

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT "OPINIONS" — THERE IS OBJECTIVE REALITY AND OBJECTIVE TRUTH — AND IT MATTERS!

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Dogma is one thing. Insisting on something without an adequate foundation is one thing. But that is very different than correctly insisting: that there is actually objective reality and, corresponding to that, objective truth; that there are methods and means for getting to objective truth; that people have gotten to it, that they do get to it. Yes, there is a relative element within that, and we should always have our minds open and be searching for deeper understanding—be open to acknowledging that what we thought to be true, wasn't in fact true—but, at the same time, we really should not lapse into relativism. By relativism I mean not just the understanding that human knowledge about reality is limited in some ways (and therefore has a relative element within it) but the erroneous notion that there is no objective reality, and/or that human beings cannot really come to know anything about reality with any certainty—that "it's all relative"—it's all just perceptions and opinions, and it's impossible to determine whether or not an idea or conception corresponds to objective reality. The struggle against relativism is a very important epistemological battle that has to be waged, particularly among the more progressive forces in society, who have been weighed down with this post-modernism and relativism, and so on—and it's killing, it's killing them and killing their ability to stand up to what's going on in the world, to even recognize what's going on in the world. As long as we let people get away with this notion that everything is just an opinion, or just your idea of the world, or your "narrative," we're never going to get anywhere good in the world.

[Editors' Note: The above is taken from the talk "Why We're in the Situation We're in Today...And What to Do About It: A Thoroughly Rotten System and the Need for Revolution," one of the 7 Talks given by Bob Avakian in 2006. Audio of the 7 Talks, plus the Question and Answer Session, with Concluding Remarks, is available at bobavakian.net. The author has edited this for publication here.]