

The Gandhi Way



Tavistock Square, London 30 January 2017 (Photo by John Rowley)

Newsletter of the Gandhi Foundation

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Gandhi Foundation Summer Gathering 2017

Theme: Inspired by Gandhi

22 July - 29 July 2017

St Christopher School, Barrington Road,
Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3JZ

Further details: Summer Gathering, 2 Vale Court, Weybridge KT13 9NN
or Telephone: 01932 841135; gandhisummerngathering@gmail.com

Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture 2017

to be given by Satish Kumar

Saturday 30 September

Venue in London to be announced later

An International Conference on Mahatma Gandhi in the 21st century: Gandhian Themes and Values

Friday 28 April 2017

at the Wellcome Trust Conference Centre,
183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BE

Organised by Narinder Kapur & Caroline Selai,
University College London

Further details on page 23

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Climate Change – A Burning Issue

Jane Sill

This was the title of this year's annual multifaith gathering which took place on 28th January at Kingsley Hall where Gandhi Ji had stayed in 1931 while attending the Round Table Conference. The title had been chosen some time ago but, in view of the drastic change in US policy, it could not have been a more fitting subject. Often pushed aside in the light of apparently more pressing issues, this is a subject which unfortunately is bound to come into higher profile as the results of global warming become more evident – unless of course there are serious policy changes worldwide.

The subject was discussed by representatives from a number of faith communities, some of whom also had a keen interest and involvement in environmental issues. They were invited to say a few words on the subject in the light of their own tradition and also to bring the subject into practical focus in keeping with Gandhi Ji's own philosophy of grass root involvement at local level.

The meeting was chaired by William Rhind from the Gandhi Foundation who first introduced Reverend Nagase, resident Buddhist monk from the London Peace Pagoda, whose teacher had stayed for some time with Gandhi Ji at Wardha in the 1930s and who was greatly influenced by him. Nagase Shonin offered a short prayer, Na mu myo ho ren ge kyo, a chant which is still heard at morning prayers in Wardha today. He drew from the Lotus Sutra which speaks of the importance of 'politics and economics coinciding with the True Law' while warning of the dangers to the world if this does not happen. Nagase Shonin quoted John Ruskin's words from *Unto this Last*, the small book which Gandhi Ji read on a train journey from Johannesburg to Durban: 'There is no wealth but life'. He went on to describe how today's world politics are ruled by a 'military industrial complex', against which we should take a stand.

Next to speak was Bob Gilbert, a Quaker, who for many years had been biodiversity officer for the London Borough of Islington and whose wife is vicar of a local church in Bow. Bob quoted from the Old Testament which made clear that it was the duty of humanity to be guardians of the earth and not to over exploit its assets. Bob said it was important for each of us to respect nature and natural resources and to reduce over consumption, protecting the environment for future generations. He went on to describe how nature is viewed as sacred by many peoples throughout the world.

Francesca Cisqueta from Jamyang Buddhist Centre who works for a government body involved with environmental issues, discussed the issue with reference to the Middle Way, extolled by Buddha, and the '3 poisons' – greed, hatred and ignorance. Practising moderation and reducing our self centred attitude, would help to reduce our carbon footprint on the earth. Francesca spoke of the need to invest in more renewable energies and

encourage a greater awareness of our mutual interdependence not only with each other but also with the earth. A deeper understanding of the law of cause and effect could help us become aware of the reasons behind our present situation in terms of climate change and also allow us the opportunity to take steps to start to reverse the process. This, Francesca stated, was our collective responsibility and was essential to protect future generations.



Rev Nagase, Bob Gilbert, Jonathon Fitter, Kajal Mehta, Francesca Ciquita, William Rhind

Jonathan Fitter, representing the Jewish faith, explained how in the Torah cautionary advice was given not to over exploit natural resources. He gave the example of how it was prohibited to fell food giving trees and the importance of caring for the environment. Jonathan spoke of the early Israeli settlers being among the first to instal solar panels to heat water, and to encourage the use of electric bikes to reduce congestion and pollution. According to Jonathan, there is a very high percentage of vegans and those who take a plant based diet amongst those following a kosher diet. In contrast, he stated that 20% of carbon dioxide produced can be attributed to the farming of animals. Jonathan went on to point out that 80% of Israel's water comes from desalinated sea water, while 80% of 'grey' water was reused for irrigation, the highest in the world, with Spain coming second, using 20% in this way.

Kajal Sheth from the Jain tradition, explained how the philosophy of Jainism had had a profound effect on Gandhi Ji's life and how its main tenets support extreme respect and care for the environment and all its inhabitants. One of its principles, 'Parasparopagraho Jivanam: all life is bound together by mutual support and interdependence', could be seen as key to helping deal with the current challenges. Ahimsa or nonviolence is also a key belief and

one which Gandhi Ji followed throughout his life. The practices adopted by adherents of Jainism could be seen to benefit the individual and also the planet and delicate eco systems: strict vegetarianism, regular fasting, frugal use of resources, Aparigraha or self limiting of possessions, setting limits to travel, refraining from engaging in occupations which could harm living beings or the environment, refraining from the use of products tested on animals, encouraging charitable concerns, providing shelter to animals and rescuing them from slaughter houses, promoting the planting of trees and recycling all materials.



Sadia and Rahela Begum

Finally, Sadia and Rahela Begum, both pupils at Mulberry School in Tower Hamlets, represented the Islam faith. As practising Moslems, they said it was one of their many duties to be a Khalifa or steward on Earth, caring for the environment and its well being. They said that this encouraged them to help support organisations which aim to improve the quality of the environment, eg those which help reduce the risk of climate change. “It is expected of us to treat the world with respect, as it is not ours to abuse. Guardianship allows humans to make use of the environment for their survival, but should never be taken advantage of.” Sadia then quoted from the Quran.

A short discussion followed with questions to the panel before Kajal, a professionally trained singer, sang two of Gandhi Ji's favourite bhajans most beautifully. Further discussions followed over tea and cake, with home made Indian snacks kindly brought by Sabia Begum, the girls' mother.

By serendipity, a World Peace Pathway, which had been 10 years in the planning, was finally completed the day before the event with the final touches being made that morning. The pathway was constructed on sand brought from Gandhi Ji's ashram at Ahmedabad, with earth being collected from every country in the world, including the West Bank, Mecca, Assisi, the Berlin Wall and Machu Picchu. Words for peace in many different languages were carved into its outer circle. At the centre is a solar powered World Peace Flame. Designed to help bring together people from all faith traditions and none and from all cultures, it seemed a very fitting conclusion to the afternoon for those present to walk together around the path. Khajal and her husband, Ashwin, then offered framed plaques to the faith representatives, commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Shrimad Rajchandra who had been spiritual guide to Gandhi Ji.



The World Peace Pathway (photos by Jane Sill)

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### **Lifestyle AGM and Conference**

11-13 August 2017

*The Difficulties and Rewards of Leading a Simple Lifestyle*

Minster Abbey, Church Street, Minster, Nr. Ramgate, Kent CT12 4HF

Catered weekend at a very reasonable cost of £90 per person

Contact: Graham Davey, 29 Norton Road, Bristol BS4 2EZ

0117 909 3491; [graham.davey29@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:graham.davey29@yahoo.co.uk)

# **An Experiment in Love:**

## **Martin Luther King, Jr. on the Six Pillars of Nonviolent Resistance and the Ancient Greek Notion of ‘Agape’**

*Maria Popova*

*“Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.”*

Although Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (January 15, 1929–April 4, 1968) used Christian social ethics and the New Testament concept of “love” heavily in his writings and speeches, he was as influenced by Eastern spiritual traditions, Gandhi’s political writings, Buddhism’s notion of the interconnectedness of all beings, and Ancient Greek philosophy. His enduring ethos, at its core, is nonreligious — rather, it champions a set of moral, spiritual, and civic responsibilities that fortify our humanity, individually and collectively.

Nowhere does he transmute spiritual ideas from various traditions into secular principles more masterfully than in his extraordinary 1958 essay “An Experiment in Love,” in which he examines the six essential principles of his philosophy of nonviolence, debunks popular misconceptions about it, and considers how these basic tenets can be used in guiding any successful movement of nonviolent resistance. Penned five years before his famous *Letter from Birmingham City Jail* and exactly a decade before his assassination, the essay was eventually included in the indispensable *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.* — required reading for every human being with a clicking mind and a ticking heart.

In the first of the six basic philosophies, Dr. King addresses the tendency to mistake nonviolence for passivity, pointing out that it is a form not of cowardice but of courage:

*It must be emphasized that nonviolent resistance is not a method for cowards; it does resist. If one uses this method because he is afraid or merely because he lacks the instruments of violence, he is not truly nonviolent. This is why Gandhi often said that if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to fight... The way of nonviolent resistance ... is ultimately the way of the strong man. It is not a method of stagnant passivity... For while the nonviolent resister is passive in the sense that he is not physically aggressive toward his opponent, his mind and his emotions are always active, constantly seeking to persuade his opponent that he is wrong. The method is passive physically but strongly active spiritually. It is not passive non-resistance to evil, it is active nonviolent resistance to evil.*

He turns to the second tenet of nonviolence:

*Nonviolence ... does not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often express his protest through noncooperation or boycotts, but he realizes that these are not ends themselves; they are merely means to awaken a sense of moral shame in the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. The aftermath of nonviolence is the creation of the beloved community, while the aftermath of violence is tragic bitterness.*

In considering the third characteristic of nonviolence, Dr. King appeals to the conscientious recognition that those who perpetrate violence are often victims themselves:

*The attack is directed against forces of evil rather than against persons who happen to be doing the evil. It is the evil that the nonviolent resister seeks to defeat, not the persons victimized by the evil. If he is opposing racial injustice, the nonviolent resister has the vision to see that the basic tension is not between the races... The tension is, at bottom, between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness.... We are out to defeat injustice and not white persons who may be unjust.*

Out of this recognition flows the fourth tenet:

*Nonviolent resistance [requires] a willingness to accept suffering without retaliation, to accept blows from the opponent without striking back... The nonviolent resister is willing to accept violence if necessary, but never to inflict it. He does not seek to dodge jail. If going to jail is necessary, he enters it as a bridegroom enters the bride's chamber.*

That, in fact, is precisely how Dr. King himself entered jail five years later. To those skeptical of the value of turning the other cheek, he offers:

*Unearned suffering is redemptive. Suffering, the nonviolent resister realizes, has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.*

The fifth basic philosophy turns the fourth inward and arrives at the most central point of the essay — the noblest use of what we call “love”:

*Nonviolent resistance ... avoids not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. The nonviolent resister not only refuses to shoot his opponent but he also refuses to hate him. At the center of nonviolence stands the principle of love. The nonviolent resister would contend that in the struggle for human dignity, the oppressed people of the world must not succumb to the temptation of becoming bitter or indulging in hate*



*campaigns. To retaliate in kind would do nothing but intensify the existence of hate in the universe. Along the way of life, someone must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate. This can only be done by projecting the ethic of love to the center of our lives.*

Here, Dr. King turns to Ancient Greek philosophy, pointing out that the love he speaks of is not the sentimental or affectionate kind — “it would be nonsense to urge men to love their oppressors in an affectionate sense,” he readily acknowledges — but love in the sense of understanding and redemptive goodwill. The Greeks called this *agape* — a love distinctly different from the *eros*, reserved for our lovers, or *philia*, with which we love our friends and family. Dr. King explains:

*Agape* means understanding, redeeming good will for all men. It is an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object... *Agape* is disinterested love. It is a love in which the individual seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor. *Agape* does not begin by discriminating between worthy and unworthy people, or any qualities people possess. It begins by loving others *for their sakes*. It is an entirely “neighbor-regarding concern for others,” which discovers the neighbor in every man it meets. Therefore, *agape* makes no distinction between friends and enemy; it is directed toward both. If one loves an individual merely on account of his friendliness, he loves him for the sake of the benefits to be gained from the friendship, rather than for the friend’s own sake. Consequently, the best way to assure oneself that love is disinterested is to have love for the enemy-neighbor from whom you can expect no good in return, but only hostility and persecution.

This notion is nearly identical to one of Buddhism’s four *brahmaviharas*, or divine attitudes — the concept of *Metta*, often translated as lovingkindness or benevolence. The parallel speaks not only to Dr. King’s extraordinarily diverse intellectual toolkit of influences and inspirations — a high form of [combinatorial creativity](#) necessary for any meaningful contribution to humanity’s [common record](#) — but also to the core commonalities between the world’s major spiritual and philosophical traditions.

In a sentiment that Margaret Mead and James Baldwin would echo twelve years later in their [spectacular conversation on race](#) — “*In any oppressive situation both groups suffer, the oppressors and the oppressed,*” Mead observed, asserting that the oppressors suffer morally with the recognition of what they’re committing, which Baldwin noted is “a worse kind of suffering” — Dr. King adds:

*Another basic point about agape is that it springs from the need of the other person — his need for belonging to the best in the human family... Since the white man's personality is greatly distorted by segregation, and his soul is greatly scarred, he needs the love of the Negro. The Negro must love the white man, because the white man needs his love to remove his tensions, insecurities, and fears.*

At the heart of *agape*, he argues, is the notion of forgiveness — something Mead and Baldwin also explored with great intellectual elegance. Dr. King writes:

*Agape is not a weak, passive love. It is love in action... Agape is a willingness to go to any length to restore community... It is a willingness to forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven to restore community.... If I respond to hate with a reciprocal hate I do nothing but intensify the cleavage in broken community. I can only close the gap in broken community by meeting hate with love.*

With this, he turns to the sixth and final principle of nonviolence as a force of justice, undergirded by the nonreligious form of spirituality that Dani Shapiro elegantly termed “an animating presence” and Alan Lightman described as the transcendence of “this strange and shimmering world.” Dr. King writes:

*Nonviolent resistance ... is based on the conviction that the universe is on the side of justice. Consequently, the believer in nonviolence has deep faith in the future. This faith is another reason why the nonviolent resister can accept suffering without retaliation. For he knows that in his struggle for justice he has cosmic companionship. It is true that there are devout believers in nonviolence who find it difficult to believe in a personal God. But even these persons believe in the existence of some creative force that works for universal wholeness. Whether we call it an unconscious process, an impersonal Brahman, or a Personal Being of matchless power of infinite love, there is a creative force in this universe that works to bring the disconnected aspects of reality into a harmonious whole.*

*A Testament of Hope* is an absolutely essential read in its totality. Complement it with Dr. King on the two types of law, Albert Einstein's little-known correspondence with W.E.B. Du Bois on racial justice, and Tolstoy and Gandhi's equally forgotten but immensely timely correspondence on why we hurt each other.

**Maria Popova's** writings can be viewed on her website [www.brainpickings.org](http://www.brainpickings.org)  
The above article (16/1/17) appears courtesy of **TRANSCEND Media Service-TMS** which puts out many articles weekly on peace and human rights issues.

An Untold Story of Two Legends of Indian History

# Mahatma Gandhi and his mentor Shrimad Rajchandraji

Commemorating 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Shrimad Rajchandraji

A man as great as Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Indian Nation was captivated in spiritual matters by Shrimadji, as he said, “This man has won my heart in spiritual matters, and no one else has ever made on me the same impression”. [Mahatma Gandhi, *Modern Review*, June 1930]

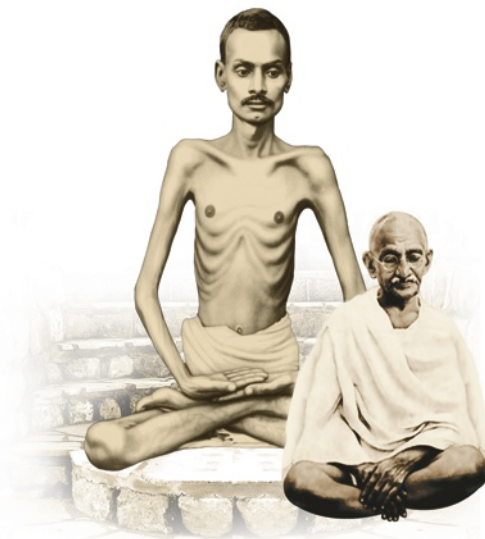
## A Close Association

The first meeting between the great souls took place in 1891 in Mumbai upon Gandhiji’s return from England. Being two years younger to Shrimadji, Gandhiji instantly took to His liking. Subsequent meetings took place on a regular basis at Shrimadji’s office during the two years Gandhiji spent his time in Mumbai. During these visits Gandhiji intently observed Shrimadji’s way of life, and as the association grew his respect grew in leaps and bounds for this spiritual visionary.

The ease with which He performed His duties as a pearl and diamond jeweller with a perfectly detached attitude amazed Gandhiji, as he wrote in his tribute, “Raichandbhai’s commercial transactions covered hundreds of thousands. He was a connoisseur of pearls and diamonds. No knotty business problem was too difficult for him. But these things were not the centre round which his life revolved. That centre was the passion to see God face to face. Amongst the things on his business table, there were invariably to be found some religious book or the diary. The moment he finished his business he opened the religious book or the diary. Much of his published writings is a reproduction from this diary. And I saw him thus absorbed in Godly pursuits in the midst of business, not once or twice, but very often. I never saw him lose his state of equipoise” [*The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Part II, Chapter 26, Raichandbhai].

In doing so, Gandhiji observed, “The man who, immediately on finishing his talk about weighty business transactions, began to write about the hidden things of the spirit could evidently not be a businessman at all, but a real seeker after Truth”.

After Gandhiji moved away to South Africa the communication with Shrimadji continued through correspondence, which contributed a great deal in moulding his character. Gandhiji attributes his strong foundation of truth,





nonviolence and self-improvement to Shrimadji, whilst this beautiful association continued intermittently for several years.

### **Refuge in Spiritual Crisis**

During his time in South Africa, Gandhiji was faced with constant pressure from his Christian and Muslim friends to adopt their faith. In this moment of spiritual crisis, Gandhiji sought refuge in Shrimadji by conveying his doubts through 27 questions by post. Shrimadji resolved his struggles through his judicious, direct and pertinent answers leaving no doubt in Gandhiji's mind and restoring his faith in Hinduism. Thereafter, no further questions remained about converting to another faith.

### **Influence of Shrimadji's Teachings**

Through such correspondence, Shrimadji's priceless letters and compositions remained Gandhiji's constant companions physically and mentally until the end. The unique composition of 'Apurva Avsar Evo Kyare Aavshe?' was one of Gandhiji's favourites which he later included in his 'Ashram Bhajanavali' – a collection of devotional songs sung at his daily prayer meetings. In addition, he often contemplated upon and recited other compositions including, 'Nirkhine Nav Yuvana' to strengthen his belief in celibacy and Shri Atmasiddhi Shastra. Through such contemplations, Gandhiji writes about Shrimadji's works, "The lines of his poem 'Apurva Avasar Evo Kyaare Aavshe' (When will that unique moment come?) are soaked in the spirit of detachment, which I have seen epitomised in every moment of Shrimad's life during my last two years of deep and abiding



friendship with him. His writings are unique in that they unfold his real experience and do not contain even a single grain of artificiality. I have never seen him writing a single line with the ulterior motive of pleasing others". [Raichandbhaina Ketlak Smarano – Shri Rajchandra Jeevanyatra tatha vicharratno, page 94]

Gandhiji continued to say, "It is my firm belief that those who want to free themselves from the torture of their souls, and are eager to know what is their main duty in this life, will gather a lot from Shrimad's writings, than may he be a Hindu and for that matter, follower of any other religion". [Raichandbhaina Ketlak Smarano – Shri Rajchandra Jeevanyatra tatha vicharratno, page 89]

## Heartfelt Tributes

Gandhiji documented his reverence for Shrimadji with words depicting windows to a heart overflowing with devotion. Having been asked to author the preface to the second edition of ‘Shrimad Rajchandra’ Gandhiji scribed an article titled, ‘Raichandbhaina Ketlak Smarano’ in which he incorporated the reminiscences of Shrimadji, which he had written during his time in Yervada Jail, Pune. Gandhiji took every opportunity to publicly acknowledge his indebtedness and express his heartfelt gratitude to Shrimadji on occasions such as his birth anniversary in Rajkot and later on kartik purnima in Kochrab Ashram. About such a saintly personality, Gandhiji added, “We are all worldly people whereas Shrimad was not of this world. We will have to take many births whereas for Shrimad perhaps one birth is sufficient. We will perhaps be running away from liberation whereas Shrimad was advancing towards liberation at a very fast pace”. [Raichandbhaina Ketlak Smarano – Shri Rajchandra Jeevanyatra tatha vicharratno, page 88-89]

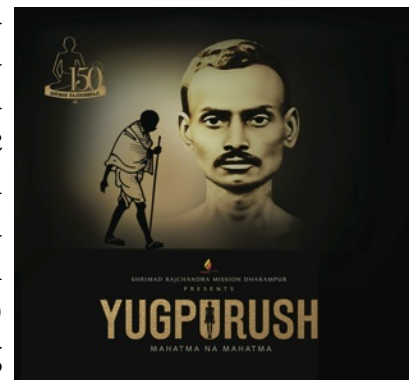
## Contribution to the Nation

Gandhiji’s memorable accounts on Shrimadji testify the profound influence that Shrimadji’s personality exerted on the Mahatma’s life. The emphasis placed on truth, compassion and nonviolence in every walk of life, later crystallised as the fundamental tenets of Gandhism. This concept played a significant role in the Indian struggle for independence, whilst in the history of India the success of Gandhiji’s nonviolent struggle as means of achieving freedom will be engraved in golden letters in the hearts of the Nation.

Gandhiji is praised by the whole world as a messenger of nonviolence. In this way he will forever remain indebted to the teachings of Shrimadji, and so the role of Shrimadji’s spiritual teachings in the regeneration of a new India can hardly be exaggerated. The history of Gujarat has witnessed the beautiful inner bond between Shrimadji and Mahatma Gandhi, which initiated a brilliant new chapter in their lives as well as in the cultural, political and spiritual history of the entire nation.

## Yugpurush – The Play

Celebrating the 150th Birth Anniversary Year of Shrimad Rajchandraji and in light of this profound relationship between the two great souls – a heart-touching play called ‘Yugpurush: Mahatma na Mahatma’ has been brought to stage by Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur. ‘Yugpurush’ is a thought-provoking play of historic and dramatic significance dedicated to the lives of two great men who changed the course of world history and spread the values of Ahimsa and Satya. Premiered on 14th November 2016 in India, the play has crossed 100 shows in just 75 days and soon will be traversing around the world to spread awareness of this great



relationship. It has received tremendous reviews and standing ovations in India and will be touring the UK in April/May 2017 with initial shows in Hindi and Gujarati. The English version of the Drama is expected to tour the UK towards the end of the year. Further information can be found on [www.yugpurush.org](http://www.yugpurush.org)

This initiative will also support the construction of Shrimad Rajchandra Hospital – a new 200-bed multi-speciality charity hospital serving one of the poorest rural regions of South Gujarat, India.

### **Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur**

Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur is a global movement that endeavours to enhance the spiritual growth of seekers and benefit society. The Mission Statement is ‘Realise one’s True Self and serve others selflessly’. It was founded by Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai, a spiritual visionary who has dedicated His life to promoting the virtues of Jainism. An embodiment of universal compassion, He has touched thousands of lives in various countries through enlightening discourses and an array of meditation retreats steering a multitude of souls towards the spiritual way of life. Further information can be found on [www.shrimadrajchandramission.org](http://www.shrimadrajchandramission.org)

Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care Programme is an initiative to offer service and bring joy to the lives of the underprivileged sections of society, based around ‘10 Cares’ promoting the welfare of people, animals and the environment. Under Pujya Gurudevshri Rakeshbhai’s guidance, the programme has touched over 1 million lives, across 50 cities worldwide, through a holistic portfolio of over 50 charitable initiatives.

Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur (UK) has centres in London, Manchester and Leicester – for details of activities, please contact [london@shrimadrajchandramission.org](mailto:london@shrimadrajchandramission.org)

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### **Our world at a crossroads – Perspectives on the way forward**

#### **An evening with Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi**

At a time when our world is facing big choices, each of us may have a part in building peace, securing justice and protecting democracy. Join us for an evening with Professor Gandhi, who will offer insights into how we can respond constructively to the pressures of our time. In that context he will provide a historical perspective on the clash between Indian nationalism and the British Empire (seen in the relationship between Mahatma Gandhi and Winston Churchill), and reflect on possible roles of South Asia and British people today.

**Date:** Thursday 20 April 2017 **Time:** Registration 6.30pm | Start 7pm | Finish 9pm

**Venue:** The Kelvin Lecture Theatre, IET London Savoy Place, 2 Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL, 6 minute walk from Embankment or Temple Underground Station

**Tickets:** £10 concession: £5

[www.rajmohangandhi.eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.rajmohangandhi.eventbrite.co.uk)

**Enquiries:** 020 7798 6000 or email [reception@london.iofc.org](mailto:reception@london.iofc.org)



# Reviews

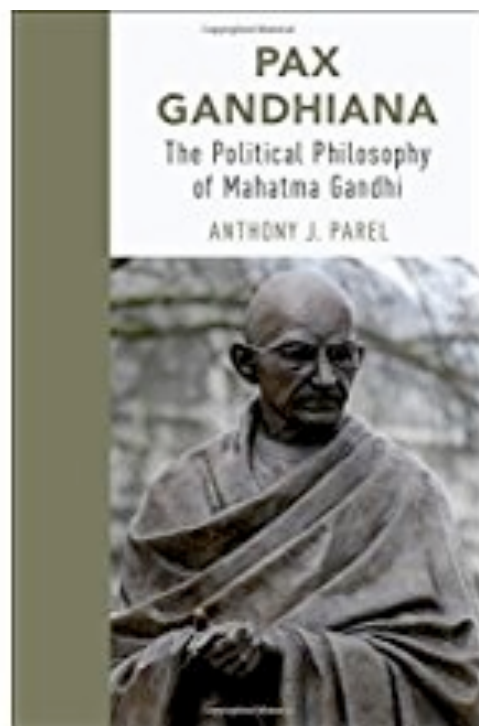
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## **Pax Gandhiana: The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi**

Anthony J Parel (Oxford, 2016)

*Before commencing I should say Professor Anthony Parel was a close friend of the Gandhi Foundation's former trustee, the late Antony Copley and delivered the 2011 Gandhi Foundation Annual Lecture. The Gandhi Foundation was sent a complimentary copy by the Oxford University Press.*

As the title of the book suggests it is not a biography of Gandhi and Parel makes no attempt to say it is. It also alludes to a corrective of the term Pax Britannica which was equated with the view that might is right with peace being compelled by military force. Accordingly, if you are looking for an introduction to Gandhi's life you should look elsewhere. Parel's objective is to show that Gandhi is worthy of study as a political philosopher and to this end I believe he succeeds admirably in both being succinct, profound and clear. It is in the form of a collection of essays so the reader does not have to read it from cover to cover. In order to achieve his objective Parel draws out a conceptual framework in which to understand Gandhi's philosophy focusing on four areas of human existence and their interaction: ethics (dharma), politics (artha), aesthetic pleasure (kama) and spiritual transcendence (moksha). To Parel it was Gandhi's ability to combine these that make him a unique philosopher worth considering as a thinker.



To the devotee of Gandhi, Parel does not shy away from presenting a Gandhi beyond the common Gandhi. Namely, Parel explains how he feels that to Gandhi nonviolence was only one method of trying to achieve Swaraj. Swaraj is often translated as home rule/independence but Parel describes in length how Gandhi viewed Swaraj as something internal to an individual as well as a political concept. Individual Swaraj focuses on self-control of one's actions, thoughts and passions. In some detail he explains and demonstrates that Gandhi did believe that violence in some form was necessary in order to lead

an active life and the state would be permitted to use violence to maintain internal order and for security with other countries. That said Gandhi felt that states needed consent from its population and that countries should be friendly and interdependent on each other.

Another area where Parel moves away from the common Gandhi is where he looks at Gandhi's Social Programme, something the Mahatma developed in the last two decades of his life. Whilst Satyagraha has received most of the focus by academic writes, to Gandhi himself the Constructive Programme was just as important if not more so. Satyagraha could only be used to correct specific wrongs that were clearly understood and could be corrected by an action from one's adversary. Conversely, the Constructive Programme could be done by everyone at any given time. It also reflected a Gandhian strand of thought that stressed that society cannot live by protest alone. This tied in with Gandhi's views of society and civilisation.

Whilst, as already acknowledged it is not a history, Parel does provide some useful facts for those interested in Gandhi's biography. For instance the day before his death on 29<sup>th</sup> January 1948, Gandhi wrote an article about how the Indian National Congress should dissolve itself as a political party now independence had been achieved and become an organisation serving India. Congress members could form their own party but as an institution Congress had achieved its aim. Another example showed that Gandhi clearly had a concept of civil disobedience before reading Thoreau.

The last two essays in this collection focus on Gandhi and the Arts and Gandhi and Thoreau. The former provides ample evidence to show how Gandhi had a keen appreciation of art and music. Gandhi himself edited a hymnbook for his ashram. Gandhi just felt there were more important things for him to write about and did not feel informed enough to engage in formal art criticism. Mirabeau commented that Gandhi was more moved by a crucifix than Michelangelo's frescos on a visit to Rome. The article on Thoreau provides a useful rejoinder to those who have presented Gandhi being reintroduced to Indian scriptures through reading Thoreau. To Parel Gandhi was influenced by Thoreau's political writings not religious ones.

All in all it is a book both interesting to read for pleasure and well worth studying (with pen and pad in hand) as it provides much to get the reader thinking about the contemporary world. It provides useful guides to Hind Swaraj and other key texts by Gandhi, explains clearly how as early as 1931 Gandhi believed in people's fundamental rights and the shortfalls of the arguments espoused by his opponents such as Sarvkar and Jinnah. It is a book I will re-read again whenever I need to talk about Gandhi's thought.

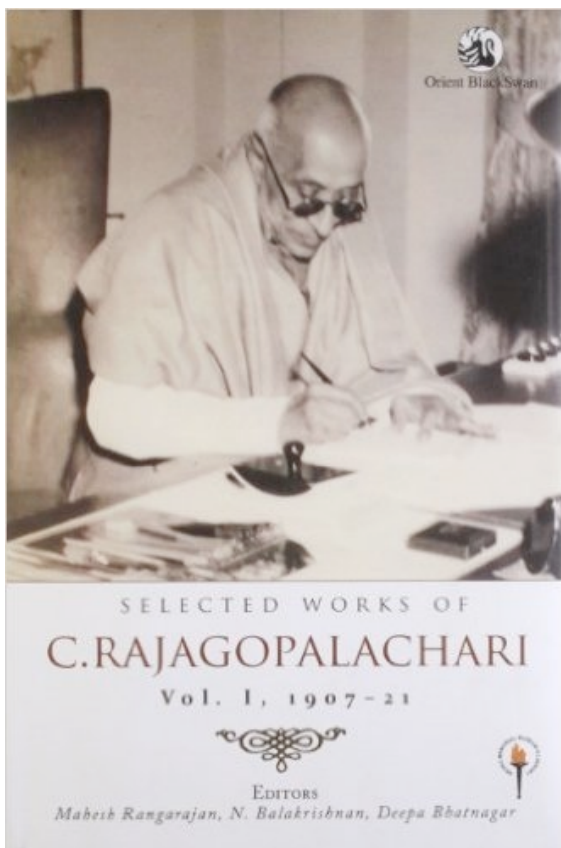
*William Rhind*

The following review is by the late **Antony Copley**, Academic Adviser to the Gandhi Foundation. His review of Volume I appeared in *The Gandhi Way* No. 130.

**Selected Works of C Rajagopalachari Vol II, 1921-22** Edited by Mahesh Rangarajan, N Balakrishnan, Deepa Bhatnagar, Hyderabad, Black Swan 2014, pp x+511

For a man of indifferent health, 1922 was an extraordinarily demanding year for Rajagopalachari, familiarly known as CR. On his release from Vellore jail 20 March he all but ran the Congress party as General Secretary. 1 June he took on the Editorship of *Young India*. He was a member of the Congress Civil Disobedience Committee, set up to decide if India was ready for its renewal, and this entailed extensive travel. He took on the role of protagonist of Gandhi's views as he believed them to be, against all opponents, and was seemingly to triumph at the 37<sup>th</sup> Gaya INC Congress. So phenomenal is this burden of office that the Editors have given a whole volume to but one year. I wonder if some brief introductory biographical and political narrative might not helpfully accompany the chronology provided and whether the decision to refer back to Volume 1 for biographical notes already published will work as the series proceeds.

The Volume begins with CR's remarkable Jail Diary, sentenced for three months,



and one surely to be set alongside the likes of those by Thoreau, Gramsci, Peter Wildeblood, Terry Waite. Initially he rejoiced in imprisonment: "I feel it is a delightful place, I was free and had thrown off the foreign yoke." (p.3) But quite soon he saw jail as "a little degraded world of itself where beasts are out to rule over beasts". (p. 9) He had mistakenly hoped his health would improve in prison. In fact he was plagued with asthma, one night of "real horror", and boils and had to spend time in the hospital wing. This was to prove even worse than solitary confinement, tormented by bed bugs, lice, mosquitoes, and with an intolerable doctor in charge: "I never thought that an educated young man could be so little-minded". (p.25) How did he survive? He resorted to prayer: "I hope to grow strong enough to commune with the Highest to break the prison bars". (p.7) Was it ignorance of Sanskrit and music that stood in the way of yoga? "In spite of

strenuous prayer the vision of the true God has not yet come to me." (p.35) His mother's death had led to "doubt, atheism and anarchy" (p.46) and it seemed his belief was still wayward. He read, the Indian classics, the Ramayana and the Tamil Kural, Robinson Crusoe and Plato's texts on Socrates. He was to finish a book on Socrates in jail and contemplated one on the martyrdom of Christ. But it seems it



was his daily spell of spinning that saved him. He welcomed the company of fellow prisoners: "it is a rare privilege to live here in such strange company". (p.38) Political and criminal were all mixed together. He was kept apart from Andhra non-cooperators, mingled with Moplah prisoners, and got to know well the colourful Hira Singh from the Lahore Conspiracy case and the Ghadr movement. Initially CR resolved to put up with these harsh conditions and not ask for any special favours for the politicals, despite there being free of any "moral depravity". He took pride in being a prisoner: "short of yielding up our lives, imprisonment is the fullest expression of our revolt against the evil which we seek to end". (p.14) The last thing they should do was seek favours from this regime: "it is to suffer unjust punishments without complaint that we have come here". (p.40) "If we show unhappiness over any of the rigours imposed the Government wins." (p.25) Even so, he admitted his resistance to any appeal was "against the inclinations of my emotions".(p.57) Clearly there was no likelihood of non-cooperators anticipating the dirty campaign of Sinn Fein in H Block. In time the prison administration itself relented and the politicals were removed from the close prison which housed the criminals. He was aware of how fellow prisoners ran the prison: "I think this is a slave system made self-supporting".(p.40) He seemed to accept capital punishment: three prisoners were executed in his time. During the last 20 days all the politicals were in a single space and CR saw it as a kind of student hostel. On his release he wrote of prison as one of the happiest periods of his life. He showered praise on the jail superintendent, Major Anderson.

In jail he had to come to terms with Gandhi's controversial suspension of civil disobedience because of the atrocity at Chauri Chaura. He reflected: "the decision to let things remain inactive now is wrong. To set a stale programme before the people at a time when repression is in full swing is likely to set the clock back". (p. 66) But he came round. Maybe individual satyagraha would be as strong as civil disobedience ? He even found himself speculating that we "will look regretfully back to the old regime of comparative justice and efficient, peaceful, more or less honest administration". (p.44) But it was he who had to address consequences of Gandhi's decision.

CR identified three main causes in the Gandhian agenda, khaddar and the constructive programme, Hindu-Muslim unity, and non-cooperation, embracing withdrawal from government schools and colleges, lawyers from the courts, and above all, a continuing boycott of the newly reformed legislatures. And behind these was his surely misguided deification of Gandhi as leader: "a man greater than the Kaiser, greater than Napoleon of St Helena, a man of world-value, one whose fellows in history and companions in Heaven will be Buddha, Socrates, and Jesus and others of that class". (p.93) Admittedly, with Gandhi locked away and out of touch, CR was pragmatic enough to ascribe to Congress the right to make adjustments in strategy. CR could comment on just about any event within or outside India. His was the sharpest mind that elucidated Gandhism at the time and it is a pity he never gathered these disparate thoughts in his journalism and speeches into a coherent whole. There was an almost blind faith in spinning, the means of teaching Indians self-reliance, the way of fashioning a mind-set of nonviolence. But CR was always the politician, and here he also saw the way to build up a Congress electorate and, above all, prepare Indians for a renewal of civil

disobedience. To raise any alternative strategy would fatally weaken 'the atmosphere' that was accumulating. To recommend extending the boycott of British cloth to all British goods, for example, would merely stoke up anger. CR would not brook any change: "tolerance does not mean there should be the least surrender of judgement or compromise of principle". (p.124)

This was sustained by a hugely optimistic view of humankind. Human nature, he believed, was naturally good, and would respond to suffering, that "the law of life is love", "to put things in the right path we have only to apply the forces of love". Ruefully, he had to recognise that the raj was "unsportsmanlike" in its failure to respond to the Congress withdrawal from all violence and he had to accept that brute force could usurp human nature: "we cannot be angels but certainly we strive at not being bigger-brained beasts". (p.277) He endorsed Gandhi's belief that the water-tight barriers between religion and politics be broken down, a need "for spiritualising our political life". (p.225) Liberals like Srinivasa Sastri ridiculed this faith in saintliness.

CR refused to acknowledge that the odds were increasingly against Hindu-Muslim unity. He accepted that the communal violence in Malabar was a huge set-back, together with further outbreaks in Multan. But here was another virtue of the constructive programme, its strengthening of communal ties. Amazingly, by way of endorsing the khilafat movement, he never ceased to support Turkey under Kemal Ataturk: "it rests only with India by the oceanic strength of her soul to stop Britain in her course and save Turkey". (p.373) He took Ataturk's deposition of the Sultan in his stride. No doubt the next volume will tell us how he took secular Ataturk's abolition of the Caliphate.

But the biggest debate within Congress was over the boycott of the Councils. CR was an unyielding opponent of Council entry. He fired off in all directions. He saw how weird it was that the Vice-Roy, Lord Reading, assumed the leadership of those ready to work the system. (The concept of 'collaborator' was not yet, it seems, in use.) It is curious he never mentions the non-Brahmin Justice party playing just this role in the Presidency of Madras. He mocked all attempts at constitution-making by the Moderates like Annie Besant and J R Jayakar, with some Congress leaders, like Motilal Nehru, moving in that direction. Intriguingly, he draws on the example of the First and Second Socialist Internationals to make his point: "they studiously avoided all discussion of the detailed form of organisation and concrete policies of the proposed socialist Government". (p.256) He also played down the importance of the Indianisation of the administration: "it matters little whether it is composed of Englishmen, Scotchmen or Indians", providing it is clean. (p.243) But CR was up against a formidable opponent in the Bengal Congress leader, C R Das. (And Subhas Chandra Bose, Gandhi's later most powerful opponent, chose CR Das as his political guru). Das pursued a policy on the Irish model of entering the Councils to wreck them from within, deadlock versus boycott. CR believed Das had got the Irish parallel wrong, it only worked there through a vitality in its local institutions that was lacking in the Indian. In his view Das "has got out of the groove of direct war and is running along the path of Parliamentarianism". (p.291) With the paralysis of the Councils, there would simply be Civil Service rule. This debate was thrashed out at the Calcutta AICC meeting and the December Gaya INC

Congress, C R Das its President. CR saw a risk of India being plunged back into “its original trance” through raising this alternative to the constructive programme: “look to the villages and cooperatives, here is the making of the civil revolt, this is the real objective of the constructive programme”. (p.359) And CR was to prevail at Gaya. But in 1923 Gandhi was to give the nod to C R Das’s Swarajist party. There is of course a massive irony that one of India’s greatest practitioners of parliamentary government, both in the Madras legislatures and the Lok Sabha, was here its most brilliant opponent.

Ineluctably I suspect the Editors are committed to a chronological approach. This can make for heavy reading. I favoured a thematic, dividing CR’s career into three: the politics of power, his conflict with the raj and his rivals; the politics of communalism, the issues of Hindu-Muslim relationships and the challenge of the anti-Brahmin movement; the politics of principle, CR’s commitment to economic and social reform. Later in the series the Editors will have to find ways of editing CR’s remarkable but very long parliamentary speeches. But we must continue to welcome and support this ambitious project.

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~ Arya Bhardwaj ~

Many past attenders at the Gandhi Foundation Summer School will remember Arya who was a regular participant for many years. Sarah Marder, social and environmental filmmaker, gives this appreciation of his life.

On October 31, 2016, Indian activist and author Arya Bhushan Bhardwaj, left this physical world. His great soul lives on in the hearts of his large extended family, including his many students whose lives were improved thanks to his tireless work to spread health-bringing knowledge about his two great interests: Ayurveda and Gandhi.

Dr. Arya, as he was affectionately called, melded these two themes together and wove them into his life. He began the preface of one of his books in Italian saying that Ayurveda was an authentic mission in his life. He surely would have said the exact same thing regarding his efforts to live and spread Gandhian principles. The point of intersection between the two areas integrated traditional wisdom and spirituality into every day life, creating a three-dimensional approach in which people seek to live respecting the physical, mental and spiritual planes of existence.

As a way of remembering Dr. Arya, here are some excerpts from his booklet “A New Way of Understanding Gandhi and Vedas”:

A single human life is not long enough to allow us to discover all that we need to know to live in an honest, harmonious and beautiful way. To do this, we need to rely on the accumulated discoveries of many generations before us. We need to become a tuning fork and seek out those ideas that best orient us towards the type of life we are trying to create for ourselves.

Gandhi did just this. He studied both ancient texts and contemporary works, allowing him gradually to formulate his convictions about how he should live his life both to be healthy himself and to participate in society in a healthy way.

For those of us who admire a figure such as Gandhi and want to follow in his footsteps, we cannot do so by merely aping the things that he did or by blindly accepting his Truths. Rather, we need to follow the broad outline of his development by going inside ourselves, discovering our own Truths and harmonizing our lives so that we live according to them. When we engage in this sort of Vertical Growth, we acquire an unimaginable amount of serenity, disengaged from ego. We also grow in stature as human beings.

We can all learn great and practical lessons by studying Gandhi's approach to life and way of living. We can learn to listen to our inner voices and simplify our lives so that they respond to our true needs, rather than based upon images and constructs passed on to us externally, via societal norms.

When we live in this way, we will constantly be employing our physical, emotional and spiritual faculties and thus will be engaged in Vertical Growth. I believe these are the most important lessons we can learn from such a great figure as Gandhi. He is a modern example of how we can apply timeless precepts to build a beautiful life for ourselves and can serve as a role model.

Dr. Arya often said he had full faith in the three dimensional approach of human beings. He realized that it would take time and would not be achieved within his lifetime. That said, he made it his life's goal to strive in this direction unto his last breath. And he lived according to this seemingly simple yet noble goal.

The following was sent by his family members – Meenu (daughter), Kapil (son), and his wife Rani Bhardwaj.

On Gandhi: reflections useful to us today

"There is no doubt Gandhi applied the principle of nonviolence to the socio-political issues facing humanity during his life time, through his symbolic political actions in South Africa (1894–1915) and later in India (1916-1948). He did succeed up to certain extent.

His ultimate goal was something more. He wanted humanity to change from the traditional ways of solving problems through physical conflict. . . to adopt new ways of nonviolent social-change. He did not fully succeed in his effort.

To change minds is difficult. From time immemorial society has relied on violent ways which have dominated the human mind. Gandhi had full faith in the human heart's ability to change. He was optimistic and continued his ceaseless effort in this direction, throughout his life. Therefore, I say, Gandhi was a spiritual revolutionary.

The human being has been gifted with three-dimensional-growth: physical, mental and spiritual. But the human psyche seldom applies all three faculties. This is the biggest limitation with ordinary human beings. Gandhi tried to use all three

faculties that were God's gift to him.... Only when one uses all three faculties can one understand an integral approach to life and the concept of God."

This is an extract of an interview with Arya Bhushan Bhardwaj. He was a great teacher, melding together his commitment to Ayurvedic and Gandhian precepts, and I had the privilege of studying with him. Dr. Arya left this world last October, after having dedicated much of his life to spreading and practicing non-violent principles. His aim in life was to strive towards peace until his last breath. He was true to his aim.

source: <http://www.gandhiserve.org/e/activities/events/2006/pw.pdf>

~ Gerd Ledermann ~

Gerd once wrote, with reference to refugees : *"As darkness descends on the one side, light radiates on the other, both so much part of the whole"*.

We all know that Gerd had a huge collection of friends, family and admirers all over the world. That is not a surprise – he was just the sort of man to attract to himself a huge wave of love and attention from all who came into contact with him. I, too, was one of those who came to love his integrity, fearlessness and dedication – not to mention those clear grey eyes that looked at me with such candour. We met way back in the early 1980s at The Ockenden Venture.

What was so unusual about Gerd was that from his *Kindertransport* journey to the UK from Germany aged 11, right up to a relatively short time ago when he could no longer function normally or even remember his own incredible life, he had decided at a soul level that he would turn all negativity into something positive. This may not have been a conscious decision, I don't know, I only know that by the time I met him, he had done this in a most remarkable way, and never wavered throughout his life.

Gerd was more than just a friend to me – he was a mentor for whom I always wanted to do my very best, for he drew that out of me, and I was challenged to be better than I thought myself by his empathetic, listening attitude, making me feel I was the only person that mattered – as I bet you all felt too when with him!

It was a milestone when he met Kamala and they eventually married, and had the lovely Lea 16 years ago. Gerd said to me once in Nepal "I can't believe the wonder of having these two amazing females in my life!" Without losing his essential Jewish background, Gerd found nourishment in the Buddhist tradition, and I think it is so fitting he has come to rest here at The Hermitage which meant so much to him and his family over so many years. He was the embodiment of simple living, without alcohol, smoking or meat, and his great love of the outdoors (walking, bicycling, climbing) was legendary. I remember he once said to me, many years ago, "I own 2 shirts – one on my back and one in the wash. Why would I need more?" I thought of my wardrobe at home and felt abashed.

In Ockenden he ran a centre for Vietnamese refugees in Barmouth, and hence his love for North Wales began. I once had a holiday at Barmouth, and saw first-hand how he hardly slept, had the energy of a man half his age, and would drive through

the night to airports to receive refugees and take them home to a warm welcome. Indeed, Hoa who is here today, was one of those willing to accompany him on these wild trips.

No one of us today can ever embrace Gerd's life as a whole – but it is a blessing he wrote stories of his life, which now looks certain to become a book. I have helped Kamala with the typing of much of it, because his whole story needs to be told far and wide. There is also this little green book of his time with Ockenden in Barmouth. His life was a real inspiration, and as he often used to say: “*May all sentient beings be happy*” and may he find true happiness in his new stage of life. We love you Gerd, with gratitude and thankful hearts. Rest in peace.

Denise Moll, 12 May 2016

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**Programme of the *Gandhian Themes and Values* Conference**  
**Wellcome Trust Conference Centre, London, Friday 28 April 2017**

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10.00-10.15 | Welcome                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10.15-10.45 | Enshrining Gandhi's Legacy<br><i>Dr Sudarshan Iyengar, The Gandhi Research Foundation, Maharashtra, India</i>                                                                                     |
| 10.45-11.15 | In Search of Health: A Gandhian Model<br><i>Dr Abhay Bang, Public Health Physician, Maharashtra, India</i>                                                                                        |
| 11.15-11.45 | Tea/Coffee                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 11.45-12.15 | Modern Gandhian Perspectives on Business: Frugal Innovation<br><i>Professor Jaideep Prabhu, Cambridge, UK &amp; Professor Bairam Bhargava, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi</i> |
| 12.15-12.45 | Modern Gandhian Perspectives on Education<br><i>Professor Makarand Paranjape, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India</i>                                                                              |
| 12.45-2.00  | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2.00-2.30   | Modern Gandhian Perspectives on Nonviolence<br><i>Professor Lord Bhikhu Parekh, UK</i>                                                                                                            |
| 2.30-3.00   | Modern Gandhian Perspectives on Justice<br><i>Dr Terry Beitzel, James Madison University, USA</i>                                                                                                 |
| 3.00-3.30   | Gandhian Innovations in Village India<br><i>Professor Orazio Attanasio, University College London</i>                                                                                             |
| 3.30-4.00   | Tea/Coffee                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 4.00-4.30   | Satyagraha and the Conquest of Evil<br><i>Dr Vinit Haksar, University of Edinburgh, UK</i>                                                                                                        |
| 4.30-5.00   | Keeping Gandhi Alive in the UK: The Gandhi Foundation<br><i>John Rowley, UK Gandhi Foundation</i>                                                                                                 |

For further information please contact [n.kapur@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:n.kapur@ucl.ac.uk) 07830117345

You can register through <http://tinyurl.com/j32baph>

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The Foundation exists to spread knowledge and understanding of the life and Mohandas K Gandhi (1869-1948). Our most important aim is to demonstrate the continuing relevance of his insights and actions for all of us.



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## The Gandhi Way

Articles, book reviews and letters of a specifically or broadly Gandhian nature will gladly be received by the Editor. Maximum length 2000 words.

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