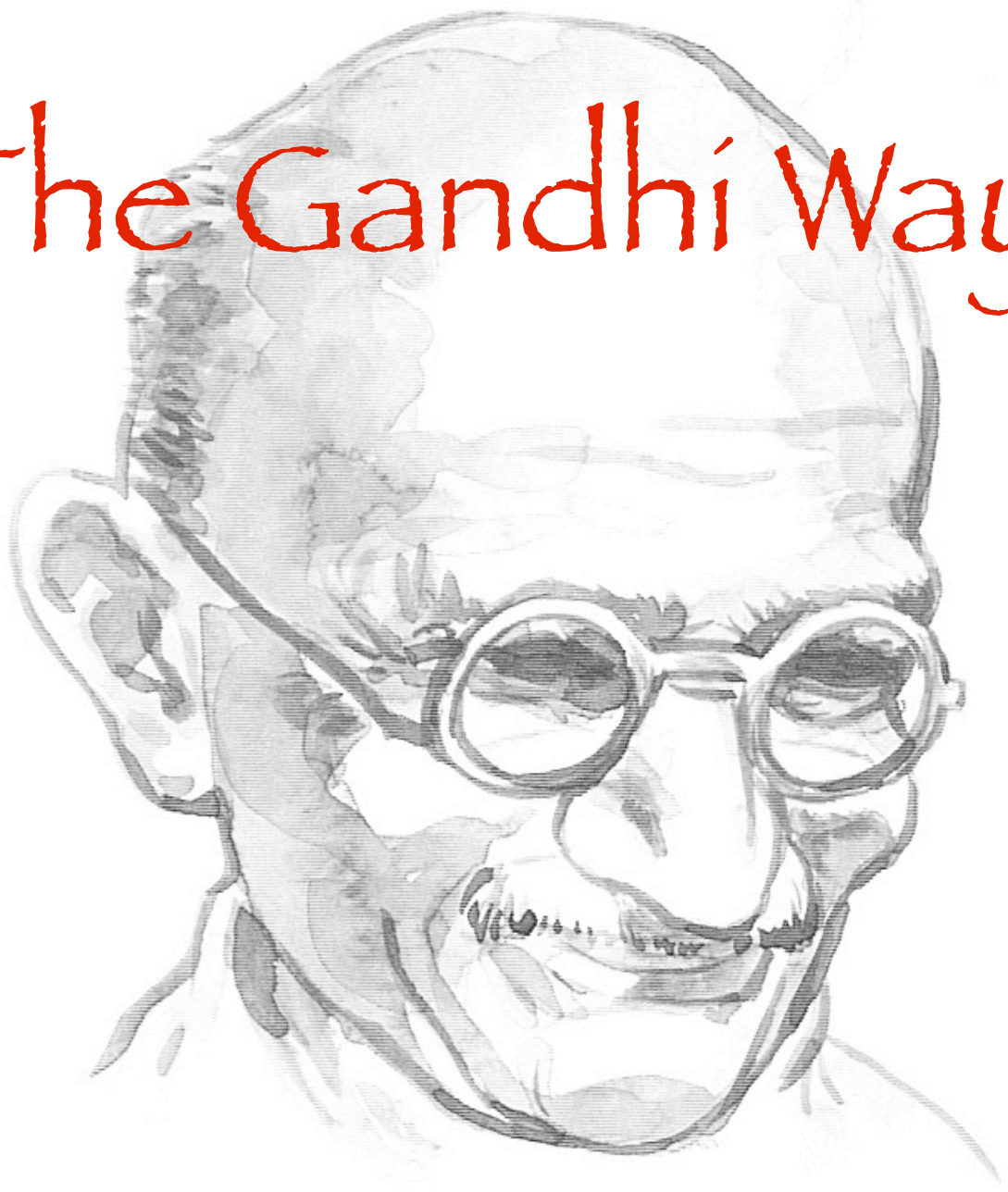


The Gandhi Way



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Tulips by Jane Thomas

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Gandhi on Nonviolence and Swaraj in Ideas

Bhikhu Parekh

In this paper I examine two ideas that are central to Gandhi's thought. They are nonviolence and *swaraj* in ideas. Gandhi has been so closely identified with nonviolence that only a few of his commentators appreciate how much his view of nonviolence differs from the conventional view of it. As for *swaraj* in ideas, it is often interpreted either to mean total freedom to hold whatever beliefs one likes and live by the light of the relative truth, or as living by the traditional beliefs of one's society. I suggest that both views are deeply mistaken.

The peculiarity of Gandhi's view of nonviolence is often missed by his commentators because of their failure to appreciate the way in which he reverses the traditional and familiar conceptualisation of it. For the latter, nonviolence is a negative and parasitic term signifying rejection of violence, whereas violence is a positive term capable of being defined by itself and without reference to nonviolence. Although Gandhi sometimes shares this view his general tendency is in the opposite direction. For him *ahimsa*, or nonviolence, is a primary or positive category and violence signifies its absence or rejection. Nonviolence is the highest principle of conduct and alone worthy of human beings. Gandhi works out the social, economic, moral, and other implications of this view and sees nonviolence not just as a method of action but as a way of life. Nonviolence or *ahimsa* for him means compassion or love of all human beings. It involves relieving their pain and promoting their well-being. An act is nonviolent if it is born out of love of others, and violent if it springs from selfishness, hatred, or anger. Gandhi's definition of nonviolence has a normative orientation just as his definition of violence has. The test of violence is not just that harm is done to another but also its underlying motive. Such a normatively based definition of violence and nonviolence is largely unique to Gandhi and creates opportunities and problems for him that the conventional view does not. A few examples will illustrate the point.

In Gandhi's ashram a cow was in excruciating pain with only a few days to live out its miserable life. After a great deal of thought Gandhi decided to end its life and its unbearable pain by administering an appropriate injection. His action was widely attacked and some even called it violent. Gandhi was deeply disturbed by what he took to be a misguided criticism. He replied that there was violence only when the intention was to give pain, otherwise it was only an act of 'nonviolent killing', a phrase that made sense to Gandhi but not to his critics. He was guided by love and meant to end the cow's pain. To take another example, Gandhi said that if his daughter is about to be raped and there is no way to save her, it would be 'the purest form of *ahimsa*' on his part

to put an end to her life. His action would respect her dignity and deny the rapist the opportunity to humiliate her.

There are cases which Gandhi calls violence, but are not so called generally. Human life is impossible without killing insects. Since this is inescapable and necessary for human survival it would not seem to count as violence. Gandhi disagrees. Killing insects is inevitable because we wish to continue to live. Our action thus is associated with our selfishness and hence is an act of violence for Gandhi. Capitalism involves a great deal of exploitation, humiliation, starvation, and all these are acts of violence because they harm their victims and are guided by self-interest. Demeaning others and speaking ill of them are also 'insidious forms of violence'. We do not see this according to Gandhi because the habit of equating violence with killing and nonviolence with non-killing has 'drugged our conscience'.

Advocates of nonviolence tend to condemn all forms of violence, and here again Gandhi is different. When discussing violence he does not indiscriminately condemn all incidents of violence but takes a nuanced and realistic view of it, as befits an activist. He calls some violence defensive (when one did not initiate it oneself), some other excusable (used by helpless and desperate people), understandable (a spontaneous outburst of frustration), and almost nonviolent (when it is unequally matched). As the moment of Indian independence drew closer, Gandhi increasingly articulated nonviolence in the language of violence and talked about 'nonviolent warfare', 'war without violence', and 'an army for *swaraj*', leading many advocates of nonviolence and pacifists to part company with him. Gandhi also greatly valued self-respect, the defence of one's dignity or honour, and said that when the choice is between cowardice and violence "I would advise violence" because "*ahimsa* never barter away honour." At the individual level Gandhi grew far more tolerant of violence. Faced with a mad man about to kill people around him, Gandhi said God would not forgive him if he were to say that his nonviolence did not permit killing him. At the collective level where he was the first in history to make nonviolence a major method of action, Gandhi was more reluctant to permit violence, though even here he found some scope for it. Faced with the Pakistani tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir, Gandhi was prepared to justify a military response by India. Kashmiris were not trained in nonviolent resistance, and the invasion left no time to train them. The treaty between India and Kashmir required India to assist Kashmir, and Indian soldiers were going to Kashmir only at the invitation of its Maharaja.

When describing Gandhi as the apostle of nonviolence we need to be extremely careful and avoid ascribing to him whatever views on nonviolence attract us. He approached nonviolence from a particular angle, seeing it as a moral virtue closely associated with the love of our fellow man. Originally derived from Tolstoy, it was heavily influenced by classical Hindu ethics.

Often but not always he took a nuanced and contextual view of nonviolence and brought it within the reach of all. Going further, he argued that just as violence represented the science of killing, nonviolence represented the art of dying a noble and inspirational death. Gandhi's nonviolence was bound up with a willing and unqualified acceptance of death, a view with few parallels in history. I have suggested so far some distinguishing features of Gandhi's thoughts on nonviolence. There are several more which need to be drawn out and commented upon.

Let us now turn to my second theme, namely Gandhi's view on *swaraj* in ideas. He preferred the word *swaraj* to the more common 'independence'. *Swaraj* is "infinitely greater than and includes independence. It is a vital word. It is a sacrilege to displace that word by a foreign importation of doubtful value". Independence was a negative term signifying the removal of foreign rule and referring to the formal status of a country. By contrast, *swaraj* was a positive term signifying what a self-governing society should be like and the values that should govern it. For Gandhi, *swaraj*, not independence, was the goal of the anti-colonial struggle in India. In his view a country can rule over another only by shaping the ways of thought of its people such that colonial rule appears to them necessary and even desirable. The rulers might one day leave the country but their justificatory system of beliefs might continue to dominate it. Such a country is independent but has no *swaraj* because its *swa* or self is the projection or product of an alien system of thought. For Gandhi, colonialism represents the antithesis of *swaraj*. It involves not only political and economic but also cultural domination and represents the 'slavery of the spirit', the conquest of the colony's self. For Gandhi there can be no *swaraj* or self rule without *swaraj* in ideas, its foundational and governing principle.

Swaraj in ideas is a complex concept and, insofar as it refers to a people thinking for themselves and freely deciding their values and objectives, it is similar to liberal democracy or a Millian form of liberalism. Gandhi however differs from it in two important respects. First, a political community for him is not a chance collection of unrelated people or a contingent gathering of individuals sharing nothing in common but rather a more or less coherent group with a history. It has a past, been subject to a body of historical experiences and has as a result acquired certain dispositions and tendencies which collectively constitute its *swa*, its identity, its truth. For Gandhi, all meaningful political discourse presupposes and takes place within the framework of a shared community.

Second, while valuing its culture or *swa*, the members of a cultural community should also critically reflect on it. It is bound to have unacceptable customs and practices, values and beliefs, and these should be removed. Even

when a culture has no glaring defects, it is bound to have its biases and imitations which it can rectify by judicious borrowings from others' cultures.

For Gandhi, one's culture has a claim on one's loyalty and should not be discarded. It can of course be criticised but it should not be rejected like an outworn pair of clothes. It has shaped and nurtured and given one a community to belong to. Second, self-respect requires that one should take at least some measure of pride in one's culture and not reject it as if it was entirely worthless. For Gandhi no culture that has survived long is altogether without value. Third, since the imitations of a culture can be addressed and corrected, there is no point in getting rid of it altogether. Fourthly, for Gandhi it is never an accident that one is born into a particular community. 'If a man is born in India there must be some reason behind the fact.' Gandhi is thinking here of the law of *karma* and the way in which one's past actions shape one's life in the present. Finally, loyalty to one's culture makes it easier to reform it because one's credentials are not in doubt.

For Gandhi then, *swaraj* in ideas did not mean dogmatically adhering to the traditional body of beliefs or rejecting interaction with other cultures and communities in a xenophobic spirit. It basically meant being ready to change as well as preserve, to look to the future as well as the past, to be critical of oneself as of others, to be loyal to one's past as well as open to the present and the future. It involves having the courage and confidence to critically assess one's past and one's future and arrive at a system of beliefs that connects the two. This is never easy. One is always under moral, cultural, political, and other kinds of pressure to opt for a particular system of beliefs, and subjected to all manner of temptations and incentives to barter away one's capacity for autonomous reflection on one's predicament. Often without being conscious, one finds oneself becoming an 'imitation man', a recognisable copy of someone's dream, and ceases to be himself or herself. It is therefore crucial that the individuals involved should have a strong character, self-respect, familiarity with their heritage, be free from self-pity and inferiority complex, and so on. *Swaraj* in ideas is never given, it has to be attained with one's own efforts, and calls for people with appropriate intellectual and moral qualities.

In taking this view Gandhi hopes to overcome what he takes to be the limitations of liberal democracy. He integrates the past and the present and makes the former an active agent. He both respects and regulates the autonomy of citizens whose choices are free but also expected to be resonant with their community's identity. Gandhi also attends to the qualities and character of the citizens needed to sustain a society oriented towards *swaraj* in ideas. We may not agree with all that Gandhi says but can certainly be stimulated by it. Δ

Sarvodaya: a force for societal cohesion and addressing the climate crisis

Ketan Varia

Gandhi had this wonderful term ‘Sarvodaya’ which means ‘Universal Uplift’ or ‘Progress of All’. Its principles are based on freeing people from greed for limitless acquisition of material wealth and ‘more and more luxurious living’. Gandhi liked the motto of ‘simple living and high thinking’. He felt that everyone should earn sufficiently through honest work for decent and dignified living.

Gandhi felt that everyone’s work is valuable, from the lawyer to the baker. And of course during this current pandemic many have come to realise the work of the nurse, the binman, the scientist and the neighbour.

However, Gandhi never advocated communism as a way of fairness towards all, but more of a deeper socialism. He understood that the income of different people may be different, depending on their talent, ability and effort. Yet he believed that those who earn more would use the bulk of their greater earnings for the good of the society as a whole. He said, ‘the uncontrolled use of wealth will multiply vices among men ... and act like a poison. But the selfsame wealth, if its circulation can ... [be] like a river whose stream has been properly harnessed, promotes prosperity.’¹

Gandhi also understood there is a benefit in the use of one’s hands e.g. in the case of the craftsman, the tiller, the cook, etc., in that our hands connect us directly to ourselves and nature, as well as providing the opportunity to learn. In India, all plastic cups (machine made) for tea (‘chai’) served on trains will be soon be replaced by clay cups, which by their very nature will have to be made locally². This is going to be benefit to many local people near train stops, the environment and also the consumer - for the taste of tea in a clay cup is said to be wonderful!

In this article, I want to consider why we have certain societal problems in terms of causal loops, with the starting point being a selfish individualistic mindset.

Individualism

“Selfishness keeps us worrying for ever.”

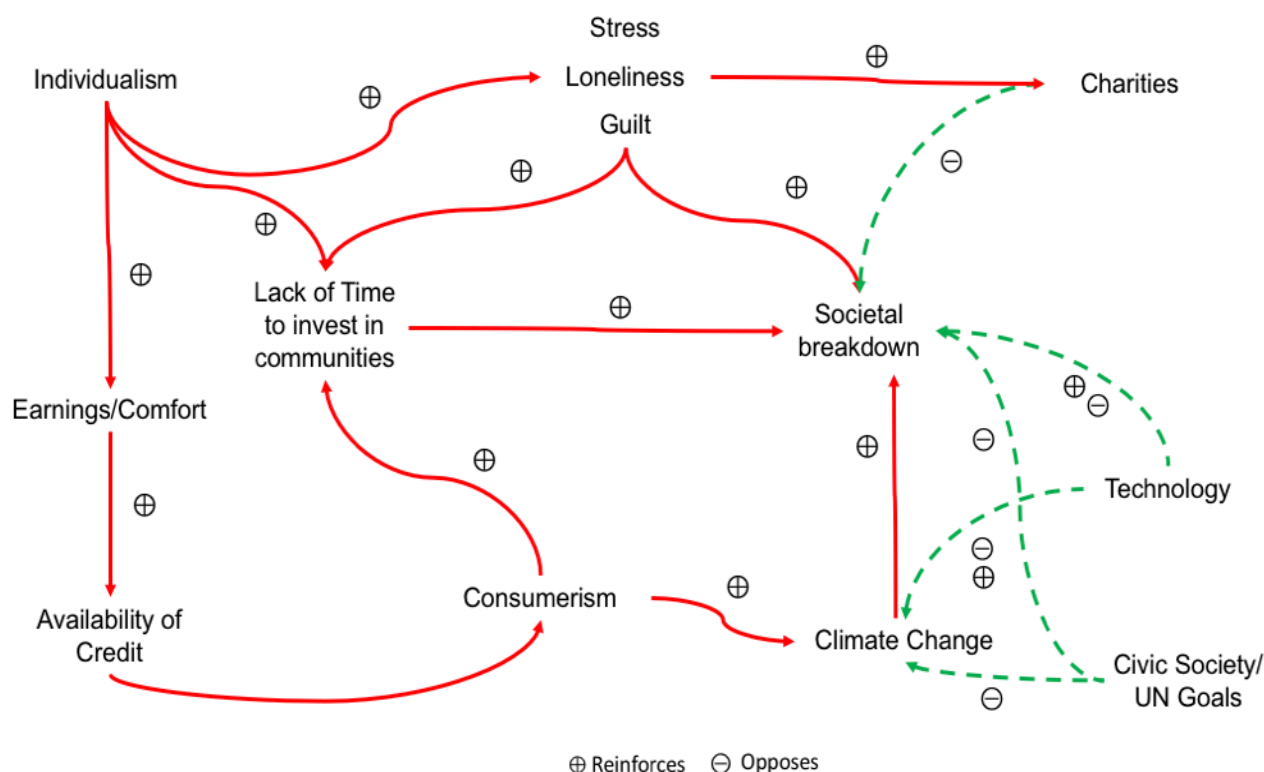


Diagram 1: Causal Loop of Individualism

A selfish mindset has in it the tenets of gaining wealth, status and comfort. What compounds this is the availability of credit which in turn creates a consumer society. There is evidence³ that the very nature of individualism creates stress, loneliness and guilt. Go to any ordinary Indian village, and you will likely see that stress and loneliness are hardly their problem. More likely, it is the availability of necessities (e.g. health care, quality education, etc.) and opportunities to develop.

“Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle.”

This very individualism also means perversely that we start valuing ‘large’ charities and give more to them; they then use this money to reduce societal breakdown. We fail to understand that our own lack of time to invest in local communities, voluntary work, justice, etc. is the root cause of this breakdown.

People with selfish desires often spare their time consuming (with associated debt and stress), leaving them no time for others. And for many, giving money to charities is seen as the main way of acting out compassion.

Of course, nowadays, there is high awareness of suffering in the world. And there are many prevalent charities/NGOs involved in a mighty way to right 'wrongs'. In other ways, awareness is missing altogether, with many individuals lacking recognition of their personal contribution to world harm.

Gandhi was never opposed to the benefits of technology⁴. He said "What I object to is the craze for machinery, not machinery as such... The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and not human greed the motive". Gandhi would have supported appropriate technology for health, fitness and some ease in labour.

Source: Wikipedia Commons



Village Up

Gandhi felt that the structure of delivering Sarvodaya was from the village up.

He wanted people "working in communities small enough to permit of genuine self-government and the assumption of personal responsibilities". These communities should be "federated into larger units in such a way that the temptation to abuse great power should not arise."

Gandhi wanted every skill and trade to contribute towards society, not just a few. He said "During a plague epidemic, the physician must not run away [from his task] but instead attend to the patients even at the risk of

So by knowing what is enough, we change our energy to help develop communities, the people around us and our neighbourhoods. In the antithesis of the first causal loop, our new causal loop shows that community work itself reduces stress loneliness, guilt and societal breakdown. In this way, we automatically learn to live with nature, seeing her as a partner in our journey. In my area at the weekends, I see families walking together in the local streets and parks (encouraged by the Covid-19 restrictions), and you can see that connection between them, the walking, nature and the people they 'bump into'. This 'village life' means we become less reliant on 'help from above'.

So, in summary, the concept of Sarvodaya (personal investment in communities) reduces our selfishness and limits our wants, which in turn help nature and societies at large.

“The earth, the air, the land and the water are not an inheritance from our forefathers but on loan from our children. So we have to hand over to them at least as it was handed over to us.”

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Ketan Varia is a Life Friend of the GF and recently ran a course on Gandhian philosophy at CityLit, London.

Gandhi and Indentureship

Ramnarine Sahadeo

May has become a special month for those who remember the movement of labourers from India to other places around the globe where the European Colonial masters needed cheap labour for their plantations.

In the Province of Ontario, Canada, since the passage of South Asian Heritage Act, 2001 the entire month of May has activities to commemorate the arrival of Indians to the American subcontinent on May 5, 1838 in British Guiana (Guyana).

The experiment first started in Mauritius in 1834 and its success led to its extension to other colonies that formed part of the British Empire. Natal was also part of this movement commencing about 1849 but the majority went from about 1860 to 1911

when it was prohibited by India. Approximately 200,000 went to South Africa over 5 decades.

The month was also significant as it was May 24, 1893 that Gandhi arrived in Durban, Natal, even though his sole intention was to work as a lawyer for Dada Abdulla, an Indian merchant. He was quickly exposed to the hate and racism that permeated the world of Indentured Servants irrespective of wealth or education but which also shaped his philosophy of CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE. In the first week he was asked by a magistrate to take off his turban. He refused and left the courtroom. The more notorious event was on his way to Pretoria, Transvaal, when he refused to give up his first class seat voluntarily and was forcibly thrown out of the train in the cold at Pietermaritzburg, Natal. His first class ticket and status as a lawyer also did not guarantee his right to sit in the stage coach from Charlestown to Johannesburg with other white passengers.

Those who limit his legacy to the lengthy battle for Indian Independence still need to appreciate the struggles that he initiated on behalf of all Indians across several continents where they were treated with absolute disrespect. His leadership resulted in their right to vote, to have their marriages from India validated, but also to have the existing laws administered in a just and fair manner.

In that process the word SATYAGRAHA was coined in 1906, a date now referred to as the 9/11 of the East as it promoted nonviolence, not the destruction of buildings or the death of innocent people. (His speech at the theatre in Johannesburg can be found online and reprinted in the book *Mohandas K Gandhi, Thoughts, Words and Deeds*). The aim was not to destroy the enemy but to win their hearts and change them permanently by reason and consistent persuasion. By 1913 Gokhale and others in the Congress Party of India had all taken up the cause hence Gandhi's final trip to South Africa was substantially dedicated to this cause. When he finally left there in July 1914 for India he made it a mission to end this new form of slavery wherever it existed in *an Empire on which the sun never sets*.

It was most helpful that his adopted brother Reverend Charles Freer Andrews had already visited places like Natal, Fiji, and even British Guiana, the only English speaking country in South America, and had first hand impressions of the conditions under which the indentured lived. The system was eventually suspended in 1917 by the Defence of India Act. Deputations from and to India described the advantages of life abroad in an attempt to recommence a Colonisation scheme but the reports of Reverend Andrews carried great weight in the decision by Gandhi and Congress to end the inhuman system permanently in 1920.

From May 5, 1838 when the first ships, the *Whitby* and the *Hesperus*, landed in Guiana to 1917 about half a million children of Bharat touched the shores of the Caribbean. About two million were scattered across several continents where their offspring still reside. It is estimated that about 20% died during the voyage across the oceans. Researchers interested in a firsthand account of life on the ships can Google INDENTURESHIP-GUYANA SUGAR BURNING.

Ramnarine Sahadeo was born in Guyana but now a retired lawyer in Canada and author of *Mohandas K Gandhi, Thoughts, Words, Deeds*. ramjihindu@rogers.com

GANDHI – LIGHT OF TRUTH

(fibonacci poem)

Breathe

fresh air

and be calm

say your prayers

for there is light of truth in Gandhi ji.

No matter the violence in our minds

satyagraha

ahimsa

will bring

peace.

GANDHI'S WORDS

(tetractys poem)

Speak

to heart

Gandhi's words

to all the world

walk his path of truth and non-violence.

For truth will bring sunshine, brighten your path

as you journey

along roads

seeking

peace.

Poems by Leonard Dabydeen



To my mind the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that, the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man.

M K Gandhi, Part III, Chapter 18, *A Month with Gokhale II*

Photos by Jane Thomas



Eirwen Harbottle

Gandhi Foundation Patron Celebrates her First Hundred Years

On February 15th 2021 Eirwen celebrated her 100th birthday at her home in Buntingford. Few people have done more for the peace movement both here in the UK and internationally than Eirwen and her late husband Brigadier Michael Harbottle OBE.

Michael and Eirwen met in 1969 when Michael was posted to Cyprus as Chief of Staff to the UN Peacekeeping Force stationed there. The role of the Force was to subdue hostilities between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots, constantly at war in this divided island.

His peacekeeping mission led Michael to reappraise the whole purpose of the armed forces. With all their training, discipline and practical skills, he saw the peacekeeping troops as having a critical role to perform in all kinds of humanitarian services such as to rebuild infrastructures and to alleviate the suffering and assist many of the casualties of armed conflict. He went on to write many practical books on the subject and in 1978 collated *The Peacekeepers' Handbook*, used for years as a manual for all peacekeeping operations.



In 1981, during the height of the cold war, Michael set up Generals for Peace, a group of retired generals from NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, whose aim was to explore ways of building bridges between East and West, and to work towards confidence building and cooperation rather than conflict. Although his unorthodox views themselves caused criticism and controversy among many colleagues in the armed forces, Michael consistently pointed out that, in the event of nuclear conflict, there would be no winners.

In the development of all these ideas and initiatives, Eirwen was constantly at her husband's side, giving practical help, encouragement and guidance, and accompanying him on his worldwide travels to promote the cause of peace and disarmament.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 Generals for Peace and Disarmament was transformed into The Worldwide Consultative Association of Retired Generals and Admirals (WCARAGA) which met in 1993 and 1994 to define strategies for peacebuilding. In 1996, the year before Michael's death, Michael and Eirwen's Centre for International Peacebuilding issued an historic statement signed by 62 high ranking officers including the former Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and the former Commander in Chief US Strategic Command, and a former head of Russian Security signed a statement demanding the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Sadly, as we have subsequently seen, all this valuable work has now been unravelled.

In 1981 Eirwen and Michael together were invited by Nobel Peace Prize winners Fenner Brockway and Philip Noel Baker to run the World Disarmament Campaign. Both were constantly exploring new ways to advance the message of peace and nonviolence in practical ways.

Inspired by Bernard Benson's book, *Peace Child*, and by the music of David Gordon's *Alpha Omega* when she heard it in Coventry Cathedral, Eirwen had the idea to introduce these two and to commission them to write a musical for young people, to be played by young pupils. The script was written and cast directed by David Woolcombe, Eirwen's son-in-law, with the help of her daughter Rosie. Miraculously funding came from the Buddhists and they were able to hire the Albert Hall for

the premier of *Peace Child* on the last day of Disarmament Week. With a cast of 300 children, including The National Youth Orchestra, and supported by various very well known actors and musicians, *Peace Child* received a standing ovation from the audience of 3,000. The following year it went to the US and from then on to tour the world.



In 1994 Michael and Eirwen jointly received the first Schumacher Society Award – a pottery lamp with the inscription attributed to Gandhi, “It is better to light a candle than to curse the darkness”, signifying the many candles of hope they have lit between them.

After Michael's death in 1997, Eirwen was determined to carry on with the work of peacekeeping in its different forms, always looking for new opportunities to build bridges between opposing parties in area of conflict. She moved from her home in Oxfordshire to be near to the Woolcombes and their work with Peace Child in Buntingford. The young people from all nationalities went on to explore new issues of concern, tackling such subjects as sustainability, unemployment, climate change and the 50th Anniversary of the UN, with Eirwen always on hand giving support, ideas and encouragement.

In 1998 Eirwen, and posthumously Michael, received the first Gandhi Foundation Peace award for lifetime services to the cause of peace (photo above).

Congratulations, Eirwen, on reaching this very significant milestone in life with such compassion, grace and good humour.

Diana Schumacher OBE, Patron of The Gandhi Foundation, Former President of the Schumacher Society

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## Book Review

**Meeting our Jewish Friends and Neighbours** by Marcus Braybrooke  
Independently published 2020, 230pp. ISBN: 97985-50351611. Price: £12.95.  
Available via Amazon or directly from the author post-free at:

Rev Marcus Braybrooke, 17 Courtiers Green, Clifton Hampden, Abingdon OX14 3EN

From Antiquity, the Greek legacy of culture, philosophy and democracy and Rome's of law, ordered government and monumental architecture, were complemented by Israel's unique bequest of moral precepts and social ethics which via Christianity deeply influenced Western civilisation. Scattered after Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE, the Jews have survived down the centuries as a people of distinctive faith despite persecutions, ghettoisations and the horrific evil of the Holocaust or Shoah.

Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, Joint President of World Congress of Faiths and former Director of the Council of Christians and Jews, in his comprehensive and sympathetic account of Judaism, helps us understand this remarkable

feat of spiritual and cultural endurance, stresses the shadow of the Holocaust as defining post-1945 Judaism, and analyses the role of Israel and prospects for Christian-Jewish relations. Awareness of Jewish history and heritage as context of human-divine encounter and collective memory constitutes a very powerful force for continuity. The cycle of festivals and holy days, regular Sabbath worship in homes and synagogues, the strength of the Jewish family, renewal through rabbinical teaching, and the rich diversity of Jewish traditions and sects – Ultra-Orthodox, Modern Orthodox, Progressive (eg. Reform, Liberal), Sephardi (originally from Spain), and Ashkennazi (from Eastern Europe) – all explain Judaism's sustaining strength.

On the Holocaust, the author sees mediaeval Christian anti-Judaism laying seeds for modern secular anti-Semitism – with horrific consequences. One also notes the terrible precedent of the Armenian Genocide (Hitler famously remarked “Who now remembers the Armenians?”) and the Nazis’ siting of extermination camps in Poland, fearing major confrontation with the Catholic Church if located in Germany itself. The author spurs readers to further study of Jewish theological responses to the Holocaust, with parallels in ‘darkness of God’ theology post-Hiroshima.

Establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 by UN vote and war with Arab states, resulted from the understandable determination of many in post-Holocaust Jewry that only a strong political entity would ensure mass extermination could never happen again. The triumph of the Zionist dream was ‘the Catastrophe’ for the many expelled Palestinians. The account of Israel's history to 2020 is objective, clearly revealing the failure to secure a mutually just Israel-Palestine peace. The suffering of the people of Gaza is cited, but not Israel’s illegal settlements on Palestinian land, destruction of farms, and other oppressive acts. Such legitimate criticism of Israeli state policy must not elide into any anti-Semitism. Israel's peace movement and grassroots efforts for Israeli-Palestinian meeting for mutual understanding by such centres as Nevi Shalom are significant, but the reconciliation paradigm of South Africa and Northern Ireland has, tragically, not been followed at the political level.

Christian-Jewish relations are increasingly significant both in the current quest for deeper understanding and cooperation between all faith traditions, and in terms of shared Old Testament scriptures, Christianity's original emergence from ancient Judaism, the need to overcome mutual misunderstandings and suspicions, and the importance of dialogue towards cooperation in building a more just world. Modern sympathetic assessments of Jesus by Jewish scholars such as Geza Vermes, stressing his ‘Jewishness’, are noteworthy. (Unlike Islam, Judaism does not recognise Jesus as a prophet).

An addition to page 23: Oliver Cromwell re-admitted Jews to Britain in 1656, believing it would practically benefit trade and spiritually hasten Christ's Second Coming.

Especially in this time of rising anti-Semitism in some European countries, this highly informative, richly insightful and urgently relevant book is much to be welcomed.

*Rev Brian Cooper, Inter-Faith Secretary, Uniting for Peace*

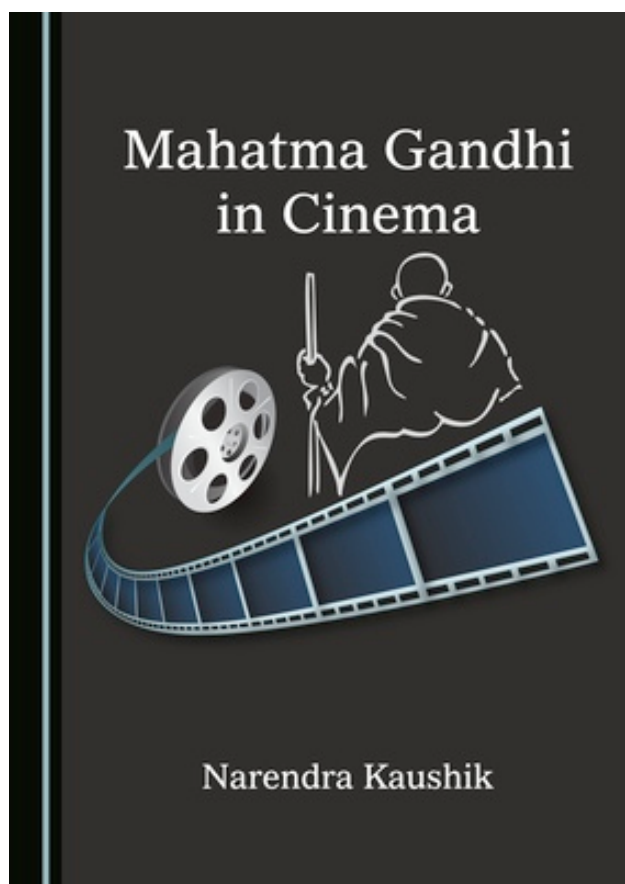
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Mahatma Gandhi in Cinema, Narendra Kaushi, Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2020, HB, 259pp

This book analyses 100 years of Hindi cinema, India's principal film industry, to explore how much space it has given to Mahatma Gandhi, the most prominent leader of the Indian struggle for freedom, and his principles. It compares films on Gandhi with the written literature on him, and juxtaposes the celluloid Gandhi with the man who walked on the earth 'ever in flesh and blood'. From his childhood through his legal practice in South Africa to his nonviolent struggle against the British Empire in India, the book covers all major events of his life and their portrayal on the silver screen.

Narenda Kaushi is a journalist and is at present Associate Professor of Mass Communication at JECRC University, India.

The book is however expensive – Ed.



John Rowley

25 April 1944 - 28 January 2021



Photo by Philip Mann

John Rowley was passionately involved in many causes throughout his life including, for 27 years, the Gandhi Foundation.

He studied Psychology at Edinburgh University and then took an MSc in Business Studies from the London Business School. He started volunteering at Kingsley Hall in the days of R D Laing and the Philadelphia Association whose aim was to help those with psychotic illnesses to live without being treated and medicated in the traditional way. After this introduction to the alternative culture of the period he attended the Anti-University Bertrand Russell House in Shoreditch.

This was followed by management consultancy work including for the Cabinet Office on job satisfaction projects. More socially minded work included as a fundraiser for the Centreprise Community Centre Workers' Collective in Hackney.

In 1975 John made a tour of Mao's China with the Scotland-China Association and two years later helped organise the first retreat in the UK of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. This marked the beginning of John's long involvement with Buddhism and Tibet. In 1987 he co-founded the Tibet Support Group (now Free Tibet Campaign) and two years later organised a public lecture by The Dalai Lama in Methodist Central Hall. In 1989 he was invited to join the All Party Parliamentary Group on Tibet (APPGT) and in 1990 and in 1993 he helped organise international conferences relating to Tibet's political self-determination and position in international law.

John then became actively involved with the Gandhi Foundation when invited by Surur Hoda, General Secretary of the Foundation, who also served on the APPGT. He helped organise the Annual Lecture given by The Dalai Lama in the Brahma Kumari's Global Co-operation House in London in 1993. Another large event came in 1998, the 50th anniversary of Gandhi's assassination, which was held in St Martin-in-the-Fields church on 30th January. Richard Attenborough delivered the sermon and Ben Kingsley read some of Gandhi's words. Other actors from the film, Geraldine James and Saeed Jaffrey, participated. More than 1000 were in attendance so the Crypt was used as an overflow. The event was followed by a reception at nearby South Africa House.

John also organised a Festival of Nonviolence running for 17 days in April 2008 which involved 28 organisations putting on 52 events. The opening night was a launch of a travelling exhibition *The Life of Gandhi* prepared by the British Library and held in the Conference Hall of the Library.

In 2011 two Indian men who were working among the tribal people (Adivasis) were given the GF International Peace Award in London. They were Dr Binayak Sen, a paediatrician who had been an Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience and Bulu Imam, a cultural historian and conservationist. The plight of the Adivasis roused John's concern and in particular the exploitation of tribal land by large mining corporations. The anthropologist, Professor Felix Padel, produced a report commissioned by John which focussed on Tata Steel's operations. A small number of MPs became involved as well as Lord Parekh and this raised the ire of the executives of Tata Steel but three years on, in 2014, the Gandhi Foundation advised ceasing contact with Tata.

John was disappointed, particularly in his later years, in the Gandhi Foundation as his vision and his desire for societal change often led him to expect too much of a small voluntary organisation, even if it does have the name 'Gandhi' in its title.

From Jane Sill

As Professor Parekh said in his tribute to John at the Gandhi Foundation Multifaith commemoration on 30th January, John was passionate in his enthusiasm for many causes and had a wide range of different interests. This led John to become involved with a number of varied organisations over the years, including one which he helped to set up in the latter part of 2018 and which is probably not so well known. This was the Buddhist-Christian Dialogue Group which held its inaugural meeting on 1st February 2019 in the Buddhist Society. The aim was to enable a small group of people invited from both traditions, and from various denominations within each tradition, to "be able to speak from the heart as practitioners". The group was not a formal body and did not have a public profile but aimed at a "mutual understanding". A safe space would be created in which participants could

meet two or three times a year to be able to discuss and explore each others' views on topics such as the nature of suffering and the human condition, science and religion, the effect of globalisation and issues related to climate change. Equally importantly, the space enabled practitioners to be able to get to know each other and to develop bonds of friendship and mutual trust. As such, the group enabled rich and potentially transformative discussions, a legacy for which John will always be remembered.

From John's wife Judith (Becque):

John had a diagnosis of Leukaemia in September 2019 and had type 2 diabetes, both of which had weakened his system and made him susceptible to Covid19. We met outside the Albert Hall in June 1984 when the Dalai Llama was giving talks. I had a spare ticket. He then gave me a spare ticket to see Bob Dylan at Wembley Stadium. These were two of his main interests that stayed with him for the rest of his life. But he was essentially an eclectic which his outstanding book collection bears out.

We married in 1988 and our daughter, Poppy, was born the same year. We divorced in 2013. His son, Alexander Rowley, was born in 1992. His mother, Carola Beresford Cooke, met John through their shared interest in Namkhai Norbu, the Tibetan Dzogchen master.

John was brought up to be ambitious, to make a mark and also to network with those who could further his aims. However, after studying Psychology at Edinburgh University in the 60's, he arrived home wearing a bobble hat which did not enamour him to his parents. Thereon, his path did not continue in the way his parents expected but his drive had been inculcated.

He was an impulsive, enthusiastic, emotional man, aiming for the stars and hoping the mundane would fall into place. He loved ideas, whether they be the latest scientific discoveries, psychological, spiritual or just being continually surprised by the beauty that he perceived in nature and in people. He was a fine photographer, managing to capture the moment of beauty of many he loved. He loved engaging. A ride on a bus and he would engage with someone reading a book that he knew of. A queue would never be a passive shuffle. He wanted so much to make a difference, whether it be conflict resolution or nonviolent participation; to change society. However he felt so strongly about these matters that he could provoke the very conflict he worked so hard to eradicate. The Buddhist philosophy was a medicine for him that he made many attempts in mastering to help establish a balance to the forces that made John the force he was.

He was not good with 'dull moments' and was frustrated and deeply despondent by the way the practical steps to realisation of his vision did not just fall into place.

His conversations were invariably stimulating, though this last year he was finding it increasingly difficult to live by the flame that made him relish living. Another Dylan (Thomas), 'Rage, rage at the dying of the light' comes to mind,

but Thomas was in his early 50's. And of course, Bob Dylan's 'Forever Young' was a subconscious mantra.

His legacy, among other things, is of two lovely young adults who are a testimony to conflict resolution in their goodwill towards each other and who, though both brought up separately, and by their mothers, he loved and who retained their love for him.

John was looking forward to helping the Buddhist Society with conferences and meetings in areas close to his interests, the Buddhist-Christian Dialogue Group which he organised and personally financed with Brian Pearce, continues to meet.

From Poppy Rowley:

My father was a deep well of passion and emotion, he felt everything so deeply whether it was joy at the first blossom or pain at the crises and injustices in the world, he felt it all. He was deeply intellectual and wolfed down books. He had an interest in everything and could talk to anyone. He worked so hard and gave so much, both financially and emotionally to all his projects and he never really realised how well-respected he was.

The messages that have come in after his death are sometimes all the more heart breaking because they speak of friendship and love that towards the end he thought he had lost.

He taught me so much and instilled in me a thirst for learning and knowledge that has made me the person I am today. What I will hold on to specifically is his phrase 'Be Astonished' meaning to be amazed and in awe at the simple and complex world around us.



John Rowley with Mark Tully, George Paxton, Graham Davey, David Maxwell, Denise Moll

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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