

## In the Light of Truth



Our recent times are characterized by a phenomenon due to which we may refer to it as a Post Truth Era. Not only are the differences between the real and unreal fewer, and less clear, but they are regarded as irrelevant. This seems to be yet another inevitable step downward in postmodernist thinking, and it deserves our attention and reflection as it seems to be yet another warning sign for what is yet to come. In a world so heavily bombarded by an overwhelming quantity of information and stimulation, with a constant increase in speed and movement, it seems almost natural to adopt an indifferent approach to what we read, hear or see; it is very easy to develop a general apathy towards the world around us, where real life tragedies are folded together with entertainment, and the boundary between fact and fiction disappears.

Truth is a familiar word to all. Yet it may be most elusive of all. We often use the word, but how little we know of it; what does truth really mean? What is truth?

If we refer to an absolute all-embracing truth, or the timeless omnipresent reality, we may never really get to know it. Instead we are only able to grasp glimpses of relative truths. Yet, there must be some correlation between what we refer to as relative and absolute for one who walks on a path towards a definite destiny. It may be a direct path towards the goal. Or it may be twisted and curved. But the general direction should be clear. In order to move on a path, one needs to leave one's current position, one's relative perspective. But it is also essential to know that one needs to move forward and upward, not backward nor downward. To pursue relative truths, which are not merely a result of intellectual debate, but extracted from reflection, experience and inner conviction, depends on the recognition of the existence of a larger objective truth. The pursuit of truth, or wisdom, is a fundamental quality of any real philosopher; it acts as an inner compass that enables a certain level of orientation. It fills the heart with the great joy of self-validation and of making great discoveries. Above all, it allows the seeker to become an integral part of a much greater life, which we may refer to as Nature in the broader sense of the word.

A world without truth; what does it mean? Or better said, what does it mean that the world does not accept truth as reality? Well, evidently we see it manifest around us rapidly. A world without truth is a world without direction, not upwards, nor downwards. With such a loss of direction can

there be any valid source of hope, or a possibility to confidently imagine the betterment of humanity? Without truth in our life, can we speak of ethics at all? Can there be any good or bad, any virtues? Can we speak of aesthetics and harmony without the base of an objective truth? Can there be any valid meaning at all?

In India, the ancient Upanishads continue to remind us: "Truth Alone Triumphs." Mahatma Gandhi resonates with this fundamental when he says, "Truth alone will endure, all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time." Can we utter the word *Sustainability* without referring to Reality as the underlying Truth?

And here we are...in a post truth world; confused and inclined to fall apart. A real direction is needed; a search for a higher perspective. It may not save us from making many mistakes. But if our search is sincere, we will have a good reason to learn and correct ourselves.

What does it mean to live in the light of truth, a relative truth? It means that it is necessary to recognize the relativity of what you perceive today. It shows you how little you know and how much more there is to know. One has to be humble in the light of truth. How can we presume that we know a definite fact, when we can see how relative our perceptions are? But, this is *already* a truth to behold! It is to find meaning in truth, because how can anything be really meaningful without it? What is the value of a wishful aim when reality stands? It is like molding sand palaces on the seashore, that the waves wash away, as if laughing at our attempt to create our own reality, a fantasy.

To pursue truth is to remain alert, by observing your own distortions, prejudices, assumptions, judgments, desires and rejections...anything that colors your vision from seeing things as they are, as clearly as you can. Such a pursuit leads you to know yourself, by removing layers of what you are not, the masks of false identities. The pursuit of truth is therefore a means of self-discovery, a necessary step towards self fulfillment and real confidence. It is to discern between the real and the unreal, imagination and fantasy, the good and bad, which expresses real intelligence, which is not at all synonymous with intellectuality. The pursuit of truth demands attention to what you say, and how you say it. It develops the inclination of being truthful, and with it, an inclination towards the Just and the Beautiful. And as has already been thought by great philosophers such as Plato, it is also the pursuit of Goodness, not only outside of us as an ideal of life, but also the need to Be Good.

We may discover only fractions of the total reality, reflections. We may only discover how little we really know. But in this smallest discovery lies real greatness, the ability to open our minds and hearts towards the world around us. We may grasp but only little truths, and remain ever ready to replace them with further discoveries. But we must follow what we already know today if we are sincere in our search. That is the base of our ethics today, and the source of a great joy. To be able to change and move on the upward path of consciousness is to rediscover what has already been learned by those we consider wise. It is to echo with life and the universe, and to feel that we are an integral part of it, as we have always been, although we know a mere fraction of what it is.

It is to walk, while becoming and realizing yourself. It is to live, beyond mere survival. We may



collect only very little truths on our path. But they can and should change us profoundly. Even knowing what we do not really know can direct our life. You may discover the purpose of life. Great! Then follow it. You may not know the purpose of life. Wonderful. Then what are you waiting for? Search for it! Am I going to vanish at the end of this life, with the end of my physical body? Are the numerous teachings about the immortality of the soul real? You don't know? The little truth is that between both possibilities lies a significant difference in the meaning of life. To live but only one life, without any continuation means what really? On the other hand, if I am an immortal soul, in one of its many incarnations, I am definitely not the one I recognize today. In order to live with deeper meaning, I must align myself with who I really am. It is not a matter of belief, but of realization and conviction, a discovery that demands from me a sincere effort in the pursuit of the real.

Real philosophy, an approach towards life, with a keen need to discover and follow truth in action, not just in words, seems to be the need of the hour. What is lacking today points exactly to what is needed. If untruth is depicted as darkness, what we need is light. The pursuit of truth is therefore to place ourselves under the light. Truth, as elusive as it may seem, is our precious compass. If we honor it, we shall always find our way back.

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