

# The Gandhi Way



Painting of Gandhi by Upendra Maharathi (1908-1981)

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## **Gandhi Foundation Multifaith Celebration 2019**

on the 70th anniversary of the UN Declaration of Human Rights

Sat 9 February at 6.30 - 8.30pm

Golders Green Unitarian Church

31 1/2 Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS

The event will include performances by Sacred Sounds a cappella singing group, poetry by Dennis Evans and talks by Fergus O'Connor from the Unitarian Church and Kishan Manocha ODIHR Senior Adviser on Freedom of Religion and Belief.

*This event is free but donations to cover costs are very welcome.*

Light refreshments will be served in the interval.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/gandhi-foundation-multi-faith-celebration-2019-tickets-55134077510?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

### **150th Anniversary Event**

on Friday 31 May 2019

***A Lecture by Gopalkrishna Gandhi***

diplomat and writer, grandson of M K Gandhi

*This will be held in central London but venue has to be arranged  
and will be announced later*

### **Gandhi Ashram Experience 2019**

Saturday 27 July - Sat 3 August 2019

*Thinking about change: Thoughts are the seeds of action*

at St Christopher School, Letchworth

To request an application form:

email [gandhisummerngathering@gmail.com](mailto:gandhisummerngathering@gmail.com) or [William@Gandhifoundation.org](mailto:William@Gandhifoundation.org)

or 33 The Crescent, Wimbledon, London SW19 8AW

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# Gandhi and Ahimsa as a Way of Life

*Bhikhu Parekh*

Although Hindu practice has fallen far short of the ideal, *ahimsa* has long been a greatly admired value in the Hindu tradition. Gandhi made it the central organising principle of his life and thought, and both drew upon and modified the Hindu tradition. For him too it involved non-injury, not causing harm to a living being. But he went further and defined it as active love. *Ahimsa* for him involved not only refraining from harming other beings but also actively promoting their well-being. As Gandhi once said, the word 'non-violence' is not its correct English translation. The better word is 'compassion' or 'love'. Killing an animal in excruciating and terminal pain with no hope of relief was an act of love, and did not constitute *himsa*.

There are also several other respects in which Gandhi stretched the Hindu tradition. For him *ahimsa* is based on a prior commitment to *satya* or truth. The latter was the ultimate goal, *ahimsa* was both an expression and a condition of it. Furthermore for Gandhi *ahimsa* did not refer only to human conduct but also to thought, feeling and judgement. One can think, feel or judge others violently or non-violently. Thoughts, for example, were the building blocks of character, and an individual tended to become what he thought. If he got into the habit of "living with" certain types of thought, over time they tended to appear natural and self-evident to him, blunted his sensibilities and both disposed him to act in a relevant manner and legitimised his actions in his eyes. Thoughts of violence paved the way for acts of violence, and were just as bad. Like most Indian thinkers, Gandhi refused to draw a qualitative distinction between thought and action. Thought was potential action or rather action in its early and embryonic stage, and action was operative or active thought. The two were integral parts of the same process and constituted a continuum. A thought was never a 'mere' thought.

In the Indian traditions harm is defined widely to include not only physical but also psychological, moral and other forms of *pidā* or *klesa* (pain). Gandhi not only accepted this broad definition but stretched it further. In his view, physical harm or destruction was the most familiar form of violence and could be caused in different ways. One might harm or kill a man by shooting him or denying him the basic necessities of life. Whether one killed him 'at a stroke' or 'by inches', the result was the same, and the individual involved was guilty of violence. Insulting, demeaning or humiliating others, diminishing their self-respect, speaking harsh words, passing harsh judgements, anger and mental cruelty were also forms of harm. They might, and generally did, result in physical harm, but it was not necessary that they should in order to be considered acts of violence. A lack of punctuality was also an act of harm as it

caused anxiety to those involved and deprived them of their time. Not answering letters was also a form of mental cruelty and even torture, and thus an act of violence.

For Gandhi, service of one's fellow human was the best form of nonviolent life. It was not a separate and independent activity, but was expressed in and informed all one did. Every man was a husband, a father, a son, a friend, a neighbour, a colleague, an employer or an employee. These were not so many discreet roles, each governed by its own distinct norms and values, but different way of realising his humanity and relating to his fellow-men. He should define, reconcile and integrate them into a coherent pattern of life governed by the general principle of social service. As a neighbour, for example, he should not only refrain from making a nuisance of himself but also help those in need, take an active interest in their well-being and the quality of their surroundings, help create a vibrant local community and join them in their fights against injustice. A similar spirit of service and humanity should infuse his manner of earning his livelihood, which he should look on as *yajna*, as his form of participation in the preservation and development of mankind and of which the monetary reward was an incidental though necessary consequence. Gandhi thought that by bringing to his every activity the 'sweet smell of humanity', every man could in his own small way help transform the quality of human relationships and contribute to the creation of a world based on love and goodwill. Such a 'quiet, unostentatious service', as wiping the tear of a widow, educating a neighbour's child, nursing a sick relation and helping a poor man or an untouchable family live in peace and dignity, and thus 'picking up one clod of earth' from the entire mass of human unhappiness, was just as important as the more glamorous forms of social service and sometimes had even more lasting and beneficial results.

Every age and every country, Gandhi went on, had its own distinctive forms and sources of suffering, and hence the nature and content of social service varied. In earlier ages when India was a happy and just society, its sages were perhaps justified in retiring to the forest. Today the situation was very different. Modern India was deeply scarred by acute poverty, vast social and economic inequalities, foreign rule and extensive moral degeneration, and the active service of its people consisted in fighting against these evils.

For Gandhi every Indian had a duty in the modern age to become politically involved. Political involvement took a number of forms and occurred at a variety of levels. Although participation in the struggle for independence was obviously important, it was not the most important. Since independence was merely formal and had no meaning without national regeneration, 'true politics' in Gandhi's view consisted in revitalising Indian society, culture and character by working in the villages, fighting against local injustices, helping people acquire courage and self-respect, building up their organised strength and in general devoting oneself to any of the eighteen items of the



Constructive Programme. Every activity that contributed to India's regeneration and made it just and cohesive was political in nature. Politics was not necessarily connected with, let alone exhausted in, the state.

For Gandhi a person committed to *ahimsa* was acutely sensitive to the prevailing injustices and systems of oppression, and fought against them. His fight was open, inspired by love, and aimed at winning over his opponent to his way of thinking about the relevant controversial issue. This 'delicate surgery of the soul' as Gandhi called it involved accepting a great deal of suffering, even dying. A satyagrahi should be willing to lay down his life for a just cause. As violence involved killing, and was successful depending on how many people one killed, nonviolence involved the 'art of dying'. For Gandhi the 'art of dying' was a best response to the 'science of killing'. We all must die one day, and an inordinate attachment to life neither postponed death nor made it easier. Like a man of violence, the man of nonviolence thought little of his own life and welcomed a noble and dignified death. He accepted death with courage and hoped that it will continue to speak to people long after he was gone, inspiring them to carry the candle further as the death of Socrates and Christ has done. For Gandhi a coward can never be nonviolent, nor of course can a bully. Nonviolence required a long training and a life of discipline almost like that of a soldier. At the deepest level Gandhi's nonviolence had a strangely similar structure to violence. This was a unique idea, original to Gandhi and representing his great contribution to moral and political thought and practice.

Professor Parekh is the President of the Gandhi Foundation and a life peer. He is the author of many books on political philosophy including Gandhi's. This talk was delivered at the opening of The Gandhi Peace Centre at Sandwell & Dudley in 2018.



# Maharathi and the Mahatma

## *Mahashweta Maharathi*

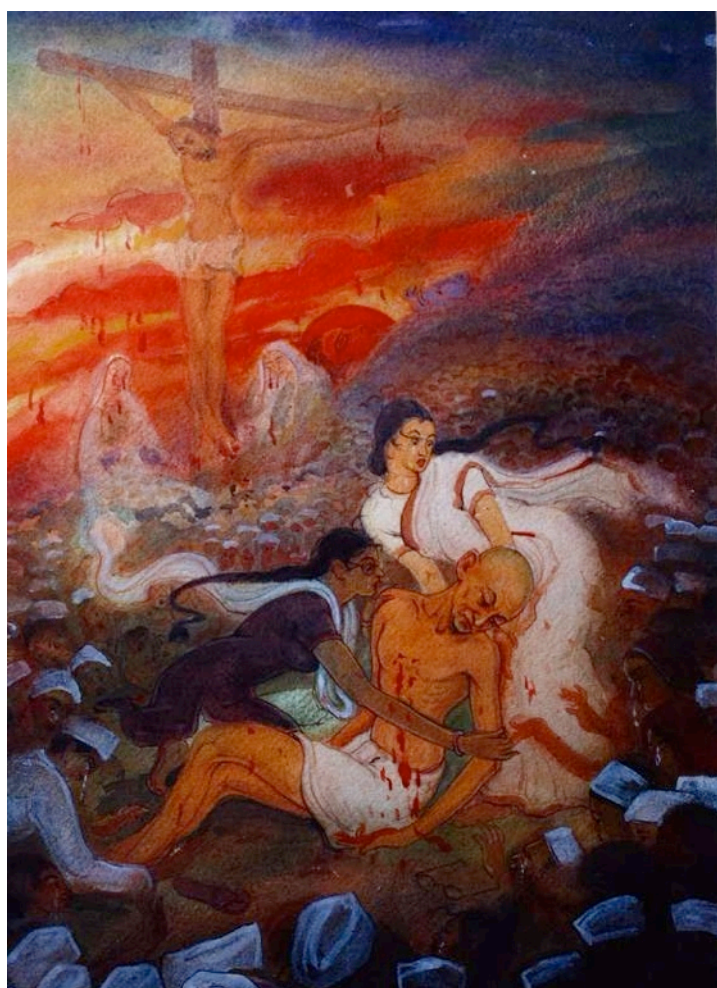
With the Freedom of India came the great responsibility of nation building. Mahatma Gandhi's call for India's resurrection echoed through the length and breadth of the country. This drew a large section of the creative minds: architects, artists, industrialists, social workers from all sections of the society, towards contributing their might for the achievement of this goal.

One of them was the artist called Upendra Maharathi. In the early 1930s he came to Bihar and carved a niche for himself. As a true nation builder, he chose the untrodden path of developing the aesthetics of various handicraft and handloom traditions of Bihar. He worked closely with the craftsmen of Bihar and rejuvenated almost twenty-two craft traditions. The textile designs with Buddhist and Mauryan motifs which were drawn by Maharathi for the weavers of Nalanda, are still known amongst them as "Maharathi design".

A nationalist to the core, Maharathi became closely associated with freedom fighters of the time. His first association with Gandhi perhaps came at the Ramgarh Congress in 1940. Maharathi turned the entire Pandal complex of Congress sessions into a magical display of various handicraft traditions of India. He painted a series of paintings for the Ramgarh

Congress on the glorious past of India, which are considered amongst his finest and are in the proud possession of the Patna Museum. The proximity with the Mahatma in the Ramgarh Congress afforded Maharathi a vantage point, whence he sketched Gandhi in his varying moods. While the Ramgarh Congress afforded him his glimpse of the Mahatma and inspired a series of paintings and sketches of Gandhi, the germs of Gandhian thought were already planted in the mind.

His outlook had been so deeply colored by Gandhi's personality as to make of him a Gandhian by faith as well as reason. The Gandhian path was to him a discovery of the way of the Buddha. That is why



in some of his paintings of Gandhi, and in designing certain Gandhian motifs, Maharathi did not hesitate to adopt traditional forms and colors. If Gandhi's face appears suffused with a divine glow in his picture, it is not an act of idolatry, but a continuity of faith in the perennial values expressed in the message of Buddha and Gandhi.

In the words of Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, "Gandhi to Maharathi, was the Buddha image in flesh and blood, to whom he was inevitably attracted. He has drawn him in many ways and moods. The ultimate expression of all his love, regard and devotion for this living Buddha is laid bare in one of Maharathi's masterpieces called 'The Bloody Sunset'. The mise en scene is the assassination of The Mahatma. The depiction is symbolic yet real. There is both rage and grief in this tragic end; the sun which glowed for a while and lit Upendra Maharathi's world, spreading light and glory, inspiration and hope had set, in a spurt of blood, leaving torrents of disorder and destruction. It is a magnificent, grand canvas which unfolds a complete scene of disaster, leaving an unspecified, shattering void. The body frame below is but a show in this devastation."

A central tenet of Gandhi's call for Swaraj was the emphasis on Swadeshi. Independence was as much about breaking the shackles of foreign rule as it was about economic self sufficiency. Inspired by Gandhi, Maharathi's unshakable faith in Swadeshi strengthened his conviction that it is essential for the progress of the country to develop handicrafts as a form of art which would serve utilitarian practical purposes as well. In this, Maharathi was drawing upon the age-old conception of art in India. In contra-distinction to the west, art in India was not an entity separate from the quotidian affairs of life, patronized by Kings and wealthy merchants to satisfy aesthetic yearnings. Rather every artifact of daily use was suffused by the artistic nous of the artisans of ancient India. To resuscitate the rural economy, Maharathi believed that folk arts of India must be revived. It was towards this end that he established an Institute of Industrial Designs to reinvent the traditional craft designs. It was later named after him. He is also credited with the revival of the dying Mithila art known as Madhubani painting.

Maharathi's artistic expression drew inspiration from the whole continuum of India's glorious antiquity. He painted extensively historical themes, depicted vignettes from Buddha's life and exhaustively churned out Gandhi's portraits and sketches. There is a famous picture of Martin Luther King with a portrait of Gandhi in the background. That portrait is by none other than Maharathi. A stone panel depicting the life of Buddha, empaneled in Mahabodhi Mahavihar, a world heritage site, is a magnificent piece of art and is based on a 100 ft scroll on the same theme by Maharathi. Maharathi's most noted architectural contribution is the iconic Rajgir Peace Pagoda, which was designed by him and built by the famous Japanese Saint and associate of Mahatma Gandhi, Fujii Guruji.

An aptly christened work called 'The Fate of three great men' by Maharathi that depicts Buddha, Jesus and Gandhi, evokes the parallels in the



lives of these three personalities who, each in their own unique way, worked towards the salvation of humankind. It is to Maharathi's credit that by depicting Gandhi in such exalted company, he evoked the global and timeless nature of the message of nonviolence, which was not just a weapon to fight the tyranny of imperial rule, but an entirely new paradigm given to a world riven by conflicts and destruction. Maharathi, and many other like him, internalized Gandhi's message and played an invaluable role in laying the foundation of Modern India.



The Author is the daughter of Upendra Maharathi and she is the general secretary of Rajgir Buddha Bihar Society. On 30 January 2019 an exhibition of Maharathi's paintings will be held at the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi. Later in the year a Peace Pilgrimage will be held 5 - 22 October from Champaran to Rajgir Peace Pagoda followed by a Peace Conference 23-24 October culminating on 25 October in the 50th Anniversary Ceremony of the Rajgir Peace Pagoda.

The editor thanks Rev G Nagase for requesting this article from the artist's daughter.

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### **Research Fellowship and Student Internship in India**

Dr Gita Dharampal who recently retired from a professorship in History at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany, has joined the Gandhi Research Foundation in Jalgaon, Maharashtra, as Dean of Research.

He is now establishing some new programmes including a residential research fellowship and a student internship.

For further details of these positions contact Dr Dharampal at

[prof.dharampal.gita@gandhifoundation.net](mailto:prof.dharampal.gita@gandhifoundation.net)



# Reverence for Life and Ahimsa

*George Paxton*

For a few decades around the middle of the 20th century Albert Schweitzer was one of the best known human beings in the world, or at least in that large part of the world influenced by Christianity. Today he is rarely mentioned. Yet much of his thought is worth studying and his key concept of reverence for life links him to Gandhi's interpretation of ahimsa.

Schweitzer was known in his lifetime for his creativity in a number of fields. Born in Alsace in 1875 (thus only a few years younger than Gandhi) he had German nationality due to Prussian victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1871 but in 1918 he acquired French nationality due to France retaking Alsace at the end of the Great War.

Albert's father was a pastor in the Lutheran church in Kayserberg and his mother's father had also been a pastor. Albert was a dreamy boy who did poorly at school but did display an early musical talent, something that ran in the family especially organists. When he reached his fourteenth year 'the spirit of enlightenment', as he described it, came upon him and henceforth he applied himself with great diligence. As well as school subjects he took lessons with distinguished organists in various parts of Europe and later wrote a book on the music of Bach. He also studied the construction of organs in different cities showing his practical side. His university studies included philosophy and theology and he wrote a critical dissertation on Kant's philosophy for his doctorate. He also made a study of the life and thought of Jesus as related in the New Testament which resulted in a book *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* which was one of the most important scholarly works on the subject. He became a pastor but he was obviously destined for a distinguished career in university teaching and research.

However he was not satisfied with this prospect. He felt he was very fortunate in his life and so he must give something back in gratitude for this – some form of practical service to his fellow human beings. He eventually settled on training in medicine in order to go to Africa to help those without access to a medical service. This plan was not greeted with enthusiasm by friends and family but he had made up his mind.

Years of more study lay ahead and he had to find a way of getting to Africa. The Paris Mission Society, which had missions in Africa, was a possibility but they were suspicious of his critical approach to the Bible. Eventually he was given their support but only if he agreed not to preach and stick to the practice of medicine which he



agreed to do. And so in 1913 he set sail along with his wife Helene, who had trained as a nurse in order to be useful in the hospital they were to build. The destination was Lambarene in French colonial Gabon. Schweitzer was to spend the greater part of his long life of 90 years working there in the jungle although Helene's poor health meant that she had to spend much time in Europe.

### **Schweitzer – philosopher of civilisation**

While Schweitzer made important contributions to music as performer and musicologist as well as biblical scholarship his most important intellectual contribution in his eyes was his study of civilisation and what was the distinguishing mark of civilisation, which was not its level of scientific knowledge or artistic expression or economic development but its ethical attainment. After much thought and study he came to the conclusion that the core concept of ethics was reverence for life. The words came to him on the River Ogowe in 1915 – “there flashed upon my mind unforeseen and unsought the knowledge that the idea of reverence for life is the basic principle of goodness”.

Schweitzer has this description in *The Ethics of Reverence for Life* (1936):

Thus if we ask , “What is the immediate fact of my consciousness ?” .... we find the simple fact of consciousness is this, I will to live. Through every stage of life, this is the one thing that I know about myself. I do not say. “I am life”; for life continues to be a mystery too great to understand. I only know that I cling to it. I fear its cessation – death. I dread its diminution – pain. I seek its enlargement – joy.

Further:

What shall be my attitude towards this other life which I see around me ? It can only be of a piece with my attitude towards my own life. If I am a thinking being, I must regard other life than my own with equal reverence. For I know that it longs for fulness and deepness of development as deeply as I do myself.

One can see that this idea embraces not only human beings but other life forms. Thus we can see the similarity to Jainism with its extreme avoiding of harming of other life. However Schweitzer claims that ahimsa originated not from compassion but in the desire to keep the person undefiled from the world. The Jains gave up animal sacrifice, meat eating, hunting and wild beast fights and even tried to avoid stepping on small insects and other creatures on the ground. The monks wear a cloth over their mouths so that they will not breathe in tiny flying creatures. The Jains avoid farming and tend to be in business or professions that do not obviously involve killing. Gandhi was himself influenced by this Jain philosophy while realising that it was impossible to avoid all killing.

## **Gandhi's ahimsa**

Gandhi's adoption of nonviolence or ahimsa as one of his two great principles – satya or truth being the other – involved a broadening of its meaning to include compassion or love (agape) a concept prominent in the Christian tradition. Gandhi criticised his fellow Indians for their lack of compassion to the cow even although they are horrified by deliberate killing. When he gave permission for a suffering calf to be euthanised he was fiercely attacked by orthodox Hindus for doing so. Gandhi also showed his realism in permitting the killing of rabid dogs, of poisonous snakes, and of monkeys stealing the precious harvest of poor farmers – although he also encouraged the avoidance of killing such animals as far as possible.

In his study of civilisation and ethics Schweitzer uses two expressions which give two contrasting orientations, namely, world and life-affirmation and world and life-negation. In Buddhism, and indeed the Indian religions generally, he sees world and life-negation predominating; this contrasts with the Chinese philosophies which he sees as world and life-affirming. Christianity was for most of its history world and life-negating but at the time of the Renaissance and later the Enlightenment it became transformed into world and life-affirming. In the case of Gandhi, although the Indian tradition of ahimsa was originally negative (keeping pure from the world) he transformed it into active nonviolence at the service of the world. Schweitzer expresses this in *Indian Thought and Its Development* (1936):

The fact that Gandhi has united the idea of Ahimsa to the idea of activity directed on the world has the importance not merely of an event in the thought of India but in that of humanity. Through him the attention of ethics is again directed to a fact which had been too much neglected: namely, that the use of force does not become ethically permissible because it has an ethical aim, but that in addition it must be applied in a completely ethical disposition.

This is the end and means issue. Gandhi is convinced that the means used to achieve a particular end must be compatible with it.

## **Gandhi's and Schweitzer's politics**

A contrast between the two is their attitude to politics. Gandhi became involved in political life in his early 20s when he encountered discrimination between the European and Indian population in South Africa. As a result of belonging to the colonised population Gandhi developed a more active political programme involving nonviolent struggle (satyagraha) which continued throughout his life. Schweitzer on the other hand was much less political until late in life and consciously so. Unfortunately because of his experience of working for and with uneducated Africans in a jungle setting he developed a patriarchal attitude to Africans in general. Gandhi had a similar outlook when he first arrived in South Africa but he abandoned it fairly quickly whereas Schweitzer retained this stance even into the post-Second World War period and this was, I believe, his greatest weakness.

Schweitzer was however drawn into active politics late in life following the development of the nuclear age. He was persuaded, after studying the effect of ionising radiation, to publicly campaign for the ending of nuclear test explosions in the atmosphere. In this he joined many distinguished scientists including the American chemist Linus Pauling and Albert Einstein. He went further in the later 1950s when he came out publicly for nuclear and general disarmament. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1952 and spent some of the money on corrugated iron roofs for his hospital.

An interesting similarity between the two men is that both travelled third class on the railways. Schweitzer's motivation, I believe, was that he could thus save money for spending on his hospital. The hospital was partly funded from his organ recitals and lectures in Europe and America and partly by others fund-raising for him. Gandhi's motivation was to keep close to the people and was also part of his belief that he should live as simply as possible especially as most Indians were very poor.

Both men shared a belief that life should include physical labour, not just mental, Gandhi taking up spinning; he also took a great interest in hygiene and nursing. Schweitzer not only directed the construction of buildings and roads in his hospital but did much of the construction itself.

With regard to diet Schweitzer was much less scrupulous than Gandhi. The latter was a vegetarian from birth and became a vegan until in middle age his health was badly affected and he took to drinking goat's milk which restored him to good health. In spite of Schweitzer's ethical belief in reverence for life it seems he did not become a full vegetarian. This does seem curious when Schweitzer believed it was wrong to thoughtlessly destroy a plant or flower. In practice both men acknowledged a hierarchy of life forms with the less developed if necessary being sacrificed for the higher.

As we have seen Schweitzer was well aware of Gandhi but I do not know if Gandhi was aware of Schweitzer and they almost certainly developed their central ethical concepts independently. Although their two concepts were very similar they arose differently: the Indian concept of ahimsa (non-killing) grew wider in scope with time until Gandhi identified it with compassion or love; for most of Christianity's existence compassion was a central concept which however only embraced non-human life at a late stage in its development – with the concept of reverence for life Schweitzer gave rational support to this. In a sense the two ideas evolved in different directions to reach a similar all embracing ethical idea.

Schweitzer concludes his *The Ethics of Reverence for Life*:

This, then, is the nature and origin of ethics. We have dared to say that it is born of physical life, of the linking of life with life. It is therefore the result of our recognising the solidarity of life which nature gives us. And as it grows more profound, it teaches us sympathy with *all* life. Yet, the extremes touch, for this material-born ethic becomes engraved upon our hearts, and culminates in spiritual union and harmony with the Creative Will which is in and through all.       Δ



# UN and a Proposed Spiritual Council

*Brian Cooper*

For much of the 20th century, religion – and its misuse – did not feature explicitly in UN concerns. In recent decades this situation has greatly changed, as faith-related factors have increasingly come to the fore in world affairs:

- \* The 1979 Muslim fundamentalist revolution in Iran was a transformative event. The Iranian leaders saw the world in theological even apocalyptic terms, looking towards a world purged of evil by a pure Islam overcoming the materialistic ‘Satans’ of USA and USSR.
- \* 1980s & 1990s conflicts in the Middle East, Caucasus, Balkans, clearly had a religious dimension, with sectarianism misused for political ends and religion defining identity and community.
- \* In the USA, Christian fundamentalists (the ‘Religious Right’) influenced state policy of Republican President, eg support for Iraq War.
- \* Especially post-9/11 (2001), the world could no longer be understood in purely secular terms as radical Islam (Al-Qaeda, later ISIS) was now a major force to be reckoned with by secular Western governments.

## UN Achievements & Failures

But faith-based opinion must applaud and support what this essentially secular institution has achieved:

- \* The UN has huge humanitarian achievements to its credit, eg UN World Food Programme feeds an average of some 104 million people in some 80 countries each year.
- \* UN Commission for Refugees currently looks after 60 million refugees world wide.
- \* UN Development programmes through its various agencies bring hope to millions. I have vivid recollections of visiting UN programmes for poor people in Sri Lanka, and recall children dancing with delight around a standing tap gushing out fresh clean water: they were set free from having to use muddy, infected water from a nearby stream.
- \* UN Peacekeeping prevents conflict and enables peace processes from Cyprus and Golan Heights to Kashmir and some African states.
- \* The Paris Climate Change Accord gives humanity hope of averting dangerous global warming.

The UN has its failures too, such as failing to solve the Israel/Palestinian dispute, failing to prevent the 2003 Iraq War, to stop the Syrian Civil War. But the UN can only achieve what its member states will it to achieve, and solving disputes always requires patient dialogue, never intemperate and threatening language.

## **Towards a ‘Spiritual Council’ within UN structures**

With the world afflicted by the misuse of religion for ideological and power struggles, is it time for UN to try to enlist the positive potential of the world faiths to help solve global problems ? Should there be a formalised involvement of world religions, their leaders and representatives, in the UN system (other than faith-based NGOs and ECOSOC) ? This idea has been mooted over the years. In 1943, prior to the UN being set up, Bishop Bell of Chichester, a leading Anglican and committed internationalist, with the support of the World Congress of Faiths, suggested the League of Nations’ successor should have a religious element. Post 1945, various global faith bodies, eg World Conference of Religions for Peace, have raised the idea of liaison with the UN.

The core of the argument in favour of a Spiritual Council linked to the UN has always been that the UN’s peace-building purposes demand the primacy of ethical motivations and that religious leaders could help articulate and advance such motivations for the cause of world peace. Since humanity’s great religious traditions are the primary source of ethics – albeit in modern times secular philosophies also provide these – it would seem wholly appropriate for their representatives to be involved in the world’s supreme forum. In recent years, the religious dimension to a number of conflicts, and the difficulty experienced by secular politicians in understanding and dealing with such faith-based factors and forces, have made even more relevant the concept of a ‘religious/spiritual’ council within, or in some way linked, to the UN. The aim, in essence, is that a body of religious leaders should be a ‘spiritual chamber’ of the UN to give moral and spiritual guidance to politicians.

In view of the widespread misuse of religion for sectarian conflict and community division in many parts of the world today the idea of an interfaith Spiritual Council deserves the widest possible support.

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## **News**

In **Hawai’i in 1893 a coup d’état** was carried out against the queen Lili’uokalani and the government by business interests supported by American marines. The queen was deposed and spent the rest of her life under arrest in her palace. President Cleveland ordered an investigation into the unauthorised overthrow of the Government which concluded that it was an illegal act. However Hawai’s sovereignty was not restored. The state now has more than 100 military installations and this is shortly to expand to include military exercises on the islands which will include all US Services. In recent years a movement for independence from the USA has gained in strength. (*Transcend Media Service* 21 Jan 2019)

Did you know that the **United States** has more than 150,000 military troops deployed on more than **800 military bases in 130 nations** ? That's 95% of all foreign military bases worldwide. There are over 50,000 U.S. troops in Japan alone ! Bases preposition troops and weaponry in preparation for war, and as such, undermine international relations, peace, and security.

Bases cause enormous social and environmental damage at a local level. Communities living around the bases often experience high levels of rape committed by foreign soldiers, violent crimes, loss of land or livelihood, and pollution and health hazards caused by the testing of conventional or non-conventional weapons. In many countries, the agreement permitting the base also grants immunity to foreign soldiers who commit crimes.

Such a widespread military presence is threatening and provocative to the rest of the world. These bases are a central feature of US foreign policy, which is one of coercion and threat of military aggression – exactly the kind of 'security policy' that World Beyond War aims to eradicate. The closure of US foreign military bases could result in a massive shift in international relations and a significant step towards the abolition of war. That's why we're making it a top campaign priority. ([www.worldbeyondwar.org](http://www.worldbeyondwar.org))

The **ethical goods** market in the UK has reached £83 billion while the **fair trade** market is around £1.57 billion. There are more than 4,500 Fair Trade products now with one-third of bananas sold in the UK labelled Fair Trade. Ethical Consumer announced a large increase in vegetarian products and ethical clothing. The ethical trade movement began in the 1990s while the Fair Trade movement started a decade earlier. The former involves retailers and supply chains taking a series of recognised steps to improve the conditions of workers in the supply chains. Fair trade involves paying a fair price for the products with a premium added to help develop the communities. The producers are often organised in co-operatives.

The UK Government has announced plans to increase the charge for single use **plastic bags** from 5p to 10p in England. It is claimed that there has been a very large reduction in use of the bags since the introduction of a charge. However your editor, as a regular observer of waste, wonders how real this effect has been as he has noticed an increase in heavy plastic bags being used once only. Whether 5p or 10p is it not a ridiculously low charge ? But better still would it not be more valuable to ban plastic carrier bags altogether. Bangladesh did this in 2002 when the bags were found to be choking drainage systems leading to increased flooding. California banned them in 2014 and New York State is considering it. Most of the states in Australia have banned them. Kenya is in process of implementing a ban.

In the village and district of Durness in Sutherland in the far north of Scotland an environmental group Plastic@Bay has been clearing the **coastal beaches**

**of plastic.** They use an electric quad bike and trailer donated by a fisheries action group. They have found that 70% of the plastic found is connected to the fisheries industry such as nets, ropes and pegs. Going further, the group intend to construct a plastic recycling centre at the cost of £65,000. (*The Herald* 28/1/19)

In January 2019 “**the state of Palestine**” took over the Chair of the Group of 77 (G77). Since Palestine only has Observer status at the UN, a special resolution had to be passed to enable it to participate in the work of the G77 which will include conferences on Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goals. (*Transcend* website 21 January 2019)

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## Racism

by Leonard Dabydeen

Deep in the colour of my skin, I live  
Heart to heart and rumble for peace within;  
I traverse this world for freedom, but give  
Not my pride for prejudice or chagrin.

I walk not alone, but strive in footsteps  
Where the journey is long, but dream is strong;  
Where civil rights are mine, with no regrets  
That civil liberty is never wrong.

Non-violence is my definitive creed,  
Through Gandhian spirit I strive and breathe;  
For you and I are equal without plead  
Where discrimination is full of seethe.  
Assassination leaves my world a cloud,  
Racism cannot be dressed in any shroud



## Meetings

### Pathways to Peace

Joint conference from the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Baptist, Methodist and URC Peace Fellowships.

Friday 8 - Sunday 10 March 2019 at Hinsley Hall, Leeds LS6 2BX (5pm Fri to after lunch Sun)

Keynote speaker is Fabian Hamilton, MP, Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament. Other speakers include Prof Paul Rogers (Peace Studies, Bradford University), Janet Fenton (Scottish CND), Rev Alistair McKay.

Further details : APF, Peace House, 19 Paradise Street, Oxford OX1 1LD. Online booking: [for.org.uk/PathwaystoPeace](http://for.org.uk/PathwaystoPeace)

### Global Problems need Global Solutions

Uniting for Peace AGM and Spring Conference, Saturday 6 April 2019, Wesley's Chapel, 49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU.

Conference 12.00-17.00

Speakers: Geoffrey Robertson QC, human rights lawyer; Lord M Desai, economist; Jeremy Gilley, Founder of Peace One Day; Vijay Mehta, Chair UfP and author of *How Not to Go to War*.

Also a Workshop: Education is Key to a Peaceful World by Peace Jam UK.

Free meeting, donations welcome. Please register at Uniting for Peace, 14 Cavell Street, London E1 2HP; [vijay@vmpeace.org](mailto:vijay@vmpeace.org); [www.unitingforpeace.com](http://www.unitingforpeace.com)

### International Conscientious Objectors Day Wednesday 15 May 2019

Gather in Tavistock Square, London at 12 noon.

Organised by First World War Peace Forum.

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### Mildred Mashedor

15/8/1917 - 17/12/2018

Mildred, a long time Friend of the Gandhi Foundation, has died at the age of 101. Mildred was a teacher and writer who collaborated with the GF particularly in promoting co-operative games.

It is hoped to have an appreciation of her life in the next issue of *The Gandhi Way*.



# The Foolishness of Anti-Globalism

*Leonardo Boff*

An anti-globalist wave is breaking out around the world. This is perhaps one of the most regressive and absurd things in the world today. There was certain anti-globalism, fruit of the protectionism of several countries, but it was not a threat to the general and irreversible process of globalization. That wave was adopted for his political platform by Donald J. Trump who, according to Economics Nobel laureate Paul Krugman, is one of most stupid Presidents in North American history. The same can be said of our recently elected President, the former captain Bolsonaro and his secretaries of State and of Education, deniers of this phenomenon, which only prejudiced and uninformed persons cannot see.

Why is this a senseless blunder ? Because it contravenes the logic of an uncontrollable historical process. We have reached a new phase in the history of the Earth and Humanity. So let's see: thousands of years ago, human beings, who arose in Africa, (all of us are Africans) began to disperse throughout the vast world, beginning with Eurasia and ending in Oceania. By the end of superior Paleolithic, some forty thousand years ago, human beings already occupied the whole planet, with about one million people.

Since the XVI century the return of the diaspora began. In 1521 Fernão de Magalhães accomplished the first journey around the planet, proving that the Earth is round. Any place can be reached from anywhere else. The European colonialist project westernized the whole world. Great networks, especially commercial, connected everything. This process started in the XVII century and continued through the XIX century when European imperialism, with sword and musket, subjected the whole world to its interests. We, of the Far West, were born already globalized. The movement grew in the XX century, after World War II.

At present, it was realized when Internet social networks, at the speed of light, connected everyone, and the economy took this process into account, especially through the "great transformation" (K. Polanyi), the transition from a market economy to a market society. Everything, including even the most sacred of truths and religions, was reduced to merchandise. Karl Marx in his book, *The Misery of Philosophy* (1847) called this "the general corruption" and "universal venality".

Globalization, which the French prefer to call, with good reason, planetization, is an undeniable historical fact. We all find ourselves in the same place: planet Earth. We are in the tyrannosaur phase of globalization, that is being formed under the sign of the worldwide integrated economy, as

voracious as the largest of the dinos, the tyrannosaur, for being profoundly inhumane regarding the poverty it causes and the absurd accumulation it allows.

We have already entered the human-social phase of globalization, due to some factors that have become universal, such the UN, OMC, FAO, and others, human rights, the democratic spirit, the awareness of a common destiny as Earth-Humanity, and of being Homo Sapiens Sapiens and Demens, a single species.

We already sense the dawn of the echozoic-spiritual phase of globalization. The integral ecology and life in its diversity, and not the economy, will be central. The reverence before all of creation and the new appreciation for the Earth, seen as Mother and a living super Organism that we must care for and love, are profoundly spiritual values. The idea is growing that we are the portion of the living Earth that with a high degree of complexity started to feel, to think, love and to venerate. Earth and Humanity form a single entity, as the astronauts have well testified from their space ships.

The moment has come, as paleontologist and scientist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin prophesied in 1933, when “the age of nations has passed. If we do not want to die, it is time to shake off old prejudices and build the Earth”. She is our unique Common Home, the only one we have, as Pope Francis emphasized in his encyclical letter On the Caring for the Common Home. (2015). We do not have any other.

We are hearing strange prejudices from future power holders and secretaries claiming that globalization is a communist plot to dominate the world. They are those who, according to Chardin, do not take the time to build the Common Home, but who become prisoners of their petty minded small world, their tiny brains lacking of light.

If they cannot see the new shining star, the problem is not with the star, but with their blind eyes.

**Leonardo Boff** is a Brazilian theologian, ecologist, writer and university professor exponent of the Liberation Theology. He is a former friar, member of the Franciscan Order, respected for his advocacy of social causes and environmental issues. Boff is a founding member of the Earthcharter Commission.

From Transcend Media Service 17-23 December 2018

## Margaret Chatterjee

13 September 1925 - 3 January 2019

Margaret Chatterjee, philosopher and Gandhi scholar, has died in Delhi at the age of 93. I first met Margaret over 20 years ago at a Gandhi Foundation meeting in London when she had come over from Oxford where she was teaching at Westminster College. She attended GF committee meetings from time to time before returning to her home in Delhi.

Margaret Gantzer spent most of her childhood in Dorset and her very religious parents took her to many different churches of different denominations where she often appreciated the organ – if it was played well. This was the beginning of her love of music. She was taught by her father Norman until she went to school aged eight. He had lived in India and worked in the civil service and it was only when he returned to England that he met and married Edith Hickman. Margaret was their only child. Her father preached in many churches and Margaret's interest in religion was seeded by her parents. She had a special interest in Judaism arising from children she met who came over in the kindertransport and they maintained strong bonds of friendship.

On leaving Parkstone Grammar School she went to Somerville College, Oxford, in 1943 as a History Exhibitioner but was persuaded to study Philosophy, Politics and Economics instead. There Margaret met a student of English, Nripendra Nath Chatterjee (NN), who was already a university teacher in India, and on finishing her studies in 1946 they married and settled in India where her husband became a Professor of English at Lahore and Agra universities. He later joined the IAS (Indian Administrative Service) in Bengal in newly independent India. As a result she learned about village life in Bengal and became fluent in Bengali. Margaret and her husband were to have a son, Malay, and two daughters, Nilima and Amala. Margaret's mother came out to India in 1953 after her husband passed away and she helped to look after the children. Margaret started teaching at Miranda House, a pioneering women's college in Delhi and studied for her doctorate in philosophy at University of Delhi 1957-61. And so began an illustrious career mainly as Professor of Philosophy at the University of Delhi until she retired in 1990. She also travelled to many parts of the world for conferences and longer periods as a visiting academic.

Margaret wrote books on diverse philosophical topics but increasingly turned to a study of Gandhi and *Gandhi's Religious Thought* was published in 1980. One of my favourites is *Gandhi and his Jewish Friends* 1992. Later still came *Gandhi and the Challenge of Religious Diversity* 2005 followed by *Gandhi's Diagnostic Approach Rethought* 2007. A characteristic of her writing is the width of knowledge it reveals as she drew on literature in different languages, from history of many eras, from visual art, and diverse religious and philosophical traditions. She wrote poetry over many decades too and published five modest collections between 1967 and 2011. Margaret



also had an extensive knowledge of western classical music and indeed was an excellent performer at the piano and sang Lieder too. For many years she was music critic of *The Statesman* newspaper.

Margaret Chatterjee was visiting professor at many universities around the world including University of Natal, South Africa, University of Calgary, Canada, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Bryn Mawr College, USA. She delivered the Teape Lecture at Cambridge University in 1983 on 'The Concept of Spirituality' and was Vice President of the International Society for Metaphysics.

In India she taught at Visva-Bharati, Shantiniketan, the university founded by Rabindranath Tagore, and in 1986-89 she was a very successful Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla.

Sadly their younger daughter Amala who suffered from Lupus passed away aged 23 in 1973. NN succumbed to cancer in 1983, age 75.

Former students describe Margaret as a very popular teacher who had "this rare quality of engaging in a deep philosophical discussion centred on a trivial everyday experience" (Shefali Moitra), and being "a very loving, caring and affectionate person" (Seema Bose).

In later retirement Margaret started her day by playing her piano and then settled down to her writing. In the last decade of her life she started to write memories and sketches of people (some famous) that she knew, and reflections, and also poetry. These have been published by Promilla & Co in around twenty short books which convey her wide interests and her lively personality. Her interest in all kinds of people she met during her long life and her recollection of them is remarkable. Eventually her eyesight deteriorated and she moved home to be cared for by her son and daughter-in-law, Meera. Her piano playing continued to the very end and although she could no longer read sheet music her playing was her mainstay.

In 2013 the Indian Council of Philosophical Research conferred upon Margaret Chatterjee their Life Time Achievement Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions in the field of Philosophy.

*George Paxton*

*The editor thanks Seema Bose, former student and friend of Margaret Chatterjee, for help in obtaining information on the life of Margaret and particularly for putting him in touch with the family.*

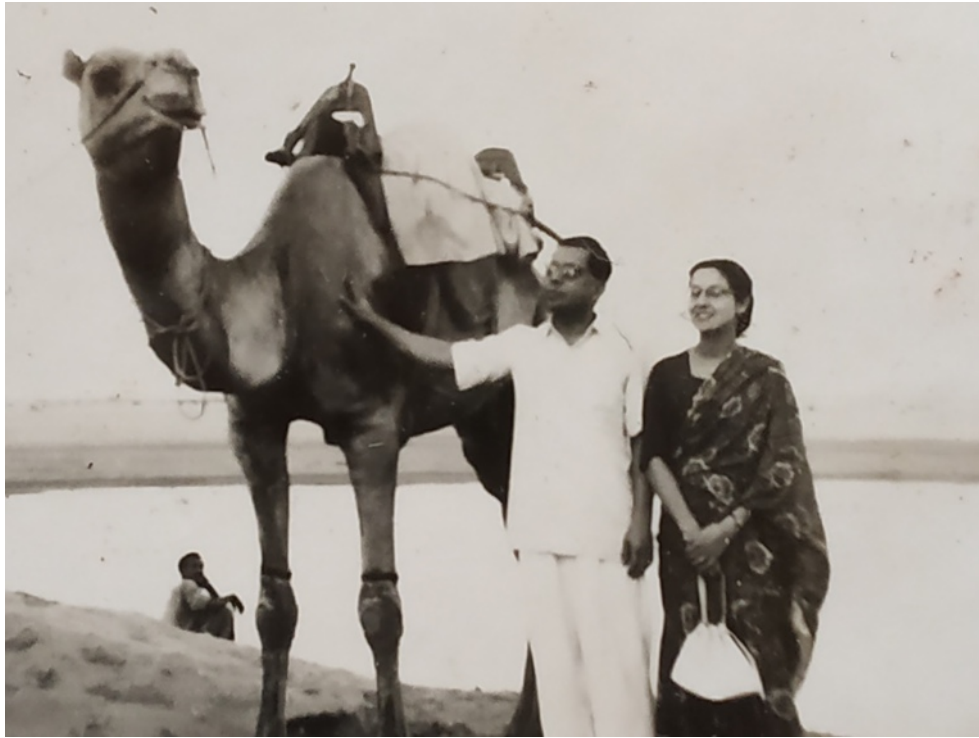
My beloved mother-in-law, Margaret Chatterjee, passed away on January 3, aged 93. She was a world-renowned philosopher, a prolific author of books, including several on Gandhi, an accomplished pianist who revelled in Bach, and a well-published poet. Her memories of growing up in England were a rich source of material for conversation and writing. She published two books as recently as 2017 though her eyesight was weak, and even after them continued to scrawl or dictate to me. "I'm churning books over in my head", she would say.

She was a person who thought and cared deeply for those around her and those in distress. As a result of her teenage during World War II, and many friends who were brought over in the kindertransport, she was frugal in her habits, generous to others, compassionate, and a committed pacifist. Fiercely independent all her life, and ever the philosopher, she saw the last two years of living with Malay and me as a “new phase of life”, often remarking that it was the first time she was being looked after, for which she was glad ! She told me much about her own mother-in-law whom she had cared for soon after she came to India in 1946. She had met my father-in-law as a student at Oxford, and coming to India was her dream. Although it was accompanied by illness and babies in quick succession, it was the “Serampore and Saharanpur” she had learned about from her father, who had been in the civil service till his retirement. Her years as Director of “Viceregal Lodge” (the Indian Institute of Advanced Study) in Simla were a crown as she had grown up with stories of Simla of the early 1900’s.



Her many accomplishments – professorial and ‘headship’ posts held, students (and their theses !) churned out, ‘a hundred’ books written (“Oxford teaches you to write!”), awards and honors received, committees chaired and sat on, her life at Delhi University, and the universities at which she taught even after retirement (in the UK – back to Oxford ! – US, Canada, South Africa and Jerusalem), were the stuff of accolades and festschrifts right up to her 90th year. But I shall remember most the person she was – affectionate, concerned, enquiring, always sharing her thoughts and ideas happily. She wanted – and got – detailed accounts of the lectures I attended (and suggested questions with which I could needle my teachers), the recipes I used to make her favourite things, the activities of her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and friends whom she knew, and much more. We talked incessantly about the different worlds we had lived in and travelled “over the centuries”; about poverty, society, and politics, which she knew to be my abiding passions; about books – their reading, writing and ‘rhythmic’ ! – and aesthetics and philosophy of science, some of our overlapping areas of study ! She had good humour – sometimes even wicked, and she had music in her soul. She was passionately fond of plants and birds, and found great pleasure in examining these – and grand-beagle Obi – in our front verandah almost until the end. She had a long and good life for which we shall always be grateful.

*Meera Chatterjee*



Margaret & Nripendra Nath Chatterjee c.1954



Margaret with her children Malay, Amala and Nilima and her mother Edith Gantzer c.1955

**A memorial service for Margaret Chatterjee** is to be held at the India International Centre in Delhi on 10 February 2019. Anyone wishing to contact the family can do so by email – [meerachatterjee7@gmail.com](mailto:meerachatterjee7@gmail.com)

# The Gandhi Foundation

The Foundation exists to spread knowledge and understanding of the life and work of 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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