

Great Book Discussion Questions – *All Men Are Brothers*

I recently referred to *All Mean Are Brothers* as “philosophy light.” In saying this, I didn’t mean that the book was trivial or “lightweight,” but that it was accessible. Mortimer Adler, in his book *How to Read a Book*, commented that philosophy should be the easiest type of book to read, since it comments on something common to everyone: daily life, and how to live it. While Adler’s comments have merit, he may be understating the effort required to read many philosophical works. Gandhi’s writing, however, is both easy to understand as well as being concerned with daily life.

1. Gandhi maintains that each person can approach truth, what he refers to as God, through their own religion and customs. This seems to be contrary to the teachings of many religions, which maintain that their way is the only way to approach God. What do you make of this seeming contradiction between the two approaches towards God?
2. Gandhi maintains that self discipline is necessary to achieve a good life and non-violence in particular. How does this call for self discipline accord with modern society’s belief that “anything goes?” Is self discipline necessary for the achievement of a well led life?
3. Gandhi maintains that morality is just as necessary in business transactions, as in everyday life. Without morality, Gandhi believes that unbridled capitalism is evil. Given the current worldwide economic malaise, caused as some believe, by greed and corruption is Gandhi’s message about morality in business more relevant?
4. Throughout his life, Gandhi downplayed his own importance. Yet many people accused him of being arrogant, self serving, and wanting to be in the limelight. After reading the book, do you believe that Gandhi was a humble man, or an arrogant one? Please give citations from the text to support your position.

5. Gandhi maintains that women can help to rid the world of Himsa, or violence. How does he think that women can do this? Do you believe that Gandhi is correct in his belief in the power of woman to practice Ahimsa?
6. The senses are at once important to Gandhi (witness his belief in the power of learning through the sense), and at the same time, he seeks to master the senses. Are these views inconsistent? If so, why? If not, why not?
7. Gandhi said that if you injure a single man, you injure the whole world. What does he mean by this?