INTEGRITY, A HEURISTIC MODEL FOR

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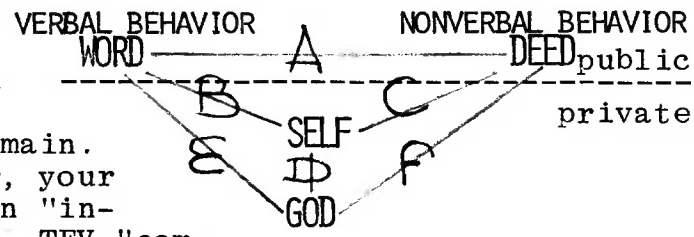
*As our USA presidential race heats up, the integrity of the few remaining candidates is coming under sharper scrutiny.... TIME says 100 in the present Administration have come under suspicion, some worse, of immoral/illegal shenanigans....Larry Speakes admits to having concocted Reagan utterances AFTER the event....Ivan Boesky isn't the only sleezy character on Wall St....Pentecostal telepreachers, a handful of them, have combined high-jinks public emotionality with private low-jinks....Cries are rising that our schools should teach morality to combat anomie, & even Harvard is considering it....Sociologists are saying that perhaps as much as 30% of taxpayers are cheating on income taxes, a % threatening our democratic structure....Politicos honor principle more in the breach than in the observance, pretending (parallel with business) that short-term advantage is the way of wisdom & that selfish interest is actually in the public interest. ...To the rest of the world, our foreign policy looks like nothing more than cynical pragmatism strutting itself as pro-freedom....*This Thinksheet presents a visual model for thinking about, exploring, seeking, testing for integrity. Letters A-F represent six dimensions of consistency-questioning.



A--Are the persons words & deeds consistent, consonant? I've labeled this "public," as it's the question easiest to observe, in the public domain. "Integrity" means getting your thing, your act, together (into one, unity, Latin "integer"--as in the Vulgate of Jas.1.4, TEV "complete, lacking nothing"). You aren't together when your word is "No deals with terrorists" & your deed is an arms-for-hostages deal (indirectly, launderedly) with Iran. At "A," the antonym of integrity is hypocrisy. In that "davar" means both deed & word, Hebrew shows the way of integrity.

B--Is the word consistent with this person, this self? Is it "in character" or only in persona, the role the individual is acting at the moment? Is what's being said "just like him/her," or suspiciously unlike?

C--Is this person's here-&-now action "in character," to have been expected in light of your prior knowledge of the person? Or does the action appear to be adventitious, utilitarian, rather than principled? (NOTE the particular meaning of "private" in everything below the dotted line: some interior knowledge, beyond word-&-deed exterior observance, is needed to pursue the question of integrity (character consistency).)

D--Is what the person is saying/doing consistent with that person's profession vis-a-vis the Holy, the Sacred, the Ultimate, God (however that person may name "the dimension of Depth")? If projected out of this person's behavior, verbal & nonverbal, would his/her "God" look like the God she/he claims to believe in & trust? (What got me started on this Thinksheet was a shocking instance, today, of egregiously unloving behavior on the part of someone whose belief, he says, is that "Love is god.") The criterion can & should be applied to groups, movements, institutions as well as to individuals. Eg, "Christian" is Greek for "little Christ": how are we Christians doing as "little Christs," imitatio Christi? Hard question along many lines, not the least of which is that we can't get a clear separation between the historical Jesus & "the Christ of faith."

E--How does this person's speaking/writing look in light of "the word" of his/her God? Does this person "let God be God" orally, verbally--or almost never mentions God, & sometimes uses God's name profanely? Does his/her speech betray, give bad repute to, her/his God?

F--Is this person's behavior-actions-deeds radiant with the holiness, the character, of his/her God? "Be holy, for I am holy." "Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me." "Hallowed be Thy name" in my praying & living.