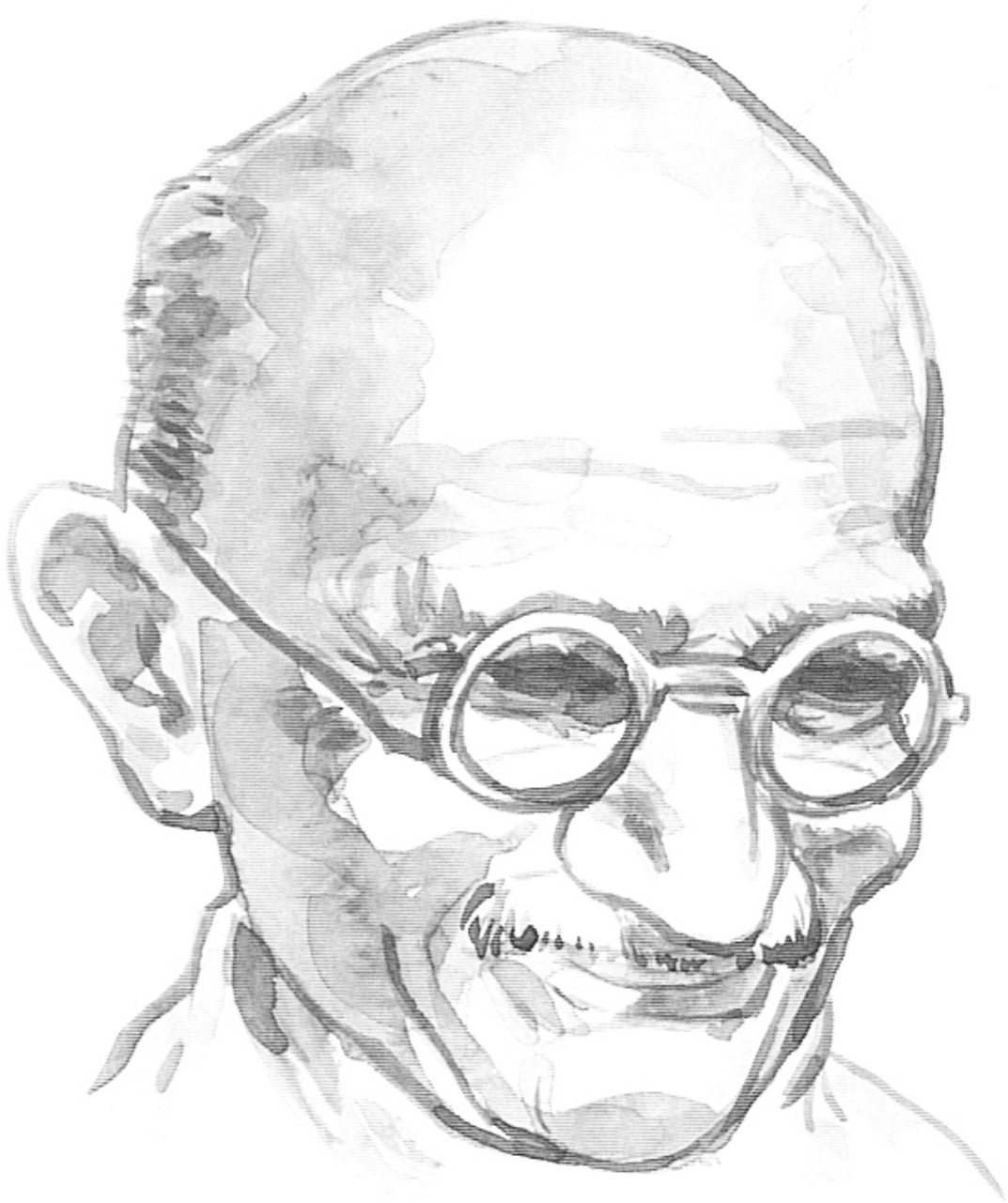


The Gandhi Way



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The Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi

His Message and Relevance for the Modern World

A new online interactive course spread over 3 consecutive weekday evenings will be launched by the Gandhi Foundation on 29th January 2026.

The course is led by Ketan Varia who has run it at City Lit, London, along with other courses relating to Indian history and religion over a number of years. The course offers an overview of the life and philosophy of Gandhi spanning his time in London, South Africa and India. This is set within the framework of examining its relevance in today's world. The course will consist of video presentations along with group discussions in which participants will be invited to reflect on Gandhi's message in relation to current world issues.

The course is introductory and will be available free of charge to Gandhi Foundation members or at a cost of £20 which includes membership of the Gandhi Foundation. The course will be limited to 15 per intake with applicants being asked to complete an application form prior to the start. The only prerequisite is an open mind and an interest in learning more while being respectful to others' views in the group.

Contact janesill@aol.com for an application form. Provisional course dates: Thursdays 29th Jan, 5th & 12 February from 7-9 pm using Zoom link.

Gandhi Foundation Multifaith Celebration 2026

The Path of Hope

Saturday 7 February 2026 at 3pm

Golders Green Unitarian Church, 31 1/2 Hoop Lane, London NW11 8BS

Music and interfaith readings and prayers

There will be an opportunity to light a candle in remembrance

Light refreshments will be offered at the end. All welcome.

Contents

Gandhi: Truth and Fiction	Krishna Kumar
Greta Thunberg:	
The World's Youngest, most active Soul Force Warrior	P A Nazareth
Rajah Day 2025	Jane Sill
A Journey into Hope	Jane Sill
A solution to dissatisfaction in modern society ?	G Paxton
How the World Enabled Gaza's Destruction	Javed Akbar
Indian Philosophy and Gandhi	Paul Bazely

Gandhi: Truth and Fiction

Krishna Kumar

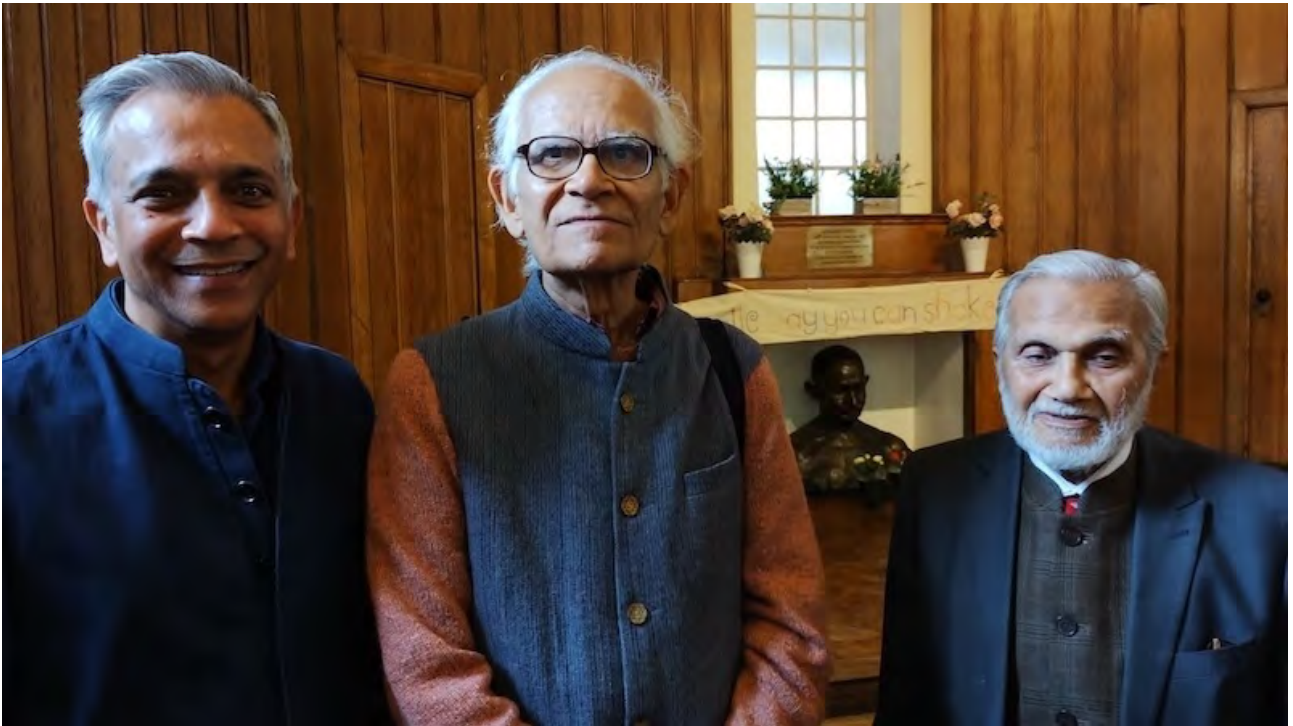
Four years ago I was close to submitting a book on Gandhi for publication. I had worked on it for some time, focusing on Gandhi's ideas of freedom and identity. Gandhi was part of two courses I had taught for several years; one on peace education and the other on educational theory. After exploring some aspects of his life and philosophy afresh, I felt I was ready to submit what would have been yet another academic study of Gandhi. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of such studies are available in libraries and on the Internet. A senior friend wondered why I wanted to add to that unending list of titles. I had seen those tall, welcoming shelves, classified as *Gandhiana*, in what used to be called until quite recently the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. They contained monographs on Gandhi in every major modern Indian and foreign language. Why would anyone want to add, howsoever modestly, to the burden of those shelves was a pertinent question.

Then came the pandemic. Its impact was both radical and pervasive, covering our physical selves as well as our minds or psychological self. The human world was paralysed; it gave an unanticipated chance to animals and birds to come closer to our spaces, to enter them with impunity. A week into the COVID lockdown, I heard dogs barking at a peacock crossing my lane. One afternoon, I noticed a mongoose disappearing into a drain. In another part of our city, a stag walked into a closed market street. There was total silence everywhere. It created the illusion that a fresh chapter of human friendship with nature had begun.

This chapter included other amazements, such as the disappearance of the distinction between the wealthy or *developed* and the poorer, *developing* nations. Both kinds were equally inadequately prepared to deal with the pandemic. People were dying everywhere, and they included — in every society — both rich and the poor. Then you heard that villages were less affected by the virus. Factories and other work places in big cities like Bombay and Delhi shut down. Migrant workers decided to return to their distant villages; in the absence of any form of transport, they started walking on empty highways. Millions walked thousands of miles to return home — with women and children. The state was clueless or didn't care, focused as it was on imposing epidemic protocols like hand washing and social distancing.

The loss of distinctions between rich and poor nations, cities and villages and the images of millions traveling on foot — it all carried an unmistakable, eerie echo of Gandhi. The academic book I had nearly finished mutated into a new, fictional frame. It became a story of two childhood friends born after India's independence from British rule. As it progressed, it

impelled me to ask the question I want to pose to you: ‘*Are fiction and truth compatible?*’ Your answer to this question will decide how you would relate to Gandhi today. If you choose to answer in the negative (i.e. that fiction and truth are not compatible), then you are left with the historical Gandhi. His life was shaped by the circumstances under which he lived and pursued his anti-colonial politics. His context defined the limits of his action and the practice of the two values – truth and nonviolence – associated with his name.



Omar Hayat, Krishna Kumar, Bhikhu Parekh

On the other hand, if you choose to say ‘yes’ to the question I have posed (i.e. *fiction and truth are compatible*), then many new surfaces of his life and political philosophy open up for our contemplation. Fiction was never far from the accounts we have of his life and work. Several incidents that mark our memory of Gandhi’s public life come across like fiction. One such episode is his 24-day march from Ahmadabad to Dandi in 1930. His companions recall the first steps he took on this walk to the seacoast to make salt in defiance of British law. Nehru’s portrayal of these first steps reads like a picture drawn with words in a novel. Louis Fischer’s drawing of the same event is similar. Fischer’s biography is full of such images. My favourite is the one where Gandhi teaches him how to eat a mango, without spilling its juice. The final moment of his life – being shot by his assassin on the evening of January 30, 1948 in New Delhi is recorded in several accounts. They all read like a dramatic chapter at the end of a novel.

By accepting that truth and fiction are compatible, we liberate Gandhi from the constraints of history and make the ideas underlying his actions and politics available for examination. Truth is one of the two major ideas he pursued. It is normally regarded as a high moral value: an ideal. Gandhi offers a considerable range of meanings of truth in his *Hind Swaraj*, the only complete treatise he ever wrote about his political and social philosophy. Some of these meanings arise from critiques of history and culture while others are embedded in the commentary on the party system, the railways, and the legal and medical professions.

Many editions of this little book are now available, including the one published by Cambridge University Press in its 'Modern Political Thinkers' series. It is full of footnotes and has a long introduction by Anthony Parel who locates the writing of *Hind Swaraj* in the ethos marked by the advocacy of violence as a means for attaining India's freedom. The advocates were men of reputation. In addition to responding to their advocacy of violence, Gandhi raises a plethora of other issues and historically important debates across the world. The sweep of *Hind Swaraj* is vast, its subject matter hard to summarise.



As you go through it, a debris of common truths and beliefs you held dear starts to fall on your head, and you ask: ‘Can everything be so wrong in the modern world?’ Nothing is spared: the practice of law and medicine, modern education, the railways, even the parliament (British) provides fodder for Gandhi’s argumentative ammunition. Its format is that of a long dialogue, between an editor and a reader. The latter poses questions and presents his doubts; the former responds to them with persuasive zeal and the confidence that he is right. Each interlocutor acquires a personality as the dialogue moves across a vast range of topics and historical periods, acquiring the character of utopian fiction. It starts with India — why it has declined — and soon enough the editor steps up his demolition drive against received wisdom about modern civilisation, and moves towards a nonviolent war to be waged for truth.

Hind Swaraj is one man’s manifesto against the modern world: as it is organised — or rather, as it *was* organised in early 20th century. The reasons why it deserved such sweeping assault by Gandhi have multiplied manifold since then. The core rationale — namely, the use of force to sustain exploitation and oppression has, somewhat suddenly one can say, become more pervasive and visible than it seemed a century ago. And the means of resistance that are currently being used by the oppressed are also based on brute force. The argument that violence alone works against violence appears to have gained popularity. One reflection of its popularity is the growth of the weapons industry. Its economic returns are so attractive that even countries with limited industrial infrastructure are impelled to devote it to the manufacturing of war-related products. And countries that barely manage to feed their population don’t mind spending their scarce resources to buy weapons from the wealthy who, apparently, don’t mind serving as examples of sound models of economic development and sustained growth. The counter discourse of *sustainable development* barely acknowledges how the idea of development has been fully co-opted.

In the passionate, and patient, tirade against co-opted modernity, *Hind Swaraj* takes us on a journey across centuries and continents. The text leaves us under a heavy pile of rubble — of symbols of progress and development, the values underpinning these concepts, and the institutions that symbolise progress. These include the railways (that Dickens too derided), hospitals, courts and the parliament itself. No major profession is spared, but lawyers and doctors face a frontal attack. So do political leaders and parties busy with democratic decision-making. The attack is followed by a complex alternative, named as ‘passive resistance’, a translation of *satyagraha*, *literally, the ‘assertion of truth’*. This is Gandhi’s idea of war. His British disciple, Marjorie Sykes, sub-titled her biographical book (written jointly with Jahangir Patel)

on Gandhi as 'Gift of the Fight'. The chapter on passive resistance in *Hind Swaraj* comes after the chapter on violence or 'brute force' which explains the futility of responding violence with violence.

As we approach the end, we feel somewhat exhausted and wonder if the crusade recommended for rebuilding the world has any practical value at all. We move towards the common view, that *Hind Swaraj* is an eccentric, absurd piece of writing, not to be taken seriously. *Hind Swaraj* was criticised and ridiculed by some of Gandhi's closest followers, even Nehru. Gopal Krishna Gokhale, the man Gandhi treated as his teacher, thought so. In his autobiography, Gandhi recalls Gokhale's laughter and comment: 'spend a few years (in India) and you will get over it.' Well, he didn't. Instead, in his final years he reiterated his faith in the ideas he had expressed in *Hind Swaraj*.



Prof. Kumar and his wife with Kishore Shah outside GF office, Kingsley Hall

The fictional character of *Hind Swaraj* is unmistakable, and so is the story of its birth which also reads like fiction. It was written in longhand in nine days when its author was aboard a steamer. Gandhi's own account of that journey suggests that the sea all around him made him feel free to say what had been simmering for some time. He wrote it in his mother tongue, Gujarati, and later translated it himself into English. He wrote continuously and stopped only when the book was finished. When his right hand felt tired, he switched to the left. This story reminds us of Liam Hudson's commentary on Rilke's composing of his Sonnets in two months of continuous writing. Hudson says that Rilke's circumstances while writing the Sonnets suggest as

if his unconscious mind tore through the conscious mind. The creation of *Hind Swaraj* suggests a similar process.

The sharp critique of modernity and its institutions presented in *Hind Swaraj* hovers on the absurd, and the alternative offered, i.e. nonviolent passive resistance also comes across as a fantasy solution. By treating this one-man's manifesto against the world as fiction, we release Gandhi from the historical Gandhi. The latter is framed by the circumstances and conditions that shaped his life and struggle. Once we put aside that frame, the cornerstones of his doctrine – truth and nonviolence – come into full focus. We are no longer distracted by the practical restraints he dealt with in his pursuit. We are able to notice that the real focus of his fight is fear. It arises in the face of violence and impels the scared mind to retaliate with violence. Gandhi's alternative is an allegory, a story in which human society chooses to stay in a circle, repeating its suffering out of fear. The Gandhi story teaches us that violence as a means of establishing dominance can only fail. Release from the circle of violence calls for freedom from fear. Herein lies Gandhi's critique of the state and the choice it makes on our behalf, in the name of keeping us secure. He helps us recognise that the cycle of violence cannot end, nor can the human mind taste freedom. Inasmuch as the state uses fear to serve as supplier of order, it discredits itself as a custodian of truth, freedom, dignity and safety. The pairing of truth and nonviolence finds an explanation. If Gandhi found God in truth, *this* faith demanded the vow to eschew violence.

We find further guidance to grasp Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence in his proposal for children's education,. Simplified versions of this proposal are aplenty. They reduce Gandhi's *nai talim* (new education) to craft-centric education for the rural poor. Some view it as early vocational education. In order to re-excavate Gandhi's educational vision, we can't do better than follow Devi Prasad, his writings and work. He taught art at Anand Niketan, the school Gandhi had started at Sevagram. He was also a reputed painter, ceramic artist and peace activist. He was the Secretary General of War Resisters International between 1962 and 1972. His ceramic art was influenced by the St. Ives tradition of functional value associated with Edmund Leach.

In his book, *Art: the Basis of Education*, Devi Prasad explains how aesthetic development during childhood creates a pre-disposition towards nonviolence. The child's creative instinct flourishes under the discipline that traditional crafts like weaving induce. He found in the child's 'craving for symmetry' a resource for aesthetic discipline through art and craft. Both as an accomplished artist and a teacher, Devi Prasad made no distinction between art and craft. His pedagogic creed and practice were aimed at making the child feel freedom from fear, and be in a position to enjoy the freedom and

swaraj or self-rule that Gandhi had envisaged for every citizen. If his proposal for education appears far too idyllic for our times, we only need to remember what Marjorie Sykes said at the end of her book, *The Story of Nai Talim*. To the extent it was true, she wrote, its time will come. This kind of faith is applicable to Gandhi's ideas in many other spheres. His legacy in fields ranging from politics and economy to science, education and the environment has now acquired historical significance across the world. In the sphere of politics, we see the long, patient resistance led by the 14th Dalai Lama against the occupation of Tibet. In science we notice a move towards its use to make sense of nature rather than destroy it. Peace education has achieved curricular status in several countries. These instances console and assure the older generation today, but they may not suffice to convince the young about the reversibility of historically entrenched trends supporting violence over its opposite.

Professor Krishna Kumar delivered this year's GF Annual Lecture at Kingsley Hall on 22 May 2025. It is based on his latest book, *Thank You, Gandhi*, Pub, Penguin Viking.

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## **Greta Thunberg :** The World's Youngest, Most Active Soul Force Warrior *Alan Nazareth*

Gandhi had lauded children thus :

"Jesus never uttered a loftier truth than in stating that wisdom comes out of the mouths of babes."

"If we are to reach real peace in this world we shall have to begin with children."

"Nonviolence is infinitely superior to brute force. It can be utilised by all, children, as also young and old people, provided they have deep faith in God and love for all mankind."

Greta Thunberg is the best vindication of these Gandhian quotes. Born at Stockholm on 3 January 2003, she made a solo sit down outside the Swedish parliament on September 9, 2018 to draw attention to Climate Change and urge effective action against it to safeguard Humanity and Planet Earth. She was then only 15 years old !

Soon thereafter she emerged as a “new voice” in global climate debates.

At the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP24) at Katowice, Poland in December 2018, she boldly alleged that those attending it were “not bold enough to tell the actual truth about Climate Change”. Her address to the 2019 World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos was titled ‘Our house is on fire.’

Pope Francis, received her at the Vatican on April 17, 2019, lauded her Climate Change activism and encouraged her to continue it.

In August 2019, she sailed from to New York in the *Malizia II* 60-foot yacht equipped with solar panels and water turbines to present this two week voyage as a “carbon-neutral transatlantic crossing”.

Her impactful, "How dare you steal my dreams with your empty words" address at the September 19-21, 2019 UN Climate Action Summit in New York City sparked “the Greta effect”, the worldwide youth engagement in climate change issues.

In late September 2019, she led ‘Climate Protests’ in Edmonton, Vancouver and Montreal. Approximately 100,000 people, including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, attended the last mentioned event.

Two weeks later she led Climate protests in New York City, Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; and Standing Rock Indian Reservation where she spoke about the “enormous injustices which had been inflicted upon indigenous Americans.” *Time* magazine included Greta Thunberg in the world’s 100 Most Influential People in 2019.

With the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in March 2020, she moved her activities online and declared, “Climate action cannot be suspended as the climate crisis does not pause.”

In a 29 December 2020 BBC interview, she urged the scientific approach to all critical global issues, and pointed out that destruction of animal habitats had triggered diverse ‘Zoonotic diseases’ : Zika, Ebola, West Nile fever and COVID. She urged meat-free diets for humans.

On 18 October 2021 she and her supporters presented the first of their ‘Climate Live’ concerts at which she sang the Rick Astley hit song "Never Gonna Give You Up".

*The Climate Book* was released on October 27 2022, A compilation of about 100 articles by geophysicists, oceanographers, meteorologists; economists historians, philosophers and indigenous chiefs, it has been edited by her and published by Penguin's Allen Lane Imprint books.

In December 2023, Thunberg and three of her supporters, in an article in *The Guardian* wrote "There is no climate justice without human rights. All forms of justice are included within climate justice. We won't stop exposing Gaza's suffering". This was the opening salvo of their pro-Palestine activism.

On June 1, 2025 Thunberg and 144 supporters from 30 countries in 9 boats of the Gaza Freedom Flotilla embarked for Gaza with baby formula, flour, rice and medical kits to break its inhumane, two year blockade by Israel. Sadly, on June 9 Israeli troops intercepted this flotilla in international waters. They boarded its lead boat *Madleen* which had Thunberg and twelve others including French MEP Rima Hassan on it, attacked them with chemical spray, then arrested and later deported them. The eight other boats were diverted to Crete.

Despite the above disappointing outcome, Thunberg soon thereafter set out to organise another and bigger flotilla. She named it *Sumud* as it means 'Steadfastness' in Arabic. This flotilla had 40 ships with 499 participants from 44 countries. Notable among them were Mandia Mandela (grandson of Nelson Mandela), Ada Colau (former Mayor of Barcelona), Bruno Gilga (Movimiento Revolucionario de Trabahadores de Brazil), Mairani Martague (Portuguese Left Block MP), and Susan Sarandon (American Actress and Human Rights Activist). The largest number of participants were from Turkey (50), Spain (49), Italy (49), France (34), Tunisia (34), Malaysia (28), Greece (23) and USA (22).

This truly global flotilla carrying only diverse humanitarian items and not a single weapon was also illegally intercepted in international waters by Israeli soldiers. Whereas all the other participants were arrested and deported, Thunberg received "special treatment". In a press conference after her return to Stockholm, she revealed she was imprisoned in a "rat infested cell, the walls of which had bullet marks with blood stains and messages carved into the walls by Palestinian prisoners. My red suitcase was returned to me covered with graffiti with cuss words in black letters and a sexual image." She then added "If Israel with the whole world watching can treat a well known Swedish passport holder like this, imagine what they do to Palestinians behind closed doors !"

Greta Thunberg is presently only 23 years old. She has done more in her 23 years of life to the hazards of Climate Change and Israel's genocidal violence against the Palestinians than any other Soul Force warrior in history. Gandhi was 27 when he launched his first Satyagraha at Johannesburg with the burning of Indian passes there on September 11, 1906. Martin Luther King was 25 when he launched his first Satyagraha with his Boycott of City buses in Montgomery, Alabama in December 5, 1955 !

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## RAJAH DAY 2025

*Jane Sill*

On 28<sup>th</sup> September at midday, on a sparkling bright early Autumn day, a large group assembled in front of the impressive 'Chattri' of Rajah Rammohun Roy in Arnos Vale cemetery, to mark the anniversary of his death in Bristol on 27<sup>th</sup> September in 1833 from meningitis. The annual event was organised by Carla Contractor and her team who helped raise funds to preserve the tomb which had fallen into disrepair and who this year inaugurated a plaque marking the many achievements of this remarkable man who has variously been labelled the Maker of Modern India and Father of Indian journalism, celebrated for his social activism, intellectual achievements and as an early expounder of tolerance and human rights.



Carla Contractor unveiling the plaque

Born into a wealthy Kullin Brahman family in 1772, as a young man Rammohun was conversant in a number of languages, including Bengali, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and English which he used to study ancient religious texts and philosophies some of which he translated. This allowed him to communicate with a wide group of people and also gave rise to a questioning of practices such as *sati* (widow burning), polygamy, child marriage and the caste system which up until then had been tolerated by the ruling East India Company. Founding the Brahmo Samaj, a socio-religious reform movement in 1828 which rejected 'idol worship, polytheism, and the caste system,

promoting reason, humanism, and universalism through its worship of one formless God', Rammohun Roy came to the UK to ensure successfully that the Sati Regulation of 1829 was not overturned by King William and the British Government. Whilst in the UK he also took the opportunity to visit friends with whom he had been corresponding on religious and social matters, including Lant Carpenter a non-conformist preacher who lived in Bristol with his daughter, Mary Carpenter, who later was to spearhead the anti-slavery movement and women suffrage in Great Britain.

Originally buried in a silent ceremony according to his wishes, on 18 October 1833, in the grounds of Stapleton Grove where he had lived as an ambassador of the Mughal Empire, the tomb was commissioned by his friend and co-founder of the Brahmo Samaj, Dwarkanath Tagore who arranged for him to be re-interred there on May 29, 1843. This was possible as the cemetery was founded as a non-religious site. The tomb has had many interesting visitors since it was built which are recorded in a book set up originally by Mary Carpenter which is now in the safekeeping of Carla who also has a wonderful collection of books and writings on all aspects of Rammohun Roy's life and works.

The anniversary commemoration took the form of tributes by representatives from the Indian High Commission, King Charles, the Brahma Samaj, Unitarians, a member of the Multi-Faith Forum, Arnos Vale trustees as well as local dignitaries, including the Lord Mayor of Bristol, Cllr Lesley Alexander, who spoke of cherished local links. A larger than life sized statue had been organised by Carla in a very prominent position on the Green in front of City Hall and Bristol Cathedral, a Rajah Rammohun Roy walk had been inaugurated in his honour and a large portrait painted during his visit is on display in Bristol Museum and Art Gallery.

Flowers and wreaths were placed at the tomb and hymns and songs composed by Roy were sung by members of the Brahma Samaj. Those present were then invited to a nearby non-denominational chapel where Dr Sumit Chanda, leader of the London Brahmo Samaj spoke on the life of Rajah from his days as a student to ambassador and social reformer. Historian Carla Contractor gave an illustrated presentation of his life and last days in Bristol, followed by Bristol Museum's former curator Peter Hardy who spoke about the sesquicentenary Bristol exhibition on the Rajah.

Although a historical commemoration, the relevance and importance of Rammohun Roy's work and message was highlighted by local Chair of Frenchay Unitarians, Peter Bruce:

“Voices in our society are producing simplistic problems, offering very few solutions but inciting blame and hate speech against minorities. If this is not nipped in the bud then things will get worse as they did in the 1930s.

1. We need to exemplify more courteous, truthful and confronting language on key life topics.
2. We need to speak truth to power, lobbying MPs, signing petitions and calling the media.
3. Take some thoughtful action that will benefit people practically AND spiritually.

We can do this for ourselves and for others, in fact the two need to be in harmony”.

*“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good wo/men to do nothing,” Edmund Burke*



Lord Mayor of Bristol, Lord Lieutenant, official of Indian High Commission

## A Journey into Hope

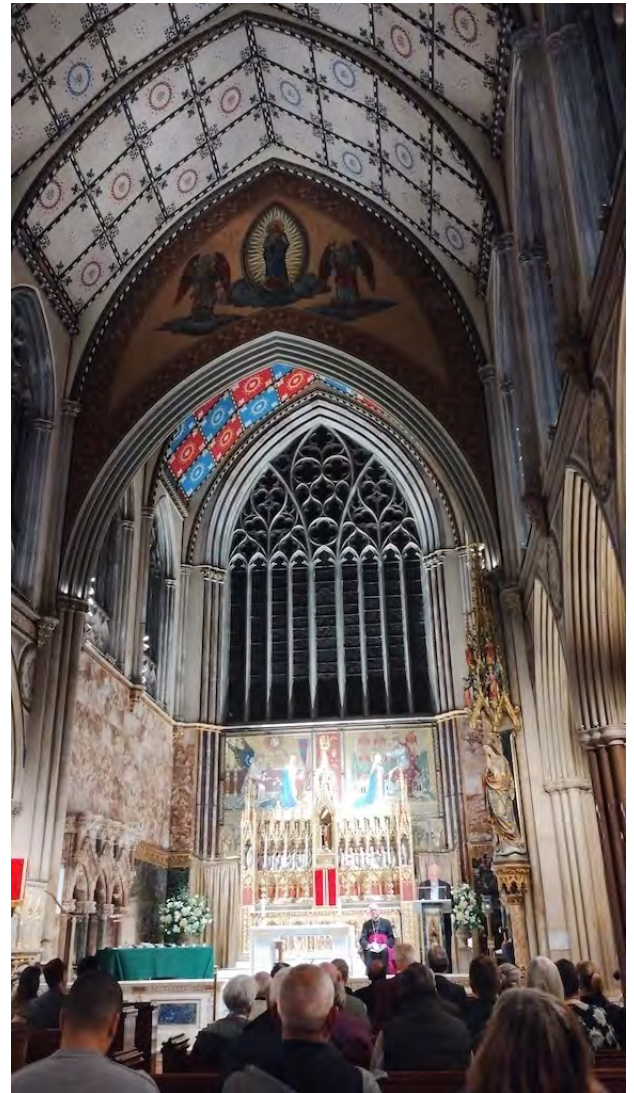
To mark the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Nostra Aetate* originally drafted by Cardinal Bea in 1965 which became the shortest document of Vatican II, consisting of 41 sentences aiming at interreligious dialogue, members and friends from over 10 faith traditions and none were invited to the Church of the Immaculate Conception in West London on 28th October, a dark but clear evening. Following on in the footsteps of Brother Daniel who founded Westminster Interfaith in 1981, the event was organised by Fr Michael Barnes, Professor Emeritus at Heythrop College, along with the new co-ordinator of Westminster Interfaith, James Holland.

The event began with a silent procession of texts from the various traditions respectfully and silently carried up the aisle to be placed on a table beside the altar. Following an address by Bishop James Curry, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, members from the Bah'ai, Brahma Kumaris, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islam, Jain, Jewish, Sikh and Zoroastrian communities each read a few words on the subject of Hope, the theme given by the late Pope for the Jubilee Year, before lighting a candle. A flame was then brought to the audience who took it in turns to light the candle they had been given on arrival from their neighbour. A simple, symbolic act which filled the darkness of the church with light. There followed an organ recital and reception at which members from all backgrounds were able to meet or renew friendships.

As Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, said in his message, “*Nostra Aetate* recognised the truths in religions everywhere which “try to counter the restlessness of the human heart” and “preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral” as discovered through dialogue and collaboration’.

*Jane Sill*

**Note: The Gandhi Foundation Multifaith celebration will take place at Golders Green Unitarian Church on Saturday, 7th February at 3 pm. All welcome.**



## **A Solution to Dissatisfaction in Modern Society ?**

There is much dissatisfaction among the UK population with politicians who seem unable to satisfactorily tackle important current issues. Among the problems are a rising cost of living, inadequate public services and immigration.

The latter is given great attention by the politicians and the media. Large scale immigration does pose some genuine problems, such as the need for housing, and school places if families with children settle. On the other hand Britain needs a younger workforce to balance its aging population and migrants can provide that. The housing situation affects much of the population and should not have been allowed by successive governments to develop – it is not the immigrants' fault. However some of the ill-feeling expressed by local residents is prejudice, which is further exacerbated by politicians and activists with intolerant outlooks. If other issues were solved (eg sufficient housing) the settled population would take a more generous view of immigrants such as indeed was the case with those from Ukraine. We could look on those immigrants fleeing intolerable situations as people in need of temporary help and also potential workers in many fields.

New Housing on the scale required needs massive input by government. It is appalling that homelessness has reached the levels it has done. Private industry is primarily interested in building expensive houses for maximum profit whereas it is basic homes that are needed. Innovation in construction is required and on a very large scale.

Another area of great importance is the Health and Care sector. As in housing, the health service has been allowed to fall behind the need. Education and Public Transport could do with substantial support too.

There is one common factor here – public finance. Here we come to the dreaded word, TAX – or so it seems by listening to the politicians of the main political parties (and indeed the media). How is it that we are told that the UK is a rich country and yet we have so little to spend on essentials? It is of course simply that the wealth is so unevenly distributed.

The richest 50 families in the UK own more wealth than the poorest half of the entire population, that is more wealth than 34 million people combined. So why not Introduce a wealth tax of some sort? One that has been proposed would require individuals with total wealth above £10 million to pay 2% on the amount above this threshold. It has been estimated that this would raise £24 billion a year. And 2% seems very modest to me. Tax Justice UK say that several other tax reforms could be added to give more than £60 billion per year. By coincidence the Department of Defence at present spends around £60 billion per year but the present Government intends to increase this

significantly. The Department for Health and Social Care spends around £200 billion per year. One objection to wealth taxes is the claim that the super rich would leave the country but this, according to surveys, appears to apply to very few of them. It has also been found that the majority of UK millionaires support taxing people like themselves more – they have an organisation called Patriotic Millionaires. I would suggest also that income tax rises for those on above average incomes, but not excessive, would be acceptable if the result was improved public services. It is also worth remembering that there are other taxes than those on income and wealth and that it is possible to create others still.

Further, I believe that the total financial resources is not the most important issue – counter to the belief in constant economic growth – it is how it is distributed. A much more equal society is highly desirable.

(Tax Justice UK campaigns for a fairer tax system.)

George Paxton

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## How the World Enabled Gaza's Destruction

Special Rapporteur, Francesca Albanese the UN's rare voice of conscience amid its faltering moral architecture, has delivered a searing indictment – not only of Israel but of the global order that enables it. In her latest report, she states plainly that nations maintaining military, financial, and diplomatic ties with Israel are “*responsible in some measure*” for what she calls the Gaza genocide.

These are not rhetorical flourishes. They are the measured language of law – and of a moral reckoning long deferred.

For over two years, Gaza's destruction has unfolded in plain sight – a live-streamed atrocity that has killed or wounded more than ten percent of its population and displaced nearly all. Albanese calls it a “*collective crime*,” impossible without the aiding hand of foreign powers. “*Framed by colonial narratives that dehumanise the Palestinians*,” she writes,

*“this atrocity has been facilitated through third states’ direct support, material aid, diplomatic protection, and, in some cases, active participation.”*

The enablers are neither few nor innocent, the chorus of collaborators stretches far and wide, but none bears greater guilt than the United States. Washington supplies two-thirds of Israel's weapons, has poured more than \$38 billion in military aid since October 2023, and wielded its UN veto as a shield against accountability. Its choreography of “pauses” and “truces” – never a permanent ceasefire – ensured the continuity of

violence under the guise of diplomacy. Under both Democratic and Republican administrations, America has not merely condoned Israel's actions; it has *underwritten* them.

Europe's record fares no better. Germany remains Israel's second-largest arms supplier. Britain, invoking the moral bankruptcy of *realpolitik*, defended Israel's right to cut off water and power to civilians — a stance indefensible under international law. France, Italy, Denmark, Poland, and Greece deepened trade ties even as Gaza's hospitals collapsed and its schools turned to dust. Economic pragmatism triumphed over principle; commerce eclipsed conscience.

Arab states stand equally guilty — masters of betrayal draped in the cloak of silence, their palaces glitter while Gaza burns — their hypocrisy knows no bounds, loud in rhetoric but criminally silent in action.

Nothing illustrates this rot better than the UAE, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco — through normalization and business with Israel — lent legitimacy to a regime of occupation and annihilation. Albanese names over sixty nations whose material, political, or diplomatic support made Gaza's devastation possible. Their complicity, born of expedience and ambition, stands as a betrayal of both Arab solidarity and the universal ideals of justice they claim to uphold.

What emerges from her report is a world order on the brink — between the collapse of international law and the faint hope of its renewal. The West's hypocrisy is now complete: those who once vowed "*never again*" have presided over genocide in real time. The same powers that proclaim democracy and human rights now officiate at their burial.

A century of Western complicity in Palestine's dispossession has been marked by cowardice disguised as diplomacy, cruelty cloaked in neutrality, and indifference exalted as pragmatism. Every chance for courage was replaced by calculation; every plea for justice, met with silence.

Albanese's warning is unequivocal: states that arm, fund, or shield Israel "*could and should be held liable for aiding, assisting, or jointly participating in internationally wrongful acts.*" This is not moral outrage — it is a legal summons. The International Criminal Court, having already issued warrants for Israeli leaders, must now extend its reach to those who financed, justified, and protected their crimes.

When the smoke clears, the world will face its own reflection — distorted by cowardice, scarred by hypocrisy. If Gaza's cries cannot awaken our sense of justice, perhaps nothing ever will.

*Javed Akbar, Transcend Media Service 27/10/25*

## Indian Philosophy and Gandhi

*An opportunity for a second lecture on Gandhi arose later in the year when the Nehru Centre asked Asha Buch if she could find a lecturer on the topic of Indian philosophy. She approached the actor **Paul Bazely** (previous GF Annual Lecturer) to see if he was free. He was, and his lecture was given on 30 September supported by Khadi London and the Gandhi Foundation and was well received. The lecture is too lengthy for reproduction in full but the last fifth of it is printed below.*



Paul Bazely and Khadi London members

**For Gandhi, there was no distinction between the moral choice and the most effective or practical choice.**

This is what marks the modern day difference between strategic nonviolence and principled nonviolence.

In the strategic nonviolence of many modern day activists and groups, there is a belief that nonviolence is a good strategy but if it seems to be going too slowly or if the opponent is just too brutal, then at some point violence may become an unavoidable option. In Gandhi's world view, no matter how honourable the cause, this attitude will inevitably lead to the violence that one wants to avoid.

In Principled Nonviolence good energy put in will ALWAYS result in a good result even if, in the short term it looks like we have been defeated.

Gandhi says:

*"[Satyagraha] is a force that works silently and apparently slowly. In reality, there is no force in the world that is so direct or so swift in working."*

I think that it is his non-attachment to results that allows him to keep his sense of humour and to use it to such effect. He once said "If I did not have a sense of humour I would have killed myself long ago."

When I studied the news reels of Gandhi when I was preparing to play him, he so often seemed to be laughing with his allies and opponents alike. We see the same thing in the footage of The Dalai Lama or Desmond Tutu. (Have you seen the film *Joy* ?) Contrary to popular opinion of po-faced ascetics, people who are *truly* grounded in the spirit often seem to be having the most fun. Think of the stories of Krishna as a child, his sense of humour with his mother and the Gopis.

Gandhi himself sometimes talked about his campaigns cheekily as "*causing mischief*".

Humour was a secret "weapon" of Gandhi. You will have all noticed that when having an argument – often with a spouse or a child/parent, at the height of the argument someone says something funny, maybe inadvertently, and if you can both laugh, all heat has been removed from the situation. You may still disagree, but the humour has somehow managed to remind you both that you are both divine creatures at play in this world of matter.

As the Dhammapada says, "*For the one who remembers that death must come to all, all quarrels cease*".

Humour can be that visceral reminder of both our mortality and our divinity.

When I see the photos or newsreels of Gandhi laughing with Jinnah or the Viceroy, I know that they are both having a moment of real connection as human beings.

Gandhi used this as a strategy, but it only worked because he truly saw the divinity in friend and foe alike.

### **So to end, was Gandhi a mystic or a wily political campaigner or both?**

I want us to think of the different paths that Indian philosophy describes as leading us to Enlightenment or Nirvana – an embodied experience of the Divine in this very life. For as Jesus said, “the Kingdom of Heaven is within”.

The first path and the most difficult in this age of sensory overload is the Jnana Yoga — the path of Knowledge. Literally using your consciousness to see through consciousness and the illusion of Maya to the eternal realm that underpins it. Great mystics of the past like Shankara or Sri Ramana Maharshi are exemplars of this method. Even Krishna describes this as a supremely difficult path.

The second path is Karma Yoga. The path of service. Another extremely hard path to follow. Service of others with no thought of your own ego or needs.

The Gita says: *They perform all work in the spirit of service, and their karma is dissolved.*

Gandhi was the great example of this path because as he said, his life’s ambition was to “*reduce himself to zero*”. The third path is Bhakti yoga. The path of love. In our strife torn and sensory world, this is seen as the easiest path for the modern aspirant. St Francis or Meera, would be good examples of this path of complete surrender to love. Of course these three paths are not really separate, they intermingle and one often leads to another through our lives.

They are made possible through Dhyana Yoga. The path of meditation or contemplation. To sit in Meditation, (Swami Nikhilananda translates the Sanskrit as “to sit in Yoga”) is to still the mind enough so that we can find the way to Love, Service and Knowledge in the rest of our waking life.

Pictures of Gandhi in his daily prayer meetings show him in deep contemplation of the scriptures as they were read aloud. Or in silent contemplation.

I think Gandhi became a mystic, thoroughly reliant on “his inner voice” though his devotion to selfless service of all.

AND by entirely trusting his inner voice and through non-attachment to results, he became a genius of strategy – all done with humour and a deep love for friend and foe alike. By studying his example and the great scriptures of India, I believe we can all attain a little of Gandhi's equanimity and power, through love, selfless service and active nonviolence. For as Gandhi said,

*"Nonviolence is the final flower of Truth."*

I'll leave you with this final quote from the Mahatma,

*"I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith."*

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New Trustees

At the AGM of the Gandhi Foundation on 18 October, held on Zoom, three new Trustees were nominated. All have been members of the GF for lengthy periods and also serve on the Executive Committee.

Trevor Lewis was involved for many years, along with his family, in the Summer Gathering which proved very popular with GF members and others (although it has not resumed yet since its suspension during Covid). For a lengthy period he also maintained the GF website and still gives technical advice.

Trevor continues to contribute to carrying out the aims of the GF which highlight how Gandhi's ideals are relevant today; in particular, the resolution of conflict via nonviolent means, which was a guiding principle in all his endeavours, and has never been needed more urgently than it is today.

William Rhind has been involved with the Gandhi Foundation in various guises since around 2008, when he attended an interfaith event in Wimbledon. As William's father was born in India it is natural that he grew up knowing as much about Gandhi and Nehru as Churchill and Thatcher.

Through his association with the Gandhi Foundation William has become more involved in the peace movement especially CND. He has spoken to numerous groups on Gandhi and his relevance today. He currently works in the Education Department of an NHS mental health trust.

Jane Sill first became involved with the Gandhi Foundation in 1991 having been introduced when she was Editor of *Yoga & Health* magazine. Over the next more than two decades, she regularly attended and featured events organised by the Foundation, including the Gandhi Summer School and a number of the readers joined the GF as a result.

Jane has visited India a number of times including many of the places associated with Gandhi Ji's life. She has taken an active roll in attending meetings and supporting GF initiatives. Her background is in welfare and community projects. Gandhi's universal message of peace and reconciliation through dialogue rather than the use of force has always been of great importance to her.

GF Greetings Cards

Some of Jane Thomas's nature photos which have often featured in *The Gandhi Way* have been made into greetings cards. There are 4 different cards with Jane's photos on the front, and on the back they have a picture of the GF Peace Award statuette along with a short quotation by Gandhi (a different quotation on the 4 cards). The inside is blank.

They can be ordered from the editor, George Paxton, 2/1, 87 Barrington Drive, Glasgow G4 9ES or gpaxton@phonecoop.coop. The 4 card pack is £5, and 8 card pack £10 (postage and packing included). Payment can be by cheque made out to *The Gandhi Foundation*, or by bank transfer (Co-op Bank sort code 08-92-99, account.no. 65234714, please give ref. 'Cards').



Statuette for the Gandhi Foundation
International Peace Award
(Sculptor: Philippe Tallis)

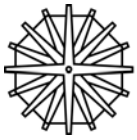
*Nonviolence is embedded in
Truth and vice versa. Hence it
has been said that they are
faces of the same coin. Either
is inseparable from the
other.*

M K Gandhi

Blue Tit
– Photo by Jane Thomas ©
Website: janeincolour.com

gandhifoundation.org





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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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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