

Rule - 4

Belief in Truth

One shall always be ready to accept truth and give up untruth.

दृष्ट्वा रूपे व्याकरोत्सत्यानृते प्रजापतिः ।

अश्रद्धामनृतेददधच्छ्रद्धाँ सत्ये प्रजापतिः॥

The Lord of people sees through both the forms; He makes distinction between truth and untruth.

He has set apart incredulity for untruth. And faith for truth. (Yajurveda XIX. 77.)

Truth: Its fourfold Criterion — Having by the first three principles defined what it means by truth, the Arya Samaja lays stress in the fourth on the supreme duty of every individual, man or woman, to seek to truth and forsake untruth. Truth with the Arya Samajist is not what is declared by the majority of his fellow-beings to be true, nor what his untrained conscience prompts him to accept as intellectually believable or practically adoptable. Among the masses, who compose the majority, ignorance is common, and their verdict, if accepted as the criterion of truth, would upset all known notions of right and wrong. The scientist, to be sure of the accuracy of the results at which his experiments in the laboratory arrive, will instead of observing their character minutely with his own eyes, have to refer every problem to the rabble who are non-scientists. How ludicrous! Equally ludicrous, too, is the proposal to decide

questions of moral propriety or impropriety by having recourse to ballot or some other device for gauging the view of the majority.

The voice of conscience is a result of prepossessions, which environments of individuals in both this and previous lives have contributed to form. An average man brought up as a Muslim regards it his religious duty to slaughter animals on the day of Id, while another who has from his infancy lived among jains or Vaishnavas alone, has, as it were, an instinctive horror of seeing living beings killed. Not only the practice but also the moral outlook of different persons on the various vital problems of life—the outlook which sanctions or condemns this or that practice, is different. There are men who with the most innocent of intentions commit wrong. There is nothing to be said against their honesty. The fault is with their judgement, which has not had the opportunity of being trained aright. Some excuse wrong on the plea of ignorance. To them innocent intention is the only and whole content of morality. Without in the least questioning the paramount importance of intention in ethics. It may yet in the interest of judiciousness be pointed out that this view of right and wrong conduct ignores the viewpoint of the victim of the wrong. The most pious intention of a tyrant would not detract from the pernicious effect of his tyranny on him who happens to be its poor target. No earthly government would condone a crime on the ground that the act, though intended otherwise, is not intended as such. An attitude such as this on the part of the judiciary will give a philip to perversity of judgment. The same rule applies to the realm of morality. Right judgment is as much a factor in righteous conduct as the most honest intention. Kant was right in regarding the notion of right among human beings as ultimately a divine prompting. God has implanted in man not only a vague sense of love for right and aversion to wrong, but also dictated to him exactly what conduct is right and what conduct is wrong. This innate moral sense were a superfluity, if

side by side with it there did not exist a definite code of righteous and unrighteous behaviour. That code is according to Manu of a fourfold character. The voice of the inner monitor, or according to some the caution not to do to others what you cannot endure being done to yourselves, the example of higher personages, their writings, and the injunctions of God himself in the Vedas, are the four criterions, arranged in the order of increasing importance. Implicit obedience is taught to the injunctions of the Vedas. The meaning of the divine behest it is the business of the individual's own intellect and conscience to find out and follow, even the greatest men fail to perform in its entirety what they preach. Their teachings are, therefore, assigned a higher rank among tests of righteousness than their practical conduct. Yet it is their practical conduct which is generally found to be a most faithful commentary on their written or spoken teaching. The four tests are in fact interrelated. You may dispense with one at the cost of all others. The sifting of truth is a complex process. The Arya Samaja has, by stressing the transcendental importance of the Vedas, as the ultimate authority on what is true and right, made the process definite and easier of accomplishment. The Veda is the text, the other criterions are, as it were, commentaries.

Truth and Untruth, Absolute — The Arya Samaja does not confuse right with wrong by declaring that they are simply relative terms. That in the right actions of men there may be an element of wrong, and vice versa, on account of the extreme difficulty of keeping the two principles rigidly aloof in practice, may be at once conceded. What is nectar to one man, may be poison to another. Viewed in the light of their results as affecting the welfare of different persons differently, our actions may at the same time be beneficial and pernicious. Or what in its results is benedictory, may in its intention have been wholly imprecatory. To sift the minute threads of right and wrong in the complex fabric of an

accomplished course of conduct is a most difficult job. To undertake the job, while the action is yet in progress, is still more difficult. Yet the threads are there, and if each thread could be laid bare in its true perspective by the performer of the action, who as the weaver of the fabric, has alone an intimate knowledge of its components, a competent ethicist could readily determine their righteous or unrighteous character.

Impiety, whether in intention or in deed, is not piety in the embryo. Violence is not a step to non-violence, hatred not a preparation for love. Wrong is not right in the making. The two may become confused when their respective motives come practically into play; in their conception they are distinct, and it is neither right nor useful to speak of them as different forms of the same principle or quality. 'Despise not the wrongdoers' is a counsel of love. 'Despise not the wrong' is a counsel of downright immorality. 'Try to reform the wrong in others' is a homily of humanitarian charity. 'Look on it as an incipient stage of right,' is a sermon to adore evil, which is tantamount, in its most insidious form, to giving latitude to the advances of Satan in others, and by and by in one's self. With Dayananda, truth and untruth are distinct conceptions, the one to be adopted and adhered to, the other to be shunned, and if by mistake adopted, to be immediately renounced.