

Balvikas Worksheet

Lessons in Human Values: Ahimsa (Non-violence)

Help Ever, Hurt Never - Baba



Quotes from Gandhi

Literally speaking, ahimsa means non-violence. But to me it has much higher, infinitely higher meaning. It means that you may not offend anybody; you may not harbour uncharitable thought, even in connection with those who consider your enemies. To one who follows this doctrine, there are no enemies. A man who believes in the efficacy of this doctrine finds in the ultimate stage, when he is about to reach the goal, the whole world at his feet. If you express your love- Ahimsa-in such a manner that it impresses itself indelibly upon your so called enemy, he must return that love.

This doctrine tells us that we may guard the honour of those under our charge by delivering our own lives into the hands of the man who would commit the sacrilege. And that requires far greater courage than delivering of blows.

My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes.

Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all - children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.

Write here what you think are the key characteristics of ahimsa

Cowardice and Love

The British once ruled India. In order to maintain their rule they carried out many cruel practices on Indians. The British enforced their rule through actions such as a massacre of Indians, numerous beatings with clubs at the salt works, numerous arrests of Indians whether they were guilty of a crime or not and general interruptions of Indian events. Once Gandhiji led a march against the British in protest of their rule. The British however wanted to put a stop to this. They marched against Gandhiji and his followers. Some people became frightened at the site of horses galloping towards them. Gandhiji remained calm. Anybody else might have suggested that either they fight the British using violence or run away like cowards. Gandhi however knew better. He knew that the British were people too and it would be wrong to harm them. At the same time he would not be a coward and run away. They had come to protest against the rule of the British government, they should do their duty and continue and not run away like cowards. Instead Gandhi knew that horses would not trample over still bodies lying down, And so, even though they were scared of the horses that were hurtling towards them at great speed the people lay down on the floor. On and on the horses ran. They seemed like they would never stop. But the people lay still on the ground. The horses were now approaching and came closer and closer. Until, they stopped. Sure enough the horses stopped. The British were dismayed at the display of courage and had to retreat. This story shows that ahimsa is about doing everything you can to avoid violence, but will never mean that you have to become a coward in the face of trouble.

What is the key lesson to be learnt from this story?



Jainism Ahimsa

Jivadaya (Respect for all Living Forms) and Ahimsa (non-violence) are the fundamental principles of Jainism.

Jainism, a religion and philosophy of India, is one of the most ancient religions of India and of the world. The Jain observe non-violence (Ahimsa) to all forms of life regardless of their shape or form. The Jain strive to be non-violent in thought, action, and deed, taking care not to directly or indirectly harm any living beings.

Vegetarianism, compassion and respect for all living creatures are at the heart of the Jain way of life.

Imagine the world if everyone put such thoughtfulness into their daily lives.

In Shree Chitrabhanu's words, "the universe is not for man alone. It is a field of evolution for all of life's forms. Jainism teaches that life is life, not only in people of all lands, colours, and beliefs, but is of the same sacred quality in all creatures, right down to the tiny ant and humble worm. Consciousness exists in everything which grows, regardless of the size of its form. Though different forms are not the same in mental capacity and sensory apparatus, the life force is equally worthy in all."

Take some notes from what your teacher is going to tell you about who ahimsa applies to.