

The Gandhi Way



Norman Smith, Shailendra Khainar and William Rhind at the Ashram Experience

Newsletter of the Gandhi Foundation

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The Gandhi Foundation International Peace Award 2018
 will be presented to representatives of *Mines and Communities*,
 an organisation working with indigenous communities,
 and also Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur
 for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
See pages 13-14 for further information
Date and venue of the Award presentation have still to be finalised
and will be announced later but it is likely to be in October or November

Nonviolence in Today's World
 BBC journalist Emily Buchanan will interview
 GF President Lord Bhikhu Parekh and Sister Jayanti
 on Thursday 6 September 2018 7pm-8.30pm
 at Global Cooperation House
 65-69 Pound Lane, Willesden Green,
 London NW10 2HH
 Tel: (020) 8727 3350

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What If The Whole World Sang Together ?

“Music has given me peace”, Mahatma Gandhi once said. “To sing is to pray twice”, wrote St. Augustine. “Imagine all the people living life in peace”, sang John Lennon.

Just imagine. What if the whole world sang together at the same time ? What if we put our differences aside for a moment and simply sang together ? What if singing together could be a catalyst for world peace. That is the vision of World Singing Day.

Unlike the conflicts that divide people as seen on the news every day, World Singing Day aims to connect people by providing a shared joyful human experience. “Unlike politics and religion”, says World Singing Day founder Scott Johnson, “music has the unique power to bring people together from all backgrounds”.



“Imagine a worldwide event,” says Johnson, “that takes place each year where millions of people from every country gather in their communities and sing together to connect and celebrate their common humanity. It just might create a wave of goodwill that could be felt around the globe.”

Why singing ? A recent study out of the University of Oxford found that singing together bonds people, even strangers, better and faster than anything else. Previous research has already shown that singing in groups produces a sense of calm and well-being, stimulates the production of feel-good endorphins, and can even synch singers’ breathing and heart rhythms.

Singing together has shown to be a catalyst to counteract conflict, intolerance and oppression. When hundreds of thousands of Estonians sought to free themselves from decades of Soviet occupation, they gathered in public to sing folk songs and to rally for independence, as documented in the film *The Singing Revolution*. That simple act of singing together triggered the beginning of the end of the Soviet Union.

Founded in 2012, World Singing Day occurs annually on the third Saturday in October (this year it's 20 October 2018). In previous years, people have participated in many ways, from singing their favorite songs with family and friends in their living rooms to singing with the whole community in the centre of town. A community choir in Malaysia sang with shoppers in a mall. Children sang at the only music school in Afghanistan. Hundreds sang popular songs in the streets of Colorado. Over a thousand people sang in Melbourne, Australia at an Indian festival. A New Zealand researcher even sang a Maori song outside in the freezing Antarctica.



If music could bring peace to Gandhi, imagine what it could bring to all of us.



To find out more, visit www.WorldSingingDay.org or email music@WorldSingingDay.org.

The Suffragette Movement and Vegetarianism

Nitin Mehta

Earlier this year the country celebrated 100 years of women winning the right to vote. The Representation of the People Act 1918 gave women over 30 (limited by a property requirement) and all men over 21 the right to vote. However it was not till 1928 that all women over the age of 21 got the right to vote. Women only got the vote after a huge struggle and a relentless campaign.

Many of the women active in the suffrage movement were also concerned about other injustices at the time. Cruelty towards animals was one such issue. According to Leah Leneman who wrote a research paper called 'The Awakened Instinct' there were three major suffrage organisations. The oldest was National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NWWSS). The second was the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) led by Emmeline Pankhurst. The third was Women's Freedom League (WFL). The president of WFL Charlotte Despard was a committed vegetarian. She first became vegetarian for her love of the famous poet Shelley. However having come in contact with Gandhi in 1909 reinforced her commitment. WFL opened vegetarian restaurants in various parts of the country. ***Charlotte said: the women's movement is related also with other great movements of the world, the awakened instinct which feels the call of the sub-human, which says, 'I am the voice of the voiceless, through me the dumb will speak'.*** The Vegetarian Society's journal of April 1907 had this to say: "It is interesting to see how vegetarianism becomes related to progressive movements. Quite a number of the leaders in the women's suffragist movement are vegetarians." Suffragist activists who ended up in Holloway prison opted for vegetarian food as it was much nicer than the meat that was served ! Marion Wallace Dunlop the first suffragette to go on hunger strike was a vegetarian as were activists Leonora Cohen and Grace Roe. Lady Constance Lytton who wrote a book called *Prisons and Prisoners* was a vegetarian. Suffragist poet, Irish nationalist and pacifist Eva Gore-Booth (1870-1926) was also a vegetarian for the last 26 years of her life. A school of thought known as Food Reform believed that meat was responsible for many illnesses which could be alleviated or cured by switching to a vegetarian diet. The roots of the link between vegetarianism and feminism lay in the 1890s as manifested in the radical journal *Shafts* published between 1892 and 1899 and edited by Margret Shurmer Sibthorp. *Shafts* had articles condemning hunting, wearing of fur, vivisection and wearing of hats and bonnets with Ospreys and the stuffed bodies of birds.

Another system of thought in Victorian Britain that had a huge following at the time was Theosophy. Many of the leading lights of the time

such as Annie Besant and Madam Blavatsky were followers and activists in the Theosophical Society. Gandhi who was in London at the time was also associated with the Theosophists. With its basis in Hinduism, Theosophy naturally encouraged vegetarianism amongst its members. Gandhi was impressed by the suffragettes courting arrest and hoped that their example would inspire Indians in South Africa to go to jail in their struggle against racial discrimination. Gandhi used this technique to great effect both in South Africa and India. It was his vegetarianism that brought Gandhi into contact with the Theosophists, British vegetarians and other radical thinkers of the time. Had Gandhi's mother not insisted that he take a vow not to eat meat as a condition to going to England, he would not have come in contact with all these people and may not have become one of the greatest human beings in recent history. So much has been written about Gandhi but hardly anyone has grasped the significance of the life-changing impact of vegetarianism on his life.

Margaret Cousins was active in the Irish Women's Franchise League and the Irish Vegetarian Society. She saw a close connection between the two. She said that a simple grain/fruit/nut diet would free women from hours in the kitchen cooking food ! She also mentioned “the fine and sensitive nature of a woman should not be subjected to cooking flesh”. “A woman”, she wrote, “instinctively shrinks at first from having to touch raw meat, from having to disgorge the entrails of fowl, game and fish”.

Vegetarianism was seen as an empowering tool for women. A speaker at a suffrage meeting said: “vegetarianism aims so directly, as women aim at the abolition of the unregenerate doctrine of physical force”. The last suffragette Victoria Lidiard died in 1992. Angela Holdsworth in an article called, ‘The Last Suffragette’, says the following about her: “Victoria Lidiard died in 1992 aged 102. In March 1912 she was imprisoned for two months for taking part in Emmeline Pankhurst’s day of action. She had travelled from Bristol to London to protest at the Liberal Government’s refusal to give women the vote. At a prearranged time suffragettes smashed windows all over central London. Victoria’s beat was Whitehall and she threw a stone at the War Office window. She was arrested and sent to Holloway prison.”

And yes, she was a lifelong vegetarian!

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Summer Gathering/Ashram Experience 2018

William Rhind

This year's Summer Gathering saw it being given a new name 'Ashram Experience'. I guess as some long standing members still refer to it as the Summer School, the name Summer Gathering will continue to be used by some. It was a very hot week with temperatures topping 30C (90F) some days and the only rain occurring on the last day.

We returned to St Christopher School in Letchworth Garden City and had a theme of 'Making the World Great Again'. Sadly numbers were down again with only 12 in attendance but it did see the return after many years of Mary Brown and after a gap of a couple of years of Esther Klaassen. Esther was accompanied by her friend and yoga teacher Ellen Dijkstra.



With Ellen's help the week followed the standard formula of voluntary 7am yoga followed by breakfast and a morning study session. Graham Davey led these sessions and the focus was on having a discussion (rather than lecture) and working out how we may act as individually, collectively and sway political and public opinion.

We covered six topics to cover the 6 days: health, reducing inequality, pollution, dealing with religious differences, climate change and population. In respect of the last point Graham advised that had we had a session thirty years ago it would have been entitled population growth but with socio-

economic changes in the world one must look at the topic in a more nuanced way than simply talking about a population explosion.



Trudy Lewis, Shailendra Khainar, Mark Hoda, Esther Klassen and William Rhind
in the shade of a tree in the school grounds

Space does not permit a full account of each of the days discussions however certain threads were established; such as we all have a responsibility to do something however small, acts of witness are important and collective action is needed.

We also had two outside speakers visiting us for the first time in a number of years. Duncan McNair came on the Wednesday afternoon to give a very professional explanation of the work of Save the Asian Elephant (stae.org) Afterwards he stayed for supper and it was felt that the GF exec should discuss how and if we can work together in the future. It was certainly an eye-opening experience for me as it brought home the cruel *pajan* methods employed in training elephants to break their spirit, and the problems of 'sanctuaries' simply pandering to tourist trips and prejudices rather than protecting and caring for elephants (see also below).

Thursday evening saw Kevin Jones of Transition Letchworth (<http://www.transitionlethworth.org/>) visit us. He talked about how the Transition Movement fitted in with both Gandhi's ideas and Ebenezer Howard's ones about Garden Cities (Kevin being a trustee of both Transition Letchworth and the Letchworth Heritage Foundation). After a most successful discussion we

have agreed to work with him at next year's Summer Gathering and hopefully getting greater involvement with the local community.

The week also saw the Gandhi Foundation have its Annual General Meeting on the Tuesday for the first time ever outside of London (this was changed as Chairman Mark Hoda had to return to London due to illness at his office). This event also included a discussion about events for the coming year to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Gandhi's birth in 2019. The report of these discussions will be covered elsewhere. It was disappointing that the only members of the GF Executive Committee were those already present for the week, namely Mark Hoda, Graham Davey, Trevor Lewis, William Rhind.



Back: William Rhind, Graham Davey, Adam Lewis, Shailendra Khainar, Brian Parker, Mark Hoda
Front: Esther Klassen, Mary Brown, Trudy Lewis, Ellen Dykstra, Katrina Singer, Trevor Lewis,
Norman Smith

As usual the last Saturday was taken up with a wide ranging discussion about the theme and programme for next year. After agreeing to return to Letchworth it was determined to move the event back a week to ensure that the week coincides with the school holidays. Accordingly, the Ashram Experience 2019 will be from 27th July to 3rd August and will have the following theme '*Thinking About Change: Thoughts are the Seeds of Actions*'.

Save the Asian Elephants

Cruel ‘training’ for tourist entertainment

India, Thailand and other countries where Asian elephants remain are popular destinations with UK holidaymakers who pay millions of pounds per annum to see and experience attractions that use captive elephants. Elephants are poached from the wild when they are calves to be ‘trained’ for attractions such as elephant rides, festivals, circuses, parades and temples. The brutal training called *pajan* is used to break the spirit of the elephant – which is isolated in a wooden ‘crushing’ cage, starved and stabbed with iron bars, planks and spikes and beaten into submission to the will of man for exploitation in the tourism industry. The *pajan* process is so violent it is believed more than half of the young elephants die during or after *pajan*. Often captive elephants tortured beyond endurance attack tourists, sometimes fatally. Yet the tourism industry continues recklessly sending its customers to such elephant attractions.

Endangered Asian elephants

The Asian elephant species has been on the IUCN Red List of Endangered Species since 1986. The world population has rapidly declined from millions in the 19th century. Now scarcely 40,000 survive worldwide (less than a tenth of the African elephant population at 400,000) of which some 10,000 are captive. The majority of surviving Asian elephants are in India. There are also approximately 4,000 in Thailand and smaller also diminishing populations in other South East Asian states such as the endangered pygmy Borneo elephant in Indonesia and Malaysia.



STAE (Save the Asian Elephant) is working to improve the living conditions of these wonderful creatures. It has a great website – although some of the pictures of cruelty can be difficult to look at. www.stae.org

The **co-operative movement** is both large and widely spread. The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) which was founded in 1895 has 1.2 billion members, including 280 million people who are employed by co-operatives. The ICA's new President, Ariel Guarco, is President of the Co-operative Confederation of Argentina which represents 5,000 co-operatives with 10 million members. Brazil has 7,600 co-operatives; in Kenya nearly 6 million people are members of co-operatives; in France 75% of all agricultural producers are members of at least one co-operative; even in the home of free trade, the USA, there are more than 29,000 co-operatives operating in every sector of the economy. Co-operatives provide over 280 million jobs around the world, 20% more than multi-national corporations. Surely a success story? The New president of ICA says its major future challenges are peace and security, human rights and humanitarian issues, international development and environmental responsibility. (Mid-Counties Co-operative Magazine)

An international study has found that **corruption in government** is lower where there is a higher representation of women members of parliament. The average female representation world wide is 24% with Scandinavian countries and Iceland over 40%. (Pressenza International Press Agency)

KBC Belgian banking group will no longer have any association with nuclear weapons in its activities. It also excludes investment in tobacco and coal as part of its ethical policy. (Pressenza International Press Agency)

Although there are nine nuclear weapon states there are American nuclear weapons stored in many other countries. A new YouGov poll commissioned by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) has found an overwhelming **rejection of nuclear weapons** in the four European Union countries that host U.S. nuclear weapons: Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy. In each country, a majority of people surveyed were in favor of removing the weapons from their soil, and for their countries to sign the Treaty that bans them outright. (www.wagingpeace.org/sunflower-newsletter-august-2018)

A report sponsored by Conscience (formerly the Peace Tax Campaign) entitled **The Minister for Peace and Disarmament** was launched in the House of Commons on 5th July. The idea of a Minister was put forward by Jeremy Corbyn in 2016 and this led to Fabian Hamilton (MP for Leeds North East) being appointed Shadow Minister for Peace and Disarmament. The report has been written by Dr Tim Street of the Oxford Research Group.

“Based on the responses of people from the peace, disarmament and security community interviewed for this study, the relevant institutional experiences of British and foreign governments and the current state of domestic and international

politics, the report concludes that there is significant potential in the MPD concept, but that it requires further thought and attention from Labour and civil society before it is established and developed in government.”

[\(campaign@conscienceonline.org.uk\)](mailto:campaign@conscienceonline.org.uk)

Permanent Structural Cooperation (PESCO) of the European Union was inaugurated in 2017 when 25 of the 28 states agreed to move towards structural integration of their armed forces. The UK did not join. Opposition has arisen in Ireland where 42 members of parliament (TDs), which is almost a third of the TDs, and some Senators have signed up to a pact in support of Irish neutrality. The inaugural meeting of a group called Group on Peace, Neutrality and Disarmament was chaired by Senator Alice-Mary Higgins. As a result of PESCO membership, which entails a binding commitment to increase military spending, Ireland would have to increase its spending from 0.3% to 1.3%. [\(www.worldbeyondwar.org\)](http://www.worldbeyondwar.org)

The Assault on Agnivesh

The International Movement for a Just World (JUST) is shocked to learn that the prominent Indian social activist, Swami Agnivesh, was assaulted on the 17th of July 2018 in the Pakur area of Jharkhand State while leaving a hotel where he had participated in an event.

The assassins are allegedly from the youth wing of the BJP, the ruling party. They had torn his clothes and hurled abuses at Agnivesh. They were angry that the activist had made a statement defending the consumption of beef. In recent months, the consumption of beef in a society where the cow is venerated has become a volatile issue with cases reported of Muslims being killed because they had eaten the meat of the animal even within the confines of their homes.

The BJP has denied that its youth workers were involved in the Agnivesh assault. One hopes that a fair and unbiased investigation will be carried out by the authorities. The culprits should be severely punished according to the law.

It is a shame that intolerance and aggressive bigotry of this sort is gathering momentum in parts of India. It has been facilitated according to certain sources by the increasing legitimization of a narrow notion of religious identity which in a sense is a travesty of the universalism and inclusiveness of the Hindu faith. Those who wield power and influence in politics and religion should not lend credibility to such gross misinterpretations of the sacred beliefs of the majority of the populace.

Swami Agnivesh is one of those few Indians who have always sought to combat bigotry and hatred propagated in the name of religion, any religion. He has adopted principled positions on major controversies in his country with courage and integrity for many decades. A multi-religious, multi-cultural democracy should eulogise — not assault — such individuals.

[Dr. Chandra Muzaffar – TRANSCEND Media Service](#)

2018 Gandhi Foundation International Peace Award focuses on indigenous peoples

This year's Award is to an organisation and an individual for their work for indigenous communities. They are **Mines and Communities** (which is London-based and whose extraordinary archive is available at www.minesandcommunities.org) and Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, who is currently the first female indigenous UN Special Rapporteur for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Tauli-Corpuz).

Ms Tauli-Corpuz is from the Phillipines, where she faces considerable harrassment, as does the organisation Tebtebba, with whom she has worked for years (<http://www.tebtebba.org>). Both she and Mines and Communities have done extraordinary work on behalf of indigenous peoples and nature-based communities who face constant pressures from land mafias and 'developers', but who play an increasingly important role in safeguarding the ecosystems that future human life depends on.

Victoria Tauli-Corpuz was appointed on 2 June 2014 as the third United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of indigenous Peoples by the Human Rights Council in 2014. In the fulfilment of her mandate, she conducts fact-finding missions and reports on the human rights situation in specific countries, addresses cases of alleged violations of the rights of indigenous peoples through communications with Governments and others, promotes good practices to implement international standards concerning the rights of indigenous peoples and conducts thematic studies on topics of special importance to the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.



She is an indigenous leader from the Kankana-ey Igorot people of the Cordillera Region in the Philippines. As an indigenous activist, she has worked for over three decades on building movements among indigenous peoples and as an advocate for women's rights.

Ms. Tauli-Corpuz is the former Chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2005-2010) has served as the chairperson-rapporteur of the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations. As an indigenous leader, she was actively engaged in drafting and adoption of the UN Declaration on the

Rights of Indigenous Peoples in 2007. She has founded and managed various NGOs involved in social awareness raising, climate change and the advancement of indigenous peoples' and women's rights and she is a member of United Nations Development Programme Civil Society Organizations Advisory Committee.

In her capacity as the United Nations Special Rapporteur Ms. Tauli-Corpuz has provided expert testimony before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and policy advice to *inter alia* the World Bank and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

With the **150th anniversary of Gandhi's birth in 2019** it is hoped that the GF will be able to put on extra events in addition to the regular yearly programme to bring people to a new appreciation of Gandhi's life and ideas.

The following ideas are under consideration: an international conference at Oxford University, a poetry competition, a walk covering sites associated with Gandhi in London possibly culminating in a showing of Richard Attenborough's seminal film.

To discover information about these events follow us at

<https://twitter.com/GandhiUK>

<https://www.facebook.com/gandhifoundation/>

www.gandhifoundation.org

2018 Lifestyle Movement AGM and Conference

21 – 23 September 2018

at the

Bamford Quaker Community

Water Lane, Bamford, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S33 0DA

Theme: "Making Our Consumption Sustainable"

Cost: £100 per person for the weekend

There is easy access by train to Bamford from either Manchester or Sheffield
and a travel pool may be applied

To Register contact:

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Book Reviews

Factfulness: Ten reasons we're wrong about the world – and why things are better than you think Hans Rosling Sceptre 2018 pp342

Hans Rosling's book on social statistics is not only important but presented in a very readable style. A Swedish physician who worked in many countries he was best known for his lectures on global trends which often astonished his audiences as they revealed facts which are often counter to generally held beliefs. Sadly he died before this book was published but his work is being carried on by his son Ola and daughter-in-law Anna Rosling Ronnlund.

The author begins by asking the reader some multiple choice questions which he previously put to various groups such as scientists, businesspeople, politicians, journalists, medical students. One is 'In the last 20 years the proportion of the world population living in extreme poverty has ...

a. almost doubled, b. remained more or less the same, c. almost halved.'

Another is 'Worldwide, 30-year-old men have spent 10 years in school, on average. How many years have women of the same age spent in school ?

a. 9 years, b. 6 years, c. 3 years.'

The answer to the first is c. The answer to the second is a. In 2017 the research team asked nearly 12,000 people in 14 countries to answer these and another 10 similar questions. The average number of correct answers was only 2 ! Moreover the most highly educated got most of the answers wrong, sometimes worse than the general public, and a group of Nobel laureates and medical researchers were not only badly wrong but systematically wrong. That is the answers were *worse than random*. As Rosling says, chimpanzees would do better.

What is going on ? Gradually Rosling realised that even those who had listened to his lectures were stuck in an out-of-date worldview. Finally, after he addressed an audience at the World Economic Forum at Davos in 2015 he came to the conclusion that the problem was that people had an overdramatic worldview that led them to choose the dramatic and negative answers. We therefore need a corrective as it is seriously misleading us (he did consider that we used outdated information but that did not prove a sufficient explanation; being misled by the media was insufficient also).

The book then presents many fascinating and important facts about our world along with some thinking tools to control our dramatic instincts. Statistics that are now readily available online give us many facts to absorb and these are presented graphically. What emerges is that human society is improving in many ways and we have been misled often by the acceptance of the exceptional rather than the more common and widespread facts.

Ten short chapters follow each dealing with a perspective that can mislead us when looking at statistics : The Gap Instinct, The Negativity

Instinct, The Straight Line Instinct, The Fear Instinct, The Size Instinct, The Generalisation Instinct, The Destiny Instinct, The Blame Instinct, The Urgency Instinct. Let's consider two of these.

Rosling illustrates The Gap Instinct by looking at child mortality. Plotting the percentage of children surviving to age 5 vertically and the number of babies per woman horizontally for all countries, with different sizes of bubbles representing population size of countries. The pattern that emerged is a cluster to the left showing large families which was also low down indicating low survival rates. Then another smaller cluster to the right and higher indicating smaller families with higher survival rates. These two clusters represented what were called 'developing' and 'developed' countries. There were not many bubbles in between these two clusters so that the world was divided mainly into two types of countries. In 1995 Rosling was teaching a class of students and showing them these child mortality statistics for different countries and discovered from their responses that they had a firm belief in the existence of countries being divided into two groups as in the graph. However the graph had used statistics from 1965, ie a generation earlier. The students did not realise that the world had changed substantially in that 30 years and the division into two groups was much less clear cut in 1995. In his book he also provides the same graph for 2017 and here there is a spectacular difference – the majority of countries are now in the upper right, including the largest countries by population, and then there is a tail of others with only a few in the position of 'developing' countries of 1965. The world had changed and families were now smaller and survival rates higher for most of the world's population. But his students, and by implication, most of the populations of the formerly 'developed' countries were unaware of this radical change.

This led Rosling to put forward a four-level classification based on per capita income to replace the two-level one. The bulk of the world's population is now in the middle two levels with a smaller Level 1 (poor) and Level 4 (rich). It was 2016 before the World Bank accepted this four income level classification and the United Nations' organisations have not done so yet.

Rosling says we should be wary of thinking of gaps when we are considering statistics (such as the two groups of developing and developed countries) as the reality is often not polarised and the majority of groups may lie in between.

Looking at The Fear Instinct the author lists three broad categories of fear commonly found in human societies: fear of physical harm, of captivity, and of contamination. These fears still have a constructive purpose for people living on Levels 1 & 2, eg the fear of snakes since 60,000 people are killed by snakes every year. However for those on Levels 3 & 4 where people can afford to protect themselves against nature these biological memories probably cause more harm than good. The media also tap into our fear instinct but this distorts the reality of the dangers facing most of us. One of the questions at the beginning was: 'How did the number of deaths per year from natural

disasters change over the last hundred years ? (Included in natural disasters are floods, earthquakes, storms, droughts, wildfires, extreme temperatures, and deaths from mass displacements of people.)

a. More than doubled, b. Remained about the same, c. Decreased to less than half.' Only 10% picked the right answer which is c, in fact deaths are only a quarter of what they were 100 years ago, and allowing for the great increase in population the deaths are only 6% of a century ago. The reason for the drop is that the majority of people no longer live on Level 1 where poorly constructed buildings, poor infrastructure and poor medical facilities result in increased injuries and fatalities. The number of casualties has dropped in Level 1 also in recent years due to better education, new affordable solutions and global collaborations.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about his book is that the global social statistics show that the world is improving in so many ways even although when people are asked if the world is getting better or worse most answer that it is getting worse. The facts are contrary to this belief. The reduction in poverty, increase in life expectancy, growth in literacy, growth in democracy, approaching gender equality, and much more are revealed by the statistics. Of course not all is rosy. We have pollution of various sorts, some producing global warming with its consequent dangers; there are still some 10,000 nuclear weapons in the world although that is a reduction from about 60,000; new infectious diseases appear and old ones can produce pandemics. But the huge improvements that have been made in a few decades give reason for hope that these others can be tackled successfully.

Rosling knew how to make social statistics exciting and this is partly because of his use of pertinent personal anecdotes. This really is a book that I can recommend without qualification.

George Paxton

The House of Islam: A Global History Ed Husain, Bloomsbury Publishing 320pp £25 Hardback. ISBN: 978-1-4088-7226-0

Islam - Towards Deeper Understanding

A former radical Islamist now for years campaigning for a 'renaissance' of classical Islam against current extreme politicised versions, Ed Husain is an establishment Muslim who was Middle East expert at the US Council on Foreign Relations and whose counter-terrorism think-tank Quilliam receives UK state funding. Controversial in British Islam for backing the Government's Prevent programme, he sees the current ideological struggle between moderate inclusive Islam, and puritanical Wahhabism, ultra-zealous Salafism and their violent expressions in al-Qaeda and ISIS, as critical for the future of Islam – and of world religion and global politics. Few would dismiss that analysis.

An insider in both the West and global Islam, Husain is uniquely placed to act as a bridge-builder for understanding between the two worlds. With Islamophobia dangerously rising in UK and anti-Muslim policies pursued by US and some EU states, this timely book will significantly contribute to this urgent task. Richly researched, a mine of information on the history, beliefs and practices of Islam, its 'collective memory' of glorious civilisations, its sense of humiliation by the West (which Husain dates from Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt), and its ongoing spiritual strength, this work is essential reading for all involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue and inter-faith endeavour.

Yet I have some reservations. I am unconvinced the turmoil and violence associated with Islam from North Africa and the Middle East to Afghanistan and Pakistan is solely caused by its internal ideological struggles. Ayatollah Khomeini's 1979 Islamist Revolution in Iran swept away the US-imposed, pro-Western modernising but ruthless Shah – and Khomeini at once declared hostility towards the two 'Satans' of imperialist USA and atheist USSR. Osama bin Laden, while opposing 'corrupt' Muslim regimes, urged revenge against the West for decades of exploitation: "now is the time for you to feel our pain". The US-UK Iraq War sparked Sunni-Shia conflict and nurtured ISIS. The West "lit the fire" within Islam as much as its own extremists, but for secular political and economic power, not any desire to oppress Muslims as such.

Further, I find Husain's historical perspective too limited. The record is clear: from 8th century to end of 17th century, European Christendom, while trading and sharing culture with Muslim states, was often at war repelling their military expansionism (which Husain admits advanced Islam as much as missionary zeal). Christian north Africa and Middle East were subjugated (the Crusades a failed attempt to partly reverse this); Muslims ruled Spain for seven centuries (creating a brilliant civilisation in the South); the fall of Byzantine Orthodox Constantinople in 1453 sent shockwaves throughout Christendom; for centuries Venice, Malta, Hungary and Serbia were its frontline against militant Islam, which only lost control of the Mediterranean at Lepanto in 1571. Its Balkan expansionism was only stopped in late 17th century, but Ottoman Muslim power held eastern Balkans until end-19th century. This millennium of military-political hostility, alongside many examples of toleration, must be acknowledged by both faiths to make honest dialogue – and for the collective memory behind some East European states' anti-Muslim attitudes today to be understood (but not justified). All is part of Islam's 'global history'.

Husain wants Islamist extremists eradicated by a sustained battle of ideas at every level of Muslim communities, an EU-style 'Middle Eastern Muslim Union' to settle disputes, a 'Marshall Plan' economic programme funded by rich Gulf states to tackle Middle East poverty – very desirable aims but very

difficult to achieve – but omits to urge cessation of Western military interventions and economic exploitation, major factors causing Islamist radicalism and violence.

Husain deplores the lack of religious freedom in Saudi Arabia and Iran – contrary to the Quran declaring “There is no compulsion in faith” – murderous anti-blasphemy laws in Pakistan, and violence against those like *Charlie Hebdo* journalists who cause hurt by mocking the Prophet. On freedom of speech and religion he is a classic liberal; he urges ‘more Muslim self-confidence’ in the face of provocation – such surely is not enough. Pew Research Centre 2018 reported Muslims ‘largest group targeted’ by high levels of hostility in many countries. Clearly huge work is needed to combat anti-Muslim prejudice, not least in the UK.

Despite my caveats, the book contains so much that is helpful – from the meaning of the Shia-Sunni dispute and faith-based origins of the Arab Spring to Muslim understanding of the after-life – making it essential reading for the student of the early 21st-century global religious scene. Not least, it merits careful reflection for its revelation of the pain within contemporary Islam, especially in the Middle East.

Brian Cooper, Interfaith Secretary of Uniting for Peace

The Gandhi Experiment: Teaching our teenagers how to become global citizens, by Margaret Hepworth, www.rupapublications.com, ISBN 978-81-291-4770-7.

Written by Australian born Peace Educator and Founder/Director of The Gandhi Experiment, this is a very practical and well thought out manual of exercises and lesson plans which have been tried out by Margaret in a wide variety of settings worldwide. The clear presentation and content testify to many years experience as an educator of both youngsters and adults. Each chapter has clear aims and offers detailed suggestions as to how to involve and inspire the audience. As Margaret clearly states, The Gandhi Experiment is not about the man himself but the essence of his message or, rather, messages: nonviolence as a conscious choice, Satyagraha, taking action about injustices – moving from apathy to action, change beginning with the individual and ‘My life is my message’. Each message is combined with theories, concepts and practices which have been well tried out in the classroom or workshop setting. The result: an excellent handbook which can lead not just the participant but the teacher through simple steps which can potentially have a huge impact on many lives.

Jane Sill

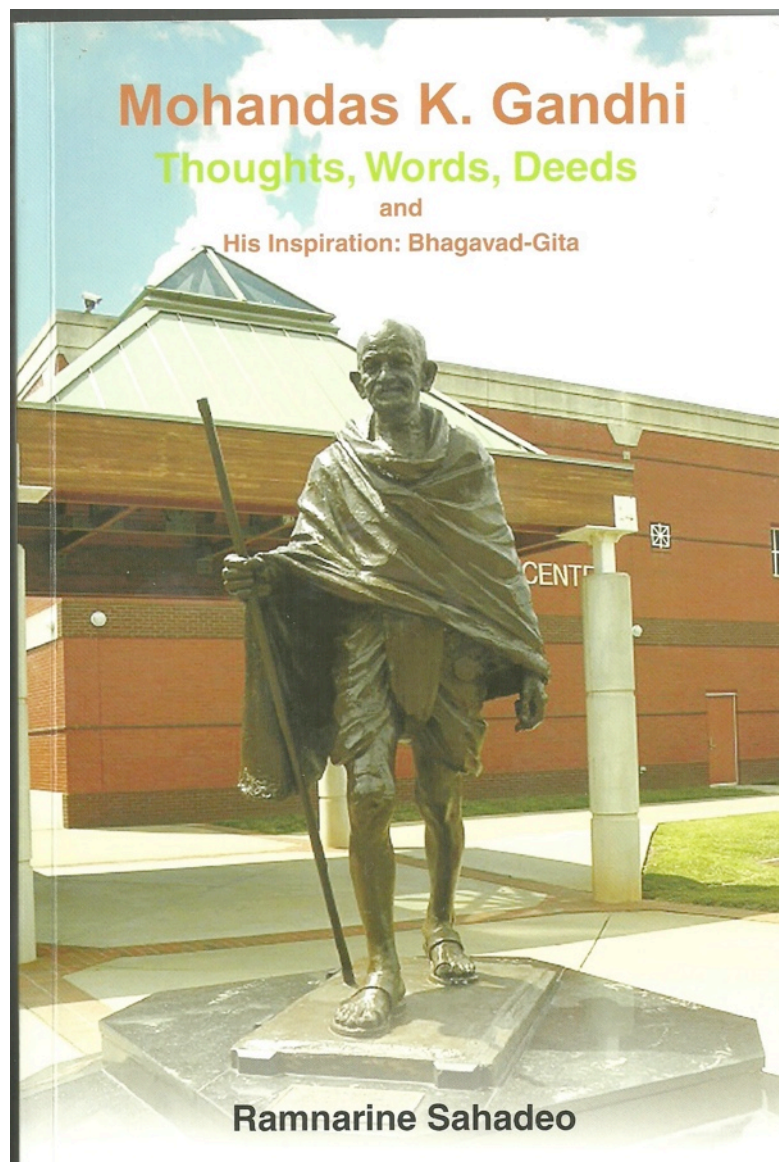
Mohandas K Gandhi: Thoughts, Words, Deeds and His Inspiration – Bhagavad-Gita by Ramnarine Sahadeo

Published by Reprographic and Printing Services, 13/2, Rasoolpura, Secunderabad 500 003, AP, India, ISBN 978-0-9868393-1-3 (2012): Second Edition.

This second edition of author Ramnarine (Ramji) Sahadeo's philosophical book: *Mohandas K. Gandhi, Thoughts, Words, Deeds and His Inspiration: Bhagavad-Gita* is a long overdue, guiding clarinet call to people of every religious belief, race, creed, sexual orientation, or political interests to follow the nonviolent principles of the indomitable *Mahatma (Great One) Gandhi*, in an attempt to seek peace, prosperity and happiness in our troubled world.

The book is a studied embellishment from the debut first edition, which was launched to mark the *10th anniversary of 9/11* – the unforgettable atrocities of the bombing of the twin towers of the *World Trade Centre* and the loss of thousands of lives of people of all walks of life. It is an attempt to point all of us to look at other 9/11s in history where visionary leaders have pleaded with human beings to live in peace, unity and harmony. Particular emphasis is highlighted in the speeches of *Swami Vivekananda* on September 11, 1893 to the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, U.S.A. And more in grace to the guidance of famous world leaders, in the likeness of Martin Luther King (Jr) and Nelson Mandela is the speech by Mohandas K Gandhi, The

Moment of Truth, on September 11, 1906 in Johannesburg, South Africa at the Empire Theatre. Gandhi, who is acclaimed the Father of Indian Independence (1947), displayed an impeccable stand for the principle of



nonviolence in the remarkable practice of *Satyagraha* – “soul force”; “truth force”; “insistence on truth”.

What was essentially Gandhi’s inspiration ? It is this pertinent question that stirred Ramji to dwell in the body of the book on the *Bhagavad-Gita*. This is the scriptural poem that influenced and inspired Gandhi all through his life. In the end we come to appreciate the Mahatma (Great One) as one of the greatest souls that set foot on this earth. Readers will no doubt shuffle the pages of this book in its various sections and headings to look for answers to bring peace and harmony in their own lives. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi:

“When disappointment stares me in the face and when I am all alone and I do not see even one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad Gita.”

The author, Ramnarine Sahadeo, is a Guyanese-born Canadian Lawyer in the Greater Toronto Area since 1980 [Retired]. It is his fervent hope that this book will promote the change which people wish to see in their homes, their social environment and the world at large. In the back cover he writes:

“Justice systems would need fewer resources if residents can just avoid lust, anger, and greed, for these vices clog the courts with expensive, unpredictable, and unnecessary litigation. Health and social systems experience lower demands from those who exercise, perform yoga, meditate or follow a vegetarian diet, practices followed by Gandhi and recommended by the Gita.”

The book is set in three parts: Part I greets the reader with an overview of how the *Gita* reaches the West, with a distinction of *Nine Elevens* apart from September 11, 2001; Part II brings the reader to the core verses of the spiritual poem of the *Bhagavad-Gita*; and Part III offers power-point comments on the *Gita* by *Gandhi*, along with influences of the *Bhagavad-Gita* that shaped the destiny of this great soul. In the end there is a glorifying explanation of the universal greeting of *Namaste* for all of us.

For copies of this book, either for yourself or for distribution to friends and family as gifts or for social gatherings, you may contact the author, Ramnarine Sahadeo: ramjihind@rogers.com. By phone: 905-671-9233.

Author Ramnarine Sahadeo is also currently involved in the initiatives of establishing a Mahatma Gandhi Scholarship for students at the McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

Review by **Leonard Dabydeen** is the author of: *Watching You*, A Collection of Tetractys Poems, Xlibris Publications, ISBN 978-1-4691-4802-1(2012). He is also listed in the World Poetry Movement’s BEST POETS & POEMS 2011 ISBN 978-1-61936-038-9 (2012); Hardcover.

First Ever: 40 Jewish Groups Worldwide Oppose Equating Antisemitism with Criticism of Israel

Jewish Voice for Peace is proud to stand in global solidarity against a harmful definition of antisemitism and with human rights and freedom to protest.

New York, London, Berlin, Tel Aviv (17 Jul 2018) – From South Africa to Sweden, New Zealand to Germany to Brazil, for the first time ever over thirty Jewish organizations across the globe came together in a [statement](#) condemning attempts to stifle criticism of Israel.

The statement warns of a growing trend of legislative campaigns to target organizations that support Palestinian rights, particularly the nonviolent Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

“From our own histories we are all too aware of the dangers of increasingly fascistic and openly racist governments and political parties,” the global letter states. “The rise in antisemitic discourse and attacks worldwide is part of that broader trend. At times like this, it is more important than ever to distinguish between the hostility to or prejudice against Jews on the one hand and legitimate critiques of Israeli policies and system of injustice on the other.”

The United States has witnessed increasing legislative efforts to [criminalize the boycott of illegal Israeli settlements and repress advocacy for Palestinian human rights by defining such acts as antisemitic](#), with two bills currently under discussion in US Congress. Such efforts are [mirrored at the state level](#), where more than 25 state legislatures have considered or enacted various forms of targeting advocacy for Palestinian rights.

Of particular concern is the usage of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ([IHRA](#)) definition of antisemitism, intentionally worded such that it equates legitimate criticisms of Israel and advocacy for Palestinian rights with antisemitism, as a means to suppress the former.

A similar approach is being employed across Europe. In France and [Germany](#), the bank accounts of BDS groups were closed and campaigns promoting the boycott of goods from illegal Israeli settlements were convicted of incitement to hatred. The [UK](#) has witnessed an ongoing battle about the legality of local government boycotts against Israeli settlements.

The state of Israel has waged its own campaign against advocates of BDS. In January, the Israeli Ministry of Strategic Affairs announced a [ban](#) prohibiting the leaders of 20 organizations worldwide from entering Israel, including Jewish Voice for Peace, for supporting BDS. And in 2015, the [Israeli High Court upheld a law](#) which allows individuals to sue individuals calling for a boycott of Israel or of companies profiting from illegal Israeli settlements.

“It is vital that Jewish organizations across the globe stand united against harmful definitions of antisemitism and together for human rights and the freedom to protest. We at JVP are proud to have initiated this historic effort,” stated Rebecca Vilkomerson, Jewish Voice for Peace Executive Director.

Jewish Voice for Peace is a large American organisation inspired by Jewish tradition to work for a just and lasting peace according to principles of human rights, equality, and international law for all the people of Israel and Palestine.

A list of organisations signing the statement can be found on the **Transcend Media Service** site 23 July 2018, also on www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org

My Life is My Message

Peter Ruhe of GandhiServe has just completed work on a comprehensive audio-visual show presenting the life of Gandhi in detail. Over 500 coloured images of Gandhi and India's independence movement are used in the high-calibre presentation. The 60-minutes show can be viewed as video-on-demand from 15 August 2018. www.mylifeismymessage.org

An invitation from Mandor Apte

In our world, violence happens anywhere, anytime and is not limited to our socio-economic status or certain neighborhoods. Acts of violence can include drug overdose, suicide, domestic abuse, mass shooting, global terrorism, etc. On occasion of Gandhi's 149th birth anniversary, we are inspired to invite you to join a unique event to promote compassion and nonviolence at the [**World Summit on Countering Violence and Extremism**](#) to be hosted in Mumbai and Bangalore, Sep 28 - Oct 3rd 2018. The Summit will bring together concerned leaders including mayors, police executives, victims of violence and public policy experts/scholars for brainstorming novel solutions to promote greater compassion and peace.

Opening of The Gandhi Centre at the Balaji Temple Campus,
Dudley, W. Midlands, on Sat 10 November 2018, 3pm-6pm
Lord Bhikhu Parekh will speak on behalf of the Gandhi Foundation
The Centre is at Dudley Road East, 10 mins from Dudley Station
See the article in The Gandhi Way Summer issue No.136

The Gandhi Foundation

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.



Founder President: Richard Attenborough

President: Bhikhu Parekh

Patrons: Godric Bader, Navnit Dholakia, Denis Halliday, Eirwen Harbottle, Martin Polden, Diana Schumacher, Mark Tully

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You can become a Friend of the Gandhi Foundation for a minimum subscription of £20, or a concession rate of £10, or be a Life Friend for a donation of £200. As a Friend you will receive the quarterly newsletter The Gandhi Way and notices of events organised by the Foundation.

Subscriptions to the Editor (address at bottom).

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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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