



National Workshop

on

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

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RESOLUTIONS*

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RESOLUTIONS*

1. Theoretical and applied failures in practically every Discipline are causing a shift in the fundamental patterns of contemporary Learning from Positivism (only sensory knowledge being true) to the view that sensory knowledge is embedded in intuited knowledge, or - the 'Positive within Transcendence' position.

This shift has already started paying rich dividends, such as, Trans-personal psychology-based Psychotherapy producing greater improvement in Psychiatric Diseases, and WHO-recommended Traditional Philosophy-based practice of Traditional Medicines resulting in greater Health-care benefit. With the increasing consistency and rigour of 'the Positive within Transcendence' trend, such remarkable breakthroughs are bound to multiply in almost every Discipline.

Post-Modernism ended 'the Ratio-Empirical Only' stance of Modernism, Trans-Modernism went ahead to the 'Transcendence *with* Positivism' position, and now the truly logical 'the Positive within Transcendence' trend, gathering speed in the last century, has been joined by FIKA to work for:

'thinking out and proposing the processes of integrating Modern Reductionist Learning into Integral Learning'

Since, all contemporary Disciplines - Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities - are willy-nilly posited in Positivist Reductionism, the above objective is a move for critiquing and optimizing the entire range of contemporary Learning in the perspective of total Reality.

Since, Total Reality is addressed only by Traditional Philosophy, therefore, this fundamental critiquing and optimization has to be carried out on the basis of contemporarily restated Traditional Philosophy, engaged with Modern Philosophy and Thought.

2. The first step in this direction, taken by Post-Modernism, and presaged by the Romanticist Movement, has been partially positive, and has opened the door for a healing return of methods other than the Rational and Empirical.

However, the inability of Post-Modernism to disavow the Anti-Transcendentalism of Modernity, left it without any *objective basis* for the extra-

Rational methods. For the same reason, it also did not have the basis for recognizing the limited but objective role of Reason and Perception. So, instead of qualifying Ratio-empiricism, it denied any objective reality to it.

Thus, on the flip side, Post-Modernism had to settle for, the philosophically embarrassing position of, Relativism, as its theory, and on the praxis side, inability to sift the real from the illusory, even the counter-real, called evil in the ethical paradigm.

3. The next step was a polyvalent mix, which may rather arbitrarily be subsumed under the term of Trans-Modernism. This school took the fateful step – which Post-Modernism could not take – of retracting from the eight hundred year old Anti-Transcendentalism of Post-Renaissance West.

However, this new-found Transcendentalism lacked sufficient integrity as it was not squarely grounded in Tradition* and in Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy, which alone has full and authentic data about Transcendence.

(*Tradition is Revelation-based, and constantly inspired, cultural and civilizational activity, transmitted and growing over the generations. The growth being like the growth of a tree out of an all-sufficing seed planted in a particular soil, rather than the chimerical transformation of one species into another.)

Transmodernism marked a fundamental shift in asking for the modernization of Tradition rather than its destruction. However, the flaw, even in such a tectonic shift is basic and obvious. Tradition being addressed to totality of reality and Modernity to only the quantified physical fragment of it, Modernity needs to be integrated into Tradition, rather than entire Tradition being qualified by the former, or even mixing the two on equal footing.

4. The present National Workshop, FIKA, drawing on these developments and, on a few very different but globally unknown, yet essentially cognate processes, has taken the next step in this direction of *thinking out and proposing the processes of integrating Modern Reductionist Learning into Integral Learning*.
5. The rather invisible streams, other than main-stream Philosophy, which FIKA has tapped include the study, researching and practicing of a Traditional Science,

namely, Unani Medicine, *as a living science*, in a basically modern educational matrix.

FIKA has also drawn on the study of probably the most massive and vibrant Traditional entity, namely, the Islamic Civilization and Culture, by a methodology that is modern in origin but got modulated to its traditional object of study. This discipline goes under the name of Islamic Studies.

At a basic level, FIKA has utilized the standing alone, but increasingly noticed works of restated Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy, appearing over the last one hundred years.

It has also utilized the recent and continuing phase of Islamic Tradition in the Sub-continent, incepted by Shah Waliullah.

6. FIKA has shown that the most fundamental step in evaluating and rectifying contemporary Learning is, the recognition and centre-staging of Total Reality viz Transcendence and Multiple Levels of Being, and of the corresponding Kingdom of Knowledge comprising of Metaphysics, Cosmology, Traditional holistic and qualitative sciences and Modern positivist and quantitative sciences.

7. It should be recognized that Modern Natural Science objectively studies Reality - albeit the lowest, and quantitatively transformed Physical Level of Reality. Both the advantage of Quantitative Science, namely, power, and the grave adverse effects besetting it, flow from the same thing, namely, restriction of study to a highly delimited part of Reality. Delimited objects are precisely understood and closely manipulable. Whereas, the expanse of the cut out and ignored Reality gives rise to practical ill effects and cognitive errors.

In light of being an objective, though limited, study of Reality, Modern Natural Science, and its unique power-giving function, need to be preserved and continued. In light of studying and accessing a quite limited part of Reality, further whittled down for the sake of quantitative measurement, Modern Natural Sciences should be complemented by holistic Traditional Sciences like Unani Medicine, Ayurveda etc. to be practiced as living sciences, essentially according to their own traditional paradigm.

In order to minimize the grave adverse effects which inevitably follow from limited perspectives, Modern Natural Science should be closely controlled and regulated.

To avoid yet another negative fall-out of limited perspectives, namely, the painting of an illusory or even counter reality picture of reality, the world-view giving role of Quantitative Science should be down-scaled. Panoramic disciplines like Metaphysics and Qualitative Natural Sciences should play a greater role in reality-picturization.

- 8.** The Modern Social Sciences possess the parameters for studying intangible, though materially explained, social phenomena and have qualitative along with quantitative methods of 'measuring' these intangible parameters.

The Transcendental and Supra-Material levels of phenomena need exactly these, intangible parameters and qualitative methods, in order to be discursively studied within a discipline of learning.

So, Modern Social Sciences should start taking into account the Transcendental and Supra-Material dimensions and factors in descriptions and explanations of social and human phenomena.
- 9.** If 'reform' of a Discipline were to mean that it should start taking into account the supra-material and transcendental dimensions and connections of its objects of study, one can say that Modern Social Sciences can be 'reformed', whereas, Modern Natural Sciences – as reductionist, quantitative, power-giving sciences - can be only 'rectified' by being 'complemented', to get things which they can't provide e.g. Holism, and by being 'qualified' to minimize the practical and cognitive errors arising from the ignoring of left-out reality.
- 10.** The Theological Sciences or 'Transmitted Sciences' are modally different from the 'Rational Sciences', an Islamic Traditional term that covers all disciplines of the Traditional and Modern stream extending from Metaphysics to Quantitative Natural Sciences. The Theological Sciences are an explanation of the Revelation, whereas, the Rational Sciences are discursive descriptions of various levels of Reality. However, the latter also draw the data about Transcendental and Supra-

Material levels from Revelation, albeit derived chiefly by intuitive exegesis exercised in conjunction with a metaphysical perspective. Again, it is Metaphysics which formulates and feeds this data into a cogent and discursive picture of these levels. Conversely, the Theological Sciences develop cogent principles for pursuing their explanatory work, such as *Usul al tafsir*, *Usul al fiqh* etc.

So, the Theological Sciences should continue to be pursued in Seminaries. However, their Abstracts, including their Principles should be appropriately restated to be cogently understandable for the contemporary mind and included in mainstream academia. This would be in addition to primary levels of Theological Sciences imparted in Departments of Theology / Divinity etc for the religious training of the students of mainstream academic institutions.

- 11.** The Traditional Sciences that cannot be studied as living sciences, such as, Geocentric Astronomy and so-called Occult Sciences like Alchemy etc should also be included in mainstream academia, but mostly in the form of their analytical Abstracts. The purposes served by such a study would include, obtaining principles to be used in other disciplines, for 'empathy' creation in social scientists devoted to the study of these sciences as cultural phenomena and for personal edification of those so-inclined.

- 12.** Some Traditional Sciences are being pursued as living sciences in essentially modern-style academic institutions, such as, the Colleges of Unani Medicine and Ayurveda in the Indo-Pak Subcontinent.
Their content and method should be increasingly brought into consonance with their true, original, traditional character. Only then the benefits being offered by them, such as, safe, non-invasive, economical and effective holistic health-care, can be preserved.
Their traditional character and frame-work can be correctly and comprehensively understood only if they are interpreted and studied in light of Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy.

So, issues of Traditional Philosophy that are specially relevant to Traditional Medicine should be compiled and restated in a manner to be understood by the contemporary mind-set of young students.

One useful means to above end is admitting Graduates from Religious Seminaries who do not only know the classical languages which hold most of the texts of these Medicines, but also have a better internalization of the traditional philosophical framework necessary for avoiding materialistic misinterpretations of Supra-Material descriptions, such as, *Ruh* (Pneuma), *Quwa* (Faculties), *Prana* (Vital Principle) etc.

13. All these exercises can be undertaken only on the basis of information about Integral Reality with its Transcendental base and Supra-Material Levels. This information can be provided only by Traditional Philosophy, particularly by, its Revelation-based Metaphysics.

So, the study of Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy, and its application to all levels of Learning is essential and of paramount importance for a truly fundamental evaluation and rectification of contemporary Learning.

Further, Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy would be needed on a continuous and interactive basis, even after the fundamental reorientation needed at this juncture has been made. In fact, the most important part of this reorientation is *restoration of Metaphysics and Traditional integral Philosophy as the apex and basis of Learning.*

So, Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy should be included as an independent and probably the most important discipline in contemporary academic institutions. So much so, that in light of its essential differences from Modern Philosophy, it would be preferable to have separate, though closely engaging, departments for Traditional and Modern Philosophy.

14. Contrary to widespread belief, existing Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy is perfectly capable of being used for this truly fundamental and profound evaluation, rectification and continued guidance of contemporary Learning.

In fact, one of the major reforms which the contemporary mentality needs is to be disabused of the grave fallacy of equating the knowledge of the immutable

and the knowledge of particularized and changing (contingent) levels of Reality, and thereby considering Traditional Philosophy formulated in the past as dated as a decade old manual of Information Technology.

The immutable level, namely Transcendence and its operation in the Contingent realm being stable, their knowledge too is stable. The apparent changes in Metaphysics and Basic Cosmology actually amount to the varying perspectives of the human observers. Whereas, the knowledge of the Contingent level keeps changing not only due to the variety of their delimitations but also due to changes in the Contingent reality itself, as it manifests itself serially in Time.

Thus, although, the Sciences of Nature and Man keep on changing, but Metaphysics *per se* is stable. However, Metaphysics does require restatement and fresh engagement with changing human perspectives and mentality and with the spatial and temporal variability of the Contingent reality.

So, existing Traditional Philosophy, particularly Metaphysics is not only capable of taking care of all issues irrespective of Time, but should be so by definition.

15. However, the existing Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy needs to be restated in order to be comprehensible for the contemporary mind. Secondly, it should be applied to existing issues which may be new or newly formulated. This will require not only restatement but fresh philosophisation. In fact, it would be difficult to practice restatement and fresh philosophisation as water-tight compartments.

Traditional Philosophy is – wrongly – believed to be outdated not only in substance but also in style. Its existing presentation too is sometimes considered to be un-decodable. But, contrary to this opinion, Traditional Metaphysics and Philosophy has already been authentically restated to an extent sufficient for its preliminary use in the academic process. Particularly, Islamic Traditional Philosophy has been more extensively restated.

However, a very grave caution in this regard is in order. It should be appreciated and always remembered, that a big part of the so-called ‘restatement’ of Traditional Philosophy is actually a modernistic distortion. This problem is all the more acute with regard to Traditional Hindu Philosophy, for various reasons. Coomaraswamy holds even Radhakrishnan’s works to be of this nature.

16. Since, Metaphysics deals with the most universal issues, it is expected to be similar in all Traditions. But various Traditions do have different perspectives on Metaphysics. Yet, the various Metaphysical Perspectives of Hindu, Islamic, Neo-Platonic Tradition etc and even the traditional sciences of these Traditions which are devoted to contingent levels - therefore, logically permitted to be very different - such as Cosmologies, Natural Sciences, Philosophy of Art etc are eminently co-relatable, in terms of certain common structures that transcend the undeniable, differences of form. It bears repetition to say that, while recognizing the commonalities, the equally undeniable reality and significance of the different forms should also be kept focused upon.

Yet, the transcendent common patterns are concrete enough to form the basis of a global paradigm for global Learning, in addition to the use of more specified individual Traditional forms that can form the basis of Tradition-specific Learnings, within each Tradition.

So, on one hand the Metaphysics and Philosophies of various Traditions should be restated integrally. But on the other hand efforts must be made to develop a Meta-language capable of showing the correspondences and affinities of various Philosophies.

This Meta-language will never replace the integral descriptions of each Traditional Philosophy, but eminently help in co-relating them conceptually and for providing a very significant range of common ground for application in truly global Learning, the claimed universality of the present 'global' Learning being spurious. The contemporary so-called universal Learning is actually a very narrow and even arbitrary sectarian perspective of Post-Renaissance, Anti-Transcendentalist and Neo-colonialist West.

17. The Islamic Tradition being the latest, is summative of earlier Traditions and most overtly presages Modernity's greater, rather exclusive, concern with the Individual / Material / Ratio-empirical. However, the Islamic Tradition despite giving greater space to the Individual / Material / Ratio-empirical, keeps it within the limits of normality and maintains the supremacy of the Universal / Spiritual / Intellectual or Intuitional.

So, the Islamic Tradition can play a good role as a bridge between various Traditions on one side, and on the other side, as a bridge between Tradition as such, and Modernity.

In fact, the growing understanding of the differential response of the Tradition-Islam-Modern 'Trialectic', to the objective and undeniable decrease of the Universal / Spiritual / Intellective-Intuitional in the Cosmos and the Psyche, in the present 'Last Times' and the increase of the Individual / Material / Ratio-empirical, is one of the most interesting and important unfolding areas of Philosophy that promises to provide more specific guide-lines for the task of integrating Modernity with Tradition, or for integrating the Quantitative Sciences with Integral Learning.

One very basic principle is obtained from the Islamic Tradition with regard to the shifting balance between the Universal / Spiritual and Individual / Material in these Last Times, namely, *providing more than optimal yet normal space, to increased Materiality and to the means of knowing it, namely, Reason and Observation, so that, the decrease in Intuition is compensated by increased Reason and Observation, but only to such extent, and accompanied by such corrective ingenuities, that the ultimate equilibrium between the Universal / Spiritual / Intuitional and the Individual / Material / Ratio-empiric is not disturbed.*

This, hitherto unstated area of Traditional Philosophy and Tradition-Modernity Dialectic, was presented in the Workshop in details that are sufficient for formulating the plan of study of this Issue, as this issue is specially relevant to the objective of FIKA, namely, fundamental evaluation and correction of contemporary Learning.

- 18.** Coomaraswamy's alerting to the dangers of modernistic distortions of Traditional Philosophy should be taken and remembered as a salutary cautioning by all those who wish to devote themselves to the restatement of Traditional Philosophy and / or to its evaluative and corrective application to contemporary Learning. There is great scope for serious error in the restatement of Traditional Philosophy and the even more treacherous task of evaluating contemporary Learning and proposing and carrying out its rectification and reform.

So, although, there is enough basis to start undertaking this task in certain areas, right up to the technical levels, the serious dangers of going wrong, demand great objectivity, hard scholarly and analytical work, self-criticism and patience. There should be no undue procrastination but, haste would be fatal.

A useful policy could be, giving ones best to restating and engaging Traditional Philosophy, but desisting from hasty conclusions.

*Edited 2017

