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**Religious Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi: A Preamble**

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**ABSTRACT**

Mahatma Gandhi's relentless endeavour enabled him to approach truth and comprehend the essence of life more completely than others, so allowing him to serve as a leader for his people. Gandhi met the expectations that many held for spiritual maturity. In addition to his roles as a politician and national leader, he was also a yogi, ascetic, and spiritual mentor to several others. Gandhi recognized his spiritual power when he expressed a desire to recount his personal spiritual experiments, which were known only to him, and from which he acquired the strength he wielded in the political arena. Gandhi asserted that the freedom of free will is an essential prerequisite of morality. An individual is not entirely at liberty to select his own lifestyle, since it is influenced by various factors including natural laws, societal situations, traditions, and human inclinations. Man possesses the capacity to establish himself and exert his will to ethically shape his environment. Gandhi's tolerance for various religions did not imply a lack of genuine trust in God. He discovered Manusmriti, which was part of his father's collection. The narrative of creation and analogous thoughts presented therein did not significantly influence him; rather, it moved him towards atheism. In this article, religious philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi: a preamble has been discussed.

**Keywords:** *Religious, Philosophy, Mahatma Gandhi.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Mahatma Gandhi acquired the Indian idea that honesty is paramount from his mother. He has also learned from his mother that a condition of harmlessness or non-violence, known as Ahimsa Paramadharma, is the ultimate religion and a supreme obligation. His father had absorbed religious culture through frequent trips and attendance at religious talks and training. He asserts that his extensive experience in practical matters benefited him in resolving complex issues and overseeing numerous individuals.

Gandhi reminisced on the fondness he experienced from his former nurse. When he experienced a fear of ghosts and spirits, Rambha recommended reciting the name of Rama as a solution for his apprehension. He regarded the name of Rama as an infallible solution for himself. The foundation of faith in God that supported Gandhi throughout his life was instilled by his devoted nurse, Rambha.



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(NCRAETSMH – 2025)**

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He notes in his autobiography that his fervor for truth was inherent. To substantiate this, Gandhi referenced an incident that transpired during his first-year exams at high school. He was unable to master the skill of imitation despite his teacher's efforts to encourage him.

### **RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI**

Mahatma Gandhi mentioned two further experiences that have persistently lingered in his memory and influenced his thinking. The initial work was the book on Shrivana Pitribhakti Nataka, a drama depicting Shrivana's devotion to his parents. He perused it with profound attention. He also observed an image of Shrivana transporting his blind parents on a pilgrimage using slings attached to his shoulders. The text and the image of Shrivana made a lasting impression on his mind. The anguished cries of his parents regarding Shrivana's death were vivid in his recollection.

The play of Harishchandra profoundly affected Gandhi's life. He could never grow weary of observing it. The pursuit of truth and the endurance of the trials faced by Harishchandra served as his singular inspiration. He genuinely believed the narrative of Harishchandra. For Gandhi, both Harishchandra and Shrivana are tangible realities.

Gandhi was significantly influenced by Jainism. Jainism has been a significant influence in Gujarat. He studied the doctrines of the Jainas as well as the Saddarsana Samuccya, the philosophical work of Haribhadra Suri. Jainism emphasizes non-violence, which greatly influenced Gandhi. (Roy, M., 2022)

Gandhi's commitment to the vow was challenged numerous times. At one point, a someone suggested that he consume eggs, as they are not classified as meat. Upon reflection, he discerned that his mother's understanding of the pledge encompassed eggs within the category of meat, prompting him to cease their consumption. Gandhi faced the option of adhering to the essence of the promise or interpreting it literally. Both forms of action are permissible; but, to uphold a pledge, it is essential to adhere to the spirit of the vow rather than its literal interpretation to maintain equity. Equity and integrity avert disputes and conflicts. Gandhi pursued an ethos of equality, embodying the principles of Jainism in spirit.

The fundamental principle of Jainism is Ahimsa (non-violence), which served as the foundation of Gandhi's ideology. He devised a political activity methodology known as Satyagraha, fundamentally rooted in truth and non-violence (Sat: truth, Agraha: firmness).

Non-violence is not a negative virtue or a mere mechanical abstention from violence in Jaina shastras; rather, it is a positive attribute rooted in universal love, arising from the acknowledgment of the oneness of existence and the kinship of all living beings. Upon this realization, one cannot remain apathetic to the suffering of others.



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**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

He applied this technique in the Kheda district during a crop disaster. The officials sought to levy taxes on the farmer's despite being aware of the poor crop yield and the farmers' inability to fulfill the tax obligation. Following attempts to petition the authorities, the farmers and volunteer political activists executed a commitment declaring their refusal to pay taxes due to the legitimate failure of their harvests. They would also endure any incarceration or other legal repercussions that the government may impose upon them. Rather than resorting to riots and demonstrations, the farmers predominantly exhibited civility and non-violence, compelling the government to acquiesce. The officials were unable to apprehend everyone, naturally. This triumph exemplified the efficacy of truth and non-violence that Gandhi had ingrained in the populace. (Nair, A.R. & Hardikar, G., 2021)

Similar to a Jain, Gandhi was also a vegetarian. He adopted a strictly fruitarian lifestyle, subsisting solely on a fruit-based diet. His diet included, among other items, groundnuts, both ripe and unripe bananas, lemon, olive oil, tomatoes, and grapes. He entirely avoided milk, grains, beans, and other items. This exemplified the depth of his conviction in Ahimsa. His complete autobiography was dedicated to it. Gandhi adhered to Jain principles, which undoubtedly contributed to his attainment of greatness. Jaina thinkers define reality as permanence among change, identity amidst diversity, and unity amidst multiplicity. Given that reality is multifaceted and always evolving, it follows that no assertion can be universally valid at all times and in all contexts. No individual may unilaterally assert possession of truth. The Jaina Shasstra stipulates that individuals should govern their behavior in daily life by refraining from engaging in malevolent channels of Karma. One should limit the scope of their activities. To this objective, certain regulations or commitments have been proposed. The principles are Truth, Celibacy, Non-violence, Non-stealing, and non-possession. Jaina philosophers assert that the complete renunciation of certain activities through the adherence to vows serves to dissociate the soul from matter, which is the source of its bondage. Gandhi cited Nishkulanand's assertion that the renunciation of objects, devoid of the renunciation of wants, is ephemeral, regardless of one's efforts. For Gandhi, the adherence to vows was fundamentally a method of fostering self-discipline and conquering personal challenges in moments of temptation and uncertainty. He asserts that an individual whose mind remains unperturbed by sensory tumult and is entirely devoid of ego cultivates an infallible intuition. In Jainism, the principal transgression is the perpetration of violence or the infliction of suffering onto others. Additional transgressions encompass falsehood, dishonesty, promiscuity, greed, wrath, arrogance, deception, and avarice, which result in enslavement in this world, while its antitheses—patience, humility, simplicity, and contentment—promote spiritual development. Mahavir asserted that human liberation is not contingent upon the benevolence of any divine being. Humankind is seen as the architect of its own fate. He must endeavour for his redemption.

Gandhi has perused Edwin Arnold's book "The Light of Asia," which is devoted to the life of Lord Buddha. This book provided him with a distinct understanding of Buddha's teachings. Gandhi states, "Observe Gautama's compassion; it was not limited to humanity but extended to all sentient beings." Jainism and Buddhism emphasize non-violence, celibacy, non-possessiveness, and non-theft. From



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**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

an early age, Gandhi was resolute in adhering to principles of truth and non-violence. He advocated for equal reverence for all religions. He repudiated any novel communication and asserted that his statements were as ancient as the hills. It is claimed he transformed dust into heroes. Viscount Louis Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, was quoted as saying; Gandhi will go down in history on par with Buddha and Jesus Christ" Buddhists respected this man of peace highly. He has been viewed in the same light as the Buddha. This great man stripped himself of all worldly goods and vowed to live a simple life, often fasting in his struggle for peace and Indian independence from British rule. He encouraged boycott of British goods, urging Indians to spin their own cloth. Gandhi himself set an example, no matter how busy his life was or what his daily commitments were, he never slept without having spun some cloth. In the 1920s, Mahatma Gandhi proclaimed himself a Buddhist, saying that Buddhism was rooted in Hinduism and represented its essence. During his visit to Sri Lanka in 1927, Gandhi had no hesitation in declaring that he was a "Buddhist" because he saw Buddhism as cleansed Hinduism. In a speech at the Young Men's Buddhist Association, Gandhi said that he (Gautama) was saturated with the spirit of Hinduism, with the Vedic spirit. And so far, as I am aware, he never rejected Hinduism or the message of the Vedas. What the Buddha did was to introduce a living reformation in the petrified faith that surrounded him, Gandhi said. In a speech delivered at the renowned Buddhist College, Vidyodaya, in Colombo, Gandhi said, that it was his deliberate opinion that the essential parts of the teachings of the Buddha formed a "integral part of Hinduism. Gandhi remarked that the Buddha, through his profound sacrifice, significant renunciation, and pristine purity of life, made an indelible mark on Hinduism, asserting that Hinduism owed eternal appreciation to this esteemed teacher. I firmly believe that Buddhism, specifically the teachings of the Buddha, reached their complete development in India, as Gautama was really a Hindu.

In a discourse before the Young Men's Buddhist Association, Gandhi asserted that Gautama embodied the essence of Hinduism, infused with the Vedic spirit. He never renounced Hinduism or the teachings of the Vedas. The Buddha initiated a dynamic reformation inside the stagnant faith of his time. In a speech at the esteemed Buddhist institution, Vidyodaya, in Colombo, Gandhi articulated his "deliberate opinion" that the fundamental aspects of Buddha's teachings constitute an "integral part of Hinduism." He remarked that the Buddha, through his profound sacrifice, significant renunciation, and the unparalleled purity of his life, left an indelible mark on Hinduism. He stated that Hinduism owes perpetual appreciation to that esteemed guru. It is my firm belief that Buddhism, or more accurately the teachings of the Buddha, reached its complete realization in India, as Gautama was really a Hindu.

The Dhammapada is the preeminent and most impactful text in Buddhist literature. 'Dhamma' refers to discipline, law, and religion, while 'pada' signifies path, denoting a way. Thus, the Dhammapada represents the path of virtue and the cornerstone of religion. The Buddha perceived the universe as a



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system of law characterized by transient elements that continually transform from one state of existence to another. He evaluated religion on a rational foundation, asserting that one should not accept beliefs based solely on hearsay or tradition. The Buddha posited that by identifying and addressing the root causes of suffering, suffering itself could be eradicated. Due to ignorance, individuals experience disjunction in life, which disrupts its inherent integrity. Ignorance is dispelled through intuition, and desire is mitigated through ethical endeavour.

The Eightfold Path of Lord Buddha symbolizes the ascent to perfection. The initial step pertains to right views and the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths. Lord Buddha asserts that an individual should aspire towards virtue and suppress malevolent thoughts; if one fails to engage in good deeds, the mind revels in wrongdoing. Should one commit a transgression, he must refrain from repeating it and avoid harbouring malevolent intentions. Conversely, if one performs virtuous acts, he should persist in them and cultivate a steadfast commitment to goodness. (Dash, N., 2018)

Lord Buddha asserted that there is no fire comparable to passion, no evil equivalent to hatred. The sorrow of physical existence is unparalleled, and the highest form of happiness is tranquillity. Greed is regarded as the most severe affliction. Contentment is deemed the greatest wealth, and trust is the most valuable of relationships. "Let a man," states Lord Buddha, "overcome anger with gentleness, conquer evil with good, alleviate misery through generosity, and counter the liar with truth." Buddha emphasized that one who pursues their objectives through violence is not righteous, whereas one who leads others through non-violent means is considered a guardian of the law, wise and just. A tranquil individual, devoid of hatred and fear, is regarded as learned. A person embodying truth, virtue, non-violence, restraint, and self-control, and who is free from impurity, is deemed wise and is referred to as an elder.

Among the texts that shaped Gandhi's philosophy, the Bhagavad Gita holds the foremost position. It serves as an unwavering guide for conduct and a reference for daily life. The teachings of the Gita, particularly verses 62 and 63 of the second chapter, profoundly impacted him. He considered it an invaluable resource for understanding truth and found it immensely helpful during his periods of despair. No other work influenced Gandhi as significantly as the Bhagavad Gita. He gained substantial insights on aparigraha (non-attachment) and samabhava (equanimity) from this text, which captivated him. The Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Hindu poem, encapsulates profound philosophy, spirituality, and divinity. It primarily consists of a wartime dialogue between Krishna and his disciple and relative, Arjuna. Gandhi frequently acknowledged its significant influence on his life. (Roy, M., 2022)

He believed that the Gita's doctrine of non-possession implies that individuals seeking salvation should function as trustees. Although the affluent possess significant wealth, they ought to regard none of these assets as their own. It became evident to him that non-possession and equanimity necessitate a transformation of heart and attitude.





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**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

Gandhi explored the profound teachings of sacred texts such as Tulasidas' Ramayana, Vyasa's Mahabharata, and the Manusmriti.

Gandhi was profoundly impacted by his reading of the Ramayana, considering Tulasidas's version as the preeminent work in devotional literature. Tulasidas counselled the virtuous to avoid the wicked, asserting that truth would ultimately prevail. The impact of the Mahabharata on Mahatma Gandhi's life is significant. He stated that I have upheld, despite orthodox Hindu resistance, that the Mahabharata is a text intended to demonstrate the futility of war and violence.

Gandhi employed Edward Maitland's style of allegorical interpretation of the gospels of the Indian Epics. He asserted that the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Gita should not be perceived as historical texts but rather as philosophical writings set within a historical context. Gandhi was affected by Maitland's emphasis on "Reasoned faith," later asserting that faith surpasses reason, yet must not contradict it.

It is peculiar yet intriguing that Gandhi's initial encounter with the Gita occurred in England and was facilitated by two English brothers. At that time, Gandhi was pursuing a legal education. The brothers frequently read the Gita and invited Gandhi to participate. They may have believed that they would have a deeper understanding of the book in Sanskrit. Gandhi had sorrow due to his insufficient grasp of Sanskrit. He studied the English translation by Sir Edwin Arnold, as suggested by his English acquaintances, and was profoundly influenced for life by the message of the Gita. He particularly appreciated the final nineteen verses of Chapter two, believing they encapsulated his understanding of dharma. He began reading the Gita daily, thereafter in its original Sanskrit language. Throughout his years of incarceration, he meticulously studied the book. At the urging of his friends, he translated it into Gujarati, his native language. A further English translation was released.

Numerous linguistic variants and interpretations of the Gita are prevalent. The three eminent Acharyas, Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhwa, elucidated it to support their positions of monism, qualified dualism, and dualism, respectively. Moreover, the promotion of spiritual understanding, devotion, and renunciation appears to be the preferred stance of numerous educators. In contemporary times, Lokamanya Tilak asserted that action (karmayoga) constituted the true message. Gandhi, however, felt that conduct devoid of anticipation of results (anasaktiyoga) constituted the essence or quintessence of the entire endeavour.

The theme of the Gita is to signify the conclusion of human existence on earth and the methods for achieving it. The Gita provides infallible psychological insights on human existence. The Gita describes the ladder of renunciation, with the initial stage being contemplation of sensory objects. The second is attachment to them; the third is yearning for them; the fourth is bitterness regarding



**National Conference on Recent Advances in Engineering,  
Technology, Science, Management and Humanities  
(NCRAETSMH – 2025)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

unfulfilled yearnings; the fifth is indifference towards all resentful beings; the sixth is self-neglect and oblivion; the seventh is the suppression of all desires, ultimately leading one to the abyss. (Roy, M., 2022).

Renunciation signifies the lack of desire for rewards, which serves as the definitive measure of faith. A man who seeks results grows impatient, expressing rage, and if he does not achieve the desired outcome, he resorts to unethical and dishonest methods to attain his goals. Renunciation constitutes the principal theme of the Gita. The renunciation of action-oriented qualities is an unparalleled treatment. All religions assert that individuals might achieve liberation by regarding the body as the temple of God.

Gandhi says that the Gita is the universal mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. A true votary of Gita does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace that passed understanding. But that peace and joy come not to skeptics or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind. There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went disappointed. I find a solace in the Bhagavad-Gita that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone, I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad-Gita. I find a verse here and a verse there, and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies -- and my life has been full of external tragedies - and if they have left no visible or indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teaching of Bhagavad-Gita." Gandhi felt that the central teaching of the Gita is bounded by truth and non-violence. It is asserted that in the absence of a passion for truth, there exists no inclination towards falsehood or violence. If any incident of falsehood or violence is discovered, the aspiration to attain the desired objective may be evident. Gandhi believed that achieving absolute renunciation is unattainable without the complete adherence to non-violence in all its manifestations. The aspiration for fruit is universally prohibited, but the absence of desire is mandatory.

Mahatma Gandhi employed fasting as a powerful tool in his "Satyagraha," the inaugural non-violent resistance movement in contemporary history against oppression and injustice. It is particularly noteworthy since a century ago, in October 1906, Gandhi initiated his Satyagraha movement in South Africa and employed fasting as a method of civil disobedience for the first time. Gandhi embraced a minimalist, ascetic lifestyle, donning solely a loincloth made of hand-woven fabric and sandals. He was incarcerated multiple times and undertook hunger strikes to draw attention to his cause.

Gandhi claimed that fasting might mitigate passion when approached with the intention of self-restraint, and that fasting is ineffectual unless accompanied with a persistent desire for self-discipline.



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Technology, Science, Management and Humanities  
(NCRAETSMH – 2025)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

Fasting constitutes the most powerful manifestation of Satyagraha. It is anguish and self-imposed. Fasting represents the utmost manifestation of the prayer emanating from a sincere and compassionate heart. It serves as a method of opposing injustice and reforming the wrongdoer. A vibrant trust in God is essential. There is no tolerance for doubt, resentment, impatience, or egotism. These induce rapid violence. A Satyagrahi must possess confidence in the benevolence of Good to provide the requisite strength and should promptly repudiate any fast if it is tainted by even the slightest impurity. Endless patience, unwavering determination, singular focus, and complete tranquility are essential prerequisites. However, as it is unfeasible for an individual to cultivate all three qualities simultaneously, no one who has not committed to adhering to the principles of Ahimsa should embark on a Satyagrahi fast. Consequently, these three significant forms of Satyagraha should be employed in the implementation of Satyagraha. The ideology of Satyagraha represents an innovative approach to living. For Gandhi, truth and nonviolence are ancient concepts, whereas the pursuit of truth via nonviolence represents a novel way of life. It serves as an instrument of social control, characterized by its permanence and creativity. Its creativity is rooted in the principles of Ahimsa and ethical persuasion. The Satyagrahi would employ Satyagraha as a means to assert the establishment of truth. Consequently, he opposes all forms of unjust power and sources of malevolence. (Valmiki, A., 2018).

In 1924, when communal riots erupted on India's northwest frontier, Gandhi initiated a 21-day purificatory fast. Mahatma Gandhi undertook 17 fasts during his lifetime, the final one occurring in August 1947, coinciding with India's independence from British rule. He initiated a "fast until death" to quell the Hindu-Muslim violence that erupted following the partition of India and Pakistan. Gandhi's objectives for fasting were many. At times, his fasting seemed to be a self-imposed penance for the transgressions of others. He also employed fasting as a method to reconcile conflicting factions, especially during the riots between Hindus and Muslims. Gandhi remained resolute in his pursuit of Hindu-Muslim unification throughout his life.

Gandhi's fasts were perceived by some as coercive tactics aimed at attaining his political objectives against the British Raj. Gandhi consistently undertook fasts solely as a final recourse, after depleting all other options for reconciliation with the authorities. The British Government in Delhi was profoundly apprehensive that India might erupt in insurrection if Gandhi were to perish during his fast. Gandhi spent five and a half years of his life in British prisons. Nevertheless, he did not possess any animosity or hostility towards the English populace.

When his admirers implored Gandhi to cease his fasting, he remained steadfast in his determination. For Gandhi, fasting constituted a spiritual endeavour, delving into one's inner essence, and was associated with prayer. Fasting entails not merely physical self-discipline; it must be underpinned by a steadfast faith in God.





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(NCRAETSMH – 2025)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

The fundamental principle of Gandhi's philosophy is Satyagraha. Satyagraha, as generally defined by Gandhi, constitutes a comprehensive philosophy of nonviolence. Most narrowly defined, it is a method or instrument of nonviolent action. To maintain simplicity in this discussion, Satyagraha will be discussed in its later form. Satyagraha can be implemented in any cultural context, given the presence of essential components, particularly Satyagrahis (individuals adept in Satyagraha). A Satyagraha movement is initiated solely after all other nonviolent methods have been deemed futile. At its core lies nonviolence. An effort is undertaken to convert, persuade, or sway the adversary. It entails the simultaneous application of intellect and conscience. The Satyagrahi, while asserting the undeniable validity of their stance, also participates in acts of voluntary self-sacrifice. Any aggression perpetrated by the adversary is tolerated without reprisal. However, due to the absence of response (which may lead the opponent to perceive their aggression as justified), the opponent can only become morally bankrupt if violence persists eternally.

Gandhi asserts that the fast is not directed at any specific individual but rather against all who wish to partake in its joy without personally fasting at that moment. However, it is primarily directed against himself. This is a heartfelt supplication for the purification of oneself and associates, as the forthcoming action is to join him. Any such fast will be a torment to both themselves and himself. He emphasizes that the physical act of fasting is insignificant without the accompanying intent. It must be an authentic admission of the inner urgency, an uncontrollable desire to convey truth and only truth. Consequently, only those who have laboured for the cause of truth, possess love even for their adversaries, are devoid of animalistic desires, and have renounced material goods and ambition are entitled to fast for this purpose. Consequently, no individual may go on the anticipated fast without prior preparation and training. He asserts that there must be no ambiguity regarding the forthcoming fast. He asserts that he has no inclination towards death. He aspires to live for the cause, yet he anticipates being equally ready to die for it. However, he requires greater purity, application, and dedication for himself and his colleagues. He seeks additional employees of unquestionable integrity.

Gandhi posits that the paramount moral principle is the relentless pursuit of the common good. Gandhi considered only voluntary behaviours to be ethical. He asserted that "no action that is not voluntary can be deemed moral". Humanism posits that benevolence towards others constitutes the pinnacle of moral existence. Religion devoid of morals would signify a mere evasion of accountability. Religion must encompass multiple facets of human existence, while ethics is regarded as the study of ideals. Gandhi integrated religion and ethics. Thorough analysis and observation facilitate the establishment of ethical principles as a guide for human behavior. Religion is not an ideology nor solely an intellectual understanding or adherence to specific teachings; rather, it is an intrinsic quality of the soul. It facilitates the delineation of human responsibilities in life and the establishment of appropriate relationships with others. However, prior achieving this, one must possess an understanding of the true essence of the self. Consequently, religion serves primarily as a vehicle for self-realization or the actualization of one's true nature.



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(NCRAETSMH – 2025)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

Gandhi defines religion as that which binds man to God and man to man. He elucidates that it is not merely the Hindu religion, which he indeed venerates, but rather a universal spirituality that transcends Hinduism, transforms human nature, and unites individuals irrevocably with the Truth, perpetually purifying them.

Religion and morality are interdependent and interconnected. Religion devoid of morality is inconsequential, whereas morality lacking religious context is aimless. Gandhi posits that means and ends are inextricably intertwined. While morality provides methods and objectives for human existence, religion directs one towards the ultimate aim. Consequently, both are complementing rather than contradictory. Gandhi underscored the necessity for the integration of morality and religion. (Valmiki, A., 2018)

The Ramayana profoundly impacted Gandhi. As Latha Maharaj commenced his recitation of the Ramayana, Gandhi was profoundly captivated. This established the basis for his profound commitment to the Ramayana. He considered Tulsidas's Ramayana the preeminent work in all spiritual literature. Tulsidas counselled the virtuous to avoid the wicked. The impact of the Mahabharata on Gandhi's life cannot be understated. Vivekananda's Master's assertion that religion is not for empty bellies profoundly impacted him. Vivekananda's notion of Daridra Narayan, the deity of the impoverished, was embraced, expanded upon, and implemented by Gandhi himself. Following the demise of Sri Rama Krishna, Vivekananda and his students pledged to a lifelong commitment of renunciation and selfless service to humanity. He traversed the entire nation from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. His travels demonstrated that India, with its astonishing diversity of races and traditions, embodies a basic unity. The destitution of the populace and their suffering eclipsed solidarity. The destitution of the populace and their suffering engulfed him. His interpretation of Daridranarayan, the deity of the impoverished, was embraced, expanded, and implemented by Gandhi himself. Swami Vivekananda personalized the notion of God. He argued that serving the impoverished is serving God. Raichandbhai, a venerable Indian trader and notable reformer of Bombay, significantly impacted Gandhi.

The majority of individuals and nations today adhere to religious beliefs. Religion serves as a socio-political influence that impacts both local and global occurrences. Contemporary conflicts, such as those in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tibet, and Kashmir, can be attributed to socio-political causes. In contemporary contexts of terror, religion has played a role in events from the early 1990s until the September 11, 2001 assaults. Conversely, regarding peacebuilding, religion has played a significant role in transformations such as the recovery of post-apartheid South Africa and the non-violent transitions from authoritarianism to democracy in East Germany, Poland, and the Philippines. Over 1000 delegates from transnational and indigenous religious traditions convened at the UN Millennium Summit of World Religious Leaders, conveying



**National Conference on Recent Advances in Engineering,  
Technology, Science, Management and Humanities  
(NCRAETSMH – 2025)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

the message of the global community's unparalleled acknowledgment of religious peacebuilding. As an individual's religious conviction emanates from the depths of the heart, religion can provide social, moral, and spiritual resources to the peacebuilding process. Religion has the capacity to alter persons' lives. This transition occurs through spiritual maturity, which emanates calm and influences tranquility at all levels, from the intrapersonal to the worldwide realm of peacebuilding.

The spiritual power endowed him with immense ability to confront challenging events in his life by the application of everlasting principles, ahimsa, and satyagraha. In elucidating his refusal to embrace the title of Mahatma (Great Soul), he modestly articulated that he conducted experiments to uncover life's truths, human truths, or finite truths, through which everlasting Truth may be comprehended, akin to a scientist's approach. He refrained from asserting his status as a genuine scientist due to his inability to furnish empirical proof with scientific precision for his methodologies, nor did he possess definitive outcomes from his experiments, as required by contemporary science. Gandhi did not perceive himself as an exceptional individual, distinct from others. He believes that if something is attainable by one individual, it is attainable by all.

The emergence of religious, social, and ethical awareness in individuals—specifically love, fraternity, and benevolence—is essential for achieving global peace among contemporary scientific and technological advancements. The most consequential result of this worldwide spiritual awakening will be the emergence of world peace. And results in the termination of conflicts at all levels. This ambitious objective will serve as the definitive indicator of the achievement of this evolution. Numerous efforts have been undertaken over the years to attain peace by methods including discussions, alliances, and warfare. All of these techniques were ineffective. Individual mental tranquility will foster global peace. Peace, both internal and external, is founded on individual and collective spirituality. The intellect, as the originator of action, possesses greater power than physical action itself. The spiritual is unequivocally more potent than both the mind and action, as both stem from the individual's spiritual state. The emergence of spirituality will foster tranquility by enhancing the spiritual state of the planet.

Numerous methods exist to achieve spiritual enlightenment. The first and most apparent method is to elevate individual consciousness. The alternative method involves these individuals and groups establishing institutions dedicated to fostering global peace grounded in spiritual ideas. This is the unavoidable result for individuals that participate in deliberate evolution. These methods facilitate global enlightenment, which will be perpetually expanded and enhanced. Ultimately, external tranquility is derived from inward serenity. Inner tranquility emerges from the realization of one's authenticity. This will assist individuals in understanding their inner peace and authentic nature. (Nair, A.R. & Hardikar, G., 2021)



**National Conference on Recent Advances in Engineering,  
Technology, Science, Management and Humanities  
(NCRAETSMH – 2025)**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2025, Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.**

Adherents of religion assert that the Infinite Potential is synonymous with God. This deity pervades all existence; hence, there is no location one may traverse that is devoid of its presence. The issue with existence on Earth is the belief in the permanence of the world. The power to elevate our conscious awareness to an unlimited level will allow one to comprehend the true essence of the planet. Due to the overwhelming nature of life, we are perplexed by the manifestations of the physical cosmos, rendering us unable to perceive the divine presence within which we exist. The eternal God serves as your refuge, and beneath you lie the everlasting arms. Upon recognizing the truth that the infinite immortal soul within oneself exists in every human being, one would understand that the primary challenge in this era is to acknowledge and revere that immortal soul.

A religious comprehension of the world would undoubtedly facilitate the preservation of peace. Religions instruct us that we are all offspring of God. While societal or governmental regulations exist to uphold peace, religious comprehension of the world fosters tranquility across all domains, including religious, social, economic, and political spheres. Individuals who are so bewildered by the manifestations of reality that they inflict violence onto others, so generating chaos and suffering in the world. It is imperative to engage with the global community, encompassing all races, religions, and nations, in a peaceful endeavour to ensure that every individual receives the dignity they inherently deserve.

Our endeavors must extend beyond merely alleviating poverty, conflict, and warfare; we must strive to peacefully integrate one another into a just society, refraining from perceiving those outside our race, religion, or nation as mere instruments for personal gain. Unrelenting endeavors must be undertaken to cease the exploitation of others and to terminate their economic subjugation. We must cease the destruction of the ecosystem from which we all derive our sustenance. Nothing undermines World Peace more than the delusion that we can rationalize the act of killing others. Individuals who perpetrate homicide based on race, religion, or nationality, as well as sociopathic leaders who incite war and discord, ought to be prosecuted as any other criminal. (Kumar, S., 2022)

## **CONCLUSION**

Every leader, regardless of their domain—political, social, economic, or religious—must possess an awareness of fostering goodness, harmony, and solidarity among the populace. Under no circumstances should they be the catalyst for discord, violence, or divisiveness among individuals. Individuals who have proven their capacity to advance the common good through positions of societal authority should be recognized and rewarded, while such positions should be withheld from those agitators whose sole aim is personal gratification, self-enhancement, and self-advancement at the detriment of others. The world is currently seeing a swift awakening to a new consciousness that enhances global peace. While it is asserted that complete peace is unattainable due to the inherently dynamic character of the universe, which inevitably introduces turmoil and conflict, it is feasible to



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enhance the degree of peace by fostering greater awareness of this understanding in individuals. According to the Dalai Lama, possessing inner peace enables us to coexist harmoniously with others. When our community experiences tranquility, it can disseminate that tranquility to adjacent communities.

Gandhi believed that initiating new faiths or religious philosophical schools was unnecessary. Dharendra Mohan Datta, an Indian philosopher, posits that Gandhi was not a pioneer of novel ideas nor did he develop a coherent philosophical system in the academic sense; however, he did curate and synthesize various traditional doctrines in a distinctive manner. This resulted in a novel philosophical wholeness, albeit partially rooted in antiquity.

Gandhi identified himself a Hindu due to his birth and upbringing. Despite identifying as Hindu, his understanding of religion suggests a universal belief system that transcends individual faiths. Gandhi asserts that when he refers to diverse faiths, he does not mean conventional, customary, or traditional religions, but rather the basic religion that underlies all religions, which harmonizes past religions and validates them. Gandhi's perspective on religion significantly enhances the Indian ethos. Individuals prioritize sensory pleasures over ethical, moral, religious, and spiritual concerns, leading to increased ambition. The emphasis on ethics, values, and cultural transformation is widely acknowledged as a crucial component of public sector reform. This ambition underpins materialism. Consequently, the individual's entire energy is expended on gratifying his ego and pleasures. Man lacks the opportunity to contemplate his fellow beings and consider global peace, non-violence, and the methods to achieve them. Peace and non-violence are no longer topics of his contemplation. He attempts to get items using immoral methods. Currently, thousands of scientists are engaged in the development of devastating weapons. A substantial sum of money has been expended on the acquisition and production of armaments and weaponry. Numerous soldiers are either receiving weaponry training or doing war simulations. Gandhi's religious and spiritual development enabled him to love even the most insignificant of beings as oneself. Gandhi's religious experience led him to see that, as a devout individual, his role was not in solitude on a mountain or in a cave, but in advocating for the rights of the vulnerable and the freedom of the oppressed.

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