December 2021, Issue No.15

THE 5D THINKING NEWSLETTER

A UNIQUE APPROACH TO READ THE UNIVERSE

Special read: An Interview with Professor Hamidullah Marazi by Bilal Malik

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- *5D Thinking on the Water Cycle*
- *"Which is More Valuable: A Banana or a BMW?" by Dr Necati Aydin*
- *"Let's not Secularize the Universe" by Dr.Colin Turner*
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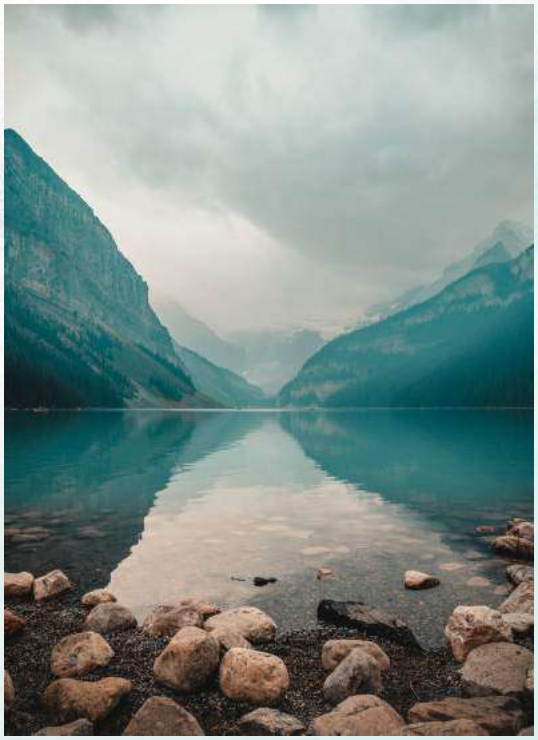


Book Review:

Syed Al Attas' "Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam" by Dr.Abdul Majid Khan

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of

The 5D Thinking Newsletter!

Dear Subscriber,

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of the 5D Thinking newsletter!

In this issue, you can read Dr. Colin Turner's thoughts on witnessing God's grace in the most miniature of worldly events in "Let's Not Secularize the Universe" and Aisha Al Owais' inspiring 5DT article "See You at the Peak".

Be sure to take the time to reflect on Dr. Abdul Majid Khan's review of Syed Al Attas' profound "Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam" and read Bilal Malik's interview with esteemed Professor Hamidullah Marazi, who is scheduled to teach a course at the upcoming "Existence and Meaning" program in Spring 2022.

In this edition, you can also read Dr. Necati Aydin's thought-provoking article "Which is More Valuable: A Banana or a BMW?" in which he intelligently explores the true worth versus market value of material objects in our worldly dimension.

Remember, you can unsubscribe at any time by clicking on the link at the end of the newsletter. We hope to continue to inspire you with the Five Dimensional (5D) Thinking Approach to education.

On behalf of the 5D Thinking Team,

Nadine Kamal

5D Thinking Approach to the Water Cycle

Did you know that the water found on Earth today is all the water that ever existed on the planet? The reason for this is that water is continuously being recycled from one form to another in a continuous process. This is known as the Water Cycle. In this chapter, we attempt to decode the meanings and messages embedded within this flawless recycling system.

In the **first** dimension, Analytical Thinking, we explore four interconnected stages of the Water Cycle: evaporation, condensation, precipitation, and storage. We also highlight some amazing scientific facts about the Water Cycle.

Next, in the **second** dimension, Analogical Thinking, to better appreciate the Water Cycle on Earth, we reflect on man-made desalination systems and explore a Singaporean sewage water recycling technology known as reclaimed water or NEWater. We learn how it took many years of collaboration for scientists to come up with a multi-step process to recycle sewage water.

Then, in the **third** dimension, Critical Thinking, we reflect on artificial desalination and water recycling systems and conclude that it is not possible to believe that random forces can move raw materials around and arrange them to create such technologies even if it takes millions of years. We learn that from experience, it takes the cumulative knowledge, will, and effort of many people over many years to come up with these highly advanced systems. Then, we urge readers to think about the origin of the Water Cycling system.

In the **fourth** dimension, Meditative Thinking, we reflect on the collaboration of the Sun, the atmosphere, the oceans, the force of gravity, and the solar and galactical systems for the Water Cycle to function. We understand that the Water Cycle is connected to the entire universe both at the macro and micro levels. We thus conclude that the Water Cycle can only be the work of the One who creates and maintains the entire universe.

Finally, in the **fifth** dimension, the Moral Thinking dimension, we invite readers to reflect on the true value of the Water Cycle as a special gift. We learn to practice gratitude for the presence of water and reflect on its countless uses on Planet Earth.

To read more about the 5DT approach to the water cycle, please click here.

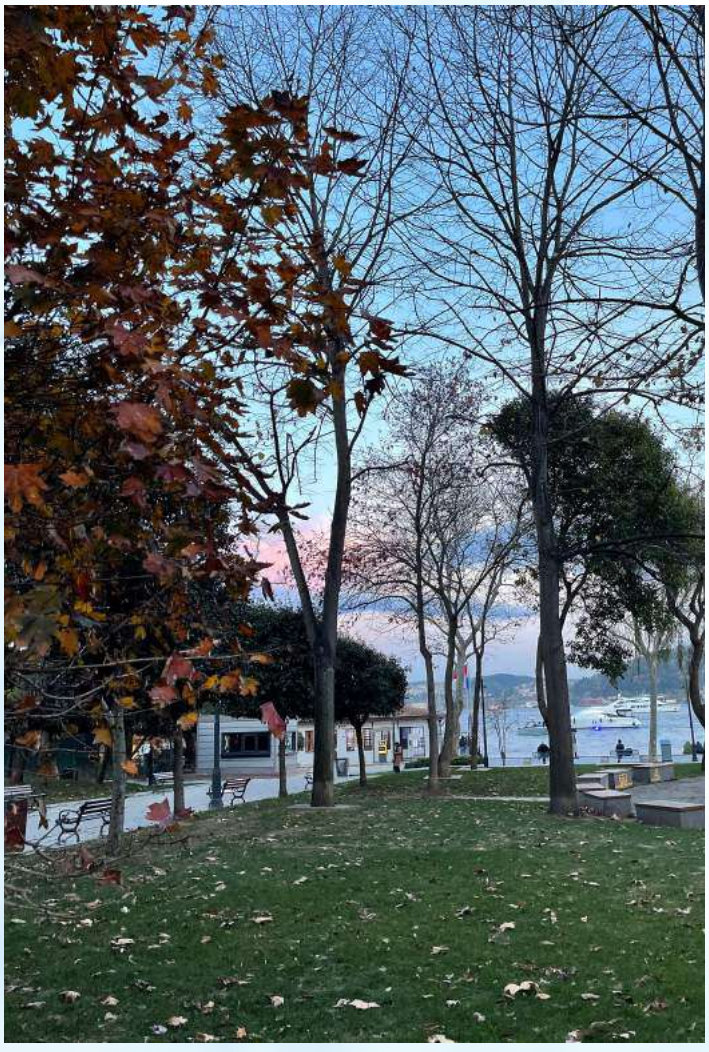
Let's Not Secularize the Universe

Dr. Colin Turner

Most of us seem to be more awed and amazed by events and situations which are great in size and dramatic in impact - things such as volcanoes, earthquakes, eclipses, floods, thunder and lightning, and so on. It is as though God's might and awesomeness is seen more in these vast, universal signs than in things which are small, apparently insignificant and devoid of any obvious consequence.

But in all of God's endless and infinite creations, there is nothing that is trivial or lacking in meaning or importance. The falling of a single leaf from a tree in autumn is probably not something that would fill most with wonder and amazement. But that is because our tastes are so jaded, and we are used to being entertained by things which are big, unexpected, dramatic and full of sound and fury: the small things which pass almost unnoticed are rarely thought to be worth our time and the investment of our interest or consideration.

But the falling of a leaf from a tree in autumn is not something trivial or inconsequential. The Quran uses this very example – a leaf falling – to show that however apparently trivial a thing may be, it is not outside the sphere of Divine activity and consideration. The leaf that falls in autumn was once part of a living, breathing, moving being, and its fall to earth, and subsequent return to the soil, is in many ways emblematic of the human body, which is also a living, breathing, moving being. And one which, like the leaf, will one day 'fall' from good health and return to the earth from whence it came.



The leaf falling from the tree is no less awesome than an active volcano or an eclipse of the sun. We should not 'secularise' the universe by seeing God's hand in only the big events: even the tiny happenings are evidence of His constant grace.

See you at the Peak

Aisha Alowais

While waiting in the queue to check-in my luggage at the airline counter, I heard a young boy say “Burj Khalifa is not the tallest building- it’s Mount Everest!”. Although his expression was true, Burj Khalifa is a man-made tower while Mount Everest is a divine gift. Did you know that Mount Everest was not known to the western world until 1852? Did you know that it is about 60 million years old? Let’s look at Mount Everest from the 5D approach.

Mount Everest was originally called ‘Sagarmatha’ by the Nepalis and ‘Chomolungma’ by the Tibetans. In terms of its geological formation, Mount Everest is composed of three distinct rock formations. From the mountain base to the summit, they are the Rongbuk Formation; the North Col Formation; and the Qomolangma Formation. These rock units are separated by low-angle faults, forcing each one over the next in a zigzag pattern. It is 8,848 meters tall above sea level, and it grows by about 0.25 inches each year. That is because it sits on the intersection of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates which collide against each other (very slowly), and push the tallest mountains in the world upwards at 1/25 or 1/3 of an inch per year.

In comparison, the tallest man-made building so far -Burj Khalifa- is 829.8 meters in height, and its construction took about nine years. Mount Everest, on the other hand, is 8,849 meters tall and its formation took more than 60 million years. Imagine the different civilizations that came across this mountain! Moreover, Burj Khalifa’s primary structure is made of reinforced concrete and structural steel while Mount Everest is made of different types and combinations of rock formations. In terms of area, Mount Everest alone is 1,243 km^2, and in total with the series of Himalayan mountains, it is 595,000 km^2. However, Burj Khalifa is only 2 km^2 wide since the main aim of its construction was to have the tallest building in the world, not the widest.

Can you see any resemblance between the man-made tallest building and the tallest mountain? Which do you think is more sophisticated and elegant? Is it possible for humans to build a taller mountain than Mount Everest?

See you at the Peak

Aisha Alowais

It seems like humans have always wanted to be close to the sky. If we look at the timeline of the human endeavor to build the “tallest building” we can see that the quest began before the 7th century with the Pantheon in Rome, followed by Hagia Sophia and several other buildings. The trend followed during the Middle Ages. Some examples would be the Hwangnyong Temple in South Korea, the Koutoubia Mosque in Morocco, the Old St. Paul’s Cathedral in London (destroyed during the great fire of London in 1666) and many others. As of the 19th century, New York was outstanding in terms of its skyscrapers such as the Empire State Building and the World Trade Center. Soon after that, Chicago’s Sears Tower came into the picture followed by the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, and finally the tallest building so far, the Burj Khalifa. Let us pause for a moment, and admire the beauty of the Burj Khalifa. How was it built? How many engineers and labor forces came together to develop such a project?

Burj Khalifa was built for several reasons, among them is a shift from an oil-based economy to one more service and tourism-based. Do you think steel and concrete alone would have come together to benefit humanity? Do you think the raw materials of the building were blown together by the wind and suddenly the tallest building came to be? How about the tower's location? What about its residential floor and other facilities? Clearly, there must have been exhaustive research and investigation before executing such a project. In fact, the engineers involved in this building have extensive previous experience with building skyscrapers elsewhere in the world. Do you think the Y design of the tower came to be from the thoughts of the atoms and molecules of steel and glass? The design, in fact, was derived from the Islamic architecture of the region, such as the Great Mosque of Samarra. The structure also features a cladding system designed to withstand the UAE's hot summer temperatures. It is comprised of reflective glazing with aluminum and textured stainless steel spandrel panels and stainless steel vertical tubular fins. When speaking of how **Mount Everest** came to be, it was a result of a tectonic smashup between the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates tens of millions of years ago. Before the collision, the ocean crust at the Indian plate's edge plunged under the Eurasian plate, scraping seabed sediments and rocks into a pile. Such tectonic activity beneath the ocean floor can also become ocean vents.

It is an undeniable fact that the development of the skyscrapers would not have been possible without the will, effort, and knowledge of many people over many years. Since the mountains’ structure and formation is much more complicated and elegant than any comparable man-made building, it must require an even higher level of knowledge and power along with a persistent will.

Since we concluded that it takes will and power to create mountains, then there must be an All-Knowing, All-powerful Creator behind the majestic mountains. In fact, all mountains speak of their Creator.

See you at the Peak

Aisha Alowais

Let's take the Himalayas range. In this case, the series of mountains is the outcome of a series of delicate, interconnected events at both the macro and micro levels. Second, plants, animals, and human beings all rely on the existence of mountains for they act as piles that hold the earth together and stabilize its gravitational stress. Moreover, they also supply critical resources such as fresh water, food, and even renewable energy.

On the micro-level, since the Himalayas are of the “Fold mountains” type, they are formed when two or more of Earth's tectonic plates are pushed together. At these colliding, compressing boundaries, rocks and debris are warped and folded into rocky outcrops, hills, mountains, and entire mountain ranges. If it was only up to these unconscious, ignorant, compartments, mountains wouldn’t have come to be. At the macro level, we can see that mountains function through the cooperative work of tectonic plates, the oceans, the surrounding land, and the force of gravity. Thus, we can conclude that The One who Created earth with its tectonic plates that play an essential role in the formation of rocks, must be the one who created the sun- the apparent reason for Earth to exist in addition to the Solar System, the trillions of stars and the entire universe.

Now, what would happen if we had no mountains? Can we as humans build them? Would we know exactly where to locate them? Would mountains build themselves on their own? The provision of the Mountains allows us to survive on planet Earth. The sophisticated mechanism behind mountains’ s formation is beyond what humans can conceive or build.

The functional importance of mountains, specifically the Himalayas, are manifested through a mountain's ability to protect people who live near it from the cold and dry winds of Central Asia. Also, through mountains, monsoon winds of the Indian Ocean are prevented from crossing over to Northern countries and cause heavy rainfall in Northern India. Moreover, when the snow melts off the mountains during summer, it provides water to the rivers even during dry seasons. These rivers carry enormous quantities of aluminum and thus make the land a fertile one. Also, The Himalayan region offers several sites which can be used for producing hydroelectricity. Many minerals as well like copper, lead, zinc, nickel, cobalt, gold, silver, limestone, semi-precious and precious stones can be found in the Himalayas range.

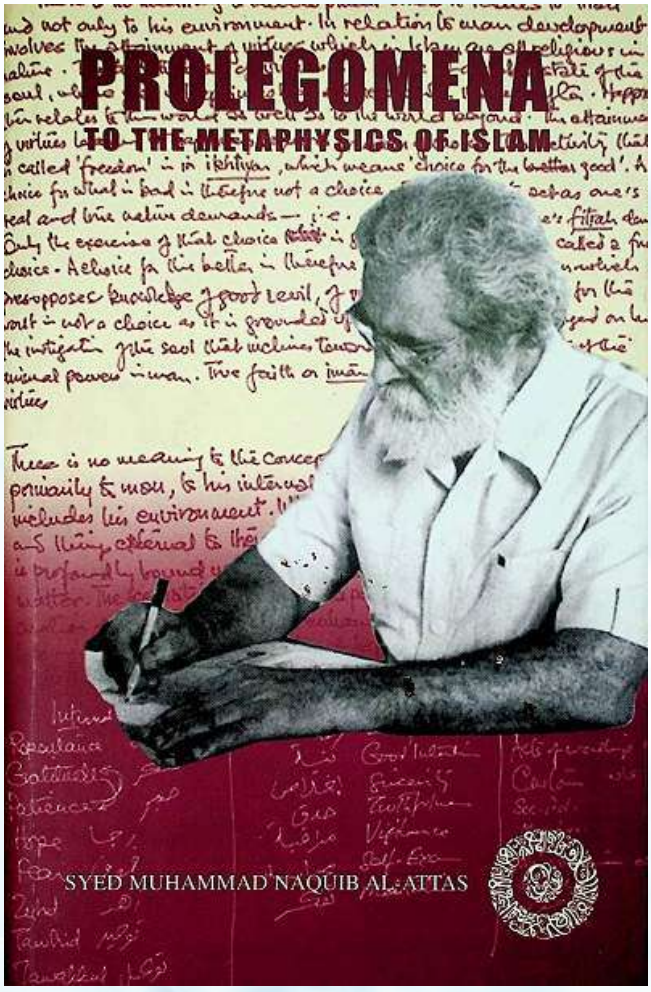
Indeed, mountains are essential elements of life. They are an extremely valuable gift that fulfills the needs of living beings in order to survive. The True Bestower of Bounties wants in return for the precious gift of the Mountain three things: one is remembrance, another is reflection, and the third is gratitude. We should realize that there is a Creator of the Mountains, contemplate the priceless, miraculous Mountains as a gift of our Creator's mercy and wisdom, and be thankful to the Creator for granting us Mountains that provide us with numerous benefits.

We should learn to be humble. We should work on our higher self and elevate our morals. From the way mountains stabilize Earth, we should learn how to balance our spiritual state of mind.

Now that we have reflected on the gift of mountains, let us keep in mind that when planning to climb one next time, we should not leave waste behind us up there. See you at the peak!

Book Review: Prolegomena to the Metaphysics of Islam by Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

by Dr Abdul Majid Khan



The contemporary world is marked by ever-increasing changes in human thought. Theories and meta-theories are formulated to cater to some dimensions of the physical world, which is considered to be the ultimate objective of human inquiry. Speculations and gymnastics of mental activities have evaded the firmness and convictions in man. Very little is seen in addressing the profound questions related to the purpose of being and the relation of the physical world to its origin and purpose. Since the Renaissance, the Western world has continued its sway not only on military, political, economic, and social domains of the globe. It has strongly affected the thought patterns of humans with consequences on their actions. Followers of religions too have fallen prey to the domineering effects of the academic and intellectual paraphernalia of the West. It is not to suggest Muslim scholars and intellectuals have not responded to the challenge.

However, very few, possessing a comprehensive grasp of the subject matter have dealt with the challenges on a profound level. Being fully rooted in Islamic tradition and loyal to its intellectual and spiritual ethos, Syed Naquib al Attas appears to have mastered the major elements of contemporary thought. He raises fundamental questions as to the nature of sciences, concept and conceptualization of knowledge, as well as the adaption of methods and theories. He elaborates that worldviews of different civilizations are based on their distinct metaphysical system. A metaphysical system provides the interpretation of what is taken to be ultimately true and real. Attas is not contended with providing a fundamental critique of the Western thought basis and formulations but offers a set of comprehensive, alternative thought patterns based on the worldview and metaphysics of Islam, a repository of the last and perfect divine revelation and its realization. It needs reiteration that Islamic metaphysics is based on Revelation which is an authentic and authoritative exposition of Truth and reality. Its worldview, sciences and associated theories need to be verified in the light of Revelation and purpose of Revelation. Al-Attas elaborates:

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"that knowledge is not entirely a property of human mind, and that the sciences derived from it are not the products solely of unaided human reason and sense experience possessing an objectivity that precludes value judgment, but that knowledge and the sciences need guidance and verification from the statements and general conclusions of revealed Truth, it is incumbent upon scholars and the learned to acquaint themselves with a clear understanding of the metaphysics of Islam and of the permanently established constituent elements of the worldview derived from it."

The human mind, soul, and spirit function in tandem, guided and inspired by the revelation and produce what constitutes "knowledge" to be actualized by practical dimensions of thought. Adab, he says, is a reflection of wisdom (Hikmah). Adab, he emphasizes, is the spectacle of justice (adalah) as it is reflected by wisdom (Hikmah). Islamic scholars have been insisting upon the fallacy of scientism for its shaky basis and unfounded and unsubstantiated claims about fundamental questions of the purpose of human life and its relation to God and the akhirah (the other world). Insufficiency and inadequacy of the 'scientific interpretations' are demonstrated effectively, among others by Said Nursi in his discourses (Risale-i Nur). Nursi's introduction of the method and concept of Mana-i-Harfi is to help one to connect 'appearing dimensions' of reality to the 'real dimensions' lying within the attributes of God, helps one to only recognize Him but also worship and obey Him as shown by the Revelation (Quran) and the last messenger Muhammad (SAW) and qualify to enjoy His grace (here and after death) and salvation in the hereafter.

Profound intellectual discourses of Syed Naquib al- Attas' publications are a must for the intellectual grooming of seekers of Truth (Muslims in particular) to help provide an alternative, authentic, stable, and blessed paradigm of thought and action. Every sincere and serious scholar should yearn to be part of this endeavor.

"If nature is like a great, open Book, then we must learn the meaning of the Words in order to discern their tentative and final purposes and enact their bidding and invitations and instructions to beneficial use in such wise that we might come to know and acknowledge in grateful appreciation the overwhelming generosity and wisdom of incomparable Author"
Muhammad Al-Attas

Which One is More Valuable: a Banana or a BMW?

by Dr.Necati Aydin

Which One is More Valuable: a Banana or a BMW? The answer seems obvious if we look at it from a market value perspective. You can buy a banana for a dollar or less, but a BMW will cost you thousands of dollars. In this article, I would like to offer an alternative perspective through which one can view a single banana as more valuable than all the BMW cars in the market.

Let us start with value. What is value? How do we determine the value of anything? The Merriam-Webster dictionary gives the first three meanings of value as follows: “the monetary worth of something”, “a fair return or equivalent in goods, services, or money for something exchanged”, and “relative worth, utility, or importance”. The first definition is about the market value or exchange value while the third one is mostly a derivative of the first two. The dictionary meaning of value clearly reflects how people view the “value” of anything in modern times. Essentially, money appears to be the real measure in determining the value of anything. Then, what does monetary value mean? In other words, how does the market determine the monetary value of anything? Economics provides a clear answer to this question. It is all about scarcity. If something is relatively scarce, it becomes expensive. If something is abundant, it is very cheap.

Thus, supply and demand are the true determinants of market value. Drinking water is very cheap compared to gold because water is relatively abundant while the gold supply is limited. As might be the case on some planets, if gold begins to rain from the sky, it will become cheaper than water. Likewise, compared to a BMW, a banana is cheaper because it is relatively abundant.

It is wrong to link the importance or “true worth” of something to its market value. While market capitalism puts all emphasis on the exchange value, the Marxist economy points to “labor value” and “use value” as other types of value. In Marxist ideology, the true value of commodities is determined by the labor value because without labor (human), you could not produce any product. Thus, human agency is the most important input. Therefore, it is a true source of value-added to raw materials. The Marxist economy also defines "use value" in terms of the importance of goods and services in fulfilling certain human needs and desires. In this perspective, water is more valuable than gold because it is a necessity for human survival. In the age of automation and robotization, it might be hard to defend the Marxist “labor value” theory. However, I think he got it right in his theory of “use value”.

Which One is More Valuable: a Banana or a BMW?

by Dr.Necati Aydin

The “use value” theory would help us argue that a banana would be more valuable than a BMW car if we have no other food but bananas to sustain our lives. Given the fact that we have many other alternative types of food, it is hard to claim that the humble banana is more valuable because it fulfills our essential needs. I suggest three other concepts of value to provide supporting arguments for banana vs BMW: existential, Divine, and gift values.

“Existential value” is the very value of something to exist versus not existing. The value of “to be or not to be”. In other words, rather than taking existence for granted, we shall reflect on the absence of existence in order to appreciate the value of existence. For instance, if we assume that the banana seed does not exist, then, the only way for us to make a banana is to arrange basic particles such as electrons and quarks in a particular way to make it from scratch. Of course, we will not take anything for granted including the existence of fundamental particles such as electrons and quarks. For now, if we are granted these particles and are left to figure out how to arrange them to make a banana, it will cost us billions of dollars (if we ever even manage to achieve our goal in making one). Economics states that the price of a product should never be less than its average cost in the long run. This means that price of a single banana will be greater than the entire market value of all BMW cars. In fact, as of now, the price of a banana is infinitely expensive because scientists do not think we can ever make a living cell (of a banana or otherwise) from scratch.

“Divine value” is another type of value we will recognize once we go deep in our reflection on the banana. This type of value requires that we see the connection between a banana and many other things such as soil, water, the atmosphere, the Sun, the moon, galaxies, and so on. It is to see that at the micro and macro level, a single banana is connected to everything to a different degree. This interconnectivity will help us view a banana as a fruit of the tree of the entire universe.

Once we see this connection, we will easily connect a banana to the Creator of the entire cosmos. That is because it takes infinite power and knowledge to create a single banana in connection with the universe. Once we come to this realization, we can decode messages embedded into a banana from its Creator. In fact, a banana will become a special letter from the Creator. It will tell us that the Creator is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, and All-Wise. He is the One who creates and sustains life through various nutritious food. He is The Most-Kind, Most-Merciful, Most-Generous, and Most-Loving. Thus, a banana is not food for our stomachs only, it is also food for our mind, heart, and other faculties. It will gain almost infinite value because we can find eternity through reading the embedded encrypted message within.

Which One is More Valuable: a Banana or a BMW?

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Yet, another type of value is “gift value”. As we know, we can value a gift much more than its market value because of its meaning for us. For instance, receiving a kilo of baklava from your most beloved president is a thousand times more valuable than buying the very same baklawa with your own money. That is because, in the former, you will see the love and care of your favorite president. Similarly, if we perceive a single banana as a special gift from The Creator of the entire cosmos, its value in our eyes will go up a thousandfold. The more we are convinced it is a special gift meant for us, the more we will feel honored and receive pleasure from that banana.

In short, it is very clear that a single banana could be more valuable than a BMW if we go beyond “exchange value”, and perceive its “use”, “existential”, “Divine”, and “gift” values. Most people fail to see such values because they are blinded by free-market capitalism which gives importance to “exchange value” only. In other words, as Oscar Wilde says, we will “know the price of everything, but the value of nothing”. As we embrace the principles of a free-market economy, we will begin to value everything through the prism of their exchange value, or price. In fact, we will even value people in terms of their market value. In other words, we respect people based on their wealth or income which is determined by the market value of their work. We will respect a billionaire casino owner over a great teacher without thinking about their true contributions to society.

We argue that one-dimensional value perception results in conspicuous consumption and lower subjective well-being. On the other hand, multi-dimensional value perception leads to higher subjective well-being with lower consumption. Indeed, one can feel almost infinitely rich and blessed through multi-dimensional perception even if one has very little things in possession. Perhaps, our very existence itself is sufficient for a person to be infinitely thankful since he/she will not take his/her own existence for granted. Thus, we think the real cure to conspicuous consumer culture goes through the awareness of other types of value beyond the exchange value. That will also bring a real solution to environmental, social, moral, and psychological problems which originate from materialistic aspirations and the dominant consumer culture.

Interview with Professor Hamidullah Marazi
by Bilal Malik

Prof. Hamidullah Marazi is scheduled to teach a course at the upcoming "Existence and Meaning" certificate programme in Spring 2022. In this regard, our team member Bilal Malik interviewed Prof. Marazi to learn more details about the course.

Bilal Malik: Assalam-u-Alykum! A warm good evening, Sir. Before I ask you anything about the course, will you please introduce yourself- particularly your academic life?

Prof. Marazi: My name is Hamidullah Marazi. Presently, I am Professor and Head of the Department of Religious Studies at the Central University of Kashmir. I have taught at JNU, Kashmir University and Central University Kashmir for 30 years, to deliver lectures on Comparative Religions, Islam and Inter-Religious Dialogue, Islamisation of Philosophy, Epistemology, Religious Disciplines etc. I have visited more than 100 universities and academic institutions in India and abroad. I am the Academic convener of the Committee for Philosophy, IOS, New Delhi, Youth convener and governing body member of World Fellowship of Interreligious Councils (WFIRC), Kerala. I am the Core Group Member of the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) in Washington USA, Honorary Director of Islamic Relief and Research Trust (IRRT) Kashmir and Governing Committee Member of All India Milli Council. I have authored 40 books on Islamic Philosophy, Epistemology, World Religious and Inter Religious Dialogue, Peace and Islamic contributions to civilization, science and technology. I am also working on Nursian thought and I have delivered several keynote lectures on Nursi, in Turkey, India and Malaysia. Currently, I am writing an encyclopaedic Tafsir of the Qur'an, two volumes of which have already been published.

Bilal Malik: Sir, will you please briefly tell us about the course and why do you think it is important?

Prof. Marazi: The course I will teach in the upcoming certificate programme "Existence and Meaning" is "Quranic Reading of Existence and Science". The course is important in many ways. For example, this course is a kind of critical response to the notion that Muslims started cultivating a scientific attitude after interacting with Greek philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato and others through the Arabic translation of Greek works on science and philosophy during the Abbasid Period. We would deconstruct such highly mistaken, but widely accepted, historical narrative in the light of historical evidences. Through this course, we would argue that fundamentally the Quran provided the basis for the "inquisitive mind"- the precursor in Muslim scientific activism. It was the Quran which opened the doors and vistas of understanding, learning and doing science.

Muslim scientific behaviour; represented through the rational and critical mind, finds its root in those verses of Quran which profoundly referred to contemplation, thinking and thought processing. Precisely, reading and understanding of the Quran was the beginning of the scientific revolution among Arabs, not Greek philosophy. So through this course we will come to know the role of Quran in fostering the development of Muslim science, culture and civilization.

Interview with Professor Hamidullah Marazi

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Prof. Marazi (continues): Muslim scientific behaviour; represented through the rational and critical mind, finds its root in those verses of Quran which profoundly referred to contemplation, thinking and thought processing. Precisely, reading and understanding of the Quran was the beginning of the scientific revolution among Arabs, not Greek philosophy. So through this course we will come to know the role of Quran in fostering the development of Muslim science, culture and civilization.

Bilal Malik: Does that mean this course is particularly about Islam and scientific debate?

Prof. Marazi: It is related to science and philosophy, both. However, it will emphasize more on what we call the philosophy of science. Philosophy of science represents the worldview e.g. there is materialism, atheism, hedonism. All these isms are product of a particular kind of worldview. The Muslim science was governed by the worldview of tawhid i.e. Unity and Unicity of God. The tawhidi worldview advocates the oneness of God, oneness of being and oneness of knowledge. That means it believes in total Unity. Through the prism of tawhid we can better understand the philosophy of science in Islam.

Bilal Malik: Will you tell us about the main topics that you will be covering in the course?

Prof. Marazi: Sure, I would like make a brief mention of the topics under focus. All topics will be aimed to argue that the Quran was the source of scientific enterprise for early Muslim scientists. Having said this, there will be discussions on different categories of understanding in the Quran which are known as Quranic epistemologies. I will show, with the help of historical references, that the Quran triggered intellectual discussions among early Arabs. There will be discussions on the cosmological verses of Quran. The verses describing earth, sun, moon, stars and other heavenly bodies will be analysed. There will be methodological exposition of tafakkur (contemplation), tadabbur (prudence) and t'akkul (rational thinking) as the prominent scientific categories referred to in the Quran. According to my understanding, these comprehensive concepts have epistemological significance and are highly relevant to understand the theory of knowledge in Islam. Through their appropriate application we are able to have a serious consideration of the signs and symbols in the universe which, logically, will take us from the creation to the Creator. As has been said, "In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are signs for those who possess intelligence" (Quran 3: 190).

Prof. Marazi (continues): So it is an intellectual movement from the universe to the Creator, i.e., from reason (‘aql) to revelation (naql). Moreover, there will be some detailed lectures about reason and rationality from the Islamic perspective. You know, there is a deep misunderstanding in this regard. Some people believe there is no space for rationality in religion but we say NO to this false belief because the Quran has talked about reason in hundreds of its verses. As I said, the use of ‘aqal, tafakkur and tadadbur reflect that there is much emphasis on reason in Quran. Precisely, how the Quran was the source of knowledge, reason and intellectualization will be taught. Similarly, there will be lectures on ijtihad (juristic reasoning) and its relation with reason. It is ironic that Muslims have reduced the application of ijtihad to the issues of wudu (ablution) and gusul (full-bath). But, let me tell you, ijtihad essentially means to think and exercise your mind about everything including the universe and natural phenomena. The method of ijtihad can guide us to make a positive use of worldly things and conquer natural resources for human benefit.

Bilal Malik: There is a predominant notion that “science is continuation of human knowledge”. What is your take on this?

P**rof. Marazi:** This is really good. MashaAllah! And we believe that Islam has never stopped its followers from learning from the people of other nations and religions. See, we have numerous references to this account. Let me mention a few briefly. For example, when there was the war of Ahzab (the battle of the trench) the Prophet (s.a.w) adopted the khandaq technology i.e. trench strategy on the instance of Salman Farsi. This war technique was used by the Persians. And in the same way, Prophet (s.a.w) adopted the method of sending letters with stamps again on the instance of Salman Farsi. Again a method used by Persians. Prophet (s.a.w) encouraged sahabah (companions) to go to Jaraish to learn different war techniques such as dababah (kind of tank) and manjineeq (catapult). In the same way Prophet told some of his companions like Zaid bin Thabit and Amar bin `As to learn the Hebrew language. There is tradition of the Prophet (s.a.w) which says, “The word of wisdom is lost property of the believer. Whenever he finds it, he is most deserving of it” (Sunan al-Tirmidhi). I will conclude this answer with a historically remarkable example. In the battle of Badar, there were those polytheists- Makkans- who were not able to give ransom. They were told to teach Muslim children reading and writing to compensate their ransom. This is a fine example were early Muslim community was told to learn from the non-Muslims. So, we can conclude that it were such instances which prompted Muslims to get actively involved in reading and translation of the sciences of other civilizations. We must remember, Allah has given us senses. He has given us faculties of reasoning, contemplation and observation (sama, fawad and basr). So, we have been told to use these. And, science has developed out of the efforts of the people who have made use of these faculties and sources of knowledge. In that sense we need to acknowledge and appreciate what others have contributed.

Interview with Professor Hamidullah Marazi

by Bilal Malik

Bilal Malik: Sir, who do you think will be your expected audience?

Prof. Marazi: I think that all people, particularly students, who belong to any religion of the world. This course is universal in appeal and it has application for all the subjects which are being taught under the name of religion. It can attract the people who are interested in the debate between religion and science and the spiritual meaning of life. It might answer their questions related to spirituality, the mystical understanding of the universe and man's existence. It might also interest the people who are fed up with the rationalization of knowledge and education which is devoid of ethical, moral and spiritual values. Also, for the scientific community who are in search of a new wisdom which is not possible only through our sensory knowledge or limited rational categories. A kind of wisdom which is beyond the boundaries of rational thought and comes through revealed knowledge. The Quran is the source of that divine wisdom and spiritual knowledge from the standpoint of Islam. It talks about the unity of knowledge and connects this material life with the immaterial life in hereafter. In this sense, this course has great scope and a vast appeal.

Bilal Malik: Here comes my last question. What are the expected learning outcomes of this course?

Prof. Marazi: Basically, through this course we intend to give a sense about a "complete person". Nowadays, we find divided personalities. For example, the people who study science, they have almost negligible knowledge of religion, spirituality and ethics. Similarly, professional students have no knowledge about social life and knowledge about cultures and civilizations. They only have one type of knowledge which is very limited. They don't know the implications of different social theories and how they impact the dynamics of social reality. But, once knowledge is studied in a holistic perspective, where values of religion taken together with science, it can help to build complete personalities well-aware their roles and duties. So in this way, it will be a great point, I should say, for constructing a world where people are well-aware about diverse dimensions of human life. As has been rightly put by Said Nursi, they will not be like "one-eyed" dajjal who can see always the material world but not the spiritual world. So they will be, in that sense, complete persons. After studying this integrated method, participants will be able understand the meaning and purpose of human life and the vast cosmos around us. It will also help them add value to our scientific discoveries because in this time science has become a direction-less endeavour. Presently science and religion have become just a hegemony of some forces and (some) powers. This course will help us challenge this hegemony and people can develop the understanding of both i.e. religion as well as science at the same time. I mean, a good religious person can also become a good scientist and vice versa.

Bilal Malik: I thank you on behalf of the 5D Thinking Project. Thanks for giving us your valuable time. May Allah bless you in your future endeavours.

Application Deadline Feb 18th 2022

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Click on the image below to view the YouTube clip on the Water Cycle topic through the 5D Thinking approach.

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