opposing his evil actions.

Jesus respected the authorities at his trial and retained a non-violent spirit all through out the process of his arrest, jailing, trial, torture and public execution. But he was positive, strong and active in his ways of loving, forgiving and tenderly inviting the oppressors to conversion, as a perfect 'role model of non-violence', even amidst some of the most abominable forms of violence perpetrated against him.

## **5.6. Non-violence – an active revolution against the oppressive structures**

The spirit of non-violence for Jesus is an active revolution. The passive peace of the cemetery wouldn't work. Jesus engaged in aggressive resistance against evil, for upholding the spirit of non-violence.

Jesus challenges the very logic of the unjust systems of the society and raises a powerful voice in favour of the dignity of the trampled, in terms of their fundamental right to live. It is a direct and active confrontation with the self-indulgent and unjust social structures, but in a non-violent style.

Jesus stands against killing the projected enemy, assassinating the adversary, ill-treating the workers, causing or neglecting the sad plight of the have-nots, perpetuating poverty, causing suffering and starvation for others, murdering the innocent, discriminating and stamping on the lowly, exploiting the weaker sections, and the like.

The non-violent battle of Jesus is a campaign against the multinational corporations engaged in injustice. It is a clarion call to repentance from the sin of economic injustice, religious superiority, social prejudice and discrimination. It demands nothing less than a fundamental conversion and transformation of one's life for the better, towards others and God alike.

The non-violent revolution of Jesus is definitely not a 'quick fix' solution of the problem or a short-term treatment. It is amazingly effective as a long run way, after the fashion of the suffering and death on the cross of Jesus and his resurrection stands as the victory of the non-violence.

## **6. NEW TESTAMENT IMPLICATIONS OF NON-VIOLENCE**

### **6.1. Loving your neighbour / one another / your enemy**

The characteristic teaching of Jesus on love is 'Love your neighbour as yourself'<sup>48</sup>.

Neighbour is not only a person who is placed next door, in a static way, but everyone whom one meets in life, in a dynamic way. 'Love your neighbour' refers to an inter-relatedness that is all-inclusive beyond the boundaries of all divisions, i.e., 'love everyone'. It transcends all considerations of non-violence. One would love oneself in the most thoughtful way and that is the model for loving others as well.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan presents how a stranger attended to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers<sup>49</sup>. The question 'who is my neighbour?' was answered by the command 'go and do likewise' by extending gestures of love to everyone in need as the loving way of life.

The irrefutable evidence for one's love is 'greater love has no one than this that he lay down his life for his friends'<sup>50</sup>.

The credibility of the teaching of Jesus on love is 'a new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another'<sup>51</sup>.

The culmination of the teachings of Jesus is 'love your enemy'.<sup>52</sup> Enemy is the extreme end on the opposite side of one's life. If enemy is conquered and befriended by love, it is indeed a the beginning of a new life.

### **6.2. Forgiving and remain reconciled with others**

Forgiveness is a reality by which one rises from the human to the divine plane. Alexander Pope observes, 'to err is human, to forgive is divine'<sup>53</sup>. The earthly way of life has limits, but the heavenly way rises beyond the limits.

Peter asked Jesus how often he must forgive his brother who wrongs him, 'as many as seven times?', Jesus responds, 'Not seven times, but seventy times seven'<sup>54</sup>. This means one should 'forgive one's offender countless number of times' and in an 'unconditional manner'.

In the episode of the woman found guilty in adultery, when the Pharisees were adamant on stoning her to death as per their law, Jesus responds with disarming compassion, 'If anyone of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her'<sup>55</sup>.

The one who falls short of the ideal does not have the moral power to punish another. To forgive is the only way, because all hands are tied by the shackles of shortcomings.



Jesus cautions the one who attempts to go before God, ‘if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother (or sister) has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother (or sister); then come and offer your gift’<sup>56</sup>.

When one is not in a state of being reconciled with others, his or her offering is not acceptable to God.

Jesus presented before the world the most sublime model for forgiveness, after having received the worst of the suffering from the world, when he prayed to the Father, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’<sup>57</sup>. I do not think the world has ever seen or will ever see such a divine style of being human in terms of forgiving others unconditionally.

### **6.3. Serving others**

Serving the other or doing well to the other is love in action and is the time-tested proof of being non-violent. The sense of one’s ego can entertain the ambition to be served by others and that needs to be kept under check.

Jesus lays down a norm for wearing a mindset of service, ‘if anyone wants to be the first, he must be the very last and the servant of all’<sup>58</sup>.

Service requires a sense of being humble before others. One’s sense of importance can be a form of violence that makes being humble difficult, if not impossible.

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus bent down and washed the feet of each of his disciples. And he proceeded to explain the sublime act thus, ‘Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet’<sup>59</sup>.

Washing the feet of the disciples by Jesus is a perfect example of service, totally unheard of in human history. This was the inauguration of a new tradition of brotherly-sisterly service, even by the elders, and without doubt is the most genuine fruit of non-violence.

### **6.4. Measuring out a preferential care for the disadvantaged sections**

Jesus stood with the dispossessed sections of the society in a preferential manner. He ate, stayed and made friendship with Zacheus, a tax collector by profession and ill-famed as a sinner, and with those discriminated and pushed to the margins of the society<sup>60</sup>.

Efforts to bring the poor, the so called low caste, the sinful, the unsociable, the lost and the least, the lowly placed and the voiceless of the society to the mainstream of social life only can instil in them a spirit of non-violence in a preventive way.

Such a preferential care for the weaker sections of the society only can empower the society and make the humans immune against violence and situations that are prone to violence.

### **6.5. Promoting peace**

The New Testament message of non-violence pioneered by Jesus is ‘good news’ of the highest order. It is a live story of ‘peacemaking’. Non-violence is an initiation into enduring peace. Non-violent ways are humane and spiritual ways and that is the ‘Jesus way’ of the New Testament, as well.

Peace is the fruit of non-violence. When violence is surrendered, stillness and serenity emerge. Peace can be celebrated only in an atmosphere of non-violence.

Jesus revealed God as the loving and peace-loving father of all. As a prince and an ambassador of peace, he announced the gospel of non-violence and peace. He walked the way of peace. He acted for peace. He suffered for peace. He died and rose again so that the humanity might live in non-violence and peace.

He highlighted the ‘spirituality of peacemaking’ when he said, ‘blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God’<sup>61</sup>.

The birth of Jesus, the messiah of non-violence, announced the gift of God's peace to all humanity, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests’<sup>62</sup>.

Jesus greeted his disciples often with the divine sentiment of peace, ‘Peace be with you!’<sup>63</sup>. His parting message to his disciples was ‘Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you’<sup>64</sup>. Jesus was certainly a prince of non-violence and peace, par excellence.

## 6.6. Living ethically

The ethical fibre of human life decides the quality of non-violence one practices. The ethical captions of Jesus – ‘Do not judge, or you too will be judged’, ‘with the measure you use, it will be measured to you’, ‘do not condemn, and you will not be condemned’, ‘forgive, and you will be forgiven’<sup>65</sup> affirms the moral and spiritual grounds of non-violent life the humans are invited to live.

Jesus made a summary statement of his ethical ideals in the words, ‘in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you’<sup>66</sup>.

Jesus made his inaugural speech on the gospel of God's reign at his messianic installation at the synagogue of Nazareth. He exclaimed, quoting the words of the prophet Isaiah, ‘the Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour’. And he boldly declared, ‘Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing’<sup>67</sup>.

This was a powerful articulation of the consciousness of Jesus as a ‘visionary and missionary of human rights, justice, non-violence and peace’<sup>68</sup> as well as ‘good news’ for every human being. Such a resurrected consciousness speaks volumes of a humane and spiritual culture of living the human lives, much beyond what the word ‘non-violence’ by and large stands for or can ever contain.

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## END NOTES

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