

The TEST for TRUTH

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Nothing moves the human mind more than the reality of Truth.

The question posed by Pontius Pilate...

"What is truth?" still haunts our psyche.

Today, **Truth is** *Questioned* by the **Skeptics**
Ignored by the **Mystics**
Condemned by the **Existentialist**
Redefined by the **Post-Modernist**.

But Truth is foundational to the human soul!

Without Truth we cannot make a meaningful choice in a world of conflicting ideas. Plato insists

"As the heart is designed for love, the mind is designed for the truth."

In the mind of Augustine, three elements will never die. Love, beauty and truth. As the Sun shines the light, the mind reflects the Truth.

At the depth of our being there is a quest, a longing to know the answer. Truth is priceless. We may deny it, but we cannot avoid it. We may ignore it, but we cannot escape it. We may reject it, but we cannot silence it. We are designed for it and our hearts are restless until we find it. It is too valuable to be trivial, too profound to be simple, too precious to be mindless.

Sir Winston Churchill understood it when he wrote

"Truth is incontrovertible. Panic may resent it, ignorance may deride it, malice may distort it, but there it is."

The Chicago philosopher Mortimer J. Adler declares

"Truth is a correspondence or agreement between our mind and reality."

Truth is fundamental to any form of thinking.

No thinking is meaningful unless our thinking is grounded in truth. Thinking would be pointless if there is no truth to think with. Truth is the essence of life.

But In our complex world of ideas, how do we choose between Truth and falsehood, Reality from fantasy, Facts from fiction? How do we know what is true?

How do we discover it? What is the nature of Truth?

As we reflect on Truth, its worth recalling Plato's wisdom

"Peoples beliefs are often formed by persuasion rather than by rational reflection."

Easy 'believism' is the greatest mental disease of our time.

People approach the house of Truth by various doors.

The Door of **Faith**

The Door of **Experience**

The Door of **Reason** and

The Door of **Science**.

We will examine the 4 doors and test their credibility.

1. The Door of FAITH.

Today many try the Door Faith. For those who take this approach, truth is not a matter of the mind (logic) but a matter of the heart (emotion). Philosophers use the term 'Fideism' to describe the approach of these believers.

Soren Kierkegaard, Joseph Campbell, Shirley MacLaine, W.T. Stace, D.T. Suzuki, Alan Watt, Karl Barth, Madam Blavatsky, to name a few, knock on the door of faith. For the Fideist truth is not a matter of reason but beyond reason. Truth is not something to reason but a reality we encounter. Not a matter of the mind but a matter of the heart. They suggest reason is inadequate, irrelevant, impersonal.

In the light of this one must not look to reason for help but turn away from it and trust your subjective senses. The fideist believes faith is greater than reason. Faith creates its own justification. Reason is irrelevant and cannot lead us to faith therefore the path of faith is better than the path of reason.

Soren Kierkegaard the father of Existentialism notes

"Faith is an objective uncertainty held fast by an infinite passion."

Following his Guru, Karl Barth declares

"Faith takes reason by the throat and strangles the brute."

Is the door of faith valid?

Is faith a sufficient ground for truth?

In reality, to accept faith without reason is blind.

If reason is a valuable guide in all areas of life why reject it on ultimate matters?

If common sense makes good sense, why seek nonsense?

How do we choose the right faith?

How do we know we are not mistaken?

How do we escape the charge of self-delusion?

How do we choose between sanity and insanity, belief in God & Satan, between KFC & KGB?

The Fideist cannot know if his faith is true and he cannot convince others that his faith is worth believing.

If a belief cannot be tested it is untrustworthy.

You have no logical grounds for knowing if your faith is true.

"One who holds a true belief or faith without understanding is just like a blind man who happens to take the right road." PLATO

The Fideist shouts without reason, invites without evidence, believes without proofs.

An untestable faith is untrustable.

- The faith of the Fideist is **arbitrary and subjective**.
- There are many **competing and conflicting faiths**
- No evidence** is provided for faith.
- A Blind faith is **no better than a false faith**.

2. The Door of EXPERIENCE

Ever since the birth of Existentialism and the rise of dogmatic Scientism people have moved to the realm of nonreason to support their beliefs. This Touchy-Feely, better 'felt' than 'told', has a wide following.

Experience is better than reason. Ernest Hemingway states

"What is good is what I feel good after,
what is bad is what I feel bad after.

Reason, they argue is cold, dry and impersonal - too abstract, not concrete enough.

In the light of this one must not look to reason for guidance but turn away from it and trust your subjective senses. What matters is not the light in your head, but the heat is your heart. One philosopher calls it

"The liver-quaver syndrome... I believe because of the shiver in my liver, or the blessing in my bosom."

For the experientialist truth is not a matter of the mind but a matter of the heart. The burning in the heart is greater than the thinking in the mind. Truth is not what you think but how you feel. The experience of God is far greater than the mere talk of his existence, so goes the thinking. Existence precedes essence. Karl Jaspers, the existential philosopher, declares,

"A 'proved God' is no God"

However, Experience is too subjective to act as an objective truth. It is conflicting and contradictory.

An experience is not the truth, but the result of the truth, an effect not the cause.

Therefore, Experience cannot act as a proof.

Experience is not self-evidence or self-interpreting. Truth is non-contradictory.

The problem with the existential approach is not its emphasis on the personal, subjective and existential but the rejection of reason. It commits mental suicide and invites people to take a leap of faith into the unknown.

It is obsessed with the heart but ignores the head.

It focuses on the subjective at the expense of the objective. The 'either-or' rather than the 'both-and'. But to glorify the 'How' at the expense of the 'What', is dancing in the dark.

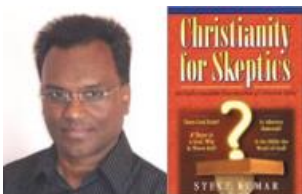
If the object is uncertain, what hope do we have that we are worshipping the true God?

What grounds do we have that our object is worthy of our trust?

Feeling is not the master of truth but a salve of human emotion. A faith without reason is a faith without hope.

- Experience is **Subjective**
- Experience is **Conflicting**
- Experience is **Individualistic**
- Experience can be **Misleading**

There is enough light in Christian faith if we would only open the door and see the wonder of truth.



Dr. Steve Kumar is an Author, Lecturer, International Speaker and Apologist committed to answering the Skeptics tough questions and equipping believers with the tools to think more about their faith and answer questions more effectively

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3. The Door of SCIENCE

There is an old story in Europe about a priest meeting a scientist. After long dialogue the scientist candidly remarked

"You give me your faith and I will give you my reason."

Horst Symanowski tells the story of a factory worker who says to his fellow worker, who is also a pastor

"Don't say 'God'. That means nothing to me...

But when you say 'Coffee', I see a color,

perceive a smell, and have already, with

the sound of the word, a taste on my tongue.

With the word 'God' I don't notice anything.

Therefore, better not say it at all"

However:

a) Science has **no moral or value base**.

It is descriptive not prescriptive.

b) Science is **limited to the observable reality**;

it studies only one aspect of reality.

c) The Empiricism of science **implies reductionism**.

d) Reality is multi-dimensional, and science cannot handle business in another domain.

Science has no monopoly on truth.

Science cannot prove science.

Only that which can be proven by science is true is unprovable by science.

4. The Door of REASON

Reason is common sense. But what is common sense?

Common sense is what makes good sense.

It is involved in every human activity.

Since the beginning of time the human mind has played a vital role in the business of life.

Reasoning is an essential part of our existence.

Reason is our human ability to make distinction.

Our ability to infer, think and choose.

Plotinus was right when he said

"He who would rise above reason falls outside of it."

We could also say

"He who would destroy logic will by logic be destroyed"

Reason is the light that shines the way to truth.

Reason is not the truth but the means to the truth.

Reason is the servant that guides faith to the house of God.

Reason does not cause faith but reason support faith.

Faith without reason is blind, and

Reason without faith is empty.

a) Reason is **Universal**

b) Reason is **Necessary**

c) Reason is **Objective**

One cold night a New York drunkard was seen walking around a lamp-post. A man asked him what he was doing.

The drunkard said, "I am looking for the key to my house."

The man joined in the search but they found nothing.

"Are you sure you lost it here?"..."No! I lost it a block away."

"Then why are you searching here?" demanded the man.

"Because there is enough light here."