

Truth and truth

In the common vernacular, there seems to be two kinds of truth; one that pertains to religious or theological beliefs, and the other that pertains to our everyday affairs and scientific issues.

In the real world of Truth, there should be no wall that separates the theological from the scientific, or the mystical from the real. Both realms should be 100% compatible. The truths of the mystical realm should be testable, repeatable, and not afraid of the light of day.

Conversely, the scientific realm should be able to explain why things sometimes seem mystical and transcendent. There shouldn't be one type of truth that applies on Sunday mornings, and another that applies on Thursday afternoons. If something's not right, it's wrong. If some theological tenet or belief doesn't hold up to scientific scrutiny or common sense, we should have the courage to challenge it, abandon it if warranted, and then keep seeking.

I believe one can only be truly enlightened if one knows the Truth. Life is too short and precious to live it based on anything less. I believe that as evolving human beings, we have the duty to discover that Truth. For a species that has the audacity to refer to itself as *Homo sapiens* (Latin for "man, the wise, or knowing"), it is incumbent upon us to discover the Truth. It is our cosmic *raison d'être*, our dharma, our responsibility to become enlightened, and live our lives accordingly. Anything less is more appropriate for *Homo credulus* (man the gullible, man the believer).

As a guide for searchers, this book revisits the major steps of my Truth-seeking journey. In essence, it's a "primate's progress"; revisiting the path I took as I evolved towards the Truth. It's a path that led me

through areas of study that are more typically associated with philosophy and science. In the end however, I believe I've arrived at a more coherent and more enlightened way to understand matters pertaining to the spirit.

Enlightenment and *Enlightenment*

Just as we can talk about two types of truth, we can talk about two types of enlightenment. The first type of enlightenment refers to the way it's commonly used in the Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism. Hinduism goes back thousands of years before the birth of Christ. Buddhism essentially evolved out of Hinduism around 600 AD. The general tenet of both of these religions is that we live amidst the Truth, but we don't quite see it or experience it. This is the same idea Paul alludes to in the book of Corinthians in the Bible, "For now we see through a glass, darkly." We know the Truth is there; but we can't quite discern it or access it. The goal of a motivated Hindu or Buddhist is to become enlightened, to be able to acknowledge the presence and activity of the true nature and underlying forces of the universe; to see beyond the "dark glass."

This type of enlightenment may be acquired in slightly different ways by different followers, but in general, it requires years of meditation with eyes closed. It may also entail contemplating the meaning of "koans"; riddles and "nonsense questions" such as, "What is the sound of one hand clapping?." When the student actually attains enlightenment, it is said to be accompanied by a state of ecstasy and bliss, and impossible to describe in words.

The second way that the term enlightenment is used is as in "The Age of Enlightenment." This was a period of time in Europe, roughly

speaking from the early 1600s to the late 1700s. There was a general revolt against the authority of religious dogma. The basic assumptions of the day were challenged and questioned by people like Rene Descartes, Isaac Newton, Voltaire, Spinoza, and Benjamin Franklin. As a consequence, new discoveries and new ways of thinking about the world emerged. This new, “eyes open” mentality brought about great progress in areas such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, astronomy and biology. This new approach to the Truth was more direct, intellectual and hands-on.

In contrast to the first type of enlightenment, this second type has a “sound of two hands clapping” quality. It didn’t rely on blind obedience to dictates of revered masters. To the contrary, it was predicated upon doubting, experimenting, critical questioning and skepticism.

I’ll talk about more about enlightenment in the final section of the book. For now, I should say that the goal of my search, and the direction of this book is one leading towards a third type of enlightenment. It’s basically a hybrid version that I call Enlightened Realism. In essence, it applies the critical thinking and questioning of the latter type of enlightenment, to issues pertaining to the former type.

The underlying premise or contention behind Enlightened Realism is that there can only be one Truth.

For example, when discussing the topic of the origin of the universe or the origin of man, there are generally two schools of thought. One is based in theology. Christians, for example, taking the words of the Bible as literal, contend that man was created by God on the sixth day of creation, and that the first woman was created from Adam’s rib.

The second school of thought is based on observation and scientific theories. The prevailing scientific theory for the origin of man is that he evolved from primates. Primates evolved from simpler mammals,