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# Business Review



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## Editorial Perspective

Aristotle is said to have observed that “man by nature wants to know.” But, to be authentic, the passion for knowledge must be predicated on the desire to know the truth.

In academia, in business and industry, in ethics, morality and religion, that is the context of education and research. It converges upon man’s creative will. But without fidelity to truth, man’s creative will cannot create anything that can dignify human condition i.e., – man’s-being-in-the-world – nor can it justify his being a human being. In this context, we cannot disregard the decisive role played by socio-cultural determinism. Each society is subject to its own inner laws of progress and development and these laws determine the range and the extent to which a society can develop and grow and an individual can become what he is capable of becoming. Beside the quest for truth, the ultimate purpose of education and of research is to discover and to define the dynamic and progressive movement inherent in the notion of the ‘world’, including the corporate world. That is the context of liberal education and authentic research. It also constitutes an essential component of the ideal of business schools and corporate research. Our success and failure in this respect depends upon our will to establish creative and evaluative relationship with, to put it in the Qur’anic parlance, “our portion of the world.” Ultimately, and in the final analysis, the beauty and the ugliness of the world depends upon how deep, clear and distinct is our perception of the truth. In the light of that perception, it also depends equally decisively upon the vitality and the authenticity of our courage to be.

Man establishes the domain of values, meaning and purpose on the *de facto* and naturalistic world in and through his creative and co-creative acts according to his vision of the truth. In seeking the truth he strives and exerts himself to establish an authentic relationship with the world. The *meaning* of the world, therefore, is derived from man’s *intended relationship* to the world. The meaning of man’s hyphenated relation to his being-in-the-world, its value and purpose, is derived from the way he relates himself to *his portion* of the world.

Pedagogically, the search for truth is a highly commendable quest rooted in the desire to know the most desirable basis of the meaning and purpose of education, embracing the ultimate value of human life and the vision of a just and humanized society. Therefore, in a research oriented academic culture, in teaching and in learning

it is of critical importance to ask: *what shall we do with the truth if or when we have found it?* Secondly, *what will the truth do to us if, per chance or through inquisitive persistence, we happen to have found it in its pristine simplicity and benign indifference?* These pivotal questions, asked in earnest, make us *think* and foster *reasoning*, reminding us that our research orientation and our quest for truth has serious methodological implications for both learning and teaching. They unveil the logic of educational experience which lies buried and hidden in the dialectic of thinking and reasoning. In their uninhibited honesty, these questions impress upon our sense of wisdom that although *all reasoning is thinking, all thinking is not reasoning*. They also make us realize that authentic education, like all genuine learning, is an existential phenomena. As such, it is an experience and experience in the fullness of its meaning is not *what happens to us*, rather, as an educational event, experience draws its meaning and pedagogical significance from *what we do to what happens to us*. Such is the dialectic of learning and teaching. It makes us grow and, as we grow older, hopefully, we also become wiser.

We learn by teaching and we teach in order to learn. That is the creative and educational burden of all research orientation. It must therefore be noted with a profound sense of anticipation that by liberating us from petrifying inauthenticities, truth can make our lives sublime. That is what education, liberal education in particular, ought to do.

We may not realize it, and after some time do not even feel it, but we are mortally wounded and our ‘body social’ suffers painful and ugly scars each time we cause an injury to truth. It deforms the over all institutional beauty, harmony and the creative vitality of our relationship to our “world”, including our corporate world. It also destroys the sanctity of our educational institutions and more so the dignity and the character of those who teach.

There is something fearlessly honest and educationally profound in Aristotle’s refrain about his teacher, Plato. Aristotle is said to have said, “Dear indeed is Plato but dearer still is the truth.” This is what we ought to expect from teaching and research. Our reverence for truth must cultivate in our students the will to truth, inviting them to examine their own assumptions and presuppositions. In search of the goal they are seeking, our students must learn to examine not only the path they need to tread, but also the direction in which they ought to be moving to achieve the desired goal. They must remember that, in life, one may indeed be on the ‘right’ path but moving in the ‘wrong’ direction and, therefore, never reaching the desired goal. They must also learn from their teachers that goal seeking behaviour is predicated on two coordinates – enlightened ethical and moral consciousness and a clear and distinct sense of reality. They must therefore learn to critically examine their naturalistic world-view and the

taken for granted beliefs and ideas. That is the tacit goal of education and research.

As a dialectical process, research proceeds from the known to the unknown, reaching out farther and farther into the domain of reality which is constantly evolving and ceaselessly changing, just like the lure of the perpetually evasive truth. Therefore, a genuine research methodology is by nature built upon the reviewed literature. It is based upon the reduction of the randomness of life and of reality into the essential and enduring features of a paradigm. It is therefore imperative that in research and in teaching we do not drift too far away from the realities of the *lived-world* and the life as it is lived. We must consciously remain connected with our colleagues who are engaged in the diverse fields of research to learn from their perspectives. Such inter-disciplinary and inter-departmental research orientation is a theme we have emphasised in our editorial perspectives. It is an orientation which teaches us to learn from the research techniques and methodologies of various disciplines and to build firmly on such *gestaltan* and holistic foundation our own teaching and research methodologies. Such an eclectic approach tends to add depth and breadth to our academic programmes, preparing our future leaders to take their place in the corporate world. It creates and reinforces the belief that education is not only a debt from the present to the future, it is also a heritage from the past to the present generation of the seekers of truth and the managers of human affairs. Our heritage of providing a world class programme is reflected in our logo – *Leadership and Ideas for Tomorrow*. It reflects “our resolve to meet the future challenges with integrated and multi-disciplinary knowledge and its creative application in a changing global environment.” Our ownership structure is unique and ensures that our program is relevant to meet the needs and challenges of future business leaders. We are committed to our heritage of providing a programme of business education, enriching the corporate experience and the personal and professional transformation experienced by our alumni, not just as a specialist or a manager or chief executive but as a harmonious personality with a deep sense of ethical values and of the morally good.

At the IBA we have emphasized the view that research is a multi-disciplinary occupation. Dialogical communication, inter-departmental participation, whole hearted fidelity to truth, ethical courage to integrate theory and practice into a transcending attitude and moral dignity to bear witness to the truthfulness of truth: these are categorical imperatives and essential components of an authentic research orientation. Our failure to share and communicate the findings of our research does not add anything pragmatically significant to our teaching and research orientation.

The importance of this observation must be firmly integrated into a genuine and creative research culture and a synthetic approach to the study of all disciplines, irrespective of their departmentalized focus on specialization. Analytically, a research

culture grows from and draws its creative vitality from the meaning and value it attributes to our passion for seeking the truth and to our ethical and moral persuasion. Teaching and research, when they are pursued creatively, are bound to result in the development of a strong and confident sense of self-awareness. It emerges in the process of the seeker of truth becoming conscious of self-realization and self-fulfillment.

The self, as the centre of the phenomenology of self-awareness is a way-farer, passing through the transitory stages on life's way, destined never to ever arrive, always incomplete, forever unfulfilled.

The phenomenon of the self relating itself to itself is so deeply embedded in the dynamics of learning and the ultimate aim of teaching that without it the process of education cannot achieve its ultimate objective, i.e., to let the seeker of truth become all he is capable of becoming. Thus, in education, as in life, the process of becoming reigns supreme. Therefore, a seeker of truth has his being in the manner of becoming. A seeker of knowledge is a journeying self, always ahead of himself. His journeying is towards his own self-realization and self-fulfillment.

As a seeker of knowledge, in search of truth, this is the noblest ideal man can aspire for. But he cannot achieve this ideal if he remains contented with the notion of "thus it is and cannot be otherwise." To achieve this ideal he has to incorporate into his notion of selfhood the reality of *becoming* and into his world-view the normative and evaluative requirements of the dialectic of "*thus it is*" and "*thus it ought to be*."

It is argued that corporate culture is a victim of conceit, deception and *bad faith*. Mired in the seductive lure of the symbols of "role", "status" and "personality ethics", it is bound to remain flawed without the regime of the ethical and moral dispensation. The remedy for its morbid, self-perpetuating and intrinsically destructive propensities lies in the "character ethics" of its top managers. The slow and progressive decline of its value system cannot be arrested or averted without the creative rage of its functionaries endowed with the breadth of transcendental vision, the will and the passion to establish the domain of value to let truth prevail. Therefore, moral integrity and character ethics ought to be the defining features and the main sources of competitive advantage in the management and administrative hierarchy of any principle-centered corporate organization.

A man's encounter with the truth calls into question his courage to be. His character is built in these encounters. Standing at the threshold of transcendence, he must *decide*, make a *choice* and *act* because, *in this sphere of being, becoming reigns supreme*. There, not to choose is *ipso facto* a choice, not to decide is in itself a decision



and the refusal to act is an action laden with awful and precarious consequences. Such newly acquired knowledge deepens the sense of integrity, making our self-awareness a trial by existence. According to Socrates, “Knowledge is virtue” and the seekers of knowledge vie with each other in noble acts and good deeds. As a reflection of the true spirit of research and education, truth loving people cannot stray from the truth for very long.

Today, the corporate world suffers from fatal flaws and failures, revolving around the notion of man. The ancient Greek philosophers, Sophists, laid the entire burden of our evaluations squarely upon the shoulders of man by making him “the measure of all things.” Socrates raised the thorny issue when he asked: “is something true (and good) because you like it, or should you like it because it is true (and good)?” Today, more than ever before, it is always an integrity issue rooted in the notion of ‘Character.’ We can survive adverse market forces as well as the adversities generated by international financial crises. What we cannot survive, without becoming mortally wounded, is the man without ethical integrity, moral character and transcendental vision.

Times have changed. Sentiments have shifted. To our great dismay, in the corporate world – the world we inhabit – we only hear the echoes of what used to be. “The No.1 criterion in every CEO search we do today is integrity. That used to be assumed. No one had to mention it. Not anymore.” It is a sad comment made by Gerald R. Roche, senior chairman of Heidrick and Struggles, in the aftermath of stunning accounting scandals, laden with deceit and deception, shrewdly and seamlessly overlooked under the trappings of ethical and moral insensivities and a schizophrenic disregard for truth. In the modern corporate world, Xerox, Tyco International, QWest, Global Crossing, ImClone Systems, Adelphia Communications and Enron are all symbols of the corporate glory and grandeur that used to be.

What went wrong?

Let us recall and recollect the words of Kenneth I. Lay, CEO of Enron.\

“We want to be proud of Enron and to know that it enjoys a reputation for fairness and honesty and that it is respected. Gaining such respect is one aim of our advertising and public relations activities, but no matter how effective they may be Enron’s reputation finally depends on its people, on you and me. Let us keep that reputation high.”

Yes indeed, man is the measure of all things – small and great , good and evil.