

# Experiment with Truth –An Expression

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## ABSTRACT

In this autobiographical record of Gandhiji which explains the recounting story of his life's experience and his experiment with truth. With this autobiography mahatma tried to disclose that his greatness was not a sudden overwhelming but passes through a long process of trials and errors. Gandhi himself wrote about these events and circumstances in candid manner. Gandhi wrote that "To describe truth, as it appeared to me, and in the exact manner, in which I have arrived at it, has been my ceaseless effort. The exercise has given me ineffable mental peace...." As he grew in his experiment with truth, he grew in his stature and grew in self-consciousness as well. It is unavoidable to talk on Gandhiji without talking on his experiment with truth. An attempt has been made in this paper to discuss on Gandhi's experiment with truth on political and personal issues he left for his readers.

## INTRODUCTION

Gandhi's experiment with truth is not an outcome of rational thinking but it is based on his life's deep down-to-earth thought of reality. Srinivas Iyengar has written in his book "Indian Writing English" that Gandhi was not a writer so called properly, nor was he interested at any time particularly in art of writing but he had to talk or write a great deal was perhaps like one has to do talk, walk, eat or breathe in life. But we can say that his writings and specially autobiography, Experiment with Truth, is one of the imperishable classic of time. The purpose of this autobiography was very authentic to record the vibrant and potential experiences that Gandhi had gained in his personal and political venture. In the author's note to book he wrote that "if had only to discuss academic principles, I should not attempt an autobiography. But my purpose being to give an account of various practical applications of these principals, I have given the chapters I propose to write the title of The Story of My Experiments with Truth. These will of course include experiments with non-violence, celibacy and other principles of conduct believed to be distinct from truth. But for

me, truth is the sovereign principal, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the Absolute Truth, the Eternal Principle that is God. There are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable. They overwhelm me with wonder and awe and for a moment stun me. But I worship God as Truth only. ” He asserts in his own words that God means nothing than truth for him, it is conspicuous from the above fact that his experimental approach with truth is greater approach to realize God. Gandhiji had disclosed details about his experiments in political field also through writings, he described as:

“My experiments in the political field are now known, not only to India, but to a certain extent to the ‘civilized’ world. For me, they have not much value; and the title of ‘Mahatma’ that they have won for me has, therefore, even less. Often the title has deeply pained me; and there is not a moment I can recall when it may be said to have tickled me. But I should certainly like to narrate my experiments in the spiritual field which are known only to myself, and from which I have derived such power as I possess for working in the political field. ”

Gandhi vision was not cessed merely with experimental approach to eternal principles of Truth and God. Facts and Wonders were but rather to the purgation and self purification of mind, heart and soul. He elaborates and explains his ideas in his autobiography that:

But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To strain to perfect purity one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought ,speech and action: to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion .I know that I have not in me as yet that triple purity, in spite of constant ceaseless striving for it.

That is why the world’s praise fails to move me; indeed it often stings me...

Gandhiji believed very firmly in the thought of Hinduism and its vision, he had elucidated it in his autobiography under chapter ‘Religious Ferment’ that:

The pious lives of Christians did not give me anything that the lives of men of other faiths had failed to give. I had seen in other lives just the same reformation that I had heard of among Christians. Philosophically there was nothing extraordinary in Christian principles. From the point of view of sacrifice, it seemed to me that the Hindus greatly surpassed the Christians. It was impossible for me to regard Christianity as a perfect religion or the greatest of all religions.... As Christian friends

were endeavouring to convert me, even so were Musalman friends, Abdulla Sheth had kept on including me study Islam, and of course he had always something to say regarding its beauty.

In seeking answers to all these religious belief and its difficulties continued with him regarding which is the perfect amongst, he corresponded this to religious authorities in India and Raychandbhai which he pointed out through his writing that:

I expressed my difficulties in a letter to Raychandbhai. I also corresponded with other religious authorities in India and received answers from them. Raychandbhai's letter somewhat pacified me. He asked me to be patient and so study Hinduism more deeply. One of his sentences was to this effect: 'On a dispassionate view of the question I am convinced that no other religion has the subtle and profound thought of Hinduism, its soul, or its charity.'

It is very important here to point out beautiful chants or hymns- 'Raghupati raghav raja ram' and 'Vaishnov jan to tene kahiea' appreciate and valued by him, describes his depth and profound believe in Hinduism. It is likely to code I thought when I was writing this paper, rest all known by everyone about these chants that how much these are soothing when it chants.

In experiments with truth Gandhi was thought of no aim in continuing the story beyond 1920 at it was already known to public, his life was so vibrant and lived in limelight with continual political and controversial blaze. Iyengar has written in Indian Writing in English that

Gandhi always had sought corroboration for his innermost convictions in the writings of others so he might not be mislead himself or mislead his countrymen. His reading was selective, not voracious, and his mind was a rich receptive soil to the seeds of creative thought that aimed at the regeneration of man.

All this writings, reading, thinking and experimentation with truth culminated in the composition of Hind Swaraj in Gujarati soon. Gandhi indicated that his view was unchanged and that he still believed that the way of satyagraha shown in the book was the only true way to Swaraj; it is the law of love, the law of life. He was the messenger of evolution, swaraj, agreement, equal opportunity, liberty, brotherhood, and value for all in the society, love,

empathy but all on the basis of non-violence or ahimsa. C .Rajagopalachary in his writing note said:

There can be no reconstruction or hope for this land of ours, unless we eradicate the worship of force in all its forms, and establish work on a basis other than violence. A refutation of the doctrine of violence is, in the present situation of the affairs of our country, more necessary than ever.

Whatever Gandhi did or thought or said over the first to fifth decade of nineteenth century all of his work flowed from the spring that was Hind Swaraj. Gandhiji exhorted to cautious from the religious superstitions and false notions prevalent about religion in form of hypocrisy. It needs accents of urgency and assurance thus:

Civilization is like a mouse gnawing while it is soothing us .When its full effect is realized, we will see that religious superstition is harmless compared to that of modern civilization. I am not pleading for a continuance of religious superstitions. We will certainly fight them tooth and nail, but we can never do so by disregarding religion.

According to the book Indian Writing in English “The germs of the Gandhian political, economical, educational and ethical thought were already present in Hindu Swaraj, and they called only for a little amplification or modification under the stress of actual events from time to time.... Self-rule, self-mastery and self-realization come first and these called for inner purification through celibacy or chastity, dietic restriction, fasting, silence, prayer, the adaptation of simple life, the readiness of manual labour, the civilization of fearlessness and truth and voluntary rejection of material possessions. Not an easy path of course, this steady ascent of satyagrah’s peak of realization. “

In year 1893 Dr. Jones wrote about Gandhiji when Ghandiji was walking up and down on the platform because of being ejected from a first class compartment by a white fellow-traveller, there Ghandiji had conceived of Satyagraha by rehearsing to himself. He said, “I won’t hate you, but I won’t obey you when you are wrong. Do what you like. I will match my capacity to suffer against your capacity to inflict the suffering- my Soul-force against your physical force. I will wear you down by goodwill. ”

This was the experiment with truth that Gandhiji realised at the core of his heart and soul and determined in him to struggle against discrimination and exploitation. Perhaps this

was the juncture from where Gandhiji started his struggle for justice not for alone but for all humans in world. It was his moral energy and soul force that worked. As Rajaji said, “the moral energy, Soul force as Gandhiji love to call it, comes from faith and true religious devotion. The Gita tells us that the lord dwells in the heart of every being and His power moves all beings that are set like marionettes on the machine. The secret presence of God in the hearts of all beings is the secret of Satyagraha. It would not the application of a new technique but the understanding of ancient spiritual teaching and firm faith in its truth. ”

It can be said that truth for Mahatma is faith in God and can be appear through peace, love, brotherhood, harmony, and equality to all without discrimination of caste, creed and race. Though his works are larger than life, it is difficult to count or record every instance of his life merely in one paper. Here an attempt has been made only to understand his preliminary encounters with Truth and Satyagraha.

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