

# FULLNESS OF TRUTH

***ARE YOU A  
TRUTH SEEKER?***

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# Introduction

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*What is it for you in this book?*

This book is not for everyone. This book, as the subtitle “**Are you a Truth Seeker?**” says, is an attempt to help you identify if you are one, or if you could be someone who have the potential to become one, or if you are in the process of becoming one, or if you are someone who chooses to live life in the assumptions, delusions, fallacies that shape your perspective and thus your perception of all things. Learning about it would give you a chance of becoming a truth seeker, or a better one, if you choose to. In my little experience of life, I have known for sure, that the lie has many fans and the truth has many haters. “*Sach kadwa hain*” (*the truth is bitter*), says a popular proverb in Hindi. It implies that the lies are always sweet. But not everything that is bitter a truth and neither is everything sweet a lie. “*Satyameva jayate*” (*Truth alone triumphs*), is the national motto of India. Now, the argument is, can that which is victorious be considered the truth? So, there is an alternative proposed that the “Truth triumphs in the end.” The confusion now expands about what is to be considered the truth and what otherwise till the end happens. If it was a movie, it would eventually end in less than a couple of hours or maybe a little more when it comes to some exceptions or when it is Indian cinema. But, in life, the end of what or who will signify the end when truth is victorious for us to identify the truth is itself a mystery. End of a relationship, end of a person’s life, end of the year, end of the age, end of the era,

or end of the world or even the end of time? When will the truth be victorious and stands out from all the lies for someone to recognize the truth? The victory podium wouldn't have first truth and second truth and third truth, if somehow, we manage to be at the end of whatever when truth finally wins. There is only one "Truth", and the rest all are lies. Now does that mean, we would not be able to identify the truth in all the journey of life till the end? Does that mean that we must live all our life believing some or the other lie, till we reach the end where the truth is revealed, and that too hopefully speaking? "*Mere ko kya karne ka hain (what do I care)?*", you could say. "*Ye sab Maya (IAST: māyā) hain*" (*All this is an illusion*), you could interject. "*I have many other issues in life to worry about*", you could evade. "*What's in it for me?*", you could question. Recalling the movie, "***The Matrix***" (*go watch it if you were out of the world till now to understand a few of the following lines*). Now, to take the blue pill or the red pill is a major decision. The people who have the potential excuses I put in above and similar ones would not even come to the place of the choosing between the blue pill and the red pill. Fantastical as it may seem, but I believe there is a something to it. The theatricals might be staged and could be considered as just for entertainment purposes. But I think, there is a choice for everyone whether to take the blue pill or the red pill. The blue pill is comfortable as there is no change in the existential state of life. The red pill is complicated as there is a mystery to it and though it is enticing, has enough recognizable risk to tend to keep one away from it. Both pills are about entering into a point of no return, and it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to making the choice of change. Are you fearful of the unknown? Are you confident with what is known in your experience of life and wouldn't choose to venture into

unknown territory? Are you habituated or comfortable with what your current life situation is? Now, will you maintain the status quo, or challenge it.

***Will you choose to be Thomas A. Anderson (or whatever your name is) or will you choose to be Neo (or whatever you truly are)?***

## Position Yourself for Seeking the Truth

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The world that we live in is built and operating on systems, which are in turn are built upon notions, theories, principles, which evolved over time with the growing of knowledge. Over the ages, many systems upon which the world and its peoples operated have changed, and rather in some cases, even have become the opposite of what it was, years, or ages ago. At one point of time, the earth was considered the centre around which the sun and the moon revolve, but later, it became to know that the earth revolves around the sun. At one point of time in the past, science was considered “magic and witchcraft” by religion and at a later point of time religion was called “magic and witchcraft” by science, although the same definitions weren’t used. One was considered rational and practical at one point of time and at another, the other was the one which the majority approved to be rational and practical. Well, both claims to be truthful and make “truth statements” and to be seeking the truth and revealing it. Both have claims to be both systematic and systemic to address the matters concerning what the truth is. How much of these is one exposed to and indoctrinated or dogmatized, positions them in their perception of what the truth is.

These are not the only systems, although, they are a couple of the major ones which shape the reality of the perception of the truth in this world. There are cultures, ancestral traditions, governments and legal and constitutional

frameworks (both at the macro and micro levels, not just the political or territorial levels), family heritage, regional history and many such systems of the world which influence one with their projections and strings attached to define the perception of the truth and in doing so influence what one would subscribe to as the truth. Most just go with the existing system(s) and follow that pattern and not challenge it. Not even about challenging it, it is quite difficult for most to even think about questioning the existing pattern to seek the truth of it.

There are thus, therefore many versions and revisions of the projections of the truth, which are floating around, promoted by such systems, which are operating either independently or in conjunction with other systems to shape a customized variant of the perception of truth. Uncountable of such variants are in the open either trying to captivate one to “subscribe and follow” or for someone to “search, view and like” as per their personal interests.

**You, my dear reader,** are adhering, or conforming, or complying to, some of these systems, notions, beliefs, theories, principles, whether it is knowingly or unknowingly, whether consciously or unconsciously, whether choosing to agree to it or by even choosing not to disagree or oppose it. The system and order (or even disorder) that you have in your life is something customized by you and for you by borrowing from existing and prevalent systems and could even be from extinct systems revived and renewed for the contemporary era. To elucidate, one could be replicating the life of his/her father/mother in a positive way or in a negative way. One could be doing/handling stuff the exact same way they have done. One could follow the methods of their ancestors to the

dot in how they live their life. It could be the same addiction of alcohol, or it could be the same good habit of eating healthy food. One could be replicating your teacher or any person you idolize. The pattern is replicated whether good or bad and that is how a person is shaped in his personality.

***Now, of what all that has influenced you to have shaped you, has been consciously received and acknowledged? How much of it is otherwise? Have you mused upon it? Why are you who you are?***

**What are the systems, notions, beliefs, theories, principles you adhere to consciously?**

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**What are the systems, notions, beliefs, theories, principles you adhere to unconsciously?**

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**What do you conform to, consciously, by not disagreeing or opposing it?**

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I strongly believe that you must have identified at least one system, notion, belief, theory or principle which you adhere, conform or comply to. Especially, the ones which you are consciously following though you do not agree to it but for the reason on not opposing it.

***Doing so and not just reading through as a work of fiction, will help you to get the maximum benefit from this book—which is my intention in writing it in the very first place.***

The authority of the government and the systems of the government, the religion that you follow, could fall into this category. It could also be scientific knowledge gained from formal education to which we unconsciously agree to. The apple didn't fall on my head, and I didn't discover or deduce gravity all by myself. A design was taught to us to be the

character in the alphabet 'A' and that another design 'B' which follows it and so on. Why is it so? It is out of the scope of the learners, and they must take it just by the face value of the teacher.

JUST TRUST THE TEACHER IS RIGHT AND LEARN IT BY HEART.

I am not saying that is wrong. At that level, that is what it is supposed to be. Knowing what something is about, is the basic step. But why it is so is altogether another story and at a higher level. Not that it is for everyone to bother about that, just like this book is not for everyone. Now, how many of you, pursue such in at least in one subject.

I would say that those which you submit to knowingly and willingly would comprise only a minor part of all your thinking, beliefs and actions that you are living your life with. I hope that you will be able to have a clearer picture by the time you finish reading this book.

The more of the unconscious or non-resistant submission to the world systems, you do, the more of the slave you are to it, who is mechanically living under some authority to serve their purpose and advance their agenda. In most cases, you will have to force yourself out of the box to even think about thinking about the Truth.

How much of a slave do you think you are to the existing systems of the world? Write down the major ones you could identify.

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Those who are conformed to the world and the systems and thinking patterns of it cannot digest the truth. The world dulls the mind and convinces it that the truth is improbable, impractical and impossible. It projects that the Truth is a utopian fiction found only in the creative art forms and literature. Most of those who even think about what the truth is, would attribute it possibly to an ancient past or a distant future but never to the present. It is attributed to something mystic and often considered to be associated with 'God' of the concept of 'God'. Whether it is concerning an individual, an object or the entire world or for that matter or even their own selves, people's minds are programmed to be judgemental. Good or bad, right or wrong, facts and figures is what we base our decisions and directions upon in navigating through life in this superfast, super busy world. These judgements are mostly based on what appears and, ironically, everyone knows appearances can be quite deceptive. The quicker the reaching to the judgement about anything, the tendency is to move on to other things keeping someone free from being tangled and stuck, is one of the opinions and philosophies of life that I heard from people. Thus, we evade what the truth of the matter is and occupy ourselves with stuff to keep ourselves busy with carrying on with our life. This avoids the pain of pursuing the truth or sometimes, though you know a deeper truth, choose to believe the lie which is comfortable.

The pursuit of the truth is left to philosophers (or students of philosophy) and most of the time, one is advised to stay in the norm followed by a majority of the people (or even a small set of people) in the world. That too, mostly, is being studied as an academic discipline, the research of which doesn't reach or benefit the average person. It could also be left to the 'gurus' of religion, whatever they are called

subject to their religion and seeking the truth, for the common man, generally is in only listening to what these 'gurus' have to say. Well, science, in its own aspect, is a form of religion, in my perspective and the scientists thereof are the 'gurus' who proclaim and profess the truth and their perspective is the pursuit of the truth for many in their busy business of life.

JUST TRUST THE "GURU" IS RIGHT AND LEARN IT BY HEART.

Now, will that be something I agree upon? Not always, as it was in the toddler state with the ABC's, in my humble opinion. There definitely will come a point and a level when, I believe, one must take it with a pinch of salt. But if our judgements are based on what we see or what we hear, or by what appears, or what the 'gurus' proclaim, there is a lot of deception in the world and one might be easily deceived and diverted from the truth of it. 'The traditional learning systems, whether formal or informal, gets a person to just trust the 'guru' just as you trust the 'teacher' in the kindergarten stage. Now, I believe, it is the responsibility of the listener, or reader to ensure that though they listen to what the 'guru' says and think for oneself and verify the veracity of it or gain deeper insight and understanding based on that. That, I believe, when done empowers the follower of the 'guru' in the pursuit of seeking the truth to become a leader to those trailing behind from just being a follower and eventually might even become a 'guru' himself/herself. I am no 'guru' but someone trying to be a student and can only speak out of my current level and my perspective changes as I grow in my knowledge and understanding of the truth. Many of you might be at a higher level than where I am as I am writing this book and I would love to learn from them as I have learned from many

stalwarts in the past. Many might be still getting to where I am and I intend to get them to a better clarity in the understanding of the process, by means of sharing that which I gained in my little experience of life, till now.

For those who are yet to recognize, the world is filled with propaganda, even to the level of influencing a child to like or purchase a small chocolate. That is how the field of marketing and media operates in the world. Seldom does someone reveal the bad or harmful aspects of a product while they are marketing it. They are not lying, just hiding the full truth of it, which the major majority is anyway not interested in, which is why almost no one questions or opposes it. Only the part which will get the product sold is emphasized (or even overemphasized).

The fine print is often, I assume, to be at least one third of the font size and when being spoken of is one third of the volume or played at 3x speed just for the sake of legally needing a disclaimer.

Plausible deniability is often used in every public facing, public support dependent person or institution or organization to try to convince the public that it is not self-interests but the interest and benefit of the public that these have or are operating when questionable operations are exposed. Whether it is the corporate, for-profit organizations or their non-profit counterparts, they all claim to be for the benefit of the public at large. Now, how much of that do you think it is true? The corporates claim to provide employment increase the economy and benefit the country and the public by that while the non-profits claim to directly benefit the public by addressing the needs of the common man and the least of them. Well, no one likes the selfish ones who take all the benefit and the profit

especially, while bleeding you dry. Do you? Well, the communist people centred ideology, from the little I know, is based on the above sentence. Is that the perfect solution? Or is it also based on the social tactic and deception of plausible deniability as the others? I am not a supporter of that as well and I choose to take even that with a pinch of salt. No system is perfect yet in this imperfect world that we live in with our imperfections as it is our own imperfections that feed, sustain and increase these systems is my humble layman opinion.

My dear reader, what are your thoughts about it? You might be a fierce corporate or a fiery communist or even of any such systems operating in the world, I believe that you would support it until you are under it and receiving a benefit out of it in cash or in kind. And if that is the case, you are not bothered about the truth and though you recognize it and know it, you would turn a blind eye to it.

In my little experience of life, I have seen that the one oppressed under any system or at the least the one who is indoctrinated that he is oppressed for being right or for being 'superior', will hate the other enough to rebel against the prevalence of it and subscribe to a newer system or a newer truth from the previously established truth in his life. Those who are benefitting or prospering with the 'truth' within the box of any system would partake of it and support it and wouldn't even think about anything beyond that 'truth' of the system. For the profitable venture, the intelligent person would connect to and subscribe to all such systems to the level in which yields maximum profit.

If such is your thinking, then most possibly, you would be oscillating between systems, opportunistically, and your pursuit of the truth and the subscription of the truth will

always be biased to the benefits or profits gained. Political ideologies, I believe operate primarily on that and seldom have I found 'true believers' of the ideology, but manipulators who make and take the maximum benefit they can from it. Some may be taking a lot of benefit from such systems, not just the political ideologies, and some might be just satisfied with the little they receive or hope to receive from it. Such would never be on the pursuit of the truth because they are stuck in the system they are in for their survival. Not to judge them, but they are infants who are not mature in the body and in the mind to survive for themselves and we have all been there. They cannot afford to pursue the truth without suffering a loss. A toddler cannot afford to pursue the truth of why some design is called the first of the alphabet 'A' except at the expense of losing the foundation to becoming literate to pursue education and knowledge and eventually, hopefully, get into the pursuit of the truth (which, is not taught in the education systems of the world, that I know of). All that they can, if they choose to, is to grow in knowledge within the system and pursue the truth of the system and get to the top of it and gain the maximum possible benefit from the system. One could settle at the top, once there, continuing reaping the benefits of the system, all the rest of their life. One could then even grow bigger to become ingrained and integrated into every aspect of the system and even become bigger than the system to be idolized and immortalized to the system. Till the system exists, such people exist, though they are gone. These are pioneers, world changers, who change the dynamics of the world systems. These are some who created new systems or have perfected an existing system to the maximum possible perfection for that time. Mahatma Gandhi is one that I think is such a stalwart in the

history of India and of the world. He chose to go out of the box and the traditional approach of resistance and pioneered another system which yielded results. He realized that the highest possible solution within the box was not the best and the greater solution was bigger than the box. The problem itself was synonymous with the box. The revolutionaries in history earlier chose the violent and bloody path when they went against kings and queens and kingdom and that system of governance was broken and new systems formed. Breaking the limits of an existing system and if necessary, even breaking off the system to birth a newer better system is what truth seekers tend to do. They think, experiment, validate and follow to lead change. Their perspective is not limited to one existing system or sphere, and their intention or interest is not selfish. Of course, once success or benefits are visible, there will always be those of selfish interests who would use the same person/people and the newer system for their own personal benefits. That is what has happened to Kings and Revolutionaries, Kingdoms and Freedom Fighters, Dictators and Democracies, Capitalists and Communists etc. Once one system trumps the other, and vice versa, but again, corruption might creep up, and selfish interests curtail the progress into a better truth. The system that is supported by the majority will rule over the people, while other systems could either take benefit from it or sit in the opposition, attempting to trump it at the next opportunity. The political parties and the government are an obvious example wherein; there are coalition governments comprising parties who fought against each other ideologically during the elections. The leaders and the followers jumping sides when greater benefit is on the other side is a common sight in the political landscape of India.

A truth seeker must carry the torch forward, beyond systems, beyond newer systems without the corruption of selfish interests and personal gain from obstructing or hindering their pursuit of the truth. Now that is a challenge many wouldn't want to face; however pure their intentions might be. Within the purview of a single system in the world, there is a potential support for the pursuit of the truth within the system or sphere. For example, scientific research might be funded and supported otherwise to uncover and discover deeper aspects of the truth of the existing knowledge framework which defines the system or part of the system of science. Similarly other systems also might be having benefactors who would support the betterment of the levels of truth deduced within the system for getting greater benefit from the system. But when it comes to the aspects of the truth which are beyond one single system or structure of systems and deals with the entirety across all the prevalent systems that govern the world. Seeking the truth in one particular system or for one particular scenario or problem is quite common and that ends when the solution is identified. It is more of a question and an answer type of scenario. It is more focused on finding the solution to a problem, rather than seeking the truth of it. It is quite natural and each and every one of us have done that. That is more of firefighting rather than seeking the truth.

Do you consider that you are firefighting or seeking the truth? Do you think you are positioned for seeking the truth, in being not limited by the existing systems and biased by selfish interests? Are you willing to break out of a system in your pursuit of truth to deduce a better system? Are you

willing to continue beyond revolutionizing a system or devising a better system and break out of even that to continue the pursuit of the truth? Like an athlete, would you break your limits and break your own record and revise it and revise it multiple times to even get to a world record and then continue pursuing it and bettering it. What would be your endurance in the pursuit of the truth?

## Truth or TRUTH?

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*What is the truth?*

*Collins Dictionary defines the meaning of the truth as “The truth about something is all the facts about it, rather than things that are imagined or invented.”*

This is an interesting way of putting it. In the colloquial usage, the word ‘truth’ is used in judging a particular fact about something or someone in a scenario and not necessarily all the facts. Even in the early levels of formal education, ‘True or False’ questions are used to ascertain one single fact. For example:

***The Elephant is a mammal. True / False.***

The answer is true, and it endorses only one fact about the Elephant and not all.

What I believe is that such usage of the words ‘true’ or ‘truth’ to refer to acknowledgement of singular facts of a subject or object has diluted the concept of what the Truth is. It does proclaim factual knowledge which can actually be useful in our understanding of something. But if the majority of scientists or the scientific bodies or the government or any such authority chooses to rename “mammals” to take for example, “superior”, the above statement will immediately become false. You, ***my dear reader***, especially if you are India, or are connected to India

may be aware of other scenarios where something is named “superior” already. Not just India, and not just in the present time, if you observe the world affairs, there are many scenarios where in some “superior” tags have been given. The perspective, the equations, the relationships, the associations, the connections, the dealings, etc., and everything changes immediately the moment such a simple change is made.

Superficially changing the terminology without an actual change is just a farce. It might just be good for appearance.

For clarity, I can give you this example.

***A man should first become a husband on the inside and then marry to be a husband or else he still would be a bachelor who is married, but is referred to as being a husband, though he is not.***

The name tags can be changed and can be many. They could be names by relation, titles of job, they could be adjectives, they could be superlatives or comparatives or pejoratives. They could be praiseworthy or insulting, indicating greatness or wretchedness. They could be self-attributed or adjudged by others. But just the name tag doesn’t mean that is what actually the truth is. It could indicate a truth or even a deception intended for manipulation.

This book is my attempt to bring forth the mess that is for a truth seeker when considering the “Truth” prevailing in the world into consideration for any truth seeker. Doing so, I intend to share my experience of challenges, confusion, resistance, etc., that I have faced in my quest for reaching the fullness of truth. Partial truth and half-truth are more dangerous than a lie as they cause more confusion and tend to deviate us from the actual truth. This is because most of

the time, with most people, when it is the partial truth or half-truth, the remaining part of the truth is actually addressed by conjecture and assumptions rather than seeking to know exactly what it is that will complete the truth. Teachings of a 'guru', the expert, can be helpful for that present time, but eventually even that would be for growing to it and pursuing even further truth, is what I believe.

When it is concerning if someone is true or not, it is quite complicated. That topic is almost never considered except in the factual concepts in very specific scenarios. When in a scenario in the courts of the law of the land, only what is presented by the parties is taken into consideration. Facts could be falsified. False witnesses, documents and evidence created and shown to be the truth. A lie can be judged to be the truth and a truth can be perceived and adjudged to be a lie, as long as it is presented in an appropriate and approvable manner. The story of the "Naked Truth and the Well-dressed Lie"<sup>i</sup> says much in that matter. Whoever the author of that is, understood the absolute basic in seeking the Truth. He/she understood that it is not by popular opinion or liking or the pleasing presentation of it which signifies the Truth, but most often (maybe even always) when it shows something to be the Truth, it is possibly a lie.

*"A lie told often enough becomes the truth."* This profound quote by Vladimir Lenin encapsulates the power of dishonesty and manipulation to sway public opinion.

Whether you are on a quest to know the truth about yourself or are in a situation where in you are seeking to identify the truthfulness of what someone said or who someone is beyond the appearances, it is a gargantuan task. There are so many facets, connections and strings attached

in such an exercise and most often the seeker would at some stage be exhausted to be able to progress further and settle for that level of truth and cease from pursuing deeper aspects of it.

It seems like it is an unending quest which would take infinite amount of time and effort with no possibility for a mortal man to achieve in a lifetime. But still, 'gurus' of all fields are dedicating their lives to seeking out deeper things and have gained a lot of new knowledge and have achieved lots of things that were termed impossible by previous generations. They are standing on the shoulders of stalwarts and building upon what those have built in the previous generations and for the benefit of the coming generations and for them to build upon. Many learn of such knowledge at a particular level of education, whether formal or informal, and use that to get things done, be employed in a job or do a business using that level of knowledge and earn their livelihood or gain wealth. Most of them stop seeking the knowledge or stop learning and will live all their lives at that level. Though some are still learners, their focus is only as required for their situation, whether the job requires it or there is some other need, or just as much as needed to make their life better, whether it is financially or in any other way. The scope of the learning is narrowed down and that is how the formal education system is designed and has made an impact on the thinking patterns of the common man.

Albert Einstein writes in his autobiographical notes<sup>ii</sup> about this. ***“It is, in fact, nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry; for this delicate little plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of***

*freedom; without this it goes to wreck and ruin without fail.*", he says. If you are a Truth Seeker, then you wouldn't be bound by these modern methods of instruction, although, formal education may be the basis of your quest for the truth, but that is not necessary for your quest for the Truth. Those standard methodologies might put you in a box and a frog in a well is limited till it thinks out of the box. There is a truth of the well which is, or at the least appears, to be true within the confines of the well. Well, till you are out of the well, in the physical or at least in the mind, --thinking out of the box, -- that truth might be sufficient but not the fullness of truth.

Even scientists have their boxes and so does the society. Religion has its own set of boxes and within each of those boxes are individuals who seek the truth within the box they are in. Any individual will have their own personal box which is a composition of the boxes of family, society, science, religion or such in which they contain their personalised versions of the original content of each of these bigger boxes. Most of the time, these are intermingled and sometimes conflicting with each other as to what is to be considered the truth. Interestingly, each person has a choice on how to balance these (or even imbalance these) to avoid tension and confusion. Some may choose science completely over religion or family over society or vice versa to avoid the conflict. They could choose to keep these boxes apart and operate in the boxes according to the rules of the box they are operating in, for avoiding conflict. They could also choose to overlap different boxes in their commonality they have leaving apart those aspects which contradict each other and in doing so keep themselves at peace within themselves. They could also choose to overlap different boxes in their contradictions and in doing so be in confusion

and conflict within themselves. I find it quite interesting to have seen, observed and interacted with people who live in a constant conflict within themselves. It is a self-defeating endeavour, and it is quite amusing to me that these people are in such a constant stress and still choose not to seek the truth. Those who are at peace with each other by overlapping these boxes in their commonalities are already comfortable and so it is not much of a wonder that they choose not to be a truth seeker.

***Which of these categories do you fall under?***

Are you at peace and comfort within yourself with regard to these boxes?

My guess says there is little chance in you being a truth seeker. But in my little experience of life, I have seen such people who have become truth seekers. Do you consider yourself a truth seeker?

Are you in confusion and constant conflict and stress regarding these boxes?

My guess says you must be a truth seeker. But if you are not, I wonder why? I would love to know, what reason, logic or weakness or may be a problem you have because of which you are not a truth seeker.

## SELF

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When it comes to the aspects of the truth, I would consider the matters of the self are of prime importance. Not just about being important, they are foundational to the perception of what the truth is. There are perceptions of the truth and then there is the truth. And a person's perception is precisely shaped according to a person's self. Though that would be the starting point of the quest for seeking the fullness of truth, most would adapt and fix themselves to how they perceive the truth.

Now, the self is quite a complicated subject. Medical science has a lot of theories and a lot of methodologies in addressing the aspect of self. Pseudo-science, as it is called has even much more material than the popularly accepted and endorsed medical science. Philosophy, by default, has a lot of discourses on the self along with almost all other things, though mostly in academic or similar fields. It is quite close to seeking the truth in my opinion, but I think it is more of seeking wisdom and understanding rather than seeking the truth. The word 'Philosophy' itself literally means 'love of wisdom'. In my humble opinion, philosophers seek wisdom but not necessarily the truth. Wisdom is good and offers solid support in the quest for the truth. So, I consider that a philosopher, who in most cases is a continuous student of philosophy need not necessarily be a truth seeker but being one could be useful in quickly adapting themselves into becoming a truth seeker. Religion has their own set of perspectives about the concept of self. These define the self, individually within themselves and in relation to others and

in the light of the concepts of God. Some even address the aspects of the society and the world and the whole universe in their definitions of the self. Some are more abstract and some more concrete in their definitions. But still there is a lot of ambiguity in the definition of the self and it is the interest and the pursuit of the individual as to how deep they would venture into identifying the truth about themselves.

### **Know Thyself**

“Know Thyself” is a maxim which is found across cultures and philosophies and texts revered to be sacred by the people following the religions of the world. Gaining Self-knowledge is prioritized in that. Knowledge about something gives us something to relate to that thing. Perspectives change as the knowledge changes, and as we grow into deeper knowledge about that subject, our understanding also changes. When it is about our own self, not many venture out into self-discovery though it happens in the early stages of life by default. There comes a stage of stagnation in the aspect of self-discovery and that could come in any age group. Most, I believe get there as they are leaving adolescence stage and the individuality of the person comes to maturity. This need not be the case, and it could be earlier and even in later stages of life when the person is in the pursuit of self-discovery through gaining self-knowledge. Consciously being on a path of self-discovery is something which is seldom done without going through some traumatic experience in life is what I have observed in my little experience of people. Heartbreak, loss of loved ones, failure in exams or any other venture, financial loss, divorce, dishonour, etc, when faced by a person, pushes them to re-adjust their definition of their

own self and could even trigger them to get them going on a path of self-discovery at least for a brief period of time. I believe that there are such phases of self-discovery which happen whether unconsciously or consciously across the spectrum of the life of a person. In all such, there is an exponential increase in self-knowledge which redefines the self-image and reshapes the person and in doing so even the life of person changes drastically.

***You, my dear reader,*** might have encountered such people who let go of the old self and have become so new, that you wonder if it was the same person, you knew earlier. Maybe you yourself have gone through that process and have looked back at your own self and your life of the past and have wondered about who you have become. Now, did that just change your perspective about yourself and about everything else or did it make you embark on a journey of seeking the fullness of truth? You might have become a better version of yourself or even the worst. In either case, there is a possibility that you might have started on a journey of seeking the fullness of truth.

***Can you recall the scenarios or phases of life that made you to consciously seek the truth?***

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***How has that changed you?***

Better/Worse | Stronger /Weaker?

***What is the longest time you sought out the truth in such scenarios or phases of your life?***

- a. 1 day                      b. 1 week                      c. 1 month  
d. 1 year                      e. greater than 1 year

In my personal experience, I have started thinking about what the truth is after I began wondering about life and death and the purpose of existence as well as the method of existence. When my maternal grandmother died when I was nine years of age, I was exposed for the first time to the concept of death. I did not quite understand what the mourning was, but way back then, I understood that she was gone and there is nothing else anybody can do about it. What was her life, I mused upon, from beginning to the end. Was that successful, was that happy, was that content, was that victory, was that an accomplishment, was that right, was that good, or was that otherwise. My young mind had a lot of questions. None or maybe a very few explanations to them, but no definitive answers. I had the privilege of seeing

and learning from a skip level generation and those were the wisest of all that I knew. They had their philosophies of life, their worldly wisdom and methods, their traditional knowledge, their spiritual tenets, their religious doctrines and over all their own outlook and perspective of life and death. I fed my mind with all such as I observed them and interacted with them and processed all that. The most interesting thing that I observed was that there was a point where even the wisest of all that I knew had a block and could not go any deeper than that, and that thing fascinated me. They were saturated or may be even supersaturated. They could not take even a little more of the knowledge of the truth. They ceased from seeking the truth and finalized what they would subscribe to as the truth. Truth about themselves, about life, about others, about the world and its affairs, about the universe, about God, about death and some even about the afterlife.

In my perspective and understanding, when one comes to such a state and stage, they are no longer living, though they are alive, they are dead to whatever it is that they have finalized and chosen to subscribe to as the truth, and if it is about all things, then they are as good as dead altogether. Any person can be defined as dead by such a definition in any single area or multiple areas and at any stage of their life, even the earliest of them. Every one of us have gone through such death, multiple times, in multiple occasions, even from when we were infants. Well, I am not saying this in a bad connotation. The term “death” is considered to carry a “grave” meaning (please excuse the pun). Some of you, ***my dear readers***, might take that in an offensive or a hard way and I ask you to please bear with me as I explain what I mean. The wise ones of you might have already understood the point that I intend to make and maybe you

can take a tea break along with those who didn't understand and are having tea to relieve the headache. Just kidding.

For an infant, weaning from milk is a sort of death. But moving on to solid food is life after death. If that “life after death” of moving to consuming solid food is not taken as they “die” to drinking milk for sustenance, they will grow weaker and ultimately really die the death (the physical one). So, I believe, as a child you have gone through that process successfully and much more of such so you are reading this book. You were also feeding on a lot of information, knowledge, etc to your mind right from the beginning and gaining understanding and wisdom. Now in that if you have gone through formal education levels, then you must have weaned off kindergarten and then the primary and secondary and higher secondary and all such levels as you moved on to higher levels and at some point in all those formal education levels (whatever they are called in your geographic location) till you have decided that you would stop pursuing more of the formal education. Defining in the same line of my presentation of the concept, you have died to the aspects of formal education. Now, after that, have you experienced “life after death” and continued learning? May be so, in a professional environment updating yourself with newer developments in the field and have grown to be a subject matter expert. You may have grown in professional knowledge, skills and wisdom. In all of that, which is good for your career and finances and name and fame etc., ***were you seeking the truth?***

Or was your quest only for the benefits of material success gained through that specific subject useful for your profession, which in turn affects your standard of living and how your family is positioned in the society. Or was it

because that is a pattern recognized and followed by the majority and is a societal norm for a proper life. Or was it just a basic animal instinct of the survival of the fittest in the jungle of the fast-paced, competitive world.

Now, coming back to the concept of “death” and “life after death” that I defined in the context of being a truth-seeker, how gracefully have they died to live again and to continue of the quest for seeking the truth is something I consider to be of utmost importance.

As the generic crude saying in India which justifies even any basic work and profession to be *paapi pet ke liye* (Hindi for, - ‘to satisfy the sinful belly/hunger’). In my observation, that is mostly the area in which seeking knowledge and learning is done as a replication of the pattern of the societal norms and though executed consciously is rooted in the unconscious conforming and complying to the established systems and notions of the society. But that is far from seeking the truth and is only learning and gaining knowledge in a particular field which may or may not push the person to start seeking the knowledge of the truth and in turn start seeking the Truth.

There are many other significant subjects which are important for life than just surviving or thriving financially or professionally? What about growing in knowledge and wisdom and the truth in those subjects? I have a couple of good friends one of whom is thriving on the professional and financial front while stationed at a faraway land, away family and extended family and friends and considers his life to be successful and happy. There is another who chose to stay in a job with significantly lesser income but is with his family and is geographically located very close to many/most of his loved ones. The latter one considers

himself to be successful and happy especially considering the family front and considers the former one to be a failure. The former one considers the latter one to be a failure, very interestingly, especially on the family front as he is providing better or more luxuriously for the family and is positioned strongly in terms of wealth. Now, ***dear reader***, who do you say is right?

I would say, both need to grow in the other area as well, which eventually and hopefully, I wish, they will. How they finish is another life story altogether, and it could be either for the inspiration or for the learning of others. Each of them is entitled to have their preference and have the liberty of choice as to what they focus more on or neglect or even prioritize or put on the back burner. That is based on a lot of factors as to what their upbringing suggests, or what life lessons they gained, in their experience of life for their decisions and actions to be as such.

Gaining knowledge and learning in one aspect or area and growing in it while neglecting another doesn't contribute to the wholeness of the self, is what I believe. You could be a knowledge-seeker, a wisdom-seeker, as in philosopher (or a student of philosophy), but for you to be a truth-seeker, you must be thinking in terms of wholeness is what I believe. If one's hand grows two inches longer than the other, it is clearly not called growth, but an abnormality. When we are talking about the concept of truth, I believe it is more of wholeness rather than one specific area or aspect which knowledge-seekers focus on. As the individual fingers of a hand are of different dimensions, but together they are whole, when you are seeking the truth, the knowledge of the truth is spread across knowledge of different aspects and that knowledge is at different levels

for it to be made whole to be the truth is what I tend to believe in my experience of seeking the truth. Knowledge in any single field, although it is at the highest possible level, would not be able to help our quest for seeking the truth, unless supported by knowledge in multiple realms and multiple dimensions. How much of that knowledge is contributing to the knowledge of the truth? You must have gained a lot of knowledge in your experience of life. It could be in any field of experience you have had and little or a lot, it did shape your perspective of life and of the worldly affairs. But has any of it get you to the knowledge of your own self? There might have been scenarios you have face, which brought out to your knowledge your strengths or weaknesses and have given you and understanding about your limitations. Those definitely are facts and are specific to a specific level and when you stretch yourself or train to get to a higher level, they change. A strength could become a weakness in a particular scenario. A double PhD could be rejected when applying for a job considering it to be an over qualification. A weakness, by education or training, be turned into a strength. A person with a fear of public speaking could be trained to become a powerful orator.

***In all your strengths and weaknesses, what about the truth about your own self. In all your experiences, what have you known about your own self. Muse upon it?***

This, I believe is important for anyone who is in the pursuit of the truth. Who you are, or putting it in a better way, who you know you are, what you are and where you are determines what you see or perceive to be the facts or the truth. The phrase, “Put yourself, in someone else’s shoes”, suggests that our perception of the facts and of the truth of any matter would change when our positioning changes.

What we see is based on what light is shone upon it. The phrase "in light of new facts" is used to indicate that a decision or action is influenced by new information or circumstances. It suggests that the new facts should be considered when making a decision or forming an opinion. This phrase is commonly used in various contexts, such as legal, academic, and everyday decision-making, to emphasize the importance of considering all relevant information before reaching a conclusion.

The self is dependent on almost everything else, in my humble opinion. When seeking the truth about our own self, it depends on what light is shining upon it. When considering the self, there are a lot of variations when considering individually, or when dealt relatively, in the family, or in the friends or in the society, or in the world or in the universe. As I mentioned earlier, there can be many factual expressions of the self in relation to the self, the family, friends, etc., when we are talking about the concept of truth, I believe it is more of wholeness rather than one specific area or aspect.

The term 'personality' is often used when describing or expressing the self. Personality changes based on the situation and circumstance. I remember reading a phrase in my childhood in 'The Little Lifco Dictionary', which, from the little I can recall said something like, 'When talking, be careful of where you are, what you are talking, who you are talking to and who you are talking about.' There is a deep wisdom to it is what I realize. This statement, I believe, is something that defines the volatility of the personality of any intelligent person. Britannica.com has an article<sup>iii</sup> for the term 'personality' in which a basic description says, "personality, a characteristic way of thinking, feeling, and

behaving. Personality embraces moods, attitudes, and opinions and is most clearly expressed in interactions with other people. It includes behavioral characteristics, both inherent and acquired, that distinguish one person from another and that can be observed in people's relations to the environment and to the social group."

The root word of "personality" comes from the Latin word "persona," which means "mask" or "character." The term evolved through Old French as "personalité" and Medieval Latin as "personalitatem." Thus, the etymology reflects the concept of an individual's character or identity. Every one of us wear masks to appear what we want to appear as even to our own selves.

***Now, how many masks you had been wearing or are wearing can you consciously recognize in yourself?***

A person has many roles, and one could be dad, a mom, a husband, a wife, a brother, a sister, a son, a daughter, etc., and I don't consider them necessarily to be masks, but one surely can wear them is what I believe. One example, I mentioned earlier, talks about a bachelor wearing a mask of a married man. Another meaning of 'persona' is a 'character'. Now, that is where, the phrase "All the world's a stage" from William Shakespeare's play "As You Like It," where the character Jaques reflects on the nature of life and human existence. It serves as a metaphor comparing life to a play, suggesting that people are like actors who perform different roles throughout their lives.

You, ***my dear reader***, could be one who is a very good actor and getting better at it in the daily act of life in this world. Your personality might be getting stronger and better as you are at it, adopting and adapting to the scene and the 'reel life' is the 'real life' for you and you might choose to live

and die in that, believing that it is the truth. There is no need of pursuing the truth for you as pursuing and improving the scene is the utmost goal and destiny of an actor. You could be content with the success in that in your life and in your death.

***Are you one living your life as in a stage? Are you wearing different masks and performing your roles to your best and letting the scene flow?***

The box of life, in which you are, continues and life and death do not matter. The fullness of truth doesn't matter. Until you get out of that role and out of that mask and out of that stage can you then embark on a journey to know the truth about your own self and in doing so might even continue beyond your own self and into the seeking of the fullness of truth.

The concept of self is an exhaustive study, which, how much ever is done in different fields of knowledge, ultimately lands in the courts of the individual for the final play and the final say. The phrase "as a man thinketh, so is he" originates from Proverbs 23:7, which states, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he". This proverb emphasizes that a person's thoughts and beliefs shape their character and actions. In essence, it suggests that our inner thoughts influence our outward behaviour and ultimately define who we are. A notable aphorism of René Descartes says, "I think, therefore, I am." How much ever you gain knowledge of your own self by its attributes, whether strengths or weaknesses or virtues or otherwise, until you think you are that you will not be that virtue or otherwise. There is a deep mystery just to that and I suggest you muse upon it.

There might be many opinions given by others or many reports given by analysing you by experts, and each one might be positioned in a particular way and shining a specific light upon you to deduce such opinions or judgements and give you name tags. What an X-ray might not reveal might be revealed under an MRI. What one person might not see about you might be seen by another person shining a different light on you. How do you see yourself? Because that is the light in which you will see everything and based on that is what you see as the truth. That is the most essential thing for someone to be in the pursuit of the fullness of truth. If you are looking through rose-tinted glasses, the entire world will appear pink. Now, what tint do your glasses have? The clearer the better and in seeking the fullness of the truth, I believe one must work on reducing the tint on the glasses we wear and make them clearer than before for us to see deeper levels of the truth. The truth about ourselves first, and then the rest.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

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I had a lot of chapters I thought would include in this book, but the topic of self and identity is very huge, and I can say tons of things that I have learned in my experience. But I am limiting this book, limited by time, I could give it, and I plan to continue this as a series of books and as we go deeper, I know, that it will take a lot more time for me to put my observations, thoughts and understanding into organized words, sentences and books which would have the least of technical jargon for even a layman can understand. Finally, I would like to share a response from ChatGPT about key questions in the pursuit of 'Know Thyself'. Not that I endorse it, but I think, it will be helpful for someone to exercise upon for a quicker positioning for seeking the fullness of the truth. I would also like to mention that generative AI wasn't used for the text of this book and it was my writing, although search engines with generative AI capabilities were used to gather some of the data used in this book. Such references have been given at the end of the book.

Here is the answer from ChatGPT when asked about key questions in the pursuit of 'Know thyself'. Ponder upon them if you choose to become a truth seeker.

1. Identity & Core Nature

- Who am I when no one is watching?
- What qualities do I consistently express, regardless of circumstance?
- What parts of my identity are chosen, and what parts are inherited or conditioned? • What do I value even when it costs me something?
- What emotions or traits emerge in me most naturally?

2. Desires & Purpose

- What do I want most—not what I “should” want?
- What would I pursue if I were guaranteed no judgment and no failure?
- What meaningful contribution do I feel drawn to make?
- What brings me alive?
- What kind of life feels “right” in my bones, not just on paper?

3. Beliefs & Worldview

- What do I believe about myself, others, and the world?
- Which of these beliefs are truly mine, and which were adopted unconsciously?

- Which beliefs empower me, and which limit me?
  - What assumptions do I make without questioning them?
4. Emotional Inner Landscape
- What feelings do I avoid, and why?
  - What triggers my strongest emotional reactions?
  - What patterns repeat in my relationships or conflicts?
  - How do my emotions try to guide or warn me?
5. Shadows & Blind Spots
- What parts of myself do I hide from others?
  - What parts of myself do I hide from myself?
  - What do I criticize in others that I might also fear in myself?
  - Which failures, regrets, or wounds still shape my behavior?
6. Strengths & Gifts
- What am I naturally good at?
  - What do others often come to me for?
  - Where do I experience “effortless excellence”?
  - Where do I grow the fastest or feel the most flow?
7. Motivations & Fears

- What motivates my choices: love, curiosity, fear, approval, or insecurity?
- What am I afraid to admit I fear?
- Where do my fears steer my life without my consent?

8. Authenticity & Integrity

- Where do my actions not align with my stated values?
- Where do I pretend, perform, or wear a mask?
- What truth about myself am I resisting?

9. Relationships & Social Identity

- How do I show up in relationships?
- What patterns do I repeat with people?
- What kind of people do I attract, and why?
- How do I behave differently across social roles?

10. Life Patterns & Choices

- What recurring themes show up in my life story?
- What situations do I repeatedly create or find myself in?
- What choices have shaped me the most?
- What am I currently avoiding deciding?

11. Mortality & Impermanence

- If I had one year left to live, what would I change?

- What do I want to be remembered for?
- Which attachments am I afraid to let go of?

## 12. Presence & Awareness

- What is happening within me right now?
- What thoughts or sensations arise when I sit in silence?
- Can I witness my own mind without identifying with it?

## REFERENCES

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ii 1959 (1949 Copyright), Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist, Edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp, Volume 1, Chapter Autobiographical Notes, Quote Page 17, Harper Torchbooks, Harper & Row, New York.

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