

1. On God – Truth – Conscience (Inner Voice) - Nonviolence

“You have asked me why I consider that God is Truth. In my early childhood or youth, I was taught to repeat what in Hindu scriptures is one thousand names of God. Among the several little things one of the religious teachers my family had was a little pamphlet which contained these thousand names of God. But these thousand names of God were by no means an exhaustive list. We believe-and I think it is the truth-that God has as many names as there are creatures and, therefore, we also say that God is nameless and since God has many forms we also consider him formless, and since he speaks to me through many tongues we consider him to be speechless and so on. And so when I came to study Islam, I found that Islam too had many names, but I had not come to recognize God for my personal satisfaction as Truth. I would say for those who say God is love, God is love. But deep down in me I say God may be love, but God is Truth. If it is possible for the human tongue to give the fullest description of God, for myself I have come to the conclusion that God is Truth. But two years ago I went a step further and said Truth is God. You will see the fine distinction between the two statements: God is Truth and Truth is God. And that conclusion I came to after a continuous, relentless search after Truth which began so many years ago. I found that the nearest approach to Truth is through love. But I found also that love has many meanings, in the English language at least, and human love in the sense of passion becomes a degrading thing also. I found too that love in the sense of ahimsa and non-violence has only a limited number of votaries in the world. And as I made progress in my search, I made no dispute with "God is love". It is very difficult to understand "God is love" (because of a variety of meanings of love) but I never found a double meaning in connection with Truth and not even atheists have denied the necessity or power of Truth. Not only so. In their passion for discovering Truth, they have not hesitated even to deny the very existence of God-from their own point of view rightly. And it was because of their reasoning that I saw that I was not going to say "God is Truth", but "Truth is God". [...]

Add to this the great difficulty that millions have taken the name of God and have committed nameless atrocities in the name of God. Not that scientists do not very often commit cruelties in the name of Truth. I know today in the name of Truth and science inhuman cruelties are perpetrated on animals when men perform vivisection. To me it is a denial of God whether you recognize Him as Truth or by any other name. So I know that there are these difficulties in one's way no matter how you describe God. But human mind is a limited thing, and you have to labour under limitation when you think of a being or entity who is beyond the power of man to grasp. But we have another thing in Hindu philosophy, viz., God alone is and nothing else exists. Now the same truth you find emphasized and exemplified in the *kalama* of Islam. There you find it clearly stated - a Mussalman has to recite it at all his prayers - that God alone is and nothing else is and that is the same about Truth. And the name that Sanskrit has for Truth literally means that which is - *Sat*. For these and several other reasons that I can give you I have come to the conclusion that the definition "Truth is God" gives me the greatest satisfaction. And when you want to find Truth as God, the only inevitable means is love, non-violence - and since I believe that ultimately means and ends are convertible terms I should not hesitate to say that God is love.“

Q. What is Truth?

“A difficult question, but I have solved it for myself by saying that it is what the voice within tells one. How then, you ask, different people think of different and contrary truths? 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 you would swim on the bosom of the ocean of Truth, you must reduce yourself to a zero. Further than this I may not tonight go along this fascinating path.”

M. K. Gandhi: Speech at Meeting in Lausanne. December 8, 1931. In: The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Volume 48, page 404 ff.

https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/cwmg_volume_thumbview/NDg=#page/438/mode/2up

2. On the First World War (1914 – 1918)

“The last War, falsely called great, has taught you and humanity many a great lesson. Human nature during that War did not by any means shine at its best. No fraud, no lie, no deceit was considered to be too much in order to win the War. Foulest charges were flung by a set of partisans belonging to one nation against another and these were reciprocated with double vehemence. No cruelty was considered too great. Nothing was considered base or mean in order to compass the destruction of the enemy. Suddenly as in a flash the friends of yesterday became the enemy of today. No honour was safe, nothing was spared, and historians tell us that there never was so much blood spilled as during the last War. [...]

At this time there is a message of hope coming from India. India is trying to attain its liberty through non-violent and truthful means. She has been endeavouring to follow out these means during the last ten years. Tens of thousands have taken part in this movement. Those who have studied the movement have come to the conclusion that it is making a steady headway. I suggest to you that if India can give an ocular demonstration of the fact that India can win liberty without shedding a drop of blood, it would be a great lesson for the world. You have been trying to discover a moral equivalent for war. It is possible that the method that India has adopted is the exact equivalent for war. I know it is as yet too early to say anything with confidence.”

M. K. Gandhi: Speech at Meeting in Lausanne. December 8, 1931. In: The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Volume 48, page 409 f.

https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/cwmg_volume_thumbview/NDg=#page/442/mode/2up

3. On World Federation

“My democracy means every man is his own master. I have read sufficient history and I did not see such an experiment on so large a scale for the establishment of democracy by non-violence. Once you understand these things you will forget the differences between the Hindus and the Muslims. The resolution that is placed before you says we do not want to remain frogs in a well. We are aiming at a world federation! in which India would be a leading unit. It can come only through non-violence. Disarmament is only possible if you use the matchless weapon of non-violence. [...]

I want you to adopt non-violence as a matter of policy. With me it is a creed, but so far as you are concerned I want you to accept it as policy. As disciplined soldiers you must accept it in toto and stick to it when you join the struggle.”

M. K. Gandhi: Speech at All India Congress Committee Meeting. Bombay, August 7, 1942; The Hitavada, 9-8-1942; also The Bombay Chronicle, 8-8-1942. In: The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Volume 76, page 381.

https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/cwmg_volume_thumbview/NzY=#page/420/mode/2up

4. On Nonviolent India and World State

“If I can get freedom for India now through non-violent means, power of non-violence is firmly established, Empire idea dissolves and world State takes its place, in which all the States of the world are free and equal, no State has its military, there may be a world police to keep order in the absence of universal belief in non-violence.”

M. K. Gandhi: Letter to Maurice Frydman, Sevagram, July 28, 1942. In: The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Volume 76, page 341.

https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/cwmg_volume_thumbview/NzY=#page/380/mode/2up

5. On the Nonviolent Basis of a World Federation

Q. What kind of world organization would promote an enduring peace or preserve it?

“Only an organization based predominantly on truth and non-violence.”

Q. With the present imperfect condition of the world and human nature, what means would in your opinion promote peace?

“Nearest approach to the condition laid down in my answer to the previous question.”

Q. Would you have a world government?

“Yes. I claim to be a practical idealist. I believe in compromise so long as it does not involve the sacrifice of principles. I may not get a world government that I want just now but if it is a government that would just touch my ideal, I would accept it as a compromise. Therefore, although I am not enamoured of a world federation, I shall be prepared to accept it if it is built on an essentially non-violent basis.”

M. K. Gandhi: Interview to Ralph Coniston, before April 25, 1945; Mahatma Gandhi—The Last Phase, Vol. I, Book I, p. 116. In: The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. Volume 79, page 424

https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/cwmg_volume_thumbview/Nzk=#page/464/mode/2up