IV-19   Folly of Denying "I"

It is not unusual to deny ignorance: We do so by asserting *I am*, by placing a mask of theory over the face of nature, or by ad hoc assumptions that may be technically liberating but they constrain searches.

Ignorance is often about the ignorance of the starting point. For a meaningful search humans start with the assertion of *I am*, that is *I exist* in relation to everything else. It is much less subjective and much more accountable than the revealed truths supped to be inaccessible to human intelligence. Appeal of the assertion "I am" against the revealed truth lies in the almost universal desire to rid oneself of opinions hitherto harbored in ones mind.

The Wise: Wisdom of the ages is a search for more immediate motives. If the wisdom stands as article of faith, or even as apparently innocuous axiomatic, blinders of ad hoc notions become so ingrained in mindset that nobody bothers to substantiate them at all. With bare and banal expediency of *it saves time*, the whole enterprise of revealed truth becomes self-referential and asymmetrical.

As people and institutions find ways of coping, attitudes interfere with thought that facilitates viable alternatives that have to be found before the past is discarded. A construct looses relevance if it tries to be true relative to a culture, a situation, a language, ideology, or some other social condition. If thought is concocted as a plan of survival, habits of boxed-in mind sacrifice deeper search. Paradox is that such forces operate in the contexts where a deeper search is all the more necessary. In such

environments evidence, fact, and inference all fall under the category of local interpretation that are more or less right by virtue of the interests they satisfy. When attitudes do not substitute for reasoning such concerns and ramblings are locutions of expediency, temerity, rhetoric, acrimony, and vindictiveness.

The Mystic: Possibly as part of the search for the relations that exist between the individual and the world outside, anyone absorbed in a book knows the mystical allure of being transposed to different worlds.   Like other mind-altering experiences, the perception that all knowledge is in The Text, or Wisdom of one persuasion or the other, is a disincentive. It produces a person who can not question, analyze, reason and create. In trying to solve a number of problems, the institutions of Supreme and Omniscience creates many more questions like *Who created the creator* and *Why should He put man to sin only to forgive him*. It is aptly captured in a *rubai* of Omar Khayyam:

> *Oh, Thou who man of baser earth didst make.*
> *And with Eden didst devise the snake,*
> *For all the sin, wherewith the face of man,*
> *Is blackened, man's forgiveness, give and take.*

On being taken over by that feeling of *almost anything will do*, the coherent begins to become incoherent. It is the core of rational practice that thrives on the input of viable alternatives from agnostics and skeptics. With a realistic starting point in the combinatorial jungle of the unknowns, suitable premises for effective arguments can be developed to the level of a testable assertion. For operation of the inquiring mind, the starting points for asking and answering important questions differ from culture to culture, and may also differ from person to person. However, a reasoned consensus rarely requires the force of authority.

From the starting point of "I": Searches link the starting assumptions to ultimate consequences. Process of building arguments requires reexamining the basic assumptions that underlie the beliefs. This can be deductive, or inductive, or actually any method that works! Concerns have to be addressed to increase precision and build inductive tautologies in the form of viable theories, models and algorithms. However, all open-minded inquiries ultimately erase the circumstances from which such questions arise.

Mathematical methods deal with quantities of objects. Sets for such purposes focus only on the shared qualities. Following the lead of the surveyors in the Nile Delta, Euclid contrived the space to the flatness of two-dimensional surface. Three orthogonal coordinates of Descartes reclaimed not only the three dimensional space but translocation with time as a change (or movement) in this space. Capturing the essence of the physical dimensions and change with time is a major step forward for representation. It places on a quantitative footing the traditional ideas about representation of reality of entities and events in the space time continuum. The Cartesian view of physical space facilitated evolution of mechanics and speeded the search for fundamental formulations in virtually all disciplines of inquiry.

Evolution of "I" to "I am": All human searches use "I am" as the starting point to eliminate the role of chance and illusion. Shrouded in a cloak of complexity, worlds of our concern in *I will do, I do, I did* have many more qualities that senses can perceive as intentionality. Just as there are valid criticisms of senses there are also valid criticisms of reason. The belief expresses in all such assertions of "I", including *I think, therefore I am* or *I think therefore I am confused*, does provide a starting point that places the physical reality in reference to "I am" the non-judgmental observer.

The "I" of Descartes

Could Descartes have openly argued that even if omniscience (God) exists it can not be relied upon for making meaningful decisions for I? He did not and could not. In the context of faith assertion of *I exist* is for the deduction of all that follows from the God. It is similar to *I am imperfect* as a conception for an independent perfection. From this dichotomy Descartes went on to argue that the creator of I, the God, must be perfect. Descartes also developed other arguments in the favor of God. In all such over-hasty generalizations, Descartes seems to have ignored the fact that the perfection he envisaged may not exist or is not the entire reality. It is not clear if Descartes was trying to escape the wrath of Church. He had good reason to fear: Recall that only a few decades earlier Galileo was silenced by Church.

In the task of reconstructing the world in relation to *I the observer*, the method is an instrument of action and behaviors with a built-in reality-check and feedback. Spotting serendipity and taking charge is both an art and a craft for humans. Dealing with the reality in the space-time continuum creates another paradox. Impossibility of the origins of something from nothing applies to all forms of resources and order, including the matter, energy and information. Thus the infinite of the space and time continuum are the mere "nothing" against which reality of matter, energy and information is represented in finite parts.

Room for Doubt