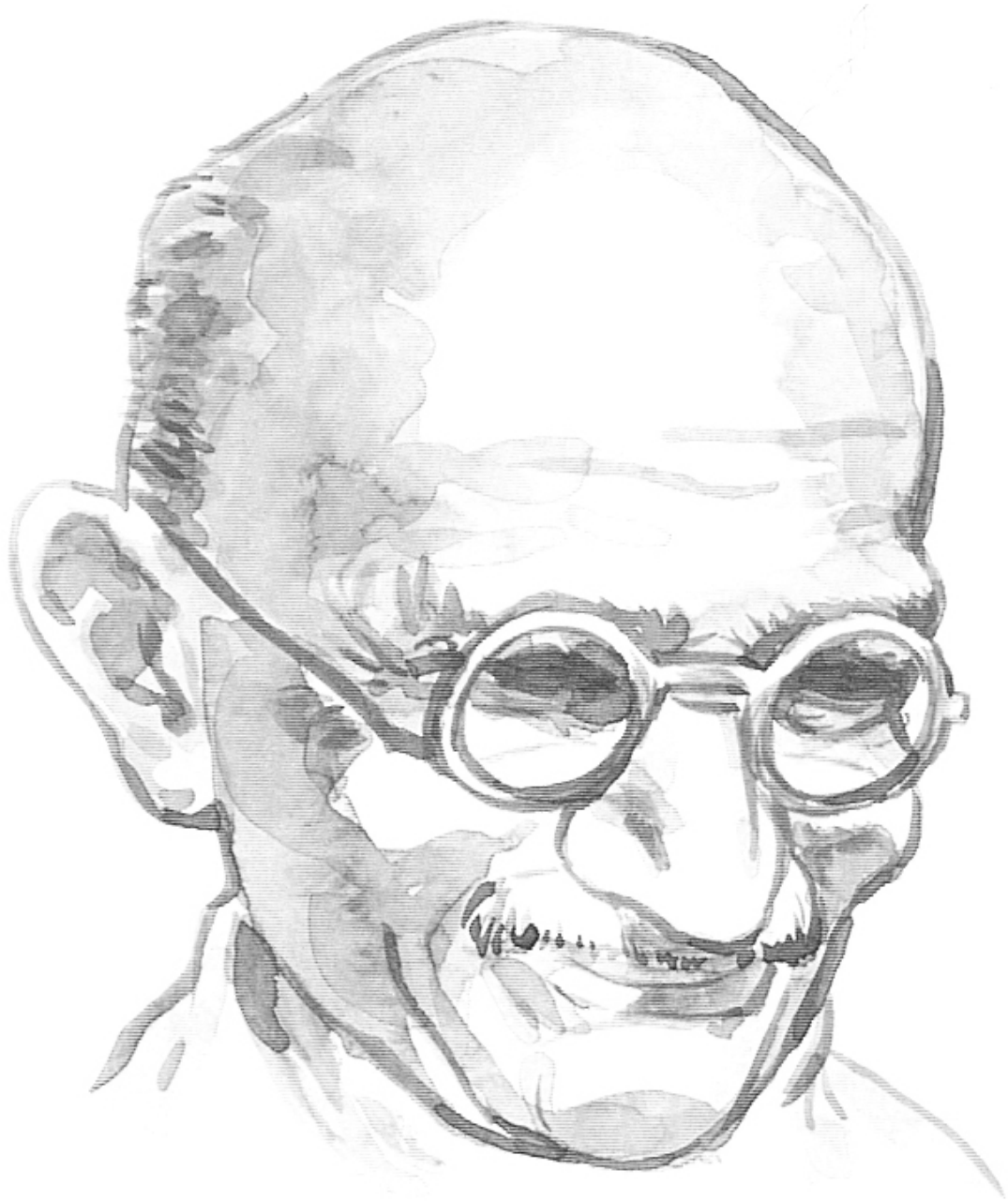


The Gandhi Way



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Gandhi Foundation Peace Award for 2023

To be held in May 2024

Recipient will be Ben Parkinson & Chrysalis Uganda

Details of the presentation have still to be arranged

See pages 8 - 9 for description of the above organisation and founder

Extract from: “**Tears Have No Boundaries**” by Roohi Majid

(Published by Moorside Words and Music 2013)

...Eyes, ears blocked to tears, screams
In the wilderness of petrified rage, crystallised hate, as plentiful as sand.
Tears have no boundaries, pain no passport.
The cutting edge-desperation, despair, etched on the territorial map.

Couldn't forgiveness enter the hearts? Let compassion
Fill dried up streams, let love flow in the fountain of pain.
Couldn't spring return to the desert of indifference.
Let humanity bloom in the oasis of peace.

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A Future for Israel/Palestine?

George Paxton

When I set out to write this piece a few weeks ago I never imagined that a few days later Israelis and Palestinians would be slaughtering each other in one of the most violent clashes since the creation of the state of Israel 75 years earlier.

One of the reasons for writing was to try to understand better the causes of this long-running conflict and to look at how Palestine/Israel might be transformed into a peaceful land. Relations between the two communities are worse than ever but there must be a solution. Let's go back to its origins in the 19th century.

The most important development among the Jews of Europe in the 19th century was that of Zionism, that is the idea that Jews should return to the land of Israel, or Zion.

After an outbreak of violent antisemitism in Damascus in 1840 the British consul in Syria wrote to Sir Moses Montefiore suggesting that Jewish settlement in Palestine was a practical response to antisemitism. At first Montefiore was sceptical but was later persuaded by a rabbi to buy an orange grove in Palestine as a start. The idea spread in Europe and pogroms of the 1880s in the Pale of Settlement in eastern Europe encouraged it. The idea was taken up particularly by the Jewish middle class in Ukrainian cities. In western Europe a Viennese journalist, Theodor Herzl, attended the trial in France of army captain Alfred Dreyfus, accused of spying, and was so shocked by the prejudice it revealed that he became convinced that Jews needed a state of their own. Consequently he founded the World Zionist Organisation in 1897 at a conference in Switzerland and became its president until his death in 1904.

Herzl worked vigorously to raise support for Zionism but found a mixed response even among Jews many of whom were hostile to the concept, especially those who were well assimilated in Germany and Britain. But he did win over some of the Rothschild and Montefiore families. Some Jews however preferred the idea of settling in Latin America, and some indeed immigrated to Brazil and Argentina.

Wealthy European Jews began to finance village settlements in Palestine which was part of the disintegrating Ottoman Empire. This was followed by Jewish socialists who saw Palestine as an opportunity to test their socialist ideas. In 1909 the first collective farm or kibbutz was established close to the Sea of Galilee, and the first Jewish city near Jaffa was founded and became Tel-Aviv.

But the land of Palestine was not empty. The Ottoman Turks were opposed to Jewish settlement and in 1914 the Turkish army rounded up 500 Russian Jews in Jaffa and put them aboard ship for Egypt. Small land

owners or absentee Arab landlords were also opposed to occupation by foreigners.

In November 1917 a significant letter was sent by Arthur Balfour, then Foreign Secretary, to Lord Rothschild, Chairman of the British Zionist Federation. It stated: "HM government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". But the British Government also gave hope to the Arabs, encouraging them to revolt against Ottoman rule and promised a large independent Arab state after the war.

Also during the war the British and French drew up a plan (the secret Sykes-Picot pact) to divide the Middle East between themselves. Lebanon and Syria were to be under French influence while Palestine and Transjordan to be under British. This was regularised in 1920 by the League of Nations. The Arabs were opposed to Jewish immigration and after riots broke out in 1920 the British reduced Jewish immigration numbers.

Throughout the 1920s Jewish/Arab hostility grew and in 1929 more than 60 Jews were massacred in Hebron. The British Government considered reducing Jewish immigration but the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933 and by 1935 more than 60,000 Jews were legally admitted per year. Although this was reduced it was followed by an increase in illegal entrants. In 1939 thirty ships carrying nearly 17,000 refugees came through ports in the Black Sea but many were intercepted by the British and some of the Jews were sent to camps in Cyprus; some ships were sunk, one by Haganah (the Jewish defence force) by mistake.

At the end of the war there were about 150,000 Jews who had survived the Holocaust and wished to go to Palestine but the British did not increase the quota. A more extreme Jewish military force, the Irgun, was now joined by Haganah to try to drive the British out. After considerable violence and with little hope of resolution the British decided to hand the problem over to the United Nations.

Creation of Israel

In November 1947 the UN voted to partition Palestine with the Jews being given their own territory. Neither Jew nor Arab found this acceptable and violence increased. In May 1948 the British mandate ended and Ben-Gurion as prime minister declared Israel independent, with the Jewish population now over 650,000. The armies of Transjordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt now attacked Israel. A ceasefire was agreed in 1949 but by this time more than half a million Palestinians had lost their homes and were settled in UN camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and also Gaza which was occupied by Egypt. Jerusalem was divided with Jordan having the eastern part and Israel the western. About three-quarters of a million Jews arrived in Israel in the next few years, many from Arab countries where

they were no longer welcome in spite of many families having lived there for centuries.

In July 1956 President Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal and Britain and France sent troops to reopen the canal and at the same time Israel attacked and took Gaza. However the US and UN forced the invaders to withdraw and UN troops were placed in Gaza as a buffer. The fedayeen (freedom fighter) who had operated in the south moved to Syria and Lebanon. For the next decade attacks on Israel from the north increased.

In 1964 the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) was formed. Yasser Arafat, leader of the armed group Fatah (conquest) soon merged with the PLO and Arafat became its leader.

In 1967 President Nasser ordered out the UN peace-keeping force stationed at the southern tip of the Sinai peninsula thus blocking Israeli access to the port of Eilat. Fearing attack by the Arab states, Israel launched a pre-emptive strike which destroyed the Egyptian air force on the ground. The Egyptian army in Sinai was cut off from supplies and the Syrian and Jordanian forces were forced back. After only six days Israel occupied the Sinai, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Syrian Golan Heights, and Jerusalem.

In 1973 came the Yom Kippur War when Egyptian and Syrian forces attacked Israeli and recovered some ground. President Carter then did his utmost to find a solution and was able to get Egyptian President Sadat to sign a peace treaty with Prime Minister Begin in the US in 1979. Although Sadat was assassinated by extremists in 1981, his successor Mubarak continued the moderate line. The following year Israel returned most of the Sinai to Egypt.

However Israel's relations with other Arab countries were deteriorating and in 1981 it bombed a nuclear reactor that was being built in Iraq. Then in 1982 after attacks on its northern border Israeli forces occupied southern Lebanon. There was opposition to this by many Israelis and PM Begin later resigned and eventually the troops were withdrawn.

The First Intifada

In 1987 an incident in Gaza gave rise to widespread resistance in what became known as the First Intifada ('shaking off'). The first 18 months were largely a nonviolent grassroots uprising. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians participated, a large proportion being women. It included strikes, demonstrations, blocking roads, boycotts of Israeli civil administration, boycott of Israeli goods, and much more. The Government responded with beatings, live ammunition, detention without trial, demolition of homes. More than 1200 Palestinians were killed, over 150 Israelis were also killed mainly by militant groups.

Secret negotiations, promoted by the Norwegian government, between Israeli PM Shimon Peres and Yasser Arafat of PLO, resulted in the Oslo

Accords 1993 which established the Palestinian Authority which gave significant autonomy to the Palestinians.

But peace was not built upon it. A Second Intifada came in 2000 provoked by a visit to the Temple Mount in Jerusalem by the belligerent Defence Minister Ariel Sharon. This Intifada was noticeably more violent than the first.

Attack by Hamas

In 2006 Hamas, a religious party aiming to create a Muslim state in Palestine, obtained a majority in the Palestinian elections, giving a shock to the PLO. In October 2023 Hamas in Gaza launched a huge surprise attack by ground fighters and massive rocket attacks on Israeli settlements. The inhabitants of Israel have been used to occasional rockets landing in their territory or a lone suicide bomber or gunman killing a small number of Jews but this was of a different order. More than 100 Israeli hostages were taken as well as more than 1000 Israeli civilians killed.

Israel responded as it always does by massive military force but this time it led to huge civilian casualties in Gaza. In spite of this the US and UK gave their support to the Israeli Government which was led by PM Netanyahu and other extreme Zionists.

Cause of conflict

With hindsight one can see the weakness as well as the strength of the concept of Zionism, a return to the historical Jewish national home. Not only had the Jews been dispersed throughout the Middle East and Europe from Roman times but Christian persecution of Jews developed when Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire. It seemed to some 19th century Jews that the solution was to reoccupy their own home at last. The argument seemed even stronger with the rise of Nazism in Germany. The weakness of Zionism was that Palestine had been occupied by others, predominately Muslim populations, for centuries.

Gandhi's involvement

Although it is not widely known, Gandhi was drawn into the issue of Jewish/Arab conflict particularly in the late 1930s. He had worked with Muslims in India and South Africa and his closest colleagues in South Africa were Jewish. Hermann Kallenbach in particular became a Zionist in his later years and a financial supporter of kibbutzim, rural communities of Jews, in Palestine.

In mid-1936, Maurice Shertok who headed the Political Department of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, decided to try to make contact with Indian leaders, especially Nehru and Gandhi, to raise their interest in a Jewish homeland. A Sanskrit scholar and Zionist, Dr Olsvanger, was sent to meet Gandhi to discuss political matters but Olsvanger returned with a

low opinion of Gandhi. A brief meeting with Nehru had no useful outcome either as Nehru's sympathies lay with the Arabs.

Olsvanger was a South African and knew Kallenbach so suggested him as possibly helpful for a mission to Gandhi. Kallenbach agreed to go to India and spend the month of June 1937 at Gandhi's new ashram at Segaon in central India. Gandhi promised Kallenbach he would study literature about Zionism which would be sent to him and he did. As a result of the meeting Gandhi gave his opinion that a meeting of Arabs and Jews only should be arranged but that he would be willing to mediate. Gandhi's position was that settlement of Palestine by Jews should only be with the permission of the Arabs settled there.

However the time was not auspicious. In September the Arab Rebellion broke out thus souring relations with the Jews and with Britain. In addition Kallenbach who had returned to South Africa for his work did not return to India when expected. Gandhi too was ill in the latter part of 1937 and also had serious disagreements with Jinnah of the Muslim League; also in 1939 with Subhas Bose, President of Congress who was seeking a second term which Gandhi opposed. Gandhi's active involvement in Palestinian issues faded.

Two States or One?

The long term solution that has been put forward by international bodies (UN and others) is the Two State one. It is based upon the division of Palestine on the creation of Israel in 1948. But the Arab countries would not accept this and attacked Israeli settlements thus leading to widespread and frequent war. The use of military force served neither side well and 76 years later no resolution is in sight. In terms of territory Israel has done well but its future is threatened by its inability to seek genuine solutions. The Arabs too have more often resorted to violence in spite of defeat rather than nonviolence as in the First Intifada. Too many Israeli citizens have elected intolerant politicians who have, especially in recent years, occupied more Palestinian land and made the lives of ordinary Arabs extremely harsh.

Israel has surely weakened its position in the world community due to its destruction of Gaza and perhaps will no longer have uncritical support from the US. Internally Israel must follow a different path to achieve security.

The immediate future is likely to be very difficult but what of the longer term? Many observers regard the Two State plan as unrealistic and that the future lies with a united Palestine-Israel state. Instead of two different separate communities with a common border there should be one united democratic society not divided along historic lines. Not easy to achieve but surely one that offers hope for the future.

GF Peace Award 2023 Recipient:

Ben Parkinson & Chrysalis Uganda (NGO) for their work in developing the Butterfly Project



Ben Parkinson, originally from Australia but brought up in London, set-up the Butterfly project in 2011 in Uganda with a community leader, Grace Ayaa. Ben initially started working for poverty eradication as an ambassador of the Global Poverty Project in 2008 after selling his house in the UK to fund his travel and poverty eradication work.

The Butterfly project is:

- a unique project to develop young social entrepreneurs (changemakers) recruited from disadvantaged young people living in poverty in remote rural areas and slum districts;
- providing extra-curricular training including: leadership development, IT, ethics, social project development, international citizenship, public speaking, problem-solving, climate change, conflict resolution, human rights, educational visits and films;
- finding sponsors across the world to support the secondary education for these children.

It differs from other projects in Africa by:

- a) Focusing on those who have been brought up with an unselfish attitude and reinforcing it with a code of conduct (The Ten Tenets);
- b) Individualising the training, so that each child has a unique experience on the project, though there is a core training programme applicable to all;
- c) Giving responsibility to them, by asking them to develop a social project for themselves;
- d) Explaining very early the destination of what their role as a changemaker might be;
- e) Giving life experience, to develop confidence;
- f) Taking ethical and altruistic behaviour very seriously;
- g) Including fun activities amongst the regular training;
- h) Focusing on international affairs and helping them understand world issues;
- i) Choosing children for the training, who have experience of living in poverty;

“THERE IS NO WAY TO PEACE: PEACE IS THE WAY”

[A J Muste (1885-1962), Dutch-born American clergyman and political activist. He is best remembered for his work in the labour, pacifist, and civil rights movements.]

The 2024 Gandhi Foundation Multifaith gathering was once again generously hosted by Golders Green Unitarian Church which offered the perfect setting for an afternoon of reflection, music and poetry. Each offering reinforced the strong commitment to peaceful resolution at a time of such widespread conflict and a seeming tottering towards an unthinkable abyss of yet more violence.

The gathering began with the chanting of Na Mu Myo Ho Ren Ge Kyo by Reverend Nagase from the London Peace Pagoda who was accompanied by Sister Maruta from Milton Keynes Peace Pagoda. Reverend Feargus then offered a few words, launching the Gandhi Schweitzer Gaza emergency appeal which aims to raise funds for urgent lifesaving medical aid in Gaza. £450 was raised from the gathering with more promised. As Reverend Feargus explained, the name of the fund was chosen to honour two great exemplars: Mahatma Gandhi and Dr Albert Schweitzer, a doctor and humanitarian, whose life and teaching centred on a reverence for life. Reverend Feargus also made reference to the Quaker Peace Witness:

‘Peace making does not mean passivity. It is the act of interrupting injustice without mirroring injustice.

It is the act of disarming evil without destroying the evil doer.

It is the act of finding a third way that is neither fight nor flight but the careful, arduous pursuit of reconciliation and justice.

It is about a revolution of love that is big enough to set both the oppressed and the oppressors free.’



This was echoed a little later when Reverend Michael read words by Gandhi Ji, "There is always the possibility of peace".



A wonderful tapestry of music interspersed the readings and speeches. Once again we were treated to a most beautiful Bach violin recital by Felix Padel who had travelled all the way from West Wales to attend. His virtuoso and evocative playing created a calming atmosphere, transporting us to a peaceful place. As Felix explained this particular piece could be likened to drops of water effortlessly dripping down.

Dennis Evans, now 90 years young, was also able to join again and offer his verses, including the memorable 'Bubbles for Peace' which he composed at the time of the London Peace March in March 2003:

There followed a selection of songs and prayers from a variety of traditions by Saara Majid and her very talented choir. These included a Sefardic Song adapted by Saara in Hebrew, Ladino & Arabic, Aboon D' Bashmaya or Aramaic Lord's Prayer and a recital of Shantih Path, a Sanskrit prayer for peace with members of the audience being invited to join in. Saara also read some short poems written by her mother over 20 years ago (see page 2), reflecting on conflict in Palestine at that time and wishing for a peaceful outcome. A Jain prayer for peace was then offered by Krishna, followed by the lighting of candles for all victims of conflict and for those who had lost their lives in the previous year. This was accompanied by an atmospheric Indian raga by Felix.



The youngest participant, Ana Ngala, aged 9, wrote her exceptional piece written while listening to her mother rehearsing in the choir – a poet and musician in the making!

Peace is the path to freedom and freedom is the path to life

Peace is the bridge for the city of good memories
 Without it all memories would be bad.
 Life must have some good memories or the world would be dead, cold and lifeless
 All creatures would be extinct.

Peace is a bridge of life, full of adventure, comfort and care.
 You are full of peace, you are one of the stones who build the bridge and saving the earth.
 You are the POWER OF PEACE.

Peace is a key to a home, a city or just one single house
 Without it you can't be a friend to the environment, to your school, to your work, to your home, to your family and to your life.
 We are going to be the heroes of this story
 We are going to be the people who save peace and save the way of life
 Save all living things on our earth so
 Let's save peace and make earth great!!!!

Saara concluded the afternoon with her own composition, "Anthem for Peace in the Holy Land". There followed light refreshments and time to catch up and meet new people.

A recording of the event is available on the Gandhi Foundation website. *Jane Sill*



The vows of Gandhi

India's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi espoused virtues of non-violence, truth, peace and simplicity



Gandhi's Legacy – 11 vows

We can practice, add, change but not forsake

Asha Buch

It is human nature to revere preaching of saints, listen to social reformers' thoughts, praise philosophers' principles and be fearful of political leaders' orders but hardly any of us would understand those principles and values and put them in practice in our life. Perhaps that is the reason why a visionary has to be born in every age to guide us. If you don't want to take trouble to follow a great soul's life and work, the best thing to do is to build a temple dedicated to him/her, place his/her statue, offer garlands and worship them!

Many great men and women lived throughout the ages who did not establish any formal religion, not started a cult, not held a prominent political post nor performed any miracles. They only showed us a simple way how to live our lives as the best human being. But we excuse ourselves by saying, "Those principles are fit for the ideologists, not relevant in this age." We keep those ideas in the books and forget about them.

Gandhiji was not only a political leader, but he was a spiritual person, whose aim was to seek salvation through the service of mankind. That is why I would like to talk about the legacy of 11 vows he put forward to all Ashram dwellers.

Let us examine, how many of those vows can be practiced in its original form, can we add some more, can we amend some of them or are most of them irrelevant and should be forsaken?

First five vows: Truth, Nonviolence, No stealing, No possession and Celibacy (Chastity) are mentioned in religious scriptures of all major religions in one form or another, and that is why they are known as 'Five great Vows'. That means they were, they are now and they will always remain omnipresent, everlasting and eternal.

Truth and Nonviolence:

It is a goal of mankind to attain the absolute Truth, and Nonviolence is the means to achieve that goal. So, they are like two sides of a coin.

We may have to suffer oppression and violent opposition from the gatekeepers of social norms, religious rituals and rulers of a nation when we try to adhere to this vow, but undoubtedly it is a thousand times better to suffer than to live in comfort by the means of practicing untruth and violence. We became complacent in observing these two vows, and see what is happening. From individual to international level, on the beat of naked untruth, violence is dancing all over the world. So, we must be aware that to forsake these two vows will surely lead us to the path of extinction of humanity.

No Stealing and No Possession:

These two vows are created to be observed in tandem. Instead of interpreting the word No Stealing or theft in a traditional terms, let us understand its deeper and wider meaning. The things I do not require and those material things I gain by unethical means for my pleasure is a kind of stealing or theft. Similarly, to produce, sell, purchase and throw away those things has also close link to No Stealing and No Possession. Following the industrial revolution a demon was created in the form of mass production by a smaller workforce, now that demon is set to destroy its very creator – us, the humans.

We think that the virtue of No Possession only applies to saints. On the name of progress and development, we have given priority to the limitless production of material objects. What have we got in return? We have lost our direction. Every living organism is sleeping on one bed – the earth, and they are covered by only one sheet in the form of the natural resources. And that sheet is not big enough to cover us all. People living in the northern hemisphere are using two pairs of hands in consuming food and other basic necessities, while people living in the southern

hemisphere are going hungry. Western countries are grabbing best products with both hands while Eastern countries are begging by spreading both their hands. Is it any wonder why people living in such socio-economic inequality resort to violent means to claim their basic rights? This is why it is clear that these two vows have direct relation to the first two – Truth and Nonviolence. To irradiate all kinds of inequality and protect our environment the vows of No Stealing and No Possession need to be observed because they are even more relevant than they were a century ago.

Celibacy (Chastity)

Now this fifth vow suggested by Gandhiji is interesting, but considered a little controversial too. Some famous historians, thinkers and politicians believe that Gandhiji did not make a wise move by introducing this vow to the general public. This is the product of his belief in patriarchal society, they are not fit for the liberal society of present day. Before discarding this vow, we need to understand Gandhi's views about Celibacy in its proper context. He strongly believe that a husband and a wife should take up this vow after careful deliberation and with full consent of both and its adherence should also be observed by mutual agreement. And that is what he put in practice himself, so there is no question of a man's dominance over his wife in observing chastity. As Vinobaji explained, the true meaning of Brahmcharya (Celibacy) means to follow a path to attain the ultimate bliss – supreme knowledge, for which men and women have the equal right. Are women meant to just give birth to children born out of lust or to fulfil the society's wrong idea of having a male child being a most important requirement for one's salvation and do nothing else? This is why Gandhiji, Vinobaji and many others have shown the right path of Celibacy to women giving her opportunities to work with men in every field; is this not a good side effect of the vow of Celibacy? In the Western countries woman has a right to say 'No' if they do not want a child and they use different methods for birth control, which are legal. But those methods have produced some adverse affect on both men and women's physical and mental health which is now a well known fact. This measure of birth control has a negative impact on society too. The younger generation has become self-willed, the element of human dignity between a man and a woman is disappearing and crimes such as rapes, murders and suicides are increasing. Forsaking this vow lowers the human character to its lowest level, so why do we think it is not relevant to our 'Modern society'? We don't have to prove relevance of this vow if we want to create a moral society.

It is clear that if the human race wants to continue to create and nurture its future generations, then observance of Truth, Nonviolence, No Stealing, No Possession and Celibacy will be necessary in every age. Perhaps its methods may change from time to time.

Next six vows: Working for daily food (bread labour), Removal of Untouchability, Fearlessness, Use local products, Control of pallet, and Equality of all Religions can be perceived as the rules to observe in order to uplift the society. These vows can vary according to a society's socio-economic and political situation. India was

economically bankrupt, spiritually weak and politically enslaved by foreign rule. Gandhiji on his return from South Africa, realised that to awaken and strengthen the whole country in all these aspects, people will need certain rules to follow. These vows were laid down before us during the independence movement, so some people think, they are not relevant any more. Let us see if that is correct.

Working for daily food (bread labour): Gandhiji may have been inspired by Tolstoy's idea of Bread labour which he placed in the list of 11 vows. Although all ancient civilisations thrived on an economic system based on the principle of one ought to work for one's daily food. Here, Gandhiji wanted to respect and praise both the act of labour and the labourers. Intellectuals must put aside a few hours to physical labour and manual labourers must dedicate some time to gain knowledge. Gandhiji believed that in doing so, everyone can develop their physical and mental capacity equally which will result in socially, economically and spiritually rich society; and therefore he emphasised the importance of physical labour right from his stay in South Africa. His aim to revive the cotton industry by the means of reintroducing the spinning wheel and weaving loom was to bring back the ideals of Bread Labour. You can remove inequality by adhering to this vow. Recently, especially in the Western countries people living relatively comfortable lives are suffering from many illnesses. Physical exercises and labour is prescribed in order to prevent serious diseases.

Removal of Untouchability (inequality)

As Gandhiji said, untouchability is a blot on Hindu religion. But discrimination based on colour, race, nationality and gender is still evident in all parts of the world. Here, let me discuss this issue in the context of Indian society. Citizens of independent India thought it was necessary to eradicate untouchability in order to gain political independence from foreign rule. But Gandhiji was fully aware of the fact that a society steeped in inequality can neither progress, nor can it provide a just administration to ALL its citizens, and that is why he gave equal importance to removal of untouchability and to gaining independence. But the people of India did not understand that. They made a mistake in thinking that by passing some laws against discrimination and keeping some reserved seats in education and government jobs, they have removed this vice. Seven and a half decades later instead of levelling up the society, discrimination based on race, caste, gender and class is on the rise. Because instead of considering every person as a human being and creating a socio-economic and political system where everyone can automatically enjoy their birth right of equal opportunities, they tried to 'Give' them some rights, so they can be pacified and the rest can remain status quo. Party politics is responsible for this state of affairs. It is wrong to think that India does not have to take any action in this regards. It is possible that they may have to pledge this vow again.

Fearlessness: Today's younger generation may ask us, we have heard of people taking vows to observe some rituals preached in religious texts or religious leaders, but can Fearlessness be considered as a vow? We have always followed commands

of our parents and teachers, obeyed government's laws and regulations and directives of our leaders without even thinking of its validity or relevance. If they are rational and benefitting to all citizens, they are worth obeying, but the fact is many of those customs, regulations and laws which exist are not protecting the interest of an individual, small group or a whole nation. Despite knowing this fact, the majority of people would not raise any objection, because they are scared of its repercussions. How can a coward resist any injustice, repression, torture or violent attack? The proof of one's character is in the protection of self respect, dignity and independence of oneself as well as their community. Today we are witnessing unrest in the name of religion and politics all over the world, for which we all express our disagreement, but not a single person has a courage to stand up against it (I include myself in this group of people). We have no choice but to take up the vow of Fearlessness again if we want to come out of this dark age.

Use local products:

The idea of using local products – called Swadeshi – took prime position during the Indian independence movement as the country was trying to free itself from the economic exploitation imposed by the British rule. But this ideology is just as much relevant today if not more so for all of us. In the age of 'Global market' the idea of using local products seems a laughable proposal. If slum dwellers from Mumbai-India can sell their products to the consumers living thousands of miles away and come out of poverty, why, as an artisan they should they sell their products to their neighbours? Why should consumers buy products of artisans living in the nearby villages or towns? Remember, the sources of fuel such as diesel, crude oil, coal and atomic power is depleting so rapidly that transportation of food and other basic necessities is becoming difficult. At that point, so called 'Developed countries' may have to take up the vow of use of local products – Swadeshi. Movements in this direction are springing up all over the world, which is a good omen.

Control of palate:

In most cultures there are some customs related to their religious festivals which prohibits them from eating certain foods or allows them to consume special items of food. Hindu religion can claim leadership in asserting the rules of palate control. Palate control is usually seen among the saints and religious leaders. In the modern world, scientific researches have proved the benefit of healthy diet and refrain from harmful food, however tasty they may be. So, now it is time to adhere to the vow of palate control as it is pertinent to our personal and communal health. By abiding to this principle, we will make positive impact on global trade. Control over our palate can assist in our spiritual development and also help in serving others. It would be beneficial not to attach just a religious view to this vow, but to look at it from a health and ethical trade points of view.



Japanese Anemone by Jane Thomas

Equality of all Religions:

A couple of centuries ago, the term Equality of all Religions did not exist. This is a new ideology. Although in ancient times, followers of more than one religion lived side by side in one country, but the political system was such that communal and social harmony was possible to maintain. Many torch bearers came in this world to establish equity among all religions. The last of those great souls was M K Gandhi, who lived and gave his life for this cause. Today the whole world is divided in the name of a religion. Terrorism, war and internal violence is flaring up so rapidly that the vow of Equality of all Religions needs to be placed with the first 'Five Great Vows'. The core principles of all major religions are similar, the proponents of all religious leaders have preached the message of truth, love and compassion, there is so much similarity in the names of the characters and stories of most of the religious texts, and yet why there is so much intolerance towards other religion? If we had followed Gandhiji and had studied all religions from a friendly perspective, not from a critical point of view, then we would have been able to understand the reasons behind the difference in its rituals and would have been able to cultivate tolerance towards each other's religion and develop mutual understanding. We teach our children not to tell a lie, not to steal other's possessions or harm others from very early age, so is it difficult to teach them to grasp core values of other religions and respect their followers? Instead of placing duty at the centre of politics making it people centric, we politicised religions which were formulated to uplift the human society. As a result political treachery, selfishness and violence has entered the realm of religions. Politics have become a dirty game and religion has lost its sanctity. We must remain vigilant of those who are feeding opium in the form of religious fanaticism using democratic system. Therefore the time is ripe to put the vow of Equality of all Religion (Sarva Dharma Samabhav), or as Vinobaji says 'All religions are mine' (Sarva Dharma mamabhav) at the top of our list of modern vows.

Carbon Footprints

A think-tank report of 2023 titled *Future Economy Scotland* reveals that the richest households have a carbon footprint more than four times greater than the poorest households. The carbon footprint of the top 5% is double that of middle income households.

Looking at different categories, aviation shows that the richest 5% of households have 11 times the footprint of the lowest 5%. The top 5% using cars are leaving 10 times the footprint of the lowest 5% using a car.

For Services, which includes phones, the difference is 7 times. But for electricity the top 5% and the bottom 5% are close in usage. Overall it is clear that inequality and climate change are closely linked.

[extracted from *The Herald* 8/10/23)

The Gandhi Foundation International Peace Award Appeal for Nominees

The Peace Award is a means to acknowledge works of individuals or organisations that have actively and consistently adhered to the guiding principles of Mahatma Gandhi and have had a substantial impact on the political or social challenges of our times concerning nonviolence, social justice and environmental protection.

There is no cash prize with the Award but the chosen person, or representative if an organisation, will be given a statuette of Gandhi to keep for 7 months from the date of the award, if within the UK, and then returned to the GF in time for the next Award.

Candidates should preferably be UK or Ireland resident but not essential if they are willing to travel to the UK, at their expense, for the presentation of the Award.

Nomination Procedure

1. Names of candidates nominated by members should be sent to the Executive Trustee responsible for the Peace Award, Omar Hayat, by the agreed submission date which is generally within 5 months of the previous years Award.
2. A full resume of each candidate must be included with the nomination stating exactly why the Award should be given to this candidate. The resume will in some cases be the only available information that the sub-committee has on a particular candidate. The resume should be precise and not longer than 2 A4 pages. Web links, if available, can also be submitted with the resume. Ideally, the resume should be sent electronically via email.
3. The successful candidate nominated must be willing to travel to London to receive the Award. A small contribution can be made by the Gandhi Foundation for rail/road travel but overseas candidates must pay for their own travel expenses to the UK and lodgings.
4. The successful candidate should be willing to make a short speech on their work. This is generally about 15-30 minutes.

Further details can be obtained from Omar Hayat, Gandhi Foundation Trustee
ohayat@ceamd.co.uk

Octopus farming

In the EU, there is growing objection (including from 75 NGOs) to plans for an octopus farm in Las Palmas, Gran Canaria. The octopus is a highly developed creature and this new planned development needs to be stopped. Octopuses are wild, naturally solitary and free-roaming creatures unsuited to captivity. Confining them can trigger aggression. The proposed farm aims to rear about one million octopuses per year. Plans reveal inhumane practices such as the use of ice slurry for slaughter which is considered by scientists to be cruel. Feeding is by wild-caught fish, which contributes to overfishing thus exacerbating food insecurities invulnerable communities. *Compassion in World Farming* www.ciwf.org.uk

A Huge Heart – A tribute to Brian Parker (1936-2023)

For those of us who were lucky to have known Brian, his memory will conjure up a larger than life character always ready to bring a smile and a chuckle, while embodying a character of the highest integrity and commitment, particularly to the values of peace and nonviolence which he espoused all his life.

Brian was born in Preston and then moved to Wembley with his family. He joined the RAF for national service before embarking on a career as a Customs & Excise officer in London. A deeply spiritual man, he found faith in Quakerism in the mid 1950s and became a member of Quakers International Society in the 1960s. During this time, he developed a great interest in spiritual healing, world faiths and alternative therapies.

Brian was always very committed throughout his life, engaging in many campaigns fighting injustice and exploitation on a local and international level. He was an active member of the Gandhi Foundation, attending many Summer gatherings over the years where his huge, baritone voice singing Old Man River and his warmth and good humour endeared him particularly amongst the youngest participants. An invitation to shake his hands was always approached with a little trepidation, wondering what novel trick he had purchased at his favourite magic shop in Covent Garden. His light, humorous tone belied a very deep knowledge not only of his Christian faith but also of Gandhian values. Brian was also an active member in many other organisations, being an elder at Westminster Meeting, driving a Quaker mobile library, helping with Crisis at Christmas, and driving for Community Transport right through his 70s. He was also a great lover of nature. Despite two hip replacement operations, Brian remained active until the last few years of his life when his daughter, Tamsin, moved in to give him support. He got through Covid but finally succumbed to kidney disease. Always cheerful, Tamsin said he would never fail to make her and his carers laugh, carrying on with his usual tricks and games. Brian will greatly be missed.

Jane Sill

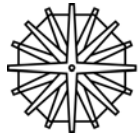




Brian Parker (L) with the late Graham Davey and David Maxwell



Brian at a GF Summer Gathering (front left)



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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www.gandhifoundation.org

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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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