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Chapter 3: The Perils of Reductionism

Compartmentalization of Mind

Within modern context of knowledge one should bear in mind that 'specialization' is a necessary dimension of scientific enterprise. It seems Allama Jafari is not opposed to specialization as such but this does not mean that he supports mental compartmentalization which looks like to be an outcome of disciplinary rationality.

He argues, for instance, if someone is interested in sociology of law s/he may need to spend three or four decades in order to master intricate aspects of problems which are of vital importance within the field. To embark upon the path of knowledge with a specialist orientation is a constructive approach. But too deeply inclined towards specialization without having a rounded picture of reality would lead to unidimensionality in the context of thinking.

Thus a jurist could be considered as a specialist in law and treated as an authority when s/he knows not only about legal issues but other fields of knowledge such as psychology too. Because all fields of knowledge are interconnected to each other and without realizing this integral aspect of knowledge one would be lost when studying multifaceted dimensions of human existence.

Human being is, in general, not the subject of any science but it is a very important subject in branches of knowledge which are related to human being. Now and again a specialist delves into the subject of her/his study that s/he may forget everything including the pivotal problem of her/his research, i.e. human self.

For example, an economist may be so infatuated with economic issues that s/he may not take into consideration the human factor in her/his economic analyses. In other words, compartmentalization of knowledge seems to be very deeply connected to disintegration of mental capacity of modern human self which could have grave consequences for life as we have known it for centuries. (Jafari, 1976. Ch.

In other words, the birth of "expertism" and the professionalization of scientific enterprise as well as the disciplinarization of knowledge inquiry have constituted the backbones of modern weltanschauung on reality and the organization of cogito in relation to the external world. In other words, the institutionalization and professionalization of science that has taken place in the past century has been called the second scientific revolution.

Seen historically, this revolution has resulted from the fusion of rapidly maturing scientific disciplines with western organizational and administrative techniques, enabling large numbers of scientists with varying interests and abilities to be marshaled for massive projects of research and development.

However, this process has had some side-effects upon the very vision of humanity on fundamental issues of life, reality, world, environment, eco-system, morality, and all that matters to be a humane human self. (Beer & Lewis, 1963. p 764) One of these deep-rooted backlashes is the peril of compartmentalization which has been dealt with by thinkers such as Herbert Marcuse in Germany, Jacques Ellul in France and Allama Jafari in Iran.

What does 'compartmentalization' mean? The term has been employed differently by different scholars in distinct fields of inquiry. For instance, within the psychotherapeutic context, the concept refers to:

...people with a borderline level of organization... [people who should] have to compartmentalize people into "all good" and "all bad", on the principle that 'compartmentalizing experiences... prevents conflict stemming from the incompatibility of the two polarized aspects of self or other. (Gabbard, 2010. Pp 34–9)

The compartmentalization is fragmentary by nature as it is the act of splitting an idea or concept up into parts, and trying to enforce thought processes which are inhibiting attempts to allow these parts to mix together again.

This process is performed in an attempt to simplify things, and to defend against angst in a complex world where human self may find her/himself as a *thrown away* being. In other words, what is considered as a psychological state of mind is, as a matter of fact, a metaphysical modality which could affect the mode

of being in relation to knowledge and all other aspects of leben. To put it otherwise, the compartmentalization prior to its demonstration on cognitive plane should be dealt with as an existential modality which has to do with metaphysics rather than cognition.

In Allama Jafari's parlance, one could argue that while the classification of knowledge in terms of management of scientific inquiry is a benevolent act of intellectual clarity nevertheless when one pushes towards compartmentalization of knowledge then we are faced with an anomic state of affairs. Because the cognitive act is an expression of existential modality and based on this the compartmentalized relationship towards reality could cause grave harms for the being and living of human self both individually and collectively as well as metaphysically.

To put it differently, one of the thorniest issues within human sciences is the question of compartmentalization of knowledge which needs to be taken seriously. Within disciplinary frame of reference each branch of human sciences is concerned with a particular aspect of human activity but this compartmentalized approach towards human existence has obscured the integral vision of reality of human *leben*.

In other words, the discontent among distinguished philosophers who are concerned about the destiny of humanity is due to this myopic approach towards human life which is based on empiricism and epistemic compartmentalization. To perceive the gamut of human existence based on these two principles would deprive us from obtaining an integral understanding of human destiny. (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1)

In a nutshell, it could be argued that the compartmentalization of mind is a reflection of 'spiritual disintegration' which has overshadowed all aspects of modern self. 1 In the primordial school of social theory there is a long-debated problematique on human self in relation to unity versus diversity which could be employed in unlocking the dead-end of disciplinary outlook on anthropology of modern self which is a *torn-apart ego*.

The most significant problem in approaching the question of human being within the parameters of disciplinary rationality is the very being of human person that appears before us as an indivisible whole in an indissoluble totality. By breaking the subject matter of human sciences into various different disciplines which would, in the course of academic progress, grow into compartmentalized paradigms in an incommensurable fashion the very question seems to be lost, namely the indissoluble totality called human being.

In other words, how could we construct a human science that is supposed to inquire about the intricacies of human existence without taking into consideration the very essence of human life which is expressed by terms such as 'I', 'Conscience' or 'Self'? (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1) What is the subject matter of disciplinary sociology? The first answer could be 'society' or 'community'.

Of course, there are differences between society and community within sociological parlance as indicated by Tonnies who argued that *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* are sociological categories for two normal types of human association. However within the paradigm of disciplinary rationality, there has been a long-term shift from community to market that is often described as modernization, progress, and the triumph of rationality.

In other words, the subject matter of sociology is explicitly 'society' but as a matter of fact the main body of research has been engaged on the mechanisms of market rather than poetry of communal relationships between human beings. Anarchists, communitarians, libertarians and primordial theorists such as Allama Jafari have extensively explored this theoretical dimension which has been deeply relegated by disciplinary social theorists and sociologists as well as social scientists.

The Perils of Reductionism

One of the main problems within the disciplinary paradigm is the question of reductionism. The *perils of reductionism* are profoundly paradoxical within naturalistic human sciences. Proponents of naturalism have fallaciously tried to reduce entities with complex interdependent parts to mere constituent parts.

Since every piece of truth must pass through the brain in order to be understood, the human brain has been the biggest target. But, the mind is not physical; it is metaphysical. The mind has a separate realm of mental states and cannot be explained in merely physical terms. The mind is capable of willing action, thinking, predicting, comprehending, and even controlling the brain and the body.

These are acts that are qualitatively different from their constituent neurons. And what of the notion that abstract concepts, such as thoughts, can act on natural things? That is completely out of the realm of the cause and effect relationship that most of the natural world appears to be operating under. There is in reality a dualism with separate orders of phenomena that at its core is very counter–intuitive and problematic for science alone to uncover.

Reductionism is, therefore, self-defeating at its core. Allama Jafari has reflected upon this problematique by arguing that the subject matter of humanity could not be reduced to the object of investigation in natural sciences. To argue that human sciences should follow the model of natural sciences has been one of the grave mistakes of disciplinary social scientists which have brought profound havocs upon humanity at large.

Because the subject matter of natural sciences lacks cogito or subjectivity while the very substance of human existence is its subjectivity. In other words, how could a sociologist dare to talk about the totality of life in regard to human being without taking into consideration the indissoluble totality? The major difference between disciplinary social sciences and undisciplinary approach is the question of reductionism which disregards the profound distinction between the realm of nature and the domain of human.

To put it otherwise, when one compares the particular themes within human realm with specific problems within physics by arguing that compartmentalization has not caused any disturbance in this realm so it would not do any harm if we approach human issues based on a naturalistic approach.

It is exactly here that Allama Jafari differs from the proponents of disciplinary rationality as it is evident that the overriding chaos in contemporary civilization is due to this misconception. (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1)

Is it possible to think on social issues and human dilemmas in the context of society and in relation to the world and reality without following the logic of disciplinary rationality? This is a worthy question for all the students of social sciences who aspire to view the 'social' on *uneurocentric grounds*. It could be argued that Allama Jafari is or could be used as a paradigmatic model in crafting 'sociological concepts' –as, for

instance, Ibn Khaldun has been used by scholars such as Syed Farid Alatas in the context of *Alternative* Sociology and non-Eurocentric concept-formation- within the parameters of the primordial school of social theory. In other words,

Allama Jafari distinguishes between disciplinary and undisciplinary sociology and further argues that the disciplinary outlook on human issues has caused severe damages in the body of human societies and civilizations across the globe. In his view, human being has a core which is termed as 'conscience' and functions as an integrative faculty in a holistic fashion. In other words, Allama Jafari believes that:

... the modern disciplinary sociology is unable to fathom 'human integratedness/wholeness' which separates human being from the subject matter of philology or physics. By neglecting this integratedness dimension of human reality the disciplinary sociology has caused severe damage in regard to the wholeness as a fundamental principle in deciphering human existence with its diverse complex layers.

For instance, we have sociologists who look at the historical aspects of human life while the others are interested in religious dimensions of humanity without taking the historical or other indices very seriously in their overall analyses. The products of these researches are interesting but disregard the principle of integratedness which is of inalienable importance in conceptualizing human existence and without as if we have lost touch with the humane aspect of human destiny. (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1)

This, in Allama Jafari's view, is a serious challenge. Of course, to map out the contours of this serious challenge has been one of the motives behind the sociological enterprise since its early disciplinary days in 19th century.

For instance, August Comte is a prime example of this tradition which has aimed to map out the ills of modern society based on the conviction that the birth of derisive individualism would destroy the social fabric. In other words, society is a possibility where there are feelings of solidarity, togetherness and philanthropy which would enable members of a community to coexist in a societal fashion. Sociology or the sociological imagination was the answer which was crafted by Comte within the parameters of positivism.

He believed that human society follows certain patterns which result in solidarity, togetherness and philanthropic modalities within and without as well as between human beings and communities. However the rapid expansion of industrialization has destructed these bonds which were nourished within the bosom of religion (i.e. Catholic Church) and consequently left individuals in an arid land without any sacred canopy to turn to.

In other words, sociology took the challenge seriously and embraced the task of building a canopy where people could feel the warmth of religious sacrality without being dedicated to any specific religion. This led to a novel tradition within sociological understanding where sacrality was switched into sociality and *theodicy* metamorphosed into *sociodicy*.

To put it otherwise, the dehumanizing effects of modernity was admitted by some strata within French sociology but the panacea was sought in the soil of positivism both as an epistemology and weltanschauung. Although positivists argued that ontology is not the prime concern of sociologists who work within the parameters of science but this *negative metaphysics* did not inhibit them to rule out any meta–rational concerns as *meaningless* and *nonsense*.

Some sociologists such as Pareto believed that modernity has triumphed over all other forms of civilizations but this accomplishment has not reached its zenith yet as we still witness the *residuals* of pre–modern modalities in the midst of modern context.

To put it differently, rationalization was the inevitable goal of all societies even that meant to live within the parameters of 'Iron Cage' or 'stahlhartes Gehäuse' for sociologists such as Max Weber.

He introduced this concept into sociological discourse in order to refer to the increased rationalization inherent in social life, particularly in capitalist societies where communities have been replaced by markets. The 'Iron Cage' thus traps individuals in systems based purely on teleological efficiency, rational calculation and control. Weber also described the bureaucratization of social order as 'the polar night of icy darkness'. (1994. p xvi)

Unidimensionality and Human Personality

Human being is an integral whole but the compartmentalization of knowledge when is moved into the ontological level then the problem is not solely of epistemological nature. On the contrary, the reduction of human existence would lead to the loss of many wonderful possibilities which without human self would lose its humanity. (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 3)

Rationalization and the Question of Religare

Rationalization is, in other words, the euphemistic term for a dehumanizing process which has led to a compartmentalized state of human existence where human beings and societies move fast towards depersonalization and absence of conscientious rules.

Sociologists argue that rationalization refers to a process in which an increasing number of social actions become based on considerations of teleological efficiency or calculation rather than on motivations derived from religion, intellect, morality, emotion, custom, or tradition. Many sociologists regard it as a central aspect of modernity, manifested especially in depersonalized societies; as a behavior of the capitalist market; of rational administration in the state and bureaucracy; of the extension of modern science; and of the expansion of modern technology.

However, many sociologists, critical theorists and contemporary philosophers have argued that rationalization, as falsely assumed progress, has a negative and dehumanizing effect on society, moving

modernity away from the central tenets of enlightenment. (Habermas, 1985. p 2) Allama Jafari agrees that when human motivational patterns are divorced from religion, morality, intellect and conscience the results would be very detrimental on the fabric of human society and human individuals but does not share the optimism of Habermas who endorses the Enlightenment project.

As a matter of fact, Allama Jafari seems to suggest that the death of conscience came about by thinkers and encyclopedia writers who viewed religion (i.e. *religare*: connecting humanity to God) as fable and a tale of past as expressed in Comtian philosophy of history. Based on Allama Jafari's reading of history and study of human psychology, the modernist narrative on humanity and its history are based on unsupported assumptions.

Because, human being is possible when there is a conscience which he terms as 'integratedness principle' and the history of humanity is the story of conscience which oscillates between the poles of permanent and contingency as embedded in the bosom of human soul.

Now the questions related to dehumanization could differ from those who share the background assumptions of modernity in a metaphysical sense where Man is considered as emancipated when God is relegated to the periphery rather than working wholeheartedly towards a *religare telos*.

In other words, could one argue that the loss of 'integratedness principle' in human vision is tantamount to dehumanization of human destiny? If the answer is affirmative then what does dehumanization mean in the eyes of Allama Jafari? In addition, how could one perceive in intellectual terms the destiny of humanity? These and many other questions could be posed within the paradigms of the *Primordial School of Social Theory* which Allama Jafari is one of its most vocal exponents.

To tackle all such questions one needs to revisit Allama Jafari's multifaceted discourse on fundamental questions of humanity in general as the modern paradox is not confined solely to epistemological plane. On the contrary, the plague of modernity is anthropological in the sense Feuerbach elaborated but in a "reverse form".

In other words, the Feuerbachian approach is based on the idea that religion is not something instituted by God, but rather is man- made. It is argued that the idea can be traced back to ancient Greece. But the proponents of this historiography argue that it was not until the 18th century, however, that it began to seem possible to finally prove what had previous been mere speculation. Ludwig Feuerbach, drawing on Hegelian philosophy, set out the idea that the process by which religion was invented was wish-fulfillment.

God, according to Feuerbach, is projection of the strongest desires of humanity. For Feuerbach, much of the appeal of Christianity lies in its promise of immortality. Human beings have many fears, but most of all they fear death. Christianity, in promising eternal life, offers to take this fear away from humans.

If, the argument goes, human beings are willing to buy into religion then they can escape from their fear,

and live in blissful ignorance of their mortality. This accounts for the attractiveness of religion, the strength of its grip on human minds.

Of course, for this process to work human beings cannot consciously decide to adopt a religion as a means of escaping from their fears. No, the decision must be unconscious; it is the unconscious mind that drives them to religion. To understand God, on this view, one must understand human psychology; as Feuerbach put it, "theology is anthropology".

This could be the case of modern reading of Christian religion but one should not extend it to other revealed traditions as many Eurocentric scholars on sociology and psychology of religion have mistakenly done. In addition, fear and ignorance are not the only sources of movement in life. In other words, how could Feuerbach explain the question of 'conscious conversion' among adults? There are many existential questions which cannot be reduced to fear and ignorance alone. To put it otherwise; then how could one explain 'sacrifice' (to give up one's life for the other or a cause) in the light of Feuerbach's theory of fear of mortality?

Lebenswelt and Kommunkationstechnik

Sociology is different from physics as both the universal and the particular are of crucial significance in perceiving the complexity of human person. If one in analyzing the human realm separates, for instance, the dimension of art from conceptualizing human existence then what could art mean alone? (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1)

In other words, the subject matter of human sciences is an 'integrated whole' which should be taken into consideration in any sociological analysis. Otherwise we may encounter insurmountable obstacles such as one– dimensionality of modern subject in which spiritual growth, aptitude and ability for critical thought and oppositional behavior wither away.

This is deeply connected to the problem of depersonalization which has resulted in the loss of self and destruction of conscience in the contexts of disciplinary human sciences. Allama Jafari has reflected upon these questions in a very systematic manner in his works on 'The Conscience' (2002), 'Intelligible Life' (1998), 'Message of Wisdom' (1997) and 'Man and Sociology' (1976).

The main issues in these works could be summarized in five key points, namely 1) loss of individuality, 2) loss of autonomy, 3) lack of individual freedom and absence of free-will, 4) specialization and loss of discernment, and 5) disintegration of value and virtue and separation of both from human existence (leben versus system).

Of course, there is no doubt that the critical wing of social theory has been occupied by similar concerns which could be of crucial importance for the students of comparative sociological studies. For instance, we can refer to works carried out by Barry Smart (1999), Max Weber (1991), Cary Boucock (2000),

David B. Grusky (2000), Michael Baurmann (2002), and Samuel Slipp (1981).

Within sociological discourse, one should make an explicit distinction between 'relationship' and 'communication' as in all kinds of relationships there is an element of communication or relatedness but the other way around is not always the case.

In other words, the concept of relation–ship is based on the idea of 'communication' which entails a sense of 'communion' and related to a human community where ties of friendships, bonds of unions, and webs of affections exist between human individuals while in the context of communication there is a sense of systemness, formality and lack of in–depth affiliation.

For instance, in the modern states of contemporary world system, there are various ministries such as ministry of education, ministry of transport and ministry of communication but there is not a single reference to a governmental office of ministry of relationship. Why is this so? Because the modern government is a machinery of bureaucratic rules, while the textures of human relationship is part of *lebenswelt* and follows different rules than those represented by *systemwelt* which works in accordance to *kommunkationstechnik*.

In other words, in the context of relationship it is the 'menschliche faktor' or *human element* which is of crucial significance while in the context of communication, it is the 'technical element' which takes the upper hand. It seems that Allama Jafari has been conscious of these problems and therefore he has argued that when we speak about the subject matter of sociology it should be clear from the outset that the subject of sociological studies is 'human social relations'.

To put otherwise, the crucial role of human element should not be disregarded or treated as an epiphenomenon and wherever this factor is under threat then we, as sociologists, should find out the underlying causes of these detrimental modes in human societies. By reflecting upon the relational nature of social life, he argues that

... there are sociologists who argue that the subject matter of sociology is 'social relations'. This is fair enough but what does it mean in concrete terms? Does it mean that sociology incline towards society over against individual? Or does it mean that disciplinary sociology is based on an equal approach to both individual and society? As far as I understand, it seems that the disciplinary sociology, in despite of many earnest attempts, has not been able to come to terms with the relation between the individual and the social.

There could be many methodological and metaphysical reasons for such a dash but the brief answer is that the disciplinary sociologists have not taken the subject (equipped with body, psyche and soul) very seriously. The question of human subject is deeply intertwined with the problem of 'I–ness' which is of towering importance in any sociological inquiry. (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1)

Modern Disciplinary Rationality

The relation or rather the lack of relation between science and metaphysics is of crucial importance in the constitution of modern disciplinary rationality. The concept of rationality is not an innocent notion within the parameters of human sciences as we are faced with two forms of rationality in the Weberian sense, i.e. the formal rationality and the substantive rationality.

Before getting into the differences between these types and their respective distinction with 'essential intellection' it would be more constructive to define each of these concepts for the purpose of our discussion on Allama Jafari. By rationality, Weber refers to an orientation to reality which weighs up the means and ends of action in a straightforward and pragmatic manner.

When Weber speaks of rationality, he distinguishes into the formal and the substantive rationality. The primary type refers to a category of decision making which is subject to calculation that goes into an action to increase its chance of success. Its decisive feature is that it eliminates an orientation to values because they are non– technical.

Rationality is formal when problems are solved by the application of technical criteria. The second form of rationality refers to a type of decision making which is subject to values and an appeal to ethical norms.

Substantive rationality does not take into account the nature of outcomes. In other words, Weber argues that formal rationality had replaced substantive rationality, because bureaucracy stresses a technical orientation to means and ends. (Nozick, 1993) To complicate the matter even further, we should note that while substantive rationality within the Weberian paradigm is of crucial importance in terms of existential concerns but it is still operating within a particular form where the diminishing role of values is lamented rather than reflecting upon the *significance of virtue* in the constitution of self and society.

In other words, while we agree that Weber had been a step further than his contemporary positivist colleagues due to his incessant engagements with Russian literary philosophy a la Dostoevsky but this does not mean that he has been disloyal to modern metaphysical vision. By distinguishing between form and substance of rationality, Weber may seem to move towards ethical concerns which have been relegated to the periphery of the spirit of capitalism but this is only on the surface as both form and substance are part of the conceptual realm of cognition.

In other words, the question of essence which is deeply interconnected to debates on ethics, morality, self, reality, religion, metaphysics, and many other essential dimensions of human existence does not have any crucial place in discursive form of rational engagement.

What I want to say is that the crisis of humanities and social sciences is not divorced from these issues and those who are interested in the reintroduction of humanism in the body of modern world system

would fail if they ignore these concerns which are of fundamental importance in human existence.

To put it differently, to emphasize on the importance of value over against instrumental outlook on life without realizing that the value is a fruit of the tree of virtue which without it would lose its underlying principle for people who have lost touch with the soil of reality. Allama Jafari belongs to the camp of theorists who endorse the reintroduction of metaphysical concerns in the body of humanities rather than refraining from metaphysical contemplation in the context of humanities. He argues that:

... within modern science there is a tendency to avoid metaphysics by arguing that the latter is synonymous to supernaturalism and science has nothing to do with para- rational discourses. The question is not about supernatural para-rationalism but the main issue is human subject that is equipped with a psyche and this very psyche is consisted of thousands of activities. When this multifaceted psyche takes a social shape then this social modality gets multiplied by thousands of facets. This is of crucial importance in delineating metaphysical aspects of the subject matter of sociology, i.e. 'relation'. In other words, when the term 'relation' is employed within our frame of reference we refer to the 'multifaceted essence'

of relation which has appeared as a complex social modality. In other words, 'I-relatedness' should be fundamentally clarified so we could be able to comprehend which relation is of positive or negative nature. This could not be understood empirically but metaphysically. (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1)

For Allama Jafari, human being was the focal point of any attempt to change or transform the state of affairs. In his view, the art of management could be distinguished into two types or kinds; in the first type, the managerial paradigm was aimed to restore human dignity by abstaining from reification of relationships while in the second type, the governing philosophy was aimed to reduce the locus of human element by focusing on instrumental factors in human societies. (Jafari, 1998)

In other words, social systems and personality characters could be viewed in terms of necrophilia and biophilia which refer to destructive as well as constructive tendencies in Frommesque style of doing sociology. (Miri, 2010. p 77) This is to state that what Fromm refers to as necrophilic mode is equivalent to Allama Jafari's reified modality and what Allama Jafari terms as realizing modality is what Fromm considers as biophilic modality.

These kinds of similarities force us to think about the possibilities of confluence of thought and comparative significance of eastern and western paradigms in the works of thinkers such as Allama Jafari and Eric Fromm. To put it differently, could one argue that the concern with the crucial importance of human being in some worldviews is part of the humanist tradition in the context of sociology?

If the answer is affirmative then what is the effect of such a tradition on the body of humanities and human sciences in relation to human issues as well as problematiques? To put it otherwise, how could we establish a connection between the humanist tradition and Allama Jafari's concern with centrality of humanity (human being, human personality, human character, human conscience and self-realization

versus self– alienation) without disregarding the atheistic tendencies in modern humanism which is alien to Allama Jafari's metaphysical position?

Human-ism or the Question of Self-Realization?

To tackle these questions we need to elaborate the concept of humanism and how it is defined within the sociological tradition. The question of humanism and its relation to sociological imagination is as old as the discipline of sociology.

However, the history of this relation seems to go back to Polish philosopher-turned-sociologist, Florian Znaniecki. It is a methodology which treats its objects of study and its students, that is, humans, as composites of values and systems of values. In certain contexts, the term is related to other sociological domains such as anti-positivism.

Humanistic sociology seeks to throw light on questions such as, 'What is the relationship between a man of principle and a man of opportunism?' It can be seen that any answer to such a question must draw on experience and facts from many disciplines. In the words of Tom Arcaro (1995),

... humanistic sociology is <>. It is a belief in human dignity and worth. It is a personal yet rigorously professional effort to push the <> just a little closer to the <>.

To bridge between the realm of <> and <> is what Allama Jafari tried to accomplish. Humanism has been defined differently by various thinkers within a mixture of distinct intellectual paradigms and also shunned by many religious thinkers in Iran and elsewhere, such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Syed Naghib al- Attas.

These latter groups have shunned the position of humanism due to a particular definition which seems to suggest a humano-centered world rather than theo-centered world that is purported to be the true message of revelations. However, Allama Jafari seems to present a more nuanced version of humanism of Frommesque type which does not exclude religious concerns while wholeheartedly includes existentialistic vision of humanism. In other words, Allama Jafari seems to suggest what Fromm argued on this issue, namely the belief that

... man is indeed forced to choose between a renewal of humanism- of taking seriously the spiritual foundations of our ... culture, which is a foundation of humanism or- having no future at all. (Fromm, 1994: 78)

To put it differently, human-ism or centrality of self-realization is of pivotal significance in the thought of Allama Jafari and it plays a very important role in the constitution of his theories on self, society, religion, politics and *lebensphilosophie*. By centrality of self- realization in Allama Jafari's outlook I refer to what Fromm elaborates as

... the supreme concern for the unfolding of those qualities by virtue of which man is man (1994: 97)

These qualities by virtue of which an individual is able to progress to the heights of humanity are the essences of *constructive mysticism*. (Jafari, 2012) In addition, Allama Jafari believes that modernism has targeted these human qualities by virtue of which man could traverse the thorny path of self–realization or humanization of self and society. (Jafari, 1998)

In other words, in the heart of Allama Jafari's sociological theory there is a *reflective dread* over the well-being/felicity of human self as well as human society both vertically and horizontally. This may seem by some professional sociologists to be a sinful act as this looks like we are crossing over the boundaries of *disciplinary sociology*.

This is correct as Allama Jafari is not a disciplinary thinker but a scholar who works within the parameters of primordial school of social theory. His sociological concerns are to be understood within a larger context which is similar to continental tradition of *lebensphilosophie* a la Henri Bergson and Erich Fromm.

To put it differently, this is to argue that every sociological theory is based on some background assumptions and these assumptions as far as disciplinary social sciences are concerned are *discursive* rationality, rationalism, empiricism, naturalism, negative metaphysics, disjointing of reason and intellect, division of cogito and leben, and the philosophy of modernism.

However, these assumptions are not shared by primordial social thinkers such as Allama Jafari who seems to have different background assumptions which make his sociological concerns very deeply intertwined with concerns embedded within the discourse of *lebensphilosophie*.

Lebensphilosophie and Human Predicament

There are at least two senses in which the term philosophy is used, a disciplinary and an undisciplinary sense. In the disciplinary sense philosophy is an academic study of the fields of metaphysics, ethics, epistemology, logic, and social philosophy.

However when we employ the term *lebensphilosophie* in relation to Allama Jafari we refer to philosophy in the informal sense, as a way of life by focusing on resolving the existential questions about the human condition. By human condition within the body of Allama Jafari's work we refer to a struggle between what *is* (existence) and what *ought* (essence) to be.

The human condition encompasses the unique and inescapable features of being human in a social, cultural, and personal context. It can be described as the irreducible part of humanity that is inherent and not connected to factors such as gender, race or class. It includes concerns such as a search for purpose, sense of curiosity, the inevitability of isolation, or the fear of death. The "human condition" is especially studied through the set of disciplines and sub-fields that make up the humanities.

The study of history, philosophy, literature, and the arts all help understand the nature of the human condition and the broader cultural and social arrangements that make up human lives. The human condition is the subject of such fields of study as philosophy, theology, sociology, psychology, anthropology, demographics, evolutionary biology, cultural studies, and sociobiology.

The philosophical school of existentialism deals with the ongoing search for ultimate meaning in the human condition. Although the term itself may have gained popular currency with André Malraux's novel (1933) and René Magritte's paintings 1933 & 1935, both titled *La Condition Humaine*, and with Hannah Arendt's work and Masaki Kobayashi's film trilogy (1959–1961) which examined these and related concepts, the quest to understand the human condition dates back to the first attempts by humans to understand themselves and their place in the universe.

There are several theories as to what humans all have in common. A popular example is that humans search for purpose, are curious and thrive on new information. High-level thought processes, such as self- awareness, rationality, and sapience, are considered to be defining features of what constitutes a "person".

The existentialist psychotherapist Irvin D. Yalom has identified what he refers to as the four "givens" or ultimate concerns of human existence – concerns with meaning, loneliness, freedom and mortality. Yalom argues with Sartre that man is "condemned to freedom", and must face his ultimate aloneness, the lack of any unquestionable ground of meaning, and ultimate mortality.

In other words, we are faced with normative situations (alternatives, choice, freedom, values, standards, ideals, obligation, and responsibility) and existential predicaments (finitude, alienation, anxiety, guilt, ambivalence, and thrownness).

To put it otherwise; there are at least three prevailing theories on how to respond to the *existential question*: 1) denial of essence; 2) affirmation of both essence and existence; and 3) denial of existence. In addition, it should be mentioned that religion has been functioning as an attempt to overcome the *existential predicament*.

In this fashion, we could mention two broad orientations of *religious existentialism* (religious existentialism holds that there are two levels of reality, essence, which is the ground of Being and existence. Religion is the ultimate concern, in this view) and *atheistic existentialism* (atheistic existentialism holds that there is one level of reality, existence. In this view, each person constructs his own unique and temporary essence).

Now the question is how to locate Allama Jafari in terms of both the existential question and existential predicament? He seems to answer the existential questions based on the second paradigm where both essence and existence are part and parcel of the same and one paradigm – and his position as far as existential predicaments are concerned leans strongly towards the religious existentialist position of thinkers such as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Tillich.

One of the perils of modern perspective in a systematic fashion is the question of 'Atheism' which has resulted in naturalism both as an ontological modality and epistemological mode as well as an existential praxis. Atheism has been defined by atheists themselves as the rejection of belief in the existence of deities.

But this is not what atheism is all about and the belief in deities is not tantamount to belief in God in accordance to *religio perennis* or revealed religious traditions. On the contrary, the question at stake is adherence to the principle of intelligibility of life or obedience to the principle of unintelligibility of life which is the demarcating factor between religionists and atheists.

By naturalism, we do not refer to the definition which has been designed by atheists who have moved from the "negating theology" towards other domains of intellectual activities. Naturalism has been defined by atheists as a philosophical viewpoint that the natural universe and its natural laws and forces operate in the universe, and that nothing exists beyond the natural universe or, if it does, it does not affect the natural universe that we know.

Said differently, this definition is based on a latent contrast to the principle of intelligibility of life which is endorsed by proponents of transcendental wisdom philosophy. That is to argue that naturalism in this fashion is contrasted with supernaturalism and this latter is defined within the paradigm of atheism which is not related to the concepts of 'nature' and 'supra' as they are understood within the parameters of religio perennis.

In other words, the questions of humanities and the poetry of human person should be sensitized to these fundamental differences which are of perennial importance in the constitution of self and society. Having problematized these questions one could now turn to the problem of naturalism in human sciences.

To put it differently, how should one problematize the concept of 'human being' within the context of human sciences? Could one think of humanity in all its dimensions within the paradigm of naturalism? Is a naturalist approach, to say differently, to human problems possible? The publication in 1959 of the University of Cambridge Rede Lecture by C. P. Snow, entitled *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, is justly remembered for posing this brilliant question before anyone who is interested in humanities and the destiny of humanity at large.

Sir Charles' account of the growing communication barrier between practitioners of the natural sciences and technical fields, on the one hand, and the arts and humanities, on the other, inspired a veritable blizzard of urbane invective throughout the globe. Allama Jafari has pondered upon this problem by arguing that the subject matter of sociological inquiry should not be reduced to any other phenomenon than being. In other words, if

... a psychologist is working in the field of psychology and interested in problems such as association of ideas, attention, memory and fantasy then slhe should not neglect the fact that each of these are

organically interconnected and constitute a whole. In other words, the human being should always be taken as a whole as the subject matter of sociology (i.e. human person) is fundamentally different than the subject matter of natural sciences and any negligence in this regard would disrupt the very subject of sociological inquiry.

Now if the reader would ask me why am I insisting upon the indissolubility of human being as an integrated whole? In that case the brief answer would be that if this whole is neglected in the equation of sociological analysis then what we consider as 'society' would not be a possibility worthy of scientific inquiry. (Jafari, 1976. Ch. 1)

If we consider the questions regarding *meaning of life* in a serious fashion and constitutive aspects of sociological background assumptions which could color the very backbones of our theoretical engagements then it would be inevitable to take issue with this problematique as the meaning of life problematique occupies a pivotal position within Allama Jafari's overall sociological enterprise.

The meaning of life is the concept that provides an answer to the philosophical question concerning the purpose and importance of life or existence in general. This concept can be expressed through answering a variety of related questions, such as "Why are we here?", "What is life all about?", and "What is the meaning of it all?" It has been the subject of much philosophical, scientific, gnostic and theological speculation throughout history. There have been a large number of theories to these questions from many different cultural and ideological backgrounds.

The meaning of life is fundamentally intertwined with the philosophical and religious conceptions of existence, social ties, consciousness, and happiness, and touches many other issues, such as symbolic meaning, ontology, value, purpose, ethics, good and evil, free will, conceptions of God, conceptions of humanity, the existence of God, the soul, and the afterlife.

Scientific contributions focus more on describing related empirical facts about the universe; they largely shift the question from "why?" to "how?" and provide context and parameters for meaningful conversations on such problematiques. Of course, the value of the question pertaining to the purpose of life may coincide with the achievement of ultimate reality, or a feeling of oneness, or a feeling of sacredness.

Allama Jafari seems to argue that religion as a model for inquiring about the meaning of life and as one of the most significant dimensions of man's weltanschauung should be taken seriously in the study of social problems. Because human beings build up features of their personality based on the dialectics between nature and nurture in the soil of society and one of the most pivotal dimensions in the constitution of self and society is the religious impulse.

In other words, when working as a sociologist one should realize that the nature of background assumptions could alter the path of theory-building and concept-formation as the human condition is the stage where a brokenness has occurred between the realm of "is' and "ought-to". Within sociological

enterprise one needs to take into consideration the significance of meaning o life problematique or weltanschauung as,

... the existence appears before the eyes of a religious personality in a different fashion than a person who lacks the religious impulse. It is noteworthy that religion colors personality in a fundamental fashion. (Jafari, 1976. Ch 1)

How to conceptualize the relation between religion and personality in the primordial sense, which is of significance in Allama Jafari's sociological perspective, is one of the most interesting comparative questions for anyone who is interested in a non– Eurocentric sociology. Allama Jafari argues that the nature of human life could be conceptualized either in a naturalistic frame of reference or in an intelligible fashion.

In each of these paradigms the very reality of life and the very life of reality are interpreted differently which could affect the textures of sociological theories at the level of *background assumptions*. In other words, constructive religiosity would change the fabric of personality by altering the frame of one's reference both teleologically and sociologically. In Allama Jafari's parlance,

... constructive religiosity ... would awaken human being by altering the textures of personality and transform the frame of reference from a nature-oriented paradigm into an intelligible framework. (2012. p 25)

1. This question has been discussed by western thinkers such as Carl Gustav Jung who spoke of the awakening of dark gods and modern horror.

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