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Truth – a spiritual inquiry

Truth – a spiritual inquiry

- Introduction
- Truth and why it prospered amongst Quakers
- An overview of how (largely) Quakers see this truth
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Truth – a spiritual inquiry

INTRODUCTION

How is truth progressing amongst *us*?

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How is truth progressing amongst *us*?

- Think of 3 words, perhaps aspects or values, that are meaningful to you in relation to Truth
- Share them with your neighbour by completing the sentence "3 words that are meaningful to me about truth are ".....", ".....", and "....." because....."

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INTRODUCTION

How is truth progressing amongst *us*?

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Truth and why it prospered amongst Quakers

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Truth and why it prospered amongst Quakers

- Why are Quakers respected?
- How truth fares today beyond Quakers

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Truth and why it prospered amongst Quakers

- Why are Quakers respected?
- A representative statement of a Quaker understanding of truth?

Craig Barnett: “According to the Quaker tradition itself, truth is not a matter of abstract philosophical argument. It is the conformity of our words, actions and lives to the reality of God.”

<http://transitionquaker.blogspot.co.uk/2016/06/friends-and-truth.html>

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Truth and why it prospered amongst Quakers

Process theology: “God is an intrinsic part of the process of becoming, part of the very fabric of existence....God is present and acting at every moment and in every place, but in a very specific way – offering to each actual occasion, in the process of its becoming, the relevant possibilities for its immediate future”

“Reclaiming the Transcendent – God in process” by Thomas Gates, PHP 422, p20

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Truth and why it prospered amongst Quakers

Linda Pegler: “in the earliest days Quakers were known for speaking truth as they experienced it inwardly in their Meetings for Worship. They didn’t make a distinction between belief and action. Truth was almost more of a verb than a noun; it was something that you ‘did’ as you experienced it. As they responded to a vibrant inner reality and obeyed the promptings of the Divine Light within, then action and speech became a natural reflection of that experience. And in acting in this way they came to discern more of its nature and were led further into expressing it outwardly. So a testimony to truth developed that, in particular, led Quakers to be known for their honesty, straightforwardness and integrity.”

Linda Pegler, *Testimony to Truth*, *The Friend* 2 Oct 2009, Vol 167, no 40, p 20

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Truth and why it prospered amongst Quakers

BYM website: “Quakers try to live according to the deepest truth we know, and we connect most deeply to this in the stillness of worship. This means speaking the truth at all times, including to people in positions of power. As we are guided by integrity, so we expect to see it in public life.”

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/about-quakers/our-values>

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An overview of how (largely) Quakers see this truth

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An overview of how (largely) Quakers see this truth

QF&P. Advices and Queries 1.02.1 "Take heed, dear Friends, to the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are the leadings of God whose Light shows us our darkness and brings us to new life"

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An overview of how (largely) Quakers see this truth

QF&P. 2.23 Harold Loukes, 1967 ".....Be still and cool in thy own mind and spirit from thy own thoughts", said Fox. It is marked by a kind of relaxed readiness, a 'letting-go' of the problems and perplexities with which the mind is occupied, and a waiting in 'love and truth': the truth about oneself, the truth about the world, deeper than the half-truths we see when we are busy in it about our own planning and scheming, the love in which we are held when we think of others more deeply than our ordinary relations with them, the love that at root holds us to the world."

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An overview of how (largely) Quakers see this truth

QF&P. 3, 10.28. "It is often hard to accept that other people have their own valid relationship with God, their own specialness and insights. We are not just disciples – we are disciples together. Our vision of the truth has to be big enough to include other people's truth as well as our own."

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An overview of how (largely) Quakers see this truth

Kabir Helminski "I have been speaking of presence as a human attribute, with the understanding that it is the presence of God reflected through the human being. We can learn to activate this presence at will..... We live at a time when the stories, belief systems, and mythologies of past centuries have lost their credibility and yet are more available to all of us than ever before in human history. We see them as relative truths now, not absolutes. The margins of cultures have become porous; parochialism is dissolving, but we do not yet have a shared spiritual vocabulary. Yet the world is moving toward an unprecedented economic, psychological, and spiritual convergence.... Humankind needs a spiritual awareness more than ever to balance this explosion of technology and communication. We need a feeling for the nobility and responsibility of being human, as we need an awareness of the unity of all life, or we will succumb to unconscious forces that will drag us down. Perhaps more than ever before, we need a way to activate and develop our latent humanness to balance the forces that challenge it."

Kabir Helminski Living Presence, Kindle loc 137

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An overview of how (largely) Quakers see this truth

Consider your experience of truth as the insight arising from connection with your deepest inner self, the leadings of God or however else you understand this phenomena – and whether you give credence to it at all.

Think & Jot: How do you see what Theory U calls "the inner place from which you operate"?

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Other perspectives of truth

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Other perspectives of truth

- Religion: tradition; texts; lineage; spirit

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Other perspectives of truth

QF&P 26.24: "Science and religion have much in common. They are communal activities and involve a search for some greater truth. The sharing of ideas is fundamental to both. The discipline of science can make a valuable contribution to religious thought; critical honesty, the willingness to abandon old ideas and modes of thought when fresh insight demands it and the centrality of experience as an arbiter of truth are as important in one as in the other. In both the scientific and religious searches for truth, the implications of current beliefs are explored to see where they lead. Beliefs are not just safe ledges in an uncertain reality, but rather handholds from which further heights can be reached."

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Other perspectives of truth

- Religion: tradition; texts; lineage; spirit
- Science: a variety of disciplines, scientific method

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Other perspectives of truth


- Religion: tradition; texts; lineage; spirit
- Science: a variety of disciplines, scientific method
- Alternatives to the religion/science as authority 'divide': e.g. integral theory/Ken Wilber and contemplation as inquiry /Arthur Zajonc

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Other perspectives of truth

Integral theory: Ken Wilber based on "The Four Faces of Truth" and "Integral Meditation" sub-titled "Mindfulness as a Way to Grow Up, Wake Up, and Show Up in Your Life"



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A (very) brief overview of integral theory

	Interior	Exterior
Individual		
Collective		

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A (very) brief overview of integral theory

Going to the grocery store	Interior	Exterior
Individual	The thought itself, and its meaning—symbols, images, the idea of going to the grocery store.	Associated brain activity that can be empirically observed.
Collective		

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Truth – a spiritual inquiry

A (very) brief overview of integral theory

Going to the grocery store	Interior	Exterior
Individual	The thought itself, and its meaning—symbols, images, the idea of going to the grocery store.	Associated brain activity that can be empirically observed.
Collective	Thoughts don't pop into our head out of nowhere but out of a cultural background. Cultural practices and languages, meanings and contexts, form shared cultural space in which we participate.	Society has material components—types of technology, forces of production (horticultural, agrarian, industrial, etc.), geopolitical locations etc. These affect the world-view within which our thoughts arise.

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Truth – a spiritual inquiry


A (very) brief overview of integral theory

Types of truth and claim to validity	Interior Subjective	Exterior Objective
Individual	Draws on dialogue and interpretation. Being in touch with all one's internal states. Validity depends on: <i>Truthfulness, sincerity, integrity and trustworthiness</i>	Something is true if it matches observed fact and the map matches the territory. Validity depends on: <i>Truth, correspondence, representation, is propositional</i>
Collective	Encompasses the shared cultural, moral, ethical, religious space, shared background, contexts and worldview. Validity depends on: <i>Justness, cultural fit, mutual understanding, rightness (Is it just, right, good, fair?)</i>	The material systems an individual fits into – economic, social, agricultural, technological etc – and how the systems work. Validity depends on: <i>Functional fit, systems theory web, structural-functionalism, a social systems mesh</i>

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Other perspectives of truth

- Contemplation as inquiry /Arthur Zajonc 
- "I had to situate this striving after a physical understanding of the universe [as] integrated into all of our human concerns."
- Quotes what Goethe calls "an apercu, a moment of perception, direct perception" and in likening this to an epiphany argues "knowledge is not an object that you acquire... it's actually an epiphanal moment. And I think this is true of the arts, poetry, painting, music and I would say also to spiritual understanding."
- Zajonc practises cognitively-oriented contemplative spirituality "which means it's oriented towards knowledge, that it's possible to have a spirituality which is not simply about faith" which over 40 years "has led me to the conviction that there's an experiential domain in contemplative spirituality, which can become clarified, which can become in some sense scientific in the sense that it's a repeatable basis of human experience, once that's shared over thousands of years and that we can be engaged with today in a way that is congruent with my activity as a scientist."

<https://onbeing.org/programs/arthur-zajonc-holding-life-consciously/>

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Truth – a spiritual inquiry

So far in my inquiry into truth ~

- I'm seeing that Quakers understand Truth broadly as an inward relationship with God or insight arising from the deepest place one can access;
- Most importantly this Truth is about exploring and holding ourselves accountable to truth as we find it through worship and in community
- What kind of 'measuring rod' we might each utilise in testing our truth (see my book "Discernment and Inner Knowing")

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Truth – a spiritual inquiry

Living this kind of truth

Establishing 4 aspects of truth in our own lives

- Values
- Content
- Practices
- Accountability

A truth compass—an alethiometer "it tells you the truth ... as for how to read it, you'll have to learn by yourself as it is a symbol reader"

Philip Pullman *Northern Lights*

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Living this kind of truth

4 questions to ask of your inquiry into truth that support the 4 aspects of truth

- Values: How might I live a life with *direction, meaning and purpose, and clear values*?
- Practices: How might I build a life based on a practice of *turning within*?
- Content: What are the obvious *traps*?
- Accountability: Is this a recognised *direction of travel*?

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Living this kind of truth

Dalai Lama: "I believe the ultimate source of blessing is with us. A good motivation and honesty brings self-confidence, which attract the trust and respect of others. Therefore the real source of blessings is in our own mind."

(Dalai Lama's Twitter feed Feb 5th 2018)

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The fruits of an inquiry into truth

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The fruits of an inquiry into truth

Brian McLaren "“Not a belief but a just and generous way of life rooted in contemplation, expressed in compassion, making amends for errors and a beloved community for all”"

Brian McLaren quoted at <https://cac.org/system-beliefs-way-life-2017-07-16/>

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The fruits of an inquiry into truth

Cynthia Bourgeault:

"According to the great wisdom traditions of the West (Christian, Jewish, Islamic), the heart is first and foremost an organ of spiritual perception. Its primary function is to look beyond the obvious, the bounded surface of things, and see into a deeper reality, emerging from some unknown profundity — a world where meaning, insight, and clarity come together in a whole different way. Saint Paul talked about this other kind of perceptivity with the term "faith" —, but the word "faith" is itself often misunderstood by the linear mind. What it really designates is not a leaping into the dark — but a subtle seeing in the dark, a kind of spiritual night vision that allows one to see with inner certainty that the elusive golden thread glimpsed from within actually does lead somewhere."

<https://parabola.org/2017/01/31/the-way-of-the-heart-cynthia-bourgeault/>

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The fruits of an inquiry into truth

Kabir Helminski

"We have subtle subconscious faculties we are not using. Beyond the limited analytic intellect is a vast realm of mind that includes psychic and extrasensory abilities; intuition; wisdom; a sense of unity; aesthetic, qualitative and creative faculties; and image-forming and symbolic capacities. Though these faculties are many, we give them a single name with some justification for they are working best when they are in concert. They comprise a mind, moreover, in spontaneous connection to the cosmic mind. This total mind we call "heart." He continues "Awakening the heart, or the spiritualized mind, is an unlimited process of making the mind more sensitive, focused, energized, subtle, and refined, of joining it to its cosmic milieu, the infinity of love."

Quoted by Bourgeault and original in Kabir Helminski, *Living Presence: A Sufi Guide to Mindfulness and the Essential Self* (New York: Tarcher/Penguin Books, 1993), p157-158

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