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Christianity and its Civil Disobedience Philosophy

El cristianismo y su filosofía de la desobediencia civil

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Abstract

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The civil disobedience philosophy, or, as put in this work, the non-violence philosophy, is constructed through four indispensable ideas: the existence of the oppressor; existence of the oppressed; non-violent methods; and, the idea of justice. These ideas are contextualized within a biblical review of nonviolence, trying to build a theological foundation on which this philosophy is based. The biblical revision will be developed analyzing the dialogues in the book of Romans, the book of Daniel, and the trial of Jesus, through the use of hermeneutics and analytic methods, a coherent interpretive structure of the space of civil disobedience can be generated.

Keywords: Jesus; Apostle Paul; Philosophy; Disobedience; Daniel; Babylon

Resumen

La filosofía de la desobediencia civil o, como se expresa en este trabajo, la filosofía de la no violencia, se construye a través de cuatro ideas indispensables: la existencia del opresor; existencia de los oprimidos; métodos no violentos; y la idea de justicia. Estas ideas se contextualizan dentro de una revisión bíblica de la no violencia, tratando de construir un fundamento teológico en el que se asienta esta filosofía. La revisión bíblica se desarrollará analizando los diálogos en el libro de Romanos, el libro de Daniel y el juicio de Jesús, mediante el uso de métodos hermenéuticos y analíticos, se puede generar una estructura interpretativa coherente del espacio de la desobediencia civil.

Palabras clave: Jesús; Apostol Pablo; Filosofía; Desobediencia; Babilonia

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Introduction

The philosophy of civil disobedience is built through essential conceptions, which behave like gears of the same system: the foundation of the philosophy of non-violence emerges through these ideas, which are autonomous, but do not work alone, all are necessary. Four indispensable ideas have been considered: the existence of the oppressor; existence of the oppressed; non-violent methods; and, the idea of justice. Regarding justice, it is necessary, first, to establish the idea of truth as absolute, immutable, transcendent, indispensable and exclusive to defend the idea of justice. In this context, the truth is not relative because if it were, it would fall into an error of logic: p cannot be at the same time $\neg p$: the principle of non-contradiction formalizes truth as absolute. In the words of Aristotle, the truth is to say that what is, is; or that what is not, is not; and what is false is to assert that what is not, is; or that what is, is not. The philosophy of non-violence welcomes the protection and relief of justice as its primary objective, exposing, at the same time, the injustice perpetrated by the oppressor. Justice does not open space for submission or fidelity to the oppressor, because the exposition of the truth cannot be replaced by fear of reprisal, by the shame of the public rumor, by indifference, or by fidelity to the tyrant. The truth surpasses any construction of values that are based on loyalty: loyalty to the tyrant is similar to loyalty to injustice, similar to loyalty to lies, similar to loyalty to evil. This article makes a biblical review of nonviolence, trying to build a theological foundation on which the philosophy of nonviolence is based. For this, two assumptions have been considered: the Bible is inspired by God and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and instructing (2 Timothy 3:16, New International Version 2011); and, second, the inerrancy of the biblical texts. With these two assumptions, the biblical review was developed by analyzing the dialogues of Jesus with Pontius Pilate, the letter of Paul to the Romans, and the book of Daniel: in this way, a coherent interpretive structure of the interpretive space of civil disobedience can be generated.

The philosophy of non-violence embraces the protection and alleviation of justice as its main objective, exposing, at the same time, the injustice perpetrated by the oppressor. Justice does not open space for submission or fidelity to the oppressor, because the exposure of the truth cannot be replaced by fear of reprisals, the shame of public rumor, indifference or fidelity to the tyrant. The truth about any construction of value is based on loyalty: loyalty to the tyrant is similar to loyalty to injustice, similar to loyalty to lies, similar to loyalty to evil. The crisis of the stories presented in this article led us to consider the rational foundation of non-violence in two sources: the imposition of worship and the search for justice. The imposition of the cult reflects the malevolent and benevolent nature of the human being, and the need for prohibitive and prescriptive patterns; while the search for justice reflects the conflict between the defense of the truth and cultural adaptability. The value highlights the character

that transcends culture and contemplates the existence of truth: the idea of justice considers truth as absolute, without space to adapt or manipulate it according to cultural traditions. The Christian foundation of hermeneutics plays an important role as the origin of theology, where hermeneutics aims to set the principles and rules that will be applied in the interpretation of the holy books of the Bible. In this sense, the hermeneutics used in this manuscript emphasize the interpretations of the narratives of certain stories in the Bible. This reflection article tries to propose a way of seeing nonviolence through a critical analysis of the biblical text, taking into account three areas of knowledge: hermeneutics, epistemology and ontology. These three areas of knowledge interact with each other in order to embody a coherent interpretation of the philosophy of non-violence through the glasses of Christianity. Furthermore, the knowledge incorporated in these areas gives us the space to emphasize the cognitive aspect of hermeneutics in the biblical text.

Ahimsa and the Non-Violence thought

The roots of the philosophy of non-violence can be found in the Sanskrit voice Ahimsa. Although Ahimsa is commonly translated as non-violence, the word carries a space that conjures up the physical and the transcendent, without physical violence and without passive violence. Gandhi translated Ahimsa as love, he thought of non-violence as a more powerful tool than any weapon of mass destruction, superior to brute force¹. Gandhi believed that killing or wounding can be an act of violence only under certain conditions. These conditions are anger, pride, hatred, selfish consideration, malicious intent, and other similar considerations. Any damage to life done on these grounds is himsa. Gandhi's considerations only represent a vision of nonviolence, perhaps the best known. But we have different considerations: according to the Indian tradition, Ahimsa involves a vacuum created by the absence of a desire to harm others. This absence of desire causes the renunciation of the feeling of enmity. However, some Hindu thinkers think that human beings would always be guilty of some violence. So if causing damage or destruction was inescapable to maintain social order, this damage was fully justified. Thus, not all violence can be considered as himsa (desire to kill or harm)². Buddhist and Jain followers thought differently and criticized the Hindu view. According to them, such a point of view fosters forms of damage and destruction in people as a way to justify violence. In addition, it uses the

- 1 ATTRI, Ajay, "Gandhi and Luther Philosophies of Non-Violence", *International Journal of education for Peace and Development*, 2014, 19-23.
- 2 RAMBACHAN, Anantanand, "The Co-Existence of Violence and Non-violence in Hinduism", *Ecumenical Reviews*, 2003, 115-121.

authority of religion to sanction unacceptable violence. They preferred to define all damage or destruction as *himsa*. For them justified and unjustified harm was *himsa*, not *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* refers to the absence of damage and destruction. Despite the differences between the three religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, they are all based on these well-known Vedic words: You will not hurt any living being. At the same time, Gandhi considered that the tradition of non-violence should go hand in hand with *Satyagraha*, right: Gandhi believed that truth and non-violence are two sides of the same coin, or rather a smooth metallic disc without a stamp. Who can say, which is the obverse, and which is the reverse? *Ahimsa* is the means; the truth is the end³. Non-violence becomes the means to defend the truth. Indirectly, Gandhi refers to truth as an absolute state, without nuances or variants, without relativisms. *Satyagraha* is the weapon of the moral and active vigilante, he does not resist evil for evil, but evil for good, considering the truth the absolute good. *Satyagraha* does not consider people as enemies, but as bad doers, in the sense that bad doers are people who do not see their mistakes, they are people who require time to overcome violence and hatred. Furthermore, for Gandhi, God and Truth are identical, although Gandhi had a pantheistic view of God. For Gandhi, *Ahimsa* also means love for all creatures. For the same love, there is no room for the desire for harm or revenge. This love is not the same as not killing, as explained above, but involves an active decision to resist injustice. *Ahimsa* carries essential ideas of love, forgiveness and compassion. Gandhi believed that there is only one option between cowardice and violence, and yet non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more courageous than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier, “but abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it makes no sense when it claims to come from a defenseless creature”⁴. On the other hand, Howard Ryan⁵, the philosophy of nonviolence can sometimes be effective; however, he argues that, on some occasions, it can be detrimental to social progress because of its moral dogma. Ryan is against ruling out the use of violence in cases such as oppression or repression. In this line of argument, several academics have presented the holy war theory as a theoretical notion for the justification of violence. The purpose, according to Guthrie & Quinlan⁶, is to ensure the moral justification of the war through a series of criteria such as the right to war, and the right to conduct within the war, in recent years it has been added a

3 RAMCHIARY, Arpana, “Gandhian Concept of Truth and Non-Violence”, *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2013, 67-69.

4 PRABHU, R.K. and RAO U.R., *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, Ahmedabad, Jitendra T Desai, 1967, 187.

5 RYAN, Howard, *Critique of Nonviolent Politics. From Mahatma Gandhi to the Anti-Nuclear Movement*, Hryan, 2002.

6 GUTHRIE, Charles and QUINLAN, Michael, *Just War: The just war Tradition: Ethics in Modern Warfare*, Londrés, Bloomsbury, 2007.

third category, the right to reconstruction after the war. The just war theory postulates that war is not always the worst option because it sets the context in which there is no other option to stop the atrocities of humanity. In this sense, the purpose of the article is not to deny the option of just war as a valid option, but to justify the philosophy of non-violence from Christian theology.

Christian principles within Non-Violence

The philosophy of non-violence is built through essential conceptions, which behave like gears of the same system: the foundation of the philosophy of non-violence emerges through these ideas, which are autonomous, but do not work alone. , all are necessary. Four essential ideas have been considered: the existence of the oppressor; existence of the oppressed; non-violent methods; and, the idea of justice. On the existence of the oppressor, it can be visualized in a political system, legal system, in empires or countries. Although the oppressor may show himself in notions of social structures, he will always be embodied in people. The oppressor is embodied in individuals who command, obey, keep quiet or encourage. This idea is essential to understand that the objectives of non-violence are framed in cracking the spiritual structure of the person who makes decisions, who commands or obeys, to reflect on pain and persecution, on justice and their direct participation. This person will be exposed to his own evil, which can bring two results: the first, that the oppressor repents and stops commanding or obeying, stops persecuting and inflicting pain; second, despite seeing his wickedness, his thought is filled with foolishness, he is clouded by the power he feels by subduing, by flagellating his opponents. The oppressor is the person with an internal motivation to repress, he is proud, harsh and dishonest, willing to lie if necessary⁷. The notion of the existence of the oppressor requires thinking also of the existence of the fool, who, despite seeing the oppression, pain and evil inflicted, will not stop persecuting, will not stop inflicting pain, will not stop oppressing. The fool amuses himself in his foolishness, he hates when someone shows him his injustice, he detests walking away from his evil, he uses the arguments of the righteous to mock and belittle him, as seen in Proverbs 13; 15⁸. The existence of the fool in the system of repression involves, at the same time, the existence of individuals who will emancipate themselves in time, people who will decide not to adapt to the system of repression. As long as the fool exists, the individual, who seeks the truth intensely, will also exist. Freedom becomes the essential element of every person who seeks the truth. Folly can

7 KEHOE, S., *How to become wise*, Dale, United Kingdom, Philbeach House, 2018.

8 NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION, 2011.

become a mass delusion: the mass fool is indispensable for the functionality of the oppressor. The mass fool despises wisdom, underestimates discipline, does not want to be instructed, sees evil with indifference, no argument can make him change his attitude, which will be defended, justified, even thought of as an act of fidelity. The mass fool defends the oppressor, even if he does not necessarily actively participate in the repression. The oppressor requires this type of fool because he becomes his most faithful follower: fidelity is the first moral principle of the mass fool. The oppressor and the mass fool feed on each other, without the mass fool, the existence of the oppressor loses meaning. Regarding the existence of the oppressed, three response options are visualized against the oppressor. First, the oppressed can align themselves with the oppressor, so that there is apparent conformity and satisfaction. This type of oppressed are willing to change their structure of beliefs and morality, they are open to become allies, with a single condition, that the oppressor stops oppressing them. Second, the oppressed can choose to keep quiet, remain silent, without showing support or rejection, avoiding being seen in public demonstrations, and avoiding commenting on the oppression, even in private gatherings. The oppressed who decide to keep quiet are those whose indifference and fear can eat away at their rationality, they are willing to remain silent, as long as they are allowed to create a bubble of peace. These people are the ones who watch as Nero sets Rome on fire, although Bohm⁹, based on the Annals of Tacitus, believes that Nero did not burn Rome, the myth serves to exemplify the essential characteristic of the oppressed who decide to remain silent) without applauding, but neither without complaining: we will have to repent in this generation not only for the hateful words and actions of bad people, but for the awful silence of good people¹⁰. Third, the oppressed who decides to reveal himself, raise his voice against the oppressor, and decide to publicly denounce his evil. These people are constructed considering that the “supreme measure of a man is not his position in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he is in moments of challenge and controversy”¹¹. These people are those who are willing to use non-violent methods to denounce evil and reveal the truth.

Regarding non-violent methods, it is important to highlight that the intention of the oppressed is not to belittle, manipulate or ridicule the oppressor, on the contrary, their intention is derived from a specific idea: to confront the oppressor with the truth, so that he can restore himself of your mistake. Therefore, non-violent methods should lead to creating a relationship between oppressor and oppressed, while preventing the

9 BOHM, Robert, “Nero as Incendiary”, *The Classical World*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, 378-406.

10 KING Jr., Martin Luther, *Letter from Birmingham Jail*, 1963, from: http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/letter_birmingham_jail.pdf

11 KING Jr., Martin Luther. *Strength to Love*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press Gift Edition, [1963] 2010, 26.

oppressor from walking away and clinging to his foolishness. Non-violent methods have been widely studied by Godwin¹², Sharp¹³ and Irene¹⁴, who divide non-violent methods into at least three categories: protest and persuasion; non-cooperation, and lastly, non-violent intervention. Protest refers to the act of challenging, resisting or making demands on the authorities, those in charge of power¹⁵. Persuasion attempts to make visible the demands of the nonviolent group and its challenges to power, with the aim of gaining more support for the group's actions. Sharp¹⁶ lists 78 methods of non-violent campaigns or actions that develop the category of protest and persuasion, among the most important are public statements, communications with large audiences, symbolic public acts, pressure on individuals, processions. and public assemblies. Non-cooperation has a specific objective: to make the work of the people in power annoying, bearing in mind that no government can survive without the support or cooperation of the people. Irene subdivides non-cooperation into lack of social cooperation, lack of economic cooperation, and lack of political cooperation. Non-cooperation "essentially focuses on boycotting or rejecting officials and supporters of the opposition or the regime"¹⁷. In the case of economic non-cooperation, it can include non-payment of taxes or strikes that generally lead to economic instability. Political non-cooperation makes use of public statements and manifestos to express the rejection of the person in power. Nonviolent intervention is the method that focuses on disrupting a political structure or disarming decision-making systems, while establishing new political structures, or establishing new decision-making systems. When this happens, society receives a shock to the status quo in its way of living, in the consideration of its values, in the construction of political systems: the establishment of new political structures proposes a direct challenge to society, which it can reject or adapt to shock. Acts of intervention can weaken and possibly accelerate the collapse of the supporting pillars of power, leaving an oppressor increasingly alone. Finally, on justice, it is necessary, first, to establish the idea of truth as absolute, immutable, transcendent, indispensable and exclusive to defend the idea of justice. In this context, the truth is not relative because if it were, it would fall into an error of logic: p cannot be at the same time $\neg p$: the principle of non-contradiction formalizes truth as absolute. In the words of Aristotle, the truth is to

12 GOODWIN, Jeff, *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*. Malden, M.A., Blackwell, 2006

13 SHARP, Gene, *From Dictatorship to Democracy (4th edition)*, Boston, The Albert Einstein Institution, 2010.

14 IRENE, Felix, "Non-Violent Campaign and Social Change: Lessons from Liberia and Campaigns to Ban Landmine and Cluster Munitions", *International Journal of Peace Studies*, Vol. 21(1), 2016, 45-70.

15 Goodwin, Jeff, *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts*, Malden, M.A.: Blackwell, 2006, 3.

16 SHARP, Gene, Op. Cit., 2010, 70-81.

17 IRENE, Felix, Op. Cit, 2016, 55.

say that what is, is; or that what is not, is not; and what is false is to assert that what is not, is; or that what is, is not¹⁸. The attributes of truth can be visualized as follows: p and $\sim p$ cannot be true at the same time, or, p is true and $\sim p$ is not true, or, p is not true and $\sim p$ is true (law of no contradiction); p and $\sim p$ have no intermediates, there are no tertiary propositions ($p \vee \sim p$); and, p is identical with itself, ($p = p$), p is always p . Thus, the possible relative truths fall into an illogical rational space when one of the truths denies another truth, or, when one of the truths contradicts another truth, or, when one of the truths manipulates another truth: therefore, the relative truths are illogical, and give way, necessarily, to visualize the rationality of truth as one, absolute, invariable, and universal. When truth is established as absolute, there is no room for relative truths: absolute truth leaves relative truths in the space of lies. Ravi Zacharias¹⁹, making use of one of Winston Churchill's phrases, mentions that the truth is so precious that it must always be attended by a bodyguard of lies. Relative truths try to hide the absolute truth, therefore, the defense of the absolute truth, the only truth, becomes an act of justice; and, on the contrary, the defense of the lie becomes an act of injustice. Justice tries to reveal the truth, while injustice tries to show the lie as truth, it tries to reconstruct an alternative reality through lies

The philosophy of non-violence welcomes the protection and relief of justice as its primary objective, exposing, at the same time, the injustice perpetrated by the oppressor. Justice does not open space for submission or fidelity to the oppressor, because the exposition of the truth cannot be replaced by fear of reprisal, by the shame of the public rumor, by indifference, or by fidelity to the tyrant. The truth surpasses any construction of values that are based on loyalty: loyalty to the tyrant is similar to loyalty to injustice, similar to loyalty to lies, similar to loyalty to evil. Next, a biblical review of non-violence will be carried out, trying to build a theological foundation on which the philosophy of non-violence is based. For this, two assumptions have been considered: the Bible is inspired by God and useful to teach, rebuke, correct and instruct; and, second, the inerrancy of the biblical texts. Starting with these two assumptions, the biblical review will be developed by analyzing the dialogues of Jesus with Pontius Pilate, the letter of Paul to the Romans, and the book of Daniel, in this way it will be possible to generate a coherent interpretive structure of the interpretive space of disobedience civil.

18 GARÓFALO, Luciano, "La concepción aristotélica de la verdad", *Apuntes Filosóficos*, Vol. 26 (50), 2016, 124.

19 ZACHARIAS, Ravi, *RZIM*. 8th November, 1996, from The Inextinguishable Light, <https://rzim.org/just-thinking/the-inextinguishable-light/>

The Apostle Paul and his thought on Non-Violence

The letter to the Romans, written by the Apostle Paul, is perhaps the New Testament book with the greatest theological depth. Paul explains the gospel message and how it ties in with Old Testament prophecies. The gospel involves submission to authority; However, this statement is loose in a sea of doubts and questions: in all circumstances? With all authority? In chapter 13 of the letter to the Romans, Paul inserts a response between the lines to the questions about the submission of every Christian to civil authority. Paul begins his argument with the affirmation that everyone must submit to civil authorities, since there is no authority that God has not ordained, so those that exist were established by him. This statement opens space to ask ourselves about Paul's intentionality, and about the message itself. On the intentionality, John Piper²⁰ affirms that Paul had his eye on Caesar, considering that this letter would pass through the hands of Roman officials, authorities, Jews and Christians: part of Paul's intention is to let him know Caesar that the Christian people have a king, who is not earthly, but spiritual, and that the intention of the Christian people is not to overthrow the Emperor, but to carry the message of salvation. Paul was speaking to Christians, but also to Roman rulers. Paul builds the essence of civil authority: everyone who opposes authority rebels against what God has instituted. This statement proposes an obvious logical problem: being God good (Luke 18:19) and loving (1 John 4: 8), has God also instituted despotic rulers? If so, how is God good and loving? The answer can be drawn through the idea of freedom: freedom of decision and, therefore, the responsibility to assume the consequences of decisions, is founded on love. Love is reflected in our greatest gift, freedom: God's love is reflected in the act of persecution, as in the search for justice, because freedom implies the existence of despotic people, like the existence of people who love the true. Freedom is based on love because if there were no love, there would be no freedom and, if there were no freedom, everything would be degraded to a composition of cause and effect: no one would be guilty of anything, we would be simple cogs of a certain historical determinism. Repression, like rebellion, are symptoms of freedom, and freedom is the most vivid example of love. Therefore, the rulers are responsible for the repression, consequently, they are agents of judgment and condemnation. Regarding the message itself, Paul affirms that the foundation of civil authority has a principle, God, who has pointed them out and established them with a purpose: the rulers are not to instill terror in those who do good, but rather to those who do wrong. Paul makes clear the responsibility of rulers: to punish evil. In this way, the conditional relationship between the rulers and the ruled is drawn in a coherent way: the submission of the Christian to authority is necessary because it has the responsibility to punish evil: the submission

20 PIPER, John, *Submission to God and Submission to the State, Part 1*, 2005, from *Desiring God*, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/subjection-to-god-and-subjection-to-the-state-part-1>

of one forces the responsibility of the other. However, the conditional relationship opens the door to civil disobedience if the rulers do not punish the bad, but the good. Norman Geisler²¹, quoted by Paul Feinberg²², shows a list of circumstances that paves the way for understanding biblical examples of civil disobedience:

1. When the government prohibits the worship of God (Exodus 5: 1).
2. When it is required to take the innocent life (Exodus 1: 15-21).
3. When it demands the murder of God's servants (1 Kings 18: 1-4).
4. When it requires the worship of idols (Daniel 3: 1-7).
5. When he orders a man to pray (Daniel 6: 6-9).
6. When it prohibits the spread of the gospel (Acts 4: 17-20).
7. When it demands the worship of a man like God (Revelation 13: 4).

Civil disobedience is composed as the visible shield of the philosophy of Christian nonviolence: civil disobedience is necessary as long as Christian principles are broken: Christians are called to civil disobedience insofar as the welfare of the peoples is in danger, as long as our life is threatened, as long as our freedom is restricted.

In this context, submission to evil makes the Christian an agent of evil, the Christian becomes the understood arm of injustice. Submission to evil makes the Christian the pedestal of persecution, makes him the justifying agent of the oppressor. In the same way, silence applauds the oppressor, turns him into an entity without judgment, without punishment, without the need to be watched. Silence compromises the existence of justice and, therefore, the Christian who decides to remain silent, decides to place himself in the position of observer, in the right position not to be touched, while he sees injustice devastate his reality. Submission, like silence, lets the truth fade as injustice spreads rapidly. The conditional relationship between rulers and ruled has a direct correspondence with the relationship between responsibility and submission. The Christian submits because submission compromises the responsibility of the ruler: the Christian submits because he knows that the ruler has an obligation to punish evil. If evil is not punished, but revered, admired or strengthened, the Christian has the obligation to disobey, he has the responsibility to prevent injustice

21 GEISLER, Norman, A Premillennial View of Law and Government. *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Vol. 142, 1985, 250-267.

22 FEINBERG, Paul, The Christian and Civil Authorities. *The Master's Seminary Journal*, Vol. 10 (1), 1999, 98-99.

from spreading. This is how we can understand the lives of Nebuchadnezzar: the disobedience of some Jews becomes a cry for justice.

Daniel in Babylon

The book of Daniel recounts some episodes of the Jewish people during their exile in Babylon. The first encounter between Daniel, Ananias, Misael and Azarias with the culture in Babylon proposes a conflict that is glimpsed between the freedom of worship and the imposition of a specific cult. This conflict falls into a deeper problem: malevolence or benevolence in the context of imposition. Finally, the conflict reflects the decision of insubordination as an act of correspondence between the search for justice and adaptability to cultural patterns. The book of Daniel tells us that King Nebuchadnezzar had a golden statue made, and he commanded that all the peoples, as soon as they hear the sound of the horns, bow down to worship the golden statue. Those who did not bow down to worship the statue would be thrown into the oven. This first scenario recreates the conflict between malevolence or benevolence within the imposition: the imposition itself has no character, but it is acquired through the application of the imposition, and the analysis of the derivations of the application. What is the character of benevolence or malevolence within the imposition? The answer can be visualized in the commandments. Jesus divides the commandments in two (Matthew 22: 37-39): love God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your intelligence and with all your strength; and love your neighbor as yourself. This division includes the two possible relationships in which the human being can interfere: a divine relationship, and a human one. The relationship with God composes the personal decision to recognize oneself insufficient in the face of divine justice, while accepting that grace as the revelation of salvation in the sacrifice of Christ (Galatians 2: 8-9). The relationship with God is contextualized in the principles that bring us closer to him: you will love God above all things; you will have no other gods; you will not take God's name in vain; and, keep the Sabbath to consecrate it to the Lord. On the other hand, loving your neighbor as yourself recreates the essence of the malevolence or benevolence of the human being: human beings require prohibitive and prescriptive patterns to appease evil and give space for goodness to flourish. The prohibitive patterns are clearly established: you will not kill, you will not commit adultery, you will not steal, you will not give false testimonies, you will not covet the goods of others. On the other hand, the prescriptive mold behaves as an ideal that highlights the benevolence of human beings: honoring your father and your mother highlights the character of benevolence, to say: the decision to do good, without pressure, without imposition. The prohibitive molds correspond to the

normative task, and can be applied in different ways, always in relation to the social agreement. However, the prescriptive molds do not correspond to the normative task because the character of benevolence cannot be imposed, but rather it develops in the freedom of the human being. In the same way, the relationship with God is isolated from the normative task because it is based on the decision of search, relationship, and coexistence with the creator. This decision can occur only in a context of freedom: if the relationship with God depends on coercion, the relationship is frivolous, fragile, and hypocritical to the extreme. The normative task structures the prohibitions in legal systems. However, the structure of legality must exclude the relationship with God, as well as the character of benevolence, because, in both cases, love is conditioned by the coercion of punishment. In coercion, love is blurred because it is not clear whether the decision is free or caused by fear of punishment: coercion leaves without support the most important moral principle of Christianity, love. Thus, when legality creates coercion with respect to the human being's relationship with God, or with respect to the benevolent character of the human being, civil disobedience becomes an act of coherence with Christian thought. However, disobedience is not necessarily the first resort, but it can be the most effective. Finally, the conflict between the Hebrews and the Babylonian culture highlights the conflict between the pursuit of justice and adaptability to cultural patterns. As mentioned in the previous sections, the search for justice is related to the visualization of the truth, which leads us to wonder if the truth is only a concept that emerges from the relationship with its opposite, the lie, or if the truth, exclusive, unique, and immutable in essence, can emerge as an ulterior reality, without the need for opposites.

For this, it is important to refer to one of the laws of logic, the identity law: the identity principle affirms that a thing is identical to itself, or $(\forall x) (x = x)$, in which \forall means for each; or simply x equals x ²³. This principle provides a solid argument to understand that the truth is true without the need for the existence of its opposite: the truth is not defined from the existence of the lie, but it is defined in itself: the truth will always be true with or without lies. The search for justice is built through the visualization of the truth. On the other hand, adaptability to cultural patterns is built, first, through the recognition of cultural patterns; then, through the desire, often thoughtless, to follow those patterns; finally, through widespread approval from the keepers of traditions. Throughout the process of adaptability, the visualization of truth is relegated to subjectivity: it is true as long as it conforms to traditions, as long as it does not contradict the reality that emerges from the conceptual molds of culture. Truth becomes a flexible, mutable and dynamic concept, that is, it has gone from being a universal reality to being a cultural construction, it has gone from being an objective

23 Encyclopaedia Britannica, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2016, from Laws of thought, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/laws-of-thought#ref180927>

referent to being a subjective referent. When the space of the subjective replaces the objective, the truth has ceased to exist, causing the search for justice to become a network of argumentative maneuvers that justify cultural activity. The conflict between the search for justice and cultural adaptability turns into a conflict between absolute truth and relative truths. To understand the illogical character of relative truths, we must refer to the law of non-contradiction and the law of the excluded environment. The law of non-contradiction could be represented in the following proposition: $\sim p$ p. That is, $\sim p$ cannot, at the same time, be p. Living cannot be the absence of life, as light cannot be the absence of light: lying cannot be right and it cannot be wrong: something true cannot be false. On the other hand, the law of the excluded middle proposes that between p and $\sim p$ there are no intermediate propositions, which means that p is real, or $\sim p$ is real, without space to consider a middle point: something is true or false, there is no midpoints. In this way, the truth is absolute or not, without middle points. Considering the laws of logic, if the truth is absolute, the truth exists; However, if the truth is not absolute, the contradiction between different truths would propose the non-existence of the truth. The only logical conclusion is to affirm that the truth is absolute; if the truth is relative, the truth ceases to exist. The crisis that Daniel, Ananías, Misael and Azarías experienced became an existential upheaval that found its rational foundation in two sources, namely: the imposition of worship and the search for justice. The imposition of worship reflects the malevolent and benevolent character of the human being, and the need for prohibitive and prescriptive patterns; while the search for justice reflects the conflict between the defense of truth and cultural adaptability. The crisis of the Hebrew agents exalted the courageous decision to disobey the royal edict because it established norms that conflicted their relationship with God. The insubordination decision of the four Hebrew heroes is shown as an act of courage in the search for justice: courage highlights the character that transcends culture and contemplates the existence of truth: the idea of justice considers truth as absolute, without space to adapt or manipulate it according to cultural traditions.

Jesus in his trial

The conversation between Pontius Pilate, governor of the province of Judea, and Jesus becomes the cornerstone by portraying the most important principle of non-violence: Christianity is not based on imposition, that is, the truth is not imposed, it is exposed with love: the truth is exposed in a context of goodness. The very exposition of the truth represents a gesture of love because the recognition of the truth produces freedom, while the act of hiding the truth in a hedge of lies produces guilt. Guilt becomes a personal motivator, capable of inventing stories. , increasingly detailed,

that they try to erase the truth. When the lie prevails, injustice triumphs. Exposing the truth also contemplates an act of bravery: exposing the truth can bring about the brutal repression of the oppressor. Exposing the truth becomes an act of courage: the search for justice becomes an act of courage. The Gospels (Matthew 27: 11-14; Mark 15: 1-5; Luke 23: 2-4; John 18: 33-38) portray the conversation of Pontius Pilate and Jesus, especially the Gospel of John, which fills the conversation with important details. The dialogue begins with a question: are you the king of the Jews? Jesus answers: do you ask on your own or because others told you about me? Jesus' answer places the question behind the question: is Pilate's question an honest curiosity? Or is it just part of the protocol of every accused? Does Pilate want to know the answer? The context of the conversation suggests that, in principle, Pilate did not want to know the answer, it was irrelevant, it was another questioning of a defendant from a small town in the vast Roman Empire. However, Jesus' response confronts Pilate with the idea of justice: if Pilate wants to do justice, he has to know the truth, and to know the truth, he has to want to know it. Pilate acknowledges: Am I a Jew? Your own people and their chief priests brought you here for me to judge you. Why? What have you done Pilate has gone from apathy to interest, now, the question is honest, Pilate wants to know the reasons why the Jewish people want to kill Jesus. Jesus' reply shocks Pilate: my kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to prevent me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders; but my kingdom is not from this world. Jesus establishes two truths, and a fundamental principle. The first truth: I am king; the second truth: my kingdom is not of this world. The fundamental principle: truths are not imposed. "My kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to prevent me from being handed over" (John 18:36): if the kingdom of Jesus were earthly, there would be no room for oppression, for lies, for injustice; However, as the kingdom of Jesus is not earthly, the truths have to be defended, but not imposed, the truths are reasons to seek justice, even if it does not arrive and is blurred in lies. Jesus finishes his argument: in reality, I was born and came into the world to bear witness to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true. Jesus proposes a third truth: "all who love the truth recognize that what I say is true" (John 18:37). There are people who love the truth or those who do not, people who seek the truth intensely, and others who shy away from it, even if they find it, they do not want to recognize it. People who love the truth seek it, and when they find it they recognize it, and when they recognize it, the truth produces freedom (John 8:32). The dialogue between Jesus and Pilate helps us to visualize two fundamental principles of non-violence: the truth is not imposed, it is defended with love and courage.

Final Remarks

The philosophy of non-violence welcomes the protection and relief of justice as its primary objective, taking into account that justice includes the existence of the idea of truth as a space that transcends the material conflict. On the other hand, adaptability to cultural patterns is built, first, through the recognition of cultural patterns; then, through the desire, often thoughtless, to follow those patterns; finally, through widespread approval from the keepers of traditions. The article criticizes the notion that, throughout the adaptability process, the visualization of truth is relegated to subjectivity: it is true as long as it conforms to traditions, as long as it does not contradict the reality that emerges from the conceptual molds of culture. Truth becomes a flexible, mutable and dynamic concept, that is, it has gone from being a universal reality to being a cultural construction, it has gone from being an objective referent to being a subjective referent. When the space of the subjective replaces the objective, the truth has ceased to exist, causing the search for justice to become a network of argumentative maneuvers that justify cultural activity. Civil disobedience is made up as the visible shield of the philosophy of Christian nonviolence: civil disobedience is necessary as long as the prohibitive principles are broken: Christians are called to civil disobedience when the welfare of the peoples is at stake. Danger, when our life is threatened, when our freedom is restricted. There is no room for submission, because it transforms the Christian, takes him from an agent of good to being an agent of evil, transforms him from an agent who bears blessing, to an agent who bears a curse. Submission to evil makes the Christian a pedestal of persecution, makes him the justifying agent of the oppressor. The search for justice is built through the visualization of the truth. The search for justice becomes a duty of every Christian, considering that, at the same time, injustice is perpetrated by the oppressor: the one who delights in lies, manipulates the truth, and justifies his acts by any means. . The search for justice does not open space for submission or fidelity to the oppressor, because the exposition of the truth cannot be replaced by fear of reprisal, by the shame of the public rumor, by indifference, or by fidelity to the tyrant. . The truth bypasses the cultural construction, bypasses any value that erects loyalty as the ulterior value. Culture builds values that can reveal the truth, hide it, or manipulate it; therefore, the truth transcends the values of the culture.



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