

# Quakerism, Its Legacy, and Its Relevance for Gandhian Research



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By

Satish Sharma

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**Dedicated to,  
My True Teacher,  
My Spiritual Master**



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## FOREWORD

In a hopelessly divided, violent world, it's almost self-deluding to talk about Quakers, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. As I write this foreword to Dr. Satish Sharma's take on some forgotten angels, I remain conscious of my limitations to do full justice to the depth and contents of this thoughtful monograph. I seek to signify the ethos of a work that merits serious consideration in a commercially compromised academe where marketplace value dominates the purpose of education at the expense of truth.

What began as a "Society of Friends" in 1650s England, a non-ritualistic approach to God through conscience became the basis of Quakerism, practiced today by 210,000 people worldwide. Existential ethics has philosophically replaced religion as the basis of morality.<sup>1</sup> I doubt if Kierkegaard or Sartre were Quakers. The voices of humanity, compassion, and ethics, however, boldly resound at a time when the radicalization of organized religion has become ubiquitously vile and banal.

About half a century ago, I wrote to an eminent philosopher-pacifist to enlighten me about the causes of war and destruction at a time when nothing was more urgent than world peace at the height of the Cold War. His response still holds water. He wrote:<sup>2</sup>

September 10, 1962

Dear Mr. Mohan,

Thank you very much for your letter. I fear that the conflict at the moment is one of power with no other mission than that. The great majority of people who acquiesce do so because they are unable to release themselves from the old habits of thought, and because they are so very unable to affect governments. This is why I am asking to develop a movement of international resistance, and I enclose a [flyer on "Fight back or Perish"] for your interest. Yours sincerely, Bertrand Russell.

Humankind almost stands at the edge of an abyss. Our lust for misguided power drives the engines of death and destruction. Terror, which always pre-existed within designated precincts, compounds, and walls, has become a 24/7 reality. It's pathetic to see countries employing

precious resources to unabashedly buy arms while their children remain hungry, while the elderly and indigents languish, uncared for. One need not witness this brutality of life on the streets of Aleppo or Caloocan: the ubiquity of fear and terror characterizes the state of our human condition.

Not that it's all dark. Signs of progress and advancements on the horizon are equally formidable. Emerging biotechnologies hold the promise of altering the fundamentals of life.<sup>3</sup> Once the CRISPR project is complete, the researchers of DNA will be able to wipe out much of the human suffering caused by incurable illness. The CRISPR pioneers "could change the world."<sup>4</sup> It's not the lack of resources but the lack of will that perpetuates the "poverty of culture" that continues to dehumanize us.<sup>5</sup> The failure of science, governance, and peoples to liberate humanity from its own trappings is the crux that must be explored deeper and further. Quakers emphasize equality to seek social justice, human rights, "environmental justice," community life, and freedom of conscience as tools to attain universal peace.

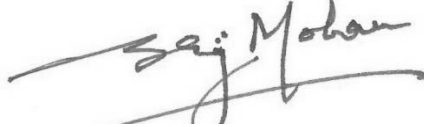
There is no dearth of books and readings on the subject. Dr. Satish Sharma, by virtue of his calling, is a professor of social work who has studied Gandhi through much of his career. His insights into Quakerism are refreshing from a secular-academic perspective. In eight well organized chapters, the author unravels Gandhian praxis in light of the historical background of Quakers and Quakerism. This brings into focus the basic tenets, times, conditions, beliefs, spirituality, and pacifism that have a prescient value for reform and conciliation in a troubled world. One can occupy a territory or win a national election, but it's well-nigh impossible to win over your demons.

Written as a reference and resource guide, the three main objectives of this work are: (1) to share with the readers information about the origins, history, principles, practices, and applications of Quakerism; (2) to point to the legacy of Quakerism and Quakers on the world scene; and (3) to suggest the relevance of Quakerism for further extending and integrating Gandhian and other pacifist research. The work is very comprehensive, and also attempts to fill some information gaps in the area. It is an extensive work and has been accomplished in a painstaking manner, with particular eye for depth and detail. The work should be useful to scholars in many disciplines and in particular to those working in the pacifism, peace, conflict-resolution, ethics, development, social reform, social services, and religious studies fields.

The book is a timely reminder that the facts of life may not be separated from the values of life. As Sartre once wrote, success is not progress. While it seems impossible to attain a peaceful global coexistence

under the shadow of contemporary social regression, it may not be too late to rethink and seek time-tested pathways to realizing life in its most beautiful shape. In this tedious archaeology of self-discovery, here's Dr. Sharma's seminal contribution to reflecting on, reading, teaching, and learning the art of practicing truth with honesty in search of universal peace. Amen!

Brij Mohan

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brij Mohan". The signature is stylized with a long horizontal line extending to the left and a large, sweeping flourish at the bottom.

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## PREFACE

Secular and non-secular traditions of the East and West have impressed upon people and nations that peaceful strategies and workings ought to be adopted as they assure the satisfaction of individual needs, create harmony and congeniality in the social order, and help to find lasting solutions to problems that are satisfactory to all. One such tradition was Gandhi's strategy of nonviolent action that became popular because of its demonstrated effects in South Africa and India undertaken by the Satyagraha movements.<sup>1</sup> That strategy was later adopted by many other reformers in different parts of the world, two prominent examples being Nelson Mandela in South Africa and Martin Luther King Jr. in America.<sup>2</sup> The Quaker tradition, with its emphasis on pacifism and social responsibility, falls into the same category, and there are many parallels between Quaker and Gandhian thoughts and practices.<sup>3</sup>

An enormous amount of literature is published on Gandhian thought and practices each year, but much of it is a restatement of the themes and facts long known; new analyses and articulations are rare. There is therefore a need for fresh explications, extensions, syntheses, and integrations of the thought and practices with other similar thoughts and practices. That need assumes even greater importance during the current times in view of the fact that force as a means of addressing the issues has greatly increased in popularity around the world, where terrorism, counter-terrorism, justified conflicts, and justified wars are becoming the preferred norms.

In 1999, a research project was undertaken by this author to further explore Gandhian thought and practices and extend some resource materials to Gandhian and other pacifist scholars. Specific focus was on Gandhi's four proclaimed teachers. In his autobiography, addresses, writings, and speeches, Gandhi mentions that four personalities captivated him, leaving deep impressions on his life, character, works, and adopted strategies. Those great men, listed in the order of Gandhi's own ranking, are: (1) Rajchandra Ravjibhai Mehta from India, (2) Leo Tolstoy from Russia, (3) John Ruskin from England, and (4) Henry David Thoreau from America.<sup>4</sup> Research on Gandhi's first teacher, Rajchandra Ravjibhai Mehta, began, and in 2005 the results appeared in the form of a book entitled *Gandhi's Teachers: Rajchandra Ravjibhai Mehta*.<sup>5</sup> After that,

three more books appeared: *Gandhi's Teachers: Leo Tolstoy* in 2009, *Gandhi's Teachers: John Ruskin* in 2011, and *Gandhi's Teachers: Henry David Thoreau*<sup>6</sup> in 2013, altogether forming the "Gandhi's Teachers Series." All the books were published by Gujarat Vidyapith, Ahmedabad, India, an institution established by Gandhi in 1920 as part of the freedom movement of India. Collectively, the books provided a wealth of information as resource materials helpful to Gandhian and other pacifist scholars in seeking further connections, extensions, comparisons, and integrations between Gandhian and other pacifist thoughts and practices. In terms of content, these books included the background circumstances in which these great men lived and laboured, as well as their life histories and struggles, thoughts, reform efforts, strategies, and lessons they left for the next generations.

In the case of the book on Rajchandra, additional information was also provided on Jainism, the Jain goals of life, the liberation of the soul from material bondage, Gandhi's questions to Rajchandra from South Africa and Rajchandra's replies, as well as the influence Rajchandra had on Gandhi's life, character, direction, and endeavours. A couple of the works of Rajchandra, *The Philosophy of Six Padas* and *Atma-Siddhi*,<sup>7</sup> are also included. This information proved useful to Gandhian and other pacifist scholars in the area of peace studies for the further enrichment of thought, practices, and strategies.

The book on Tolstoy presents information on the social, political, and cultural conditions of the period pertaining to Russia and South Africa. Set against that backdrop Tolstoy was presented as the teacher and Gandhi the disciple. The work includes their respective life histories, endeavours, works, thoughts, strategies, and lessons. This book also contains some information on Gandhi's three prominent followers: Vinoba Bhave, Jayaprakash Narayan, and Martin Luther King Jr. Additional information is included on Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* and *Sarvodaya*, Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, and King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, all of which assisted in filling gaps and was deemed helpful.

The book on Ruskin likewise focuses on the general conditions of the Middle Ages and the arrival of urban-industrial order, which brought with it multitudes of problems, issues, and sufferings for common people. Ruskin was deeply concerned about these problems and spent his whole life striving to improve the conditions. The book covers Ruskin's life, works, achievements, and reform efforts, and reflects on his *Unto This Last*, *Munera Pulveris*, *Time and Tide*, and *Fors Clavigera*, as well as providing a brief glimpse into the "Guild of St. George," a project initiated

by Ruskin and his supporters to manifest their adopted principles and ideas.

Lastly, the book on Thoreau focuses on his life, struggles, and endeavours against the backdrop of Transcendentalism, developing urbanization and industrialization, and the anti-slavery movement in America. Discussed in detail are his essays “Resistance to Civil Government,” “Slavery in Massachusetts,” “On Captain John Brown: A Plea, Martyrdom, and Last Days,” “The Higher Laws,” and “Life Without Principle,” as well as other writings on “Individualism,” “Simplicity,” and “Reform.” The work additionally contains information on Emerson’s essay “The Transcendentalist,” a timeline of the anti-slavery movement, and chronologies of Thoreau’s life and works. This information was likewise helpful in the various research endeavours, seeking to identify further connections, extensions, comparisons, and integrations between Gandhian and other pacifist thought and practices.<sup>8</sup>

Having finished the four-book series on “Gandhi’s Teachers,” the desire was to pursue further research and offer still more resource materials to Gandhian and other pacifist scholars. It has been noted that, in South Africa and India, Gandhi lived and worked for a time with some Quaker friends and greatly appreciated their zeal, support, work, and approach to the issues of peace and justice based on the Quaker faith.<sup>9</sup> A decision was therefore made to explore Quakerism and its historical circumstance and issues with the goal of highlighting the main points of its legacy and the relevance of those materials to further Gandhian and other pacifist research. Thus, this work is an extension of the earlier research efforts and is aimed at furthering the causes of peace and pacifist research in their different dimensions.<sup>10</sup>

Acknowledgment of valued support for the publication of this work must be extended to the Canadian Peace Research Association (CPRA), as does the assistance from the University of Nevada through a sabbatical leave. Many professionals in India and the United States have cooperated in this research effort at different stages, and the author is very thankful to all of them. Particular thanks, however, goes to Dr. Brij Mohan, Dean Emeritus at Louisiana State University, and Dr. Shreesh Juyal, current President of the Canadian Peace Research Association (CPRA), for their help and cooperation in this project. Dr. Brij Mohan also kindly wrote the Foreword to this book. The author also feels greatly indebted to the managing staff of Cambridge Scholars Publishing and in particular Anthony Wright, Victoria Carruthers, and Amanda Millar for their active guidance, support, and meticulous care in the various printing needs of this book. The author also wishes to thank the reviewers who read the

manuscript carefully and extended thoughtful suggestions for further improvements. Last but not least, the author wishes to thank his wife, Asha Sharma, and children Ashish Sharma and Anu Sood, and their children, for their enduring patience and support over the course of what turned out to be a lengthy project.

As in the earlier works, this book is also offered to readers with the same sense of humility, devotion, and dedication as Gandhi always expressed for his esteemed audiences. Peace!

Satish Sharma  
Las Vegas, United States



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

Gandhi's intimate connections with Quakerism and Quakers in South Africa, the fact that parallels exist between Quaker and Gandhian thought and practice, and the prevailing need for more comparative, analytical, integrative, and synthetic research on Gandhian and other pacifist thought and practices have been indicated in the Preface. It also indicated that the author has recently finished a four-book series on "Gandhi's Teachers," and that this work should be considered as a continuation of that research effort, to fill some information gaps for Gandhian and other pacifist researchers. Three main goals of this work are: (1) to provide comprehensive information on Quakerism and Quakers at a level at which the work practically becomes a reference/resource guide for researchers; (2) to point to the legacy of Quakers on the world scene in relation to their faith, religious practices, organization, and efforts relating to liberty, reform, fairness, justice, peace, and character-building; and (3) to attempt some interfacing (not comparing and contrasting) between Quaker and Gandhian thought and practice and suggest some possibilities for future research.

Before the above tasks are attempted, a basic knowledge of Gandhian orientations and principles of Quakerism and Quakers is necessary for those who may not be familiar with these topics. That information is provided below in accordance with the following outline.

### **Gandhian Orientations and Principles**

Gandhi started began writing on the social, political, developmental, religious, and spiritual issues of the day with his Satyagraha movement in South Africa. Included in those writings are his emphasis on the non-tolerance of injustices, the search for fairness in all affairs, the maintenance of high morality, nonviolent orientations, altruism, and taking care of people in need.<sup>1</sup> Gandhi's moral stance and struggles in South Africa caused scholars and reformers around the world to take notice of his writings. The increased attention spurred a flurry of writing on Gandhi

and his practices and reform strategies. That body of literature is voluminous and has been translated into most major languages of the world. Gandhi, however, was not alone on the path to creating fairness, justice, and harmony in societies; there were many more visionaries before and after him who fought against inequality, injustice, and atrocities, attempting to bring fairness, justice, peace, harmony, and happiness through the development of greater understanding, tolerance, compassion, and kindness. We have become aware of these individuals through their endeavours, struggles, and actions.<sup>2</sup> In that regard, mention has already been made of Gandhi's four proclaimed teachers from whom he drew inspiration, adopted strategies, and life-lessons. He also received inspiration and lessons from other sources, including: (1) his traditional upbringing in the setting of Indian culture; (2) his deep respect for parents, elders, and wise men; (3) his appreciation of the secular and religious traditions of India and other nations; (4) his early exposure to the cultures of England and South Africa; (5) his workings with a variety of people during the Satyagraha movements in South Africa and India; (6) his great reverence for prophets like Mahavira, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, and Christ; (7) his comparative study of the religions and philosophies of the world; (8) his developed habit of reflections on the self, others, and society; (9) his empathy for poor and left-behind people and communities; (10) his desire to serve the whole of humanity; and (11) his urge to become a religious person and a liberated soul.<sup>3</sup>

His early traditional upbringing in the Indian cultural setting inculcated in Gandhi a sense of pride for that tradition that had survived many ups and downs and sustained people for thousands of years. That tradition was basically religious and spiritually oriented. It filled Gandhi with a desire to become a pious, pure, and disciplined person, modelled after exceptional examples. Diversity, tolerance, and compromise were also strong features of the Indian tradition, and Gandhi learned those lessons through his interactions and dealings with others. The tradition also contained secular wisdom, and advocated conscientious, fair, and generous living. Gandhi learned that lesson as well. Further religious inspiration came from his mother, and he learned practicality from his father. The neighbourhood in which he lived, the school he attended, and the friends he associated with were also sources of inspiration and lessons. Other notable influences shaping Gandhi's orientation and imparting lessons were his elders, teachers, caste members, his stay in England, his work in South Africa, and his participation in the freedom movement of India.

Small communities where production, distribution, consumption, and functioning were local were also sources of inspiration for him, leaving

deep impressions. He greatly admired their self-dependence, self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-regulation, self-empowerment, and unity that were self-created, self-enforced, self-maintained, and self-monitored. This community format fascinated Gandhi, and he wanted the restructuring of India to occur on that model. Gandhi envisioned an India composed of small interdependent communities independently regulating their own economies, political affairs, education, and social justice, all accomplished in local, personal terms.<sup>4</sup> Gandhi believed that the British rule of India was unfair and that people must be liberated from its evil impact. Gandhi also believed that the decentralization of power was necessary at all levels, and that cities were to carry their own burdens and not burden villages and towns for resources or to fulfil their needs. Moreover, the needs of the people were to come first, before the needs of institutions, organizations, and communities were considered. Weak and disinherited people were to be protected and the entirety of the social order was to be oriented towards harmony and nonviolence; everyone was to experience true satisfaction and happiness.<sup>5</sup>

The main religious traditions in India were Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam, all of them contributing considerably to the past glory of India. Gandhi was exposed to these religious traditions early on, taking influence and guidance from them for his projects, actions, behaviours, achievement of goals, and choices of strategies. Particularly helpful were the Christian, Islamic, Jain, and Hindu traditions, and he liberally borrowed from them for his life's activities and socio-political reforms. He stressed that all religions were of equal importance and the messages in them were one and the same. Therefore, any one religion could inspire the inner and outer workings of the human, if followed faithfully and sincerely.<sup>6</sup> The *Bhagavad-Gita* especially was of considerable use to Gandhi, and whenever in doubt or quandary he sought answers from it. It provided him with the basis for fruitful and wholesome living.<sup>7</sup> Gandhi additionally liked the Jain, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic traditions, and felt that they also provided a similarly sound basis for living and functioning with an emphasis on simplicity, austerity, self-sacrifice, tolerance, nonviolence, forgiveness, and keeping vows. The Sermon on the Mount fascinated Gandhi: "But I say unto you, that ye resist not the evil: but whosoever smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak too."<sup>8</sup> This message delighted Gandhi beyond measure, and he was reminded of Shamal Bhatt's verses: "For a bowl of water give a goodly meal; For a kindly greeting bow thou down with zeal; For a simple penny pay thou back with gold; If thy life be rescued, life do

not withhold. Thus, the words and actions of the wise regard; Every little service tenfold they reward. But the truly noble know all men as one, And return with gladness good for evil done.”<sup>9</sup> Gandhi said that those words went straight to his heart and he started comparing lessons contained in the Bhagavad-Gita, the Sermon on the Mount, and *The Light of Asia*.<sup>10</sup> Thus, all those sources were venerable to him. He drew many inspirations from them, and incorporated these lessons into his *Ashram Observances in Action*.<sup>11</sup>

As a boy, Gandhi was quite shy, and the conservative environment of India constrained him considerably. At age nineteen, however, when he went to England for higher studies in law, he found himself in an open and more flexible environment where he was restrained no more and could live and experiment at will. There he tried new lifestyles, orientations, and ways to handle affairs with partial success. He became more confident, his personality blossomed, and he matured a great deal. He became more simple, frugal, non-conventional, and independent, and he learned a variety of important lessons in life. There, he willingly accepted vegetarianism and his early religious leanings returned to him. He carried these orientations and experiences into his future and continued to expand upon them still further. In South Africa he met a wide variety of people from different nationalities and backgrounds, shared his life with them, and worked with them as a co-worker on many causes, acquiring many more lessons and applying these experiences to the Satyagraha movements in South Africa and India with positive results. In South Africa, Gandhi’s Christian and Muslim friends pressed him to convert to either Christianity or Islam, pointing to their respective advantages. Gandhi felt bewildered and wrote to his friend Rajchandra in India about the predicament, who convinced him to remain in the Hindu tradition. That experience sharpened Gandhi’s curiosity about other religions vis-à-vis Hinduism, and he started comparing them and found that, at the core, they were one and the same. Thereafter, he became more serious about his religious life and started craving soul liberation. Gandhi was also very sympathetic towards the poor, needy, and downtrodden people, and fought for their rights and comforts all his life. He also paid attention to the social evils of the time and urged their elimination through social reforms. He urged racial and religious equality, stressed Hindu-Muslim unity, and recommended serving attitudes towards others. He despised the marginalization, oppression, suppression, and exploitation of people and communities and did whatever he could to alleviate those circumstances. In the long run, Gandhi wanted to bring about an ideal social order where human purpose transcended all other considerations, and where

understanding, empathy, sympathy, and harmony prevailed, and only those factors guided the workings of economic, social, political, and religious systems. Artificial inequalities were to go, fairness and justice were to exist, the strong were to protect the weak, and the whole administration was to be geared to the satisfaction of the needs of people and communities. Discriminations, manipulations, oppressions, and rivalries were to become things of the past, people were to become more uplifted, and cultural norms and workings were to support pacifism, peace, and the welfare of all. Gender equality was to exist and males and females were to work shoulder to shoulder to meet the needs of the social order. Illiteracy and poverty were to be eradicated and all people were to be involved in mainstream activities. Political freedoms were to be protected, slavery was to be eliminated, and communal harmony was to be maintained. Addictions were to end, health and sanitation were to be paid more attention, and power was to be shared at all levels. There was to be no dehumanization in the social order and no violence was to occur. Gandhi felt that all this was possible and that his vision of an ideal social order where all people felt satisfied and self-realized was achievable.<sup>12</sup>

With the passage of time, Gandhian thought and practices became quite popular and were appreciated around the world. There are gaps, however, which still exist and there is room for further improvement and sharpening of the thought, practices, and strategies through connections, extensions, comparisons, and integrations with other similar thought, practices, and strategies. There is also a need to work more on the reform visions that better fit modern circumstances in light of recent changes and the increasingly complex problems and issues prevalent today. Violence has been increasing in societies all over the world, showing its ugly face in many forms. It has also been gaining ascendancy over nonviolent practices and people have started questioning if nonviolent methods and strategies are relevant and workable in modern circumstances in the handling of problems and issues. Evil manoeuvring, covert strategizing, and aggression have become more common and have begun to take precedence over honest and truthful practices. All those conditions point to the need for further research into Gandhian and other pacifist thought and practices. More clear, succinct, and demonstrable answers must be sought to prevent the spread of the current problems and issues, and in that respect help also needs to be procured through available secular and religious sources including conceptions and articulations of globalization, liberalism, egalitarianism, and universalism. Transcendental thought and conceptions and articulations on human equality, human rights, a fair world order, the welfare of people and communities, and conflict-resolution theories and

conceptions can also be helpful. Then there are the themes and topics of peace movements, civil rights movements, and feminist movements that can also offer some help. Similar help is also available through other traditions of the East and the West. All these resources could go a long way in further improving and enriching Gandhian and other pacifist thought and practices in terms of reach, scope, and applications.<sup>13</sup>

## **Quakerism and Quakers**

Another resource for the expansion and further explication of Gandhian and other pacifist thought and practices are the writings related to Quakerism and Quakers. As is well known, Quakerism was born in England as a breakaway Christian sect during the seventeenth century amidst many social, political, and religious upheavals in Europe. The founding father was George Fox, and his revelations were the basis for the founding of the sect. Inner searching was urged; God was placed at the centre of everything, and people were advised to follow pristine Christian teachings. They were to live simply in peace and harmony with others, and follow the dictates of truth. They were also to subscribe to cooperation, egalitarianism, altruism, honesty, empathy, integrity, and friendship. Life was to be viewed as sacred and to be purposeful, meaningful, and rewarding. Understanding, patience, tolerance, love, compassion, and mutual-reliance was advised, cherished, and observed. Support of others was mandated, and the whole of humanity was to be served. Wisdom and guidance for that came from the “Inner Spirit” sat in the heart of every person, effortlessly showing the right path through “inner light” and “inner revelations.” All people were on the same plane, each receiving revelations from the same source. Thus, they were spiritually equal, each person worthy, dignified, and honourable to the same extent. They had the same access to divine power within, were bound together by one fate, and had the same future. “Inner conscience” and “inner reflections” guided day-to-day living and ideals were practical, pragmatic, faith-based, and utilitarian, leading to exemplary behaviour and actions. God’s will was accepted and taken as supreme. Evils and conflicts were to be avoided, purity was to be watched for, and life was to be lived in devotion to families, communities, nation and the world at-large. Additional messages in Quakerism were: (1) seize the present as it contains all that there is; (2) love thyself in spite of faults and love others too; (3) love the world no matter how bad it appears to be; (4) don’t just talk, listen to what you already know within and act; (5) engage in a team spirit which teaches: (a) only so much is under one’s control at any point in time; (b) how to handle

pressure; (c) how to familiarize oneself with diverse people, tasks, and conditions; (d) how to function at a higher level; (e) how to experience happiness when performing well; (f) how to confidently handle failure; (g) how to keep going against all odds; (h) how to win or lose with grace; and (i) how to avoid self-centeredness; (6) learn how to accept God's will; (7) believe in the perfectibility of the self and society; (8) render love visible through work, action, and concern for others; (9) seek fairness and justice throughout the world; (10) look for the light of God in every person; and (11) "let your life speak for itself." It is thus clear that Quaker and Gandhian thought and practices had much in common and, if jointly explored, could further support, reinforce, and enrich pacifist thought and practice through seeking extensions, comparisons, integrations, and syntheses in the available information. Such research would also fill existing gaps in pacifist knowledge and practice, and give planners, policymakers, and social reformers more tools to work with.<sup>14</sup>

## **Outline of this Work**

In addition to a Foreword, a Preface, four appendixes, and a comprehensive Bibliography, this work has been divided into eight chapters entitled: Introduction; Times, Conditions, and Thought; Seeds and a Brief History; Core Quakerism; Spirituality, Pacifism, and Peace; Aid, Relief, Reform, and Conciliation Efforts; Legacy and Interfacing; and Conclusion. The included appendixes are: The Timelines of Quakerism; A Declaration from the Harmless and Innocent People ...; The Sermon on the Mount; and William Penn's "An Essay."

The Foreword, Preface, and chapter one attempt an overview of the context of this work and offer insights into the contents, details, and directions. Basic information on Gandhian orientations and principles of Quakerism and Quakers appears in chapter one for those who may not yet be familiar with these topics. Chapter two describes the background of the times, conditions, and thought that initiated the birth of Quakerism and later influenced its growth and international spreading. Also discussed here are the contexts of early Europe, the conditions and circumstances in the Early, High, and Later Middle Ages, and the prevailing thought and beliefs of those periods. Chapter three provides information on the seeds of Quakerism and attempts a brief history of the movement and sect. Chapter four presents core aspects of Quakerism in terms of the beliefs, worship, and other practices. Other topics included here are: (1) truth, theology, and changes; (2) conscience, service, and simplicity; (3) equality, integrity, and peace; and (4) family, business, and community.

Chapter five focuses on spirituality, pacifism, and peace with the sub-topics of spirituality and its practice, spiritual ideals and expressions, and spirituality and practical spirituality. Chapter six focuses on the family and community sense of the Quakers and their aid, reform, and conciliation efforts. The sub-topics here are: family and community sense, social organization for need satisfaction, Quaker welfare efforts, aid and relief, prison reforms, sanitation, physical health and nursing, mental healthcare, temperance, human equality, the slave trade and slavery, educational endeavours, and conciliation efforts. All these topics are addressed at some length focused on Quaker necessities and the reforms they pursued. Chapter seven overviews the main points of the legacy of Quakerism and Quakers and their significant global contribution, despite the relatively small size of the sect. Interfacing (not comparing and contrasting) between Quaker and Gandhian thought and practices has also been attempted here and suggestions have been offered for further research by Gandhian and other pacifist scholars. Chapter eight provides concluding thoughts and briefly indicates the overarching significance of this work.

In conceptual and applicative terms, this work contributes substantially to the existing knowledge and should help with handling practice-related issues and seeking solutions to current problems and predicaments at different levels. An additional value of this work is as a reference and resource guide for researchers. Care has been taken regarding the needs of Western and non-Western readers, and the book should be of considerable use to students and scholars in the fields of political economy, social development, peace studies, social change, social welfare, social work, comparative religions, and other related disciplines. Courses are currently taught all over the world in pacifist, reformist, and welfare thought and strategies to overcome ongoing problems and issues peacefully at local, national, and international levels. In that regard, this work will assist in filling gaps in scholarship and can be used as a textbook or supplemental textbook in related courses.



## CHAPTER TWO

### TIMES, CONDITIONS, AND THOUGHT

All social, political, religious, and intellectual movements are products resulting from past and present circumstances, and the origin, growth, and spread of the Quaker movement is no exception to that rule. The immediate factors responsible for the emergence of the movement were unsettled conditions in England during the seventeenth century, an ongoing power struggle between the state and the church, and the many manipulations that had crept into the Roman Catholic Church. But the seeds of the movement had been germinating since the early stages of Christianity and they also need to be brought into focus for a proper understanding of the movement, the sect, and the people. Accordingly, this chapter provides information on the times, conditions, and thought that cumulatively prompted the birth and spread of the Quaker movement. Another objective of this chapter is to provide as much background, contextual, and causal information as possible against which the contents of forthcoming chapters can be placed, viewed, and judged properly. The historical periods covered are Classical Antiquity to the end of the Late Middle Ages.

#### **Early Europe**

The Europe of earlier times was much different from the present-day Europe in terms of the conditions of people and societies. The first settlers in the remote past arrived during the Palaeolithic period and technology gradually came from the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> Classical Antiquity began with the rise of city states in the region and ahead in that respect was Ancient Greece, which supported Hellenic civilization and had great influence upon the continent through accomplishments in science, philosophy, politics, mathematics, sports, music, theatre, and modes of governing.<sup>2</sup> These developments were later adopted by the Romans, and together the Greeks and Romans created a legacy evident in their social, cultural, intellectual, and political institutions. Greek influence gradually waned and the Romans took over, creating a dominant Mediterranean civilization

which impacted the whole of Europe. The Roman Empire was at its peak by the second century AD, after which it started declining due to economic issues, excessive taxation, population decline, diminished small town vitality, a widening gulf between rich and poor people, rivalries among competing princes and emperors, foreign pressures, internal divisions, and political instability. Other contributing factors were the large-scale conversion of the population to Christianity between the second and the fifth centuries, persistent barbarian attacks, and a divided Christian church.<sup>3</sup> In AD 400, Visigoths invaded the Western Roman Empire and in AD 410 the city of Rome was sacked, and Alans, Vandals, Suevi, Franks, Alemanni, Burgundians, Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were all active during that period. Under these attacks, the Western Roman Empire began to crumble and was divided into numerous smaller political units ruled by different tribes. This also created new political boundaries and rearranged the demographic map of the continent. The Germanic people were becoming increasingly strong in the north, and under their repeated attacks the Western Roman Empire fell in AD 476, culminating in the deposition of Emperor Romulus Augustus, and thus ending Classical Antiquity.<sup>4</sup> The Eastern Roman Empire had survived and was later given the name the Byzantine Empire.<sup>5</sup> In the remnants of the Western Roman Empire, Germanic people established their own kingdoms, forming West Francia (later the Kingdom of France) and East Francia (later the Holy Roman Empire). The Kingdoms of Poland and Hungary were also founded during this period. In Western Europe, new political entities were emerging, local hierarchies were being formed based on the types of bonds to the land, and people had monetary and political obligations to the regional princes and lords. The Tithe System developed and supported the running of governmental affairs and wars.<sup>6</sup>

## **Middle Ages**

The Middle Ages began in about the fifth century and lasted until about the end of the fifteenth century. That whole period can be divided into three parts: the Early Middle Ages (from about the fifth century to about the tenth century), the High Middle Ages (from about the tenth century to about the thirteenth century), and the Late Middle Ages (from about the thirteenth century to about the end of the fifteenth century).<sup>7</sup> The conditions and circumstances in all those periods deemed relevant to the understanding of the Quaker movement have been presented below.

## **Early Middle Ages**

The Early Middle Ages, also known as the Dark Ages and the Age of Invasions, were marked by attacks from outside, mass migrations of people, de-urbanization, and shrinking populations. Kings and military men held power, Roman traditions and customs were prominent, and the intellectual tendencies of earlier times were copied. Political structures were in flux and revenues declining. Rulers were finding it difficult to meet administrative costs and maintain armies. Accordingly, land ownership and rental deals became popular with people of means, and in return they supplied rulers with monetary, military, and other help. This period also saw the gradual development of a feudal system based on new social, economic, political, and governing institutions, and these stayed strong until the end of the High Middle Ages. Rivalries among kings and emperors were ongoing and frequently led to warfare. A sentiment of huge uncertainty prevailed. The slave population declined, urban to rural migration increased, and powerful individuals, not directly linked to the rulers, filled gaps in the administration and governmental functioning. Invasions from outside remained persistent, bringing with them new ethnic populations entering with varied traditions, customs, languages, and living styles. The landscape of Europe was changing fast and Western Europe in particular was in great turmoil. In comparison, Eastern Europe remained steady and even enjoyed some economic revival up to the seventh century. The main factors leading to this were fewer invasions from outside, peaceful relations with Persia, and closer ties between the state and church. All that changed however with the onslaught of Muslim invasions in the seventh century. Caliphates and other Arab invaders proved to be relentless, and they began to conquer Eastern Europe. Roman Syria, Roman Mesopotamia, and subsequently Roman Palestine, Roman Egypt, parts of Asia Minor, and Roman North Africa fell to their control, and the trend continued with the fall of the rest of Mediterranean North Africa and most of the Iberian Peninsula. Over the next century, further territories came under Muslim rule, including Cyprus, Malta, Crete, Sicily, and parts of southern Italy. The trend was reversed only in 717 when Muslims laid siege to Constantinople for the second time, but failed. In the middle of the eighth century, invasions became less frequent after the overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty and its replacement with the Abbasid dynasty. Also during the seventh and eighth centuries, Franks of the Carolingian dynasty<sup>8</sup> established an empire that covered much of Western Europe that lasted up to the ninth century, until finally succumbing to Viking invasions

from the north, helped by Magyar attacks from the east and Saracen attacks from the south.<sup>9</sup>

Most of Europe was Christianized during the Early Middle Ages. At first, Christians were harassed and persecuted, but that changed when Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity at the beginning of the fourth century. In 313 he issued the Edict of Milan, declaring the legality of Christianity, and in 395 Theodosius I made Christianity the official religion of the Empire. Trade networks developed far and wide, but foreign invasions during the fourth and the fifth centuries disrupted them, and Mediterranean and African goods stopped coming to the continent. Another development of the Early Middle Ages was the formation of monasticism fashioned after traditions originating in Egypt and Syria. Monasteries, in addition to being religious centres, also became seats of education, learning, and literary products. They additionally acted as financial lenders and engaged in propaganda for the rich and powerful. The church in Western Europe remained divided during the Early Middle Ages, but exhibited outward unity. That changed after the conquest of North Africa by the Arabs. The Byzantine Church took a different route in terms of relationships with the state and liturgy, preaching, iconoclasm, and clerical marriage practices. With time, the differences between the Western and Eastern churches widened and led to a complete break in 1054 when the papacy of Rome and the patriarchy of Constantinople proclaimed supremacy over each other and excommunicated themselves. The first tradition became the Roman Catholic Church and the second the Eastern Orthodox Church. The estrangement between the two continued for centuries amidst numerous power struggles and divided the people of the continent. East Francia became part of the Holy Roman Empire by 800 and the Pope crowned Charlemagne, the king of the Franks, emperor. His empire encompassed much of France, the Low Countries, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Bohemia, Lower Saxony, and Spain. To the east was Bulgaria, founded in AD 681, and the Bulgarian Empire was a strong rival of the Byzantium Empire. Frankish power had risen between AD 481 and 814 and ushered in a cultural revival known as the "Carolingian Renaissance." Literary, art, architectural, jurisprudential, liturgical, and scriptural studies were all influenced by this renaissance. The Carolingian Empire started disintegrating in the middle of the ninth century when local kings tried to fight back against Viking, Magyar, and Saracen invaders. New political entities emerged, including Poland, Hungary, Croatia, and Serbia. Missionary efforts during the ninth and tenth centuries strengthened and supported Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Irish, English, Norman, and Spanish kingdoms. In Eastern Europe, the Byzantium

Empire experienced a revival that led to the “Macedonian Renaissance.” Missionary efforts in the eastern and western parts focused on Moravians, Bulgars, Bohemians, Poles, and Magyars, and contributed to the founding of Moravia, Bulgaria, Bohemia, and the Kievan Rus’. Meanwhile, the feudal system continued to flourish during these times, resulting in numerous technological and military advancements that played significant roles in the events of the High Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup>

## **High Middle Ages**

Foreign invasions ceased by the tenth century and slaveholding declined. Many agricultural and technological innovations were devised, resulting in increased crop productions and population increase. Trade flourished, towns started expanding, and new methods of economic dealings emerged. About ninety percent of the population were peasants, no longer dispersed on isolated farms but settled in small communities called “manors.” They owed services and rent to the overlords under the system called Manorialism. There was also a higher section of the society consisting of clergymen, townsmen, and low-ranking nobility who did not own land but were privileged to it, and in return owed military services and other favours to higher nobility. Then there was the still-higher nobility and the king. Middle-ranked people were dominant, however, based on their privileges to the land, the military personnel they kept to provide services to the higher nobility, the castles they controlled, and their immunities from levies and taxes. These factors made middle-ranked people quite powerful, and at times they could defy their overlords and even the king. The clergy fell into three categories: (1) monks who lived under strict religious discipline in monasteries and were considered part of the nobility; (2) the higher secular clergy who came from nobility and other higher ranks of the society; and (3) parish priests and lower clergy who were drawn from local peasant classes and lived among them.<sup>11</sup>

The High Middle Ages continued as a period of ups and downs. A main highlight of the time was the undertaking of the religiously motivated Crusades to liberate the Middle-Eastern Holy Lands from the Muslims. The Viking Age was coming to a close, while in the background the Seljuk Turks had quietly begun taking over much of the Middle East: Persia in the 1040s, Armenia in the 1060s, and Jerusalem in 1070, culminating in the defeat of the Byzantine army in 1071 in the Battle of Manzikert. The Turks then invaded Asia Minor and captured a large part of that heartland, but lost Jerusalem to the Fatimids of Egypt amidst additional in-fighting. The Crusades began in 1095 when the Byzantine

Emperor, Alexios Komnenos, asked Pope Urban II for help, who in turn delivered a message to the public at the Council of Clermont resulting in the mobilization of tens of thousands of people all over Europe, ultimately taking back Jerusalem in 1099. That gain was contentious, resulting in the constant agitation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries with violent clashes with the surrounding Islamic states. Military orders were organized and more Crusades were called for, helping to establish the Crusader States in Europe, including the Latin Empire of Constantinople founded during the fourth Crusade in 1203. The Crusader States were short-lived and by 1291 were either taken over or forced out. Only the Kingdom of Jerusalem survived a little longer. The Crusades had a number of positive impacts, however. New routes to the outside world were discovered, such as the Silk Road to China and India, which encouraged trade and commerce in the continent. In the Baltic lands, Muslims were pushed out of Iberia and the State of Teutonic Order was established. The kings in France, England, Spain, and Portugal consolidated their powers and established long-lasting governing institutions. Early signs of nation-states started appearing and city states became more vibrant. Eastern Europe was greatly impacted by the rise and fall of the Mongol Empire, of which the most illustrious figure was Genghis Khan, who led Steppe nomads and established an empire that extended from China to the Black Sea and the Baltic Sea in Europe. When Mongol power declined the Grand Duchy of Moscow became powerful and turned to Tsardom in 1547. Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia had converted to Christianity and became notable Central European powers. This was also the time when the papacy first asserted its claim to temporal authority over the entire Christian world. The papal monarchy reached its peak in the early thirteenth century during the period of the Northern Crusades, which served to advance Christianity into pagan regions in the Baltic and Finnie, ultimately assimilating many diverse populations and shifting the social and political fabric of Europe still further. The first attack against the papacy came in 1024 in Germany during the rule of the Salian dynasty in Emperor Henry IV's times, and these challenges persisted, becoming increasingly intense. The High Middle Ages also witnessed artistic, intellectual, and technological advancements. Aristotelian logic and the logic of Aquinas were rediscovered and extended to religious and theological domains. Cathedral schools were established and took over the monastery system of education, leading to the establishment of colleges and universities all over Europe. There was also a mix of "realism" and "nominalism" during the period that led to a greater fusion of philosophy and theology. Scholastic thought emerged and systematic approaches to truth, reason, and analysis came