

Search for Answers – Part 2

The challenge posed to resolution of crises by the concepts of Absolute, versus Relative Reality.

If humans are going to make any significant progress in solving our many crises, we must first come to grips with the notion of absolute versus relative truths or realities, because no social system can be designed and built along multiple competing realities.

Today, many consider “truth” to be a function of one’s perception.

This belief emerged out of studies in the fields of psychology and social research, which presented data confirming that indeed people see life, and events that occur around them, differently. And that, the way the individual assimilates life’s experiences determines their world view, or reality.

In drawing these conclusions based on these study results, it is common today to hear arguments that all shades of opinions and conclusions are equally valid, since they reflect individual or group realities.

This thinking is, no doubt, one of the greatest challenges facing modern societies, as we struggle to understand and find solutions to our crisis while balance conflicting individual or group perspectives/realities on the situation.

Increasingly, many of the burning social crises of today can be framed as conflicts between realities. For example, the individual’s or groups’ rights to freedom of self-expression, regardless of how it affects others.

Even international conflicts are gradually being framed in this light.

Perhaps, the first step to understanding the fundamental issue is to grasp the essence of the key concepts involved in this crisis; namely,

- “*Individual or group realities*, versus
- “*Absolute reality*”, .i.e., the incontrovertible and indivisible truth.

Individual Reality, as the Psychologists will tell us, is subject to a person’s cognitive ability, which is affected by the types of previous experiences that have left an imprint on the person.

Absolute Truths, by contrast, are defined as things that are always true and always remain the same in all places. They are things that are always true no matter what the circumstances and cannot be changed. For example, there are no round squares.

The notion of absolute truths has been with humanity as far back as one can investigate. It is also the foundation of practically all religious and social customs. This concept was also supported by discoveries in classical science.

Things changed with the dawn of Quantum Physics in the early 1900s, when findings in this field confounded some of the absolute truths (laws) of classical Physics. The confounding was further aggravated when Psychologists adapted concepts from Einstein’s theories of relativity to their discipline. This adaptation was done and accepted whether or not the application was in harmony with the scientific essence of Einstein’s Theory of Relativity

With this development, the concept of absolute truth or reality began to crumble and has now spread into the general population.

Another feature of Absolute Truth is that it starts as the perceptions of a select or elite group. Then, in time, they become accepted as incontrovertible, through confirmation, indifference, or intimidation, of the majority by this elite group.

The push for acknowledgement of individual realities is also a sign that many are less accepting of views that are simply handed down for compulsory adoption. Rather, more people now insist, or want to base their acceptance of any view on what they themselves sense or experience deeply within.

This attitude is not necessarily bad because conviction can only arise from personal experience and discovery.

However, an honest concern is that, in the desire to accommodate individual or group realities, Absolute Truths that have served to keep, and oil the working of societies, for generations will suffer damage and could be cast aside.

Already, any serious observer cannot fail to see that the collapse of beliefs in the social absolutes of the past has increased the trend towards narcissism, selfishness, and materialism, because many have cast off restraints that are not in alignment with their “*individual or group realities*”.

As confusing and uncomfortable as these developments may be, an objective person will have to admit that some of the age-old Absolute truths that are used to govern societies harbor prejudices and biases that need to be toppled.

Another good thing that is emerging from the debates is that many now appreciate the fact that societies are indeed made up of individuals, with different perspectives on life. And that, society would be made much richer by the fusion of these multiple perspectives.

But, as liberating as the acknowledgement of different points of views may be, we must accept that a person or group could have an individual reality that is detrimental to the wellbeing of the larger group. And, the embrace of all realities, notwithstanding their impact overall, will only lead to anarchy, which will eventually lead to the collapse of society.

Therefore, it appears that the only tenable way forward for any society's survival, would have to be to accept only those realities that reflect a level of responsibility and accountability, to the whole group. This recognition is evident in the increasingly popular term - *Consensus Reality*.

The appeal of **Consensus Reality** is that it tries to accommodate multiple views in arriving at a consensus that can serve the common major goal. It can also be the basis for a pragmatic guide since it is more "practical" than attempting to adopt all the individually perceived realities.

Unfortunately, given today's heightened level of acrimony and distrust among competing realities, it is not surprising that attempts at arriving at consensus realities have proven to be almost an insurmountable challenge. It appears that no sooner is a consensus approached, than it soon falls apart.

This leaves the serious thinker to wonder whether the antagonists can ever attain the maturity required to cultivate a "responsible consensus reality" on any subject.

By responsible reality we mean one that has the greater good in mind.

But even here, we quickly run into another challenge, where we face the question, "How will responsibility to the whole be determined or measured, and by whom?"

The growing number, types and complexity of the current crises, along with the multiplicity of views, and the acrimony and distrust among competing views, despite proclamations of desiring a common goal or outcome (for example, freedom and justice for all), have led some who are very familiar with Spiritual Knowledge to believe that these are manifestations of what has long been prophesied.

In the next segment, we will investigate some prophecies, to see how they may be relevant to our discussion.