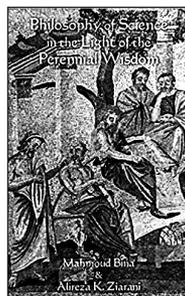


Philosophy of Science in the Light of Perennial Wisdom

By Mahmoud Bina and Alireza K. Ziarani

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Reviewed by Mebrdad Mahmoudi Zarandi



'The unexamined life is not worth living.'

Attributed to Plato or Socrates

This book is an invaluable work in a world dominated by the universal praise of modern science and the implications man draws from its hegemony regarding his global place in the universe. Bina and Ziarani, in their thorough critical look at the foundations of the empirical sciences and their effects in shaping humanity's worldview, have provided us with an urgently needed work that is worthy of in-depth consideration.

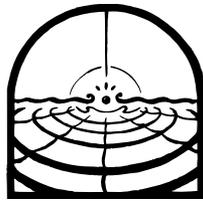
It is in the nature of human beings not only to reflect on the phenomena around them and their causes but also to examine their own perceptions and views of the realities they encounter in life and in their own souls. Knowledge, a fundamental content of our consciousness, has always been praised as an essential and fundamental value in our lives. Across diverse sectors of humanity and since the beginning of our appearance on earth, knowledge has been compared to light and sought after, while the lack of it is compared to darkness from which one tries to escape. The transition from ignorance to knowledge is considered a desired goal.

The word ‘science’ is—in terms of its origin—related to knowledge. In the intellectual landscape of post-Renaissance man, however, the term ‘science’ has come to be used exclusively for empirically-based branches of man’s intellectual quests or for the study of what can be perceived through the senses and their extensions. By mentioning this latter reservation, we would like to point out that the technological advances of modern man enable him to augment his immediate sensorial perceptions. Yet, what can be observed through microscopes, telescopes or other devices of this sort, even though these data extend the limits of our sensorial perception, they nonetheless remain within the same plane of reality and are merely nuances and refinements of it.

Now, the phrase ‘philosophy of science’ implies reflection on the findings of science and analyzing them using some sort of integrating methodology to situate these scientific findings within our overall existence. This phrase is currently used in academic circles to refer to the general principles and theoretical consequences of our scientific findings. The book by Bina and Ziarani, however, is a radical departure from such academic works, both in terms of its methodology and in terms of its content. As stated in the book’s preface, ‘we intend to offer intellectual¹ arguments in support of the views of the great traditions on knowledge and reality.’ This reference to the great traditions and its basis on them sets this work unequivocally apart from the worldview of modernism. From the outset, the authors set forth an alternative view of reality to the conventional one adopted by modern scientific methods. Their view of reality is based on a hierarchical ordering of the degrees of being and thus is not limited to sensorial perception. It is within this same hierarchical view of reality that man has his place as a being whose intelligence is, in principle, total and who is the subject which studies objective reality. It is this basis and this approach that enable the authors to demonstrate the limitations of modern scientific methods. It is not only the plane of reality admitted as valid by modern science but also the consequences that are drawn from its findings within this plane of reality that are shown to be fragmentary, partial and misleading. Modern science does not admit that the examining faculty must transcend what it is examining and cannot be situated on

¹ For these authors, the words ‘intellectual’ and ‘intellect’ have a scope that is far more comprehensive than the rational faculty, which is only one among other aspects of the intellect.

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