

Mohandas Gandhi: Devotion to Truth⁹

The word Satya (Truth) is derived from Sat, which means “being”. Nothing is or exists in reality except Truth. That is why Sat or Truth is perhaps the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God, than to say that God is Truth.

Devotion to this Truth gives us 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 state in the pilgrim’s progress is reached, all other rules of correct living will come without any effort, and obedience to them will be instinctive. But without Truth it would be impossible to observe any principles or rules in life.

Generally speaking, observation of the law of Truth is understood merely to mean that we must speak the truth. But we in the Ashram should understand the word Satya or Truth in a much wider sense. There should be Truth in thought, Truth in speech, and Truth in action.

But Truth is the right designation of God. Hence there is nothing in everyone following Truth according to their own lights. Indeed, it is their duty to do so. Then if there is a mistake on the part of anyone following Truth, it will automatically be set right. For the quest of Truth involves tapas – self suffering, sometimes even death. There can be no place in it for even a trace of self-interest. In such Selfless search for Truth nobody can lose their bearings for long. When they take the wrong path and stumble, they are redirected to the right path. Therefore the pursuit of Truth is true bhakti (devotion). It is the path that leads to God.

How beautiful it would be, if all of us, young and old, men and women, devoted ourselves wholly to the Truth in all that we might do in our waking hours, whether working, eating, drinking or playing, till dissolution of the body makes us one with Truth? God as Truth has been for me a treasure beyond price. May God be so to every one of us.

⁹ Truth by M.K. Gandhi, *Mahatma Ghandi Center*. At James Madison University, available at https://www.jmu.edu/gandhicerter/wm_library/gandhiana-truth.pdf (last visited Nov 8, 2022).