

Newsletter

GANDHI'S REFLECTIONS...

Echoes of Peace, Non-violence, and Harmony

Editorial Team: Anil Agrawal & Dr. Sushil Kumar

SEPTEMBER 2025



ISSUE 19



Our Mission
To educate communities on Gandhi's principles of peace, justice, and harmony across cultures.

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Gandhi's VOWS: The Enduring Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi

The essence of all religions is one. Only their approaches are different... Gandhi

OUR NEXT EVENT

"Gandhi's Legacy Talks & Community Dialogue" Series
(Schedule here)

Speaker: Dr. Pradeep Merchant, C.M.
Topic: The Legacy of Gandhi in the Modern World... Gandhi's Relevance in the 21st Century

Saturday, October 18, 2025 (3:00 - 5:30 PM)
Admission FREE. Register at: <https://gandhiji.ca/2025-10-18>
VENUE: Minto Recreation Complex (2nd flr, Cambrian Room), 3500 Cambrian Rd, Barrhaven (Greenbank Rd & Cambrian Rd) (Map)



About the Session: Key points will include:

- Timeless Relevance** – Gandhi's principles of nonviolence, truth, inclusivity, and ethical leadership in today's divided world.
- Global Challenges** – Applying Gandhian thought to climate change, inequality, humanitarian crises, and international tensions.
- Pathways to Peace** – How empathy, dialogue, and peaceful resistance can replace confrontation with cooperation.
- Bridging Divides** – Building understanding across cultures, ideologies, and nations.
- Everyday Responsibility** – Small acts of truth, compassion, and justice that spark larger transformations.
- Living Legacy** – Gandhi's philosophy as a practical guide to a more peaceful and fair global order.

About the Session Leader: Dr. Pradeep Merchant is a distinguished physician and an inspiring community leader. His professional achievements and community contributions have earned him the honour of the Order of Canada—the nation's highest civilian recognition.

As the Site Chief of Neonatology at The Ottawa Hospital Civic Campus and a long-standing Trustee-Life Member of the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Council of Ottawa, Dr. Merchant has dedicated his life to service and building bridges.

He has led initiatives in strengthening Canada-India relations. Plus his foundational work with Carleton University's Canada-India Centre for Excellence, showcases his commitment to fostering global cooperation.

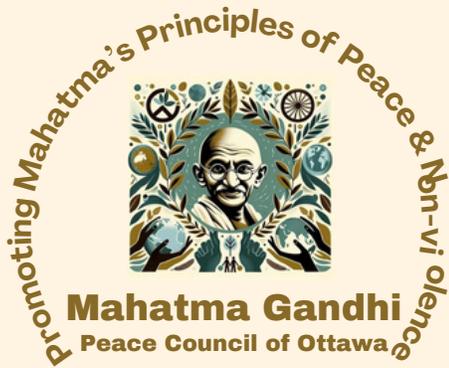
Dr. Merchant embodies the principles he speaks about. He is dedicated to leveraging his values to uplift communities through philanthropy, business development, and cultural exchange.



Dr. Pradeep Merchant, C.M.



Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal?



OUR MANIFESTO FOR 2025

Initiatives & Activities for Diverse Communities in Ottawa

Lectures/Seminars To Educate Community in Gandhian Principles

Gandhi Memorial Day Lecture 2025 (Jan 2025)

Featuring William van Geest (Ecology Ottawa) on "Why Bother with Local Environmental Action?... on Greening Canada's Capital."

M.K. Gandhi Annual Lecture 2025 (Nov 2025)

Our flagship event (Endowed Lecture) held in collaboration with the College of the Humanities, Carleton University,

"Living Gandhi's Legacy - Talks & Community Dialogue" Series

[\(Click Here to Open the Web Page\)](#)

- (2025-Feb-15) Fearlessness: Overcoming Personal and Social Challenges
- (2025-Mar-16) Truth as a Way of Life
- (2025-Apr-27) Food and Mindful Living
- (2025-May-31) Personal Peace and Inner Harmony
- (2025-Jun-15) Non-Violence: A Path to Conflict Resolution
- (2025-Jul-26) Power of Equality of Religions (Faiths)
The Ripple Effect of Kindness [rescheduled to Jan 2026]
- (2025-Sep-27) Environmental Sustainability
- (2025-Oct-18) The Legacy of Gandhi in the Modern World
- (2025-Nov-08) Simplicity in a Material World
- (2025-Dec-13) Community Leadership – Leading with Gandhi's Values

Virtual Education Initiatives for the Different Segments of Community

Monthly Newsletter (Gandhi's Reflections)

Educating community by sharing Articles/Essays, Videos, and Book Summaries related to Gandhian Principles and Values.

Gandhi's Vows Education

- Gandhi's Vows for Kids (9-13)
- Gandhi's Vows for Youth (14-27)
- Gandhi's Vows for Everyone

Self-paced Workshops

- **Inner Peace Journey:** Discover how to manage stress, build positive relationships, and embrace social responsibility for a fulfilling life.
- **Cultivating Kindness Society:** Building Compassionate Lives, One Thought, One Act, One Community at a Time

Community Celebrations (Cultural Programs) & Service Initiatives

Bhajan Bliss

Music Concert (Apr 12)

Pandit Kaivalya Kumar Gurav singing classical Bhajans

Gandhi Jayanti 2025 Celebrations

Garlanding of statue (Oct 2)
Cultural Function (Aug 30)

Community Services

Environmental Stewardship
Community Dialogues
Companion Visits
Storytelling/Culture Exchange

Let your thoughts be free of hatred, your actions be guided by truth, and your heart open to all. That is the path to a peaceful society.



Honoring Our Life Members: Trustees, Sponsors, and Patrons

Your unwavering support and commitment inspire us every day.

Trustees/Life Members- **New:**

Dr. Kanta Marwah
Mr. Anil Agrawal
Dr. Nishith Goel
Dr. Jagmohan Humar, C.M.
Dr. Pradeep Merchant, C.M.
(Late) Mr. Kailash Mittal
Mr. Nathan Oxford
Dr. Vasant Ruparalia
Mr. Jack Uppal

Sponsors/Life Members - **New:**

Mr. Sain Dass Aeri
Ms. Anjali Agrawal
Mrs. Suman Agrawal
Dr. Indu Gambhir
Mr. Atul Garg
Dr. Rajendra Gupta
Mrs. Rashmi Gupta
Mr. Rajesh Jain
Dr. Uma Kumar
Dr. Noel Salmond
Mr. Kanwal Talwar

Patrons/Life Members - **New:**

Mr. Nav Aggarwal
Mr. Chandrakant Arya
Mr. Edward Atraghji
Dr. Muralidhar Rao Avadhanula
Mr. Beant Barewal
Mr. Mandeep Basra
Mr. Subhas Bhargava
Dr. Kumar Bharti
Mr. Sanjay Bhasin
Dr. Mayurika Chakravorty
Mr. Bhagya Chander
Mr. Harpreet Chhabra
Mr. Sanjeev Chugh
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Dr. Steven Desjardins
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Centre (ICCC)**
Mrs. Malti Kesarwani
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Mr. Pradeep Srivastava
Mr. N. Subramani
Mr. Kanwal (Ken) Talwar
Dr. Arvin Telli
Mr. Saif Terai
Mr. Ravinder Tumber

AN APPEAL TO THE COMMUNITY

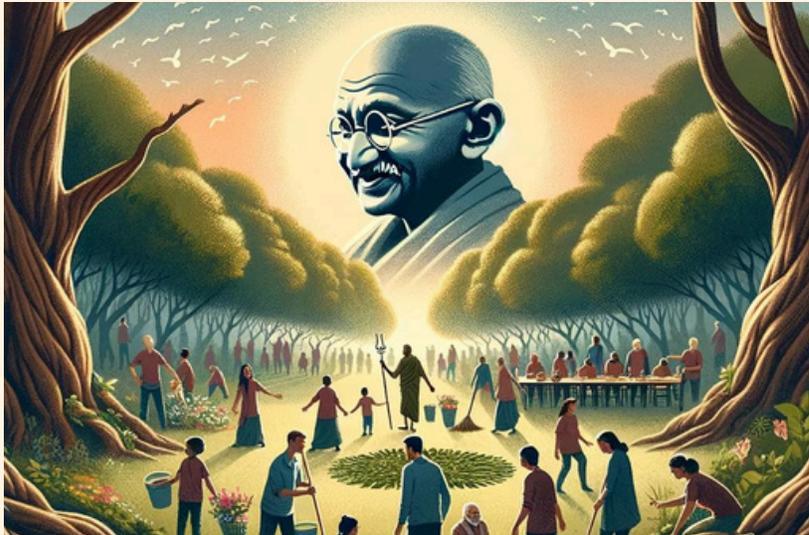
Join Us in Making a Difference - Become a Life Member and Support Our Mission

JOIN US TODAY: GANDHIJI.CA/JOINUS

Your contribution helps us continue to educate and inspire our community with Gandhian principles. Together, we can make a lasting impact.



If we could erase the "I's" and "Mine's" from religion, politics, economics, etc., we shall soon be free and bring heaven upon earth.



Echoes of Gandhi: Past Lectures Revisited

[Click Here To See The Roster of All Events \(2024 - 2006\)](#)

The highlighted talk below is displayed on the following page.

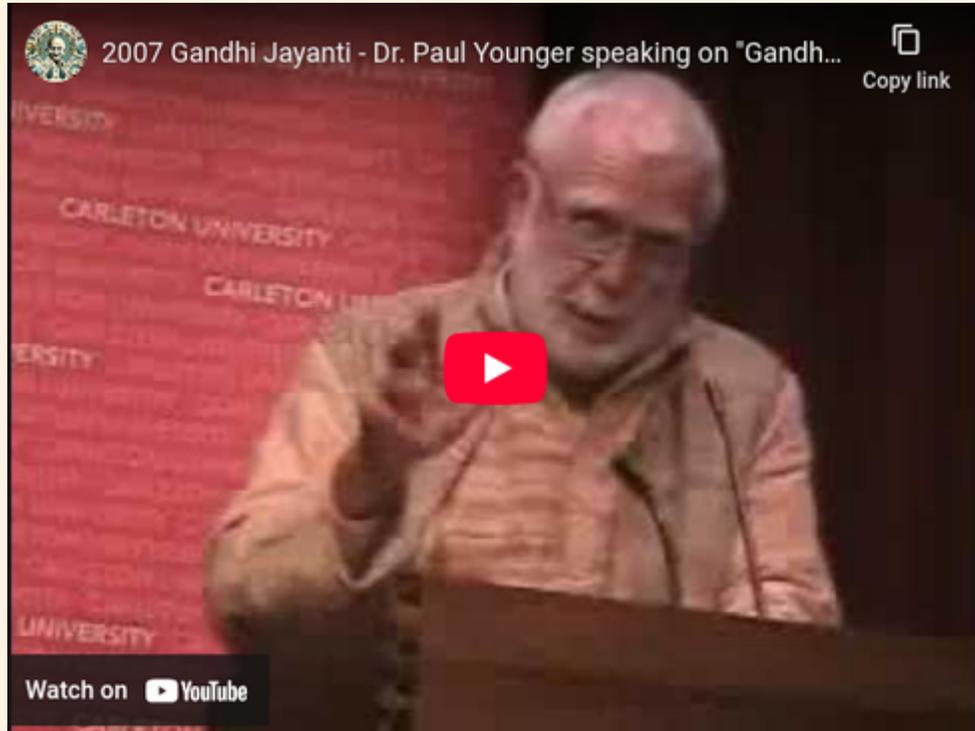
- 1) 2024 "Notes from the Climate Struggle" by Bill McKibben (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue #1)
- 2) 2023 "Impact of Jain Religious Tradition on Gandhi" by J. Humar (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue# 2)
- 3) 2022 "Peace in a Picemeal World" by Jaya Row (Zoom Call) (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue# 3)
- 4) 2021 "Mahatma Gandhi & Islamic Non-violence" - Panel Discussion (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue# 4)
- 5) 2021 "Turning the Tide on Non-violence in Education" by Jill Carr-Harris (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue# 5)
- 6) 2020 "Mahatma Gandhi - Beyond the Civil Rights Movement (Panel) (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue# 6)
- 7) 2019 "Gandhi and Human Rights" by Vinay Lal (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue #7)
- 8) 2019 "Gandhi: His Relevance in the Modern World - Panel Discussion (Talk published in Newsletter-Issue# 8)
- 9) 2019 "Jai Jagat: A 10,000 KM March..." by Jill Carr-Harris Talk published in Newsletter-Issue# 9)
- 10) 2018 "Gandhi and the Human Rights to Peace" by Douglas Roche (Published in this Issue #10)
- 11) 2018 "Reflections on Gandhi, the Great Law of Peace and Indigenous Resurgence" by Taiiaki Alfred (In Issue #11)
- 12) 2017 "Samdarshana and Sambhava: Gandhi on the Plurality of Religions" by Dr. Bindu Puri (In Issue #12)
- 13) 2017 "Mahatma Gandhi Today" - Panel Discussion [No video]
- 14) 2016 "A Centre for Peace (A Vision for the Sacred Islands in the Ottawa River)" by Douglas Cardinal (No video)
- 15) 2015 "The Mahatma, the Pope, and the Planet - Gandhian Reflections on the Pope's Recent Letter on Environment" by Dr. Noel Salmond (No video)
- 16) 2014 "Gandhi's Solution to Religious Conflicts" by Dr. Arvind Sharma (In Issue #13)
- 17) 2014 "Non-Violence Conference (A Weapon of the Strong)" - St. Paul University (No video)
- 18) 2013 "Gandhi's Religion and the Politics of Hinduism" by Vinay Lal [[Transcript only](#)]
- 19) 2013 "Gandhi as Social Visionary: The Grassroots Work of Ekta Parishad" by Paul Schwartzentruber [[Transcript](#)]
- 20) 2012 "In Search of Pax Gandhiana" by Dr. Anthony J. Parel [[Video in Issue 14](#)] [[Transcript](#)]
- 21) 2011 "Encountering Gandhi on the Rideau River" by Dr. Noel Salmond [[Video in Issue 15](#)]
- 22) 2010 "Mythic Origins of Non-violence" by Devdutt Pattanaik [[Video in Issue 16](#)]
- 23) 2009 "The Influence of Vaishnavism on Mahatma Gandhi" by Dr. Harsha Dehejia [[Video in Issue #17](#)]
- 24) 2008 "Gandhi and Women" by Trichur Rukmani [[Video in Issue #18](#)] [[Transcript](#)]
- 25) 2007 "Gandhi, Religion & Non-violence" by Dr. Paul Younger**
- 26) 2007 "Gandhi and the Question of the Worship of Images" by Dr. Noel Salmond
- 27) 2006 "Gandhiji's Ideals: Truth and Non-violence, Religion and Non-Violence" by Dr. Trichur Rukmani

***He who is ever brooding over result often loses nerve
in the performance of his duty.***



2007 GANDHI JAYANTI LECTURE

Dr. Paul Younger on "Gandhi, Religion and Non-violence" Transcript of the Talk



If the
video
doesn't
play
here,
play it on
YouTube.

ChatGPT Summary of the Video:

The video features Dr. Paul Younger speaking at the 2007 Gandhi Jayanti celebration organized by the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Council of Ottawa. His talk is titled "Gandhi, Religion and Non-violence," and it explores Gandhi's understanding of religion, violence, and their interplay from the colonial era to the present day.

Dr. Younger begins by highlighting Gandhi primarily as a brilliant political analyst who deeply understood the nature of violence in his time and anticipated future forms of violence, especially related to the end of colonialism. Gandhi was born into a diverse religious environment, with his parents practicing different religious customs. He initially viewed religion as a personal, spiritual pursuit centered on the unrelenting quest for truth, distinct from political power.



ChatGPT Summary of the Video (continued):

However, Gandhi's experiences, especially in South Africa, revealed to him that colonial powers had redefined religion as a political tool to justify imperial dominance. The colonial mindset promoted one "superior" civilization—Christianity—and marginalized or caricatured other religious traditions, a process Gandhi called "orientalizing." Gandhi strongly opposed this narrow, politicized definition of religion and critiqued both colonial authorities and some Hindu leaders who adopted similar views to build political power.

Dr. Younger discusses Gandhi's opposition to Christian missionary work in India, not because of its social programs, but because Gandhi saw it as tied to civilizational superiority and political control. Gandhi's writings, such as his 1910 book "Hind Swaraj," mock the colonial monopoly on civilization and expose moral flaws in British imperialism.

Moving to the postcolonial era, Dr. Younger explains that Gandhi foresaw new challenges where religion would again be manipulated for political ends, this time fueling ethnic and communal violence. He opposed communalism—the use of religion to define exclusive political communities—which led to violent conflicts in places like India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Gandhi advocated for religious pluralism and saw religious diversity as a societal blessing.

The talk then addresses the contemporary globalized world, where random, often senseless violence linked superficially to religion has become common. Dr. Younger cites examples such as Osama Bin Laden's extremist messages and the Sri Lankan woman who assassinated Rajiv Gandhi, noting that these perpetrators are often "homeless" individuals lacking deep religious grounding, who use religious symbolism for political violence.

Despite these challenges, Dr. Younger offers hope, emphasizing Gandhi's belief in the essential goodness of human nature and the capacity for spiritual growth. He notes that societies can awaken to the futility of violence, citing Rwanda's recovery from genocide and ongoing struggles in places like Myanmar. The talk concludes with a call to continue the patient pursuit of truth and nonviolence, inspired by Gandhi's legacy.



Past Lecture (2007 Video): Dr. Paul Younger on "Gandhi, Religion and Non-violence" (Page 3/3) - contd.

ChatGPT Summary of the Video (continued):

In summary, the video offers a thoughtful analysis of Gandhi's insights into religion and violence, tracing their evolution from colonial times through postcolonial communal conflicts to the contemporary globalized context of random violence, while affirming hope in humanity's potential for peace.

How does Dr. Younger describe the transformation of religion from a spiritual practice to a political tool in both colonial and postcolonial contexts?

Dr. Younger explains that during the colonial era, religion was transformed from a personal, spiritual practice into a political tool primarily by colonial powers to justify and sustain their imperial rule. The colonial mindset promoted one "superior" civilization—Christianity—and marginalized or caricatured other religious traditions, a process Gandhi referred to as "orientalizing." This redefinition of religion served to legitimize colonial dominance and dismiss indigenous religious and cultural identities. Gandhi recognized this manipulation and strongly opposed the colonial use of religion as a means of political control.

In the postcolonial context, Dr. Younger describes a different but related transformation. After the end of colonial rule, religion was again modified to serve political ends. Still, this time it became a basis for communalism, where religious identity was used to define exclusive ethnic or communal political units. This shift led to ethnic conflicts and violent struggles over homelands, as seen in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and elsewhere. Religion, instead of being a source of spiritual unity and diversity, was often reduced to a shallow communal identity that fueled violence and undermined individual freedoms and rich religious traditions.

Overall, Dr. Younger highlights that in both eras, religion was co-opted from its deeper spiritual roots to serve political purposes—first to uphold the empire and later to assert communal power—resulting in various forms of violence and social fragmentation.

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."



Article

Mahatma Gandhi, a devout Hindu, believed all religions were unified paths to God, championing nonviolent harmony and social justice to unite diverse communities.

The Vision of Mahatma Gandhi: Harmony and Unity of Religions

Contributed by Editors

Synopsis: *Mahatma Gandhi, a devout Hindu, was a strong advocate for religious harmony, grounded in his belief in the essential unity of all faiths. He supported religious pluralism, viewing every religion as a valid path to God and celebrating diversity as a strength of humanity. Using the metaphor of a "sacred thread," he taught that all spiritual traditions are interconnected and lead to the same ultimate goal.*

Gandhi promoted tolerance and active interfaith dialogue to build bridges between different communities. For him, true spirituality was inseparable from social justice, which required service to the oppressed, regardless of their faith. His life exemplified this principle, as he drew wisdom from various religions. In multicultural India, he championed unity through nonviolence (Ahimsa) and emphasized universal values such as truth and compassion. He employed peaceful methods, including interfaith prayers and marches, to resolve conflicts and laid the foundation for a pluralistic and harmonious society.

Article:

Mahatma Gandhi was a highly respected leader around the world who had a unique and personal understanding of religion. Although he was a dedicated Hindu, he didn't limit himself to just one belief system. Instead, he believed that all religions have a connection with one another in meaningful ways, and he devoted his life to bringing people of different faiths together. The foundation of his beliefs was several key ideas that he both taught and practiced in his own life.

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The ultimate measure of a person is not where they stand in moments of comfort, but where they stand at times of challenge and controversy.



A World of Many Paths: Religious Pluralism

Gandhi's central belief was in religious pluralism, which means he believed that no single religion could claim to possess the sole truth. He believed that every religion is a valid way to reach the same ultimate goal: connecting with the divine. Instead of seeing different religions as a reason for conflict, he viewed them as a beautiful part of the rich and complex human experience. Gandhi taught that we should embrace and respect this diversity because each religion offers a unique perspective on understanding the sacred.

Unity in Diversity: The Sacred Thread

Gandhi often discussed the connection between different religions, using the concept of a "sacred thread." He saw this thread as something that runs through all spiritual beliefs, tying them together despite their apparent differences. He believed that even though rituals, texts, and languages may change, the true essence of all religions is the same. They all aim for the same goal: to understand God or reach spiritual enlightenment. This idea of a shared spiritual foundation was a key part of his message about unity.

The Foundation of Respect and Dialogue

Gandhi strongly believed in the importance of tolerance and respect for everyone. He argued that people should have the freedom to practice their own religion without fear of persecution or discrimination. He encouraged others to look past stereotypes and recognize the positive values found in every faith.

Gandhi didn't just talk about these ideas; he actively worked on them by initiating conversations between different religions. He engaged with leaders and followers from various faiths, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Jainism. He believed that these discussions were crucial for overcoming misunderstandings, building connections between different groups, and finding shared goals that could benefit everyone.

Key Principles of Harmony

- *"He saw a fundamental unity connecting all faiths."*
- *"No single religion could claim a monopoly on truth."*
- *"He envisioned a 'sacred thread' weaving through all spiritual traditions, binding them together."*
- *"True spirituality was not complete without active service to humanity."*
- *"His own life was the most powerful illustration of his commitment to religious harmony."*
- *"He famously declared, 'I am a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew.'"*
- *"When communal tensions arose, Gandhi consistently advocated for nonviolent methods of resolution."*
- *"He sought to create a common foundation that could unify all communities.."*

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Faith in Action: Religion and Social Justice

For Mahatma Gandhi, religion was not just a private matter; it had a deep connection to the fight for social justice and humanitarian values. He believed that authentic spirituality involves actively helping others. Gandhi taught that faith should motivate people to work towards improving the lives of marginalized, poor, and oppressed individuals, regardless of their religious affiliation. He thought that the measure of a person's spiritual journey is by their kindness and efforts in creating a fairer world for everyone.

A Personal Example for the World

Gandhi's life was a strong example of his dedication to religious harmony. He drew inspiration and wisdom from a wide range of spiritual sources. Although he was rooted in Hinduism, he often studied the teachings of other religions, including the Bible, the Quran, and the ideas of Jainism and Buddhism. He used these lessons in his daily life and philosophy. This open-minded approach to spirituality resonated with people from diverse backgrounds and played a crucial role in bringing together India's diverse population during its fight for independence.

An Approach for a Multicultural Nation

In a country like India, with its diverse cultures and religions, Gandhi's approach to thinking was both bold and pragmatic. His concept of Sarvodaya, meaning "the welfare of all," emphasized the importance of treating every person with dignity and equality. Along with this, he firmly believed in Ahimsa, or nonviolence, which he applied not just to avoiding physical harm but also to appreciating the diversity in society.

He famously said, "I am a Hindu, a Muslim, a Christian, and a Jew," showing his belief that all people share a common identity and can come together. Gandhi set an example by forming close and meaningful friendships with people from various communities, including Muslims, Christians, and Sikhs. He often participated in the spiritual practices and prayer meetings of different religions, demonstrating his genuine respect for them.

When conflicts and tensions arose between communities, Gandhi consistently advocated for resolving issues through nonviolent means. He organized big prayer gatherings and peace marches to bring people together and encourage healing. By highlighting shared values that everyone can believe in—such as truth, love, compassion, and helping others—he aimed to build common ground that could unite all groups.

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The Vision of Mahatma Gandhi: Harmony and Unity of Religions (continued page 4/4)

In summary, Mahatma Gandhi held a firm conviction in the importance of peace and understanding among diverse religions. He saw great value in diversity and respected the unique beliefs of every faith. Gandhi believed that all religions share a common thread that unites them, promoting harmony rather than conflict. He was dedicated to the idea of resolving disagreements through nonviolent means, emphasizing that genuine change can come from peaceful actions rather than violence.

Gandhi's teachings and example still inspire many people today. They encourage conversations between people of different faiths, helping to break down barriers and foster mutual respect. His commitment to peace continues to motivate efforts worldwide to build a sense of community and unity among diverse groups. By focusing on understanding and compassion, Gandhi's vision offers a path for creating a more peaceful world where everyone can coexist, regardless of their beliefs.

Key Takeaways from Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy on religious harmony

Religious Pluralism: Gandhi believed that no single religion holds a monopoly on truth. He saw all faiths as valid and legitimate paths to understanding the divine.

Unity in Diversity: Despite different rituals and practices, he taught that all religions are interconnected by a "sacred thread" and share the same ultimate spiritual goal.

Faith in Action: For Gandhi, true spirituality was inseparable from social justice. He believed that faith must be expressed through active service to humanity, especially the poor and oppressed.

The Importance of Dialogue: He actively promoted tolerance and mutual respect by engaging in conversations with leaders of different faiths to build bridges and find common ground.

Nonviolence (Ahimsa) as the Foundation: His core principle of nonviolence extended to respecting the beliefs of others, providing a framework for peaceful coexistence.

Focus on Universal Values: He emphasized the universal ethical principles shared by all religions—such as truth, love, and compassion—as the basis for a unified society.

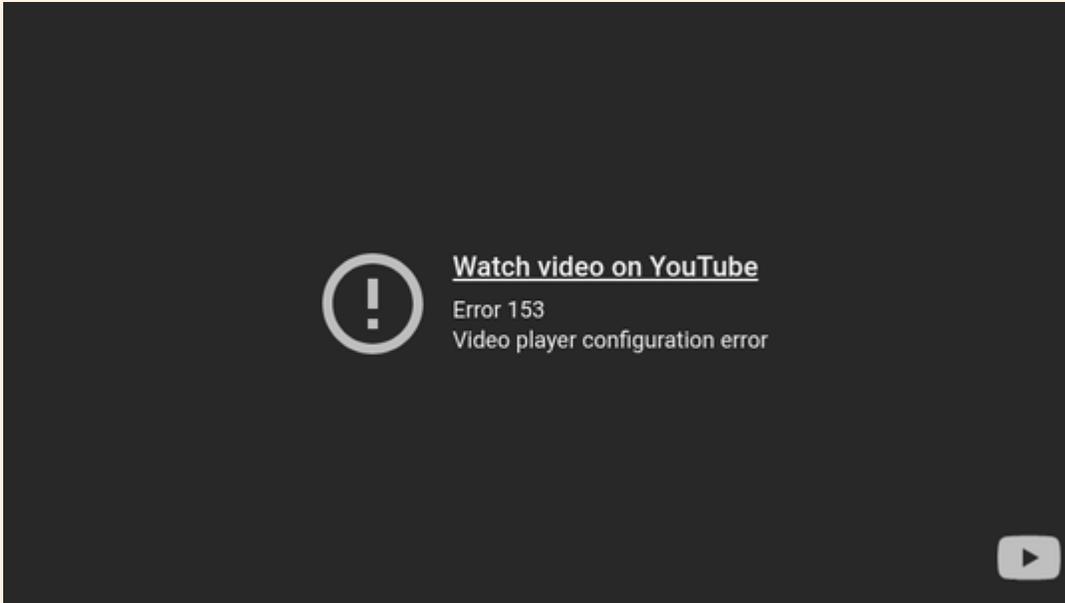
Leading by Personal Example: Gandhi lived his philosophy by drawing wisdom from various religious traditions and demonstrating profound respect for all communities in his daily life.

Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.



Video

Huston Smith - The World's Religions



If the
video
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play it on
YouTube.

Video Summary by ChatTube (AI):

The video "Huston Smith - The World's Religions" from the Intellectual Deep Web channel presents an insightful overview of the common vision shared by the world's great wisdom traditions regarding ethics, virtues, and ultimate reality.

Huston Smith outlines three key aspects important in human life: what we do (ethics), who we are (virtues), and what we see (vision). He discusses four major problem areas in human life—force, possessions, the spoken word, and sex—and explains how religions address these through ethical guidelines such as "do not kill," "do not steal," and "do not bear false witness," while also acknowledging complexities like justified exceptions and the nuanced nature of sexual ethics.

Moving to virtues, Smith highlights humility, charity, and veracity as central virtues in Western traditions, noting that their original meanings were tied to power and dignity, rather than just moral goodness. He contrasts this with Asian traditions, which focus on overcoming the "three poisons" of greed, hatred, and delusion as a path to virtue.



VIDEO - HUSTON SMITH - THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS (PAGE 2/4)

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Finally, Smith explores the shared religious vision of ultimate reality as more beautiful, unified, and mysterious than everyday experience reveals it to be. He emphasizes a vertical dimension of reality—often symbolized as God or the ultimate truth—that transcends ordinary perception, inviting a deeper spiritual quest beyond conventional understanding.

Throughout, the video underscores the remarkable unity among diverse religious traditions in addressing fundamental human concerns and pointing toward a profound, mysterious ultimate reality.

Religion versus Spirituality:

Huston Smith relates religion to spirituality by presenting religion as the structured, communal, and ethical framework through which individuals engage with deeper spiritual realities.

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I object to violence because when it appears to do good, the good is only temporary; the evil it does is permanent.



Religion versus Spirituality (continued):

He views spirituality as the personal, experiential dimension of encountering ultimate reality, which religions seek to articulate, guide, and cultivate through their teachings, practices, and visions.

Smith's understanding of spirituality across different religions emphasizes several key points:

1. Common Core of Spiritual Experience: Despite the diversity of religious traditions, there is a remarkable unity in their spiritual insights. Religions universally address fundamental human concerns—such as ethics, virtues, and ultimate reality—and point toward a deeper, more unified, and mysterious dimension of existence that transcends ordinary experience.

2. Ethics as a Spiritual Foundation: Spirituality is closely linked to ethical living. Smith highlights how religions provide ethical guidelines (e.g., do not kill, do not steal, be truthful) that serve as the groundwork for spiritual growth. Managing the "four problem areas" (force, possessions, speech, sex) is essential for progressing on the spiritual path.

3. Virtues and Inner Transformation: Spirituality involves cultivating virtues such as humility, charity, and veracity (or their equivalents in other traditions) and overcoming inner "poisons" like greed, hatred, and delusion. This inner transformation is central to spiritual development.



Religion versus Spirituality (continued):

4. Vision of Ultimate Reality: Spirituality entails perceiving reality beyond its surface appearances—recognizing its beauty, unity, and mystery. Smith describes this as a vertical dimension of reality (often symbolized as God or the ultimate truth) that is as real and significant as the horizontal, everyday world.

5. Mystery and Humility: Spirituality embraces the mysterious nature of ultimate reality, acknowledging that it cannot be fully grasped by reason alone. This calls for humility and openness, qualities essential to genuine spiritual inquiry.

In summary, Huston Smith sees spirituality as the lived, experiential heart of religion—an ongoing quest to align one's life with universal ethical principles, cultivate inner virtues, and perceive the deeper, mysterious reality that underlies existence. Religions provide the language, symbols, and practices that support this spiritual journey, making spirituality accessible and meaningful across cultures.

Key takeaways:

1. Shared Ethical Ground: Most world religions agree on basic ethical principles like not killing, not stealing, and being truthful. These universal guidelines help maintain social harmony and personal integrity.

2. Virtues Shape Who We Are: Qualities such as humility, charity, and honesty are not just moral ideals but also reflect inner strength and dignity. Cultivating these virtues contributes to personal growth and better relationships.

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Key takeaways (continued):

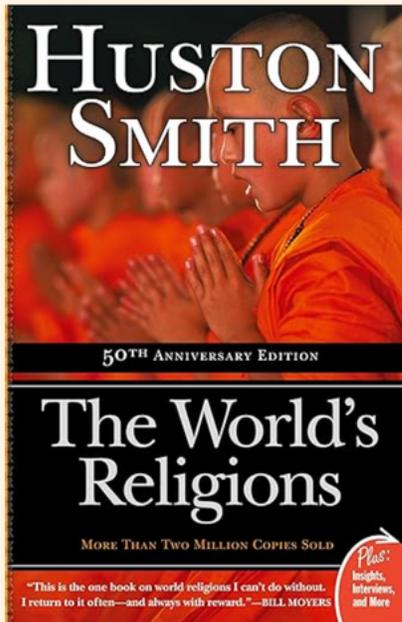
3. Awareness of Negative Tendencies: Recognizing and managing common human flaws—like greed, hatred, and confusion—can help improve one's character and interactions with others.

4. Life Has Deeper Meaning: Beyond everyday experiences, there is a deeper, more unified, and mysterious reality that many religions point to. Being open to this can enrich one's perspective on life.

5. Balance Between Practical and Spiritual: Life involves both practical, everyday concerns and a vertical, spiritual dimension. Nurturing both aspects leads to a more balanced and fulfilling life.

6. Embrace Mystery and Growth: Understanding that some aspects of life and reality are mysterious encourages humility and ongoing personal and spiritual development.

In essence, the video encourages educated individuals to live ethically, cultivate inner virtues, acknowledge their flaws, and remain open to deeper spiritual insights that can enrich their understanding of themselves and the world.



Book Summary

An inviting tour of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Indigenous traditions, covering beliefs, practices, and ideals to foster understanding, comparison, and dialogue.

The World's Religions

(50th Anniversary Edition, 2009)

by Huston Smith

Source: <https://www.amazon.ca/Worlds-Religions-Huston-Smith/dp/0061660183/>

Preamble

Curious about what the world's great religions actually teach—and why millions find them meaningful? This summary of Huston Smith's *The World's Religions* provides a clear and down-to-earth gateway. Smith writes as a friendly guide, not a referee, presenting each faith "at its best" so that you can see how beliefs become daily practices and shape character. He covers Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Indigenous traditions, explaining big ideas in simple language with concrete examples. If you want a fair, beginner-friendly map before diving deeper, start here.

Book Summary:

Huston Smith's aim is simple and generous: show what the great faiths look like "from the inside," at their best, so readers can understand why they move people and how they guide life. Smith's approach—sympathetic, comparative without forcing sameness—has made the book a standard introduction to world religions for decades.

The World's Religions is a welcoming guide designed for general readers. Its purpose is not to argue which faith is "right," but to show why each major tradition moves its followers and how it shapes daily life. Smith writes as a sympathetic outsider, highlighting religion "at its best" to build understanding and reduce fear or stereotypes.

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



Book Summary (continued):

The scope is broad yet clear: Hinduism, Buddhism (including Theravada, Mahayana, Zen, Tibetan), Confucianism, Taoism, Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and a respectful chapter on Indigenous or “primal” religions. It is not an encyclopedia or a debate book; it is a map and an invitation.

Smith’s steady voice makes complex traditions readable, comparable, and relevant to everyday life—perfect for personal learning, family conversations, classrooms, and book clubs. You’ll come away with clearer definitions, fewer stereotypes, and a better sense of both common ground and real differences.

Read the summary now, then get the **50th-anniversary edition** to enjoy the full tour—one compelling guide through many living paths.

Key takeaways from the book:

- It’s a friendly map, not a debate: the goal is understanding, not proving a winner.
- Each chapter illustrates beliefs in action—how people actually live out their faith.
- Religions aim to form character (compassion, honesty, self-control), not just teach ideas.

Many Paths, One Human Quest.

- **Hinduism** — Many ways to liberation; find the divine within and serve it in all.
- **Buddhism** — Suffering can end; train mind and heart in wisdom and compassion.
- **Confucianism** — Build character; right relationships create a humane society.
- **Taoism** — Flow with the Way; act effortlessly in harmony with nature.
- **Judaism** — Live the covenant; remember, study, and do justice in community.
- **Christianity** — God’s love in Jesus; faith becomes service, hope, and forgiveness.
- **Islam** — God is One; prayerful surrender orders life toward mercy and justice.
- **Indigenous Traditions** — Sacred earth and ancestors; ritual binds people, place, and spirit.

Humanity Across Faiths

Different paths, shared hopes: seek truth, practice compassion, do justice, and care for one another and the world.



Key Takeaways (continued):

- You'll learn about clear core themes, including Hindu paths to liberation, Buddhist Four Noble Truths, Confucian ren/li, Taoist wu-wei, Jewish covenant/Torah, Christian agape, Islamic tawḥīd/Five Pillars, as well as Indigenous lifeways.
- Smith writes "religion at its best," reducing stereotypes without hiding real differences.
- Indigenous traditions are treated respectfully, broadening the usual "big seven" picture.
- The book strikes a balance between history, ideas, and rituals, ensuring that context never overwhelms clarity.
- It offers fair comparisons—spotting overlaps (such as compassion and justice) and genuine distinctions.
- Key terms are explained in plain language, useful for newcomers and discussion groups.
- You can read chapters in any order—start with the faith you're most curious about.
- Useful for families, classrooms, and book clubs to spark thoughtful, civil dialogue.
- **Biggest takeaway:** many paths, shared human hopes—understanding others sharpens your own quest.



SATYAGRAHA AND NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE



ARTICLE SUMMARY

Discover how Jain and Hindu traditions—and Gandhi himself—struggle with the challenge of living by nonviolence while confronting the realities of duty, justice, and conflict.

Nonviolence Conundrum:

... Political Peace and Personal Karma in Jain and Hindu Traditions
by Veena Howard

Source: <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/14/2/178>

Synopsis:

Dr. Veena Howard's article, "The Nonviolence Conundrum," examines how Jainism and Hinduism reconcile their fundamental value of nonviolence (ahimsa) with the necessity of using force in the pursuit of justice and self-defense.

Jainism upholds the strictest interpretation of nonviolence, viewing any harm as a spiritual obstacle. It allows for "counter-violence" only as a last resort, emphasizing that such actions bring remorse rather than honor. In contrast, Hinduism permits "righteous war" as part of one's social duty, as illustrated in the Bhagavad-Gita. However, its epics reveal the immense suffering and guilt that follow warfare, demonstrating that victories can be hollow.

Mahatma Gandhi later synthesized these ideas, transforming nonviolence into an active force for change. The article concludes that both traditions allow for violence only with great reluctance. By consistently highlighting the tragic consequences of war, they discourage conflict and emphasize that peace, rather than violence, is the ultimate goal and the highest path to take.



Article Summary: Nonviolence Conundrum by Dr. Veena Howard (page 2/4)

Article Summary:

Dr. Veena R. Howard's article, "The Nonviolence Conundrum," explores a significant issue within two of the world's oldest religions, Jainism and Hinduism. Both traditions teach that nonviolence is among the highest values. However, what should individuals do when confronted with real-world violence? How can one protect others and ensure justice while believing that all violence is wrong? This is the conundrum. The article illustrates that both religions grapple with this tension as they strive to balance the need for personal peace with their societal responsibilities. While they may reluctantly accept violence in certain situations, they do so with great sorrow, emphasizing that their ultimate goal is not war, but peace.

Jainism has a rigorous and detailed concept of nonviolence, known as ahimsa. For Jains, ahimsa is the most essential principle. This belief is rooted in the idea that every living being has a soul. This perspective extends beyond just animals and humans; as Dr. Howard explains, Jains believe that "life dwells in rocks, clods of earth, drops of water, flowing streams, radiant sunbeams, flickering flames, and gusts of wind." The ultimate goal of life in Jainism is to free the soul from karma, which is the result of our actions. Harming any living being, no matter how small, generates negative karma and binds the soul.

This creates a challenge for ordinary people who aren't monks: how can they navigate their daily lives without causing harm? Jainism offers a practical solution through "lesser vows" that permit necessary actions involving minimal harm, such as cooking and cleaning. Furthermore, Jainism is not entirely pacifist; it acknowledges virodhi-himsa, which means "countering violence with violence as a last resort."

Voices on the Conundrum of Violence:

- "Life dwells in rocks, clods of earth, drops of water... flickering flames, and gusts of wind."
- "If you are killed, you win heaven; if you triumph, you enjoy the earth... Therefore, stand up and resolve to fight."
- "The earth seems to be crammed with fallen heads, hands, and every sort of limb... put into heaps."
- "Damn the ksatra way! Damn the power... Damn the unforgiving stubbornness that brought us to this disaster."
- "If someone is victorious but grieves... how can he think of that as victory? In fact, his enemies have defeated him."
- "If there ever could be a justifiable war... against Germany to prevent the wanton persecution of a whole race would be completely justified."
- "The practice of violence... changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world."

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You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is like an ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.



Article Summary: Nonviolence Conundrum by Dr. Veena Howard (page 3/4)

Article Summary (continued):

Dr. Howard shares the story of a soldier named Varuna. He vowed to fight back only after being attacked first. During battle, he fought bravely and emerged victorious. However, he did not celebrate his win. Instead, "concerned about the consequences for his own afterlife, he immediately sits on the ground... to achieve his own peaceful death." Varuna was more troubled about the spiritual harm he had caused than his victory. This story exemplifies the Jain perspective: while violence may be necessary for self-defense, it is ultimately a regrettable event rather than a cause for joy.

Hinduism also regards ahimsa, or non-violence, as the "highest dharma," meaning duty. However, it approaches the concept from a different perspective, focusing on an individual's social role. Hindu laws established a specific duty for the warrior class, which was to protect the kingdom and its people, a responsibility that inherently included the use of force. An ancient Hindu text states that one "may slay without hesitation an assassin who approaches."

A well-known example of this concept is found in the Bhagavad Gita. In this text, a great warrior named Arjuna is deeply troubled at the thought of fighting against his own family members. However, the god Krishna reminds him that it is his sacred duty to engage in battle. Krishna assures him, "If you are killed, you win heaven; if you triumph, you enjoy the earth." This statement implies an explicit endorsement of what could be considered a "righteous war."

However, that is not the entire story. Dr. Howard argues that these traditions compel us to confront the devastating consequences of violence. The great epic, which includes the Gita and the Mahabharata, does not conclude with a triumphant victory parade. Instead, it depicts the bloody battlefield through the eyes of a mourning queen who has lost all her sons. She cries out upon seeing the field, where the earth "seems to be crammed with fallen heads, hands, and every sort of limb." The war's victor, King Yudhishtira, feels no joy. He is overwhelmed with guilt and sorrow, exclaiming, "Damn the [warrior] way! ... Damn the unforgiving stubbornness that led us to this disaster." For him, victory feels like a total defeat. The epic's true lesson is that war is futile and leads to endless suffering.

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To give pleasure to a single heart by a single act is better than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.



Article Summary: Nonviolence Conundrum by Dr. Veena Howard (page 4/4)

Article Summary (continued):

Mahatma Gandhi famously grappled with the challenge of total nonviolence. Inspired by the Jain principle of ahimsa, or nonviolence, he faced the harsh reality of dealing with absolute evil as a political leader. Dr. Howard recounts a story in which Gandhi posed a question to his Jain teacher: What should one do if a snake were to bite him? The teacher responded that, for a wise person, it would not be reasonable to kill a creature like that. However, Gandhi took a more practical approach. While he personally advocated for peace, he recognized that nonviolence has its limits. He once stated that it is the "plain duty of everyone to kill" someone on a murderous rampage. He even acknowledged that a war against the Nazis "would be completely justified." Nevertheless, he quickly added, "I do not believe in any war." Gandhi's solution was to redefine ahimsa, transforming it from a passive concept into an active and powerful "weapon" for fighting against injustice.

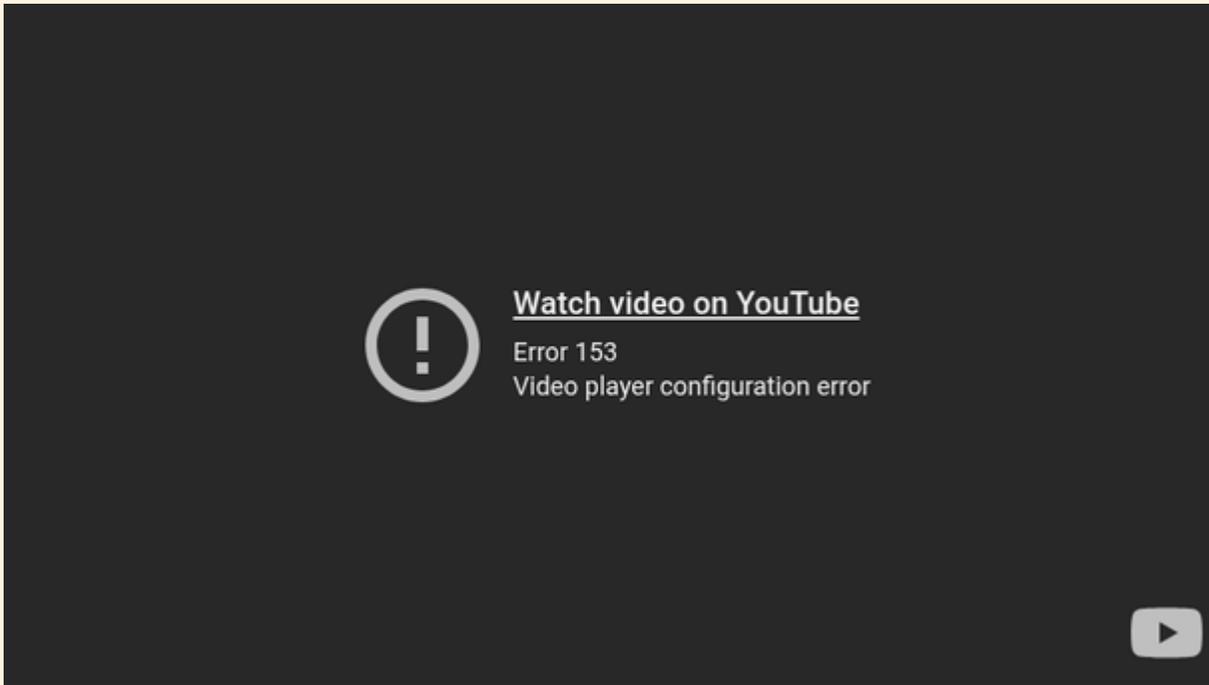
Ultimately, "The Nonviolence Conundrum" demonstrates that Jainism and Hinduism do not offer a straightforward justification for war. Instead, they maintain a delicate balance between two opposing ideas: the duty to protect others and the duty to avoid causing harm. By highlighting the significant personal and societal costs of war, these philosophies serve as a warning against engaging in violence. They consider violence only as a last-resort option, acknowledging its tragic nature and the severe consequences it brings. The final message is powerful: always seek a path toward peace, for violence is not a solution but a failure.

Each one has to find his peace from within. And peace to be real must be unaffected by outside circumstances.



Video

Non-violence and relevance of Gandhi's ideas in modern times: Hanuman Dass speaks with Arun Gandhi



If the video doesn't play here, play it on YouTube.

Brief AI Summary (by ChatTube AI):

The video features a conversation between Hanuman Dass and Arun Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, in which they discuss the philosophy of non-violence and its relevance in modern times. Arun Gandhi shares personal insights from his upbringing with Bapuji (Mahatma Gandhi) and explains that non-violence is not just the absence of physical violence but also includes passive violence—such as societal structures, materialism, and selfishness—that harm others unconsciously.

He emphasizes that true peace involves creating harmony in society through respect, understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of all people, thereby transcending labels such as religion, race, or economic status. Arun Gandhi highlights Gandhi's discipline, compassion, and active engagement in constructive work, encouraging individuals to use every moment meaningfully and to be the change they wish to see.



Video: Non-violence and relevance of Gandhi's ideas in modern times (Page 2/3)

Video AI Summary (continued):

The discussion also touches on environmental non-violence, noting Gandhi as an early environmentalist who practiced resource conservation and opposed wastefulness. Arun Gandhi advocates for utilizing modern tools, such as the internet, to disseminate messages of peace and non-violence, while cautioning against dogmatic interpretations of Gandhi's teachings.

They explore the practical applications of non-violence today, including compassionate charity that empowers rather than creates dependency, and the importance of mental discipline and meditation in controlling anger constructively. Arun Gandhi also discusses his Gandhi Legacy Tour, which inspires people by demonstrating how individual actions can lead to significant social change.

Overall, the video conveys a message of universal compassion, purposeful living, and active non-violence as a path to personal and societal transformation, rooted in the enduring legacy of Mahatma Gandhi.

Key Insights on Non-Violence and Compassion from Arun Gandhi:

1. Non-violence is more than no war; it's ending all forms of harm.
2. Peace is creating harmony, not just the absence of conflict.
3. Be the change you wish to see in the world.
4. Every moment is precious –use it constructively.
5. Compassion transcends all divisions and labels.
6. True charity empowers, it does not create dependency.
7. Control your mind to use anger wisely, not destructively.
8. Adapt timeless wisdom to today's challenges with an open mind.
9. We are all one global family—respect and unity are essential.
10. One person's small action can inspire significant change.



Video: Non-violence and relevance of Gandhi's ideas in modern times (Page 3/3)

Passive Violence defined:

In this video, passive violence is defined as the subtle, indirect, and often unconscious forms of harm that people inflict on others without physical aggression. It encompasses behaviors and societal structures rooted in selfishness, materialism, wastefulness, and inequality that lead to suffering and injustice.

Unlike physical violence, which involves overt acts like fighting or killing, passive violence manifests through neglect, exploitation, discrimination, and environmental harm—actions that hurt people and communities by perpetuating disparities and damaging relationships, even when no direct physical force is used. Arun Gandhi emphasizes that passive violence fuels physical violence, making its recognition and elimination essential for true peace.

Practicing Passive Nonviolence:

1. Self-examination and personal responsibility:
2. Cultivating respect, understanding, acceptance, and appreciation:
3. Reducing selfishness and materialism:
4. Practicing compassion:
5. Using mental discipline and meditation:
6. Engaging in constructive action:
7. Adapting Gandhi's philosophy thoughtfully:

By adopting these remedies, individuals and societies can cut off the "fuel" of passive violence that often leads to physical violence, thereby fostering true peace and harmony.

Antidotes to Passive Violence tendencies and behaviours:

1. **Respect:** Valuing others for who they are without judgment or conditions, recognizing their inherent dignity.
2. **Understanding:** Making an effort to empathize with others' feelings, perspectives, and circumstances.
3. **Acceptance:** Embracing people as they are, without trying to change or reject them based on differences.
4. **Appreciation:** Acknowledging and valuing the positive qualities and contributions of others.
5. **Compassion:** Showing genuine care and concern, especially towards those in distress or difficulty.
6. **Self-reflection:** Examining one's own attitudes and behaviors to identify and change selfish or harmful patterns.
7. **Open communication:** Engaging in honest, kind, and constructive dialogue to resolve misunderstandings and build trust.
8. **Inclusivity:** Avoiding exclusion based on labels such as religion, race, or social status, and fostering a sense of belonging.

By cultivating these qualities, individuals can reduce passive violence in their relationships, promote harmony, and build stronger, more compassionate connections.

Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men.



Poetry Book Summary

Silent Ripples

Exploring the Depths of "Silent Ripples": Jagjeet Sharma's Poetic Journey and its Gandhian Echoes

Poetry by: Jagjeet (Guddi) Sharma

Source: <https://www.amazon.ca/Silent-Ripples-Jagjeet-Sharma/dp/1988253969/>

Contributed by Newsletter Editors



Remarks of the Author, Jagjeet (Guddi) Sharma:

"Silent Ripples," is a poignant collection that reflects the quiet turbulence beneath the surface of our everyday lives. My book covers the societal unrest, the fog of modern distractions, especially social media, and the yearning for clarity in a world that often feels chaotic and disconnected.

In the introduction of my book, I mention that I am saddened by the direction the world is taking. Governance falters, lawlessness rises, and meaning is lost in the pursuit of shortcuts, yet there are none. The book weaves together elements of spirituality and nature, inseparable forces that illuminate our path.

Quotes:

- *"In the quiet moments, I hear the loudest truths, ripples of a past that never truly leaves."*
- *"We were a story written in disappearing ink, beautiful for a moment, then gone."*
- *"Even the longest night must bow to the dawn, a quiet promise whispered in hues of gold."*
- *"My heart is a garden where only memories grow, watered by silent tears."*
- *"The moon shared its loneliness with me, and for a moment, the darkness felt like a friend."*

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***You may never know what results come of your actions.
But if you do nothing, there will be no result.***



Preamble:

Jagjeet Sharma's poetry collection, "Silent Ripples," explores how small, quiet moments and feelings can have a significant impact on our lives. The book suggests that we should pay more attention to our inner world. Through its poems, the book explores the everyday human experiences of love, loss, hope, and memory. The main message is that just like a small pebble creates ripples in a pond, our quiet thoughts and feelings shape who we are.

Gandhian Echoes:

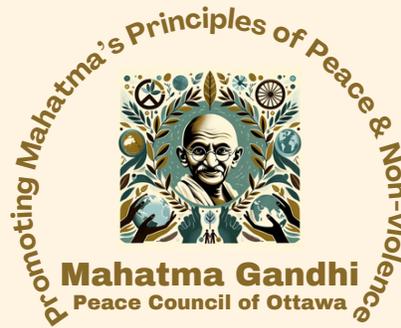
The ideas in "Silent Ripples" reflect the principles of Mahatma Gandhi in a few key ways:

- **Truth (Satya):** Gandhi believed in finding truth by looking within yourself. The book encourages this same kind of self-reflection, suggesting that our most actual feelings are found in quiet moments.
- **The Power of Small Actions (Ahimsa):** Gandhi's principle of non-violence demonstrated that small, peaceful actions can lead to significant changes. The book's title, "Silent Ripples," reflects this idea, illustrating how small, personal moments can have a profound impact on a person's life.
- **Empathy for All (Sarvodaya):** Gandhi taught the importance of caring for everyone. The poems in this book explore universal emotions such as loneliness and hope. By sharing these common experiences, the book helps us understand and connect with others, laying the foundation for empathy.

In conclusion, "Silent Ripples" reminds us that our inner lives have great power. By focusing on small, personal moments, the book beautifully illustrates how our private feelings connect to big ideas, such as truth, nonviolence, and empathy, that Gandhi championed. It shows that the smallest ripples of thought and emotion can create powerful waves of change, both within ourselves and in how we understand each other.

Points to Ponder:

- What small moments have shaped your life?
- When do you hear your own "loudest truths"?
- How can a memory be both happy and sad?
- Can a quiet act be as powerful as a loud one?
- Where do you find comfort in moments of loneliness?
- Why do we treasure moments even if they won't last?
- How do you find hope in difficult times?



The Enduring Teachings of Mahatma Gandhi

Gandhi's 11 Vows:

1. Nonviolence (Ahimsa):

Commitment to non-violence and harmlessness towards all living beings.

2. Truth (Satya): Pursuit of truth, both in thought and action.

3. Non-stealing (Asteya):

Refraining from taking anything not freely given.

4. Chastity (Brahmacharya):

Practicing self-discipline and control over desires.

5. Non-possession (Aparigraha):

Embracing simplicity and minimizing possessions to only what is necessary.

6. Body-labor (Sharirashrama):

Valuing physical labor as a means to sustain oneself.

7. Diet (Aswada):

Advocating for a simple and healthy diet, mindful of the impact on the body and environment.

8. Fearlessness (Abhaya):

Cultivating courage to stand by one's convictions and truth.

9. Equal respect for all religions (Sarva Dharma Samanatva):

Promoting religious tolerance and understanding.

10. Economic strategy (Swadeshi):

Prioritizing local economies and self-sufficiency.

11. Untouchability (Asprishyatanivaran):

Opposing caste discrimination and advocating for equality and respect for all individuals, regardless of their social status.

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the Peace Council:
www.gandhiji.ca/joinus



**"Be the change
you wish to see in
the world."**

This simple statement reflects Gandhi's belief in personal responsibility, action, and the power of individual transformation as a catalyst for societal change. It urges everyone to embody the values they wish to see in society, emphasizing that real change starts with oneself.