

M.K. GANDHI *THE CALL OF THE INNER VOICE*

For me the voice of God, of Conscience, of Truth, or the Inner Voice or ‘the still small Voice’ mean one and the same thing. I saw no form. I have never tried, for I have always believed God to be without form . . .

. . . I was not dreaming at the time I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain that it was the Voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm . . .

Could I give any further evidence that it was truly the Voice that I heard and that it was not an echo of my own heated imagination? . . . I can offer no proof to the contrary.

. . . Realist things are only relatively so. For me the Voice was more real than my own existence. It has never failed me, and for that matter, anybody else.

And everyone who wills can hear the Voice. It is within everyone. But like everything else, it requires previous and definite preparation.

Excerpts from M.K. Gandhi, ‘All About the Fast’, *Harijan*, 8 July 1933

In Raghavan N Iyer, (Ed.) *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, pgs. 131-132

M.K. GANDHI *WHAT IS TRUTH?*

The word satya is derived from *sat*, which means that which is. *Satya* means a state of being. Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why *sat* or *satya* is the right name for God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth . . .

And where there is Truth, there also is knowledge which is true. Where there is no Truth, there can be no true knowledge. That is why the word *chit* or knowledge is associated with the name of God. And where there is true knowledge, there is always *ananda*, *bliss*. There sorrow has no place. And even as Truth is eternal, so is the bliss derived from it. Hence we know God as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, one who combines in Himself Truth, knowledge, and bliss.

Devotion to this Truth is the sole justification for our existence. All our activities should be centered in truth. Truth should be the very breath of our life. When once this stage in the pilgrim’s progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without effort and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it is impossible to observe any principles or rules in life . . .

. . . But how is one to realize this Truth, which may be likened to the philosopher’s stone or the cow of plenty? By *abhyasa*, single-minded devotion, and *vairagya*, indifference to all other interests in life—replies the *Bhagavad Gita*. Even so, what may appear as truth to one person will often appear as untruth to another person. But that need not worry the seeker. Where there is honest effort, it will be realized that what appear to be different truths are like the countless and apparently different leaves of the same tree. Does not God Himself appear to different Individuals in different aspects? Yet we know that He is one. But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing wrong in every man following Truth according to his lights. Indeed it is his duty to so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of anyone so following Truth, it will be automatically set right. For the quest of Truth involves *tapascharya*, self-suffering, sometimes even unto death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such selfless search for Truth, nobody can lose his bearings for long. Directly he takes to the wrong path he stumbles, and is thus redirected to the right path. Therefore the pursuit of Truth is true *bhakti*, devotion. Such *bhakti* is ‘a bargain in which one risks

one's very life.' It is the path that leads to God. There is no place in it for cowardice, no place for defeat. It is the talisman by which death itself becomes the portal to life eternal.

Excerpts from M.K. Gandhi's Letter to Narandas Gandhi, 'Satya—a State of Being', 22 July, 1930
In Raghavan N. Iyer. (Ed.), *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, pgs. 162-163

M.K. GANDHI *TRUTH IS GOD*

Seeing that the human mind works through innumerable media and that evolution of the human mind is not the same for all, it follows that what may be truth for one may be untruth for another and hence those who have made these experiments have come to the conclusion that there are certain conditions to making experiments. Just as for science there is an indispensable course common for all, even so it is true for persons who would make experiments in the spiritual realm—they must submit to certain conditions. And since everybody says it is his inner voice which speaks, you must listen to the voice, and you will then find out your limitations as you go along the path. Therefore, we have the belief based upon uninterrupted experience that those who would make diligent search after Truth—God—must go through these vows: the vow of truth—speaking and thinking of truth, the vow of *brahmacharya*, of non-violence, poverty and non-possession. If you do not take these five vows, you may not embark on the experiment. There are several other things which were prescribed, but I must not take you through all those. But those who have made these experiments know that it is not proper for everyone to claim to hear the voice of conscience and it is because we have at the present moment everybody claiming the right of conscience without going through any discipline whatsoever that there is so much untruth being delivered to a bewildered world. All therefore that I can in all humility present to you is that Truth is not to be found by anybody who has not got an abundant sense of humility. If would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero...

Speech at Meeting in Lausanne, 'Truth Is God', 8 December, 1931
Mahadeva Desai's Diary (MSS)
in Raghavan N. Iyer. (Ed.), *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1986, pgs. 166-167

RAGHAVAN N. IYER *ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE TRUTH: TRUTH MISPLACED*

Gandhi contended that evil is good or truth misplaced. This does not mean that (as Bentham might say) any motive which is evil, when under certain circumstances it leads to harmful actions, may be good in other circumstances when it inspires harmless actions. It is rather implied that every evil action is based on a mistaken belief (itself a perversion of a partial truth) or a failure to see things as they really are. The mind when swayed by desires becomes a deceiver, a distorting mirror, a tool for rationalizing selfish intentions. Satan speaks at times as the voice of God, untruth masquerades as truth. Satan is illusory in the last analysis, but we are deluded through our ignorance. This is the real difficulty, not the fact that in practice the truth we possess is only relative . . .

Raghavan N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, Oxford University Press and Concord Grove Press, Santa Barbara, California, 1983, p.159