

SATYA - TRUTHFUL IN THOUGHT, SPEECH & ACTION

Truth is by nature self-evident. As soon as you remove the cobwebs of ignorance that surround it, it shines clear. Gandhi

There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth, not going all the way, and not starting. Buddha

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.
1 John 3:18



Welcome to our third edition of SATYA. Our subject this time is fear and most notably written about by Paula Hulet in her essay, *What We Feed.* We hope it speaks to you and will help in these troubled times.

As for me, I've been thinking about nonviolence and what it means now as we hunker down in our homes trying to keep the unknown curse that seems to be upon us from reaching us with its awful tongue. As I shelter here recovering from two heart procedures, I am forced into being still and quiet and while my heart beats steadily, it is by no means quiet. I hear it shouting to me, "don't give up!"

My friend Susan brought me all her college student books on society, violence and nonviolence that were required reading for her in the early 1970s. What fun, I thought. And something to read! I began with the *Essays of A. J. Muste* and if you don't know who he was, Google him. Students of nonviolence should know him. Muste, the ultimate Pacifist was born four years before my father was born, in 1885, the 19th century. My life is colored by these men. Those of us protesting the Vietnam War during the 1960s and 70s heard about Muste but I am not sure we totally understood him. He had a long career active in the labor, civil rights and peace movements back before I was even born.

Nonviolence tells us to respect the other person's position which these days we find hard to do. Here is what Muste had to say: "I've always tried to keep communication open between radicals and non-radicals, between pacifists and non-pacifists. It goes back to something very fundamental in the nonviolent approach to life. You always assume there is some element of truth in the position of the other person, and you respect your opponent for hanging on to an idea as long as he believes it to be true. On the other hand, you must try very hard to see what truth actually does exist in his idea and seize on it to make him realize what you consider to be the larger truth." Thus, I ponder and realize this, that it is difficult to live nonviolence. You have to work at being a human being. It does not come naturally.

Ruth Ann Angus

What We Feed

by Paula Hulet

The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown. H.P. Lovecraft

With all that is possible and all that we are capable of it is amazing to me that we live in a world dominated by fear. I know that fear and our fight or flight nature has helped keep the human race alive. Yet, fear has seemed to taken control of our lives. We fear the unknown. And rather than seek the truth or share the truth we spread panic and hysteria. But our fears today, the ones that shape our nation and rule our lives, reasonable, especially as we live in a time with easy access to information (both good and bad)? I like the words of the 19th century author, Christian Nestell Bovee, which ring so true in today's world, "Panic is a sudden desertion of us (ourselves), and a going over to the enemy of our imagination."

Think about it. Maybe you don't, but there are plenty in our world who fear the refugee, the loss of jobs or income, being considered second best, those whose lifestyles are different than their own and fear those who think differently than we do. There is fear of entering into a civil conversation with others because it just may mean listening, learning something new, and possibly changing our minds about the way we view the world. We fear change yet expect everyone else around us to change so that this world will be a better place for us.

In our fear we lash out. We lash out with our words. We succumb to a mob mentality rather than listen to reason. We build fences literally and figuratively. And as shared by a friend as I am writing this, some turn violent when they must stand an extra ten minutes in the grocery checkout line. The result, we separate, we denigrate, and we seek whatever means, large or small, that we think will help us to "control" the world around us, even at the expense of others.

In this environment of fear, I am reminded of a Native American story. This is a story about a young boy who was feeling angry and upset at an injustice, something he felt was beyond his control. He wanted to lash out but was unsure that would change anything. So, the boy went to his Grandfather for advice. The Grandfather tells the boy that he too, has felt these feelings.

"It is as if I have two wolves living inside me," says the Grandfather. "One is good and does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him and does not take offense when no offense was intended. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way.

But the other wolf, fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. The smallest thing will send him into a fury. He cannot think because his anger and rage are so great. However, for all its fury, his anger changes nothing.

Sometimes it is hard to live with these two wolves inside me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit.” The boy looked into his Grandfather’s eyes and asked, “Which one wins, Grandfather?” His grandfather replied, “Whichever one I feed.”

Which wolf are we letting dominate our lives? Which wolf do we feed? Which wolf is shaping our country?

Our goal as peacebuilders is to confront our fears, learn how they control us and ultimately rise above them. Only then will we be able to truly live and love with more than our words. Only then will we learn to live and love in truth and action.

