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Seeking truth, rejecting dogmas

by Nikola Milošević? - Tuesday, June 28, 2022

<https://inspiratron.org/blog/2022/06/28/seeking-truth/>

Let's go straight to the definition - truth needs to be factual reality. And there is no multiple truths about a certain thing, there is one true description of it. However, we may not know all about the thing in question, and that is where our beliefs, biases and limited information come to play. However, with the increasing amount of information revealed the truth should come out, or be closer to be completely revealed.

However, in recent years, I started increasingly noticing it from 2014 onwards, but it may have started earlier, we started having issue with dogmatism. Here people would believe a certain version of things, and reject any other view, or new information. Now, I do not have issue with viewing some things differently, especially when it comes to politics, that is why we have multiple parties. Some people like more social welfare, on the cost of taxes, some like to keep as much as possible from their salary. That is all fine. However, we have these debates because of some cost-benefit criteria we think are particularly important to us, or because we do not have enough information to make objective conclusion which system is the best. Same comes to science. There is one way the world works. However, we do not have full picture and science is there to gradually remove fog from the issue and find objective answers. Science is full as well of speculations, especially when the field is young. Gradually, as we know more, these speculations are disappearing. But statement "believe science", which was propagated during the COVID crisis, was from the scientific perspective very bad statement. Science works by questioning itself. By questioning reproducibility and reproducing studies, we can see whether authors had correct study design and whether they did not fake the results of the study (this may be more common than you think). By questioning key concepts, we can generalize better how world works. Take for example gravity - the theory was set by Isaac Newton, however, Einstein dared to question it and came up with theory of relativity that generalizes gravity as well, and explains it for any kind of object in the Universe. There are many similar examples. There are as well examples where science was completely wrong. Take medicine few 100s years ago, and you will see that people were treated by taking their blood, and actually weakening them. If modern science did not question that approach, we would be still killing people instead of treating them. Statements like "Believe science" are dangerous not only for scientific community, but for the society as a whole, as it introduces dogmatism in which there is one way of thinking and any kind of questioning that way is forbidden. And we are getting these kinds of dogmatisms more and more lately. Many of which are connected to social justice, where talking against more justice may seem immoral. However, when this social justice is done wrong, or done in a way where it harms some of the group (and all of the social justice points that arise from the new Left are like that, as they are trying to invoke revolution and are talking about Marxist class struggle, where classes may be replaced with various identities or races), they have to be questioned. At the end what we would wish for is just society, not revolution where oppressed become oppressor, as this turned out too often times to be similar or even worse than it was.

At the end, there is Matrix philosophy, where Morpheus is offering the truth, but the real question is whether people or society wants it. Science can help and be kind of Morpheus if done right, but Neo, or us in this case have to as well do a good job of reviewing arguments. One of the major part of every research is doing literature review. In this bit you would review ideally everything that can be found on the topic you would like to work on that was done before you start. It is difficult part, as it involves quite a lot of reading and understanding other people's approaches. Based on that, researcher can start developing his or her approach and try to advance field. But not before he/she knows absolutely everything that was done in the field and all the arguments. Coming and having agenda or belief that won't change in face of new evidence won't bring us far, and that is the danger that sets dogmatism. And it can be compared to starting working in a new field with no idea about a field and just starting designing study. In most cases you would just do what someone did long time ago, and likely your whole study design would be wrong, and results useless. So let's stop falling to this trap as society, and do a proper work.