

Knowledge

Gandhian Philosophy in Short : By Mahatma Himself

I know the path. It is straight and narrow. It is like the edge of a sword. I rejoice to walk on it. I weep when I slip. God's word is: 'He who strives never perishes.' I have implicit faith in that promise. Though, therefore, from my weakness I fail a thousand times, I will not lose faith, but hope that I shall see the Light when the flesh has been brought under perfect subjection, as some day it must.

My soul refuses to be satisfied so long as it is a helpless witness of a single wrong or a single misery. But it is not possible for me, a weak, frail, miserable being, to mend every wrong or to hold myself free of blame for all the wrong I see.

The spirit in me pulls one way, the flesh in me pulls in the opposite direction. There is freedom from the action of these two forces, but that freedom is attainable only by slow and painful stages.

I cannot attain freedom by a mechanical refusal to act, but only by intelligent action in a detached manner. This struggle resolves itself into an incessant crucifixion of the flesh so that the spirit may become entirely free.

Search for Truth

I am but a seeker after Truth. I claim to have found a way to it. I claim to be making a ceaseless effort to find it. But I admit that I have not yet found it. To find Truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, i.e., to become perfect. I am painfully conscious of my imperfections, and therein lies all the strength I possess, because it is a rare thing for a man to know his own limitations.

If I was a perfect man, I own I should not feel the miseries of neighbors as I do. As a perfect man I should take note of them, prescribe a remedy, and compel adoption by the force of unchangeable Truth in me. But as yet I only see as through a glass darkly and, therefore, have to carry conviction by slow and laborious processes, and then, too, not always with success.

That being so, I would be less than human if, with all my knowledge of avoidable misery pervading the land and of the sight of mere skeletons under the very shadow of the Lord of the Universe, I did not feel with and for all the suffering but dumb millions of India.⁸⁶

Trust in God

I am in the world feeling my way to light 'amid the encircling gloom'. I often err and miscalculate... My trust is solely in God. And I trust men only because I trust God. If I had no God to rely upon, I should be like Timon, a hater of my species.

I will not be a traitor to God to please the whole world.⁸⁸

Whatever striking things I have done in life, I have not done prompted by reason but prompted by instinct, I would say, God.

I am a man of faith. My reliance is solely on God. One step is enough for me. The next step He will make clear to me when the time for it comes.

No Secrecy

I have no secret methods. I know no diplomacy save that of truth. I have no weapon but non-violence. I may be unconsciously led astray for a while, but not for all time.

My life has been an open book. I have no secrets and I encourage no secrets.

I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good-wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. I admit it is a painful climb, but the pain of it is a positive pleasure for me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next.

When I think of my littleness and my limitations on the one hand and of the expectations raised about me on the other, I become dazed for the moment, but I come to myself as soon as I realize that these expectations are a tribute not to me, a curious mixture of Jekyll and Hyde, but to the incarnation, however imperfect but comparatively great in me, of the two priceless qualities of truth and non-violence. I must, therefore, not shirk the responsibility of giving what aid I can to fellow-seekers after truth from the West.

Guidance

I claim to have no infallible guidance or inspiration. So far as my experience goes, the claim to infallibility on the part of a human being would be untenable, seeing that inspiration too can come only to one who is free from the action of opposites, and it will be difficult to judge on a given occasion whether the claim to freedom from pairs of opposites is justified. The claim to infallibility would thus always be a most dangerous claim to make. This, however, does not leave us without any guidance whatsoever. The sum-total of the experience of the world is available to us and would be for all time to come.

Moreover, there are not many fundamental truths, but there is only one fundamental truth which is Truth itself, otherwise known as Non-violence. Finite human being shall never know in its fullness Truth and love which is in itself infinite. But we do know enough for our guidance. We shall err, and sometimes grievously, in our application. But man is a self-governing being, and self-government necessarily includes the power as much to commit errors as to set them right as often as they are made.

I deny being a visionary. I do not accept the claim of saintliness. I am of the earth, earthly . . . I am prone to as many weakness as you are. But I have seen the world. I have lived in the world with my eyes open. I have gone through the most fiery ordeals that have fallen to the lot of man. I have gone through this discipline.

Self-sacrifice and Ahimsa

I am asking my countrymen in India to follow no other gospel than the gospel of self-sacrifice which precedes every battle. Whether you belong to the school of violence or non-violence, you will still have to go through the fire of sacrifice and of discipline.

I want to declare to the world, although I have forfeited the regard of many friends in the West – and I must bow my head low; but even for their friendship or love, I must not suppress the voice of conscience, – the prompting of my inner basic nature today. There is something within me impelling me to cry out my agony. I have known humanity. I have studied something of psychology. Such a man knows exactly what it is. I do not mind how you describe it. That voice within tells me, “You have to stand against the whole world although you may have to stand alone. You have to stare in the face the whole world although the world may look at you with blood-shot eyes. Do not fear. Trust the little voice residing within your heart.” It says: “Forsake friends, wife and all; but testify to that for which you have lived and for which you have to die.”

No Defeatism

Defeat cannot dishearten me. It can only chasten me I know that God will guide me. Truth is superior to man's wisdom.

I have never lost my optimism. In seemingly darkest hours hope has burnt bright within me. I cannot kill the hope myself. I must say I cannot give an ocular demonstration to justify the hope. But there is no defeat in me.

I do not want to foresee the future. I am concerned with taking care of the present. God has given me no control over the moment following...

Trust

It is true that I have often been let down. Many have deceived me and many have been found wanting. But I do not repent of my association with them. For I know how to non-co-operate, as I know how to co-operate. The most practical, the most dignified way of going on in the world is to take people at their word, when you have no positive reason to the contrary.

I believe in trusting. Trust begets trust. Suspicion is foetid and only stinks. He who trusts has never yet lost in the world.

A breach of promise shakes me to my root, especially when I am in any way connected with the author of the breach. And if it cost my life which, after all, at the age of seventy has no insurance value, I should most willingly give it in order to secure due performance of a sacred and solemn promise. To my knowledge, throughout my public and private career, I have never broken a promise.¹⁰⁴

My Leadership and Non Violence

They say I claim to understand human nature as no one else does. I believe I am certainly right, but if I do not believe in my rightness and my methods, I would be unfit to be at the helm of affairs.

As for my leadership, if I have it, it has not come for any seeking, it is a fruit of faithful service. A man can as little discard such leadership as he can the color of his skin. And since I have become an integral part of the nation, it has to keep me with all my faults and shortcomings, of some of which I am painfully conscious and of many others of which candid critics, thanks be to them, never fail to remind me.

It is a bad carpenter who quarrels with his tools. It is a bad general who blames his men for faulty workmanship. I know I am not a bad general. I have wisdom enough to know my limitations. God will give me strength enough to declare my bankruptcy if such is to be my lot. He will perhaps take me away when I am no longer wanted for the work which I have been permitted to do for nearly half a century. But I do entertain the hope that there is yet work for me to do, that the darkness that seems to have enveloped me will disappear, and that, whether with another battle more brilliant than the Dandi March or without, India will come to her own demonstrably through non-violent means. I am praying for the light that will dispel the darkness. Let those who have a living faith in non-violence join me in the prayer.

My Work

I am content with the doing of the task in front of me. I do not worry about the why and wherefore of things... Reason helps us to see that we should not dabble in things we cannot fathom.

My work will be finished if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family, that every man or woman, however weak in body, is the guardian of his or her self-respect and liberty. This defense avails, though the whole world may be against the individual resister.

It will be time enough to pronounce a verdict upon my work after my eyes are closed and this tabernacle is consigned to the flames.

Web sites about Mahatma Gandhi and other Gandhi inspired people:

<http://www.transnational.org/sitemap.html>

[http://www.hjortespring-](http://www.hjortespring-skole.dk/Infoweb/Designskabelon7/Rammeside.asp?Action=&Side=&Klasse=&Id=)

[skole.dk/Infoweb/Designskabelon7/Rammeside.asp?Action=&Side=&Klasse=&Id=](http://www.hjortespring-skole.dk/Infoweb/Designskabelon7/Rammeside.asp?Action=&Side=&Klasse=&Id=)

<http://www.dcum.dk/neobuilder.2006030211152947000057958.html>

<http://www.konfliktloesning.dk/regado.jsp?type=page&id=19>

<http://www.jur.ku.dk/medarbejdere/vibekevindeloev/>

<http://www.sydafrika.dk/medlem/>

<http://www.leksikon.org/art.php?n=2447>

<http://www.salzburgseminar.org/ihjr/blog/index.cfm>

<http://www.livingroomtaipei.com/archives/2006/07/27/000904.php>

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=115712140>

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/m/mohandas_gandhi.html

<http://www.rigshospitalet.dk/rh.nsf/Content/centerforvoldtgtsoffre>

http://images.google.dk/imgres?imgurl=http://www.gandhifoundationusa.com/MLKIII_PeaceAward.jpg&imgrefurl=http://www.gandhifoundationusa.com/contents.htm&h=832&w=1039&sz=115&hl=da&start=86&tbnid=M9f0IRaUL239DM:&tbnh=120&tbnw=150&prev=/images%3Fq%3Dgandhi%26start%3D80%26imgsz%3Dxxlarge%26ndsp%3D20%26svnum%3D30%26hl%3Dda%26lr%3D%26newwindow%3D1%26sa%3DN

<http://www.gandhitoday.org/>

<http://www.gandhifoundationusa.com/contents.htm>

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/index.htm>

<http://www.thekingcenter.org/>

<http://www.mkgandhi.org/>

<http://www.mkgandhi.org/environment/environment.htm>

http://www.bpf.org/html/get_involved/chapters_and_affiliates/chapters/chapter_resources.html

http://www.sgi-dk.org/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1

<http://www.fredsakademiet.dk/>

http://www.peacejournalism.org/index.php?f=data_home&a=0

<http://brahmakumaris.dk/>

<http://markshep.com/nonviolence/index.html#bookshelf>

<http://www.folkrorelser.nu/saltmarschen/>

<http://saltmarch.org/index.htm>

http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/global/ebhatt_int1.html

<http://www.mahatmagandhiji.com/>