

Chapter 2 -Da Vinci's Study on Light, shade & Shadow Decoded:

Light is Truth, Shadow is Deceit

Light and dark have always been the most natural symbols for good and evil, and at their core is truth and deception. What we see in the physical world is a mirror of the spiritual one. Just as the eye perceives the contrast between light and shadow, so the soul perceives the difference between truth and deceit. We first recognize that darkness itself is not a substance, but the absence of light. In the same way, evil has no true existence of its own, it is simply the absence of goodness. Light is truth, the goodness, and wherever light shines, darkness flees, evil flees. This means that truth and love do not struggle to “defeat” evil as though it were an equal power; rather, evil only thrives where light is withheld. When light enters, it automatically diminishes the shadow. In human lives, there are moments when truth is blurred, when conscience is weakened, when people live in deception without realizing the full weight of that evil. Shade is subtle; that is where little lies mingle with fragments of truth. They remind us that not all danger looks like utter darkness, sometimes it hides in partial light. Shadows also reveal the way evil grows by distortion, being primary or derived. A primary shadow is fixed to the object, like lies rooted in the heart. A derived shadow extends outward, touching others, like the way one person’s corruption can spread and cast darkness on those around them. Evil begins in one place, but if left unchallenged, its shadow stretches outward, diminishing the light for others. The Four Lights and the Shadows They Defeat Leonardo da Vinci taught that there are two kinds of light, each with two natures. There is Free Light, which shines openly upon bodies, the light of Truth. And there is Restricted Light, the same rays but narrowed as they pass through a hole or window, the light of Hidden Truths.

These rays also manifest in two ways: as Separated Bodies, where each stands alone illuminated by the light—Truth Sent; and as United Bodies, where many together are lit as one—Individual Souls Enlightened. A cluster of united bodies is always brighter than those apart. Illumination increases when beams overlap, for brightness intensifies where light converges. So too with Divine Truth: as people awaken together, the light does not diminish but multiplies, amplified and strengthened. These are not mere observations of physics, but revelations of spirit. For light, in all its forms, is a teacher of goodness, showing how to overcome darkness. Darkness, by contrast, is poor. It has only two shapes: the primary shadow, which clings to the body like a chain, and the derived shadow, cast outward but still tethered to its cause. Darkness has no freedom, no abundance, no higher nature. It can only cling and copy. But light multiplies. Free light pierces directly, revealing truth in clarity. It moves without restriction, filling spaces and illuminating all who are open. Restricted light, though narrowed, still carries its fullness—it enters through doors, windows, even the smallest cracks, and still reveals. And whether bodies are separated or united, illumination flows, distinct

when apart, magnified when together. Thus light has four ways to manifest, while darkness has only two. Darkness may obscure, but it cannot create. Its shadows merely mimic what light has already revealed. Light is the source; darkness only the absence. This is why goodness prevails. Light's abundance defeats darkness' poverty. Four answers overcome two lies. And the one who learns to see light in all its forms will never be overcome by shadow. Even the form of shadows teaches us. They may appear pyramidal, narrowing the farther they extend from their source. Spiritually, this can represent how our flaws or darkness may appear broad and overwhelming up close, but at a distance, under the perspective of eternity or divine truth, they taper down to something small and insignificant. What feels vast to us in the moment is only a narrow trace when seen from a higher vantage. And, be sure that shadows are not stronger than light. Shadows exist only because the light has not yet found them. And this means that every shadow points back to the reality that light is near. Even when the soul feels covered by shadow, it is only proof that light is shining nearby, and if turned toward, the shadow will dissolve. When we turn to the side of light, we learn equally profound truths. Light exists in different forms. Some light is free, shining openly for all. Spiritually, this is God's goodness and blessing, which pours out freely on the righteous and unrighteous alike. Other light is restricted, entering through a narrow window or hidden space. This speaks of the focused beams of truth or revelation that shine into particular lives or moments, not all at once, but in a concentrated stream that illuminates exactly what is needed. Light may be separated from the object, shining upon it, or united with it, filling it from within. This reflects the difference between knowing about truth and embodying it. It is one thing to have truth shine on you, another to have it dwell in you. When goodness becomes part of your nature, when truth is lived rather than merely observed, the soul itself becomes luminous. Shade and shadow aren't the same, even though people often treat them as if they are.

- Shadow is the absence of light, the place where light is blocked. It's harsh, defined, and sometimes unsettling. It hides.
- Shade, though, is softer. It's a mixture, where light is reduced but not eliminated. Shade still carries light—it's a gentler truth, a softened version that reveals depth and form instead of blotting things out. In art, that's why Leonardo leaned so heavily on the study of chiaroscuro (light and shade, not light and shadow). Shade gives contour, dimension, and realism. Shadow alone flattens and obscures, but shade sculpts. So if we carry that into truth:
- Shadow might be falsehood, distortion, or the deliberate blocking of light.
- Shade is partial truth, fragments, gradations—it's not a lie, but it's not the whole. It's what allows us to see dimension and depth.

We also learn that small lights, when multiplied, create a greater brightness than one large light alone. In the same way, small acts of goodness, when joined together, often outshine the grand gestures of a single individual. Many small blessings, many voices of truth, many acts of kindness — these create a brilliance that no solitary effort can equal. It reminds us that the strength of goodness lies in unity, in the community of light-bearers shining together. And yet, just as light reveals, it also tests. The closer one is to the light, the clearer both the purity and

the flaws are revealed. This is why evil often prefers the shadow — not because the light lacks power, but because the light exposes what is hidden. In spiritual life, the nearer one draws to truth, the less room there is for deception to hide. Shadows are peeled away, and the soul must either embrace the light fully or retreat into obscurity. Finally, the great paradox is this: where there is more light, there is less shadow. This simple truth is the essence of hope. Evil cannot overwhelm goodness when goodness shines fully. A life filled with love, with truth, with the divine light, casts fewer and fewer shadows until finally it becomes like the swan — white without spot, offering its last song as an act of beauty, not fear. Reflection on Leonardo's "Light and Shade" Leonardo begins by stating a principle that could be both scientific and spiritual: "No substance can be comprehended without light and shade; light and shade are caused by light." If light is divine truth, then shade and shadow exist only in relation to it. Even the darkest deception (shadow) and the half-truths (shade) are dependent upon the presence of light to define them. Without truth, deceit and distortion would not even have shape — they would be nothingness. Light as the Expeller of Darkness Leonardo writes: "Light is the expeller of darkness. Shadow is the suppression of light." This reads as a cosmic law: truth actively drives out falsehood, while shadow is the deliberate attempt to block or twist truth. Shade, however, plays a subtler role — not outright suppression, but partial reflection, the places where truth is refracted and fragmented, still visible, yet dimmed. Primary light, he says, is the cause of illumination itself. In your symbolic frame, this would be the direct presence of divine truth. Derived light is the way that truth is reflected in others — the echo of divine clarity in human lives. Similarly, primary shadow is the place where light does not fall at all, pure deceit, whereas derived shadow is created by the striking of shaded rays, distortions that extend outward to touch and darken others. The Spread of Shadows and Reflections: Leonardo notes that every body in space throws off a "concourse of rays," filling the air with an infinite number of images. Spiritually, this is a reminder that every being radiates influence, either rays of truth, shades of partial truth, or shadows of deceit. The world is never neutral; every life contributes to the shared field.. He also observes how shadows on transparent or spherical objects deepen in certain places. This can symbolize how deceit grows strongest in hidden corners or in the hearts of those already partly obscured. Conversely, luminous places are brightest where the greatest number of rays converge, as though divine truth magnifies itself in unity.. Perception and Distortion: Objects appear larger in mist, or by night, than in clear daylight. In spiritual terms: when clarity is absent, distortions of truth loom larger than they are. Lies seem bigger in the dark, but in the clean air of divine light, things are revealed in their proper proportion..

He continues: "The breadth and length of shadow and of light, although through foreshortening it may appear less in quantity, will not therefore appear diminished as to quality." This suggests that even when truth looks smaller or more hidden, its quality remains

unaltered. Divine light is not diminished simply because it is obscured, it is only our perception that changes.

Atmosphere and Clothing of Light: A profound passage notes that the atmosphere gathers up the likeness of everything, instantly imprinting it with light. When the sun rises, it fills the whole hemisphere with its semblance. Applied spiritually, the atmosphere is like the soul of the world: it receives and carries the imprint of every truth or falsehood. Solid bodies, Leonardo says, become “clothed and dyed” by the light that surrounds them. Likewise, every being is clothed either in truth, fragments of truth, or deceit, depending on what light or shadow they are turned toward.

Boundaries of Light and Darkness: Leonardo points out that the shape of a body cannot be fully perceived without both shadow and illumination. This matches your distinction: without seeing how deceit and half-truths bend or resist the light, we cannot grasp the full nature of truth. Light alone shows glory, but light contrasted against distortion reveals depth..

He also reflects on juxtaposition: black beside white, or white beside black, appears more extreme. Spiritually, this reminds us that divine truth shines most clearly when contrasted against deceit, and that lies, too, are most exposed when truth stands beside them..

Colour, Blending, and Intensity: At the end, Leonardo turns to colour. He observes how overlapping rays tint and blend, sometimes intensifying one another, sometimes muddying the mixture. This is a metaphor for human experience: fragments of truth can blend with deceit, creating shades that are harder to distinguish, while pure truth shines more intensely. He closes with a recognition that “colours are more intense and more sharply defined at their edges.” In spiritual language: truth and falsehood reveal themselves most clearly at the boundaries where they meet..

Closing Thought Across these three pages, Leonardo’s science of light becomes a parable of truth. Light is divine truth, illuminating and clothing all things. Shade is the half-truth, refracting and fragmenting light but still testifying to its presence. Shadow is the suppression, deceit that denies truth entirely yet depends upon it to even exist. Every body is surrounded, clothed, and defined by this interplay. To discern rightly, one must look not only at the brilliance of the light but also at the distortions it casts, for only then can the full form of reality be comprehended.

Leonardo da Vinci: “Moreover these derived shadows in striking upon anything create as many different effects as are the different places where they strike; and of this I will make the fourth book. And since where the derived shadow strikes, it is always surrounded by the striking of the luminous rays, it leaps back with these in a reflex stream towards its source and meets the primary shadow, and mingles with it and becomes changed into it, altering thereby somewhat of its nature.” Reflection: Leonardo’s physics of light and shadow reads like a parable of truth

and deceit. The primary shadow, the first lie, the core deceit, throws out “dark rays.” These dark rays are derived shadows, distortions that spread and scatter, touching many places and creating different effects. Each derived shadow has its own shape, its own look, its own claim to be something in itself. But Leonardo warns: these derived shadows “leap back with [the luminous rays] in a reflex stream towards their source and meet the primary shadow, and mingle with it.” In other words, the small lies return and strengthen the great lie.

This is how deceit works. The diversions, half-truths, or distortions may look separate, but they are not free — they circle back, feeding the main deceit from which they were born. A person may think they have only entertained a little error, a harmless shade, but that shadow is tethered to the root. And when it rebounds, it does not remain as it was — Leonardo notes it “becomes changed into it, altering somewhat of its nature.” The small lie, once it returns, takes on the full weight of the greater falsehood.

Thus the warning: if you fall for deceit, you may soon find yourself bound into a larger lie. The derived shadows carry you back to the primary one, and what seemed partial becomes whole. Only light, only divine truth, can break this cycle, because where shadows rebound, light clarifies and dissolves.

Prose Poem: Shadows do not stay where they first appear. A lie is born, and from it scatter smaller lies, drifting outward like fragments. Each has its own shape, its own color of deceit, and they touch different places, seeming separate. Yet they are never free. In time they bend back, carried by the very light they sought to suppress, and return to the source. There they mingle with the greater darkness, and in their merging they change, the small falsehood takes on the weight of the larger one. What was once shade becomes shadow, and what was once shadow becomes night. This is how deceit grows: by multiplying, by returning, by folding itself back into the root. And this is why truth alone breaks the cycle. Light does not return to shadow; it dissolves it, scatters it, unmasking it. Where truth shines, the fragments cannot recombine. They lose their power, and what seemed endless darkness becomes nothing more than a vanishing trace.

Leonardo da Vinci, *On Light and Shade* (XXXII): “No substance can be comprehended without light and shade; light and shade are caused by light.” Reflection: Leonardo is speaking first in terms of art and vision, but the truth he touches reaches far deeper. Light is the principle of understanding, truth itself, shining and revealing. Shade is not simply darkness, but the shaping of light, the contrast that allows us to see form, depth, and reality. Without shade, light would overwhelm; without light, shade would vanish into obscurity..

If we take this into the realm of truth, then full truth (light) and partial truth (shade) are inseparable. The shade is not falsehood, but rather a fragment, a limited angle, a softened

reflection of the whole. To comprehend substance, whether it be an object, an idea, or the self, we must have both the brilliance of truth and the measured contours given by shade..

In other words, truth alone can be blinding, while fragments alone can be misleading. But together they reveal reality in its fullness. Just as a painter needs both light and shade to give life to a form, so too must the seeker of wisdom accept both the clarity of fact and the subtleties of perspective.;

Shade(partial truth) are not the enemy of light(truth), they're the necessary partners that gives them meaning.

Proverbs for Light and Shadow: Light and darkness are not equals; darkness is only the absence of light. Evil has no life of its own—it feeds only where goodness is withheld. Shades are not total light but partial-truths, distortions where clarity falters. They spread outward, touching others, yet they remain tethered to the root. But light multiplies. It pierces cracks, joins in unity, and grows brighter when shared. Shade shapes, shadow deceives; one gives depth, the other obscures. And always the truth stands: wherever light shines, darkness flees.

A Prose Poem for the Soul: The Soul's stewards truth. When bodies of light are separated, their rays fall weak and scattered, each casting shadows that stretch across the ground. Yet when they are united, their brilliance multiplies, and the shadows retreat before them. So with the soul: divided, it struggles, flickering against the weight of darkness; but joined to virtue, it becomes luminous, and the fragments of shade turn into pathways of clarity. To read, to grow, to live by the truth is to kindle this inner flame, until the light within burns so steadily that no deceit can suppress it..

Leonardo da Vinci (Windsor: Drawings 19148): “What difference is there between the manner of penetration of the images which pass through narrow apertures and those which pass through wide ones or those which pass at the sides of shaded bodies.”

Reflection: Leonardo is analyzing optics, but symbolically this speaks to the path of truth and perception. Some truths pass through narrow openings: they are refined, focused, sharpened. Others pass through wide ones: they spread broadly, but perhaps with less clarity. Spiritually, this can be seen in how God’s light reaches us. Sometimes blinding, overwhelming but indistinct — and sometimes through a tiny opening, sharpened into clarity..

When light or truth passes “by the sides of shaded bodies,” it is altered, distorted, or darkened. In other words: the medium matters. The purity of the channel through which truth flows determines how we perceive it. This can become a metaphor for the soul itself, a clean vessel transmits truth more clearly, while a darkened one distorts it..