Miranda E Hall

Problems of Knowledge

February 25th, 2017

David Smith

Truth, Like a Flower is Fragile, Yet it is Also Strong

A beautiful rose, soft red petals like feathers against the skin can still have thorns that can break the outermost layer of flesh, leaving a crimson trail where it pierced. When you see this lovely rose, do you leave it where it can grow or take it inside where you can care for it? When left outside the rose may have to deal with drastic weather changes and cold but it may grow stronger from this. If the rose is taken inside it may glow brightly but will eventually turn brown and crisp while dying. This rose, or rather if we take the rose inside instead of leaving it to the weather, represents truth. The conditions of truth may change the rose, whether or not the truth is told or hidden. The question one may ask then is, would it be better to leave the rose where it lay, and tell it the truth, or to bring it inside and hide the truth from it?

Jess Whittlestone, in “When the truth hurts”, argues that we should always seek out the truth, that the truth is always better to be known than hidden. Though all the truths we may find may not be those of value they still may provide some light to shine onto our lives. She brings up the point that she has never regretted knowing something to be the truth, even though the truth may be painful to hear. If the rose was to be told that it would die in the upcoming blizzard do you think the rose would rather have been taken by surprise by its death, or rather would it stand strong and beautiful in its final few moments. Whittlestone argues that the rose would want to know so that in its final moments it could stand proud and lovely as it was overtaken by the snow.

I agree with Whittlestone’s argument, I believe that the truth should always be known. There are no circumstances under which I would not wish to know the truth or tell the truth. I believe that the rose should be left in its natural place and even though it may go through trials, that it will grow stronger from these trials. I would always rather know what someone thinks of me truthfully as I will then base my interactions with them off of that. Or in a more life altering example I would much rather be told I have an incurable terminal illness with one month to live because I would want to spend every waking minute trying to make my life mean the most in those final moments. I would rather be pierced by the thorn and have to suffer little but see the beauty, than be surprised when the thorn stuck in my thumb becomes infected and kills me. You may say, “but what if you were told that your loved one was terminally ill?” I would much rather know so that I can spend their last moments with them, caring for them and showing them I love them. Would I tell them of their illness if they didn’t know? Yes I would. That way if they had any special final requests or wishes I could help them to fulfill those. The truth, like the frost hitting a rose, may hurt but it is something that must be known.

There is another side of this argument, those who would choose to take the rose inside to save the rose from the storm. Why would these people want to prevent the rose from being hit with the chill of the frost? They want to protect it, and to keep it safe. By hiding the truth they believe they are protecting the people the truth would hurt. An example that was discussed in my philosophy class was in the era of world war II would you not lie about the whereabouts of a Jewish family you were helping to hide. Those who want to protect the rose would lie and keep the truth from those who were seeking it. A smaller example though would be your friend broke a window while playing ball with you, if you tell that it was entirely his fault he will get in more trouble and you may lose a friendship, but if you lie and say it was both of your faults you may both take the blame equally. These people see the idea of protecting someone from being hurt as more valuable than the person knowing the truth.

Is it worth plucking the rose to save it from the storm only to have it die and disintegrate a few days later? Or should we leave the rose to traverse the trials it was meant to go through? Truth, a fragile concept one that has the power to destroy lives but also to build them up and make them great. Whittlestone and I agree that truth should always been looked for and known, no matter what pain it may cause, we agree that the rose should be left to weather the storms and to grow stronger from it, even if it leads to its demise. There are those who see the other side of the coin, who wish to spare the rose from the storm, to hide the truth from others and perhaps even themselves, to insure not hurt comes to them from the truth. Is any one side necessarily wrong, all are entitled to believe what they wish. However it should be left to the rose whether it wants to stay outside or not, it should be based on the person if they want to know the truth or not, and if they choose not to know the truth then allow them to live in their blissful world of ignorance. The rose may be hurt either way, but perhaps it could have made it through the storm, perhaps knowing the truth would be better.