

JPJRS 8/1 ISSN 0972-3331, Jan 2005 5-19

DOI:10.5281/zenodo.4265870

Stable URL:<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4265870>

A Creative Approach to Violence: A Biblical Perspective

Rekha M. Chennattu RA

Dept of Scriptural Studies, JDV, Pune 411014

Abstract

Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis* has often been reduced to pious exhortations: "evil actions are not to be resisted" or "not to testify against an evildoer" or "an attitude of overabundant righteousness toward evil people." Such views present Jesus as someone uninterested in the course of human history and make Jesus' teaching socially and politically irrelevant. On the other hand, the author asserts, the Gospel narratives in general present Jesus' actions as revolutionary, but without recourse to violence. Moreover, the teachings in Matt 5:38-42 in particular explicitly address those who are insulted, oppressed and exploited ("if anyone strikes you . . ."). So the author attempts a different reading of the text employing the experience of the oppressed and marginalized, including women, in the light of the Gandhian concept of non-violence and non-cooperation as the hermeneutical key for interpreting Jesus' teaching on retaliation. The present author understands Jesus' commands as imaginative and efficient non-violent responses that would protest against all oppressive systems and dehumanizing practices, and enable the victims to recover their human dignity and restore justice. The readers are challenged to use their creative imagination to find alternative non-violent ways of responding when confronted with similar or new situations of violence and injustice. An imaginative non-violent engagement demands creative ways of blending one's reason and heart, anger and compassion, and it has the inner force to liberate both victims and evildoers at the same time.

Keywords

Lex talionis, Gandhi, non-violence, Jesus' creative response.

We live in an era of ever-increasing violence, in which religions play an important role. The paradox of religion is that, on the one

hand, it is one of the most pervasive and compelling forces that inspires humans to commit themselves to the well-being and welfare of all living beings, while on the other hand, as history shows, religion begets the most outrageous out-group violence.¹ Violence breeds a cycle of violence because humans, consciously or unconsciously, believe in the principle of retaliation. The question, therefore, is how to use religious ideas and values to motivate and mobilize people to break the spiral of violence and to participate in an effective and “sustainable peace building process.”² It seems therefore very timely to reconsider Jesus’ interpretation of the *lex talionis* (law of retaliation) found in Matthew 5:38-42.³

Jesus’ interpretation of the *lex talionis* has often been reduced to pious exhortations: “evil actions are not to be resisted” or “not to testify against an evildoer” or “an attitude of overabundant righteousness toward evil people.”⁴ Such views present Jesus as someone uninterested in the course of human history and make Jesus’ teaching socially and politically irrelevant. The Gospel narratives in general present Jesus’ actions as revolutionary, but without recourse to violence.⁵ Moreover, the teachings in Matt 5:38-42 in particular explicitly address those who are insulted, oppressed and exploited (“if anyone strikes *you* . . .”). The following reading of the text thus employs the experience of the oppressed and marginalized, including women, in the light of the Gandhian concept of non-violence and non-cooperation as the hermeneutical key for interpreting Jesus’ teaching on retaliation.

Matthew 5:38-42 (see also Luke 6:29-30)

38 You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you [NRSV].

The literary setting for Jesus’ interpretation of the *lex talionis* (5:38-42) is the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5–7).⁶ Jesus is addressing the crowd (including the disciples [cf. 5:1]) gathered

to listen to him (5:1), and the background of the mountain reminds the readers of Mount Sinai and the Law given by Moses. The Evangelist clarifies the underlying presupposition of the Sermon that Jesus came not to abolish but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets (5:17). The six antitheses that follow the introduction therefore need to be interpreted as Jesus' own way of appropriating and fulfilling the Torah. Each antithesis starts off by saying, "You have heard that it was said . . . " (except the third one which begins with, "It was also said . . ."), followed by the formula, "But I say to you." The structure of the fifth antithesis on retaliation can be summarised as follows:

A. Citation from the OT (5:38) – "an Eye for an Eye . . ."

B. Jesus' Appropriation/Interpretation (5:39-42)

a. The First Prohibition (v. 39a)

b. Four Examples or Models of Responses (vv. 39b-42a)

1. Turn the other cheek (v. 39b)

2. Offer the outer garment (v. 40)

3. Go the second mile (v. 41)

4. Give to everyone who begs from you (v. 42a)

a¹ The Second Prohibition (v. 42b)

After citing the *lex talionis* from the OT, Jesus formulates his own principle, "Do not repay violence for evil/violence," and furnishes four models of responses – turning the other cheek, offering the outer garment, going the second mile, giving to everyone who begs from you – highlighting the implications of his principle. The teaching is concluded by another exhortation to take deliberate means so that the victims do not become violent oppressors themselves when they are in a better economic position. These examples are not meant to be imitated literally, but the readers are awakened to "an infinite variety of creative responses in new and challenging circumstances."⁷

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'" (5:38)

Jesus begins with the OT principle of retaliation ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth") found in Exod 21:24; Lev 24:20;

and Deut 19:21. The Palestinian Targum interpreted the *lex talionis* (Exodus 21) in economic or financial terms: “the value of an eye for an eye; the value of a tooth for a tooth . . .”⁸ The Law may appear to be awful and barbarian “as a *carte blanche* for private retaliation.”⁹ But the goal of the Law in the OT was to limit private revenge and the judicial punishment, to prevent the escalation of violence. “No person was required by the Law to react in like manner toward an offender.”¹⁰ As Robert L. Cate has observed, “In the world in which Israel lived, vengeance was the rule of the day. Here they were being told that they could exact *nothing more than justice*.”¹¹

It is, however, doubtful if this practice was in force or that the Law was in effect in Jesus’ time. Josephus speaks about it as an *option* rather than a *necessity*: “He that maimeth any one, let him undergo the like himself, and be deprived of the same member of which he hath deprived the other, unless he that is maimed will accept of [sic] money instead of it; for the law makes the sufferer the judge of the value of what he hath suffered, and permits him to estimate it, unless he will be more severe.”¹² The punishment should not exceed the physical injury that one has actually received. The law sets boundaries as to how far retaliation could be carried out. In other words, the *lex talionis* justifies a just and proportionate violence as a legally accepted means of punishment. The Law thus limits retaliation in proportion to the offender’s crime and tries to restore justice.¹³

“But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer” (5:39a)

Jesus transcends and perfects the *lex talionis* by saying: *mē antistēnai tō ponērō*. The conventional interpretation of “do not resist an evildoer” has been non-opposition or non-resistance or submission to evil. This interpretation contradicts the basic teaching and actions of Jesus, since, as the Gospels indicate, Jesus himself always opposed evil with his whole being. The difficulty starts with the translation of the Greek text. The Greek verb used in Matt 5:39a is *antistēnai*, which literally means to stand (*stēnai*) against (*anti*). According to Liddell-Scott, one of the usages

anthistēmi is “to stand against, especially in battle.”¹⁴ As Walter Wink has aptly observed, the interpreters have not noticed or have ignored the fact that in the LXX *anthistēmi* is often used “as a technical term for warfare.”¹⁵ For example, we read in the book of Leviticus: “They shall stumble over one another, as if to escape a sword, though no one pursues; and you shall have no power to stand against [*antistēnai*] your enemies” (Lev 26:37; see also Deut 7:24; Josh 23:9; Judges 2:14; Dan 8:4; Judith 11:18; Wis 11:21; 2 Maccabees 8:5; 10:18, etc.). The same meaning is implied in Ephesians: “Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand [*antistēnai*] on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm” (6:13). In other words, *antistēnai* means more than simply resisting evil; it implies “violently opposing or confronting the enemy” as in the context of armed warfare.¹⁶

The next difficulty is with the ambiguous term *ponēros* which literally means “evil.” Here it most probably refers to an evildoer/ wrongdoer rather than evil or the one who is evil.¹⁷ Now what do we make of Jesus’ command: *mē antistēnai tō ponērō* (Matt 5:39a)? If *antistēnai* implies a violent opposition and *ponēros* refers to a wrongdoer, then Jesus is *not* exhorting his audience to be passive and submissive to evil actions, but Jesus commands his listeners to refuse to repay violence for violence or to refuse to confront violently the evildoer. In the words of Walter Wink, “[Jesus] is urging us to *transcend both passivity and violence* by finding a third way, one that is at once *assertive and yet non-violent*.”¹⁸ Drawing inspiration from the *Sermon on the Mount*, Gandhi reaffirms that non-violence “does not mean meek submission to the will of the evildoer, but it means the putting of one’s whole soul against the will of the tyrant.”¹⁹ The victims of violence can interrupt the spiral of violence only through a creative non-violent response. Non-violence implies and manifests tremendous spiritual power. Gandhi writes: “I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power.”²⁰ Non-violence is the summit of innovative, life enhancing heroism.

Ronald H. Worth pointed out the precedents for non-retaliation in the OT. For example, “to give one’s cheek to the smiter” (Lam 3:30a); “I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting” (Isa 50:6). So Jesus’ appropriation of non-retaliation was not something totally alien to his audience, but Jesus brought to the center what was on the periphery in the OT by making it a salient feature of his proclamation of God’s reign. The disciples of Jesus are asked to resist opposing evil on its own terms, lest they allow the opponents to dictate terms to them. Jesus wants to prevent the escalation of violence, to break the cycle of violence. The same notion of non-retaliation is also found in the Letters of Paul and Peter: “Do not repay anyone evil for evil” (Rom 12:17a); “See that none of you repays evil for evil” (1 Thess 5:15a); “Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse” (1 Peter 3:9a).

“But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also” (5:39b)

What does “striking on the right cheek” imply? The Greek verb *rhapizō* does not mean a blow with a fist, but a “slap on the face” (Liddel and Scott, 1565), a gesture of insult (see, e.g., Ps 3:7; Lam 3:30; Isa 50:6). Jesus is talking about insult rather than physical assault.²¹ Unlike in the Lukan version (6:29), the Matthean Jesus deliberately specifies it as the *right* cheek. This detail is of significance in interpreting the teaching of Jesus correctly. Now most people are right handed. Moreover, there seems to be a religious prohibition against the use of the left hand as it was meant to be for unclean tasks.²² How does one strike the right cheek of another with one’s own right hand? It is very difficult to slap a person on the right cheek with one’s own right hand. Therefore the detail of the right cheek suggests that the blow is a backhanded slap to demean and insult the receiver. It was observed that a backhand slap was very common to reprove “inferiors” (1 Kings 22:24; cf. also Matt 26:67).²³ Therefore, those who received such treatment were socially or politically or/and economically less

privileged and significant than their opponents. The relationship presupposed here is that between the master and slave, the rich and the poor, man and woman, a Roman officer and a Jewish civilian, oppressor and oppressed. And remember most of the people listening to Jesus were thus degraded in society (cf. “if anyone strikes *you*”). Since both v. 38 (the citation from the OT) and v. 40 (the unjust suing) deal with judicial actions, Roland H. Worth argues that it denotes “the judicial abuse that one is receiving.”²⁴ If taken in this sense, then it implies an undeserved juridical punishment.

What does it mean to “turn the other cheek”? Does Jesus urge his listeners to endure unjust abuse and insults? The conventional interpretation affirms that the point of the saying has to do with self-control under provocation in daily life. Jesus exhorts the crowd to endure “the petty insults and pains of life without physical striking back.”²⁵ In his commentary on Matthew’s Gospel, Daniel Harrington writes: “It is possible that ‘the other’ is a misunderstanding of ‘back’ in Aramaic (‘*uḥrâ*’/‘*aḥōrâ*’) and that the idea is that, when insulted by a slap on the cheek, *you should simply turn away and not retaliate*.”²⁶ But if we take the first slap as a backhanded slap to humiliate, then turning the other cheek implies confronting the master as an equal by offering the left cheek for a blow with the master’s right fist. No master would wish to establish such equal relationship with his slave. In a master-slave relationship, turning the other cheek makes the master incapable of exercising his dominance and superiority over the slave. In the words of Chilton and McDonald, “The strategy of turning the other cheek (5:39) is a refusal to trade insults or blows, or to inflame the situation; it is *to create a new situation by refusing to assent to the logic of violence*.”²⁷ The adversaries are stripped of their power to insult, humiliate and dehumanize the less privileged people. By turning the other cheek, the inferior or the oppressed refuses to be degraded or humiliated by the superior or the oppressor. Wink paraphrases the thought of Jesus in the following words: “Stand up for yourselves, defy your masters, assert your humanity; but don’t answer the oppressor in kind.

Find a new, third way that is neither cowardly submission nor violent reprisal.”²⁸ In the words of Gandhi, “The first principle of non-violent action . . . is that of non-cooperation with everything humiliating.”²⁹ Gandhi explores the concept further when he writes: “Non-cooperation is not a passive state; it is an intensely active state – more active than physical resistance of violence. Passive resistance is a misnomer. Non-cooperation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and therefore neither punitive nor vindictive nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred.”³⁰ In fact, Gandhi seems to prefer violence more than cowardice *if there is no other option*: “I do believe that where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence I would advise violence. . . . But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment.”³¹ Similarly, Jesus’ response is neither fighting violently to punish the opponent nor fleeing fearfully from danger, but engaging oneself to assert one’s right with nobility and self-dignity as an equal partner to restore justice and well-being to both victims and their opponents (cf. John 18:23). Turning the other cheek is thus an imaginative non-cooperation or non-violent confrontation that has an inbuilt transforming power.

“If anyone wants to sue you and take your coat (chitōn), give your cloak (himation) as well” (5:40)

Unlike the Lukan version that reflects the situation of theft (6:29b), the context of the saying in Matthew is an interaction between a creditor and a debtor over an unpaid loan. The creditor seizes the undergarment (*chitōn*, “a garment worn next to the skin”) from the debtor, and Jesus expects the debtor to offer the outer garment (*himation*).³² The Torah commands that the creditor return the outer garment (*himation*) of the debtor before the sunset so that the poor debtor would have something in which to sleep and cover his body.

25 If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them. 26 If you take your neighbor’s cloak in pawn, you shall restore it before the sun goes down; 27 for it may be your neighbour’s only clothing to use as cover; in what else shall that person sleep? And

if your neighbor cries out to me, I will listen, for I am compassionate (Exod 22:25-27 NRSV; LXX 22:24-26; see also Deut 24:10-13).

Josephus alluded to the practice of slaves wearing two garments (*Ant* 17:136). Jesus exhorts the poor debtor to offer his outer garment along with his undergarment. Offering the outer garment implies that the debtor is standing naked in front of the hard-hearted creditor. It is the persons causing or viewing the nakedness of others who were cursed, shamed or punished rather than the naked person (cf. Gen 9:20-27; Isa 20:1-6).³³ By leaving the court naked, the debtor puts the creditor to shame and protests against the unjust system that enslaved him to be a debtor. "The entire system by which debtors are oppressed has been publicly unmasked. The creditor is revealed to be not a legitimate moneylender but a party to the reduction of an entire social class to landlessness and destitution."³⁴ This might give an opportunity for the creditor to see the implications of his own actions and policies and thus impel the creditor to change his way of life.

"If anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile"
(5:41)

The third example of Jesus implies forced labour. The situation presupposed seems to be the practice of Roman soldiers forcing the Jewish civilians to carry their baggage.³⁵ The subservient is compelled to carry a soldier's pack for one mile. Now what happens when one refuses to stop at the first mile and carries the baggage yet another mile? Wink has pointed out that carrying the baggage a second mile would violate the military norm. By walking a second mile, the forced labourer or the victim has seized power to respond to the soldiers with self-dignity by taking the initiative to make choices.³⁶ The soldiers are confused and off guard as they do not know the intention of the person offering the second mile. They cannot be sure whether the victims would complain against them for making them carry their baggage for two miles. "Imagine a Roman infantryman pleading with a Jew to give back his pack! The humour of this scene may have escaped us, but it could scarcely have been lost on Jesus' hearers, who must have been delighted at the prospect of thus discomfiting their oppressors."³⁷ This

creative non-cooperation or non-violent response empowers the victims to throw the oppressors into a situation of unpredictability, as they can now no longer estimate or calculate the victim's response and thus dictate terms to the victims.

“Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.” (5:42)

Some scholars do not consider v. 42 as an integral part of the original cluster of sayings on retaliation, but as a secondary addition to Jesus' teaching on retaliation. For example, Wink writes: “Matthew has not quite succeeded in integrating v. 42 into the rest of the saying. I will therefore treat v. 42 as a secondary addition of a (probably authentic) saying of Jesus as represented by the Lukan and *Thomas* version” ³⁸ As we shall see, Jesus' second principle (v. 42b) reinforces the first prohibition (v. 39a). Verses 38-42 are addressed to the same audience as referred to as “you” (“I say to *you*” [v. 39a], “if anyone strikes *you*” [39b], if anyone would sue *you*” [v. 40], “if anyone forces *you*” [v. 41]; “give to him who begs from *you*” [v. 42]). Verses 39b-41 focus on what was done to the disciples or Jesus' audience and their response back to the evildoers. Verse 42a-b focuses on what the listeners should do in their turn to the less privileged members of their community. The change of role implied in this final command is very important to understand Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis*. The three examples mentioned before presuppose Jesus' audience or the disciples as the victims of aggression or oppression: those who are struck, sued unjustly, and forced to carry things (If anyone strikes *you* on the right cheek; if anyone would sue *you* and take *your* coat; if anyone forces *you* to go one mile). The situation changes radically in the last command where the listeners are presupposed as potential oppressors who can deal mercilessly with those who are in need, they are in a better economic position, having power and wealth (“give to him who begs *from you* . . .”). In this reversal of roles: the oppressed have now the power and means to provide for others, and they are commanded NOT to imitate those who oppressed them before. Jesus exhorts the

crowd to give generously to everyone who begs from them in order to eradicate unequal distributions (v. 42a). This exhortation is followed by the second prohibition: “do not refuse anyone who would borrow from you” (v. 42b; see the first prohibition: “do not resist an evildoer” [v. 39a]). The first prohibition in v. 39a thus parallels the second prohibition in v. 42b. In between these two prohibitions, Jesus provides four examples that illustrate his interpretation of the *lex talionis*. It seems therefore reasonable to regard v. 42 as an integral part of Jesus’ teaching on retaliation.

The earliest form of Matt 5:42 seems to be found in the Gospel of Thomas 95: “If you have money, do not lend it at interest. Rather give [it] to someone from whom you will not get it back.” When we read v. 42 within the context of unjust suing and the loss of garments in v. 40, we derive the meaning that Jesus warns the listeners that they should not, in their turn, become oppressors to others (cf. the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matt 18:23-35). Verse 42 seems to imply a situation of need arising from injustice and the exploitative tax system. Jesus is not advocating generous almsgiving and money-lending but abolishing an unequal relationship characterized by ranking (between those having and those not having) and envisaging a new society where there will be no disparity between the rich and the poor, the oppressor and the oppressed or those having and not having. So let me paraphrase the teaching of Jesus as follows: Do not become evildoers yourselves as you fight against them. The warning of Nietzsche brings out the same principle very powerfully: “Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster.”³⁹ In the words of Michael Walzer, “Here is the ultimate tyranny: those who resist the aggression are forced to imitate, and perhaps even to exceed, the brutality of the aggressor.”⁴⁰ So Jesus’ second prohibition is the endorsement of the first prohibition. To put it differently, Jesus warns the listeners not to become evildoers themselves by demeaning and humiliating the economically poor and less privileged people, but to restore economic equality. Jesus invites his listeners to acknowledge the

need of the poor, the exploited, and to respect their dignity. It is a call to abolish the unequal relationship by restoring justice that results from the equal distribution of wealth and resources.

Conclusion

Jesus' interpretation of the *lex talionis* in Matt 5:38-42 can be paraphrased as follows:

The *Lex Talionis* (5:38): "an Eye for an Eye . . ."

Jesus' Appropriation/Interpretation of the *lex talionis* (5:39-42)

a. He First Prohibition (v. 39a) – "do not repay evil/violence for evil/violence"

b. Four Examples or Models of Responses (vv. 39b-42a)

1. Turn the other cheek (v. 39b) – abolish the relationship of ranking and recover human dignity
2. Offer the outer garment (v. 40) – unveil the unjust system and shame the creditor
3. Go the second mile (v. 41) – seize the initiative to protest non-violently against forced labour
4. Give to everyone who begs from you (v. 42a) – eradicate unequal distribution

a¹. The Second Prohibition (v. 42b) – "do not be/become a violent oppressor yourself"

The first prohibition in v. 39a: "do not repay evil/violence for evil/violence" parallels the second prohibition in v. 42b: "do not be/become a violent oppressor yourself." At the centre are the four examples or models that illustrate Jesus' interpretation (vv. 39b-42a). As the above reading demonstrates, Jesus' appropriation of the *lex talionis* in Matt 5:39-42 evokes imaginative non-violent strategies to break the cycle of violence. Jesus exhorts neither withdrawal nor violent confrontation, nor does he encourage an otherworldly or eschatological spirituality of overabundant goodness and generosity that has no social and political implication for the present reality. Rather, Jesus commands an imaginative and efficient non-violent response that would protest against all oppressive systems and dehumanizing practices, and enable the

victims to recover their human dignity and restore justice. The readers are challenged to use their creative imagination to find alternative non-violent ways of responding when confronted with similar or new situations of violence and injustice. An imaginative non-violent engagement demands creative ways of blending one's reason and heart, anger and compassion, and it has the inner force to liberate both victims and evildoers at the same time. It calls for an economic, social, religious and political restructuring of the entire system, where the terms of reference are no more domination or power relations but the active presence of attainable justice and human dignity.

Notes

- 1 See Charles Kimball, *When Religion Becomes Evil*, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002.
- 2 See the detailed discussion in Luc Reyhler, "Peace Architecture: The Prevention of Violence," in *The Social Psychology of Group Identity and Social Conflict: Theory, Application, and Practice*, eds., Alice H. Eagly, Reuben M. Baron, and V. Lee Hamilton; Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2004, 133-146.
- 3 Gandhi speaks of both the *Sermon on the Mount* and the *Gita* as sources of inspiration for his philosophy of non-violence as a way of life; see *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 32 (1970), 61. For an exposition of Gandhi's understanding of non-violence, see Noel Sheth, "The Non-Violence of Mahatma Gandhi," *Jnanadeepa* 4 (2001), 1: 59-78.
- 4 See the discussion in Daniel Patte, *The Gospel According to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987, 81-82.
- 5 See André Trocmé, *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2004.
- 6 The Sermon on the Mount consists of an introduction/setting (5:1-20), six antitheses (5:21-48), three acts of piety (6:1-18), wisdom sayings and other teachings (6:19-7:12), warnings about judgment (7:13-29); see Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991, 76.
- 7 Walter Wink, *The Powers That Be: Theology for a New Millennium*, New York: Doubleday, 1998, 110. See also Robert C. Tannehill, "The

- 'Focal Instance' as a Form of New Testament Speech: A Study of Matthew 5:39-42," *Journal of Religion* 50 (1970), 372-85.
- 8 Cited by Geza Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993, 36.
 - 9 Roland H. Worth, Jr., *The Sermon on the Mount: Its Old Testament Roots*, New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1997, 230.
 10. J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ: A Study of the Life of Christ*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981, 180.
 11. Robert L. Cate, *Old Testament Roots for New Testament Faith*, Nashville: Broadman, 1982, 43.
 12. *Antiquities* iv.viii.35.
 13. See also Philo, *De specialibus legibus* III. 181-82.
 14. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968, 140.
 15. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 100.
 16. Warren Carter paraphrases the expression as "do not violently resist an evildoer" (*Matthew and the Margins: A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*, Bible and Liberation Series; Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000, 151). See also the detailed discussion in Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 184-86; Hans Dieter Betz, *The Sermon on the Mount: A Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, Including the Sermon on the Plain (Matthew 5:3-7:27 and Luke 6:20-49)*, ed. Adela Yarbro Collins; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995, 280-82.
 17. Harrington, *Matthew*, 88.
 18. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 101 (italics are mine).
 19. *Young India*, August 11, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 133.
 20. *Young India*, August 11, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 133.
 21. See Worth, *Sermon on the Mount*, 244-46; Wink, *The Powers That Be*, 101; Betz, *Sermon on the Mount*, 278.
 22. See, for example, the Community Rule of the Qumran community: "And whoever takes out his left hand to gesticulate with it shall be punished ten days" (IQS 7:15). See also Wink, *Powers That Be*, 101.
 23. The Code of Hammurabi decrees confirm the same idea: "If a man has smitten the cheek of a man who is his superior, he shall be given sixty lashes with an ox whip in the assembly" (par. 202). See also the discussion in Wink, *Powers That Be*, 101; Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 151-52.

24. Worth, *Sermon on the Mount*, 235.
25. Worth, *Sermon on the Mount*, 242.
26. Harrington, *Matthew*, 88 (italics are mine). Although it is possible, it remains best a hypothesis that is not necessary to interpret the text as it stands today.
27. Bruce Chilton and J. I. H. McDonald, *Jesus and the Ethics of the Kingdom*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 104 (italics are mine).
28. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 103.
29. Gandhi, *Harijan*, March 10, 1946. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 83 (1981), 206.
30. *Young India*, August 25, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 195.
31. *Young India*, August 11, 1920. Cited from *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 18 (1977), 132.
32. In Matthew there seems to be some confusion regarding the use of *chit;n* and *himation*. See the Lukan version has changed the order: “from him who takes away your outer garment (*himation*) do not withhold even your undergarment (*chit;n*)” (6:29b).
33. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 104.
34. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 105.
35. Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry the cross of Jesus, the criminal to be crucified (Mark 15:21; Matt 27:32; Luke 23:26).
36. For a detailed discussion on the issue, see Carter, *Matthew and the Margins*, 151-53; Betz, *Sermons on the Mount*, 280-92; Wink, *Powers That Be*, 106-11.
37. Wink, *Powers That Be*, 108.
38. W. Wink, “Neither Passivity nor Violence: Jesus’ Third Way (Matt. 5:38-42 par.),” in *The Love of Enemy and Nonretaliation in the New testament*, ed., W. M. Swartley; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/ John Knox Press, 1992, 103.
39. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, tr. Walter Kaufmann; New York: Vintage Books, 1966, 89.
40. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, London: Allen Lane, 1978, 32.

Article received: November 12, 2004

Article approved: December 24, 2004.

No of words: 5,324