



Truth

Independent Investigation of Truth

Issues for Discourse with Youth

Bahá'í Discourse - Truth

Truth?

In an era when false or fake news is increasingly current, artificial intelligence can generate outputs indistinguishable from reality, and politicians demonstrate that any lie repeated often enough becomes accepted as the truth, it is hard to know what to believe. Does truth mean anything today?

Truth – a definition

Truth is the property of being in accord with fact or reality, and it is usually opposed to falsehood.

The word truth can refer to the state of being factual, a true statement, or a spiritual reality.

Truthfulness

Truthfulness and sincerity have always been the ornament of a man's character, and so they shall ever be.

(Bahá'u'lláh, from a Tablet—translated from the Persian, compilation: Trustworthiness: A Cardinal Bahá'í Virtue §22)

Truthfulness

Regard thou faith as a tree. Its fruits, leaves, boughs and branches are, and have ever been, trustworthiness, truthfulness, uprightness and forbearance.

(Bahá'u'lláh, from a Tablet—translated from the Persian, compilation: Trustworthiness: A Cardinal Bahá'í Virtue §2)

Truthfulness

Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning. Suffer not yourselves to be deprived of the robe of forbearance and justice, that the sweet savours of holiness may be wafted from your hearts upon all created things. Say: Beware, O people of Bahá, lest ye walk in the ways of them whose words differ from their deeds. Strive that ye may be enabled to manifest to the peoples of the earth the signs of God, and to mirror forth His commandments....

Truthfulness

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues. Without truthfulness progress and success, in all the worlds of God, are impossible for any soul. When this holy attribute is established in man, all the divine qualities will also be acquired.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá. cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 26)

Truthfulness

Truthfulness, uprightness and integrity are the attributes of the righteous and the hallmarks of the pure.

Truthfulness is the goodliest of qualities as it comprehendeth all other virtues. A truthful person will be protected from all moral afflictions, will shrink from every evil deed, and be preserved from every wicked act, inasmuch as all vices and misdeeds are the very antithesis of truthfulness, and a truthful man will hold them all in utter abhorrence.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá. from a Tablet—translated from the Persian, compilation: Trustworthiness: A Cardinal Bahá’í Virtue §41)

Truth

How do we look for truth? Do we believe what others tell us, or do we investigate truth for ourselves?

We can turn to science to look for truth in the material world, but what about spiritual truth? Where can we turn to decide what we believe in and what is our true purpose in life?

Independent Investigation of Truth

The first Baha'i principle is the independent investigation of reality. Not found in any sacred Book of the past, it abolishes the need for clergy and sets us free from imitation and blind adherence to unexamined, dogmatic beliefs. Baha'is believe that no soul should follow ancestral or traditional beliefs without first questioning and examining their own inner landscape. Instead, the first Baha'i principle gives each individual the right and the duty to investigate and decide what they believe on their own.

(<https://bahaiteachings.org/bahai-principles-independent-investigation-of-truth/>)

Independent Investigation of Truth

The Baha'i writings usually list this fundamental core principle first. It achieves that primacy because of its importance and its essential nature, calling everyone on earth to open their minds, using their mental faculties and their hearts and their spirits to determine what they believe.

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Independent Investigation of Truth

When you endeavor to search, to make your own decision about your spiritual beliefs, you actually do set yourself free – from imitation, from falsehood, from fossilized traditions that do harm to humanity and continue the mistakes of the past.

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Independent Investigation of Truth

Most importantly, you set yourself free from the prison of prejudice, which all of us inherit from our traditions and our cultures and our upbringing. The primary goal of the independent, unfettered investigation of truth focuses on eradicating prejudice and freeing our hearts and minds from its corrosive impact.

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Independent Investigation of Truth

The Baha'i teachings say that human beings possess intellectual abilities, inquisitive minds and curious spirits—precisely because we need the tools to determine the truth for ourselves.

(<https://bahaiteachings.org/independently-investigate-truth/>)

Independent Investigation of Truth

Baha'is believe that science and religion agree. The Baha'i writings describe science and religion as “the two wings that humanity needs to fly.” This revolutionary concept of the unity of science and true religion underpins the Baha'i ideal of the independent investigation of truth.

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Independent Investigation of Truth

When you dedicate yourself to a spiritual search, to your own independent investigation of reality, you become a true seeker. You can learn from the experience and knowledge of others, of course, but ultimately you must let your own heart and mind decide what you truly believe.

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Independent Investigation of Truth

We all have minds, hearts and souls. When these three powerful instruments combine in a seeker's quest for meaning, our intelligence, our emotions and our deepest spiritual yearnings can bring our true inner reality to light. The Baha'i Faith encourages everyone to take that journey of spiritual discovery.

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'Abdu'l-Bahá in Bristol, England

Independent Investigation of Truth

... weigh carefully in the balance of reason and science everything that is presented to you as religion. If it passes this test, then accept it, for it is truth! If, however, it does not so conform, then reject it, for it is ignorance!

(Abdu'l-Baha, *Paris Talks*, p. 143, quoted in <https://bahaiteachings.org/independently-investigate-truth/>)

Independent Investigation of Truth

God has created in man the power of reason whereby man is enabled to investigate reality. God has not intended man to blindly imitate his fathers and ancestors. He has endowed him with mind or the faculty of reasoning by the exercise of which he is to investigate and discover the truth; and that which he finds real and true, he must accept. He must not be an imitator or blind follower of any soul. He must not rely implicitly upon the opinion of any man without investigation; nay, each soul must seek intelligently and independently, arriving at a real conclusion and bound only by that reality.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 291. quoted in <https://bahaiteachings.org/independently-investigate-truth/>)

Independent Investigation of Truth

...every individual member of humankind is exhorted and commanded to set aside superstitious beliefs, traditions and blind imitation of ancestral forms in religion and investigate reality for himself. Inasmuch as the fundamental reality is one, all religions and nations of the world will become one through investigation of reality.

(Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 433. quoted in <https://bahaiteachings.org/bahai-principles-independent-investigation-of-truth/>)

Independent Investigation of Truth

Bahá'u'lláh continually urges man to free himself from the superstitions and traditions of the past and become an investigator of reality, for it will then be seen that God has revealed his light many times in order to illumine mankind in the path of evolution, in various countries and through many different prophets, masters and sages.

(‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Divine Philosophy*, p. 8, quoted in <https://bahaiteachings.org/bahai-principles-independent-investigation-of-truth/>)

Independent Investigation of Truth

Reality is one, and when truth is investigated and ascertained, it will lead to individual and collective progress. In the quest for truth, science and religion – the two systems of knowledge available to humankind – must closely and continuously interact. The insights and skills that represent scientific accomplishment must look to the force of spiritual commitment and moral principle to ensure their appropriate application.

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development, 1998)

Independent Investigation of Truth

Spiritual development involves investigating truth for one's self. Continual reflection, based on experience in applying this truth, is critical to the process of spiritual development.

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development, 1998)

Consultation to investigate truth

For collective investigation of truth and group decision making, consultation, which draws on the strength of the group and fosters unity of purpose and action, is indispensable. Institutions and those in positions of authority would do well to create conditions amenable to the meaningful investigation of truth, while fostering the understanding that human happiness and the establishment of peace, justice and unity are the ultimate goals of this investigation.

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development, 1998)

Consultation

Consultation requires that individual participants strive to transcend their respective points of view in order to function as members of a body with its own interests and goals. In consultation, where views are exchanged with both candor and courtesy, ideas belong not to the individual who presents them, but to the group as a whole, to take up, discard, or revise as seems to best serve the goals pursued. Consultation succeeds to the extent that all participants support the decisions arrived at. Under such circumstances, an earlier decision can be readily reconsidered if experience exposes any shortcomings.

(Bahá'í International Community, Valuing Spirituality in Development, 1998)

Truth

[A]ll the nations of the world have to investigate after truth independently and turn their eyes from the moribund blind imitations of the past ages entirely. Truth is one when it is independently investigated, it does not accept division. Therefore the independent investigation of truth will lead to the oneness of the world of humanity.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, [Japan Will Turn Ablaze: Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Letters of Shoghi Effendi and Historical Notes About Japan](#), page 35)

Truth

There is no contradiction between true religion and science.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, page 145)

Truth is one

All the Manifestations of God bring the same Light; they only differ in degree, not in reality. The Truth is one. The light is the same though the lamps may be different; we must look at the Light not at the Lamp. If we accept the Light in one, we must accept the Light in all; all agree, because all are the same. The teaching is ever the same, it is only the outward forms that change.

(Abdu'l-Bahá in London, Page: 66)

The Search for Truth

Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination, so that he may be able to search for truth unhindered. Truth is one in all religions, and by means of it the unity of the world can be realized.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*)

The Search for Truth

All the peoples have a fundamental belief in common. Being one, truth cannot be divided, and the differences that appear to exist among the nations only result from their attachment to prejudice. If only men would search out truth, they would find themselves united.

Touchstone

A touchstone is a noun that means an established standard or principle by which something is judged.

Originally, it referred to a black stone used to test the purity of gold and silver.

Touchstone of Truth

...the sign of truth and falsehood is designated and appointed in the Book. By this divinely-appointed touchstone, the claims and pretensions of all men must needs be assayed, so that the truthful may be known and distinguished from the imposter. This touchstone is no other than this verse: “Wish for death, if ye are men of truth.” Consider these martyrs of unquestionable sincerity, to whose truthfulness testifieth the explicit text of the Book, and all of whom, as thou hast witnessed, have sacrificed their life, their substance, their wives, their children, their all, and ascended unto the loftiest chambers of Paradise.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Kitab-i-Iqan, p.227)

Touchstone of Truth

Another proof and evidence of the truth of this Revelation, which amongst all other proofs shineth as the sun, is the constancy of the eternal Beauty [the Bab] in proclaiming the Faith of God. Though young and tender of age, and though the Cause He revealed was contrary to the desire of all the peoples of earth, both high and low, rich and poor, exalted and abased, king and subject, yet He arose and steadfastly proclaimed it.

(Bahá'u'lláh, [Kitab-i-Iqan](#), p.230)

Touchstone of Truth

Behold how the divine Touchstone hath, according to the explicit text of the Book, separated and distinguished the true from the false. Notwithstanding, they are still oblivious of this truth, and in the sleep of heedlessness, are pursuing the vanities of the world, and are occupied with thoughts of vain and earthly leadership.

(Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitab-i-Iqan*, p.228)