

January 30 Day 1

"Religions are different roads converging upon the same point. What difference does it make that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal."

M.K. Gandhi

No religion or spiritual path can ever completely embrace all the Divine is. The Divine is Infinite. No human religion can ever be anything but *"the finger pointing at the moon"*. Franciscan theologian Richard Rohr says, *"All religion is metaphor"*. Each of us has our own "soul metaphor" or cosmology, our way of understanding the universe and our place in it. We each have a soul metaphor, whether we know it or not. Gandhi's soul metaphor refers to the Divine as "God" and "He" and "Him". For many of us, the word "God", along with concepts like a male Deity, seem to create a violent dissonance within us. Dealing with our own feelings about a Male God can be a wonderful practice of nonviolence. Arun Gandhi, M.K. Gandhi's Grandson and co-founder of the "Season", reminds us that we should release all attachment to possessing the Truth and join his grandfather in pursuing it. Believing we possess the Truth is the path of *"himsa"*, violence. Believing we all, even Gandhi, pursue the Truth is the path of *"Ahimsa"*, *Ahimsa* is the Hindu/ Buddhist practice of reverence for and nonviolence toward all living beings.

A SEASON FOR NONVIOLENCE



carry the vision

Affirmative Practice

Today, I will meditate on and remember each being has their own "soul metaphor". Today I will remember that every belief, even those that make me uncomfortable, are different roads taken in pursuit of the same goal, Truth. That is the path to nonviolence.

Let peace begin with you.

January 31 Day 2

"There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it though I do not see it. It is this unseen Power which makes itself felt and yet defies all proof, because it is unlike all that I perceive through my senses."

M.K. Gandhi

We have all had moments of awe and wonder that filled us with some sense of the spiritual nature of everything. A beautiful sunset, an eagle crying out as it soared over head, the first smile of recognition from an infant... each of us has experienced that "indefinable mysterious Power". When we begin to understand that the indefinable nature of that Power forces each

of us to interpret it in our own way, through our own “soul metaphor”. The path to true nonviolence begins when we remember that this “Power... pervades everything” and be clear about our “soul metaphor” and its role in our work. Our work of nonviolence begins and ends with knowing that the person who gives nonviolence is that Power and the person who receives nonviolence is that Power and the nonviolence itself is that Power.

Affirmative Practice

Today I will meditate on and remember that undefinable, mysterious Power that fills all life including me and look for it in every being and situation. In finding that Power in every being and situation, I will find nonviolence.

Let peace begin with you.

February 1 Day 3

“God is not some person outside ourselves or away from the universe.... God is then not a person. He is the all-pervading all-powerful Spirit. Anyone who hears Him in his heart has accession of a marvelous force or energy, comparable in its results to physical forces like steam or electricity but much more subtle.”

M.K. Gandhi

When we remember to think of the Divine as a Power, a Spirit, a subtle force within us, then something marvelous happens. How often have all of us set out on a task, a mission, only to become “burned out” before the job is complete? This Power we speak of is literally that, a Power. It will fill us as we listen for it, listen to it and open our hearts to it. Then, like electricity charging batteries, we are charged with that very Power that is Spirit. As Spirit is all powerful, we are filled with all power when we are truly listening and open. Our work then, should always begin with a conscious opening to the Divine, whatever that may be to us. With nonviolence as our polestar and a Higher Power filling the sails of our souls, the work of nonviolence becomes light and easy.

Affirmative Practice

Today, I will open myself and allow the Power to fill me. Today, all my actions will begin with that conscious opening to the subtle force that pervades all things, including me and I will let that power carry me through my work of nonviolence.

Let peace begin with you.

February 2 Day 4

“God alone knows the mind of a person; and the duty of a Man of God is to act as he is directed by his inner voice.... I ask nobody to follow me. Everyone should follow his own inner voice.”

M.K. Gandhi

For many of us, the Power of the Divine comes as a “*still, small, voice*”, the voice of Spirit. Yet Gandhi says the “*still, small voice*” is our “*own, inner voice*”. Is this a contradiction? No, of course not. Our own inner voice, the voice of our intuition, the voice of Love, IS the voice of the Divine speaking through us, as us. For each of us that voice is different. If you are a member of a spiritual community of any kind, you know that every person, even in your own community, believes something different from everyone else. And yet we are all right, and all wrong, for the Divine can not be defined in human terms. We can never hear, nor act, perfectly, but we can endeavor to do so with authenticity and integrity. We do that when we listen to, and follow our own inner voice. The surest way to walk the path of nonviolence is to listen to our own inner voice knowing that it is THE path of nonviolence and allow all other beings to do the same.

Affirmative Practice

Today, I will meditate and listen for that still, small voice within me. I will follow that inner guidance and know that each person does the same. This is the path of spiritual nonviolence.

Let peace begin with you.

February 3 Day 5

“Man as an animal is violent but as Spirit is nonviolent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards ahimsa (nonviolence) or rushes to his doom.”

M.K. Gandhi

While the Mahatma and Dr. King lived and carried on the work from the high place of spirituality, their movements remained nonviolent. After their assassinations, anger, frustration, and pain drove major elements in both movements in the direction of violent confrontation.

Negative and violent emotions only gain dominance when we have lost our spiritual awareness and connection. Whatever we face, whatever forces we oppose, we have to first awaken to Spirit and then stay awake. That awakening is a daily part of nonviolence. As Gandhiji said, grounding ourselves in Spirit, holding to a spiritual practice of *Ahimsa*, are the only path to success.

Whenever we feel frustration, fear, anger, irritation, impatience or depression about the pace of the work we do, we are in the violent realm of “animal man”. When we are able to hold to the Truth, walk the path and do the work from a place of peace, serenity and love, we are in the spiritual realm of *Ahimsa*.

Affirmative Practice

Today, I will meditate on my motivations and emotions. Am I doing the work of nonviolence

to “defeat” the forces of violence? Or am I doing the work of nonviolence to bring love and healing to those who fear, who are angry, in pain and frustrated. Today I will treat each person I meet with love. That is the path of nonviolence.

Let peace begin with you.

February 4 Day 6

“To me God is truth and love. God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of light and life, and yet He is above and beyond all these.”

M.K. Gandhi

Many of us describe ourselves as “*spiritual, but not religious*”. What we're really saying is that we do not accept the idea of a God that exists as a “Super Being”, in the sense of “the Old White Man with white hair and beard on the Throne of Gold” or whatever our idea of “Not God” is. Each of us is entitled to our own soul metaphor, even the metaphor of “Not God” because none of us can ever know God except through ourselves.

Gandhiji is stating the Truth of the Divine, whatever soul metaphor you may apply to it. Those of us who reject the idea of God, but honor, respect and practice the highest ethical and moral qualities are worshiping the Divine in our way. All of the highest qualities, the “*soul*” qualities, that we possess are the Divine. And yet, even within us, God is above and beyond all those soul qualities. Our very life essence is Spirit expressing itself in a unique way through each of us.

Many of us, however “*Spiritual but not religious*” we may be, still feel a connection with all life, and a unity in all life. We feel that connection all life is the Divine expressing. Nonviolence is the outward expression of our conscious unity with Spirit, however we understand it. Violence is the separation that comes when we forget who we are.

Affirmative Practice

Today, my day will begin and end with consciously remembering that I am one with everyone and everything. Today I will see and bless Spirit expressing in all Life. Today, I will see and honor the Divine even in those with whom I most disagree. That is the path of nonviolence.

Let peace begin with you.

February 5 Day 7

“We may not be God, but we are of God, even as a little drop of water is of the ocean. Imagine it torn away from the ocean and flung millions of miles away. It becomes helpless, torn from its surroundings, and cannot feel the might and majesty of the ocean.... But for my faith in God, I should have been a raving maniac.”

M.K. Gandhi

Whenever we feel any negativity, any lack or limitation in our work of nonviolence, we are that drop of water, feeling torn from our immersion in and unity with the Ocean of the Divine and flung far from it, alone and helpless. Is it any wonder that when we give in to our frustration, irritation, anger, resentment at the slow pace of progress in our work, we sometimes feel, “*Am I insane, or is it the world?*” The answer, of course is “Yes”! Anytime we feel ourselves disconnected, separate and apart from all that is, we have forgotten who and what we are. We have simply forgotten our true nature. Worse, we believe our own delusion of ourselves, alone and separate from life, dependent on our own will, our own strength, our own power. Truly, we have become that “*raving maniac*” Gandhiji feared in himself.

Faith in something greater than we are is the only path to nonviolence that never disappears before us, but goes ever, ever on, stretching before us. When we remember our unity with the All, sanity returns, and there is always enough strength, enough power, for the work of nonviolence.

Affirmative Practice

Today, I will meditate on my connection to the All. Today, I will make the conscious effort to remember my unity with all that is, especially those I feel most separated from. Today, I walk in my faith. That is the path to nonviolence .

Let peace begin with you.