

Anatomy of Truth

Our web site is called “Truth Radio.” From childhood, we learn it is important to tell the truth. How does anyone know Truth from error? How can you tell Truth from fiction or a lie? What does Truth look like? What is the anatomy of Truth? In an episode of the TV show “Boston Legal,” two sets of attorneys were in a settlement conference. Should foreclosure go forward, or would the bank agree to terms? The room steamed with the heat of argument. One after another offer was rejected. Finally, Attorney Alan Shore, defending the foreclosure victim, laid out his final offer. Making it clear to the bank's lawyer that Shore would have it his way and nothing would stop him, Shore gazed into the eyes of the opposing attorney and said with burning conviction, “Search my eyes. This is what the truth looks like.”

That was television drama, but how about real life? You raise your right hand before the judge and swear to “tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth...” Why? One reason is that truth is supposed to be convincing. When we testify in court or when we simply discuss issues with a friend, we want our words believed. How can we convince people that our spoken or written word can be trusted unless we know what “Truth” looks like?

Governor Pontius Pilate demonstrated that he didn't know what Truth looked like. Pilate could not be expected to think clearly in the pre-business morning. Facing Jesus, Pilate asked, “What is Truth?” (John 18:37-38). There stood Jesus before one of the most intelligent men of that day. He heard Pilate ask, in so many words, “What is your anatomy?” Pilate could see Jesus' body but did not understand what he saw. Jesus had declared, “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.” Pilate wondered, “What is this standing before me?”

Although the Truth was fully visible before Pilate, he could not figure out who Jesus might be. Jesus, a Person, had called Himself “the Truth.” In a twist of His description of Himself, Jesus proclaimed, speaking to God the Father, “Your Word is Truth” (John 17:17). John 1:1 defines Jesus as the Word of God. So, what Jesus said is an expansion of “I am the Truth.” If we take Jesus seriously, if we believe what Jesus said about Himself, we may be able to tell Truth from fiction, and learn to tell the difference between veracity and lies.

Since that most important trial in history, great minds have wrestled with the definition of “Truth.” Many have struggled to resolve its conflicting meanings that demand objectivity, yet knowing Truth is often subjective. How can it be both? How can rock-solid Truth sometimes not be solid? Truth can be both subjective and objective because words cannot define it any more than a man can be defined by a photograph. Truth is complex, just as is human anatomy.

We cannot pretend to describe the anatomy of the Creator. He is infinite – impossible of complete description. However, we can at least partially analyze the Person Who called Himself Truth. We will not fully succeed, but perhaps we will gain a better appreciation of Truth and learn why we should hold it in profound respect. What is the anatomy of the living Person called Truth?

Swami Narayananda wrote, “The Ultimate Truth is called God.” Martin Luther King, Jr., said, “I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. That is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.” Immanuel Kant, describing how truth was perceived in his day, wrote, “Truth is seen to consist of the agreement of knowledge with the object.” Gandhi said, “God is Truth.” Later he changed his definition to “Truth is God.” Some of the attributes of truth are logic, integrity, consistency, accountability, morality, honesty, good intentions, good faith, righteousness, enlightenment, accurate perception, noble conviction and high purpose.

Marcellinus Ammianus wrote, “The language of truth is unadorned and always simple.” He said Truth is simple. What a simplistic understatement! Yet, how true. In all its complexity, Truth is unitary. To be Truth it must be simple for the concept to have reached the core of its reality. Whether you seek to understand, want to explain something correctly, watch a judicial proceeding, quiz your teenager, try to understand where your employer's confusing words have come from, or earnestly try to understand just ten percent of why your spouse is upset with you, Truth can seem slippery as mercury. Whether looking, hearing, touching, smelling or thinking with great analytical skill, we struggle

to reach the confident place where we can exclaim, "I found the truth." If you look to the infinite reach of space or peer through the equally infinite space revealed by a microscope, even though you may experience balance, calm and peace in your spirit, your mind will be in turmoil if you are honest as you seek Truth.

Truth is out of reach of our complete understanding. Though you seek to learn the Truth, though you seek to analyze facts in accord with Truth, though you seek to write or to speak Truth, you are not "Truth walking." Truth is separate from you, though Jesus may live within you by the power of the Holy Spirit. What we must seek is enough familiarity with Jesus-Who-is-Truth so that we can be confident and resonate with His character as well as possible in our imperfect presentation of Truth to the world.

Calling upon Gandhi again we hear, "Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there, and to be guided by truth as one sees it. But no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth." True as Gandhi's statement is, how can it be? How can a concept that cries out for precision be unattainable?

Martin Luther, not content with Gandhi's surrender to what he viewed as impossible, believed "Peace if possible, truth at all costs." Colossians 3:15 declares, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts." If we believe peace is attainable, we must seek also to find truth and to be willing to pay any cost for it. You cannot be at peace without having your being attached to foundational Truth. Whoever submits to the subjective surrenders to uncertainty. In uncertainty there is only turmoil, permitting little or no peace.

Mark Twain expressed his frustration over this difficulty. He wrote, "Familiarity breeds contempt. How accurate that is. The reason we hold truth in such respect is because we have so little opportunity to get familiar with it." (*Notebook*, 1898). In his *Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar*, Twain wrote, "Truth is stranger than fiction, but it is because fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't." That suggests Truth breaks the bonds of the possible and is capable of the miraculous.

Jesus told Pilate, "I have come into the world that I should bear witness to the Truth. Everyone who is of the Truth hears My voice." (John 18:37-38). Voice! The Word. The Word spoken created our Universe. When Jesus spoke, Truth spoke. Jesus is the Word. The Word is Truth. Today that Word of Truth is made real to us by the Holy Spirit. That Word must come from a mouth attached to a body. Let's look at the parts of that Body. What is the anatomy of Truth?

The **body of Truth** lives in an environment, so we must first examine the location where Truth interacts with the Universe. We are finite, but we live in an infinite Universe. The infinite Universe has within it a two-part function. The essential element is transcendence; the dynamic element is coherence. Transcendence is out of reach of our perception. Yet, it is in Truth that we must live if we want to live in harmony with our Creator. Coherence is the subjective dynamic we apply to our understanding of the Universe. The result is limited human understanding.

Within "limited human understanding," there is a function we could call facts wrapped in reality. For a clearer understanding, you should read my book *Einstein, Money and Contentment*. A major point in the book is that everything in or about the Universe consists of a two-part function operating within a structure producing a result. In this case, the structure is limited human understanding. Within that structure the functional essential is the facts. Those facts are driven by reality. "Limited human understanding of facts driven by reality" is about the best we can do to reach semantic precision. Semantics is the science of symbols and how they promote understanding. Semantics is where our human understanding of the body of Truth resides.

Now that we know where Truth lives, let's try to discover something about the anatomy of Truth. A brain must control this body called Truth. The **mind of Truth** can be described as logic. The mind of Truth is trusted to be orderly.

A body is held together by a spine. What is the **spine of Truth**? What gives Truth its trustworthy unity? Integrity. The spine of Truth is integrity. James 2:19 says, "... there is one God." He Who is Truth is the expression of the One God who created the Universe and in Whom all things hold together. Colossians 1:17 says, "By Him all things consist." Truth is logic controlling integrity.

The **cellular system of Truth** that hangs on the spine of integrity is consistency. The cellular function of Truth restores the anatomy, creating coherence. It makes Truth relative and real, refreshing the one who perceives it. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistency.

The **neck of Truth** is accountability. It adapts the mind to changing reality. The concept will be expressed in a manner that is accountable for adjustment to new facts. This mystery of the infinite Jesus-Who-is-Truth, operating on the human level, is subject to finite limitations. The witness in court might declare, "I saw the driver of the Buick plow directly into the side of the Pontiac." Later, another witness who had been a passenger in the Pontiac states, "The driver of the Pontiac wanted to end his life. He purposely shot in front of the Buick. The driver of the Buick could not have avoided a collision." At that point, Truth turns its neck, It adapts to new information. When someone speaks the Truth the best he knows, but makes a mistake, he is flexible. Truth is willing to change as its perception improves. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability.

The **heart of Truth** is its moral values system. We know that Jesus' values are perfect. They beat at one with the Universe. Therefore, the heart of Truth is objective. Some people have values matching Jesus' values; others do not. A person who claims to tell the truth who is not connected with Jesus could come to a conversation with untrustworthy subjectivity. Whether the speaker can be relied on depends on if it is Jesus-Who-is-Truth Who speaks through the "Truth-teller." If Jesus does not control the speaker, the one who seeks to tell the Truth may not be trusted. What moral values anchor the heart? In the answer to that question you will be able to discern whether the speaker is capable of Truth. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability guided by Biblical moral values.

Next, Truth is given mobility by its legs. Let's call the **right foot of Truth** honesty. The torso of Truth would have no practical application, no way to apply to life, without its merits coming into touch with the earth in a way that allows it to walk in reality. Honesty makes that connection. Bias is an enemy of Truth. The stride of the right foot of Truth, pointed forward, following the logic dictated by the brain of Truth is dangerous. "To be direct and honest is not safe" (Othello, Act III, Sc3, Line 378). A leg can twist or buckle. A leg can stumble. Truth stands erect and walks straight despite threat or danger. There are risks that encourage a person concerned about safety to turn one way or another, but Truth will aim the right foot of honesty toward the center of any storm. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability, guided by Biblical moral values applied against facts honestly perceived.

The **left foot of Truth** is good intentions. Someone wrote, "Good intentions don't carry out the act," yet without good intent, the act will distort and Truth will stumble. In one of the *Fragments* of Epictetus we read, "If you wish to be good, first believe that you are bad." Truth in human perspective must be aware in the words of Romans 3:10 that "none is good: no not one." Having the perception that we are bent toward evil, Truth willfully determines to go against human nature and discard the first impulse with the deep desire to see a good outcome as spinal integrity controls the walk. Though Jesus-Who-is-Truth is perfect, His Truth body applied through frail mankind allows for individual liberty, and with that liberty comes the possibility of imperfection. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability guided by Biblical moral values applied against facts honestly with good intentions.

The **right hand of Truth** is good faith. "Shake on it" is enough when Truth offers its hand. Written contracts are worthless when offered by those living a lie, but for those seeking to conform to Truth, any written contract is a memory prompt of a simple handshake. To illustrate, the grade school teacher told us to write our names on a sheet of paper. We did. She walked to Judy's desk and picked up Judy's paper. "Is this Judy?" she asked us. Puzzled, we nodded our heads. "No, this is not Judy. Judy is sitting at her desk. This is Judy's name. This paper is only a symbol. Judy is what is real." When you see the name, you think of that real person and the reputation determines your relationship. Acts done in good faith produce a "good name." The name says it. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches" (Proverbs 22:1). "He lives who dies to win a lasting name," as pointed out by Drummond, in his *Sonnet XII*. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability guided by Biblical moral values applied against facts honestly with good intentions operating in good faith.

The **left hand of Truth** is righteousness, bringing honor to the teller. When I was 12 my Sunday School teacher gave our class an assignment. "Next week I want you to tell me what is your most precious possession" He surprised us

with the answer. “Your most precious possession is your name.” The left hand clasped against the right in a gesture of honor to seal the determination to act with righteousness: that is Truth. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability guided by Biblical moral values applied against facts honestly with good intentions operating in good faith in righteous honor.

The **mouth of Truth** is expressed in educational enlightenment. Truth seeks the benefit of those around it. “‘Tis education forms the common mind; just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined” (Pope *Moral Essays Ep.*) I, Line 49). If the wind blowing from the mouth of Truth has a function, it is to bend opinion to a correct view of reality; to educate the witness to Truth's testimony. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability guided by Biblical moral values applied against facts honestly with good intentions operating in good faith in righteous honor educating and enlightening in its application.

The **height of Truth**, the measure of how tall it is, should be viewed as accuracy of perception. The teller of Truth will see over the heads of petty self-serving distortions. The gaze of Truth will pierce with understanding, providing the mind of Truth with all the tools needed for trustworthy analysis. “Two men look out through the same bars; one sees the mud, and one the stars” (Frederick Langbridge, *A Cluster of Quiet Thoughts*, Religious Tract Society). Truth will see the mud. Truth will see the stars. Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability guided by Biblical moral values applied against facts honestly with good intentions operating in good faith in righteous honor educating and enlightening in its application, based upon accurate perception.

The glare of conviction from the eyes of Attorney Alan Shore on *Boston Legal* burned with conviction and purpose. Those are the **eyes of Truth**. If you want your communication with the world to be effective and to “win your case,” may your eyes match the eyes of Truth, registering noble conviction born of high purpose. L.S. Sukhorukov is credited with, “He who loves Truth looks her straight in the eye.” ***The body of Truth is logic controlling integrity with consistent flexible accountability guided by Biblical moral values applied against facts honestly with good intentions operating in good faith in righteous honor educating and enlightening in its application, based upon accurate perception, as it connects with reality glaring through eyes radiating high purpose driven by noble conviction.***

The Truth-Body does not operate as twelve separate parts. It is a unity. Facts and evidence come to light as the Body of Truth works. A process called colligation exposes error. Colligation is defined by Webster's Third New International Dictionary as the truth emerging “spontaneously and directly” from a thorough collection of facts. Mark Twain wrote, “Lies always have to be defended. The truth stands all by itself.” Dross floats separate atop a heated crucible. Foreign bodies are exposed and rejected by the immune system of the human body. In the same way errors exposed by Truth can then be swept away.

Finally, Truth intends only good; as does our Lord Jesus Christ. When Truth, if spoken, would harm, Truth should be restrained. Rahab did the work of Truth when she withheld the Truth to protect Joshua's spies (Joshua 6:17).

“A man protesting against error is on the way towards uniting himself with all men that believe in truth.”
(Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, IV)

“You shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.”
(Jesus: *John 8:3*)

“Great is truth and mighty above all things.”
(Esdras: IV 41)

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