

School kids to make January 30th a “World Ahimsa Day” ?

Dear children,

Last year, a class of students in Paris sent out a *Call for Ahimsa Day* on Tees Janvari. These children wished for 'simple' things that perhaps only a child can understand: stop spending on weapons, ensure food, water, health, housing and education for all. In a world ravaged with human, indeed man-made, calamities, it is now urgent that young Indian kids take the lead to help their country and the world understand Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence.

Gandhi was the first person in history who dared to make non-violence and truth central to politics. In fact he made non-violence a pre-condition for any search for truth. Albert Einstein said, “Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this walked the earth in flesh and blood”. With Gandhi's example, the calendar was re-cast into a Before-Gandhi and an After-Gandhi history of humanity.

The resolve to realize non-violence is different from any other project because it needs only one person's conviction to succeed. “Be the change you want to see in the world”, said Gandhi. The best way to change the world is to change the square meter one is standing on.

Gandhi was able to achieve something special single-handed only because he was not so much obsessed with changing others as with experimenting upon his own self. This is India's special tradition. Even Yoga, one of India's most original gifts to the world, is all about a hands-on approach to one's self, experimenting on body and mind, a do-it-yourself path to freedom. The school children in Paris learnt this as they worked on the film *Gandhi*, and simply decided upon an Experiment with Ahimsa ! Doing this they have sent a wake-up call to children in India, the only civilization where Ahimsa has been the supreme value!

In May 1954 a Japanese mother began a petition against nuclear war. It got 32 million signatures and led to the Einstein-Russell manifesto of 1955.

Today can we hope that young people in India will grab this baton (as in a “relay race”!) to see for themselves and show the world their power of imagination? Let India's children make Tees Janvari a day to launch a real quest for non-violence in the world. Born rich or poor, black or white, man or woman, tall or short, all of us have similar stories of pleasure and pain, love and hatred, that will all end with death, the great equalizer. Once we realize this like the ancient Charvakas, we will not only realize *a-him-sa* (“no-hurt-desire”) within ourselves, but make sure that all together we make the best of what this short life has to offer, instead of fussing and fighting enemies.

So please get into the brain-storming or “dream-storming” mode now, and go for daring ideas to recreate Tees Janvari, World Ahimsa Day, as a festival of imagination and creativity. Wake up, painters, sculptors, actors, debaters, writers, poets, singers, dancers, scientists! Let the nine saps (*rasas*) flow to realize the goal that we all cherish in our heart of hearts – living with all in the world as one family. Within your classroom, like those children in Paris, or at home, at work, cook up something that will flow out and mingle with other creative energies, beyond all borders that the accident of birth has erected (nation, colour, gender, caste, or religion).

Shirin Ebadi of Iran, the Peace Nobel laureate, brought this reminder to India and spoke to girls at a tiny school in Goregaon, about the need to revive Gandhi's ideals.

Now it is up to you young people to show the way to the grown men running the world. They need your guidance.

Come and join the F-a-m-ily - Friends-of-Ahimsa Movement.
www.ahimsaonline.org