

Truth

Mira Mehta

THOROUGHFARE TO TRUTH

See the colour of the sky!
Paint it with your inner eye!
Paint the trees, the sun, the flowers;
Choose your subject as you will,
But be true,
For if you cover
Night's dark shade with silver hue
Or the frankness or the beauty,
You will be the loser,
You.

Truth is the daughter of time, as the saying goes, for untruth comes out in time and rebounds on the teller.

Truth is the second of five moral principles that Yoga enjoins, couched in terms of restraints. The first is refusing to hurt living creatures; this is the touchstone for all the rest. The remaining three are refraining from stealing, from promiscuity and from acquisitiveness.¹

Moral conduct, according to Yoga, applies not just to words and deeds but also to thoughts. Truth is defined as speech and thought that accords with fact. Speech should be for the sake of communication of knowledge; it should not be misleading, ambiguous or empty of meaning. It must be used for doing good, not harm, to others.²

Thus Yoga philosophy distinguishes between genuine and spurious truth. The ultimate test is its adherence to the principle of non-violence: if speaking the truth harms someone and is not for the ultimate good, it should only be done after careful consideration.

¹ Yoga Sutra 2.30

² Commentary on Yoga Sutra 2.30

The poem is taken from Mira Mehta's book *Cascade of Stars*, published by Shephard-Walwyn (www.shephard-walwyn.co.uk). For information about her classes and other publications visit www.yogicpath.com.