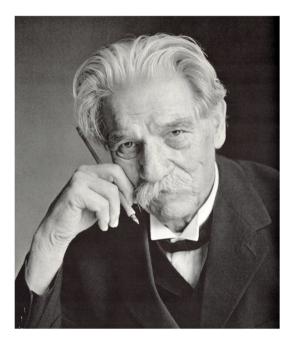




61 Ausstellungsführer der Universitätsbibliothek der Freien Universität Berlin



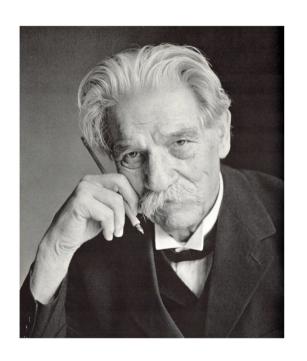
Dr. Albert Schweitzer

(14 January 1875 – 4 September 1965)

"My Address to the People" Commitment against Nuclear War

Anti-Kriegs-Museum e.V. (www.anti-kriegs-museum.de)
Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum e.V. (www.nonviolent-resistance.info)
Realisation: Christian Bartolf, Marion Gericke, Dominique Miething
Patron:





Dr. Albert Schweitzer

(14 January 1875 – 4 September 1965)

"My Address to the People"
Commitment against Nuclear War

Exhibition from 5 November until 20 December 2019

in the foyer of the Universitätsbibliothek [University Library] at the Freie Universität Berlin, Garystr. 39, 14195 Berlin

Ausstellungsführer Nr. 61 [Exhibition Catalogue no. 61]

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- Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum e.V.

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Realisation: Christian Bartolf, Marion Gericke, Dominique Miething

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Foreword

On 23 April 1957, Dr. Albert Schweitzer had his "A Declaration of Conscience" (printed in the New York *The Saturday Review*, May 18, 1957, pp. 17-20) published via Radio Oslo. The call for nuclear disarmament was broadcasted by many international radio stations and printed one day later in the *New York Times* on 24 April 1957. This exhibition was opened on 24 April 2017, sixty years later, and was on display at the Berlin Anti-War Museum's Peace Gallery until 24 September 2017. Meanwhile the Foundation German Albert Schweitzer Center ("Stiftung Deutsches Albert-Schweitzer-Zentrum Frankfurt/Main") has organized presentations of this Schweitzer Peace Exhibition in many public places.

"I send my deep respect and high esteem to Mahatma Gandhi. I have been deeply moved by all he is doing and by the thoughts which he conveys to others. I would so like to make his personal acquaintance. Will it ever be possible that I see him and the poet Rabindranath Tagore, too, whom I have wanted to meet for a long time?"

Written in the year 1926, these words by Dr. Albert Schweitzer from his hospital at Lambaréné in today's Gabon point to the similarity of his ethics of reverence for life and the spiritual world of his Indian contemporaries.

Civic education and political philosophy at schools and universities shall be committed to the ethical principles of a global "Culture of Peace" (United Nations). Our exhibitions on the *History of Nonviolent Resistance* give voice to the humanists and opponents of any war, for example, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Dr. Albert Schweitzer.

Christian Bartolf / Dominique Miething Gandhi Information Center ("Gandhi-Informations-Zentrum e.V.")

Welcome Address

Nobel Peace Laureate Albert Schweitzer, in the last decade of his life, was vehemently engaged against nuclear weapons tests and against nuclear armament. His "Last Message to Mankind" was recorded some months before his death and has oftentimes been referred to as his ethical legacy.

In this message he forges a bridge between his ethics of "reverence for life" and the condemnation of nuclear weapons and all forms of war. Are these thoughts of Albert Schweitzer from the 50s and 60s of the last century still interesting and useful today?

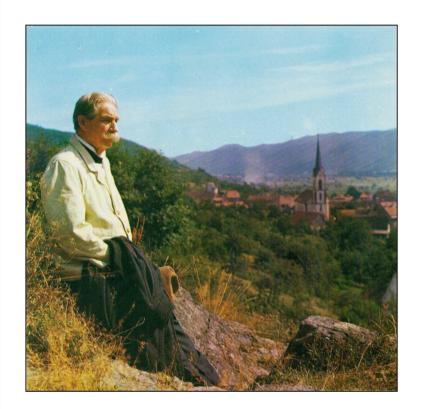
In view of the contemporary and impending wars in the Middle East, annulled and expiring disarmament treaties and the newly sparked debates on nuclear modernization, Albert Schweitzer's points of argument seem highly topical.

That is why I am wholeheartedly grateful to the president of the Gandhi Information Center in Berlin (society for education), Christian Bartolf, and his collaborators for creating this exhibition, which was first shown in Berlin's Anti-War Museum in 2017

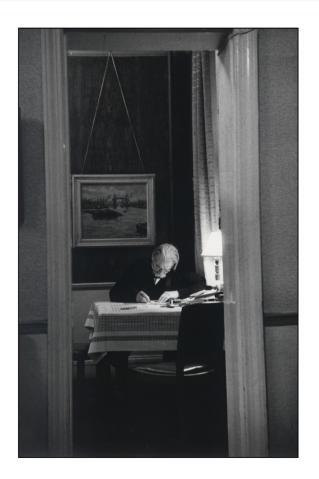
and may be borrowed as a travelling exhibition for peace from the Foundation German Albert Schweitzer Center ("Stiftung Deutsches Albert-Schweitzer-Zentrum Frankfurt/Main").

Now I want to invite you to read Schweitzer and I do hope that the philosopher, theologist, physician and musician's reflections will inspire both your personal – and also your public – analysis of nuclear weapons and war.

Dr. Stefan Walther Vice-President Foundation German Albert Schweitzer Center ("Stiftung Deutsches Albert-Schweitzer-Zentrum")

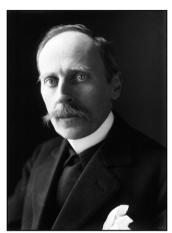


What is usually considered maturity in a person is really resigned reasonableness. It is acquired by adopting others as models and by abandoning one after another the thoughts and convictions that were dear to us in our youth. We believed in the good; we no longer do so. We were zealous for justice; we are so no longer. We had faith in the power of kindness and peaceableness; we have it no longer. We could be filled with enthusiasm; we can no longer be. In order to navigate more safely through the dangers and storms of life, we lightened our boat. We threw overboard goods that we thought were dispensable; but it was our food and water that we got rid of. Now we travel more lightly, but we are starving.

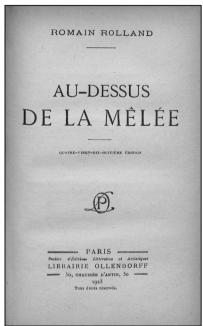


What is nationalism? It is an ignoble patriotism, exaggerated till it has lost all meaning, which bears the same relation to the noble and healthy kind as the fixed idea of an imbecile does to normal conviction. ...

The cult of patriotism as such is to be considered as barbarism; it does, indeed, announce itself to be such by the purposeless wars which it necessarily brings in its train.



Romain Rolland (1915)



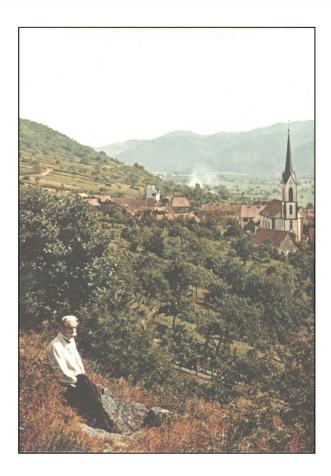
To Romain Rolland

Lambarene, 1915

Dear Friend,

... and your ideas are among the few comforting ones in these dismal times. Given what you know about me, you must sense how often our minds meet. And I must tell you how greatly I admire you for your courage in fighting against the vulgarity to which the minds of the fanaticized masses have sunk in our time. Please do not respond to this little greeting from the jungle. You must have a lot of writing to do. But if you should respond, then please bear in mind that others may read the letter before it reaches me. Good-bye. ... For how long? And be courageous in waging the struggle in which I join you with all my heart, although in my present condition I am unable to assist you.

From the bottom of my heart,
Albert Schweitzer



I had an experience during my seventh or eighth year which made a deep impression on me. Heinrich Bräsch and I made ourselves rubber band slingshots with which we could shoot small pebbles. One spring Sunday during Lent he said to me, "Come on, let's go up the Rebberg and shoot birds."

I hated this idea, but I did not contradict him for fear he might laugh at me. We approached a leafless tree in which birds, apparently unafraid of us, were singing sweetly in the morning air. Crouching like an Indian hunter, my friend put a pebble in his slingshot and took aim. Obeying his look of command, I did the same with terrible pangs of conscience and vowing to myself to miss.

At that very moment the church bells began to ring out into the sunshine, mingling their chimes with the song of birds. It was the warning bell, half an hour before the main bell ringing.

For me, it was a voice from Heaven. I put the slingshot aside, shooed the birds away so that they were safe from my friend, and ran home.

Ever since then, when the bells of Passiontide ring out into the sunshine and the naked trees, I remember, deeply moved and grateful, how on that day they rang into my heart the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." ...

The way in which the commandment not to kill and torture worked on me is the great experience of my childhood and youth. Next to it, all others pale.

In China we have two philosophical schools: ... of Laozi (born 604 BC) and ... of Kongzi (552-479 BC).

Associated with the school of Laozi is Chuang Tzu (4th century BC); ... with that of Kongzi is Mengzi (372-289 BC).

In the 5th century BC, Mozi proclaims an ethics of universal love, which is closely related to the Christian ethics.

Laozi is the first representative of the concept of pacifism.



Laozi

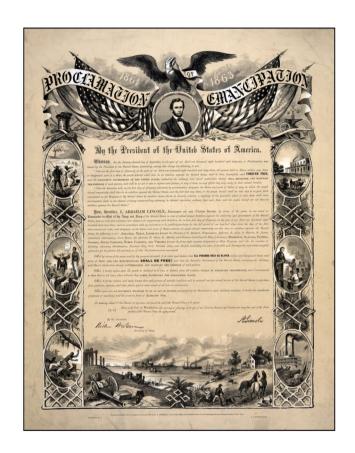
To Lincoln Memorial University, U.S.A.

Lambarene, 15 November 1937

For this university, which was founded at the personal request of Abraham Lincoln, I wish that the spirit of that great and noble man may inspire the students and arouse their enthusiasm for the ideal of the truest and deepest humanity.

It is only by reviving the spirit of humanity as embodied in Lincoln that mankind can find its way out of its present material and spiritual predicament.

Even as a boy I was deeply impressed by Lincoln's personality.





To the Congress of Japanese Physicians [April 1959]

... It is my deep conviction that we doctors who strive to preserve life are called upon in a special way to educate mankind to have reverence for life and thereby achieve a higher spiritual and ethical stance, which will enable people to grasp and solve the difficult problems of our era.



In an atomic war there would be neither conqueror nor vanquished.

During such a bombardment both sides would suffer the same fate.

A continuous destruction would take place and no armistice or peace proposals could bring it to an end.

When people deal with atomic weapons, no one can say to the other, "Now the arms must decide"; but only, "Now we want to commit suicide together, destroying each other mutually ..."



... Through my written speeches and my letters I have joined the fight against test explosions of atomic and nuclear arms and the struggle for the elimination of these weapons. Through letters I am trying to make known and effective the major argument that atomic and nuclear weapons violate international law. It is only when this elementary and irrefutable argument occupies and determines public opinion throughout the world that it will have the power to bring about the abolition of atomic and nuclear arms, thereby preventing the destruction of mankind. Until then we will be hovering on the verge of annihilation, which leading politicians incomprehensibly view and laud as wonderful behavior ...

What humanity needs most at present (1)

... If we are not to perish, a permanent state of peace must be created. Our efforts must aim at bringing a peace that is no longer menaced by war. ...

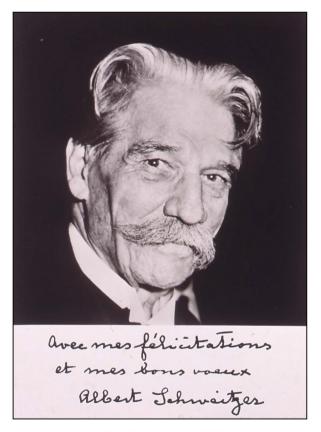
Through Christianity, the idea of a kingdom of peace has been known to mankind for centuries. People did not believe they could make it come true. It was viewed as something purely religious that could not be applied to reality, but actually it is something that should and must be realized.

This insight is urged upon us by the times in which we live. If mankind is not to perish, then we have no choice but to place our hope in the spirit, which is different from the spirit of the world.

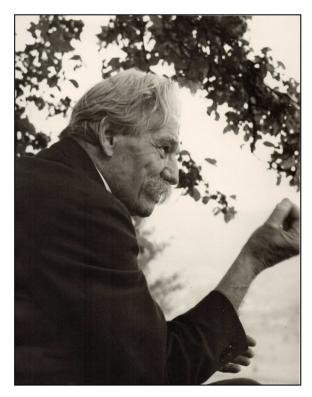
... This spirit cannot be proclaimed in the world or put an end to war if it does not first settle within us and begin its work.

Anyone who seriously begins to obey that spirit will experience something of Jesus' blessing of the peacemakers. Granted, in his striving to serve peace, he will not be successful in everything. He will be misunderstood and smirked at. He may even encounter distrust as if he had ulterior motives for his peace efforts. . . .

Anyone who earnestly does so will not be disappointed; instead, he will partake of a joy he did not know.



Albert Schweitzer (1955)



Albert Schweitzer (Gunsbach, 1957)

What humanity needs most at present (2)

... We have no idea how many people will follow the call of our time to quietly pave the way for peace, but one thing is certain: We have to make a start toward what has to happen.

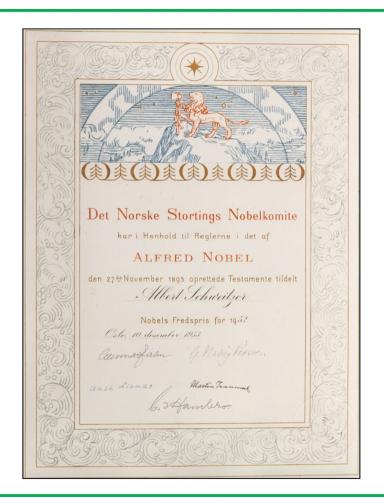
If at first it is only a few in every place and a few thousand in every nation, then this is already an announcement of the spirit of peace, a proclamation that cannot remain hidden.

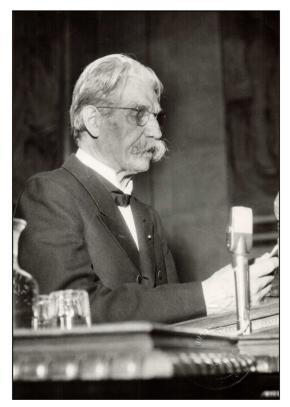
We must never give up our faith in the spirit or the hope we pin on it.

The yearning for peace is great in the hearts of mankind today. For them, a revelation of the spirit of peace will be an experience with unforeseeable consequences. It is only through the miracle of awakening the spirit of peace in mankind that it can be kept from perishing.

May it be granted to us that the efforts toward avoiding war are successful and that in the time that is thereby given us we can make the spirit of peace so powerful that it will start to become the Kingdom of God in ourselves and in the world.

Albert Schweitzer Lambarene, 1 March 1952





Dr. Albert Schweitzer Oslo, 4 November 1954

The first man who had the courage to advance purely ethical arguments against war, and to call for those superior standards to which the will-to-good can give rise, was Erasmus of Rotterdam [1469-1536], in his *Querela Pacis* [The Complaint of Peace], published in 1517.

In this he describes the plight of Peace in her search for an audience.



Otto Hahn, Werner Heisenberg and Albert Schweitzer, Lindau, June/July 1954

He who uses atomic weapons to defend freedom would become subject to a similar fate.

Those who conduct an atomic war for such freedom will die, or end their lives miserably. Instead of freedom they will find destruction.



But if in our time we renounce nuclear arms, we shall have taken the first step on the way to the distant goal of the end to all wars.

If we do not do this, we remain on the road that leads in the near future to atomic war and misery.



Pablo Casals on 24 October 1958, the United Nations Day, at the UN General Assembly in New York

To Pablo Casals, Prades

Lambarene, 3 October 1958

Dear Friend,

[...] how impressed I am by your plan to play for the U.N. [General] Assembly on October 24, to give a speech attacking the nuclear arms race, and on that day to ask orchestras throughout the world to perform the "Hymn to Joy" with the chorus from Beethoven's Ninth. You are right to move the fight against [atomic] weapons to an artistic level. It will have an impact on people if a maestro like you deals with this issue, and it will create grand and noble publicity for this cause! But first you will have to deal with the censors who will want to make you give up the best passages in your speech. ... Be a skillful David against this Goliath.

You cannot imagine how encouraging it is for me to have you join us in our campaign. I have the prosaic task of organizing it. We have been highly successful in getting the United States and England to stop their atomic testing. This happened sooner than I expected. The governments realized that in the long run they could not resist the public opinion that has been developing against the continuation of these disastrous tests.

Now we have to take up the struggle for the abolition of all atomic and nuclear weapons. If we are to succeed, we have to influence public opinion throughout the world...

No government can deny that these weapons violate international law ... and international law cannot be swept aside! ...

Because of what we are currently experiencing, people are inspired to accept the idea of the prohibition of atomic weapons. Now a dispute over a tiny island off the coast of China could actually "degenerate into an atomic war at any moment."

An inconceivable madness has become reality, and it will be the same in all future struggles if we fail to get rid of those weapons.

With kind regards, to you and all of your family, your godfather Albert Schweitzer



Dr. Albert Schweitzer with the cellist Pablo Casals Gunsbach, 1955

To Bertrand Russell, London

Lambarene

18 May 1962

The world needs unyielding thinkers to make it aware of its possible annihilation by atomic weapons. Einstein was the first thinker in this line. He knew that others would continue this resistance after him.

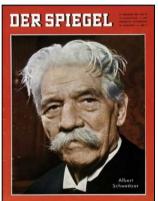
As one of the most important of these unyielding people, you, dear friend, have launched the struggle. You have the power to encourage the population to follow the path that you have smoothed.

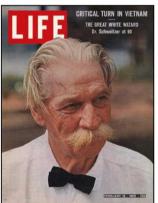
You have brought the anti-nuclear struggle in England further than it has advanced in any other country. You may be certain that this is important for any country where resistance is being waged against these weapons.

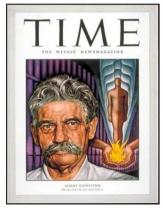


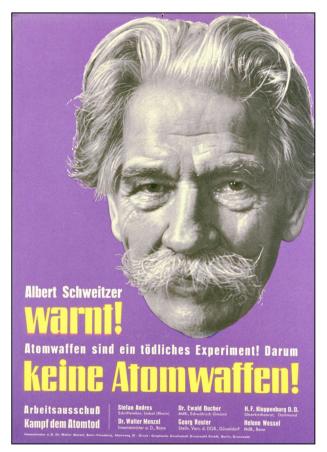
Bertrand Russell and Albert Schweitzer, London, 1955











In der Werzengung der Ebofunkt von dem Leben bis sil gelangt withent sit in der Einsamheit des Unwalds meine But " Kulling und EDuli" salait om 1914 lis 1917. Damah ging mir auf dan Kultur, die malue Kultur, etwas geistiger und Elhische ist, nämlich die stelste und Tiefste Nemschlichheit. zier leben nach in der remmansablishkeit, weil wis nuch in Betracht ziehen. Kriege mit elimnette zu führen, up sie sehen in den letter maderner Kriegen in der nommensellichhait versanden, ohnes um auszuge stehen, show bennest zu warden. Es hamdelt auch um das Galislesal des Mensalhait. Und es missen mile sein die die Einsühl aufinn gen, um was en in umen geit geliter .was er legriffen het, muss er bekennen und verhinsdagenallet Ilmeife

To Linus Pauling

Lambarene, 25 June 1962

Dear friend,

... Between us: We who fight nuclear weapons do not act as accusers, but as judges. We judge in the name of reason and humanity, and want to create a public opinion that judges like us and ultimately should force the abolition of nuclear weapons ...

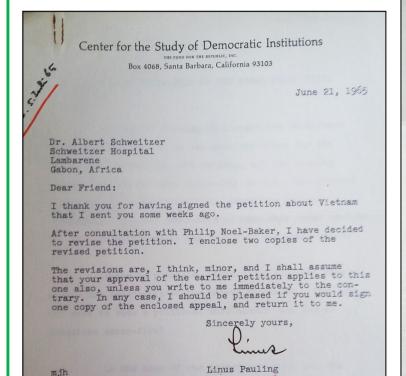
Earlier than I thought, my prophecy has been fulfilled that nuclear weapons armament would bring economic ruin to the people ...

We are experiencing that with us the facts raise their voices against nuclear weapons. We could be ignored, but the facts cannot be ignored ...

Kind regards to you and your wife. Cordially, your Albert Schweitzer



Albert Schweitzer with Ava and Linus Pauling Lambaréné, 15 July 1959



Enc.

AN APPEAL BY RECIPIENTS OF THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

The war in Vietnam challenges the conscience of the world. None of us can read day after day the reports of the killing, the maiming, and the burning without calling for this inhumanity to end. Our present object is not to apportion blame among the groups of combatants. The one imperative is that this crime against all that is civilized in the family of man shall cease.

Peace is possible. Both sides say that they accept the essentials of the Geneva Agreement. Then why not meet to seek a political settlement? Why not an immediate cease-fire?

In the name of our common humanity, we, the undersigned recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, appeal to all the Governments and parties concerned to take immediate action to achieve a cease-fire and a negotiated settlement of this tragic conflict.

Please return one copy, signed, by airmail to Linus Pauling, P. O. Box 4068, Santa Barbara, California, U. S. A.

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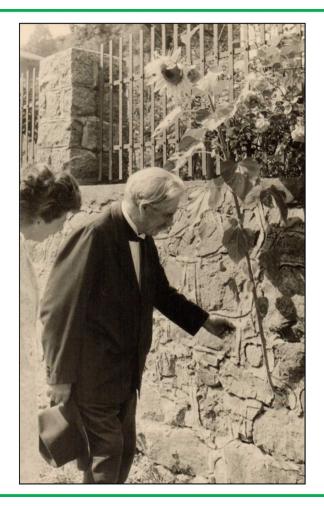
Signed:
Norman Angell
Boyd Orr
Albert Schweitzer†
Georges Dominique Pire

Philip Noel-Baker A. J. Luthuli Linus Pauling Martin Luther King, Jr.



Angel row: from L. to R. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Dr. Albert Schweitzert, Sir Angell. Middle vow: Dr. Linus Pauling, Philip Noel-Baker. Bottom row: Chief uthuli, Father Georges Dominique Fire, Lord Boyd Orr. Reprints of this Appeal are available from the Minority of One, P.O. Box 544, Passaic, N.J. 07056 at 2c per copy.

- 29 -



To Nikos Kazantzakis

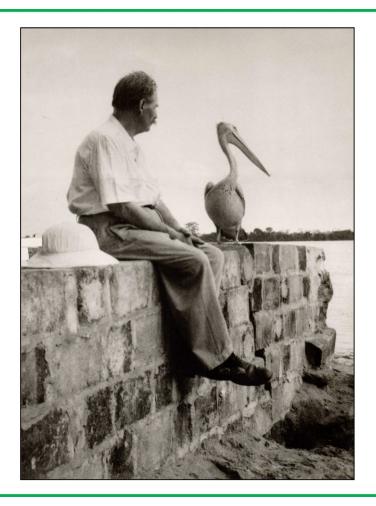
29 June 1955

Yes, around 1894, during my student days, I was absolutely shaken when I got to know St. Francis. Since childhood I had taken the same road and reached the same spirit, but I have never been able to speak or write about him and me together.

I never refer to him. I am very reluctant to do so. He is a famous saint, I am an ordinary man. He possessed an intimacy of speech that is his alone. None of us should try to imitate that speech; no one should adopt it for himself. It was *granted only to him. The rest of us must speak in ordinary words* ...



Dr. Albert Schweitzer with Nikos Kazantzakis, Greek Nobel Laureate in Literature (1955)



To Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, New Delhi
Lambarene 29 November 1964

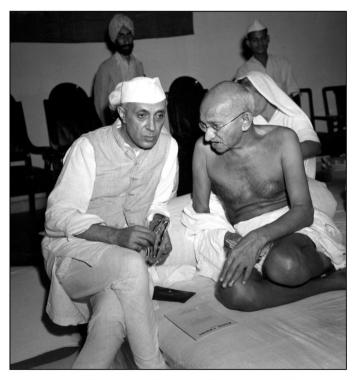
Dear Mr. Prime Minister.

[...] Thank you for being interested in me because my ideas are known to India and are consistent with Indian ideas.

I did not know Gandhi personally, but I maintained contact with him through a mutual British acquaintance. Back then I was spending some time in Lausanne, Switzerland. When Nehru was released, he visited me in Lausanne for a while. ... –

So those were my Indian friends. Little by little they were joined by others because I was seriously studying Indian thought, to which I felt drawn. –

The main thing is that India and the rest of the world are getting closer and closer to a deep ethical civilization, bringing an era in which no more wars will be fought and no more nuclear arms will be built. An entirely different spirit must come into the world and illuminate human beings. It is the living spirit of reverence for life which imbued the great Indian thinkers.



Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi Bombay, All India Congress, July 1946

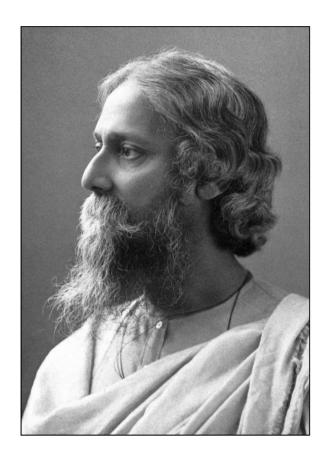
To the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, India

Lambarene 10 February 1965

... I studied Indian philosophy early on, when I was attending the University of Strasbourg, Alsace, even though no course was being given on that subject. But then, around 1900, Europe started getting acquainted with Indian thought. Rabindranath Tagore became known as the great living Indian thinker. When I grew conversant with his teachings, they made a deep impact on me. ...

By then I was teaching at the University of Strasbourg. Focusing as I did on the problem of ethics, I reached the conclusion that Indian ethics is correct in demanding kindness and mercy not only toward human beings but toward all living creatures. Now the world is gradually realizing that compassion for living creatures is part of true ethics.

I regret that I have never found time to visit India. In 1913 I founded my hospital in Africa, so there was no question of my traveling to India. But through letters and through one of my British friends I became familiar with Indian thinkers, especially Gandhi, who was the same age as I. ...

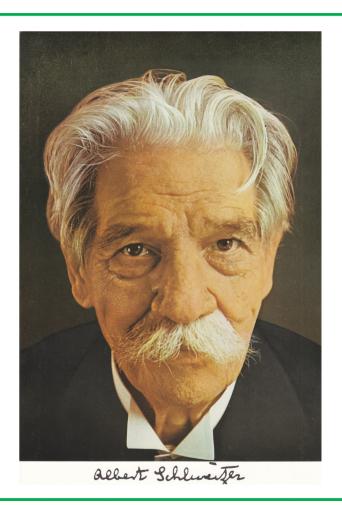


... Dr. Schweitzer has devoted a life time to the pursuit of universals that know no national or continental limits: knowledge, truth, beauty, and the spirit of compassion for fellow man. ...

Dr. Schweitzer has shown by his example how great a force for good a single human being can be. There could be no greater fulfillment of the role of "world citizen."



Adlai Stevenson
(United States Ambassador to the United Nations)
with Albert Schweitzer

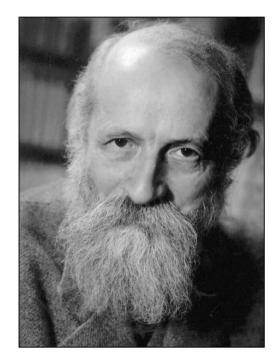


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Dear Albert Schweitzer -

Since my early years, it has been a strengthening knowledge for me, and in later years, a comforting knowledge, that you exist in the world. It was always the helpers, who I have been concerned with, and you have been a great helper in manifold ways all the time. From real help provided, the Hasidim say, angels are born. May you, dear Albert Schweitzer, be granted the air again and again to be moved by a gentle stroke of wings.

Your Martin Buber



Martin Buber

My Address to the People

(Albert Schweitzer, Mein Wort an die Menschen, 1964)

I summon mankind to the ethics of reverence for life. This ethic makes no distinction between more valuable and less valuable, higher and lower life. It rejects such a distinction. For the wish to assume universally valid distinctions of worth between living beings amounts ultimately only to this, that we judge their worth according to whether for our feeling they are more or less closely related to us humans. But this is a completely subjective yardstick. For who of us knows what significance the other living being has in itself and in the universe? The result of this distinction is the view that there is worthless life, whose annihilation or inhibition is permitted. Thus, depending on the circumstances, by worthless life we understand either insects or primitive nations.

The most immediate fact in the consciousness of man is this: "I am life that wants to live, in the midst of life that wants to live". This universal affirmation of life is an act of the spirit in which man ceases to live blindly but rather begins to dedicate himself to his own life with reverence in order to give it its true worth. The man who has become thoughtful in this manner experiences at the same time the necessity of offering to every will to live the same reverence for life that he offers to his own. Good, then, for him means to preserve and promote life, raise life capable of developing to its highest worth. Evil, for him, means harming or destroying life capable of developing in its development. This is the absolute fundamental principle necessary for ethical thinking. Through the ethics of reverence for life we enter into a spiritual relation with this world.

In my own life I have always tried to remain youthful in my thinking and feeling, and I have again and again struggled with the facts and with my practical experience for faith in the good and the true. In this age, when violence hides behind lies and rules the world ominously as never before, I nevertheless remain convinced that truth, peaceableness and love, meekness and kindness, are the power that passes all power. The world will become theirs, if only enough men think and live with sufficient purity and constancy, the thoughts of truth and love, meekness and peaceableness.

Every usual power in this world produces a limit for itself, for it creates an opposite power that sooner or later becomes equal or superior to it. Kindness, on the other hand, acts simply and persistently. It creates no tensions through which it neutralizes itself, but relaxes existing tensions, it removes suspicion and misunderstandings. By awakening kindness, it gains new strength. For this reason, it is the most practical and most effective force. Whatever by way of kindness a man sends out into the world affects people's hearts and thoughts. It is our stupid fault that we do not dare to make an earnest attempt at kindness. We always want the great load to move without making use of the lever that can multiply our strength a hundredfold. There is an immeasurably deep truth in the saying of Jesus: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth".

Reverence for life tells us to bring aid to the nations all over the world which are in need.

Almost everywhere the fight against the diseases by which these nations are beset has started too late.

When all is said and done, whatever good we do for the people of the former colonies is not charity, it is our atonement for the suffering which white people have inflicted on them from the very day

when our ships first found the way to their shores. We must reach the point when white and coloured will meet in the ethical spirit. Only then will genuine understanding be possible. To work for the creation of this spirit means to pursue a policy with a future.

Whoever has been saved from dire distress or disease must himself lend a hand, so that those who are in distress today may obtain a helper as he did. This is the brotherhood of those marked by pain. They are responsible for the human and medical humanitarian work in all nations. This work ought to be carried out from the gifts of gratitude. I want to believe that we shall find enough people moved by our entreaties to give thank-offerings for those who are now in distress.

The distress, however, in which we live to this day is the peril that threatens peace. At this time we have the choice between two risks. The one consists in continuing the senseless armament race in atomic weapons, and in the implied danger of an atomic war; the other in the renouncing of atomic weapons, and in the hope that America, the Soviet Union and the nations connected with them will manage to live side by side in compatibility and peace. The first risk holds no possibility of a fruitful future. The second does. We must risk the second.

The theory that peace can be preserved through deterring the opponent by atomic armament is out of the question for our time with its intensified danger of war. The goal toward which, from now on for all future, our eyes must be directed is that questions which divide the nations can no longer be settled by war. The settlement must be found by peaceful means.

I profess the conviction that we shall solve the problem of peace only when we reject war on ethical grounds, namely, because it makes us guilty of inhumanity. I am certain that in our time the mind has the power to create an ethical spirit. Therefore I proclaim this truth in the hope that it will not be put aside as a truth that looks good in words but does not count in reality.

May those who hold in their hands the fortunes of the nations be concerned to avoid everything that might make the situation in which we are, still more difficult and dangerous.

May they take to heart the splendid word of the apostle Paul: If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. This holds good not only for individuals, but also for nations. May they, to the utmost limits of possibility, endeavor to preserve peace with one another so that time may be given to the spirit of humanity and of reverence for all life to grow in strength and effectiveness.

My Last Message to Mankind

by Albert Schweitzer

I summon mankind to the ethics of reverence for idie. This ethic makes no distinction between more valuable and less valuable, higher and lower life. It rejects such a distinction. For the wish to assume universally valid distinctions of worth between living beings amounts ultimately only to this, that we judge their worth according to whether for our feeling they are more or less closely related to us humans. But his is a completely subjective yardstick. For who of us knows what significance the other living being has in itself and in the universe? The result of this distinction is the view that there is worthless life, whose annihilation or inhibition is permitted. Thus, depending on the circumstances, by worthless life we understand either insects or primitive nations.

Reverence for Life

The most immediate fact in the consciousness of man is this: "I am life that wants to live, in the midst of life that wants to live." This universal affirmation of life is an act of the spirit in which man ceases to live blindly but rather begins to dedicate himself to his own life with reverence in order to give it its true worth. The man who has become thoughtful in this manner experiences at the same time the necessity of offering to every will to live the same reverence for life that he offers to his own. Good, then, for him means to preserve and promote life, raise life capable of developing to its highest worth. Evil, for him, means harming experience that principle necessary for ethical thinking. Through the ethics of reverence for life we enter into a spiritual relation with this world.

In my own life I have always tried to remain youthful in my thinking and feeling, and I have again and again struggled with the facts and with my practical experience for faith in the good and the true. In this age, when violence hides behind lies and rules the world ominously as never before, I nevertheless remain convinced that truth, peaceableness and love meckness and kindness, are the power that passes all power. The world will become theirs, if only enough men think and live with sufficient purity and constancy, the thoughts of truth and love, meekness and peaceableness.

Kindness Relaxes Tensions

Every usual power in this world produces a limit for itself, for it creates an opposite power that soon or later becomes equal or superior to it. Kindness, on the other hand, acts simply and persistently. It creates no tensions through which it neutralises itself, but relaxes existing tensions, it removes suspicion and misunderstandings. By awakening kindness, it gains new strength. For this reason, it is the most practical and most effective force. Whatever by way of kindness a man sends out into the world affects people's hearts and thoughts. It is our stupid fault that we do not dare to make an earnest attempt at kindness. We always want the great load to move without making use of the lever that can multiply our strength a hundredfold. There is an immeasurably deep truth in the saying of Jesus: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth".

Atonement for Inflicted Suffering

Reverence for life tells us to bring aid to the nations all over the world which are in need. Almost everywhere the fight against the diseases by which these nations are beset has started too late. When all is said and done, whatever good we do for the people of the former colonies is not charity, it is our atomement for the suffering which white people have inflicted on them from the very day when our ships first found the way to their shores. We must reach the point when white and coloured will meet in the ethical spirit. Only then will genuine understanding be possible. To work for the creation of this spirit means to pursue a policy with a future.

Whoever has been saved from dire distress or disease must himself lend a hand, so that those who are in distress today may obtain a helper as he did. This is the brotherhood of those marked by pain. They are responsible for the human and medical humanitarian work in all nations. This work ought to be carried out from the gifts of gratitude. I want to believe that we shall find enough people moved by our entreaties to give thank-offerings for those who are now in

Choice Between Two Risks

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"I have arrived at the conviction of the reverence for life while writing my book in the loneliness of the jungle between 1914 and 1917. It was then that I realized that culture, true culture, is something spiritual and ethical, namely the noblest and deepest humanity. We still live in inhumanity because we are still contemplating to wage wars with nuclear weapons, as we sank into inhumanity in the last modern wars, without admitting it to us, without being aware of it. It is about the fate of humanity.

And there must be many who are able to have the insight into what our time is about. Anyone who has understood this, must confess and proclaim this."

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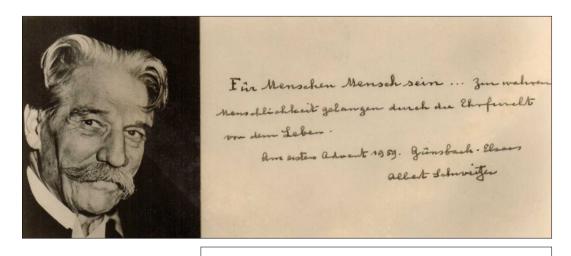
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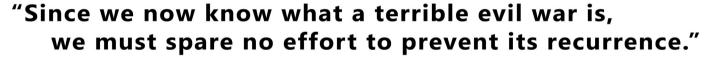
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To be human to human beings ...
to attain true humanity through reverence for life.
On the first advent 1959. Gunsbach - Alsace
Albert Schweitzer



Dr. Albert Schweitzer