

Value Insight

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Bi-Monthly

Ahimsa

- Tryst with Non-Violence
- The Way to Humanity
- Symbols of Peace



A bi-monthly magazine of
Foundation for Restoration of National Values (FRNV)
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IN LOVING MEMORY



Shri Satish Kumar (06.01.1942 - 15.01.2024)

Illustrious Sri Satish Kumar was born on the 6th of January 1942. Within five years of his birth, his father passed away leaving young Satish and his mother to deal with the world. Hardworking and studious, Satish Kumar as a student won scholarships and therefore supported much of his education. In addition he taught students to augment the family income. Soon he joined the Delhi College of Engineering and graduated in flying colors.

As an Engineer his career was remarkable. Gaining the confidence of his seniors with his unfailing integrity, Shri Satish Kumar, qualified as an IRSEE officer and held many responsible positions in the Railways. He was one of the key persons, holding the post of Director, in the execution of the Delhi metro and this led him to be sought after by many States to advise and guide their metro plans within India and outside, including Bangladesh.

His successful career had two dimensions: skill and righteousness. The second integral part of his character made him an invaluable Life member of the Foundation for the Restoration of National Values. As Vice President, he guided the foundation's activities and was editor of the journal brought out by the organization. An energetic yet soft spoken gentleman, he regularly read the Bhagwat Gita and tried to imbibe its teachings in his professional as well as personal life. Among the many awards and recognitions that were awarded to Sri Satish Kumar are: Eminent Engineer by IET (Institution of Engineering and Technology), UK; Global Alumni Excellence Award by DTU (Delhi Technological University) and Lifetime Achievement Award by Institution of Engineers (India). Sh. Satish Kumar is survived by his wife Smt Saroj Kumar; daughter and son-in-law Dr. Shikha and Dr. Sameer, son and daughter-in law Sh. Salil and Smt. Kritika and grandchildren Bhuvi, Aarav and Virraaj.

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Aruna Srinivasan is a journalist, columnist and an author. She writes both in English and Tamil on subjects ranging from business management, current affairs and social issues. Her works have appeared in mainstream newspapers and magazines in India and Southeast Asia. She has authored a book in Tamil on management, a book in English on Women in Tamil Fiction and has edited an online Tamil magazine, "Thisaigal." She has also presented a breakfast talk series for All India Radio. 'Cosmic Dots', a novel, is her latest work.



**Jishnu
Devvarma**

Jishnu Devvarma, former Deputy Chief Minister of Tripura (2018 to March 2023) held the portfolios of Finance, Rural Development, Panchayat, Power, Planning and Co-ordination, Science and Technology. He pioneered the concept of Bio- village 2.0 As Minister for Power he devised a scheme "Gramin Bazaar Alok Yojana" to light up remote rural tribal markets so that the people are able to work during the day and sell their produce in the evening. He was honored by the State Government with Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Award in 2023 for contributing to the field of art, culture and development. He has also authored two books and written numerous articles on various topics.



**Prema
Raghavan**

Prema Raghavan is a writer, teacher, counsellor. She did her B.Ed at SNDT, MSW at Nirmala Niketan and studied Methodology at TISS and Nature Cure under Lakshman Sarma which she has been practicing for the last 4 decades using herbal remedies. She also learnt yoga at the Bihar School of Yoga and has authored 2 books, 'Living in Rhythm with Nature' and 'A Journey with a Special Traveler'.



Sanjay Joshi

Sanjay Joshi is a Social Development Specialist. A graduate in Commerce, a gold medalist in Law, and a postgraduate in LLM in International Human Rights Law, University of Essex, England, he also holds a Master's degree in Development Studies, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, Holland. He has worked with local, national and international NGOs covering issues like Human Rights, Education, Child Rights & Protection, Environment, National and International Relief & Rehabilitation Work, Corporate Social Responsibility, Children's Home Management, School & College Management, Hospital Management and Research.



**Commander
S. Mohan**

Commander S. Mohan Sought voluntary retirement from the Indian Navy after an exciting sea-going career of a quarter century as an electronics engineer. Apart from supervising construction of new warships and project management of ship-construction whilst posted in shore assignments, during his sea-going tenures he was Head of the Electrical Department on board a missile-frigate, an anti-submarine frigate (INS KIRPAN), and mine-sweepers.



**Sudhamahi
Regunathan**

Sudhamahi Regunathan is former Vice Chancellor of Jain Vishva University in Ladnun, Rajasthan. She is an author and translator and has over 25 published works to her credit. Her writings are mainly on culture and religion. Her latest published work, *Unveil Your Greatness* was published in 2022.

Readers Write



“ Value Insight is a magazine that promotes the concept of “*Vasudhaiva Kumbhakam*” which means the whole world is one family. The magazine focuses on values that go beyond survival and enrich our lives. These values are universal and transcend religious and cultural differences. They also help us solve the problems that we face as a society.

The magazine offers practical guidelines for moral development. There are three levels of morality: do no harm, elevate others and yourself, and sacrifice for others and society. If we can do this with love and kindness, we are the best kind of people.

Value Insight is a valuable resource for anyone who wants to learn and practice these values. I especially recommend it for educational institutions, so that they can instil these values in young minds. ”

Best Wishes
Prema Raghavan
Vadodara, Gujarat

“ The Issue of Value Insight on "Righteousness " is a very rare collection of articles written by experienced writers from various walks of life. The style of writing is so lucid and innovative that a reader enters in a unique state of self- reflection. But the beauty of the entire contents is its strong message, positivism, and hope.

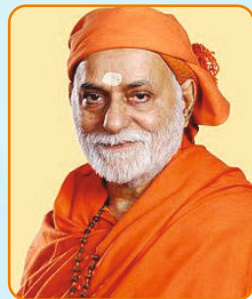
Other regular features on Swami Vivekananda, Children's Corner, Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha, From President 's Desk also give a specific road map for FRNV as a whole.

It will be a great initiative by Regional Chapters of FRNV if they translate some selected topics on various themes of all six issues of Value Insights (2023) and publish it in their local language so that the message of FRNV can reach very far and wide. ”

Dr. Jibitesh Rath,
Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Viveka: The Fundamental Quality of a Seeker

Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha, a well-known exponent of spiritual treasures like Bhagavad Gita, is the head of Narayanashrama Tapovanam, Trichur, Kerala. He has provided inspiration to people across the globe including corporate leaders on ethical practices.



Poojya Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha

Yesterday I began speaking about the qualities of the seeker. Earlier also, I happened to mention that there are some prerequisites to enquire into *brahmavidya*.

Vidya means knowledge, *Brahman* means the Supreme reality. The Supreme reality can be interpreted in two ways – it is the source of everything and it is the finale of everything. All the water sources in the earth, maybe rivers, lakes, tanks, wells etc., if you go into the source of all these water collections, you will find, it is the sea. From the sea, the water rises in the form of vapour, and the vapour travels in the sky, gets cooled, comes back in the higher altitudes in the form of snow, in the lower altitudes they start hovering in the form of clouds, they get cooled and they start shedding. And this water is what wets the surface of the

earth, becomes the sub-soil water, river etc. So the source of all this water is the sea and you will find, ultimately, whenever there is a water flow, the flow will finally have to go to the sea. It is more evident in the case of rivers. So the oceans are not merely the source of water, they are also the terminus of water. In the same manner, you will find, the Supreme reality is that which survives when the whole visible universe is destroyed. When everything is reduced into its final form, what happens, it survives. So what is the ultimate nature of all substances that we see in this world? That is called the Supreme reality. Another is the source of everything including creation. That is called Brahman.

Vidya means knowledge. The knowledge relating to, or the

knowledge, the pursuit of which will expose to you and make you realise, understand what is the Supreme reality called Brahman, this is called brahmavidya. Now in order to take up and pursue brahmavidya, is there any quality or qualification? I said there are some prerequisites and viveka is one.

We generally have viveka because it is an inevitable quality of human, particularly of our intelligence. But generally the viveka is to go into some of the functional and interactional details of substances, persons and the like. For e.g, I said the eyes are always distinguishing between colours. The ears are distinguishing between sounds. But what kind of a viveka we mean in the case of a seeker? That viveka is focused in order to find out – of all the substances including our body with which we live in the world, is there anything permanent and lasting? Because we find everything is changing. The earth is changing, air is changing, water is changing, our own body is changing, mind is changing, intelligence is changing, ego also has its undulations, so the gross and subtle things which constitute the universe are found to be constantly in a state of flux,

change. So, the question necessarily arises; our body itself is changeful and whatever we acquire with this body, they are also changeful. So changefulness multiplied by changefulness will only become changeful squared. And what is meant by a change – mark my words - what is meant by a change? Whatever is now, it becomes extinct and in its place something else comes. So change implies extinction and emergence. Though we call it change, it is actually “whatever is the present form of a substance, that disappears and something else in its place arises.” So every change implies destruction. So the whole world including our body is destructive. It is getting destroyed. Naturally the question arises; what is this? Should I not have something indestructible, something which does not change off? In the sensory level, we may be needing changefulness but for our real strength and real fulfillment, I must find something lasting. Is there anything like that? So, we must be able to enquire into and find out, what is real and what is unreal.

Anything unreal cannot exist by itself, because it goes on changing. So the changeful element is always

supported by a changeless base or substratum. As you find in the running of a car or a train, the wheels are moving very fast. If they have to move very fast, they must have an unmoving solid, rigid rail or road. The same applies to everything. No change can be there except when related to, supported by a changeless substratum. What is that changeless factor? Is there anything outside? The outside universe is endless, so we cannot travel everywhere and find out.

The outside universe itself is perceived, projected and reflected in our mind, so let us go into our own personality and find out whether there is anything changeless. Body is changeful, mind is changeful, intelligence is changeful, ego also is subject to fluctuations. So the question arises: how can the whole changeful aggregate be there, unless it is supported by a changeless nucleus or a centre or a support. When we start thinking in this manner, we have a ready answer.

Ever since birth, when we began to speak, we started saying “I”, the first personal pronoun and we started saying I, I, I, I, and we continue to say that. Yesterday “I” was. Today

“I” am. Tomorrow “I” shall be. “I” saw you five years back. You are coming for the first time after that. So in order to cognize, understand the changes in the ego, in the intelligence, in the mind, in the body, there must be a constant factor. That constant factor is what we refer to as “I”. And in our experience the “I” is changeless. The “I” does not change at all. When my height increased, I did not increase. When I become sick, I don't become sick. When I become blind, my eyes become blind. I am not becoming blind. All the things like body, mind, intelligence, and ego, I refer to as mine. “Mine” is a possessive case. The possessive case always refers to something different from me. “I” is the nominative. Only when the “I” is there, the mind can be. Any action can proceed only from an actor. Action is a face of expression of the actor. So, I can walk, I can jump, I can sit, I can lie, I can see, I can hear, I can think, I can understand, I can be proud, egotistic. Only when the “I” remains constantly, all these different activities can be possible.

So we are able to find something changeless in us. Now, try to develop your thought and find out whether you can get into the arena of the “I”.

So, our shastras say, the Supreme reality is the *atma*, the Self. And what is the Self? Mark my words. *aham pratyaya gocharah* -It is that which is denoted by the term “I”. “I” is a ready realisation or experience. Everybody refers to it. You cannot refer to something non-existent (as I) and still continue to exist. So, there is something and we denote it in the form of “I”. Try to get into that arena and find out what this “I” in reality is and what is its magnitude, what is its potential and what are the different qualities it has.

Now this is called *nitya-anitya vastu vivekah*. Viveka, no doubt, but applied to this particular point – “is there anything distinct and changeless in the whole universe different from the changefuls, the senses perceive and interact with” This kind of a viveka is the first and the last quality everybody must have. In the case of this viveka, what does

it do? It sharpens your intelligence, it makes your faculties subtler and more perceptive. I always tell children, if you read a subject for one hour and understand, if you become a vedantically inclined boy or girl, you will find you can read and understand it, if not in 30 minutes, at least in 40 minutes. Because the very understanding process is rarefied, it is touched up and its efficiency increases. So this is the fundamental quality of a seeker.

Harih Om Tat Sat. Jai Guru. Jai Guru.

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SUBHASHITAM

अहिंसा परमो धर्मस्तथाहिंसा परो दमः ।
अहिंसा परमं दानं अहिंसा परमं तपः ॥

Non-violence is the supreme religion, as also the best self-control.
It is the most excellent charity as also the pinnacle of austerities.

अहिंसा ही सर्वोत्तम धर्म है तथा सर्वश्रेष्ठ आत्म-संयम है ।
वह सर्वोच्च दान है तथा श्रेष्ठतम तपस्या भी वही है ।



From the President's Desk



This month witnessed a historical event in the form of the construction and consecration of the temple in Ayodhya. The exuberance with which people welcomed this event left one feeling their felt need has been fulfilled. It is indeed a proud moment for us as it connects us with our hoary past.

At the same time it raises many questions in our conduct, culture and discipline. Two incidents that took place recently come to my mind. One is about a plane which caught fire while landing in an airport in Japan and the other was a fire accident that took place in a high rise building in Delhi. When the plane was burning and could have exploded any time, the passengers did not lose their cool. They observed extreme discipline and got out of the plane as directed by the crew, who also escaped unhurt. In the fire accident in Delhi chaos prevailed and as a result five people perished. We lost them not because of the fire, but because of the stampede and unruliness that prevailed. Therefore, the question arises, as to why in a country with long and continuous tradition and culture, people could not behave in a disciplined and unselfish manner. Whereas another country could follow their traditional culture and behave in a most admirable way. Where did we lose our discipline and character though we are all the time boasting of our past. We have to think about this seriously and sincerely work to restore qualities of discipline and unselfishness in our nation.

This question has presented often itself in discussions of the Governing Body. One of the active participants was Sri Satish Kumar, our Vice President. He was sensitive in his understanding of the need for ethical behaviour and conduct. We have lost a man who not only believed in what he said but lived it as well. We, at FRNV will miss him dearly, but his thoughts will always voice themselves in our minds. Our prayers for strength to his family who too will continue to be guided by the legacy of his ever readiness to learn and be helpful to all. Om Shanti.

S. Regunathan
President (FRNV)



Tryst with Non-Violence

Aruna Srinivasan

Non-violence and satyagraha are the two key concepts that Mahatma Gandhi used to fight for justice and freedom and inspire millions of people around the world.

The year was 1891. A young Indian barrister had just returned from England finishing his law studies. In Hindu orthodox communities in those days, foreign travels were banned and those who went against this tradition were excommunicated.

This meant that this young barrister's relatives should not entertain him in their homes; he could not so much as drink water in their houses. Although his relatives were willing to evade this prohibition, he didn't encourage it since it was not in his grain to do something in secret that he would not do in public. He didn't revolt against the ban either, nor did he try to seek readmission to the community. He

respected the community rules and accepted the punishment without any resentment or resistance. He later wrote in his autobiography, "I have experienced nothing but affection and generosity from the general body of the section that still regards me as excommunicated.

They have even helped me in my work, without ever expecting me to do anything for the caste. It is my conviction that all these good things are due to my non- resistance. Had I agitated for being admitted to the caste, had I attempted to divide it into more camps, had I provoked the caste men, they would surely have retaliated, and instead of steering

clear of the storm, I should on arrival from England, have found myself in a whirlpool of agitation, and perhaps

a party to dissimulation.”



This was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's first tryst with the concept of non-resistance, a thought which eventually paved the way to his other concepts of

passive resistance and non-violent resistance which he applied to achieve his goals of realizing social and political justice later in his life. It was during his life in South Africa, that he coined the word “Satyagraha”, adapting a winning entry from a list of suggestions that he received for a competition he had announced to suggest a word for his idea of non-violent struggle. His

Satyagraha got India free from Britain.

And the world picked up on the idea from where he left. Today, the idea of Democracy and the power of people has taken root. People take to the streets to voice their dissent rather than resort to civil wars and violence. After 77 years of India's freedom that Gandhi fought for and 76 years after his assassination, the word Satyagraha - or the spirit of it - still holds sway to achieve political transitions or to make governments listen to people's voices.

Changes of government have come about with peaceful means without bloodshed. In Myanmar for instance,



the Military rulers after five decades, caved into international pressure and Aung San Suu Kyi's peaceful

struggle to conduct general elections in 2010 allowing multiple parties to contest. By 2015, Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy came to power with an

and paved the way for full democratization of the country. Soon revolutions broke out in other countries like Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain in the region.



The wave hit Iraq, Morocco and Algeria also, where people's dissatisfaction found expression in agitations and s t r e e t demonstrations. Termed as Arab Spring, these revolts were

absolute majority. In 1986, the Philippines went through a people power revolution to topple autocratic Ferdinand Marcos. Similarly, many of the countries in erstwhile USSR became sovereign nations in the 1990s through nonviolent protests. Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King (Jr), two leaders who brought political changes through peaceful means in their respective countries, have attributed their source of inspiration to Gandhi. In the 2010s, a series of protests against oppressive regimes shook the Arab world. The first protest to kick off was Tunisian Revolution which toppled out President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali

peaceful in nature though some turned violent and some were quelled with violent responses from the authorities.

Arab Spring in turn, inspired the Occupy Movements, a non-violent series of socio-political protests across the world, that fought against social and economic injustice. In some places people took to Occupy Movement to demand more effective democracy. During Occupy Wall Street Movement, protesters carried a statue of Gandhi on their shoulders to give expression to their nonviolent protest. The ripple effect of Occupy Movement spread so far and wide that at some point the Movement was

happening in 82 countries.

If Gandhi's non-violent protest is an idea on which the future generation grew up and used effectively to transform the world *sans* war, his idea of equality of races is a reality too. Apartheid today is shunned as social evil. Nelson Mandela's struggle to overthrow the South African Apartheid regime, through non-violent means is a sterling example. Although Mandela believed briefly in violent methods against the Apartheid regime, as the the African National Congress, he later continued to follow the non-violent means like civil disobedience.

Steven Pinker, author of *Enlightenment Now*, wrote that the modern world is a better place today where there are no wars anymore and where the constant deluge of innovations is making human life better. If wars are less, it can be attributed to the idea of non-violence gaining currency.

However, the world is not completely free of violence and it's not hunky dory all over. It's true that

countries don't invade each other anymore for the sake of acquiring new territories or to settle scores. But the atmosphere of negativity and animosity that triggered wars earlier hasn't changed.

On the contrary, they have morphed into different ways of violent expressions across the world. Battle lines are still drawn on simmering old hatred - based on religious, cultural and ethnic differences. And individuals, rather than sovereign nations, take responsibility to set right the wrongs - perceived or real. And thus, we continue to have violence and terrorism, the fountain head lying in powerful individuals who hold sway among the masses.

While any search on the internet browser on non-violence would yield multiple links with significant links including the ones on Mahatma Gandhi, the concept can be traced back to Jainism's first Tirthankara Rishabhdev. History has proved that violence can never be the solution to right a wrong. On the contrary, with simmering anger of the wronged, violence feeds more violence – if not immediately, it would impact with greater power over a period.



The Way to Humanity

Jishnu Devvarma

Understanding is the key;

Compassion and Kindness is the way...

The Mahabharata, one of the outstanding books of India, has multiple mentions of the phrase *Ahimsa Paramo Dharma* (अहिंसा परमो धर्म), which literally means: “non-violence is the highest moral virtue.”

***Ahimsā is the greatest dharma. Ahimsā is the greatest refuge.
Ahimsā is the highest charity. Ahimsā is the greatest tapasya (meditation)”.***

Ahimsa or non-violence is a belief that symbolizes love, genuine care, and compassion towards all living beings. The principle of ahimsa



extends far beyond avoiding or causing physical harm; it also

includes avoiding or causing harm through speech and thought. ahimsa is non-injury in mind, speech, and action towards any creature.

It is interesting that the *Mahabharata*, is itself a story of a bloody war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The *Bhagavad Gita* is a part of that great book, where Sri Krishna argues with Arjuna, (for whom he is the charioteer) to pick up his bow and fight. Arjun sees the futility of war and in killing his relatives who are on the opposite side. Sri Krishna tells him that duty is above all and on this battlefield, it's Arjuna's duty to fight and uphold his dharma - his righteousness. Therefore to quote a

passage on ahimsa or non-violence from the Mahabharata may seem somewhat inconsistent but the incidents leading to this battle, which has been described by some Western authors as a “Doomsday Epic,” needs to be looked into, in order to understand *ahimsa* (non-violence) and it's opposite *himsa* (violence).

This destructive battle of Kurukshetra culminated from various injustices meted out to the Pandavas by their cousins the Kauravas. The Pandavas were always for mediation and compromise, that is *ahimsa* . To avoid war they were ready to settle for even five villages leaving all claims of the kingdom. The Kauravas, on the other hand, refused to relent and even concede an inch of land without a war. They were arrogant and selfish; there was *himsa* or violence in their minds. Therefore non-violence or violence is not only a matter of action but also of the mind or thought process. After all it is the mind and the thought process that triggers action. When non-violence fails due to arrogance, ego, selfishness and greed, then violence takes over and the result is sheer destruction. There is no victor or vanquished. Each one then is only required to do his or her duty, to uphold their righteousness, without pondering over the outcome. The outcome is already decided.

“*Satyamev Jayate* (truth shall triumph). Failure of ahimsa leads to destruction. The Mahabharata - “The Doomsday Epic” therefore proclaims “*Ahimsā* is the greatest dharma. *Ahimsā* is the greatest refuge. *Ahimsā* is the highest charity. *Ahimsā* is the greatest Tapasya (meditation)”. This holds true also in Buddhism and Jainism.

The concept of non-violence or ahimsa was already there in the Indian thought process, highlighted not only in the Mahabharata but also other texts. It was, however, Mahatma Gandhi who used non-violence as a means or, one could say, as the “*Brahmastra*” against exploitation and domination of a colonial empire, which boasted that the “sun never sets” on it. The Mahatma was well versed in the scriptures like the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, etc. He accepted these as valid. He once declared, “Every fiber of my being is Hindu,” in 'Young India' in 1924 .He strongly believed in dharma, as he envisaged India as a nation built with dharma as its goal and he believed that the only path leading to it was ahimsa. At his prayer meetings the Ramdhun (song of Lord Ram) was his favorite bhajan in Gujarati, “*Vaisnav janato teney kahin yeh rey.....*” Meaning, “ Vaisnav (truly devoted) are those who know the pain of others” and went on to add, “They are the ones who help others in their

sorrows but are far from pride.” He therefore gave non-violence a new meaning - that it was not only action but also a state of mind. Gandhi added a new dimension to ahimsa - compassion.



Gandhi went on to show the world that non-violence was not a passive state of mind, it was not something that allowed for things to remain as they are; ahimsa for him was compassion so it had to be against discrimination, domination and exploitation. It was therefore essential for ahimsa to stand with the sufferers and those discriminated against. Not only stand with them but also resist the forces that caused suffering and discrimination and above all resist all forces of himsa or violence. He developed various techniques or means of resistance. When resistance then was widely done through the gun, he proclaimed that it was not possible to root out violence with violence. He said, “An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind”. Professor Gene Sharp, a leading scholar on non-violent resistance, uses the following definition in his publication, 'The

Politics of Nonviolent Action':

“Nonviolent action is a technique by which people, who reject passivity and submission, and who see struggle as essential, can wage their conflict without violence. Non-violent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict. It is one response to the problem of how to act effectively in politics, especially how to wield powers effectively.”

The central theme or concept in Gandhian philosophy of non-violence is *Satyagrah*. It is a technique or tool of nonviolent action. Satyagraha was developed by Gandhi in South Africa to give the Indian population there a weapon with which to resist the injustices being perpetrated upon it by the colonial government. At its heart is non-violence. An attempt is made to convert, persuade or win over the opponent. It involves applying the forces of both reason and conscience simultaneously. Non-violence or ahimsa is equally a philosophy of self-transformation. The individual's task is to make a sincere attempt to live according to the principles of truth and non-violence. Its fundamental tenets are therefore moral. They include - resisting injustice, developing a spirit of service, selflessness and sacrifice, emphasizing one's responsibilities rather than rights, self-discipline and attempting to maintain truthful and

non-violent relations with others. Simplicity of life-style, not poverty, because poverty breeds discrimination, inequality and that leads to violence.

In 1947 at the hour of Indian independence the country became independent but bifurcated in the name of religion. It was indeed a sad moment for Gandhi, the staunch believer in ahimsa that riots had broken out with people killing one another in thousands; millions lost their homes but he held on trying to bring sanity in that dark hour. He stood steadfast like a towering rock, holding onto his faith - non-violence. An enthusiastic supporter came up to him saying, "Gandhiji, at last our non-violent army has won against the powerful British," Gandhi sadly replied, "Yes, but it has also defeated and dethroned its general." The Mahatma the apostle of non-violence was not defeated but his men abandoned him, as they were fatigued by long drawn agitations and movements and somewhat impatient to get into power. Jinnah



defeated these leaders and not the Mahatma. His faith in non-violence was not all shaken; it was only that his cry for ahimsa fell on deaf ears. The country that followed

the path of non-violence and satyagraha regardless of caste, community or creed was partitioned on the basis of religion and it was a violent division.

Albert Einstein described Gandhi as "A leader of his people, unsupported by any outward authority; a politician whose success rests not upon craft, nor upon mastery of the technical devices, but simply on the convincing power of his personality; a victorious fighter, who has always scorned the use of force; a man of wisdom and humility; armed with resolve and inflexible consistency; who has devoted all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot; a man who has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being, and thus at all times superior." He ended his greetings with those famous words: "Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood, walked upon this earth." In times to come many emulated the Gandhian way of nonviolent resistance and protest; be it Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King jr and many more all over the globe. The peaceful and silent marches or the candle light vigils of today are but reflections of non-violent protests and resistance to injustice through technique of Satyagraha - "The Way of Truth"



The Focus is on YOU

Prema Raghavan

*If you learn to be nonviolent with yourself,
you can be nonviolent with the world*

Just as all beginnings are made at home, so too with nonviolence. It begins with being nonviolent with oneself. Whenever I am upset and disappointed with people or circumstances, I observe silence. I also write down my feelings on a piece of paper and then burn it; this symbolic act removes any traces of negativity in my mind. I follow a strict diet and do barefoot walking on the lawn for forty minutes. When I calm down, I pray for the person who

harmed me. This process works like a miracle; I see this as a practical, deliberate and responsive form of meditation.

If we wish to become non-violent towards the world, we will first need to be non-violent to ourselves. That our behaviour towards others is directly connected to how we deal with ourselves is a profound insight. When we harbour resentment or are judgemental of others, we end up creating negativity within ourselves

and this is self-violence.

Whenever one feels anger, guilt, shame or being judgemental, one should pause, observe one's mind and practise stopping that impulse as soon as it arises.

When we begin to reflect on how we inflict violence upon ourselves in everyday life, we will notice how subtly it operates, often subconsciously.

Another subtle form of violence towards oneself is to force oneself to do something that does not feel right or natural. It could be as simple as practising yoga, fulfilling a responsibility or practising one's profession; if one feels forced to do these things, the mind will be resentful and frustrated.

On the other hand, performing one's tasks with love and passion fills the mind with happiness and peace. Only when you begin to understand and overcome violence within yourself will you be able to conquer violence towards others. Practise cultivating compassion and respect towards all beings and learn to accept others, even when they create a stir-up within you.

Abjuring physical violence is only a small, albeit more obvious, aspect of *ahimsa*. Even one who has been physically violent in one's life will, upon due contemplation, be able to



trace that violent behaviour to one's thought patterns and psychological make-up.

Anytime you judge or try to

Other practical ways in which you can cultivate non-violence towards the world

- Humanitarian work – try to give without expecting anything in return.
- Respect nature – for example, pick up a piece of trash you see on the road and dispose it off responsibly, rather than just judging the person who threw it there and doing nothing about it.
- Non-violence towards animals – if you don't want to go vegan or vegetarian, at least minimize your meat intake.

manipulate others (i.e. trying to control their behaviour in line with your views), you are being violent. Again, simply practise identifying and stopping that impulse as soon as it arises.

Like any other skill or behaviour, non-violence can be developed over time with patience, compassion, and continuous practice.

I am reminded of a friend and his wife who suffered from Parkinson's disease. Their children were settled abroad. They no longer needed the service of their driver who had lost his young wife to cancer and had two young daughters to take care of. My friend felt it wouldn't be fair to do anything to compound his problems. He trained the driver to perform nursing services and run all the errands of the household for the same salary as before. Besides, he requested many of his friends to make use of his driver whenever they needed to hire one. This sensitive and compassionate approach worked well for both the parties concerned.

There is something fundamental about human nature due to which we feel at peace with *ahimsa* and we are disturbed by *himsa*. By not embracing *ahimsa* we risk compromising our humanity. Verily, the full adoption of non-violence by all of society could rewrite the story

of human destiny.

The cardinal importance of *ahimsa* in Hinduism cannot be over emphasised. To quote just one reference is a verse from the Mahabharata which says *ahimsa* is the highest virtue, the highest self-control, the greatest gift, the best penance, the highest sacrifice, the finest strength, the greatest friend, the greatest happiness, the highest truth and the greatest teaching. It is non-injury in thought, speech or action towards any creature. In addition, the law of *karma* teaches that whatever we do through thought, word and deed will return to us in this life or the next. Causing harm to another in any form will eventually revert to us with equal or amplified intensity.

We live in times when selfishness is growing in this world. A lot of people around us are affected by this knowingly or unknowingly, and our next generation is also being influenced by it. Wealthy people seek to control the rest of the world. One nation wishes to dominate another. We see ongoing wars that have behind them centuries of enmity and bitterness. There are many people in this world who wish to live in peace and harmony, but do not get the opportunity because of circumstances around them. At the

same time, there is always a significant section of the population waiting for opportunities to take revenge and get even. As the Bhagavad Geeta says, “*vinaasha-kaalevipareeta-buddhih*”. A mind that harbours anger and resentment becomes one's own enemy and results in one's destruction.

Non-violence recognises that evil-doers are also victims and are not fundamentally evil. The nonviolent

resister seeks to defeat evil, not people. Non-violence holds that suffering can educate and transform and therefore accepts suffering without retaliation.

Non-violence rests upon the pillars of Respect, Understanding, Acceptance, Appreciation and Compassion. Imbibing these five pillars can help us practice *ahimsa* in our daily lives without much difficulty.

Types of Violence in Society

Broadly, we see nine types of violence and abuse around us:

1. Physical violence occurs when one uses a part of one's body or an object to injure or control someone.
2. Sexual violence occurs when a person is forced to take part in sexual activity.
3. Emotional violence occurs when someone says or does something to make a person feel stupid or worthless.
4. Psychological violence occurs when someone uses threats and causes fear in an individual to gain control.
5. Religious violence occurs when someone uses or abuses an individual's religious beliefs to manipulate, dominate or control that person, especially with the aim of religious conversion.
6. Cultural violence occurs when an individual is harmed or discriminated against because of practices that are part of her or his culture or tradition.
7. Verbal abuse occurs when someone uses language, verbal or written, to cause harm to an individual.
8. Financial abuse occurs when someone controls or misuses an individual's financial resources without the person's consent.
9. Abuse by way of neglect occurs when someone has the responsibility to provide care or assistance for an individual but does not.

Symbols of Peace

Exploring some of the most iconic symbols of non-violence and peace across different cultures...

Symbols of non-violence and peace are integral to various cultures around the world, embodying the universal aspiration for harmony, understanding, and unity. These symbols serve as powerful reminders of the human desire for peaceful coexistence and have been used throughout history to inspire, guide, and promote non-violent resistance.

The concept of non-violence is embodied in the symbol of the "Dove of Peace," which has a global significance.



The image of a white dove carrying an olive branch is recognized across cultures as a universal emblem of peace. In Christianity, it symbolizes the Holy Spirit and is

associated with the story of Noah's Ark. In ancient Greece, the goddess Athena, associated with wisdom and peace, was often depicted with a dove. The symbol of the dove has transcended religious and cultural boundaries to become a universally recognized icon of peace.

In Buddhism, the "Dharmachakra" or the "Wheel of Dharma" symbolizes the teachings of the Buddha, including non-violence, compassion, and mindfulness. The wheel's eight spokes represent the Noble Eightfold Path, which guides practitioners



towards enlightenment and inner peace. The image of the Bodhi tree, under which the Buddha attained enlightenment, also serves as a potent symbol of peace and non-violence in Buddhist cultures.



In Hinduism, the symbol of "Ahimsa" is deeply rooted in the spiritual and philosophical traditions of

India. Ahimsa, which means non-violence or non-harming, is exemplified by the image of a lotus flower, representing purity and spiritual awakening.

This symbol is closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi, who adopted Ahimsa as a guiding principle in his non-violent struggle for India's independence. The spinning wheel, known as the "Charkha," is another potent symbol used by Gandhi to promote self-sufficiency and non-violent resistance.

Moving to the Middle East, the "Hand of Fatima" is a widely recognized symbol of protection and peace in Islamic and North African cultures. Also known as the "Hamsa," this hand-shaped amulet is believed to ward off the evil eye and bring blessings, harmony, and protection to the wearer. The five fingers of the hand symbolize the Five Pillars of Islam, emphasizing the virtues of faith,





prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage.

In Native American culture, the "Peace Pipe" or

"Calumet" holds great significance as a symbol of peace and unity. The smoking of the calumet was a sacred ritual used to seal treaties and agreements, symbolizing a commitment to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among tribes. The pipe itself was intricately decorated with symbols representing harmony, balance, and respect for the natural world.



In the African tradition, the "Adinkra" symbols of the Akan people in Ghana convey profound messages of peace, wisdom, and cultural

values. The "Dwennimmen" symbol, or ram's horns, represents humility and strength, emphasizing the importance of using one's strength for constructive rather than destructive purposes. The "Sankofa" symbol, depicted as a bird with its head turned backwards, encourages learning from the past to build a better future, reflecting the essence of non-violence and reconciliation.



In East Asian cultures, the "Yin and Yang" symbol embodies the harmony of opposites and the balance between conflicting forces. This Taoist symbol

represents the interconnectedness of all things and conveys the idea of living in peace and equilibrium with the natural

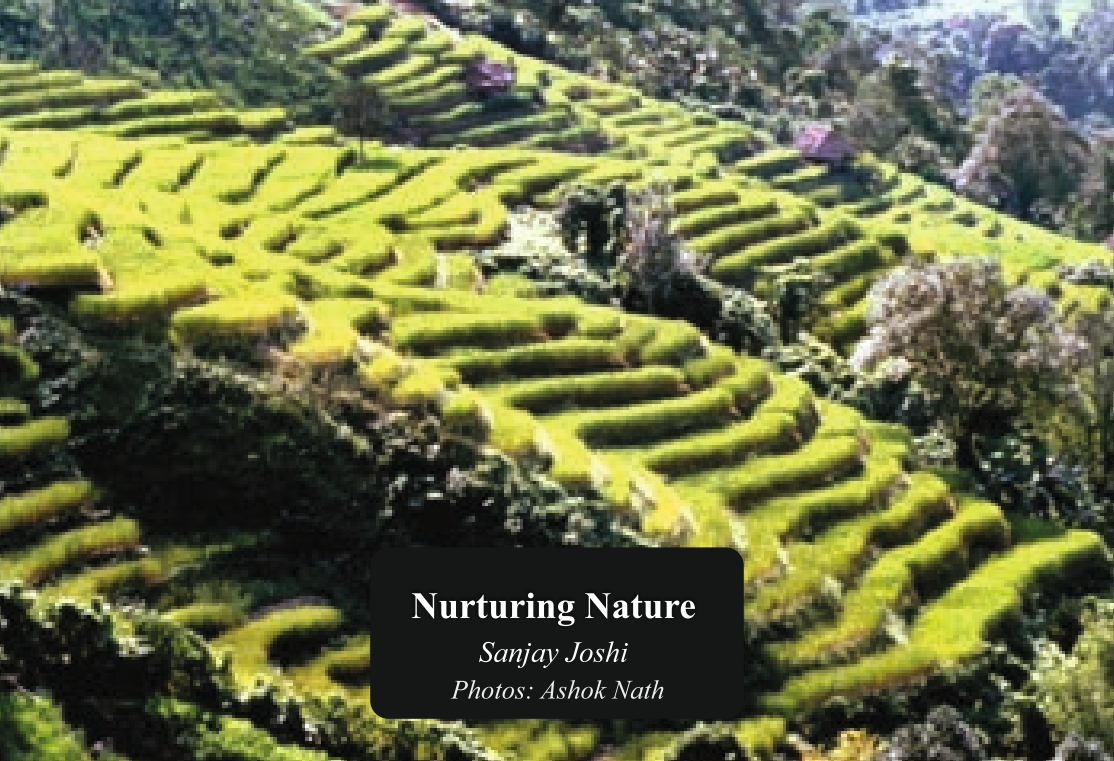
world. The lotus flower is also highly regarded in East Asia, symbolizing purity, enlightenment, and the potential for spiritual growth amid challenging circumstances.

In the Western world, the "Olive Branch" has been a symbol of peace since ancient times, dating back to ancient Greek and Roman traditions. In Greek mythology, the goddess Athena presented an olive tree to the city of Athens as a symbol of peace and prosperity. This association continued into the Roman Empire, where victorious armies would carry olive branches to symbolize their peaceful intentions. The image of the olive branch remains a universal symbol of peace and reconciliation to this day.

In modern times, the "Peace Sign" or "Peace Symbol" has become a ubiquitous icon of non-violence and anti-war activism. Designed in 1958 by British artist Gerald Holtom, the symbol combines the semaphore letters "N" and "D" (standing for "nuclear disarmament") within a circle, creating an enduring emblem of peace and social justice movements worldwide.

These symbols of non-violence and peace not only reflect the cultural diversity of humanity but also highlight the universal yearning for peaceful coexistence and understanding. They serve as enduring reminders of the human capacity for compassion, empathy, and reconciliation, transcending linguistic, religious, and geographical boundaries.





Nurturing Nature

Sanjay Joshi

Photos: Ashok Nath

A call for environmental nonviolence - a prerequisite for human survival...

Have we truly comprehended the extent of our desensitization to environmental abuse? Pollution of air, water, and biodiversity, in general, has adversely affected our health, posing a threat to our social fabric. Within the intricate tapestry of human existence, the environment plays a pivotal role by providing sustenance and the very air we breathe. However, the persistent assault on our planet, reminiscent of centuries of violence, jeopardizes the delicate balance of our ecosystem. As India strides into the 21st century, the nation grapples with the consequences of its rapid development, with the scars of

environmental violence becoming increasingly evident. Blasting mountains for resources, drowning in plastic waste, and saturating agricultural lands with harmful pesticides – these practices undermine the very foundation of human survival. In a nation deeply rooted in the principles of Ahimsa (nonviolence), the imperative to embrace a harmonious relationship with the environment has never been more pressing.

Unveiling the Environmental Impact of Colonialism and Industrialization in India:

India's historical landscape reveals a tapestry of interconnected



ecosystems that thrived in symbiosis with its people. However, the colonial era and subsequent industrialization have left an enduring legacy of environmental exploitation. Mountains once considered sacred are now blasted apart for coal and minerals, depleting biodiversity and disrupting local communities. Rivers, the lifelines of the nation, bear the brunt of industrial effluents and urban waste, jeopardizing not only ecosystems but also the health of millions.

Plastic Menace and Beyond:

The proliferation of plastic in modern life has become a symbol of environmental irresponsibility. In recent years, India has witnessed a surge in plastic consumption, exacerbating the global environmental crisis. Urban centers grapple with overflowing landfills, and water bodies choke on plastic pollution. Acknowledging this, the Indian government has launched initiatives such as the Single-Use Plastics (SUP) ban and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, emphasizing waste

reduction and management. However, the journey towards a plastic-free India necessitates a collective shift in consumer behaviour, encouraging sustainable alternatives and supporting innovative solutions.

Pesticides and Agricultural Practices:

Agriculture, the backbone of India's economy, has undergone transformative changes with the



Green Revolution. The widespread use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, while boosting productivity, has come at a cost. Soil degradation, water contamination, and the loss of traditional farming practices pose significant challenges. Recent initiatives like the Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, promoting organic farming, and the emphasis on sustainable agriculture in government policies signal a growing awareness of the need for eco-friendly farming practices.

Solutions for Sustainable Coexistence:

Addressing environmental violence requires a fundamental re-evaluation of our lifestyles. The ethos of nonviolence (Ahimsa) ingrained in India's cultural fabric can guide us towards sustainable living. Embracing simplicity, reducing consumption, and adopting eco-friendly practices are essential components of a nonviolent lifestyle. From renewable energy adoption to mindful consumption, each individual's choices can collectively contribute to a healthier planet. India's diverse population holds the key to ushering in a new era



of nonviolence towards the environment. Recent developments in the renewable energy sector, with ambitious targets set under the National Solar Mission and the push for wind energy projects, showcase India's commitment to a cleaner, greener future. Additionally, the promotion of electric vehicles and sustainable public transportation aims to curb air pollution in densely populated urban centres.

Some of the steps in strengthening and promoting sustainable coexistence include the following:

Renewable Energy Transition:

- **Expansion of Solar and Wind Power:** Increase investments and incentives for solar and wind energy projects to boost the share of renewable energy in the national grid.
- **Research and Development:** Allocate resources for research and development in renewable energy technologies to enhance efficiency and reduce costs.
- **Grid Modernization:** Upgrade the power grid to accommodate the integration of renewable energy sources, ensuring a stable and reliable energy supply.
- **The National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture and the National Bamboo Mission** reflect India's commitment to sustainable energy and

agriculture practices.

Circular Economy Practices:

- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** Implement and enforce EPR policies to make manufacturers responsible for the entire life cycle of their products, including recycling and disposal.
- **Innovation in Recycling Technologies:** Invest in and promote innovative technologies for recycling, such as waste-to-energy and advanced sorting systems.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch public awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the importance of a circular economy and their role in waste reduction.
- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan's waste management initiatives and campaigns like 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, foster a circular economy mindset among citizens.**

Conservation and Reforestation:

- **Protected Area Expansion:** Identify and designate new protected areas to safeguard ecosystems and prevent habitat destruction.
- **Community Involvement:** Involve local communities in conservation efforts,



emphasizing sustainable practices that balance human needs with environmental preservation.

Afforestation in Urban Areas:

Introduce urban afforestation programs to enhance green spaces in cities and improve air quality. Moreover, initiatives like the National Afforestation Programme and Project Tiger underscore the importance of preserving natural habitats and biodiversity.

Promoting Sustainable Agriculture:

- **Diversification of Crops:** Encourage farmers to diversify their crops, promoting biodiversity and reducing



dependence on a single crop.

- **Water Conservation Techniques:** Implement water-saving technologies and practices to ensure efficient use of water resources in agriculture.
- **Support for Agroecology:** Provide support and incentives for the adoption of agroecological practices that prioritize sustainability and soil health. The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and Soil Health Card Scheme encourage farmers to adopt sustainable and organic farming methods.

Environmental Education and Advocacy:

- **Green Career Programs:** Establish programs to guide students toward careers in environmental science, conservation, and sustainable development.
- **Community Workshops:** Conduct workshops and seminars at the community level to disseminate knowledge about environmental issues and solutions.

Collaboration with NGOs: Partner with non-governmental

organizations to amplify environmental education initiatives and advocacy efforts. Recent environmental education initiatives, coupled with the inclusion of sustainability in school curricula, empower the younger generation to become stewards of the environment.

Nonviolence towards the environment is not a mere choice; it is a prerequisite for human survival. India, with its deep-rooted philosophy of living in harmony with nature, must lead the charge in fostering a sustainable future. India stands at a crucial juncture where traditional wisdom meets modern challenges. By acknowledging the historical footprint of environmental violence and embracing recent developments in sustainable practices, India can pave the way for a brighter, greener future. The essence of nonviolence towards the environment lies not only in policies and initiatives but in the choices of every citizen. Through collective efforts, India can reclaim its legacy as a guardian of nature, ensuring a sustainable and harmonious coexistence for generations to come.

A photograph of an elderly woman with glasses and a bindi, wearing a floral shirt and blue pants, hugging a large tree trunk in a forest. The background is filled with lush green foliage and sunlight filtering through the trees.

TREES ARE SANCTUARIES.

Whoever knows how to speak to
them, whoever knows how to
listen to them, can learn the
truth. - Hermann Hesse



The Gentle Way

Cdr. S. Mohan

"An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind".

– Mahatma Gandhi

From pre-biblical times(Hammurabi civilization), the rule of law was laid down in writing: A tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye -- Punishment proportionate to the offense.

On the other hand, thousands of years even before the Christian era, people in India (Bharat-varsha) eschewed violence and so, the philosophy of non-violence inevitably seeped into our psyche. Interestingly, you may be surprised to learn that for over one millennium years we have not been the aggressor in conquering others' lands! It is a different matter that we have risen to defend our home-land against foreign aggression. Why did we adopt non-violence ways? Why did our fore-fathers actively promote 'Ahimsa'? Not only is it the most effective way of achieving political and social justice, but it is a way of

living which leads to profound peace, happiness, and contentment. From the practice of Ahimsa flows other benevolent practices – truth, humility, charity, kindness, and shunning aggression, avarice and greed. In their profound wisdom, our fore-fathers propagated "*Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*" -- as the greatest Dharma!

Let us consider some prominent examples.

The name of Mahatma Gandhi has been indelibly etched in the global



list of apostles of peace. It is not difficult to surmise how deeply he was influenced by the principles he imbibed from our ancient Sanskrit works. Incidentally, his favorite hymn '*Vaishnava Jana to te ne kahiye....*' embodies his life, and its full meaning should be enjoyed by everyone, in case one has missed it. As we all know, Gandhi ji motivated millions of people in the Indian sub-continent exclusively by non-violent methods.

Gandhi's first major achievement was in 1918 when he led the Champaran and Kheda agitations of Bihar and Gujarat. (We must bear in mind that the Ist World War had just ended.) He also led the Non-Cooperation Movement, Civil Disobedience Movement, Swaraj, and Quit-India movement against the British government. In every movement, the British authorities resorted to violent means to quell the disturbance. British Indian Police mercilessly lathi-charged peacefully protesting Indians, arresting them, or even firing teargas-shells. Many hundreds of protesters faced bullets at the infamous Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Gandhi Ji responded non-violently - at great personal pain and discomfort.

When violent in-fighting occurred

between Hindus and Muslims, he had to appease the crowds urgently. It was then that he devised peaceful solutions like personally going on 40-day fasts and *maun-vrat*, to appease the fighting masses. Time and again, the British were at their wit's end and could not fathom how to deal with this "half-naked fakir" – as Winston Churchill disparagingly called Gandhi Ji. Gandhi regarded the expression as a compliment!

A recent collection of visual images from around the world reveals Gandhi's impact on popular culture as 'the conscience of humanity'. But it also demonstrates how globally identifiable the man in the loincloth is. What may not be common knowledge, however, are the reasons that spurred him on to dress the way he did. Sartorial integrity, incidentally, is a state in which one's moral well-being affects the way one dresses and presents oneself to others. To be a sartorially integrated person means to reflect the honesty of character through the dignity of bodily decorum in the face of all costs, difficulties, and imperative urges.

Finally in 1947, he secured freedom from the British empire. How? Non-violence! Imagine the disastrous consequences to India's struggle for

freedom had he resorted to a violent protest - even once! Rather, he sincerely propagated the Biblical adage “If someone smite ye on the left cheek, turn your right cheek too!”

Prominent among the many who were greatly influenced by Gandhi Ji are Martin Luther King and Nelson



Mandela. Subsequently, they too chose non-violence as their weapon to confront violence. In his momentous speech “I have a Dream” Martin Luther talked about real freedom for Negros in America. (His dream did come true when Barak Obama became the first Black to become the President of USA.)

To narrate American history for the benefit of some readers, (the younger generation may perhaps not know), in the years following 1615, thousands and thousands of Negros were shipped from Africa by the White Americans – to work as slaves on American soil. They were kept chained in irons, lashed with whips, starved, and branded with hot irons if the slaves protested working on the

white man's farms. Sad to say, future generations too remained slaves of the white man's family. The arrogant and imperious whites ruled that the blacks strictly could not intermingle with whites. The Negros had to eat at separate restaurants, travel in separate coaches in trains, and remain segregated at every social event. Such inequalities and unjust indignities persisted for hundreds of years. Thus began the American Civil War between the Southern and Northern States, ending in 1865 - with President Abraham Lincoln abolishing slavery. But it took many more years before the blacks began to be gradually accepted by the white American people.

By the early 1960s, African Americans had seen gains made through organized campaigns that placed its participants in harm's way but also garnered attention for their plight. One such campaign, the 1961 Freedom Rides, resulted in vicious beatings for many participants, but resulted in the Interstate Commerce Commission ruling that ended the practice of segregation on buses and in stations.

Similarly, the Birmingham Campaign of 1963, designed to challenge the Alabama city's segregationist policies, produced searing images of demonstrators

being beaten, attacked by dogs and blasted with high-powered water hoses. Martin Luther did not respond with violence. He moved the masses by his speeches, which emphasized non-violence at all costs. He kept Gandhi Ji as his role-model.

In 1968, Martin Luther, a Baptist Minister, led non-violent protests in support of the Negros in America. Sad to say, he got assassinated, but the movement gained unstoppable momentum, and the Blacks today enjoy social equality which was unthinkable for hundreds of years prior to Martin Luther. How did it happen? Non-violence.

Nelson Mandela, another Black man



from South Africa spent twenty-five years in jail; but what magnanimity he showed his tormentors! When he came out of jail, Mandela had no rancor, revenge, or resentment towards his White oppressors! What a remarkable practice of 'Ahimsa'! With his totally non-violent philosophies he became so popular among his people that he went on to become the President of South Africa! [By the way, following Gandhi Ji's principles, since India's independence over 60 other countries have won freedom from the British].

Rounding off this essay, although we immediately associate non-violence with Gandhi Ji, it was in fact known to us in Bharat for thousands of years. This world needs to consciously live by these principles. I am reminded of an old sloka:

*Kshama shastram kare yasya
Durjanah kim karishyati;
Atrune' patito vanhihi
Swayamevopashamyati.*

He who is armed with nothing but Kshama Will come to no grief at the hands of evil-doers;

Just as even raging fire that falls on barren land Lo and behold! Extinguishes all by itself.

A saintly philosopher, Paramacharya of Kanchi, Chandrasekhara-

Saraswati propagated beautiful and abiding principles when he said:

*Maitreem bhajata , akhila
hrujetreem
Atmavadeva paraanapi pashyatha.
Yudham tyajata, spardham tyajata,
Tyajatha pareshaam kramam
aakramanam
Daamyatha data dyadhwam
janathaah
Shreyo bhooyaan sakala janaanam.*

*“Actively laud universal friendship
and humility.
Look at others just as you consider
yourself.
Shun war, shun greed, shun avarice
and competition for power.
Give up aggression and atrocities
on others;
Restrain yourself, donate your
wealth and be kind to others
May all peoples of the world enjoy
peace and prosperity.”*

[This song was sung beautifully by Bharat Ratna Smt MS Subbalakshmi at the United Nations General Assembly during its 50th anniversary.]

In conclusion, one can definitely say that non-violence as a way of life raises humans from the crude, aggressive, animal-level of

existence to a finer and nobler level of living - whereby peace, contentment, and happiness are attained by the right way of living.



Ahimsa is the highest duty. Even if we cannot practice it in full, we must try to understand its spirit and refrain as far as is humanly possible from violence.

----Mahatma Gandhi----

Wisdom Waves... Navigating Spiritual Realms

Beneath Duality Lies the One

Sudhamahi Regunathan

*Encounters with the wise always bring some realizations,
some experiences of truth. To build on them is to follow the spiritual path.*

As I sat listening to him, I was faced with questions like: Is our day, which we give so much importance to, just the space between two periods of sleep? A short span of wakefulness



between two stretches of time when we are lost to the world! How did the Ramayana and Mahabharata, not to mention the Bhagavad Gita, spread across the length and breadth of India? What an excellent education system was it that we are unable to replicate today? Have you thought that the body is nothing but inert matter, even the senses? The body

and the sensory organs have no power to generate knowledge by the eyes see without light? What makes them function as they do? Are not the alternates *sukha* and *dukha*, products of the mind? Does not the mind create them and dissolve them? Does it come from the outer world or from the inner?

As these and similar questions enveloped me, the air seemed to clear up. A presence lightened the room.

I was meeting Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha ji in the Delhi ashram called Centre for Inner Resource Development (CIRD) in Vasundhara, Ghaziabad. Why Inner Development? Because that is what you are. You are your inner personality. All your external interactions and activities are guided by your mind which creates your

inner personality. To develop and understand that is the quest of human life.

A beautiful and well-maintained garden (every activity you do to take care of the ashram is seen as service to the Guru, one follower told me) greeted me. Does my mind associate peace with ashrams or was peace resting in that place, I do not know. There were three circular shaped buildings, the one behind me seemed to be accommodation to the followers who wished to stay there, one ahead of me, to the left was the kitchen and the dining hall while the one which lay a few steps away to the right was the assembly hall. Swamiji's talks were given here. We were meeting him in one of the rooms inside.

A smile that seemed so personally addressed to me and a twinkle in the



eye is how he greeted us. Later I realized each one of us who were in his presence had felt the same way. A

charming idealism that bordered on the purity of being childlike is how I heard him. If it were possible for him, he would take our minds, fill it with knowledge, devotion, love and the sense of service and put it back into our bodies. Day after day he repeats the same message to thousands of his followers. In each shloka of the Bhagavad Gita he finds great wisdom and joy. "Frame this in every room of your house. And keep reading it and repeating it to yourself." He told us of an instance when one of his disciples called him saying he was good at everything but all he lacked was concentration. Swamiji's solution was to tell his disciple to keep repeating the word Concentration all through the day. The disciple reported back saying he had repeated it for 32 hours and soon he had improved in his concentration.

Words represent ideas, he says. When you read texts like the Gita, you have to first by heart the verses. This is called *shravana*. After learning them by heart you reflect on them. That is *manana*. Then you internalize them. That is *nidhi dhyasana*. "Read at least 3 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita and learn it by heart," he entreates...the heart breaks. How can someone care so much for you that he repeatedly tells you how to get wiser? The resolve to

follow him strengthens. It is only devotion that can take you far and he tells you the story of Shankaracharya and how he wrote the verses of the Bhaja Govindam. Shankaracharya saw a very old man learning by heart the Dukrn karane, grammatical principles spelt out by Panini. He was so engrossed in his learning that he did not see a python inching its way towards him. "Stop," said Shankaracharya to him, "You fool, *Dukrn karane* will not be of help to you in your final moments. Pray to the Lord." As he has told us earlier, learning by heart is the first step. The old man did not have time to reach the stage of *nidhi dhyasan* and then seek the infinite within. So addressing him as a fool, Shankaracharya advises him to turn his mind towards devotion.

"There are four types of devotees," says Bhoomananda Tirtha swamiji. "The one who is in trouble and so calls to God as Draupadi did. There are those who seek knowledge and so seek God. There are others who require help to achieve something and so pray to God. And there are yet others who have attained the Knowledge of the Brahman and so seek Him, the *gyanis*. In the Bhagavad Gita Krishna says the *gyanis* are the ones he loves the most.

Who are the *gyanis*? *Gyanis* are those for whom God is the greatest love. A *Gyani* knows that everything is God. The *gyani* knows only God, there is nothing else."

A quiet settles after each of his word. Is that the voice of God? "Be loving to others. Be of service to the society. These are eternal values. They build your inner personality. The laws laid down by a Government for example is to ensure law and order, exterior discipline. They are contemporary values which change with time. Your energy has to come from within and only your values will give you that. All values are in relation to the mind and intellect. They have to be relevant and integrated to the mind and intellect. The mind handles everything. The doctors know about your physical body. Who knows about your mind? About the personality created by the mind? No one knows. Know that."

As I bend down and offer my salutations to take leave, the words echoing in my head are...do not accept anything without question...probe...the mind reflects all of the world...all of it is full of duality, beneath the waves of the ocean lies the unruffled waters, beneath the duality of the world lies the That...



Smile and the World Smiles with You !

Prema Raghavan

Pathways to Fitness



“Life is like a mirror. Smile at it and it smiles back at you.” – Peace Pilgrim

Happy and peaceful people have two things on their lips: Smile and Silence -- Smile to solve problems; Silence to avoid problems.

I was not feeling well for about ten days and lying in bed. Though the body was at rest, the mind was racing at double speed. The noise around the corona virus added to my anxiety. Suddenly, I realised that I did not stir out of the house and never smiled as well. Normally, when we go for a walk in a small city like Baroda, we smile at even strangers and say “*Jaya*

Shree Krishna”, which is the local equivalent of 'Namaste' or 'Good Morning'. I decided to go out and see the sunlight to cheer my spirit. I saw a construction worker's child smile at me and I smiled back like a reflex. Smiling not only elevated my mood, but it also changed my mood for the better. I noticed these brief interactions leading to small positive changes. My reflections on the value of a smile began that day.

If I try to think of something negative without losing my smile, I find it is not possible. Peace begins with a smile.

I used to notice the laughing club members in the garden. Even though

their laughter seemed artificial, looking at them made me laugh as well. I noticed that I began enjoying the 'fake laugh'. It reminded me that to 'smile and laugh' are such great inbuilt human assets.

Health Benefits of Smiling

A smile is free therapy. We, human beings are endowed with the great blessings of smiling and laughing. The other assets like speaking, reasoning, falling in love etc., which are special to us, have to be handled with discretion. But smiling is an absolutely safe and spontaneous comfort zone which would only strengthen us.

Smiling can be a conscious, intentional choice. Whether your smile is genuine or not, it can act on your body and mind in a variety of positive ways, offering benefits for your health, your spirit, and even the mood of people around you.

- A simple smile can trigger the release of neuropeptides that improve your neural communication, as well as neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin, which can boost your mood. Think of smiling as a natural antidepressant.
- Why is smiling important? Smiling not only offers a mood boost but helps our bodies release cortisol and endorphins that

provide numerous health benefits

- A good laugh relieves some body aches or pains, lowers blood pressure, strengthens the immune system and relieves stress.
- Laughter diffuses the tensions of daily life, builds better relationships, and makes people more youthful.

A warm smile is the universal language of kindness. We are born with the ability to smile, creating a ripple effect, yet as we age, we smile less often and think more!

Start practising your smiling skills with inner purification, you will find that you're healthier, happier, and more relaxed. Your smiling muscles connect directly to your nervous system and brain, so smiling can improve your mood.

“Just for today, smile a little more.”

— James A. Murphy

The power of perspective

Two men visit a Zen master.

The first man says: “I'm thinking of moving to this town. What's it like?”

The Zen master asks: “What was your old town like?”

The first man responds: “It was dreadful. Everyone was hateful. I hated it.”

The Zen master says: “This town is very much the same. I don't think you should move here.”

The first man leaves and the second man come in.

The second man says: “I'm thinking of moving to this town. What's it like?”

The Zen master asks: “What was your old town like?”

The second man responds: “It was wonderful. Everyone was friendly

and I was happy. Just interested in a change now.”

The Zen master says: “This town is very much the same. I think you will like it here.”

What we seek is what we find. The reasons why you do, what you do matter as much, if not more, as what you end up doing. Because they shape how you seek. So, ultimately, they'll also determine what you find.

When we smile at a situation, it allows us to embrace it for what it is instead of resisting it in the hope of something better. We can then carry that spirit wherever we go.



Swami Vivekananda

The Universal man

At the Guru's feet

S. Regunathan

The four to five years that Narendra spent with Sri Ramakrishna were of great significance, both in his internal and external journey. During this period, he lost his father, who left the family in penury and in high debt. Naren found that those who were friendly and helpful to him in his days of prosperity were not just unhelpful but even tried to avoid him. He saw how superfluous people were in their relationships and how they had no desire to help the needy.

He also realized that in the matter of spirituality, rational and intellectual pursuits has their limitations. He came to the conclusion that the teachings of Brahmo samaj were

merely dry philosophy while Hinduism was a vibrant living tradition imparting meaning to its followers. He was completely weaned away from the influence of Brahmo samaj and understood that both personal and impersonal Gods are true and real. All these changes happened at the feet of his master Sri Ramakrishna who taught them unobtrusively and provided true knowledge without forcing any argument or rigid practices. Sometime the master's silence itself was eloquent.

In turn, Sri Ramakrishna too, during this period, had assessed his prime disciple and gave him all the

importance due to a good student. Naren followed the primary rule set forth by his guru, which was not to accept anything without questioning it. Naren did not accept whatever Sri Ramakrishna said without questioning and understanding it.

The master once told some of his disciples that Narendra had extraordinary power, that in fact he had 18 powers. If anyone had even one or two powers it would be sufficient to put that person in the forefront. He predicted that Narendra would be a great spiritual power who would impact and influence the world.

The student also learnt much in the peaceful tranquil atmosphere of Panchavati of Dakshineswar. He was full of joy and youthful energy most of the time, absorbing each and every teaching of his master with full understanding and importance. Once when Sri Ramakrishna explained Vaishnavism and then he spoke of service, not help to fellow beings. Narendra exclaimed to his guru-bhaiyas that that day he had learnt one of the greatest secrets of advaita.

His respect for his master was growing everyday and one day he expressed to his friends that Sri Ramakrishna gave him love and

understood him more than his parents. This love completely changed his way of thinking as Sri Ramakrishna gently showed him that true love is a way to realize God. Sri Ramakrishna insisted that God has to be realized and experienced, but not by logic and arguments. He has also taught them that all religions are true and they only see part of the whole.

This period also saw Sri Ramakrishna being afflicted with what was first innocently understood as sore throat and turned out to be a disease which had not yet been fully understood in those days. Therefore there was no effective treatment for it. Narendra read all the material he could find about his guru's ailment and realized it was a fatal ailment. He told his guru bhaiyas that their master would very soon depart from this world as his disease had not yet found a cure. Many interpreted his suffering in abstract ways like saying that he was bearing the sins of others, that he had taken the illnesses of others and so on. Narendra believed that any human body is bound to have disease and ultimately decay. He saw it in a very rational and logical way. Though his guru had extraordinary divinity he was still mortal.

Young Voices



Vidhi Bhatt, student of Balvantray Mehta Vidya Bhawan (ASMA), studies in the 7th grade(class 7B). She is an avid reader and for her, there is nothing better than a good book.

Additionally, she also delights in crafting her own tales and even dreams of becoming a famous author one day. Vidhi also enjoys the occasional jigsaw puzzles and loves engineering new inventions through her toys. Her favourite subjects are Maths, Science and English.

The True Meaning of Non-violence

Nidhi Bhatt

"Non-violence is a weapon of the strong."

This well-known quote by Mahatma Gandhi, the father of our nation, perfectly sums up the power of non-violence. Non-violence is not merely an omission of physical aggression and force but it is a revolutionary philosophy that prioritizes peaceful protest over violence. It emphasizes peaceful means to bring about social, political, and cultural changes in the world. This profound ideology encourages people to act with their brains, instead of their fists. Dialogue, diplomacy, symbolic protests, and civil disobedience are some of the well-known methods used by Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.

Both prominent figures believed that the way to justice and equality should be paved with peaceful principles instead of bloodshed and sacrifice. They helped shape the credo of nonviolence into the inspiring ideology it is today. Non-violence fosters a communal understanding through communication and negotiations. It builds trust among communities and nations. Exclusion of violence can lead to a better comprehension of the other party's motive thus making it easier to see eye to eye. Non-

violence upholds the dignity of individuals, recognizing the shared humanity of all people even in the face of disagreement.

Overall, non-violence is a powerful tool that can be instrumental in trying to achieve any form of change without the long-lasting impact of consequences associated with violence.

Children's Corner

Tree Hugging Heroes

Story and Illustration: Devika Raghav

It was the beginning of the wheat sowing season. The farmers were getting ready with the mulching and tilling of their lands. Soon the plots would be filled with water and then the sowing of the seeds would start. Everyone in the family participated. While the village was gearing up for the sowing, one of the landowners, Bisen Singh, was asking around for the eucalyptus trees which lined the fencing of his land to be cut and sold in the market. These four giant eucalyptus trees in the area were majestic to look at. Some days, the moonshine struck its branches making them come alive! They looked as if they had adorned themselves with silver dust as they shone at night.

Most of the grandmothers in this village knew how to extract the oil and use it for colds and coughs. Their fragrance acted as an insect repellent too! The oil was a huge success for aromatherapy, de-stressing, and relieving the mind.

When the villagers came to know of

Bisen Singh's intentions, they gathered around the old Banyan Tree where the Panchayats sat. They requested the wise old Panchayat head to persuade Bisen Singh not to cut the beautiful trees.

But Bisen would not change his mind. Men with huge electric saw machines arrived and prepared to cut the trees.

The grandmothers and grandfathers of the village led by the children



marched towards the plot. Upon reaching up to where Bisen Singh was standing, the children said, "Chacha, every morning the Oriental White Eye birds feed on the tiny insects from its blossom. Even the Purple Sunbirds come to taste its nectar each morning." Another child spoke up, "I saw the Black-hooded Golden Oriole calling out to its mate from this tree. They love to feed from these trees as they have been doing for years, please don't cut them."

Bisen Singh, undeterred, looked away and asked his men to push aside the old gentry. None of the villagers wanted any violence or fight. They wanted to resolve the matter peacefully.

The eldest girl from the group gathered courage and went on to hug the tree tight. Seeing her, the other kids joined her and held each other tight, hugging the eucalyptus trees.

The wood cutters, on seeing the determination in the eyes of the kids and the elders, decided to lower their stance and withdraw from the trees.

Bisen was terribly disheartened at their conduct and tried bribing them. But the moment had passed and the Panchayats gave their final verdict, "We tried explaining it to you Bisen Singh, take a look at the children!" Saying so, the elders left. The kids stood hugging the trees together. Finally, the landlord relented and promised them not to cut the trees ever.



Children's Corner



Kindness comes from the Heart

Story and Photo: Gayatri Kumari Diggi

Once upon a time, there lived many gods and goddesses who loved and cared for different animals and birds. Lord Vishnu had a golden-winged bird called Garuda, who carried him across the sky. Lord Ram had a brave monkey friend called Hanuman, who helped him in his adventures. Lord Ganesh had a tiny mouse, who was his faithful companion. Goddess Saraswati had beautiful swans and peacocks, who sang and danced with her. These stories show us how kind and close the gods and goddesses were to their loyal animals and birds. They teach us that we should also be kind to all living beings.

But not everyone is kind to animals. Some people are cruel and heartless. They throw stones or beat them with sticks. They laugh at their pain and suffering. These people do not know how to love or live in harmony with other beings.

Here is a heartwarming and a true story of a kind girl named Meghna who was going for her daily morning walk when she saw a hungry, lonely white puppy. The puppy wagged her tail and followed Meghna home. Meghna felt sorry for the puppy and

gave her milk and bread. She named her Durvi, which means brave. She took her to the vet and got her the injections and vitamins she needed and then gave her a warm bath and a cozy blanket.

Durvi grew to love Meghna very much. She liked sleeping on the staircase, where she could guard the house. She was a playful puppy and liked running out into the garden to play with other dogs. She also loved to chew shoes or slippers! Meghna got her a bone to chew, but Durvi still liked to steal shoes or slippers from outside. She thought it was fun. One day, Durvi went out to play and did not come back. Meghna was very worried. She searched everywhere for Durvi. She called out Durvi's name, but there was no answer. Durvi was nowhere to be seen. Meghna was very sad. She missed her mischievous puppy. She put an appeal on Facebook and posted Durvi's picture and mentioned she was wearing a reddish brown collar. She asked anyone who found her to contact her immediately.

After a week, someone saw a friendly puppy wearing a reddish

brown collar in a different colony. The puppy was hungry and was begging for food. The person informed an animal-friendly society, who contacted Meghna. They asked her if the picture was of her missing puppy.

Meghna was overjoyed! She said, "That's my Durvi!" The animal-friendly society people said that some mean person must have caught Durvi and left her far away in another street so that Durvi could not find her way home. Meghna hugged Durvi and thanked the people who helped her.

Durvi was overjoyed to see Meghna. She jumped with joy and licked her face. She seemed to say, "Where were you all these days?" Meghna took Durvi back home. Durvi went back to her staircase and sat on her blue blanket. She played with the other friendly dogs in the colony. She followed Meghna for walks and wagged her tail. She was very grateful to Meghna for saving her. She was a loyal and loving puppy. When I visited Meghna recently, I saw something under Durvi's blanket. This time, she had quietly brought home a small umbrella! She

was still a playful puppy, but she was also a kind puppy. She had learned from Meghna that kindness comes from the heart.



FRNV NEWS AND EVENTS

Meeting with Swami ji at CIRD on 25th November 2023



Smt. Sudhamahi Regunathan, Shri Ashwani Kumar, Poojya Swamiji,
Shri S Regunathan, Shri Satish Kumar and Shri Prem Arora

Swamiji suggestions for deliberation and follow up with the Supreme Court of India:-

- ☆ In democratic set up, where citizen elect the government; elected members should not have additional privileges which are denied to citizen e.g. misbehaving/ manhandling citizens;
- ☆ India bring a secular country, there should not be any Special privilege to any religious minority.
- ☆ No one should be above law & there should not be Immunity/ protection to elected Members even in the Parliament.

The Governing Body of FRNV is deliberating on the above suggestions.



Advisory Board, FRNV

Shri Satyananda Mishra, IAS (Retd.) and former Chief Information Commissioner has kindly consented to be a Member on the Advisory Board of FRNV from 8th December 2023. FRNV welcomes Shri Mishra ji. FRNV will benefit with his rich experience.

Values Based Education Workshop

FRNV jointly with Ramjas International School, R K Puram, New Delhi organized a workshop for Teachers on Saturday, the 20th January 2024 at the school premises. About 75 teachers participated. Dr. Sharda Kumari, Head, Values Based Education Task Force, FRNV conducting the workshop.



Shri S Regunathan,
President/FRNV
addressing the
participants



Shri Ashwani Kumar,
General Secretary
delivers speech



Dr. Sharda Kumari,
Head, Values
Based Education
Task Force, FRNV



Smt. Richa Sharma,
Principal, Ramjas
International School



(L-R Shri Ashwani Kumar, Smt. Richa Sharma,
Principal, Ramjas International School,
Dr. Renu Bhatia, Shri S Regunathan, Dr. Sharda
Kumari, Dr. Anushree Ghai)



With the participants at the School Workshop
20.01.2024

127th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

Odisha Chapter, FRNV under the guidance of Dr. Arun Kumar Rath, Chairman organized a seminar on “Remembering Netaji; Restoration of National Values” in Bhubaneswar. The seminar was organized rightly on the occasion of Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on 23rd January 2024. About 100 participants attended. 4 Schools and 3 colleges deputed their students. Audience welcomed Values & Ethics in right earnest.



Students with Certificates and prizes awarded at the Elocution contest



Group of Dignitaries

Life Members joined since 1st December 2023

Name	Membership No.	From
SMT. KHILONA RAJ BEHERA Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/067	12.12.2023
DR. MANOJ KAR Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/068	20.12.2023
SHRI BIJAYA KUMAR NATH Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/069	26.12.2023
DR. (MRS.) SIPRA RAM Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/070	27.12.2023
SHRI BASANTA KUMAR KAR Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/071	27.12.2023
PROF. (DR.) DWARIKANATH MISHRA Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/072	28.12.2023
SHRI ASHOK KUMAR SAHU Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/073	01.01.2024
DR. VIJAYA LAKSHMI MOHANTY Odisha Chapter	FRNV/LM/074	01.01.2024

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