

# Practices of Peace Contemporary Forms of Gandhian Spirituality

In the 21st century, spirituality is understood in diverse ways, often emphasizing personal growth, connection to something greater than oneself, and inner peace. While some may associate spirituality with organized religion, others view it as a journey of self-discovery, mindfulness practices or a sense of interconnectedness with the world. Many seek spirituality outside religious frameworks, exploring the nature, the path of yoga, meditation and various spiritual teachings to find fulfillment in their lives.

Spiritualism in India emphasizes the pursuit of self-realization, calmness and unity with the divine or cosmic consciousness. To deal with it, Indian seers, sages and thinkers mastered the language of spiritualism by adopting the technique of debates and discourses, which they did in varying degrees, put it to different uses and gave rise to different forms of spiritual treatises. Contemporary Indian modernists were inspired by both traditional Indian and Western thoughts; however, the critical traditionalists focus more on the traditional Indian thought not merely as a matter of national pride but also for other reasons. According to them Western thought lack insights, these set of people with their extraordinary capacity were alone intelligible to the masses whom they were increasingly mobilizing in their struggle against the colonial rule, countered the hold of anti-modern conservatives, and helped create a common space between Indians of modernist, conservative, and other persuasion. The exuberant set of the critical traditionalists included some of India's most influential religious and cultural

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torch bearers such as Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

All compliments to the editors Dr. Saji Varghese and Dr. Randhir Kumar Gautam for conceiving such a masterpiece and compiling the expressions & discourses of scholars across the globe who have presented their views on the fundamental understanding of the ontological, metaphysical, practical and experiential account of 'Peace embedded in Gandhian Spirituality.' The book is the resourceful, well documented proceedings of the conference on "Satyagraha and Gandhian Spirituality" organized by Mahatma Gandhi Center for Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies and Lady Keane College Shillong.

President of the Gandhian Information Center Dr. Christian Bartolf's foreword clearly mentions 'for a new non-violent praxeology of human dignity, human rights and peace' one must do away with all kinds of 'complexities' and 'isms.' Similarly, retired Bishop in Shillong Dr. Thomas Menampampil in the Prefatory Reflection Making Spiritual Values Relevant has set the right tone to the book by stating that 'the principles derived from one's own culture and indigenous wisdom based on spiritual reflections are the foundations that shall ensure a future to humanity.'

Section I titled as Mahatma, Peace and Nonviolence consists of eight chapters which

encompasses various themes in Mahatma's life such as empathy, love, moral order, peace, non-violence were not just external principles but were transformative power of cultivating inner peace and harmony through self-discipline, meditation, and moral integrity.

Section II is based on Perspectives on Satyagraha. Gandhi's concept of Satyagraha or soul force has been viewed by eleven contributors in philosophical, political, global and critical perspectives.

Section III is devoted to the spiritual perspective of peace, non-violence, secularism, reason & faith, education for overall development of an individual.

Section IV comprises of allied Gandhian Themes by ten writers who have laid an eclectic foundation of Gandhi's holistic approach to inspire movements for peace and justice and The book "Practices of Peace Contemporary Forms of Gandhian Spiritualism" is timely and insightful discourse conveying the meaning of peace extends beyond the absence of war or conflict to encompass broader notions of fostering harmonious relationships between individuals, communities, and nations, while also addressing the underlying issues such as inequality, poverty, discrimination and environmental degradation.

**Book Review by Dr. Kamala Srinivas, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy SIES College of Arts, Science & Commerce Mumbai**