

**DO WE KNOW
OR DO WE TRUST?**



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Introduction

The relationship between knowledge and trust requires serious questioning in both scientific and religious contexts. Do we really know, or do we trust others and accept things as if we know them? The obstacles and difficulties we will encounter while searching for an answer to this question lead us to deep thoughts.

Scientific Knowledge and Trust

Scientific knowledge is a field of knowledge shaped by observations and experiments on the one hand, and experts and institutional structures on the other. However, questioning scientific knowledge directly requires expertise in every field. This is almost impossible in practice. In other words, criticizing scientific knowledge requires going deeper into every field and acquiring comprehensive knowledge in every subject.

Moreover, scientific knowledge is often produced by an institutional structure. The journals, research and sometimes even the economic interests behind this information can create major obstacles in terms of questioning the accuracy of the information. Given the vested interests behind scientific knowledge, it is very difficult to deal with these structures as an individual. Even criticizing an idea often remains on a personal level, and it seems very difficult to fight against powerful institutional structures.

Religion and Trust

A similar situation is also valid in the field of religion and belief. The source of knowledge through religion is again based on a matter of trust. Faith, especially accepting religious knowledge, usually requires trusting the teachings of authorities or holy books. Here, instead of directly possessing knowledge, we believe in what we are taught and transmitted.

Religious teachings are based on trusting belief systems rather than being verifiable through human experience or questioning. In order to accept a religion as true, one must either trust the prophet who brought it, or trust the sacred text, or both. This comes to a parallel point with scientific knowledge: Trust somehow automatically comes into play when acquiring knowledge.

The fact that religious knowledge is constant makes it somewhat easier for people than scientific knowledge. This is because scientific knowledge is constantly being developed and developed by many focal points, as well as alternative knowledge being produced. This makes it very difficult to follow and check the accuracy of this knowledge.

Criticism and Individual Inquiry

Criticizing scientific knowledge and religious knowledge doesn't seem to be a very meaningful thing to do on an individual level. Even in a scientific context, questioning the accuracy of this knowledge often leads to huge obstacles. Because there is a very strong institutional structure. In the same way, religious knowledge has a structure that makes it

difficult to question at the individual level and is often supported by institutional and social pressures.

In this case, developing a critical approach to knowledge may be limited to engaging in a philosophical debate. In fact, success may be far from possible in this context. Because the strength of institutional structures can often render an individual criticism meaningless.

We Think We Know

Here, the question we need to ask the most is: Have we actually directly experienced the things we know, or do we accept them by hearing them from others? This is a critical issue in understanding both scientific knowledge and historical events.

For example, when we accept the mathematical knowledge that the interior angles of a triangle are 180 degrees, how many people have actually tested this rule? This rule, accepted as mathematically true, is accepted as true by almost everyone. But for most of us, this knowledge is just a fact that we learn from teachers or from books. We don't make any effort to experience or verify this knowledge; we just trust those who claim to have experienced it.

This is easy to solve in formal disciplines because we can test it individually and get the information directly. But for this we would need to master all the formal disciplines and this would require considerable time and effort. The purpose of giving this example is to raise awareness of the fact that we do not test this information directly but accept it on trust.

We can illustrate a similar situation with the theory of evolution. Evolution is considered one of the cornerstones of modern biology. However, how many people have actually observed evolutionary processes or examined the evidence for evolutionary processes with their own eyes? For most of us, this information comes from the writings of experts and scientific journals. Without experiencing the details of evolutionary processes, we believe in this theory because we trust it. So this knowledge is passed from person to person, creating a chain of trust.

Another example is the discipline of astronomy. As with others, almost all people do not observe or test any of the information obtained from this field. They have to rely on the publications of the institutions created for this field and the statements of experts. Especially since this field is not like the others, it does not provide opportunities for individual initiatives because we are talking about a formation that requires large capital behind it. As a result, we encounter the same situation of trust-based information that we have encountered in others, but in a deeper context.

We can also see such a chain of trust in historical events. For example, when we read ancient inscriptions or learn about a historical event, most of us have not examined the inscriptions or seen the events in person. Much historical information is passed down through generations, but it is often not possible for us to test the accuracy of this information. Societies have relied on this information throughout history and it has become a reality in their collective memory.

It is similar when we look at political events. Many of the political events we think about or discuss today are events that we have not observed on the ground and have not personally experienced. However, when we think about these events, we often rely on historical texts, the

media or an expert opinion. Did each individual actually observe those events? Of course not. We form social and political opinions based on the information shaped by these trusted accounts.

Conclusion

Consequently, in the case of both scientific knowledge and religious knowledge, the basis for accessing knowledge is trust, that is, belief. Most of the time, without direct experience or in-depth knowledge in every field, we accept this knowledge by trusting others. However, questioning and criticizing knowledge seems to be a personally challenging process to overcome this trust.

When we approach knowledge from this perspective, there is actually not as big a difference between the accuracy or reliability of scientific knowledge and religious or cultural knowledge as we perceive. In all fields, we don't actually acquire knowledge directly, we accept knowledge by trusting those we think have acquired it or those who claim to have acquired it.

As a result, critiquing such information is often no more than an individual effort. The important thing, then, is not just to question this knowledge individually, but to try to develop a broader consciousness on a societal level. This may be the most important way in which efforts to question the accuracy of information can be meaningful.