

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), widely known as the ‘great prophet of satyagraha and apostle of non-violence’ and as the architect of the Indian independence movement, was much more than a non-violent activist and political leader. Michael Bergunder points to "strong textual evidence to suggest that M. K. Gandhi's notion of Hinduism, his specific view of Christianity, and his general belief that all religions refer to the same truth were shaped by esotericism, namely the Theosophical Society and the Esoteric Christian Union."

Gandhi met Madame Blavatsky and Annie Besant in November 1889 in the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society. He became an associate member of the society in 1891. He later stated that “Theosophy is the teaching of Madame Blavatsky. It is Hinduism at its best. Theosophy is the Brotherhood of Man.”

Gandhi was also deeply influenced by the thought of Anna Kingsford and Edward Maitland. He was launching himself as an agent of the Esoteric Christian Union, organized by Maitland, in South Africa in 1894. It is particularly interesting that Gandhi stated, "to me there is little difference between Theosophy and Esoteric Christianity." Pyarelal Nayar, Gandhi's secretary, described that Esoteric Christianity had a "specific and lasting influence" on Gandhi's thought.

Gandhi amalgamated Esotericism and Christianity with Hindu and Jain thought. He used Hindu terms to encourage mass mobilization and to organize mass movement.