

What Is Truth?

Apart from the common meaning of the word truth, which is: facts and real things, we have another meaning of the word, which is: a transcendent, fundamental, or spiritual reality. It is the latter meaning of truth that we are concerned with in this short essay.

Down the long corridors of time, since homo sapiens sapiens acquired a consciousness capable of reflection, the echo of their search for the truth in human existence reverberates without diminution.

Many religious people believe that there is more to the reality than that is apprehended by the human senses. They believe that reality has deeper connections and meanings in the universal existence of all things, material and immaterial. That reality can be apprehended only by mind. This marks one of the dividing boundaries between science and religion.

One of the most exalted ways of living human life is through the mode of a searcher of the meaning of human life, also called the truth of human life. How should a man live his life or what are the most significant things in life or what are the good and bad things in life, they all mean the same thing. Ordinarily, one would think that because of the age of man on this planet (as science believes), these things would be well known by now, so that after a newly born person acquires certain threshold of education, it would be easy for him to know what is the truth of human life. But we know that it is not so. Each person has to experience the truth of life. Obviously, the knowledge of the truth of life is different from the other knowledge.

Hinduism calls the truth of life as ultimate reality. It is connected to the concepts of Brahman, atman, sat, chit, ananda, moksha, samsara, maya, leela, and others. Realization of the ultimate reality by a person leads him to a state of consciousness, which is unaffected by worldly vicissitudes: pain, love, hate, status, material possessions, etc. This consciousness being different from the

ordinary consciousness is called super consciousness.

For Buddhism the truth lies in achieving nirvana and anatta. For Christians, Muslims, and other groups it is different things. Besides the religious groups there are individual philosophers, poets, artists, and thinkers who have their own truths. It is quite clear that the truth is no one group's or individual's province. Anyone can claim to have found the truth. For a common modern man the truth lies in amassing a lot of wealth, working hard, and having a good-time. (Even though good-time is not a precisely defined concept but its meaning is well understood) I do not believe these values alone can lead to bliss. They need to have the fire of some idea or ideas that play the role of a superstructure to them.

Because of the nature of a human being, the need for the search for the truth is necessary for the higher quality of his life. Every age will have its own truth and there will never be a universally accepted truth. Therefore, the search for the truth is eternal. Words of Lessing aptly apply: "The search for truth is more precious than its possession."

Suffern, New York, 1.31.11 www.kaulscorner.com