



National Workshop

on

“Fundamental Issues in Knowledge and its Acquisition (FIKA)”

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SYNOPSIS

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SYNOPSIS

LECTURES & DISCUSSION

The Workshop comprised of four Lectures. Each Lecture was followed by an exhaustive discussion.

LECTURE TOPICS

The Topics of Lectures were as follows:

- I.** Introduction
- II.** Modern Science
- III.** Traditional Philosophy and Metaphysics
- IV.** Corrective Agenda for Main-Stream Academic Process

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Problem

- (1) Despite elevation of the standard of living, emerging all-pervading crises have started ending the transcendental and worldly life of Man
- (i) Crisis of Meaning / Relativism / Post-Modernism -> Religion follows Man not vice versa e.g. Homosexual indoctrination in Kindergartens, Women Priests etc
 - (ii) Ecological Crisis: Global Warming etc
 - (iii) Frankensteinian Technologies:
Insurmountable Radiation leaks from Nuclear Technology
Bizarre outcomes of Genetic Engineering etc
 - (iv) Socio-economic Crisis: Capitalism -> Loss of human autonomy, uprooting of humane communities & emergence of cancerous cities, economic privations
 - (v) Health-care crisis: Exorbitant costs, Serious Side-effects, Non-curative life-long treatments
- (2) **Failure of Academia:** Both the positive and negative aspect of contemporary life, namely, high standard of living and the all-pervading crises, have arisen from contemporary Learning and from the Academia which support this Learning. So, the Academia is responsible for reforming itself and the Learning that it generates, in order to resolve these crises, while retaining the standard of living.
- (i) The Academia has signally failed in resolving these crises.
 - (ii) In order to resolve these crises *the Academia has to reform itself*, as the negative component of the existing genius of the Academia and the corresponding world-view and programme emanating from the academia is the chief cause of these crises.
 - (iii) The Academia have at least taken note of the crises of the human and physical ecosphere, although, with little motivation for reform and even lesser production of reform blue-prints. But, the more fundamental need of reforming the academia themselves, needed for restoring normality, has not even been recognised.

B. Solutions proposed

Although, the main-stream of the Academia do not question the existing academic process itself, yet, a few powerful minds like Feyerabend, Kuhn etc. recognised the rational and positivist perspective of contemporary Learning to be too narrow.

These critics rejected the Rationalism of Modern Philosophy, and even its Materialist Perspective of Reality but they continued to accept the Anti-Transcendent prelude of Materialism.

Actually Materialism has two sides:

(i) Nothing exists except Matter

(ii) Matter, known only by sensory means, is the only positive Reality.

Feyerabend etc rejected only the second aspect.

So, they paved the way for non-ratioempiric methods not by invoking some positive basis, but by disproving that Ratio-empiricism is the only method of knowledge.

Thus, paradoxically, they endorsed methodological plurality by denying *any* objective method of knowledge, hence, the freedom to use *any* method.

Their stance boils down to an 'active' Solipsism. The **ancient Solipsists** said that since there is no Reality and no Truth, so: do nothing. The **modern 'activist' Solipsists** said, since there is no Truth, so: do anything or everything.

So, these Post-Modernists not only weakened Ratio-empiricity in its own limited sphere, but, also failed to provide any objective basis for Non-Ratioempiric Methods, to distinguish true Ratio-empiric methods from illusory ones and to develop and use them in an objectively guided manner.

Instead of absolutely rejecting Matter and continuing to hold Modern Philosophy's rejection of Supra-Matter and Transcendence, they should have rejected Modern Philosophy's Anti-Transcendentalism and Materialist Absolutism.

On the positive side, they should have accepted Transcendental Metaphysics and Supra- Material + Material Cosmology.

Instead of accepting Non-ratioempiric methods in an indiscriminate, 'anything goes' manner, they should have re-instated the age-old and universal Transcendentalist Perspective and the rich and profound Metaphysical Perspectives arising within it, to get all the vast richnesses of Non-Ratioempiric Methods in an objectively guided manner.

Secondly, instead of rejecting Matter and Ratio-empiricity absolutely, they should have only qualified these ontological and epistemological stances, and limited them to their own partial sphere, to continue getting the benefits of Ratio-empiricity.

Thus, Feyerabend etc partially and hazily expanded the means of Knowing at the expense of denying even the limited reality of Ratio-empiricity.

If they could have freed themselves from the new-fangled and parochial stance of Anti-Transcendentalism, emerging only in Europe 800 -900 back, and re-subscribed to Transcendentalism, which had been the basis of all the great Learnings and Sciences of Humanity, and still continues in that capacity - to greater or lesser extent - in the East, they would have got the positive bases not only for re-instating non-ratioempiric methods, but even the objective basis for the ratio-empirical method, in its own limited sphere.

Thus, Post-Modernism's commitment to challenge the totalization of Ratio-empiricity and champion Non-Ratio empirical Methods, without being able to restore the universally accepted pre-Renaissance, Supra-Materialist or Transcendentalist Perspective of Reality, only led to enervating Relativism and plunged humanity from the frying-pan into the fire.

To revert to the point of departure of this Workshop, namely:

'ridding the dire crises that beset today's high standards of life, by a fundamental critique and rectification of contemporary Learning'

the few who have woken to this imperative have been thwarted by the **radical inadequacies** of Modern Philosophy.

Modern Philosophy, both its Modernist/Rationalist and Post-Modernist/Irrationalist phases and modes are based upon the **fatal denial of Transcendence**. Philosophy, by definition is the study of an object in the perspective of its over-all or universal setting and roots. So, Philosophy of the Physical Universe should study it in the context of its Transcendent root and Supra-Physical trunk. Refusing to countenance Transcendence and Supra-Physical level of being as objective reality, both Modernism and Post-Modernism fail to fundamentally evaluate and rectify Modern Science.

Traditional Philosophy, by contradistinction, has a comprehensive vision of Reality, higher than, but inclusive of the Objects of Science, and inclusive of the Objects of other cognate Learnings. It also has its own method of knowing and explaining,

higher and wider than the method of Science, but inclusive of it. So, Traditional Philosophy, particularly Traditional Metaphysics is the effective basis for an objective evaluation and critique of modern science and modern Learning as a whole. The critique on the basis of Traditional Philosophy, can not only add to the objects and methods of existing Learning, but also justify and guide Ratio-empiricity and its applications, in its own valid sphere

The near total exclusion of Traditional Philosophy in main-stream Academia as outdated and irrelevant to today's questions and issues is completely unjustified. What to talk of Philosophy, which being concerned mainly with Universals is applicable across widely different particularities, **even the Traditional Sciences, such as, Traditional Medicines like Unani Medicine, Ayurveda etc have been practically shown to be effective**, and that too in manners in which Western Medicine is intrinsically incapable of doing, namely, Holistic manner, with all its attendant advantages, such as Safety, Radical Cure etc.

So, there is no justification for pre-judging Traditional Philosophy as irrelevant to contemporary issues.

However, use of Traditional Philosophy as a critical perspective and tool requires its restatement in terms more easily comprehensible to the contemporary mind. This contemporary restatement of Traditional Philosophies has already been accomplished to a great extent.

The major Traditional Philosophies, particularly the Islamic, Hindu and Thomistic Philosophy have been quite extensively restated, followed by Buddhist, Taoist, Neo-Platonic, Shinto Philosophy etc. Even non-philosophised metaphysical perspectives, such as, Native American and Siberian traditions have been engaged with the contemporary paradigm to a significant extent.

Islamic Traditional Philosophy being broadly summative of all pre-existing Traditional Philosophies and typologically most relatable to Modern Learning, will be mainly used for critiquing Modern Learning in the present Workshop, along with, a meta-language relatable to all Traditional Philosophies: Greco-Alexandrian, Hindu, Far Eastern, Scholastic etc.

Now it is time to bring in Traditional Philosophy into the agenda of the Workshop. Globally recognized scholars of Traditional Philosophy and Metaphysics, arrived at a clear diagnosis of the malaise besetting the Academia to be 'the ignorance of the

multiple levels of Reality and the transcendent Principle that manifests and unifies them’.

What we see, namely, the Physical or Corporeal Reality, is not the sum total of Reality. Above it is the Subtle level, and above that is the Spiritual level. This Corporeal-Subtle-Spiritual conglomerate is the Manifestation of ‘the Principle’ that transcends this Manifestation, but manifests and unifies it. The Transcendent Principle is apprehended as ‘the Absolute’ in Metaphysics and as God or Godhead in Theology.

Just as ontologically there is a hierarchical Kingdom of Reality / Being, the knowledge of Reality comprises a hierarchical Kingdom of Knowledge. Various Disciplines study various segments or dimensions of the Kingdom of Reality and occupy various locations in the Kingdom of Knowledge.

Science studies either, the Corporeal / Physical level or the Corporeal+Subtle level. The former type of Science is mainly Quantitative, whereas, the latter is mainly Qualitative.

From the Metaphysical point of view, it is not forbidden to cultivate Sciences devoted only to the Corporeal/Physical Level. In fact, such circumscribed Quantitative sciences have the advantage of powerful manipulation of physical reality. But, on account of leaving out vast expanses of Reality, they also give rise to negative effects and paint a very inadequate picture of Reality. So, in order to be used safely, they should be used only when essential, strongly regulated and complemented by Qualitative Sciences at the practical level. Secondly, their role in world-view creation should be minimal. The cognitive task of world-view formation being chiefly left to Revelation, Metaphysics, Qualitative Sciences, Literature etc.

The crux of the problem

The quantitative reduction of reality by Modern Science does provide the power to elevate the standard of living. But the need for studying the rest of reality – much more than the nine-tenth of the proverbial submerged iceberg – cannot be addressed by contemporary Learning, as it rejects Supra-Physical Being and Transcendence and is unenthusiastic for the qualitative dimension of the Physical Level. Thus, it has no means of preventing the inevitable adverse effects of practical application of Reductionist Science. It also has no means for rectifying the illusory, rather, counter-reality picture of reality painted by the cognitive and ontology-indicating application of Reductionist Science.

Worse than the above errors of omission, contemporary Learning commits the much graver sin of totalizing its partial Learning, to actively create the bizarre and counter-reality world and self-image of brute materialism, which has no space for conceiving and actualizing the Truth, the Good and the Beautiful.

Essential Solution

The solution lies in returning to the vision of integral Reality, with its Corporeal-Subtle-Spiritual hierarchy and the Transcendent Principle or 'the Absolute', which is behind.

This return will obviously include the return to the means of knowing these respective areas: Revelation, Spiritual Intuition or Intellection, other grades of objective Intuition and Imagination, Rationality and Empiricity.

This will:

- (i) Allow the continuation of Ratio-empiricity and the high standard of living provided by it.
- (ii) Minimize the inevitable cognitive and practical ill effects of this highly circumscribed study of reality and
- (iii) Provide the space for the flowering of parallel Qualitative and Holistic Sciences, both Natural and Social, as well as, the Science of Transcendence or 'the Absolute', namely, Metaphysics and its cognates: Transcendent Literature and Literary Criticism, Qualitative Mathematics etc.

Scholars appealing to this vision of total Reality, have eminently succeeded in presenting the description of all levels of Reality provided by traditional metaphysical and cosmological sciences, particularly by Islamic metaphysics and philosophy (cf. SH Nasr's "Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy") in a manner which is comprehensible for the contemporary mind.

This is no mean feat, given that it was exactly the growing incomprehension of transcendental Metaphysics, which gave rise to the reductionist materialist vision of reality and the fragment-studying but self-totalizing modern disciplines arising within its framework.

Nasr et al. have also used their metaphysical descriptions of the totality of supra-physical and physical reality, and its truly transcendental Principle, to show how limited the objectives and methods of the modern disciplines are, and worse still, how the totalization of the limited vision of these limited sciences results in cognitive and practical disasters.

On the positive side: they have also presented a few very fundamental principles of a healthy and holistic Learning.

If this Holistic Learning is further characterized and Modern Science is integrated in to it, Modern Science, and the use of its Findings will be appropriately qualified and complemented, to become free of its negative aspects and effects while retaining its positive aspects.

The next logical step

However, this exercise has not attempted to derive, even a generalized, blue-print for *practically* transforming the Learning that exists, into the Learning that ought to be. So, there can be no question of putting together a practical programme for the reform of main-stream academic exercises.

It may be quite true that the attempt to fully implement the changes demanded by the fundamental critique of existing Learning within existing Academia may be like fitting a square peg in a round hole. But a partial reform of the existing academic processes cannot be ruled out.

So, the present Workshop is conceived as the next logical step, in trying to compile and round-off the fundamental critique of contemporary Learning, and press it towards the yielding of a programme for reform of main-stream academic exercises.

Since, even a general plan for over-all transformation has also not been worked out, some general issues of over-all transformation of Learning will need to be discussed and mentioned at the Workshop, but the focus will be on getting some guide-lines for the Academia, even though the guidelines identified and used may be general, partial and tentative.

However, it is aimed and hoped that they would stand the test of fidelity to the great objective of recreating Holistic Learning, as well as, the test of practicability, in being, at least partially, amenable to pursuit in main-stream academic institutions.

B. Objective

The objective of the Workshop is:

- (1) To examine the issue of over-all reform needed in Main-stream Learning which will make it more effective in solving the all-pervading crises besetting today's world, and arrive at some practical details of this reform.

It will leave aside the role of Traditional Institutions and of possible New Alternative Institutions in this task of crisis resolution and normality restoration.

C. Scope

The Workshop will examine and propose changes in all the four levels of Learning pursued in main-stream academic institutions:

- (1) Corrections, *complementation** etc in General Perspective of Knowledge as such
- (2) Corrections, complementation etc in General Perspective of various Streams and Disciplines
- (3) Corrections, complementation etc in Specific Perspective of a particular Problem or Issue
- (4) Corrections in Objectives and Methodology of Research of a particular Issue at technical level

Obviously, it can take up only a few examples of (2) – (4)

Since, Modern Science is the sole focus and referent of Mainstream Academic Exercises, therefore, under (2):

the referent will be *Modern Science*, with only three streams being considered directly, namely, *Philosophy, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences*, although, other disciplines too will be touched, particularly *Literary Criticism and Future Studies*.

Natural Sciences will be discussed by using the case study of *Medicine: Western Medicine and Unani Medicine*.

Social Sciences will be discussed mainly in terms of *Western Theories of Civilization and Shah Waliullah's Theory of Civilization*.

D. Method

The chief method of the Workshop will be:

Comparison of the stance of Tradition* and Modernity* over the issues under examination, by a fundamentally rational method.

Since, the examination has to be mainly at the level of the deepest philosophical underpinnings of science, rather than its surface morphology, historical development, sociological background etc; and since, the study of such universal essence and relations of a thing, falls in the purview of Metaphysics (*Ilahiyat*), so, it can also be said that:

The issues will be examined chiefly at the Metaphysical level. However, historical development etc will also be considered.

In using Tradition and Metaphysics, the Workshop will not entertain the nearly universal present-day distinction and exclusion of Religion from Metaphysics or Spirituality but on the contrary:

It will always include Religion, as Metaphysics or Spirituality never becomes fully operative without it. (cf. SH Nasr²)

Out of the major comprehensive or integral perspectives of Metaphysics, namely, Hindu, Far Eastern, Neoplatonic and Islamic, the last mentioned being the latest, is nearest and most responsive to Modernity and also summative of the earlier perspectives, so:

The Workshop will *chiefly* use either the Islamic perspective or a Meta-language drawn from, and assimilative to, all the perspectives.

II. MODERN SCIENCE

(1) The central and defining role of Modern Science: Modern Science makes up the bulk of Modernity and defines its basic character.

Modern Science is the most important concern of the academia and also colors the pursuit of other disciplines like Humanities.

The contemporary human life too is mainly determined by Modern Science. Modern Science is responsible for both the high standard of living of contemporary Man which is extremely distanced from Nature, as well as, for the all-pervading crises which have started ending Man's transcendental and worldly life. There is near unanimity that Modern Science is responsible both for the 'glory' and the 'gore' of contemporary times, i.e. high standard of living and the all-pervading crises, respectively.

So, any discussion on these issues should begin with an examination of Modern Science.

(2) What is Modern Science? How it is different from Traditional Sciences, such as Unani Medicine and other Traditional Medicines.

Science is the study of Nature, and by extension, the study of Man.

The study of Nature may be **Positivist*** or **Transcendentalist***.

The former is limited to the Physical level of Natural Objects while the latter includes Supra-Physical Levels to varying extent.

Unani Medicine, Ayurveda etc study the Physical and Subtle Level. Most Traditional Alchemies usually study all three levels of Manifestation: Physical, Subtle, Spiritual. Traditional Psychologies go up to the Transcendent Principle behind Manifestation. Some Traditional Geographies are limited to the Physical Level. But they do not deny the higher levels. So, they do not claim that there is nothing more left to study beyond what is covered by their Method.

Modern Natural Science limits itself to the Physical Level and also denies the existence and knowability of any higher level of its Objects of Study. Thus, it not only restricts itself to the study of the Physical Level of Natural Objects – which some Traditional Sciences also do – but, unlike the acceptance of Higher levels and relations by quantitative Traditional Sciences, Modern Science asserts that there is nothing more to be studied beyond what comes under the purview of its sensory and quantificatory Method, namely, Physicality.

The Modern Quantitative Sciences limit themselves not only to the Physical Level, but reduce even the Physical Level to its 3-dimensional geometric skeleton or some other measurable Quantity, real or notional, that can be *measured* instrumentally and subjected to mathematical operations.

This brings us to another important typological classification of Sciences into **Quantitative and Qualitative.**

The Quantitative character of Science has been discussed above. While, the Qualitative type will be discussed later.

Yet another classification of Sciences is into **Reductionist and Holistic.**

Although Reductionism and Holism are familiar terms but they, particularly Holism are not properly understood. The full and deeper meaning of Reductionism and Holism needs to be understood. Modern Science is Reductionist, Positivist and Quantitative, whereas, Traditional Sciences are Holistic, Transcendentalist and Qualitative.

Reductionism: The part has priority over the whole. The part alone is real, causally effective and sufficient to explain the properties of the whole. The system is non-real and virtual with no objective reality and causal effectiveness of its own.

Modern Natural Sciences are Reductionist. For instance, Molecules are considered to be the only real and effective entities behind all Biological Phenomena, including Mind.

Holism: The whole has priority over the parts. The whole has primary reality and primary causal efficacy, the part is a sort of expression of the potential richness and inherent variety of the whole.

Unani Medicine, Ayurveda etc are Holistic. For instance, Unani Medicine considers all bodily and mental traits of an Individual to be the expression of his / her overall *Mizaj* (Temperament) or unique ratio of the for primary Qualities: Hot / Cold and Wet / Dry.

Reductionism is tied up with Positivism, individual 'parts' are more amenable to quantitative study. So, Reductionism, Positivism and Quantitative Method go together.

Conversely, Holism is possible only with Transcendentalism*.

Transcendentalism means to recognize that Reality is made up of a Manifestation and the Principle or Basis of this Manifestation that ontologically transcends the Manifestation. The Principle is referred as 'the Absolute' in Metaphysics and as God or Godhead in Theology. The Manifestation is then made up of at least three descending Levels of Spiritual, Subtle and Physical or Corporeal. The Corporeal or Physical Level is the level that is known by sensory means.

The Subtle can be considered to 'transcend' the Corporeal and the Spiritual to transcend the Subtle. But this is only relative transcendence, whereas, true transcendence is between the Principle and the Manifestation.

As mentioned, only Supra-Material and Proto-Material substances have the simplicity to be describable as a whole. The Physical Level is extremely differentiated and variegated. Not only is the Supra-Material Level of an Object itself simple enough to be knowable as a whole, but being the 'sub-stratum' of the Physical Level, its characterization allows the integration of the physical differentia rooted in it, to be knowable as a unitary pattern, that can be manipulated as a whole by a unitary intervention.

Thus, Holism is possible only with Transcendentalism, or its cosmological component of Physical-Subtle-Spiritual three-tiered reality. The Subtle level is simple and homogeneous unlike the much more differentiated Physical Level. So, Sciences which can conceive the Subtle Level of Natural Objects and also access it by using appropriate means, get the tremendous advantage of describing the Object as a whole, as explained above.

(3) The two Functions of any Science:

A Science studies its Object, both (i) in relation to realities higher than its level of study, ultimately going up to the Absolute, as well as, (ii) in relation to other objects at

its own level of reality. The first aspect gives the Cognitive or World-view providing function, while the second aspect gives the Pragmatic Function or technological application.

(i) Higher/Cognitive/World-view Providing / Realizational Function: Showing the object of that science as a reflection or Sign (*Ayat*) of the Absolute / God and, thereby, joining Metaphysics and the dogma and practical teachings of religion in affording the realization of Truth;

(ii) Lower / Pragmatic/Problem Solving Function: Solving problems and maximising the enjoyment of the segment of worldly life which happens to be the object of this science.

The poor or negative Realizational Function of Reductionist Science is recognized. The reductionist western science claims that there is no valid means of knowledge except the Sensory Method. Since, the Sensory Method used in isolation can observe only the material level of the reality.

But, in addition to its misleading vision of Reality, its Pragmatic or Instrumental Function is also compromised, in that, it has short-term and short-range benefits but long-term and long-range harms.

This is clearly being experienced with Modern Science e.g. Potent but Toxic Medicines and Powerful but Global Warming Industry.

On the other hand, Holistic Science not only possesses a good Cognitive Function but practically too strikes a good balance between efficacy and safety, as exemplified by Traditional Medicines.

(4) The Power of Reductionist Science:

It is undeniable that Reductionist Science is very powerful. So, its power should be taken into account and its explanation should be arrived at.

Reductionist science was developed and is prized for the sake of the power it provides (cf. Francis Bacon). It acquires power by reducing the Natural Objects to its quantitatively measurable and physically manipulable skeleton. Thus its findings are fully characterized in contradistinction to qualitative descriptions of the whole Natural Object, which amount to a sort of profile or silhouette. They are also more closely manipulable in comparison to holistic entities.

However, the dimensions of Natural Objects not amenable to the quantitative method which are ignored by Modern Quantitative Science, are real and contribute to the

totality of the object. Thus, the study and generalizations based on only an extremely limited (and disjointed) portions of the Object gives a false picture of reality. Similarly, the manipulation of only a poorly cut out small part, without regard to the larger and organized reality, imposes a shearing force on the 'whole' to distort it and disturb its function, thus giving rise long-term and large-range adverse effects.

Thus, the power of Reductionist science lies in reality / power trade-off (cf. KM Yusuf Amin).

Restricting an object to only sensorily observable and physically manipulable part increases the power for short-term and short-range purposes but distorts cognition and disturbs function at the level of the 'whole', giving rise to both cognitive and physical malaise.

The over-all **cognitive error** caused by Reductive science is a Materialist world-view, with all its dire realizational, ethical and social implications. Whereas, the **practical error** is the progenitor of all physio-biological crises eg Global Warming, Radiation Spread, Bizarre Life Forms, Failed and Toxic Health-care etc.

Thus, ways and mean have to be searched for minimizing the cognitive and practical harms of Reductionist Science, while, benefiting from its power, in a judicious manner. In general, its harms can be minimized by limited and regulated use: both for practical purposes and for painting the picture of reality; and by complementing it, at the practical level by Traditional Sciences and for world-view formation at by Theology, Metaphysics, Literature etc.

But such perspectivization would be possible only after acquiring the full perspective on Reality, chiefly by Traditional Metaphysics.

(5) History of Modern Science needs to be understood for disabusing from a couple of very basic erroneous surmises which in turn have given birth to many serious errors of meaning and value.

Two such basic issues are:

(i) Materialist Science followed Materialist Philosophy, rather than vice versa:

It is believed that the demonstration of nothing but material entities by Modern Science has given rise to materialism. This is disproved by history. Newton, who founded mechanistic science was preceded by Descartes who philosophized that *res extensa* or three-dimensional physical things are the only objective reality out there. Thus, the West first developed a Materialist philosophy or belief that gave rise to a materialist

science. Since, this science looked only for matter so unsurprisingly it found only matter. Not that an exact and objective science appeared for the first time in human history which found only matter which converted the truth-loving west to Materialism.

However, the supra-physical, and beyond the supra-physical the transcendental bases of reality, are so overwhelming that even this matter-gearred science has started running against supra-physical level as with Bell's Theorem and Bohm's Implicate Order in **Modern Physics**.

The Implicate Order in simple words is nothing but the supra-physical substratum of the physical universe.

(ii) Another basic historical fallacy is the view that Modern Science is nothing but the development of Muslim Science adopted by Europe during the Renaissance, so, Muslims should most unhesitatingly re-appropriate their patrimony.

The fact is that the West cut out the supra-physical and transcendental core of Muslim Science (cf. SH Nasr) and converted qualitative-quantitative empiricism of Muslim Science to a radically quantitative one (cf. KM Yusuf Amin). **So, the West took the Materialist dregs of Muslim Science and disavowed its Transcendentalist basis.**

So, instead of embracing the materialist western modern science as the only revealer of reality, the Muslims have to again qualify it and integrate it in the total Kingdom of Knowledge, where Revelation-based Metaphysics and even Philosophic Cosmology stands above it and Traditional Sciences like Unani Medicine stand as parallel and complementary Qualitative Sciences.

(6) The basic difference between the modern Natural Sciences and Social Sciences needs to be appreciated.

The objects of study of the Natural Sciences are only the material level of natural objects, whereas, the objects of Social Sciences are intangible phenomena, even though explained exclusively by materialist causes.

Now, the *optimal* correction needed for Modern Science, amounts to extending its study even to

Although, it is permissible for a Discipline to restrict its study to the physical level – while affirming the higher levels and the transcendent Principle, to be studied by other Disciplines – as in al Biruni's Geography, but a more robust discipline should study all levels of Being and their 'roots' in the transcendent Principle. This, however, is not

possible with Modern Natural Science while retaining its matchless power. As seen above, the unmatched power of Modern Natural Science depends upon the reduction of a Natural Object, not only to its Physical Level, but to only the three-dimensional skeleton of the Physical Level. So, Modern Natural Science cannot be transformed into an optimal, total-reality spanning science, while retaining its uniquely greater power. Thus, Modern Natural Science cannot be *optimally* reformed. It can only be *regulated* to minimize the inevitable side-effects of a narrow vision, and, *complemented* by other Qualitative Natural Sciences, like Unani Medicine, for a fuller, Physical+Subtle vision of Nature and by Metaphysics, for describing the 'roots' of Manifestation in 'the Absolute'. The modern Social Sciences and Humanities, on the other hand, have as objects intangible entities, no doubt given a materialist basis, but nevertheless being intangible themselves, to be integrable with, the necessarily intangible supra-physical and transcendental 'roots' of human/social *phenomena*.

Similarly, the methodology of modern Social Sciences also accommodates Qualitative Methods which are basically *matrices for exercising Intuition*. So, the *method* needed for apprehending transcendent and supra-physical dimensions of social or human phenomena i.e. Intuition in various forms, can also be used with modern Social Sciences. It is clear that modern Social Sciences do not give to the fruits of its intuitive methods the status of certitude or quasi-certitude, while, the use of Intuition – of an appropriate type - for apprehending transcendental issues, assumes the results to be certain. But Intuition is *morphologically* a part of Social Sciences.

On the contrary, the methodology of the modern Natural Sciences does not include an overt and organized form of Intuition, as Modern Social Sciences have in the form of their well-characterized and universally accepted Qualitative Research Methods.

The modern *Social Sciences*, by *morphologically* possessing overt and organized place for intangible objects of study and the Intuitive method allow the inclusion of transcendental and supra-physical levels. So, the Modern Social Sciences can be *reformed*, to be used for studying social and psychological phenomena in the context of their physical, supra-physical and transcendental determinants. The Modern Natural Sciences on the other hand, can only be *regulated* and *complemented*, for reasons already discussed above.

Nearly all the above considerations, namely, Holism, Reductionism, analysis of power and error of Reductionism, factors leading to emergence of Modern Science and

intrinsic correctability or otherwise of various Modern Sciences, all involve Philosophical and Metaphysical considerations. So, a discussion of Traditional Philosophy, particularly Metaphysics is needed for the full comprehension of the critique of Modern Science, not to speak of the positive and corrective propositions needed for normalizing Learning, so that it may become capable of providing the guidance for salvaging and normalizing the transcendental and terrestrial life of Man. The corrective propositions will, therefore, follow a very general discussion of aspects of Traditional Philosophy relevant to the critique of Contemporary Learning.

III. TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND METAPHYSICS

(1) What is Traditional Philosophy? Comparison with Western Philosophy.

Parts of Traditional Philosophy: Metaphysics, Mathematics, Cosmology, Practical Philosophy. Comparison of these disciplines with their western / modern counterparts. Comparison of the relation and role of Traditional Philosophy and Western Philosophy with the rest of Learning and disciplines.

(2) Various Traditional Philosophies: Greco-Alexandrian, Hindu-Buddhist, Far Eastern, Christian: Scholastic-Augustinian, Islamic. The positivistic distortion of these philosophies by their modern legatees.

(3) The dependence and relation of Traditional Philosophy with Revelation, Religion, Morality and Eschatology.

(4) Islamic Traditional Philosophy. It is based on Qur'an and Hadith. Its morphology and structure is mainly based on Greek Philosophy adapted to the Qur'anic Worldview right from the beginning and transformed more and more in this direction. Its affinities with, or borrowings from, other Traditional Philosophies.

The maturation of Islamic Traditional Philosophy. It began, not ended in 12th Century CE (SH Nasr). Mature forms reflected in Mulla Sadra, Shah Waliullah etc.

The variety of Islamic Traditional Philosophy: Peripatetic, Illuminationist, Theosophical, Associations with Kalam and various theological disciplines eg Usul al Tafsir, Usul al Fiqh, Akhlaq etc.

The complete correspondence of integral Islamic Traditional Philosophy to Qur'an, Sunnah and Ijma.

The greater responsiveness of Islamic Traditional Philosophy to modern positivism. On account of association with the latest and final Revelation, it sums up earlier Traditional Philosophies, and also includes new expressions that may provide a Traditional basis to Modernity, the oxymoronic nature of this statement being mitigated by replacing Modernity with Contemporaneity.

Islamic Traditional Philosophy thus links up with all Traditional Philosophies on the one hand and with Modern Positivism on the other, providing a common ground and basis for better mutual comprehension.

(5) The issues involved in criticism and correction of Contemporary Learning, seen in light of Islamic Traditional Philosophy and Traditional Philosophy in general:

- (i) What is Reality?** Transcendental, Multi-level: Spiritual-Subtle-Corporeal cf. Wajib al wujud and Mumkin al wujud; Darajat al wujud / Maratib al wujud; Hazrat al khamsa al ilahiyyah, Each Level indefinitely expanded, but all unified and dependent on the Principle
- (ii) Means of Knowledge:** Intellection (Spiritual Intuition), Ratiocination, Empiricality
- (iii) Adequacy of the Human Subject to Reality:** Human consciousness mirrors all levels of Reality, therefore, able to know all levels. However, higher levels become activated in only the Elect (*Sabiqun*)
- (iv) Knowledge:** Apprehension of Reality or Truth
- (v) Criteria of Truth:**
 - (a) Correspondence with whatever happens to be the higher level of Reality, leading to 'vision of the Principle' or Ma'arifat (Gnosis), otherwise known philosophically or mentally.
 - (b) Correspondence with lower levels of Reality leading to its manipulability and practical benefits

Higher-directed and more reality-aligned the Knowledge greater the first mentioned fruit or Gnosis.

Lower and less aligned the Knowledge greater the second mentioned benefit or worldly power.

(v) However, the increased worldly **power of lower directed Knowledge** is relative i.e. short-range and short-term and vitiated by long-range and long-term harms

Similarly, the decreased **Gnostic value of lower-directed Knowledge** too is relative and its positive symbolism can be appreciated only by the metaphysical elite.

This will be explained by using the example of Unani Medicine (cf KM Yusuf Amin) and Geocentric Astronomy (cf. Wolfgang Smith), respectively.

(vi) **Holism and Reductionism and the Qualitative and Quantitative Methods will be correlated with above deeper insights.**

(vii) **Reality-giving function:** Whatever is revealed by Modern Science has mainly a pragmatic or problem-solving value but **cannot be considered better or even correct description of objective reality**. This is agreed upon even in contemporary western philosophy of Modern Science.

(vii) The above discussion will help in realizing the **plurality of Modes of Knowledge** and **plurality of Natural Sciences** i.e. there can be many, even apparently conflicting 'Knowledges' depending upon the level and manner of Reality being observed. Thus, *the data of Traditional Sciences are as correct as of Modern Science, each in their manner, even if apparently conflicting e.g. Geocentrism and Heliocentrism.*

The only difference will be in their respective higher and lower benefits or Gnosis and Power, and that too only relatively.

(viii) **Critique of Evolutionism.** As time is advancing Man and the World are not improving at the contingent level, as claimed by Modern Philosophy and sought to be substantiated by providing the example of a more powerful Modern Science, but deteriorating, as claimed by all Revelations and Traditions and as substantiable by a correct analysis of History (cf. Schuon and Martin Lings).

This will help in removing the tremendous scepticism about older or pre-modern, traditional Knowledge: Revelations, Philosophies and Sciences.

(ix) **Time-created ontological changes in Cosmos and Psyche (cf. KMY Amin) and the need and permissibility of *greater* focus on corporeal or physical level and corresponding methods i.e. empiricity and rationality in these Times.**

Although, all scholars using the metaphysical paradigm recognize the darkening of the Intellective (Spiritual Intuition) faculty in these Last Times, but strangely enough, the very obvious implication of adapting the path of realization to this objective reality, prominently including a greater compensatory use of empirico-rationality has not been adequately appreciated except for some general considerations in Martin Ling's "The Eleventh Hour".

A corresponding issue, namely, the last Revelation Islam providing this adaptation has also not been explored except for some small studies by the author of these lines.

But the adaptation of the spiritual path to the darkening of the Intellect and the greater involvement of Man in corporeality / physicality and the corresponding predilection for Empirico-rationality is one of the central characters of Islam and has been given quite pervasive expressions in the transcendental and civilizational life of Man. That is one of the reasons for Islam's appeal and for its success in maintaining a spiritual or traditional personality, civilization and society even in these dark Last Times.

This adaptation includes the provision of greater space for the corporeal and material level of reality and the method of knowing it, namely, Empirico-rationality, while maintaining the sovereign position of spirituality and Revelation, as well as, of Intellection or Spiritual Intuition.

Secondly, care has been taken that the more than optimal space for the Material level and the means of knowing this level, namely, Empirico-rationality, should be so qualified, quantitatively and by various complementations, so that it may not disturb the equilibrium between the Universal and the Individual, the Absolute and the Contingent, Being and Becoming and Principle and Manifestation.

The greater space for 'the world' or for Positivism is not a superior expression but a 'compensation'. However, it has been provided not only as *appeasement* of the more worldly Man but also as a true or positive compensation to fulfill needs which cannot be catered by the increasingly inaccessible Intellect / Spiritual Intuition. Secondly, the compensations that amount to appeasements are graded as increasingly 'Undesirable' (*Makruh*). 'Undesirable' compensations should be for as short time and for as limited extent, as possible.

The overall adaptation of realization to the constraints of the Last Times revealed in Islam is beyond the scope of this Workshop. However, one important element of this adaptation is the greater than optimal - but within equilibrium - space for Positivism,

will be briefly discussed as in the light of this principle the corrections and adjustments demanded from Modern Science would be lesser, which will obviously be more acceptable for the more 'worldly' contemporary Man.

Such agenda of correction will not be a non-starter like Gandhi's radically anti-Modern 'Village Republics'. The reason for Gandhi's inability to take into account the increased Positivism of contemporary Man was his use of an ancient Tradition that had not needed and, therefore, did not have the more than optimal - but within normality - space for 'the world'. It should be remembered that this magic magnitude of a more than optimal space for Positivism which is enough to fulfill contemporary Man's needs but is not so great as to disturb the equilibrium, this subjective balance can be struck most correctly by a new Revelation rather than the modulation of an older Revelation by ordinary human beings.

It should be appreciated that the emergence of quantitative sciences in the Islamic Civilization, like that of al Biruni, that are unprecedented in earlier Traditional Civilizations, became possible due to this greater space for Positivism.

For the same reason, a metaphysical and cosmological scheme drawing upon the Islamic Revelation is likely to yield maximum possible space for Modern Science, both the Permissible (*Mubah*) type of space and the one qualified as 'Undesirable' (*Makruh*).

IV. CORRECTIVE AGENDA FOR MAIN-STREAM ACADEMIC PROCESS

(1) An appreciable part of the Normal Learning conceivable in light of above considerations can be undertaken in the Main-stream Academic Process, namely:

- (i) Traditional Philosophy, re-stated and re-understood**
- (ii) Modern Natural Sciences, qualified and complemented**
- (iii) Modern Social Sciences and Humanities, reformed, to various degrees**
- (iv) Modern Social Sciences and Humanities devoted to the study of Traditional phenomena like Comparative Religion, Sacred Languages and Islamic Studies, reformed to a much greater extent**

(2) Another part will be left with the Religious *Madrasas* and Seminaries e.g. *Tafsir, Hadith, Fiqh, Tasawwuf* etc. However, an abstraction from, and a contemporary

paraphrasing of, these disciplines, can be included in the Main-stream Academic Process which would be something between Traditional phenomena studied as reformed social sciences as in (2) – (iii) and a doctrine for self-realization.

(3) A small but significant part would be the Traditional Sciences and Technologies being taught in modern style academic institutions such as Unani Medicine in Unani Medicine Colleges or Tibbiya Colleges in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. The teaching and application of the modern component and modern method of study in these institutions should be totally reformed and the extremely limited and secondary place of the unreformable part should be specified.

(4) **The part of Normal Learning that cannot be accommodated as living sciences in Academia:**

The exercise delineated under (1) to (4) would still leave out a very significant part of Normal or Traditional Learning. In fact, the full expression of this Learning can come about if the point of departure were the re-expression of Traditional Learning rather than reform of the Main-stream Academic Process. The Main-stream Academic Process has such intrinsic limitations that even the maximum possible reform cannot provide the space and frame-work for all necessary disciplines.

Yet, the point of departure adopted in this Workshop, namely, reform of the Main-stream Academic Process is a valid approach as it is obligatory to (i) start practically applying, to the extent possible, the newly obtained insights and (ii) to reform the massive Main-stream Academic Process to the possible extent.

Returning to the question of that part of Normal or Traditional Learning, in addition to the Religious Sciences mentioned under (2), that cannot be accommodated in the Main-stream Academic Process as living disciplines, such as,

(i) most of the Traditional Sciences like Traditional Physics, Biology, Astronomy etc. and

(ii) the so called Occult Sciences like Alchemy, Numerology etc, they should also be re-stated and re-understood, just like Traditional Philosophy has been restated, **for personal edification and for the application of principles obtained from them to the living disciplines and living academic processes such as Future Studies.**

(5) **Traditional Philosophy, focused on Metaphysics, re-stated and re-understood.**

- (i)** This can happen in departments of Philosophy and Islamic Studies. It should be undertaken as the compilation of the totality of Traditional Islamic Philosophy, as admirably exemplified by SH Nasr's "Philosophy in the Land of Prophecy", as well as, fresh philosophizations within this perspective.

At the direct level it is an exercise of historical survey, interpretation, analysis and synthesis. But at the meta level this should be basically an exercise of intuitionally extracting and discursively and rationally presenting the, largely implicit, teachings of Qur'an and Sunnah regarding Reality, both transcendental and cosmological.

This exercise should be correlated with all metaphysical perspectives of the world, in order to develop a contemporary meta-language for Traditional Philosophy and Metaphysics of various Traditional Civilizations.

This exercise should also engage with, and be responsive to Modern Philosophy, Sciences and Civilization.

The foremost outcome of this exercise would be a Map of various levels of Reality and the Classification and list of the Disciplines describing these levels. As mentioned, such truly comprehensive Classification of Knowledge will be the primary means of evaluating and reforming contemporary Learning and the Main- stream Academic Process.

- (ii)** The development of the fundamental paradigm for Learning mentioned above, could be supplemented by the development of the Philosophy of each discipline, in the light of the general or fundamental perspective of re-stated. Traditional Philosophy, in the department of that particular discipline.
- (iii)** Some general perspectives for the reform of the Main-stream Academic Process emerging from such Philosophical study could be:
- (a)** Delimiting the area of authority of a discipline by judging how much of Reality it actually studies.
- (b)** Organized frameworks and structures for obtaining Hypotheses from Traditional Philosophy and from the Intuitions of the researcher, as exemplified by some qualitative research methods of modern social sciences.
- (c)** The adoption of the basic rule that the study of any phenomenon should take into account that everything in manifestation is one term of a 'duality' or 'dialectic' and, therefore, this phenomenon should be studied in the context of the other

term of the duality rather than as an independent and absolute issue e.g. Women Empowerment and *Conjuality*, Political Consultation and Political *Obedience* etc.

- (iv) Modern Natural Science should be **qualified** and **complemented**. This is likely to be inter-disciplinary between departments of Natural Sciences and Philosophy.

Major qualification: Increasingly strict ethical restrictions on extreme technologies such as Nuclear Technology, Genetic Engineering etc.

Major Complementation: Rejection of 'Scientism' ie the claim that the Empirico-rational method is the only method of knowledge for all types of reality. The replacement of Scientism by a 'Metaphysicalism', namely, acceptance of Transcendence and the possibility and need studying it as a Discipline of a very different sort that would be commensurate with its Topic, plus Epistemic Pluralism, namely, the possibility of many types of Natural Sciences, such as, Quantitative, Qualitative.

- (v) Modern Social Sciences, reformed:

On account of their existing experience of studying intangible objects of study, the structures of modern social sciences are more amenable for studying metaphysical, supra-physical or Ethics driven social parameters, as a means for describing and explaining social phenomena.

Many such general and specific parameters can be obtained from Shah Waliullah's Hujjat Allah al Baligha eg certain spiritual and moral values being civilization-creating and civilization-improving.

- (vi) Traditional Disciplines like Unani Medicine, taught in modern style institutions should have their modern additions evaluated in light of Traditional Philosophy. Those found intrinsically in conflict with their Qualitative character should be deleted. Others should be modified and adapted to their Qualitative character.

For instance, Clinical Trials on Unani drugs should have a dual protocol: one based on modern bio-molecular modern medical parameters such as Blood Pressure but the other based on traditional Unani parameters such as subjective symptoms, pulse quality etc.

- (vii) Re-statement and re-understanding of the philosophy of Religious Sciences, non-living Traditional Sciences and so called Occult Sciences, for developing a proper world-view and for taking help from these insights in other areas.

***GLOSSARY**

***Traditional:** A civilization based on principles obtained by Revelation and transmitted across generations. The developments and explanations of these principles also enjoying a general transcendental guidance and validity cf. The Prophet's (Salallahu alaihi wa sallam) declaration that his Ummah will not agree on error.

***Modernity:** Rejection of transcendental guidance and in fact of all principles and *a priori* knowledge of any type and, description of Reality - limited only to Corporeal / Physical level - only by empirical study of merely the Corporeal or Physical level of Reality.

***Positivism:** The belief that sensory knowledge is the only true knowledge and the physical objects that answer to it is the sum total of reality.

***Transcendentalism:** The perspective that Manifest Reality has three levels of Being: Spiritual, Subtle and Physical. The basis of this tri-partite manifest reality is 'the Absolute' that completely transcends this manifest reality. Manifest reality is known by various forms of Intuition, Objective Imagination, Reason, Logic, Mathematics and Empirical study. The transcendental and absolute basis of Manifestation is known by Revelation and Intellection / Spiritual Intuition.

REFERENCES

1. **Ibrahim Kalin, "Three Views of Science in the Islamic World" in "God, Life and the Cosmos: Christian and Islamic Perspectives" Eds. Ted Peters, Muzaffar Iqbal, Syed Nomanul Haq, Ashgate, 2002, pp. 43 - 75.**

If it is the modern secular science that is culturally and historically constructed, then Islamic science, as understood by this group of scholars, has to explain how and why it is entitled to universal validity and applicability. It will simply be short of logical consistency to say that Kuhn's language of paradigms is an adequate tool to explain the history of Western but not Islamic science.

2. **Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr", p.38.**

During the last thirty years, when the thirst for a more holistic approach to nature made itself felt, something even worse occurred because neither mainstream religion nor modern science showed any interest whatsoever in the religious and symbolic knowledge of nature and the holistic approach to it. The water sought for in this thirst seeped under the structures of Western culture and came out in the form of New Age movements, nearly all of which are very much interested in the science of the cosmos. But what they claim as science is really a New Age pseudo-science of the cosmos. It is not an authentic traditional science, because **a traditional science of the cosmos always has to be related to a traditional religious structure**. In this New Age climate the word "cosmic" has gained a great deal of currency precisely because of the dearth of an authentic religious knowledge of the cosmos in the present-day world. Somehow the thirst had to be satisfied.

So we have had both excavation of the earlier Western esoteric teachings about nature—usually presented in distorted fashion—or borrowings from Oriental religions and their teachings about nature, often distorted. Even the famous and influential book of Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics*, does not really speak of Hindu cosmology or Chinese physics, but only mentions certain comparisons between modern physics and Hindu and Taoist metaphysical ideas.