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A Quest for Peace and Reconciliation

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A Quest for Peace and Reconciliation

Integrity does not always garner universal praise.

- Pope Francis

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A Quest for Peace and Reconciliation

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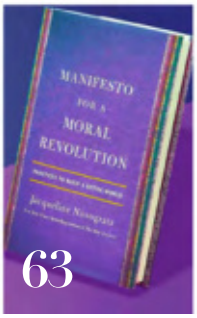

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Editorial

Integrity and Peacebuilding

Integrity is the necessary condition for the existence of value-based transactions among human beings.

I remember that at the time of the collapse of the Soviet Republics, it was speculated that the USSR would be replaced by a free-market economy. Nothing of the sort happened. In fact, what emerged was a number of groups of ruffians who looted law-abiding citizens and their private property. In this context, the great economist Ronald Coase remarked that for a law-abiding system to function, it is necessary to have contracts in place.

Contracts are the vanguard of integrity, though they do not explicitly proclaim it.

Many people make a distinction between personal integrity and public integrity. This is not correct. Without personal integrity, all other manifestations of integrity reduce to a sham. In this context, one is tempted to recall the Ten Commandments and the role they played in the ethical and moral framework of Old Testament society.

Now, the real question that needs to be asked is whether, without the basis of integrity, peacemaking or peacebuilding is possible. History is full of failed attempts at peacebuilding without integrity. Revolutions, as well as social and economic reforms, testify to the fact that without an ethical basis, no edifice of peace is possible.

Peace must emanate from the desire of the individual to love his or her neighbour and empathise with them. Without this crucial and necessary ingredient, goodwill among human beings and the consequent peacebuilding will not be possible.

People wrongly ascribe to institutions and systems the fundamental responsibility for integrity. This is not correct. What the conscience of an individual can achieve, nothing else is capable of replicating.

Pax Lumina is in the process of peacemaking and peacebuilding among different nations and cultures in this world, emphasising the primacy of individual integrity. Let us hope this New Year will bring a new era of peace to this troubled world.

Jacob Thomas

Editor

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Meditate.
Live purely.
Be quiet.
Do your work
with mastery.
Like the moon,
come out
from behind
the clouds!
Shine.

- Siddhārtha Gautama

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Pax Lumina 1(6)/2025/08-10

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THE ROAD TO PEACE

NONVIOLENCE AND INTEGRITY IN ACTION

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Peace is impossible without meeting essential conditions: truth, justice, the complete absence of violence or intimidation in the peace-making process, and integrity on the part of the peacemaker. **Unfortunately, the hypocrisy displayed by societies and nations has often corrupted this delicate process.**

In a time when peace-making processes are often tainted by hypocrisy and vested interests, Gandhi's unwavering faith in humanity and his relentless pursuit of justice serve as a guiding light. This essay delves into the profound lessons offered by Gandhi's words and actions, illustrating how the path to peace is not only a moral imperative but also a practical reality when approached with sincerity, courage, and an unshakeable belief in the power of love over hate.

"Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment thereof." – M. K. Gandhi, Harijan, May 16, 1934.

This quote by Bapu perfectly encapsulates the idea that peace is impossible without meeting essential conditions: truth, justice, the complete absence of violence or intimidation in the peace-making process, and integrity on the part of the peacemaker. Unfortunately, the hypocrisy displayed by societies and nations has often corrupted this delicate process.

"Though we sing: 'All glory to God on High and on earth be peace,' there seems to be today neither glory to God nor peace on earth." – M. K. Gandhi, Young India, December 31, 1931.

Despite the prevalence of conflict, war, oppression, and injustice, peace is still attainable if one approaches it selflessly and honestly. Bapu demonstrated this during his peace pilgrimage through the riot-devastated districts of Noakhali and Tipperah in East Bengal (present-day Bangladesh) and later in Bihar. Refusing to indulge in the blame game, Gandhi transcended religious divides. In East Bengal, Muslims had massacred Hindus, while in Bihar, Hindus had killed Muslims. For Bapu, they were all human—both the victims and the perpetrators. He appealed to their inherent humanity: for the perpetrators to repent and reform and for the victims to forgive and trust.

This approach may seem difficult, but Bapu's success as what Lord Mountbatten famously called a "One-Man Peacekeeping Force" lay in his ability to soothe rather than stoke the flames of hatred. "Not to believe in the possibility of

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permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking." – M. K. Gandhi, Harijan, May 16, 1936.

When the deployment of military forces was suggested to stop the riots in East Bengal, Bihar, and Punjab, Gandhi objected. He believed, rightly, that violence cannot be extinguished by counter-violence. Modern history validates this view: post-9/11, the U.S. waged wars in Afghanistan and Iraq under the banner of a "war on terror." Yet, these efforts have neither made the U.S. safer nor brought humanity closer to peace, precisely because they lacked justness and integrity. Subjugation and annihilation cannot ensure peace.

"An armed or imposed peace is no peace." – M. K. Gandhi, Young India, February 9, 1922.

"Peace must be just; to be so, it must neither be punitive nor vindictive. The strong are never vindictive." – M. K. Gandhi, Press Statement, April 17, 1945.

In conclusion, two historical examples underscore the transformative power of nonviolence, truth, and justice in achieving peace.

In South Africa, centuries of racial persecution under apartheid resulted in widespread killings and injustices. When liberation came, fears of a bloodbath loomed large. However, Nelson Mandela's unwavering belief in forgiveness and healing led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This revolutionary process demanded admission and genuine remorse from perpetrators and magnanimous forgiveness from victims' families. Mandela's practice of truth, justice, and nonviolence ensured South Africa emerging as the "rainbow nation" of his dreams.

Similarly, Rwanda faced a devastating genocide, with the brutal Hutu militia massacring Tutsis. Yet, through a similar process of reconciliation and healing, Rwanda has rebuilt itself, proving that even in the face of unimaginable atrocities, peace can triumph.

"Peace has its victories more glorious than war." – M. K. Gandhi, Harijan, July 21, 1940.

Nelson Mandela's unwavering belief in forgiveness and healing led to the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. **This revolutionary process demanded admission and genuine remorse from perpetrators and magnanimous forgiveness from victims' families. Mandela's practice of truth, justice, and nonviolence ensured South Africa emerged as the "rainbow nation" of his dreams.**

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CULTIVATING PEACE

THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

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Peace should not be viewed as an abstract ideal but as a tangible state of well-being, deeply connected to individual lives and the broader harmony of society. Peace goes beyond the absence of conflict. It involves a balance of mental, emotional, and environmental well-being, reflecting harmony within ourselves and the world around us.

Here I reflect on my personal experiences and the collective struggles faced by those of us in Ukraine amid the harsh realities of war. Despite the overwhelming challenges, we are reminded daily of the power of gratitude and abundance, and our shared responsibility to promote peace. Before diving into my own perspective, it is important to first explore what it truly means to promote peace—an endeavour that seeks to foster harmony, reduce conflict, and encourage cooperation. While these ideals are noble, they often remain abstract, seldom translating into meaningful action.

Living Peace in Tangible Action

Let's examine the reality of promoting peace. Is it just a concept, a word, or a theory? Or is it a way of life that demands action and practice? To understand this, we must move beyond mere words and explore how peace can be lived in tangible ways. In light of the tragedies that have shaken our communities and the world over the past 10 to 20 years, reflecting on peace has become crucial. What does peace really mean? If my peace benefits me, does it also benefit you? Can peace be imposed? For example, when larger nations force smaller ones into peace agreements, we must question: on what principles is this peace based, and how can it truly take root in our communities?

Peace should not be viewed as an abstract ideal but as a tangible state of well-being, deeply connected to individual lives and the broader harmony of society. Peace goes beyond the absence of conflict. It involves a balance of mental, emotional, and environmental well-being, reflecting harmony within ourselves and the world around us. Achieving peace is not a one-time act, but requires ongoing engagement on multiple levels.

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We must engage mentally, bringing clarity and rationality to our actions. We must engage emotionally, connecting with both our own feelings and those of others. Additionally, we must integrate emotional, spiritual, and intellectual intelligence. Only by harmonizing these aspects can we create a peace that is transformative, not just theoretical.

We must also engage with our environment, understanding how our actions contribute to peace. For example, as someone from Eastern Europe, how can I promote peace in Africa, Latin America, or Asia? And how can someone from Asia or the U.S. foster peace in Eastern Europe? Do they truly understand our struggles? What steps can we take to bridge these gaps?

This engagement is vital—it requires us to be mentally, emotionally, and environmentally aware of the world around us. Emotional engagement means connecting both with reason and the heart. Environmental equilibrium involves creating a space where people coexist with respect, understanding, and compassion towards one another and the world we share. Nature does not offer perfect equality but rather ongoing balancing processes. While we may not have perfect balance, constant adjustments keep the world in motion.

Utopia vs. Reality: Rethinking Justice and Global Peace

For the past 70 to 80 years, particularly after World War II, Western universities have focused mainly on humanism, goodness, and peace. While important, this focus has overlooked the reality of injustice, racism, hatred, evil, and the unequal distribution of resources. The Western world has, in many ways, created a utopian illusion that does not reflect the complexity of our global reality. Many are familiar with Thomas More's Utopia, a key text for understanding peace, political systems, and global forces. The Western world often presents this utopian ideal of justice, but what is justice? Is it truly achievable in the modern world? Who decides what is fair?

Consider international organizations like the United Nations, the Red Cross, and Amnesty International. Why have they remained largely uninvolved in military conflicts around the world—be it in Syria, Ukraine, or Africa? Why were they so slow to respond during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, when over 800,000 lives were lost in just three weeks? These institutions were paralyzed by indecision. But as global bodies, isn't their duty to intervene in times of crisis, especially to assist those in urgent need?

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We must counter the fear and suspicion ingrained in us by fostering understanding, connection, and compassion. These values are essential for building a peaceful community, step by step. Teaching these values should start with our loved ones, especially children, in kindergartens and schools. It's too late to begin in university or later stages of life. These lessons must begin at the very start.

Why, even after three years of conflict in Ukraine, do these institutions still hesitate to act, unsure whether their involvement would harm international peace? Meanwhile, Russia continues its aggression, civilians face daily attacks, and we bear the consequences: missile strikes, drone attacks, and a lack of essential services. The absence of electricity means no heating, hot water, or light—yet, by God's grace, we have light once more.

While these institutions are well-meaning, their actions often fall short. They may offer theoretical support, like lighting a candle in the window, but rarely engage in meaningful change. As individuals and symbols of peace, we must ask: what can we do, especially when confronted with the call for "justice"?

Coming to Terms with Justice

Justice is fundamentally about fairness for all, without exception. Every citizen should be treated equally under the law. A government upholds justice by ensuring the protection of human rights for all individuals within its jurisdiction. The rule of law is vital for maintaining order and preventing chaos.

To truly understand justice, we must engage with the complexities of key issues firsthand. This is the central message of Bryan Stevenson's Just Mercy. If we aim to bring peace to conflict-ridden nations like Ukraine, Syria, Somalia, or Venezuela, we must recognize the underlying forces—often driven by economic interests like the global arms trade or exploitation of human resources. Yet, when we speak of "justice," we must ask: what does it really mean? The principles of law should be universal, applied equally to all—whether a country is large or small, or an organization powerful or modest.

Working with families who have lost loved ones under tragic circumstances requires supporting them, not offering hollow reassurances like "everything will be okay"—a promise that's unrealistic. The truth is painful. I, too, have experienced personal losses—cousins, three close friends, and I often attend the burials of young soldiers, barely 20 or 22 years old.

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At these funerals, a moment called salwa occurs, when soldiers fire their guns to honor the fallen. Afterward, a solemn tune fills the air, as the family stands: a mother, a wife, perhaps young children. In those moments, they turn to you for comfort.

But what can you say? How can you offer solace when you, too, carry this weight, unable to fully share or ease their pain?

We are all called to be close to those in need. Even if we lack the right words, our presence matters. The most important truths can't be understood from a distance; you must be close to the people. You must live their lives—taste their food, drink their drink, and feel the essence of their existence.

The Power of Individual Actions and Collective Compassion

The journey toward peace begins with individual actions. But what does "individual action" mean? It starts with committing to non-violence and, most importantly, teaching children kindness and empathy. Children are the foundation of any peaceful community, and every small step—each act of kindness or lesson shared—builds a better future.

Earlier, I discussed the challenges stemming from the differing approaches of Western and Soviet societies. In the West, there has been a strong emphasis on teaching humanism. In contrast, in the Soviet Union—where I was born and spent my first 11 years—the message was starkly different. From kindergarten, we were taught that enemies surrounded us and could attack at any moment, fostering a mindset where the "enemy" was always present.

This is why our actions must actively promote kindness and empathy. We must counter the fear and suspicion ingrained in us by fostering understanding, connection, and compassion. These values are essential for building a peaceful community, step by step. Teaching these values should start with our loved ones, especially children, in kindergartens and schools. It's too late to begin in university or later stages of life. These lessons must begin at the very start.

Engaging with others, speaking out against injustice, and helping those in need are not just acts of goodwill; they are essential practices for creating a compassionate society. Compassion is not only about helping others but about

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Civil society, not institutions, is the true driver of peace. **This is why we must reassess and rebuild organizations like the United Nations, the Red Cross, and Amnesty International. Once symbols of global cooperation and compassion, these institutions have become politicized and corrupted, often serving the interests of powerful nations.**

understanding their struggles and showing that we truly empathize with their experiences.

Recognizing the power of collective action is crucial. When we share and embody these principles, we amplify their impact, creating a ripple effect that spreads kindness and empathy, transforming communities, societies, and the world.

Building Peace: The Balance of Self, Society, and Global Action

Peace begins within my heart. As human beings, we must ask: What does it mean to be at peace? We are constantly balancing, a dynamic process that encompasses both the external and internal aspects of our lives. Peace grows with each thoughtful gesture, encouraging word, and act of kindness. Let this be a call to action for all of us to embody peace in our daily lives, transforming ourselves and the world around us.

As we embrace peace, we become beacons of hope and agents of change in a world yearning for harmony. This harmony is possible, but it begins within—my heart, my life, my mind, my community, my family, and the balance between my body, soul, and spirit. Together, through collective effort, we can create a future where peace is a prevailing reality, where understanding, respect, and love triumph over conflict and division.

To address the critical issues of our time, we must engage with them directly. Change does not come from institutions alone. Even within the church, significant transformations, like those sparked by the Second Vatican Council, were driven by the demands of civil society. Meaningful change in any institution—whether churches, constitutions, or governments—often begins with the people, not the institutions themselves.

Civil society, not institutions, is the true driver of peace. This is why we must reassess and rebuild organizations like the United Nations, the Red Cross, and Amnesty International. Once symbols of global cooperation and compassion, these institutions have become politicized and corrupted, often serving the interests of powerful nations. To create a world of genuine peace, we must restore these institutions to their original purpose: serving humanity and fostering global harmony.

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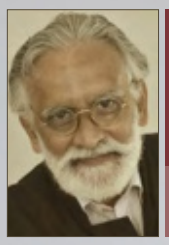

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INTEGRITY AS THE KEYSTONE OF PEACEBUILDING

ABSOLUTE VALUES IN A RELATIVE WORLD

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In our increasingly interconnected yet fractured world, the pursuit of peace is more critical and challenging than ever. Amidst this backdrop, the concept of integrity stands out not just as a moral guideline but as the bedrock of all efforts towards peacebuilding. The role of integrity can be defined as an unwavering adherence to truth in thought, speech, and action, in crafting sustainable peace. By exploring the lives and legacies of Jesus and Mahatma Gandhi, who exemplified this virtue, we aim to uncover the practical implications and challenges of implementing integrity in contemporary conflict resolution and peace efforts. Their steadfast commitment to truth and non-violence offers timeless lessons on the transformative power of integrity, making a compelling case for its necessity in today's complex world.

As we delve deeper, it becomes apparent that integrity is not merely about personal morality but is fundamentally linked to broader societal health and stability. It encompasses a holistic approach that combines ethical individual actions with systemic, structural changes to ensure justice and fairness at all levels of society. This understanding of integrity challenges us not only to hold ourselves accountable but also to demand the same from our leaders and institutions.

In an era of global crises and deepening divides, the call for integrity in peacebuilding is more than a moral imperative; it is a practical strategy for mending the fabric of society. The following sections will show how absolute integrity, grounded in empathy and forgiveness, fosters true reconciliation and enduring peace. This discussion highlights integrity as the keystone of peacebuilding, bearing the weight of hopes for a more just and harmonious world.

The Absolute Nature of Integrity

Integrity is often regarded as the moral fibre that binds the fabric of society, embodying the consistency between one's values, words, and actions. This uncompromising view of integrity demands strict adherence to truth, suggesting that even the slightest deviation can erode its essence. In the context of peacebuilding, integrity translates into transparent and honest interactions, fostering trust and mutual respect among conflicting parties.

Here, integrity transcends individual responsibility, extending its reach to institutions, governments, and societies. All must commit to the unwavering pursuit of fairness and justice to nurture a genuinely peaceful world. Moreover, absolute integrity requires extraordinary moral courage—an attribute as rare as it is indispensable. It compels individuals and organizations to make the right choices not only in times of ease but also under the immense pressure of adversity.

This unwavering form of integrity is grounded in transparency and accountability, serving as a robust shield against corruption and injustice. When leaders embody such principles, they set a compelling example, inspiring others to act ethically and cultivating a culture of trust and mutual respect.

Ultimately, the absolute nature of integrity stands as a cornerstone for both individual morality and the effective governance of societies. It provides a solid foundation upon which peace and stability can be built and sustained, ensuring that ethical conduct and justice prevail across all levels of human interaction.

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As we delve deeper, it becomes apparent that integrity is not merely about personal morality but is fundamentally linked to broader societal health and stability. It encompasses a holistic approach that combines ethical individual actions with systemic, structural changes to ensure justice and fairness at all levels of society.

Historical Perspectives on Integrity and Peacebuilding

Throughout history, leaders and movements have shown how integrity can drive transformative societal change. For instance, Gandhi's 1930 Salt March exemplified integrity in action, challenging unjust laws through non-violent resistance. Similarly, the U.S. civil rights movement, inspired by Gandhi and Jesus, drew its strength from the moral authority of leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. These events underscore the power of integrity to inspire societal transformation while also highlighting the complexities of applying such ideals in diverse contexts.

The role of integrity in peacebuilding transcends cultural and national boundaries. In the late 20th century, Nelson Mandela's leadership during the peaceful dissolution of apartheid in South Africa demonstrated the transformative power of integrity. Despite enduring decades of oppression, Mandela's commitment to truth, reconciliation, and justice paved the way for national healing and set a global benchmark for resolving conflicts with integrity and forgiveness.

Earlier, the struggle for Indian independence also showcased the effectiveness of integrity in politics. Gandhi's emphasis on ethical conduct and non-violence mobilised millions and pressured British authorities to negotiate respectfully. This approach stood in stark contrast to violent independence movements elsewhere, proving that integrity could lead to more sustainable peace than armed conflict.

Similarly, the founding of the United Nations in 1945, following the devastation of World War II, was rooted in the principles of integrity and collective security. The UN Charter's emphasis on maintaining international peace and justice relied on the integrity of member states to uphold lawful and fair interactions. This commitment highlights the role of integrity at both individual and collective levels in fostering global cooperation and respect for human rights. These historical examples affirm that integrity is indispensable in peacebuilding.

Empathy and Forgiveness: The Humanising Elements of Integrity

At the heart of integrity in peacebuilding lie empathy and forgiveness—qualities that bridge divides and foster understanding, even where rigid adherence to personal truths might lead to impasse. By embodying empathy, individuals and leaders can appreciate others' perspectives and pains, paving the way for meaningful dialogue and reconciliation. Forgiveness, in turn, becomes a transformative act of releasing past grievances, often breaking cycles of violence and retribution. This section highlights global examples where empathy and forgiveness have healed conflict-torn societies, underscoring their indispensable role in achieving peace through integrity.

In Rwanda, following the 1994 genocide, the reintroduction of Gacaca courts—a traditional community-based justice mechanism—demonstrated the power of empathetic dialogue and forgiveness. These courts prioritised open

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discussions to address the emotional and psychological wounds of both victims and perpetrators, fostering reconciliation and enabling communities to move forward. The process showed how empathy facilitates the sharing of painful truths, while forgiveness lays the foundation for rebuilding trust.

Similarly, in Northern Ireland, cultivating empathy played a pivotal role in the peace process. Initiatives that brought together individuals from opposing factions to share their experiences and grief humanised the "enemy," reduced tensions, and built a shared commitment to peace. These efforts, often led by community leaders and peace organizations, culminated in the Good Friday Agreement—a milestone grounded in mutual empathy and the willingness to forgive past offenses.

Empathy's role in peacebuilding extends beyond immediate conflict resolution to the prevention of future conflicts. By fostering an environment where diverse groups understand and empathise with each other's grievances, societies can craft inclusive policies that address the root causes of conflict.

The integration of empathy and forgiveness into peacebuilding reflects a profound understanding of integrity that embraces human imperfection and the complexities of social interactions. True integrity involves seeing beyond one's perspective and committing to the challenging process of reconciliation. Far from weakening the moral fabric of society, these virtues strengthen it, weaving understanding and compassion into the collective consciousness. Ultimately, empathy and forgiveness are essential for transforming conflict into collaboration and animosity into progress.

Challenges to Absolute Integrity

The ideal of absolute integrity, while noble, encounters numerous obstacles in practice. In the murky waters of international politics and local governance, the black-and-white moral clarity offered by absolute integrity often clashes with the grey shades of reality. Negotiations and peace processes frequently require compromises that may seem to contradict an absolutist moral stance. Furthermore, in societies where corruption and mistrust are rampant, instilling a culture of integrity can be particularly daunting.

There are always challenges, as both theoretical dilemmas and practical impediments that complicate the application of absolute integrity in contemporary peacebuilding efforts. One of the primary challenges is the tension between the ideal of absolute integrity and the practical necessities of diplomacy and compromise. In complex international relations, peace negotiations often involve conflicting interests and a history of mutual distrust. Absolute integrity may require a forthright approach, risking alienation of stakeholders unprepared to face harsh truths or admit past wrongs. Peacebuilders must carefully balance honesty with the practical need to keep all parties engaged in the negotiation process.

The implementation of absolute integrity can be hindered by cultural relativism, where different societies have varied understandings of what constitutes integrity. For example, in some cultures, maintaining social harmony is valued over the direct expression of truth, which can be disruptive or disrespectful. This cultural perspective can clash with the absolutist view of integrity, which prioritises truth-telling above all else. Peacebuilders working across such cultural lines must find ways to respect local

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Empathy's role in peacebuilding extends beyond immediate conflict resolution to the prevention of future conflicts. By fostering an environment where diverse groups understand and empathize with each other's grievances, societies can craft inclusive policies that address the root causes of conflict.

customs while promoting a universal standard of integrity, a task that requires sensitivity and innovation.

Additionally, the absolutist stance on integrity may face resistance from entrenched power structures that benefit from the status quo. In settings where corruption is systemic, efforts to promote transparency and accountability can threaten those in power, leading to pushback or even retaliation. Advocates of absolute integrity may find themselves marginalised or persecuted, making the fight for truth and justice not only a moral challenge but also a personal risk.

These challenges highlight the need for a flexible approach to integrity in peacebuilding—one that recognises the complexities of human behaviour and the intricacies of social structures. It requires a blend of moral fervour and practical wisdom to navigate the delicate balance between idealism and realism in the quest for peace.

Conclusion

Integrity, as explored through the lens of absolute values, emerges not only as a moral imperative but as a practical necessity for peacebuilding. The historical and contemporary examples discussed herein illustrate the potent role integrity can play in resolving conflicts and fostering a culture of peace. As we reflect on the teachings of Jesus Christ and Mahathma Gandhi, we are reminded of the profound truth that "peace begins with a smile," as Mother Teresa once said.

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A PERSONAL REFLECTION ON INTEGRITY IN PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS

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Integrity is the cornerstone of effective peacebuilding, and from my experience, I have seen firsthand how truth-telling with integrity plays a pivotal role in fostering reconciliation and lasting peace. In the course of various peacebuilding efforts, I have learned that true integrity is not about selective honesty; it demands a firm commitment to truth, justice, and accountability. When working toward peace, particularly in a complex context like Kenya's, it becomes clear that integrity in addressing past injustices, ethnic violence, political manipulation, and marginalization is not merely a virtue—it is an absolute necessity.

In many peacebuilding processes, especially in post-conflict settings, the temptation to hide or distort painful truths is strong. I have encountered situations where individuals, institutions, and even entire communities try to suppress uncomfortable truths to protect their reputations or preserve power. This selective integrity where people choose what truths to expose and which ones to ignore ultimately hinders progress. During peace initiatives, I have witnessed how this type of "convenient" integrity creates divisions and delays the healing process, as affected communities are left feeling unheard and betrayed.

Johan Galtung, a pioneer in peace studies, asserts that "peace cannot be achieved through the use of violence, but through a creative process that addresses the root causes of conflict, encourages dialogue, and nurtures healing and justice" (Galtung, 1996, p. 234). His insights resonate deeply with the importance of addressing the painful truths of past conflicts and the role integrity plays in fostering an environment where these truths can be safely shared. Integrity, in this sense, is not only about truth-telling but also about creating the space for reconciliation and healing.

In the course of various peacebuilding efforts, I have learned that true integrity is not about selective honesty; it demands a firm commitment to truth, justice, and accountability. **When working toward peace, particularly in a complex context like Kenya's, it becomes clear that integrity in addressing past injustices, ethnic violence, political manipulation, and marginalization is not merely a virtue—it is an absolute necessity.**

Jesus Christ's teachings highlight the importance of truth and reconciliation, emphasizing that confronting painful truths is essential for healing and unity (John 8:32: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"). Resistance to truth often stems from fear, but integrity requires the courage to face these fears, as reconciliation cannot be achieved without truth. Integrity in peacebuilding means not only speaking the truth but acting on it, as seen in grassroots movements where former perpetrators of violence have become peace advocates. This transformation requires societal support and institutional mechanisms to ensure lasting justice and peace.

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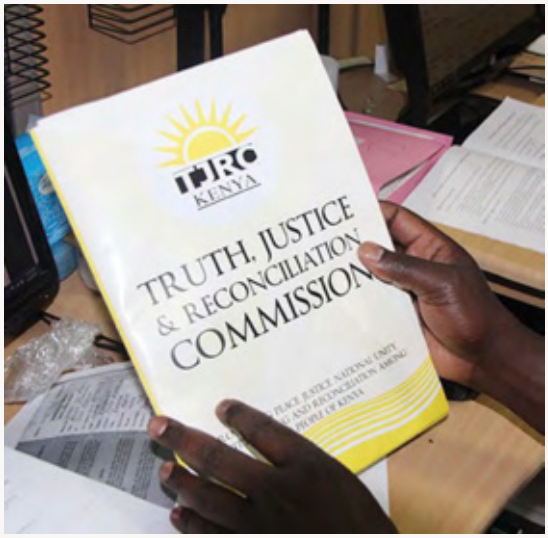
The Role of Truth-Telling in Healing Historical Injustices in Kenya

In Kenya, addressing historical injustices—such as ethnic violence, political manipulation, and the marginalization of certain groups—is essential for healing the wounds of the past. These injustices have created deep divisions, mistrust, and ongoing conflicts within society, highlighting the need to bring the truth to light. Truth-telling is not merely recounting past events; it involves acknowledging the pain and suffering of marginalized communities and encouraging national conversations that can foster understanding, healing, and reconciliation. Confronting these uncomfortable truths is a crucial step in restoring justice, rebuilding trust, and promoting social cohesion.

Truth-telling also plays a crucial role in breaking the cycle of impunity. When the truth is suppressed, those responsible for violence or manipulation often go unpunished, which perpetuates mistrust and division. To achieve sustainable peace, it is necessary for the truth to come to light so that accountability can be pursued. Without truth, any efforts toward reconciliation will remain hollow, and progress toward lasting peace will remain unattainable.

Reflecting on Kenya's Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), I recognize the immense challenges of pursuing integrity in truth-telling. The commission faced resistance from the political elites, many of whom had vested interests in maintaining the status quo,



and from ethnic groups unwilling to confront uncomfortable aspects of their collective histories. Many individuals and groups implicated in past violations sought to undermine the commission's work, discredit its findings, and prevent accountability. Additionally, ethnic divisions further complicate the truth-telling process, as acknowledging wrongs committed by one's ethnic group can be seen as an act of betrayal. This reluctance to engage in truth-telling is driven by fears of exacerbating ethnic tensions or sparking further conflict.

Despite these challenges, integrity remains essential in peacebuilding. The TJRC's efforts in Kenya, though imperfect, demonstrated how truth-telling can serve as a critical step in breaking the cycle of impunity and initiating the healing process. In my work, I have seen communities begin to come together as they collectively confront their painful pasts. This shift is slow and fraught with difficulty, but each step taken with integrity is a step closer to lasting peace. Through transparency, accountability, and courage, integrity becomes the bedrock upon which healing can begin.

During my involvement in community-based reconciliation efforts, it became clear that a truly honest approach to addressing these wrongs was critical for building trust between divided groups. Despite the backlash, the importance of truth-telling cannot be overstated. Without revealing the truth, we cannot hold perpetrators accountable, nor can we offer victims the recognition and justice they deserve.

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Moreover, in Kenya, ethnic loyalty often complicates the process of truth-telling. Acknowledging the wrongdoings of one's ethnic group is seen by many as an act of betrayal. I have personally seen how people struggle to break through these loyalties to embrace the larger cause of national healing. The importance of building a shared sense of national identity where the well-being of the entire nation outweighs narrow ethnic interests cannot be overstated. In my experience, integrity in peacebuilding requires fostering this broader vision of unity and encouraging individuals to look beyond their personal or group interests for the greater good.

This highlights the critical role of integrity in the peacebuilding process. Integrity requires truthfulness in confronting past injustices, regardless of the consequences, as it ensures accountability and reconciliation. Only with honesty and transparency can Kenya build a sustainable peace and work towards healing the scars left by historical injustices. These virtues of integrity form the foundation for building strong relationships, fostering trust, and ensuring that peacebuilding efforts are grounded in ethical principles. They are crucial not only for individual character development but also for creating just, harmonious, and sustainable communities.

In my experience, integrity is the foundation of effective peacebuilding. I have observed that communities committed to truth-telling and accountability are more capable of healing and reconciling. In places like Kenya, where deep divisions stem from past violence, integrity in both leadership and society is crucial for lasting peace. Integrity is not just an individual virtue but a collective responsibility, demanding constant commitment from all. Without integrity, trust cannot be restored, and peace remains unattainable. It fosters unity and ensures that peacebuilding efforts are both transformative and enduring. The practice of integrity in peacebuilding is not a one-time endeavour but an ongoing process, requiring dedication, courage, and a firm belief in the power of truth to heal and transform.

Truth-telling is not merely recounting past events; **it involves acknowledging the pain and suffering of marginalized communities and encouraging national conversations that can foster understanding, healing, and reconciliation.**

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RECONCILIATION BEYOND FORMAL JUSTICE

THE ACHOLI EXPERIENCE

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Despite the State's emphasis on formal mechanisms—such as truth commissions, tribunals, and the International Criminal Court (ICC)—**various conflict settlements, particularly in northern Uganda (Acholiland), continue to favour traditional approaches to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. As a result, traditional forms of justice increasingly hold greater social authority at the grassroots level.**

In Uganda, the ongoing struggle for the State to become more viable and democratic has resulted in tension between the formal systems of justice and traditional methods of conflict mitigation and resolution, with a preference for the latter. Despite the State's emphasis on formal mechanisms—such as truth commissions, tribunals, and the International Criminal Court (ICC)—various conflict settlements, particularly in northern Uganda (Acholiland), continue to favour traditional approaches to peacebuilding and conflict resolution. As a result, traditional forms of justice increasingly hold greater social authority at the grassroots level. This article examines two key cases where traditional justice and reconciliation processes have been preferred: first, the resolution of the long-standing conflict between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army insurgents, and second, the reconciliation of Mathew Kanyamunyu before Acholi leaders.

Restoring Harmony: The Mato Oput Justice Process of the Acholi

Similar to other tribes in Uganda, the Acholi people in northern Uganda have their own traditional system for promoting and restoring justice and peace through a process known as Mato Oput. This cultural form is used to settle both interpersonal and group conflicts. Timothy Murithi, in his article *African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity,* published in *African Journals Online* (2006), highlights five stages of conflict resolution under *Mato oput* which are paralleled in most traditional African methods of conflict resolution. In the first stage, following the presentation of evidence by witnesses, offenders are encouraged to accept responsibility for the offences committed. The second stage encourages the offender to repent and show remorse. In the third stage, the offender is required to ask for forgiveness from the victim and the victim is expected to be merciful and forgive. Then, depending on the nature of the case, it is expected that the offender will pay compensation to the victim. The last stage is a process of reconciliation between the representatives of the offender and the victim which involves drinking a bitter herb obtained from the Oput tree to signify the efforts made to restore harmony and social trust.

In various conflict cases, Mato Oput, a traditional method of justice and conflict resolution, has been preferred by cultural leaders over formal justice systems like civil courts. Though the formal ways of justice through civil courts retributively deal with offender and end up in being given a punishment that will make the offender be reformed, the Acholi people take Mato Oput as a holistic form that can heal the interpersonal conflicts and revitalize the social fabric. In some cases, a clan may come to the police to demand a prisoner's release because conditions in prison are too good. So

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they will go to the prison and pull him out. And the police don't dare say no because they will have to deal with 500 armed warriors. The clan believes that the offender cannot be holistically helped by police due to a need for healing to both the victim and offender. In addition, the Acholi people believe the civil court systems through resolving grievances by imprisonment, the conditions in the prison are good and may not lead to the realization of guilt. However, traditional methods bring about genuine social repair. They are on reparative, restorative and retributive in nature.

Through the traditional means, Acholi traditional culture encourages individuals to accept their mistakes and take responsibility for their actions. It is important to note that an individual does this voluntarily. Individuals are encouraged to forgive and not to seek revenge. In this format of Acholi reconciliation, a punishment acts only as a last-ditch attempt to find a resolution, after all other means of re-socializing the guilty have been exhausted. It centers on the restoration of the social fabric that has been affected between the victim and the offender. This is done through mediation between the affected parties, in that, the offender and the victim so that trust and compliance can be restored in the broken friendship. Trust in every society is a vital tool to uphold complementary existential interactions between people and societies. Thus, the Mato Oput focuses on bringing back the lost trust between individuals.

Case Studies of Traditional Justice in Acholi Society

This preference is not merely an assumption; it is reflected in several conflicts. The long-standing conflict between the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Ugandan government intensified after the overthrow of Idi Amin in 1986 by Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA). The LRA claimed to be fighting against economic mismanagement, undemocratic governance, and widespread human rights violations committed by the army in Acholiland. The group also presented itself as driven by a desire to live according to the Ten Commandments of Moses, guided by God through their prophet, Joseph Kony.

This conflict resulted in the abduction of 30,000 children, with boys being forced into the rebels' ranks and girls taken as sexual slaves. Over 1.6 million people were displaced into various internal-ly displaced persons (IDP) camps. In response to the insurgency, the 2000 Amnesty Act was enact-ed to encourage rebel soldiers, many of them children, to abandon the conflict. By 2005, the Am-nesty Commission received 14,695 applications for amnesty. However, dissatisfaction grew within the government, leading them to take the matter to the International Criminal Court (ICC). In 2005, the ICC issued indictments against five senior LRA leaders. The ICC began investigating

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This development paved the way for the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), an inter-denominational religious network that marked a shift from formal justice systems to traditional forms of reconciliation. **Over time, the ARLPI evolved into a key player in community peace mobilization. Starting from its grassroots origins, it grew into a credible intermediary between the LRA commanders in the bush and the government.**

potential war crimes in Uganda in July 2004, and by October 2005, the situation remained contentious, with local leaders expressing dissatisfaction with the ICC's processes.

Local leaders made recourse to the traditional ways. Paramount Chief Rwot David Onen Acana II of the Acholi pointed out, that the wounds of war will be healed if the Acholi practice their traditional guiding principles. He gave out the following as the guiding principles: "Do not be a trouble maker," "Respect," "Sincerity," "Do not steal," "Reconciliation and harmony," "Forgiveness," "Problem-solving through discussion," and "Children, women, and the disabled are not to be harmed in war." Most of these principles emphasize the need to live in harmony with others and restore social relations.

This development paved the way for the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), an inter-denominational religious network that marked a shift from formal justice systems to traditional forms of reconciliation. Over time, the ARLPI evolved into a key player in community peace mobilization. Starting from its grassroots origins, it grew into a credible intermediary between the LRA commanders in the bush and the government. In the absence of sustained formal peace efforts and amidst the lack of trustworthy intermediaries, the ARLPI became a vital voice for peace amid the violence perpetrated by both the LRA and State armed forces. The initiative included prominent leaders such as Anglican Bishop Macleod Baker Ochola II of Kitgum Diocese, Catholic Archbishop John Baptist Odama of the Archdiocese of Northern Uganda, Episcopal Vicar Monsignor Matthew Ojara, Fr. Carlos Ludigrie, and Fr. Joseph Genna. By uniting Catholics, Anglicans, Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Seventh-day Adventists, and Born-Again Faith Federation worshippers, the ARLPI created a powerful platform to foster dialogue and reinforced the moral imperative of forgiveness for those who had been abducted.

Secondly, the influence of Mato Oput is clearly evident in the case of Kanyamunyu, as reported in The New Vision on 15th September 2020 and The Daily Monitor on 28th October 2020. Following the suspension of Kanyamunyu's trial by Justice Stephen Mubiru, after he was accused of killing child rights activist Kenneth Akena on November 12, 2016, at Forest Shopping Mall in Lugogo, Kanyamunyu sought reconciliation with Akena's family. This effort was facilitated by the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) and the Acholi Cultural Institution in Gulu, under the principles of Mato Oput. The reconciliation ceremony was led by Archbishop John Baptist Odama of the Gulu Archdiocese and Paramount Chief Rwot David Onena Acana II.

During this event, Kanyamunyu openly acknowledged his mistake. "To be honest I would be lying to you if I told you that I have fully comprehended the tragedy of that day to

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date. The stupidity, the foolishness, the evil that I exhibited on that day is not something I knew was in. But now I recognize, now I recognize within me, deep within me, there is evil that I did not know about," Kanyamunyu said. Later, he requested forgiveness. "I am sorry and that is the reason I ask for your forgiveness, I ask for your understanding and for time for this healing process to begin and for time for me to comprehend the magnitude of the tragedy," Kanyamunyu added. Through the intervention of Prime Minister Ambrose Ola of the clan, a bitter drink made from the loaves of the Oput tree as a mechanism of forgiveness and reconciliation was given to Kanyamunyu. A compensation of 10 cows and three goats was asked to be paid to Akena's family.

The Path Ahead

The preference for traditional methods has created tension between formal justice systems and cul-tural reconciliation practices. This raises the question: which approach should take precedence? However, this tension can be beneficial. At its core, it reflects the cultural values and traditional practices of different ethnic groups, which endure as "webs of significance" (Clifford Geertz, 1973:5). On the one hand, this tension fosters collaboration, where both formal and informal justice mechanisms work together to bring healing to conflicted communities, it encourages a collective discourse that opens up new possibilities for lasting peace at both the State and community levels, and on the other hand, it can lead to rivalries and hostilities if both methods encounter setbacks. Formal justice may fall short in healing both the offender and the victim, while traditional practices cannot address severe human rights violations, such as those seen in civil wars. Therefore, both approaches must be used complementarily and with prudence.

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Filex Nimanya is a Ugandan, member of the Montfort missionaries and a student at Hekima University College.

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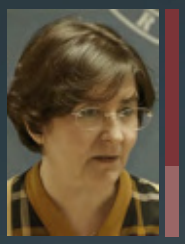

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AI A TEST OF HUMAN INTEGRITY

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Research into the intersection of cybersecurity and humanity explores profound questions: **What does it mean to be human, or a human of integrity, in an era where tools are being developed to detect, in real-time, whether the individual we engage with is a deepfake?**

To address integrity in *Artificial Intelligence* (AI), we begin by reflecting on recent applications and the conceptual framework presented in the European Union's 2024 regulations. Our primary focus is the integrity of digital synthetic content, particularly as exemplified in *digital synthetic humans*. The widespread availability and advancing capabilities of such systems hold significant implications for the integrity of *information ecosystems* and the foundation of *trust*.

Research into the intersection of cybersecurity and humanity explores profound questions: What does it mean to be human, or a human of integrity, in an era where tools are being developed to detect, in real-time, whether the individual we engage with is a deepfake? A pressing debate surrounds the ethical boundaries of AI simulation and the strategies to maintain transparency when creating highly humanized systems.

Understanding Integrity in AI

In common parlance, *integrity* is synonymous with *honesty* or *having strong values*. A "person of integrity" suggests *trustworthiness* and *reliability*. However, the term also carries etymological meanings such as *"integral," "whole,"* and *"undivided."* For instance, we refer to the structural integrity of a building when it is solid, well-designed, and integral to safety and well-being.

As defined in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Cox, 2021), integrity encompasses two key intuitions: First, Integrity is primarily a formal relationship that one has with oneself or between parts or aspects of oneself. Secondly, integrity is intrinsically linked to moral performance, implying that acting with integrity involves adherence to *substantive* or *normative principles*.

The concept of *"Artificial Integrity"* is gaining traction within the field of AI. Hamilton Mann, in his 2024 book *Artificial Integrity: The Paths to Leading AI Toward a Human-Centered Future,* posits that "The future of AI lies in Integrity over Intelligence." He defines Artificial Integrity as: "The development and deployment of AI systems that uphold and reinforce human-centered values, ensuring that AI's integration into society enhances rather than undermines the human condition."

Mann approaches the topic from the perspective of human-machine interaction, presenting scenarios where synergistic relationships between humans and AI not only safeguard but also elevate fundamental human values through unwavering integrity.

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European Union regulations (see: Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024) emphasize aligning AI development and deployment with principles such as *trustworthiness, fairness,* and ethical responsibility. The regulatory framework identifies seven guiding principles: human action and oversight, technical soundness and safety, privacy and data management, transparency, diversity, non-discrimination, and equity, social and environmental well-being, accountability.

The term "integrity" is referenced ten times in the regulation, addressing key aspects such as:

- Data Privacy Management (Clause 27) and requirements for data governance (Clause 67).
- Risks to the Physical Integrity of critical digital infrastructures (Clause 55).
- Challenges posed by synthetic content to the integrity of the information ecosystem and public trust (Clause 133).
- Protection of public and national security, the integrity of criminal and administrative proceedings, and classified information (Clauses 167 and Art. 3, No. 38; Art. 31, No. 5).

In short, artificial integrity refers to the capability of AI systems to operate reliably, transparently, and ethically, adhering to predefined standards of fairness, safety, and accountability. This emerging paradigm reflects the growing recognition that AI must not merely mimic human intelligence but embody human values, fostering trust and social harmony.

We now turn our attention to the integrity of synthetic content, delving deeper into its implications for AI systems and society at large.

Deepfake Technology

Deepfake technology represents the convergence of artificial intelligence and media manipulation, enabling the creation of highly convincing fake images, videos, and audio recordings. Using advanced machine learning techniques, particularly deep learning, deepfakes replicate real people with remarkable precision, challenging our ability to differentiate between authentic and altered digital content.

Among the various forms of deepfakes, videos are the most prevalent. Through AI, it is possible to superimpose someone's face or body onto existing footage, creating scenarios where a public figure appears to say or do something controversial, or where fabricated news stories gain credibility. Similarly, voice cloning—or

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audio deepfakes—replicates voices to create false audio content. For example, scammers could mimic a child's voice to deceive a parent into transferring money urgently.

While deepfake technology has legitimate applications in film, video games, advertising, and marketing, its potential for misuse raises serious ethical concerns. In educational contexts, students are particularly vulnerable to risks such as identity theft, biometric data breaches, and cyberbullying. The growing capabilities of generative AI in producing deepfakes underscore the need for robust digital education to equip individuals with the skills to recognize and mitigate such risks.

Digital Synthetic Humans

In today's technology-driven era, *synthetic digital humans* stand out as one of the most groundbreaking innovations. Unlike deepfakes or fake profiles, these are entirely digital personas crafted using advanced artificial intelligence and marketing strategies. They are increasingly prevalent in spaces like social media, where they function as influencers with substantial followings.

For instance, Spanish influencer Aitana López, despite not being a real person, earns €12,000 a month, collaborates with renowned brands, and boasts 335,000 followers on Instagram. Created by a Barcelona-based agency, Aitana exemplifies how digital personas can transcend cultural and market boundaries. Similar examples include Lu do Magalu in Brazil and Rozy Oh in South Korea, the latter developed by Sidus Studio X. These virtual influencers offer unmatched availability, adaptability, and cost-efficiency compared to their human counterparts.

Synthetic digital humans are created through sophisticated AI and 3D modelling techniques, achieving hyper-realistic attributes from nuanced facial expressions to intricate interactions. Their applications span marketing, entertainment, customer service, medical research, and education, redefining our interactions with technology and the concept of digital presence.

Companies like Epic Games and Unreal MetaHuman Animator are at the forefront of this revolution, offering tools to create "metahumans"—ultra-realistic avatars—in just minutes. Unreal MetaHuman Animator's tagline, "High Fidelity Digital Humans," aptly captures their technological prowess. Every day we are closer and closer to *synthetic digital humans* indistinguishable from people. And these hyper-realistic "avatars" are leading to deepfake scenarios that are increasingly complex to detect, as can be seen in the video presentation of *Unreal MetaHuman Animator* .

What once required months of labour by highly specialized teams can now be achieved in hours, even on mobile devices. The democratization of this technology has shifted it from the realm of science fiction to everyday reality.

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The key to the success of synthetic digital humans lies in their perceived authenticity rather than their physical reality. These avatars generate genuine engagement, weaving fabricated yet compelling narratives that resonate deeply with audiences. By tapping into aspirations, emotions, and entertainment desires, synthetic influencers bridge the gap between artificial creation and authentic human connection.

Future Challenges to Integrity in AI

The rapid advancements in artificial intelligence indicate that digital synthetic humans—capable of engaging in profound conversations and generating increasingly sophisticated content—are on the horizon. As a result, the boundary between what is real and artificial will become significantly more blurred. These advancements promise to deliver experiences that are far more immersive, making virtual and augmented realities increasingly convincing to human perception.

Cybersecurity experts, such as Chema Alonso, a member of Telefónica's Executive Committee and a prominent voice in the study of Deepfakes, warn of the critical challenges posed by these synthetic humans. Alonso highlights the profound implications for cybersecurity and the protection of human integrity. According to him, "DeepFake Detector algorithms relying on features like HeadPose, Eye Brightness Symmetry, Gaze Tracking, Artefacts, or Grey Histograms may become entirely ineffective." He further notes that it remains uncertain whether techniques like detecting Blinking or Heartbeat anomalies will retain any efficacy in identifying synthetic content.

As we forge ahead into this new era of AI, addressing these challenges will require innovative solutions and a multidisciplinary approach to safeguard the integrity of digital interactions and human trust.

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INTEGRITY IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

A TRANSACTIONAL EXPLORATION

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Since interactions between different stakeholders can range **from long-term relationships to dynamic short-term relationships, integrity, or lack of it, allows a unique perspective to explore industrial relations**

Industrial Relations, as commonly accepted, deals with the relationships between employers, employees and other institutions. The subject includes the systems/procedures used by different stakeholders, with the most influential being the government, collectives of employers, and workers' collective representatives, to govern these relationships.

Historically, Industrial Relations was influenced by three main factors: 1) institutional factors, 2) economic factors, and 3) technological factors. State policy, laws, collective agreements, social institutions, and political parties usually represent the core of institutional factors. The nature of economic organization being followed in a country (capitalist, mixed, socialist, or communist) and the demand and supply of labour represent the economic factors while manufacturing technology, and now information and communication technology, signify the influence of technology on industrial relations.

The nature of relationships between the different stakeholders can be understood using various theoretical lenses/frameworks, ranging from Dunlop's Systems theory (1958) to the most recent labour flow model (e.g., Blanchard & Diamond, 1992; Davis et al., 2006), including the presence of negotiated harmony, extensive presence of legalistic conflicts or a preponderance of lawlessness. In this note, I explore the role of integrity in industrial relations.

Integrity, as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, refers to "the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles". Since interactions between different stakeholders can range from long-term relationships to dynamic short-term relationships, integrity, or lack of it, allows a unique perspective to explore industrial relations. We conceptualise a transactional framework (see Figure 1) using two axes: the probability of repeat transactions as the Y-axis and the Value of a single transaction as the X-axis.

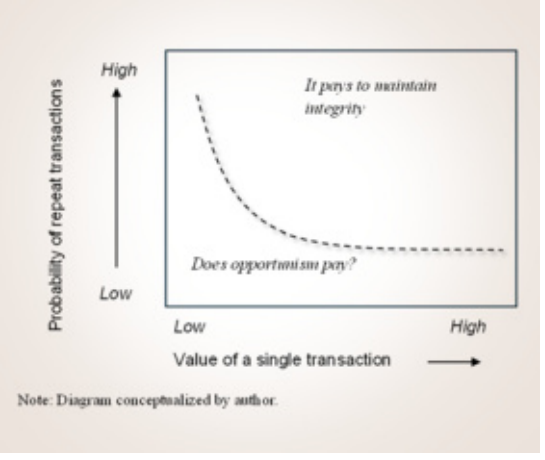

Figure 1: A Transactional Perspective to Integrity

The framework sensitises us to the possibilities of how different stakeholders can behave, and does not indicate how a stakeholder will behave. In situations of one-off low-value transactions, the tendencies to engage in opportunistic behaviours may run high due to the combined effect of – 1) the relatively higher cost of pursuing justice by the aggrieved party and 2) the lack of need to maintain one's reputation. It is only when, despite such a situation, there is a shift towards the increased volume of business, indicated by

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Does that mean that increased mutual reliance, that which will necessarily require each member of society to rely on others, **as characterised by Adam Smith's specialisation of labour and hence of activities, will lead to men of character and integrity?**

both the volume of transactions and the value per transaction, do the parties to transactions either must ensure their reputation or will rely on legal processes to ensure mutual integrity. In the lower part of the diagram, we can seek solace in the words of Adam Smith, where he indicated how the need to play by the rules would apply to all.

> "If there is any society among robbers and murderers, they must at least. . . . abstain from robbing and murdering one another. So, beneficence is less essential than justice is to the existence of society; a lack of beneficence will make a society uncomfortable, but the prevalence of injustice will utterly destroy it."
>
> — Adam Smith,
> The Theory of Moral Sentiments

Does that mean that increased mutual reliance, that which will necessarily require each member of society to rely on others, as characterised by Adam Smith's specialisation of labour and hence of activities, will lead to men of character and integrity? This framework seems to indicate so. A village landlord running roughshod over his fellow villagers is in a different situation as contrasted to an owner of a manufacturing firm, located in an industrial district, who must attract workers in competition with other manufacturers. No wonder that most manufacturing firms do not want competition if one were to remember the licence raj days of the Indian economy.

Revisiting history can be insightful, not only to gather guidelines but also to critically reanalyze key historical milestones. For instance, consider the introduction of the 8-hour workday at Tata

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Steel. Was this progressive policy a reflection of the owner's benevolence, or was it driven by the practical need to attract workers to a remote jungle, teeming with wild animals and far removed from major industrial hubs like Calcutta (now Kolkata)? This question sparks intriguing debate. While the Tatas' pro-worker policies have undeniably been ahead of their time, this perspective suggests that the initiative might have also stemmed from a strategic response to a challenging labour market, paired with a high-integrity approach, during Tata Steel's formative years.

At the extreme top corner, high-value, ongoing relationships, such as B2B partnerships or long-term client relationships, incentivise the highest display of integrity as the combination of high stakes and sustained interactions creates strong incentives for fairness and the need to play by well-defined rules.

In conclusion, integrity emerges as a cornerstone of Industrial Relations, shaping the dynamics between stakeholders across varied contexts and transactions. Whether in low-value, short-term exchanges or high-value, sustained relationships, the presence (or absence) of integrity profoundly influences outcomes, fostering fairness, trust, and cooperation. The transactional framework presented in this exploration underscores the pivotal role of integrity in navigating complex industrial landscapes, highlighting how mutual reliance and high-stakes interactions naturally promote adherence to moral and ethical principles.

By examining historical milestones like the 8-hour workday at Tata Steel, we observe how integrity, intertwined with strategic necessity, can serve as a driving force behind progressive practices. As industrial relations continues to evolve with economic and technological advancements, this perspective offers valuable insights into the enduring significance of integrity in building resilient and equitable systems.

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INTERVIEW

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ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

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INTERVIEW WITH PROF MADHAV GADGIL

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1 My first question concerns the ongoing conflict. As we anxiously anticipate the possibility of a large-scale war in West Asia, how do you foresee a high-tech war affecting the environment and our natural habitat?

All wars, whether high-tech or otherwise, place enormous demands on resources—both energy and materials. In addition to that, the destruction they cause is devastating. For instance, look at Iraq. There were claims, later proven false, that Iraq possessed nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, both Britain and the United States pressed these claims, with the United Nations, acting almost as their subordinate, passing resolutions that led to the destruction of significant Iraqi oil resources.

This sort of destruction represents a colossal waste of resources. Now, with threats looming large over Iran's oil resources, it is clear that wars are incredibly harmful to the Earth's resources.

2 Moving on to climate change, what do you consider the major factors contributing to the drastic climate changes we are witnessing globally? Do you believe that development initiatives taken by wealthy countries are the primary cause?

The term "development" has become virtually meaningless, particularly when we consider the so-called "development initiatives" of wealthy nations. What is the United States spending its resources on? They are investing heavily in the development of armaments. They also spend a considerable amount of resources on producing cosmetics and products like Coca-Cola.

For example, you may be familiar with the controversy surrounding Coca-Cola's plant in Plachimada, Palakkad in Kerala. The factory was not only polluting water but also making excessive demands on groundwater, leading to significant environmental destruction.

This is what they call development—initiatives that place enormous demands on resources and promote a wasteful, throw-away economy. Many industrialised countries are following this path, but the United States is the worst offender.

Referring to these practices as development initiatives is, frankly, an improper use of the term.

3 Many ecologists have suggested the creation of a landslide inventory map. Could you explain the importance of such maps and how they might help in preventing future disasters?

A good database, especially a spatial one, is indeed crucial. However, the question is: what data should be used? Government data is often misleading. For instance, after the devastating landslide in Koottikkal, Kerala three years ago, the government claimed there were only three stone quarries in the area. But satellite imagery from Google Earth showed there were actually thirteen.

Governments often provide deliberately misleading data. In such cases, alternative sources of information are critical. Satellite imagery, verified by independent experts, is one option. Local language newspapers and television channels, which tend to report the facts more accurately than English-language media, are also useful.

The best approach, however, would be to prepare honest people's biodiversity registers, as mandated by the 2002 Biological Diversity Act. In Goa, for instance, the secretary of the biodiversity board, who is not from the forest department, has overseen the creation of good

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The most important step is to avoid undesirable interventions.

The government is, on the one hand, engaging in activities such as building tunnels that weaken the structure of the Western Ghats, increasing the risk of landslides. Then they speak of preparedness and warnings—it's absurd.

biodiversity registers in various village councils. In Kottayam district, Kerala, the Kadanaad panchayat also prepared a people's biodiversity register that highlighted the adverse effects of stone quarrying on a nearby hill.

Such initiatives, if supported by the government, could provide comprehensive and reliable data.

4 How can Kerala improve its disaster preparedness, particularly in landslide-prone areas, to ensure timely warnings and save lives?

The most important step is to avoid undesirable interventions. The government is, on the one hand, engaging in activities such as building tunnels that weaken the structure of the Western Ghats, increasing the risk of landslides. Then they speak of preparedness and warnings—it's absurd.

We should stop developments that exacerbate these risks, rather than continuing with them and pretending that preparedness alone will mitigate the consequences.

5 How important is community participation in disaster risk reduction? How can local committees be actively involved in preparing disaster risk maps?

Community participation is absolutely crucial. As I mentioned earlier, the example of Kadanaad shows what can be achieved when local communities are involved. They should be empowered to take charge of preparing biodiversity registers and disaster risk maps, with proper support from the government.

The involvement of local communities ensures that the data is accurate and relevant, and it also helps raise awareness about the risks and necessary precautions.

6 You mentioned the example of the Green Party in Germany. Could you elaborate on how they manage industrial pollution, and how that contrasts with the situation in India?

Yes, a good friend of mine, Rainer Jorik, who was a German broadcast journalist, shared some insights on how the Green Party in Germany works. In Germany, the Green Party ensures that industries comply with pollution control regulations. These industries operate under strict guidelines and cannot exceed permissible levels of pollution.

However, the same companies, when operating in India, collaborate with local companies and pollute without any restraint. When asked about this, their response was shocking. They admitted that while they accept a profit margin of 40-50% in Germany due to pollution controls, in India, where there are virtually no regulations, they can make 500-600% profit. Their rationale is simple: if India doesn't care about pollution, why should they? This is a grave problem, and it highlights the need for India to become a law-abiding country where pollution control laws are strictly enforced.

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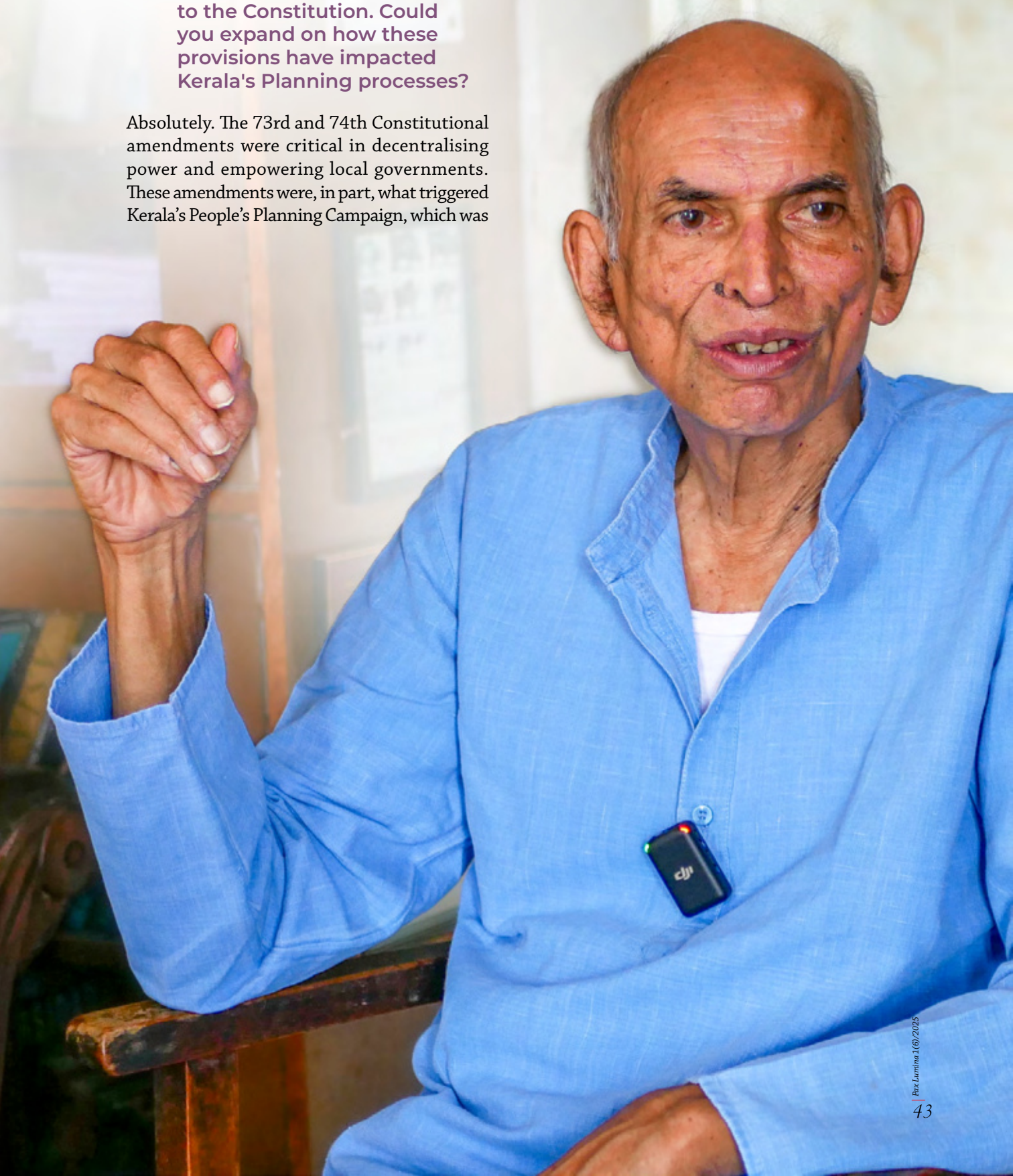
7 In your comments, you referenced the importance of empowering local governments through the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution. Could you expand on how these provisions have impacted Kerala's Planning processes?

Absolutely. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments were critical in decentralising power and empowering local governments. These amendments were, in part, what triggered Kerala's People's Planning Campaign, which was a significant movement towards participatory governance. Additionally, the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 built upon this foundation, enabling local bodies to take a more active role in biodiversity management.



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The crux of the matter, as we highlighted in the Western Ghats report, is that development decisions are being made without consulting local communities. **Projects are simply imposed upon them, whether it be tunnels or other infrastructure developments. There is no dialogue with the people who live in these areas and are most affected by these decisions.**

The gram panchayats, under these provisions, should be at the forefront of managing local resources and planning development. This approach is essential to ensuring that decisions are made with the involvement of the people, rather than being imposed from above.

8 How do you think Kerala can balance development projects with environmental sustainability, particularly in ecologically sensitive areas like the Western Ghats, to minimise the risk of future disasters?

The crux of the matter, as we have highlighted in the Western Ghats report, is that development decisions are being made without consulting local communities. Projects are simply imposed upon them, whether it be tunnels or other infrastructure developments. There is no dialogue with the people who live in these areas and are most affected by these decisions.

Similarly, decisions related to conservation are also imposed, often by the Forest Department, which has gained a reputation for using its authority in an overbearing and, at times, corrupt manner. The people have no say in whether they want these projects, nor do they have any input on how conservation efforts are implemented. This is not how a democracy should function. We need to change this top-down approach to both development and conservation.

9 Do you believe migrant farmers are responsible for landslides and human-animal conflicts in areas such as Kozhikkode and Wayanad? Do you have any suggestions on how these conflicts might be reduced?

The issue is far more complex than simply blaming migrant farmers. In fact, I suspect that there are larger interests at play, particularly those tied to the Church, which may be backing these actions, similar to what I have observed in Goa.

I spent many years working in Goa and became friends with Jose Bismarque Dias, a local leader who was deeply committed to protecting the land. He was a former priest who resigned from the Church after disagreeing with its role in backing dubious land transactions. Bismarque believed that the Church was more interested in profiting from land deals than in the welfare of the people or the environment.

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He was later elected the head of his village council and worked tirelessly to protect the village from real estate developers. Tragically, he was found dead under suspicious circumstances, and many believe he was murdered for his efforts. In my view, it is not the migrant farmers who are the root cause of these conflicts, but rather powerful interests exploiting the situation for profit.

10 In your report, as well as in several articles and books, you have provided numerous suggestions on how to preserve the Western Ghats' biodiversity. Is there anything you would like to add beyond what has already been written?

Yes, there is one recent development that I find particularly encouraging. Since 2015, smartphones have become widely available, even in remote villages. This technological advancement has empowered local communities in a way that was not possible before.

For instance, local people can now use apps like Google Lens and Google Photos to identify plant species by simply taking a photograph. This has removed the barrier of requiring outside experts to provide scientific names for the species recorded in the People's Biodiversity Registers (PBR).

In the past, the government agencies would argue that locals could not prepare these registers because they didn't know the scientific names. Now, with smartphone technology, that argument no longer holds. The gap in knowledge is narrowing, and local communities are becoming more self-sufficient. This is a positive development, as it allows people to take ownership of their resources and manage them in an informed way.

11 There have been renewed talks, particularly from political figures in Kerala, about constructing a new dam across Silent Valley and setting up a nuclear power station. Could you please share your reaction to this?

I can give a concrete example from the Silent Valley project itself. You might be familiar with the controversy surrounding it. A committee was formed to examine the project, chaired by Professor M.G.K. Menon, and I was one of the three nominees from the Central Government.

There were also representatives from the Government of Kerala. When the committee began its work, I approached the Kerala State Electricity Board and asked if they had considered alternative sites for the project. They were pushing Silent Valley as the best option, but I wanted to know if they had assessed other possibilities. To my surprise, they had not done any such evaluation. It seemed the real reason for their insistence on Silent Valley was the proximity of their preferred contractor, who had already executed some work nearby and had heavy

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The current conflict is rooted in the growing intolerance between the communities.

The Meiteis, who have been granted Scheduled Tribe status, are now able to purchase land in the hills, which the Kukis see as a threat to their traditional lands. This has escalated tensions. It's a reflection of broader issues of intolerance and inequality in India today.

machinery in the area, making it cheaper for him to proceed. This kind of decision-making, driven by vested interests, needs to change. There should be a transparent process where all alternatives are openly assessed, which is the proper way to handle such matters.

12 India is currently facing several internal conflicts, many of which are related to the control of natural resources. You have spent time in Manipur—what are your thoughts on the ongoing conflicts there?

The situation in Manipur is complex. The society is divided between the valley-dwelling Meitei community, who are primarily Vaishnavite Hindus, and the tribal communities in the hills, such as the Kukis and Nagas, who traditionally practised hunting, gathering, and shifting cultivation.

The Kukis, for example, had a rich tradition of nature worship, with sacred forests and waters covering significant portions of their land. However, in the 1950s, Christian missionaries convinced them to abandon these practices, leading to adverse environmental impacts, such as uncontrolled fires during shifting cultivation. Some communities eventually restored their sacred groves, though they now refer to them as "safety forests."

The current conflict is rooted in the growing intolerance between the communities. The Meiteis, who have been granted Scheduled Tribe status, are now able to purchase land in the hills, which the Kukis see as a threat to their traditional lands. This has escalated tensions. It's a reflection of broader issues of intolerance and inequality in India today.

13 You've written extensively about democracy, once describing it as "of the omnivorous, for the omnivorous, and by the omnivorous." Could you elaborate on this idea, and do you think we can hope for a democracy that truly serves all people?

Yes, in my book Ecology and Equity, I discussed how democracy has often been co-opted by those in power, driven by greed, casteism, and religious divisions. However, there is hope. The narrowing of the knowledge gap, thanks in part to technological advancements, is empowering people and could lead to a strengthening of true democracy. As people gain more access to information, they can make more informed decisions and hold those in power accountable. So yes, there is a possibility of a more genuine democracy in the future.

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14 The values of democracy have been undermined by religious independence, casteism, power, greed, and money. Do you believe there is still hope for an era where democracy truly means, "a governmenet of the people, by the people, and for the people?"

Yes, I believe there is hope. As I mentioned earlier, the narrowing of the gulf in knowledge and access to information is a key factor that could contribute to strengthening real democracy. As people become better informed and more aware of their rights and the issues at stake, there is a possibility that democracy can become more genuine and reflective of the people's will. So, I do think there is hope along those lines.

You've written a number of books, including a remarkable autobiography. I had the pleasure of attending its launch at the Gokhale Institute. Unlike many so-called environmentalists, especially those in Kerala, who often write from an "ivory tower," your approach is different. You go to the ground, understand the pulse of both the people and nature before writing. Do you have any new projects in the works? I know you have a large following in Kerala, with many mentioning you during their environmental research.

Yes, I am currently involved in a new project that centres around the tribal communities in Gadchiroli. These communities have been granted rights over their community forest resources, and there have been very promising developments. They are managing these resources well, and the tree cover is actually increasing in those areas.

They have found that certain technical inputs are helpful in managing their resources more effectively. Since I have experience as an ecologist, particularly in assessing forest resources, I've been helping them for years, and we continue to work together. This is my current focus.

15 In this digital age, people seem to have become more self-centred. I remember you concluded your autobiography, Western Ghats: A Love Story, by reminding us that we should work not only for ourselves, our families, or our nation, but for the entire human race. How can we cultivate such a mindset, especially when politics and religion seem indifferent to this ideal?

That quotation is actually from the Dalai Lama, not my own words. The Dalai Lama, being a Buddhist, professes values of equality and compassion for all. To my understanding, Buddhism offers a unique perspective among world religions, promoting care for all beings. Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, in my view, do not fully embrace these values in the same way.

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The policies I advocate challenge vested interests, and those interests are feeding into this propaganda. **Some of these people are working for the mafias, whether they be timber, land, or development mafias.**

While I don't formally adhere to any religion, I believe Buddhism holds the promise of guiding us toward such an ideal, although I acknowledge the challenges. For example, in South Korea, a predominantly Buddhist country where I've spent time, I have seen positive steps being taken. However, achieving such a mental state on a global scale is, I agree, not easy, especially given the current socio-political climate.

16 **While Buddhism might have this promise, it's also true that in countries like Sri Lanka, there have been conflicts involving Buddhists. And in Korea, both North and South are in tension. How do you view this?**

Yes, that is true. The conflict in Sri Lanka, for instance, is driven by historical British interventions. The British introduced Tamil labourers to work on their tea estates, creating a divide that persists today. Similarly, the tension between North and South Korea can be traced back to the imperialist intervention that drove a wedge between the two. These conflicts are unfortunate, but they were set in motion by external powers.

North Korea, for example, has since become a significant military power, and the division between the two Koreas remains a lingering consequence of these past actions.

17 **In Kerala, you have faced criticism, particularly from religious groups and politicians, who accuse you of prioritising the interests of wildlife and ecosystems over human interests in the Western Ghats. How do you respond to such criticism?**

I find it astonishing how much rubbish people can talk. These critics clearly haven't read the report. If they have read it, they would have seen that a significant section is devoted to the Vasishti River and how chemical industries are polluting it, depriving fisherfolk of their livelihoods. When an industry creates jobs for 10,000 people, but 20,000 fisherfolk lose their jobs due to pollution, how is that not prioritising human interests?

I've also discussed the impacts of the Innercon project in the Bhimashankar area near Pune, where windmills are adversely affecting villages, their water resources, and livelihoods. All these are given in detail in the report. And then there's Plachimada, where I addressed the devastating impacts of Coca-Cola's operations. So, to claim that I am only concerned with birds and elephants is utter nonsense. People can say whatever they like, but the facts speak for themselves.

Many of your critics haven't even gone through the report and are clearly prejudiced. They lack a scientific understanding of ecology, yet they continue to mislead people. This issue extends to some journalists as well, who write without fully grasping the subject.

It's not just half-baked knowledge—it's deliberate. The policies I advocate challenge vested interests, and those interests are feeding into this propaganda. Some of these people are working for the mafias, whether they be timber, land, or development mafias. It's a deliberate and vicious campaign against policies that advocate for sustainable development and conservation.

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Prof. Madhav Gadgil and Saji Abraham

18 In addition to these vested interests, there is a growing number of journalists and social media activists whose knowledge is, as you said, half-baked. They lack the depth to fully understand these complex issues, yet they continue to spread misinformation. What are your thoughts on this?

Unfortunately, you cannot do much about it. These individuals lack the willingness to dive deep into the subject. Instead, they perpetuate half-truths and misinformation, which is a real tragedy.

19 I know you don't subscribe to any established religion, but I wanted to quote the French-American Christian theologian Gabriel Vahanian, who said, "The history of religion is the history of the decay of spirituality." Given your extensive experience in Kerala, how do you respond to this statement?

The question, really, is what we mean by "spiritual experience." To me, it's very much like an aesthetic experience—something that is deeply satisfying and personal. For example, I'm quite fond of devotional music, but I appreciate it for its aesthetic value rather than for religious reasons. Bhimsen Joshi, the great singer of Hindustani classical music, would perform bhajans devoted to Hindu gods. I enjoy them for their beauty, not necessarily for their religious message.

Similarly, I've appreciated Christian music, such as Christmas carols, whether in Goa or at Harvard. These experiences are aesthetically pleasing to me. However, what I find deeply satisfying, perhaps akin to a spiritual experience, is making sense of the world as a scientist. My work, particularly in understanding the evolution of life and biodiversity conservation, has brought me great personal satisfaction.

I've also applied this understanding in ways that have had practical benefits, such as helping rural and tribal communities use technology like Google Photos to identify species for their People's Biodiversity Registers. This has empowered them in ways that were previously unimaginable. All of this gives me a profound sense of fulfilment, which I would liken to a spiritual experience.

Photo Courtesy:
Thomas Philip & David Mathew

Saji Abraham is a renowned literarist and a professional Engineer at the Indian Railways.

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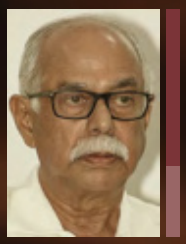

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INTEGRITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

THE CORNERSTONE OF LEADERSHIP AND TRUST

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In the centuries that have passed since the Renaissance, the concept of Christian humanism, with its emphasis on integrity, has not truly succeeded in bringing about peace in the world. **The Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, which gave the Western world a significant advantage over the rest of the globe, were at least partly responsible for colonialism and its associated ills.**

Many years ago, Parekkat Achuta Menon who had served in the Indian Civil Service shared with me a longish article that he never published. It is still in my possession after more than half a century. The veteran Ambassador concluded his article with the following words:

"Nineteen centuries ago, in the golden age of the Antonines, to which the historian Gibbon has given lyrical praise, the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius reminded himself of his duty in memorable words. He wrote, `Do what comes to hand with correct and natural dignity and with humanity, independence and justice, and allow your mind freedom from all other considerations'. The ICS was a great service because its members were trained to walk in the way of Marcus Aurelius."

Not all may agree with his conclusion that all members of the Indian Civil Service were great men, but the quote from Marcus Aurelius brings out the essential qualities in a leader who is a person of integrity. Dwight D. Eisenhower famously said, "The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionably integrity." For us in India, there are countless quotes from our scriptures which highlight the importance of integrity. As Thirkkural beautifully puts it, "He who would live truly in his own heart, truly lives in the heart of all people."

This brings us to the question as to what is "integrity". The word itself derives from the Latin "integritas", which denotes wholeness or completion. Horace sang of "integer vitae scelerisque purus" - a man pure of life and free of vice. "Eupraxia", an earlier term coined by Aristotle, while arguing that "acting well or badly requires thought and character" bears no similarity to the latin word "integer" but conveys the same sense.

These quotes on integrity reflect the best facets of ancient Greek and Latin civilizations, which, however, got submerged in the context of the conflicts that preoccupied and the political corruption that prevailed in the western world in the subsequent centuries, especially the period following the fall of the Roman Empire. Modern civilization, as we know it today, owes much to the 15th century Florence, where the historic phenomenon known as the Florentine Renaissance took shape. A small group of people in that city cross-bred religion with the best elements of classical Greece and Rome to produce a new way of life, which came to be termed as Christian humanism.

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This set high value on political freedom, public spiritedness and free inquiry, man's will and imagination besides the beauty and power of the human body. The humanists took an interest in man as a whole, in fathoming man's nature as well as his or her quests in literature and the arts, history, and science. That revolution led to our revival of interest in art and science and led, in turn, to various revolutions including the the industrial revolution, leading humanity to unprecedented progress in the centuries which were to follow.

In the centuries that have passed since the Renaissance, the concept of Christian humanism, with its emphasis on integrity, has not truly succeeded in bringing about peace in the world. The Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution, which gave the Western world a significant advantage over the rest of the globe, were at least partly responsible for colonialism and its associated ills. The twentieth century witnessed two World Wars and a prolonged Cold War, marked by the constant threat of nuclear disaster. Thus, while the Renaissance undoubtedly ushered in progress, it did not necessarily lead to a reduction in conflict. The history of the past 500 years warrants deeper exploration by scholars and historians to uncover the reasons behind this contradiction.

Was it the lack of integrity amongst leaders and rulers of nations which led to the recurrence of conflicts in our world, despite all the progress that we have been able to achieve in various fields? On a deeper reflection, one finds that many conflicts have resulted from the absolute conviction of rival parties that the respective ideologies that they pursue are the best for their people or their nation. The leaders of the rival parties or groups may not be wanting in personal integrity. On the other hand, their very integrity may be the root cause of the conflict. It therefore emerges that what is more more important is that the mediator or the interlocutor who takes up the task of conflict resolution is a person of integrity who inspires trust in both parties.

In today's world, conflict resolution is of paramount importance. Integrity plays a key role in fostering trust, transparency, and fairness. The mediator's integrity and the trust they inspire are crucial for the success of any effort to resolve conflicts. When individuals or groups demonstrate integrity, they are perceived as honest, consistent, and committed to finding fair, ethical solutions. This fosters open communication, as all parties feel confident expressing themselves without reservation, encouraging collaboration and compromise.

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In today's world, conflict resolution is of paramount importance. Integrity plays a key role in fostering trust, transparency, and fairness. **The mediator's integrity and the trust they inspire are crucial for the success of any effort to resolve conflicts. When individuals or groups demonstrate integrity, they are perceived as honest, consistent, and committed to finding fair, ethical solutions.**

Trust reduces defensiveness, helping individuals focus on problem-solving rather than self-protection. Integrity in the mediator ensures that all parties are treated fairly, with their concerns taken seriously, motivating everyone to act with integrity. This, in turn, increases the likelihood of equitable solutions, minimizing feelings of being cheated or neglected. When integrity prevails, people are more likely to take responsibility for their actions, even admitting faults when necessary. This accountability clears misunderstandings and prevents conflicts from escalating.

Sergio Vieira de Mello, a humanitarian peacemaker, embodied all the qualities of a mediator. Active during the most significant conflicts and geopolitical crises of the late twentieth century, he was tragically killed in a terrorist attack on the U.N. Headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003.

On the subject of integrity, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the former Prime Minister of India, deserves mention. He passed away in late 2024, leaving behind a legacy of unwavering integrity. This quality greatly aided his efforts to advance the peace process with Pakistan, though factors beyond his control prevented a final resolution. Those who worked with him during those challenging times admired his conflict resolution approach. He progressed cautiously, ensuring the adversary upheld prior agreements at every step. Assessing the integrity of his interlocutor was central to his method.

Notably, one of the most successful conflict resolution efforts in our region occurred during the same period. The resolution of Nepal's Maoist insurgency, which claimed 15,000 lives between 1996 and 2006, stands as a remarkable achievement. Over the past two decades, fewer than 20 lives have been lost to this conflict. Chasing the flame of peace, as Manmohan Singh and Sergio Vieira de Mello did, is the hallmark of true integrity.

P.K. Hormis Tharakan, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer, was chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), India's external intelligence agency, and the former Director General of the Kerala Police.

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INTEGRITY IN NURSING PRACTICE

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Integrity is crucial in nursing because nurses play a vital role as primary support for patients and families dealing with health challenges. **The role requires emotional resilience and moral clarity, especially in a physically and emotionally demanding profession.**

Integrity is a cornerstone of ethical behaviour and professional practice, embodying fairness, honesty, and adherence to strong moral principles. In nursing, integrity goes beyond personal virtue, becoming a professional necessity. It involves confidentiality, honesty, and trustworthiness, which are essential in healthcare. Nurses with integrity demonstrate reliability and ethical commitment, ensuring their actions uphold the highest standards of care.

Integrity is crucial in nursing because nurses play a vital role as primary support for patients and families dealing with health challenges. The role requires emotional resilience and moral clarity, especially in a physically and emotionally demanding profession. Integrity ensures decisions prioritize patients' best interests, fostering trust and healing. It strengthens professional relationships, encourages accountability, and reinforces nurses' commitment to ethical, compassionate care.

Benefits of Having Integrity in Nursing

There are many compelling reasons to incorporate integrity into your nursing practice. Below are some key benefits:

- **Creating a Positive Work Environment**

Trust in yourself and your colleagues fosters a harmonious work environment and nurtures meaningful professional relationships. For example, nurses often collaborate closely with doctors and other healthcare professionals to assess patients' conditions and devise personalized treatment plans. A foundation of mutual trust and integrity enhances teamwork and ensures the best outcomes for patients.

- **Being Dependable and Trustworthy**

Demonstrating integrity signals to others that you are dependable and trustworthy. Your actions can reassure colleagues, patients, and their families that you are reliable and committed to professionalism.

For instance, patients and their loved ones often turn to nurses for clarity and guidance. If you provide a realistic and honest overview of a situation—rather than simply telling people what they want to hear—they will trust your judgment. Likewise, doctors rely on dependable nurses to administer medications correctly and maintain accurate health records, ensuring safe and effective care.

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- **Warranting Forgiveness from Others**

Acting with integrity can make others more understanding of occasional mistakes, as they trust your intentions and recognize that you aim to do your best. Consistently demonstrating honesty and professionalism encourages others to be forgiving when unexpected challenges arise.

For example, John, a nurse, realizes that some equipment needed for a workplace event will arrive late because he entered the wrong delivery date. Instead of blaming the delivery company, he works quickly to expedite the shipment, reducing the delay to just a few hours. He then informs his supervisor of the mistake and offers a sincere apology. Recognizing John's integrity and efforts to correct the issue, his supervisor appreciates his honesty and resourcefulness.

Improving Your Professional Performance

Ultimately, integrity enhances your ability to excel in your role. It aligns your professional actions with your core motivations for becoming a nurse, enabling you to perform your duties with purpose and dedication.

For instance, most nurses pursue the profession out of a desire to help others and make a positive impact. Practising integrity reinforces these motivations, helping you feel more engaged and inspired in your daily work. This sense of alignment can also boost your confidence and overall job satisfaction.

By integrating integrity into your nursing practice, you not only enhance your professional relationships and performance but also contribute to a work environment that values honesty, trust, and mutual respect.

How to Practise Integrity in Nursing

Here's a list of steps you can follow to practise integrity in the workplace as a nurse:

- Focus on honest communication.
- Treat others with respect.
- Uphold ethical standards.
- Hold yourself and others accountable.
- Follow through with your commitments.

Importance of Integrity in Nursing Practice

Practising integrity in nursing is essential for your own growth, your patients' well-being, and the success of your team. Here's why nurses should always strive to uphold integrity:

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As we continue to grapple with these challenges, the focus must remain on fostering resilience, creativity, and wisdom among our youth, ensuring that they are equipped not just to survive **but to thrive in articulating themselves in an increasingly complex yet beautiful world.**

- Your integrity, like your reputation, speaks for you.
- Demonstrating integrity leads to better patient outcomes.
- When you practise integrity, you inspire others to do the same.
- You contribute to a positive and supportive work environment.
- Essential Qualities of a Nurse with Integrity

The desire to demonstrate integrity in nursing practice stems from having a solid moral compass. People with good character and integrity are usually easy to identify. Below are eight key traits of nurses who exemplify high integrity:

1. Respect for Others' Time

Nurses with integrity recognize the value of others' time. Despite their own demanding schedules, they understand that everyone's time is equally important. These nurses prioritize efficiency, minimizing distractions and delays to ensure smooth operations. They also acknowledge when others offer their time and attention, often expressing sincere gratitude for their support.

2. Kindness and Consideration

Integrity in nursing means treating others with the same respect and kindness one would expect. Nurses with integrity never exploit others; instead, they selflessly give without expecting anything in return. Their actions are driven by a genuine desire to improve the well-being of those they care for.

3. A Commitment to Good Deeds

Even in the face of heavy workloads, nurses with integrity continuously seek opportunities to do good. Whether through small acts of kindness or making a meaningful difference in patients' lives, they find joy in improving others' days, regardless of how minor the gesture may appear.

4. A Positive Outlook

Nurses with integrity maintain an optimistic perspective and encourage others to focus on the good in any situation. They understand that a positive attitude has a powerful impact, shaping how people feel and respond. This optimism not only fosters stronger relationships but can also contribute to better patient outcomes.

5. Trustworthiness

At the heart of integrity is trustworthiness. Nurses with integrity are dependable, ensuring others can rely on them to be truthful, even when the truth may be difficult. This honesty helps alleviate patients' fears and anxieties, reinforcing strong nurse-patient relationships based on trust.

6. Authenticity

Authenticity is vital for nurses with integrity. They embody the "what you see is what you get" principle, reassuring patients and colleagues that they can trust in the consistency of their actions and words. Being genuine allows them to build dependable, honest connections.

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7. Willingness to Admit Mistakes

Nurses with integrity are unafraid to admit their mistakes. While some may see acknowledging errors as a sign of weakness, those with strong moral principles view it as strength. By openly discussing and learning from mistakes, they improve their skills and grow as caregivers.

8. Emotional Regulation

Emotions can run high, especially in healthcare settings, but nurses with integrity are mindful of their emotional responses. They maintain composure and professionalism, particularly in stressful situations, ensuring that their emotional state does not interfere with patient care.

Demonstrating Integrity in Nursing Practice

Practising integrity as a nurse means having a set of core values and demonstrating them in all your efforts. The concepts of integrity in nursing practice are the same concepts anyone who wishes to have high moral character and integrity should follow. The following are ten top ways nurses can demonstrate integrity in nursing practice.

- Be honest.
- Be dependable.
- Treat other people with respect.
- Hold yourself accountable.
- Give credit to others for their efforts.
- Follow company policies and rules.
- Be a positive example for others to follow.
- Respect property and equipment.
- Lend a helping hand.
- Address conflict and stress at work with respect.

Consequences of Lack of Integrity in Nursing Practice

While integrity in nursing brings numerous benefits, its absence can have serious consequences that affect everyone involved. Here are some of the key repercussions:

- **Poor Nurse-Patient Relationships**: Trust is vital for effective care. Nurses lacking integrity struggle to build relationships, undermining patient outcomes and mutual respect.
- **Increased Workplace Stress**: Without integrity, teamwork suffers, leading to poor communication, reduced collaboration, and heightened stress among healthcare professionals.
- **Unfavourable Patient Outcomes**: Strained relationships, stress, and poor collaboration create a domino effect, resulting in decreased performance, reduced patient compliance, and negative health outcomes.
- **Loss of Job Security**: Employers value integrity in nurses as it ensures high-quality care. A lack of integrity can make nurses liabilities, potentially leading to job loss.

Integrity is the cornerstone of nursing practice, influencing every interaction, decision, and outcome. By fostering trust, accountability, and ethical behaviour, nurses not only enhance their own professional growth but also contribute to a positive work environment and improved patient care. Upholding integrity ensures that the nursing profession remains a beacon of compassion, excellence, and unwavering dedication to those in need. Embracing this core value empowers nurses to make a lasting impact on their patients, colleagues, and the healthcare system as a whole.

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CHALLENGES TO PEACEBUILDING IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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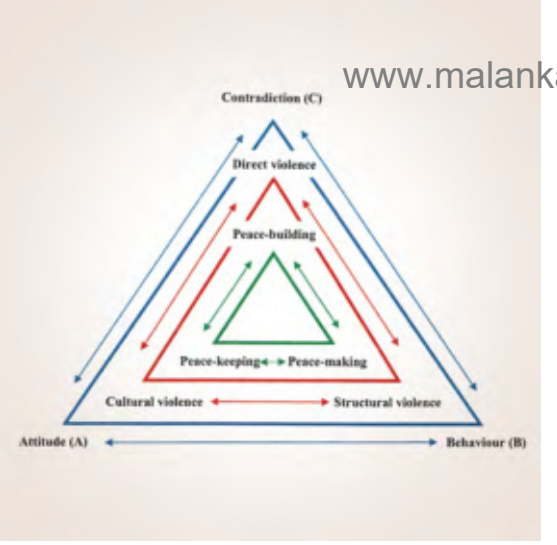

Intellectual history, institutional paradigm, and spiritual endeavours are the major standpoints in understanding the structure of peace. As Johan Galtung emphatically argues, peace is a structure with its dynamic bases and superstructures. For Galtung, Peace can both be negative and positive. Peace can't be understood until one analyses the causes and roots of conflict.

The absence of direct violence emanating from contradictions and manifested conflict can achieve direct peace but it would be an unfinished project. Galtung argues that critical responses to structures (roots of inequalities), and cultural conflicts (caste hierarchies, identity and religious differences) are essential for peacebuilding. In short, Peacebuilding is not about managing conflicts, it has to be an associated endeavour and sustainable without possibilities of recourse to cyclic challenges.

The Challenge of Peacebuilding

John Lederach has been a central figure in inquiring about the idea of sustainable peace. He argues that sustainable peace can't be achieved without understanding the role of actors, their participation and collective commitments. In his final submission, for peacebuilding, the idea of sustainable peace can only become a reality if there is a balancing act between top-down (State, army, etc), middle-level (intelligentsia, civil society) and bottom-up (grassroots, local governance systems) approaches.

The large canon of intellectual history on peacebuilding provides the base on which institutions including States, and international agencies like the United Nations have been focussing on peacebuilding measures. Institutions are the pillars through which peacebuilding has found a liberal meaning. For the United Nations and larger institutional paradigm, Peacebuilding is about 3H (human needs, human development and human security).

Beyond limited notions of negotiations, conflict prevention, diplomacy, and legal provisions, peacebuilding is a project in continuity. It is structure and actor-compatible goals that are required for any peacebuilding activities. The idea of needs, development and security cannot be separated and thus institutions focus on these frameworks to achieve sustainable peace.

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In short, Peacebuilding is not about managing conflicts, it has to be an associated endeavour and sustainable without possibilities of recourse to cyclic challenges.

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The Absence of Agency

The world can be seen through the lens of conflict and peace. The conflict can be both latent and manifest. The notion of State hegemony, anarchy in the international system and human nature offer a realist perspective. On the contrary, the peace lens is the liberal perspective going back to the age of Enlightenment and particularly Kantian expressions of the cosmopolitan world. The idea of interdependence, cooperation and individuals shape the liberal argument that peace is a necessity for sustainable development and collective security.

The realist-liberal debate became a structural issue when a liberal idea failed to address the question of nationalism. The State hegemony remains intact even in the age of globalisation that brought universal consensus of cooperation in achieving sustainable peace.

However, war and conflict remained a permanent reality. The structure is intact but agencies are missing. The notion of sovereignty remained bonded within the State framework and thus nationalism despite bringing a territorial notion of identity, sovereignty and security became a burden for the absence of individual sovereign rights and choices. Nationalism therefore became a cornerstone in analysing the challenges of peacebuilding, where the role of an agency is absent.

Indian Nationalism and Peacebuilding: The current Rupture

The current Indian Nationalism stratification is politically noisy, fractured on identity lines and ideological segregation under populist majoritarian tyranny. The rise of the far right in India is fundamentally the nucleus of why peacebuilding is a pipedream. The current rupture under the guise of the Hindutva movement has brought the current Modi regime through consensus. The Hindutva ideology draped into religious-cultural superiority has divided the social structures and marginalised individual agencies in the name of the singular idea of nationalism.

The ruling Modi government maintains the façade of collective ideas for cooperation, development and trust *(Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas)* but it masks the undertone of hatred of industry and the segregation of minorities. For Modi and his Hindu nationalist Party (Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP) core vision has been *Hindu Rashtra*.

The cultural force behind Modi and his Party is the *Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh* (RSS) which fundamentally believes in religious segregation. They ideologically define the idea of India as not secular based on constitutional provision

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but rather Hindu Majoritarianism. The RSS speaks in the name of cultural slogans like *Hind, Hindu, and Hindustan* as a supreme goal for a greater India. It has made a framework for India as a Hindu Rashtra. Such formidable challenges constrain peacebuilding processes.

RSS's 'idea of India' has been an exclusive cultural project marginalising its non-Hindu citizens. Such structural and cultural violence against its people in the name of identity and faith has become an everyday reality. Institutions in India also have been compromised to meet the expectations of majoritarianism. The court verdicts and the charges against intellectuals and political opponents speak volumes about the dynamics of structure-actor complexities. This structural violence, manifested through several forms including thought control, killing innocent people in the name of food choices, defeats the constitutional ethos of India.

Addressing the root of such ideological force is essential for the development and welfare of the country. Marginalization of individual agencies has become a permanent feature of the peacebuilding crisis in India. Economic and military power alone cannot promise a developed society until each fulfils its potential.

Peacebuilding is an everyday commitment at the individual and society level manifested through ethics of commitment, participation, trust and respect. **The notions of rights, development and security in the 3H for peacebuilding require mutual trust, mutual respect and social unity.**

Peacebuilding as A Way Forward

Peacebuilding is an everyday commitment at the individual and society level manifested through ethics of commitment, participation, trust and respect. The notions of rights, development and security in the 3H for peacebuilding require mutual trust, mutual respect and social unity. Any peacebuilding possibility needs a positive framework of structure-actors relationships. The current dispensation of such essential credentials in achieving a sense of sustainable peace is absent in India. Peacebuilding is not restricted to institutions, intellectuals and States rather it's a necessity for human survival and critical to becoming a civilized nation.

Dr Minakshi Sardar is an Assistant Professor at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

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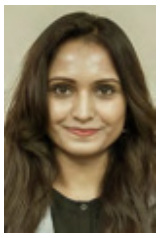

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BOOK REVIEW
Pax Lumina 1(6)/2025/63-66

A HEARTFELT CALL TO ACTION

Manifesto for A Moral Revolution

Jacqueline Novogratz

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Jacqueline Novogratz's *Manifesto for a Moral Revolution:* Practices to Build a Better World is a relevant and contemporary exploration of moral leadership and sustainable change. Drawing from her extensive experience as the founder and CEO of Acumen, Novogratz offers not just insights but also tools for action. Her 13 actionable practices provide a roadmap for leading with empathy, courage, and purpose in a fractured and often inequitable world.

1. Just Start: The Essence of Moral Leadership

One of the foundational ideas in Novogratz's manifesto is the concept of *"Just Start."* She urges readers to act, even in the face of uncertainty. "Purpose doesn't come out of theory," she writes, "it is forged in practice." This simple yet profound insight reminds us that waiting for a perfect condition often leads to inaction. Her call to "start before you are ready" resonates deeply, challenging us to embrace uncertainty as a natural part of the journey toward meaningful impact.

Balancing humility and audacity is a recurring theme in the book.

Novogratz advocates for listening with humility while acting boldly to tackle systemic issues.

2. Redefine Success: Beyond Wealth and Fame

In a world that often equates success with wealth and power, Novogratz invites us to redefine success in terms of purpose and shared well-being. She writes, "A moral revolution redefines success to include the collective, the community, and our shared humanity."

This redefinition shifts the focus from personal achievement to creating positive ripples in the lives of others. Success, she argues, is not about accumulation but about contribution.

3. Partner with Humility and Audacity

Balancing humility and audacity is a recurring theme in the book. Novogratz advocates for listening with humility while acting boldly to tackle systemic issues. "To change the world, we must simultaneously push boundaries and acknowledge our limitations," she writes. This delicate balance ensures that leaders remain both empathetic and effective.

4. Cultivate Moral Imagination

Perhaps the most striking concept in the book is "Moral Imagination," which Novogratz describes as the ability to put oneself in another's shoes and design solutions from their perspective. She believes this kind of imagination is essential for sustainable and just solutions.

Her story of a Japanese entrepreneur partnering with Colombian cacao farmers exemplifies how moral imagination fosters trust and collaboration. "We can build systems that serve humanity if only we learn to see the world through the eyes of others," she observes.

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5. Listen to Voices Unheard

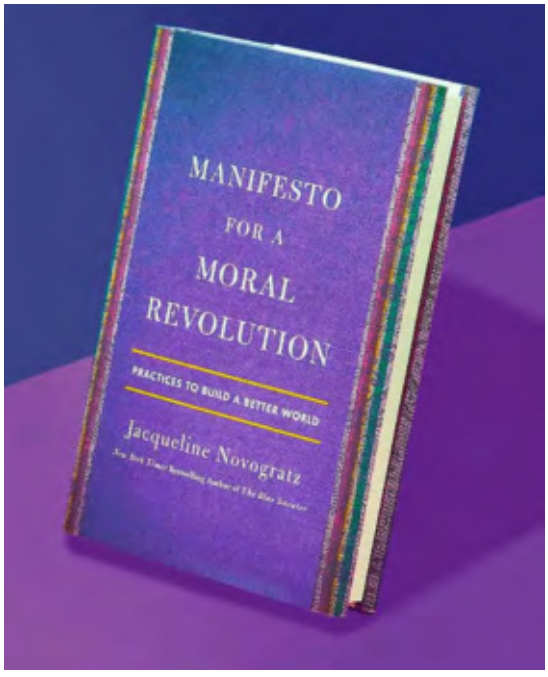
Novogratz highlights the importance of listening to marginalized voices, emphasizing that "those closest to the problem are often closest to the solution." True listening, she argues, involves more than hearing words—it means engaging with the emotions and identities behind them. This practice of deep listening is not just an act of empathy but a pathway to innovation and inclusion.

6. Tell Stories That Matter

Stories have the power to inspire and connect. Novogratz believes that sharing narratives of resilience, courage, and shared humanity can create bridges across divides. "The stories we tell ourselves shape the systems we create," she writes. By telling stories that matter, we can inspire hope and foster collective action.

7. Embrace the Beautiful Struggle

Change is hard, and Novogratz acknowledges this truth with honesty. She calls the work of moral leadership "the beautiful struggle"—a phrase that captures both the challenges and the profound meaning of this journey. Embracing this reality helps leaders remain resilient and hopeful, even in the face of setbacks.



8. Accompany One Another

True leadership, Novogratz reminds us, involves walking alongside others. "We cannot lead alone," she writes. This practice of accompaniment is about solidarity, mutual responsibility, and shared humanity. It's a call to build relationships rooted in trust and care, not just transactions.

9. Expect a Lot, and Don't Be Afraid to Demand It

"Demand more from the people you work with, and they will rise to the occasion," Novogratz advises. High expectations, combined with respect and accountability, create an environment where excellence thrives. This practice reflects her belief in the transformative power of setting ambitious goals for oneself and others.

10. Practice Courage Daily

"Courage is not the absence of fear," Novogratz writes, "but the willingness to act in spite of it." This practice of courage involves taking daily risks, however small, to stand up for one's values.
She challenges readers to ask themselves: *What is the cost of not daring?*

11. Stay Grounded in Your Values

Integrity is the cornerstone of moral leadership. Novogratz emphasizes that leaders must stay true to their values, even in the face of adversity. "Our values are our anchors in times of turbulence," she writes, reminding readers that a strong moral compass is essential for navigating ethical dilemmas.

12. Cultivate a Mindset of Abundance

Scarcity breeds fear and competition, but Novogratz urges leaders to adopt a mindset of abundance. "When we focus on what we have, rather than what we lack, we

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create opportunities for collaboration and innovation," she writes. This mindset fosters generosity, creativity, and a sense of shared purpose.

13. Be Brave Enough to Adapt

Adaptability is essential for leaders navigating a rapidly changing world. Novogratz advises: *"Hold tightly to your values, but loosely to your plans."* This principle underscores the importance of flexibility and openness to change, while remaining grounded in core principles.

Stories That Inspire

Throughout the book, Novogratz weaves compelling stories of individuals who embody these practices. From her own journey leaving a lucrative banking career to work in East Africa, to entrepreneurs and changemakers transforming their communities, these anecdotes bring her principles to life. Her reflections remind us that "The arc of the moral universe bends toward justice, but it needs our hands to pull it." In a world often driven by self-interest and short-term gains, *Manifesto for a Moral Revolution* offers a counter-narrative rooted in purpose, empathy, and courage. Novogratz's practices are not abstract ideals but practical steps that anyone can take to contribute to a more just and inclusive world.

Her call to redefine success, listen deeply, and cultivate courage serves as a compass for navigating the complexities of modern leadership.

Conclusion: A Manifesto for Our Times

Jacqueline Novogratz's *Manifesto for a Moral Revolution* is more than a book; it's a movement. Her actionable principles and heartfelt stories challenge and inspire readers to reimagine leadership and embrace the work of building a better world.

Whether you're an entrepreneur, educator, activist, or simply someone who cares deeply about humanity's future, this manifesto will push you to think, feel, and act differently. Novogratz reminds us that the moral revolution begins with each of us—and that change, however daunting, is always possible.

Whether you're an entrepreneur, educator, activist, or simply someone who cares deeply about humanity's future, this manifesto will push you to think, feel, and act differently. **Novogratz reminds us that the moral revolution begins with each of us—and that change, however daunting, is always possible.**

Ambalika Mirgale is an accomplished professional with over 60 months of experience in the IT, real estate, and airline industries, excelling in project management and business analysis. Currently pursuing a PGDM (GM) at XLRI Jamshedpur, she builds on her academic foundation from Pune University and has a proven record of leading cross-functional teams to success.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pax Lumina 1(6)/2025/67

Dear Editor,

It's a pleasure to greet you Team Pax Lumina.

I must confess that I feel honoured to get my participation in this issue of the PAX Lumina magazine. I am eager to share this precious work of a great team with my acquaintances and colleagues. I hope that we can continue collaborating on future issues.

Carlos Daniel Caballero Barragán
Colombia

Dear Editor,

Again another exciting issue of PAX LUMINA on Challenges Before the Youth. Congratulations!!!

The youngsters are the dreams of our country, since India has a very young population. I fully agree with the fact that today's youth face a variety of challenges and difficulties, including:

Unemployment: High unemployment rates make it difficult for young people to find work and support themselves.

Political and Social Issues: Navigating the complexities of social and political issues can be challenging for young people.

I read all the papers!!!

Prof Dr Sabu Thomas
Chairman, Trivandrum Engineering Science & Technology Research Park (TrEST Research Park)

Dear Editor,

Thank you for the latest Pax Lumina.

It is, indeed, an enlightening issue with a number of inspiring and illuminating articles on the youth of the world and their dreams and aspirations.

The Editorial has presented the theme and summed up the contents well.

Congratulations to Team Pax Lumina.

Swami Sachidananda Bharathi
Kochi

Dear Editor,

I congratulate you and the Pax Lumina team on bringing out this issue of the challenges faced by youth across the globe. In particular, I appreciate the articles on the youth with disabilities, the influence of technology and artificial intelligence and those in conflict regions like Kashmir. I hope the insights drawn from this issue will enlighten and help readers to accompany the present generation of youth to more creative and hope-filled action for a better world.

Best wishes,
Denzil Fernandes
Bangalore

Dear Editor,

Very Important contribution.

Congratulations.

Best Wishes,
Srinivasa Murthy
Bangalore

Dear Editor,

Thank you so much. The issue is wonderful.

Looking forward to reading future issues and/or having collaborations.

Best,
Tanvi Bahuguna
USA

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The supreme quality for leadership is
unquestionably integrity.
Without it, no real success is possible, no matter
whether it is on a section gang,
a football field, in an army, or in an office.

- Dwight D. Eisenhower