

Satsang with Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati
Arsha Vidya Gurukulam
Truth and Reality

Question

Please explain absolute Truth.

Answer

The word absolute means that which is not relative. Relative is that which is subject to change with reference to time. Or if it changes with place, it is relative with reference to place. Or if it changes in different situations, it is changing with reference to situations. Whatever we know is subject to change in reference to time, or place, or conditions. What is absolute is that which does not change with reference to time, or place, or conditions. It transcends, or is unaffected by time, place and conditions. That absolute Truth is the subject matter of Vedanta.

Question

What is Real?

Answer

The definition of what is real is that which does not change. Even in our day-to-day language, we say that truth is something that does not change in time, place, or condition. Only when I speak consistently the same thing every time, you will say I am speaking the truth. If I say one thing to you and something else to somebody else, then I am not truthful. If I say something in the morning and something else in the evening, I am not truthful. If I say something here and something else there, I am not truthful. Therefore, truth is that which is consistent or does not change with reference to time, place or condition. Thus, what is called Truth or Real is independent of the changes of time, place and conditions; that which is ever changeless. It is always there as it is, and therefore it cannot be negated.

Vedanta would explain to us that the world is unreal because it is ever changing; it is never the same the next moment. Whenever there is something changing, there must be a changeless basis or background on which the change can occur. All change calls for a basis which does not change. Like a rotating wheel calls for an axle, a center point that doesn't rotate. Thus the fact that the universe is constantly changing shows us that there must be a changeless sub-

stratum and that would be its Truth. Truth is the one which is ever the same, which is consistent, which does not change, which is infallible, which is reliable. Nothing in the world is ever the same. You cannot take anything for granted because it is never the same the next moment. Therefore, the world of names and forms is said to be unreal, whereas that on which it is based is Real¹.

¹ Transcribed and edited by Malini, Chaya Raj and KK Davey.