

PHILOSOPHY AND THE ADVANTAGES OF STUDYING IT²²

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Gentlemen of the Philosophical Society and Honoured Guests, There were times when Philosophy was regarded as “the Queen of Sciences,” as the noblest of studies, as the highest what man could pursue. Those times seem now to have gone by. They have changed. One is inclined today to look askance at this great subject. The scientist, proud of his achievements, asks: “what has Philosophy achieved?” The Economist, deep down in his problems of finance and exchange, inquires: “what is the money value of Philosophy?”, The Historian, sure of his good common sense and understanding of the world, smiles at the dreamer and the abstract thinker as a queer and useless person, The man of literature and art finds the philosopher a person who is far away from the joys and beauties of life. The Theologian, half afraid of the metaphysician, gives him out as a monster that must be avoided. It has thus become quite a common place to look down upon Philosophy and to regard it as something thoroughly useless and even harmful.

This attitude towards Philosophy is mainly due to materialism of the times and to the ignorance of the nature of Philosophy. But, gentlemen, this was not the view of Philosophy taken by the greatest of human souls, Socrates, whom it is difficult to distinguish from a prophet and who knew Philosophy best, believed it to be the most useful thing on the face of the earth. The Prophet of Islam who knew things better than even Socrates, regarded the teaching of Philosophy *hikmah*, as the real function of his life (the Qur’an 2:149); and held a sage (*bakim*) Philosopher to be very nigh a prophet (كاد

²² This lecture was delivered by Dr. Seyed Zafer ul Hasan to the Philosophical Society of The Muslim University Aligarh in December 1931. (Courtesy, Khizr Yasin– Burhan A. Faruqi Collection.)

(الحكيم ان يكون نبيا) And, Gentlemen, the Prophet of Islam knew better how to speak to the materially (economically) minded men of the street– he spoke to them of spiritual goods in terms of material commodities, which you exchange and of which you can hold a traffic and he told them emphatically and repeatedly that the spiritual goods were immensely more useful, more advantageous than– the material goods.

But I am not out for a mere popular sort appeal in favour of Philosophy; I am speaking to a Philosophical audience. I must be more exact. I must show as clearly as I can:–

1. What is Philosophy?
2. What is an Advantage? And lastly,
3. What are the Advantages of Philosophy?

As a student of Philosophy, I must first analyze the concepts of Philosophy and Advantage, and then show the relation of one to the other. I must be logical and try to leave no doubts on the point.

Gentlemen, I shall be brief in my analysis of the concepts of Philosophy and Advantage; for I have to speak at length on the Advantages of Philosophy. However, though brief, I trust I shall manage to be clear, so as to be easily understood when I come to expatiate on the Advantages of Philosophy.

PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy, to start with, is, as the etymology of the word indicates, the Love of Wisdom. But in its completion, i.e., as a discipline (*fann*), it is, as the great modern philosopher Kant points out, the Doctrine of Wisdom–wisdom in its most complete sense. What is Wisdom then? It is the state of mind in which understanding (*fahm*) is combined with action (*‘amal*). He is a wise man in the ordinary sense of the word, who understands the situation and acts accordingly. The Wise Man, the Sage, the (*bakim*) therefore, is one in

whom the complete understanding of the situation of Man is combined with appropriate action. In other words, one who knows— knows as much as man can know— one who knows What is this Universe, What is Man, and What is the Relation of Man to it; and further; What is the Ultimate End of man which he has to realize in this universe? He is the truly and most completely wise man, who has given his best thought to these gigantic problems, has thought systematically, logically, i.e., scientifically, upon them— has thought with the greatest souls who have thought on these questions before him; and has come to definite conclusions upon them (positive or negative it does not matter); and who conforms his action to these conclusions. Gentlemen, such a man as a Philosopher; and the subject matter is philosophy. He has done what man can do; and nothing more can be demanded. The understanding of the problems just mentioned and the solutions thereof logically and systematically reached is called Theoretical Philosophy (*bikmah nazariyah*); and the moulding of the Action accordingly is called Practical Philosophy (*bikmah ‘amaliyyah*) since ancient times.

In a systematic inquiry these problems break up into a number of philosophical problems, and yield various philosophical disciplines, e.g., Logic, Ethics, Aesthetics, etc., and Psychology and Anthropology in the Kantian sense. It will be going too far to work out his articulation of Philosophy into its branches.

ADVANTAGES

Now I come to the second concept, viz. “Advantage”. When you, speak of the Advantage or Advantages of a thing, what you have in mind in this: what Purpose, what Ends does it serve? You can conceive of it as a Means to an end. Take an example. When you ask me what are the advantages of Philosophy you mean to ask: Is it helpful in bringing me Money, or Influence or Fame or Internal Satisfaction, etc.? In other words, is it a means to these ends? When you say: Economics or Physical Science is a useful study, you mean to say that it will help you in earning your livelihood or bring you influence in the world of human affairs, etc. When you raise the question, why should I go to a University and take a good degree, you mean to ask; what are the advantages of doing so? i.e., what benefits will such an education bring you? Will it help you in making a living or attaining to a

position of influence, etc? Thus in every case you have an end in view and measure the thing under consideration— Philosophy, Economics, Science, University education, as a means to that end. Now suppose the end with reference to which you measure Economics as a means, were Money-making. Cannot I put the question: What are the advantages of Money-making? I can. Suppose your answer were: The advantages of money are evident; it is the sole means of all physical and material comfort. Quite right. But I can have the impertinence of pushing my question further and asking: what are the advantages of Physical and material comfort? You may feel yourself at the end of you wit, and say unto me: Well, Sir, I don't understand you Advantages of Comfort? Comfort itself is an advantage; it is something which we covet in itself whether it brings us any further advantages or not. I may agree with you. But what you mean to say now is that comfort is not valuable as a means to a further end, but on the contrary it is an end in itself; other things. e.g., money, are valuable as means to it, but comfort is valuable in itself— we seek it for its own sake. You mean to say: If I could get to this end without money, I have no use for money— it has no value for me, it is no Advantage to possess money.

. In other words, firstly, the Advantages of a thing are its value merely as a means to an end; it draws its value wholly from that end or ends. And, secondly, there are ends which are means to no further ends; they have their value in themselves; other things are valuable merely as means to them. Plainly, the value of such ends is immensely greater than the value of any means.

Now, Gentlemen, bear these distinctions in mind. If I could show that Philosophy is for Man an End— in— itself and that this cannot be rightly said of any other science, then I shall have proved the immense superiority of Philosophy to other branches of study. And if I could further show that as a Means to other ends Philosophy compares favourably with any branch of study, I think I would then have carried the cause of Philosophy in the domain of “advantages” of which so much is spoken.

ADVANTAGES OF PHILOSOPHY

Now I shall first take Philosophy as Theoretical Philosophy (*bikmah*)

nazariyah) and try to show that as such it is an end-in-itself, and then I shall take it as Practical Philosophy (*hikmah 'amaliyah*); and show that as such too it is an end-in-itself.

Then I shall point out in detail the value of Philosophy as a means to further ends; in other words, the “advantages” of Philosophy in the sense in which one ordinarily speaks of advantages.

Knowledge is an end-in-itself. In ordinary parlance we speak of it as “knowledge for the sake of knowledge.” That knowledge is an end-in-itself, is the discovery of the Greek mind. Muslim thinkers and modern philosophers agree with Greek philosophers on the point. I believe that every human mind agrees with them implicitly. No man will agree to lose his eyes and ears and reason even if all the “advantages” that he can draw from them are guaranteed to him— he will retain sight, etc, for their own sake. In any case there are men for whom knowledge is an end-in-itself; and they are not the lowest kind of men. I mean the Scholars and the Learned. This also shows that knowledge is not only an end-in-itself, but also that it is one of the noblest ends of man. Indeed the Greeks regarded it to be the highest end.

Theoretical Philosophy is the knowledge of the Universe as a whole— the knowledge of the nature of the world and of man and of their relation. It is moreover the knowledge of these things so far as human mind can see. That is, it is the profoundest knowledge of the profoundest objects. If, therefore, there is any knowledge, which ought to be sought for its own sake, that knowledge is Philosophy. Other sciences too, physical, and mental, give us knowledge, which is apparently sought for its own sake. But firstly, this quest of sciences is confined to phenomena— to what appears to the eyes, etc., and to its interpretation. They stop where appearances of things stop. They cannot go further. They cannot probe deep down into that which may be at the bottom of things and which cannot by its very nature be an object of senses. The knowledge they give is all right so far as it goes, but clearly such knowledge is not complete knowledge of the nature of the things. Secondly, the sciences confine themselves to this or that portion of the universe to matter, to life, or to mind. Each science inquires into the nature of its objects apart from other portions of the universe. But can such knowledge be called

complete knowledge of the nature of that object? No. The knowledge of Matter is incomplete if the knowledge of its relation to Life and Mind is not forthcoming. In other words, “Sciences” do not give us complete knowledge of anything. Only that Science, which goes to “the bottom of things and considers the universe as a whole, can give us Knowledge in the complete sense of the word. And indeed, in their Origin (beginning) and in their true Intent (End, Purpose), all scientific inquiry is subordinate to Philosophy— it is there to study the universe piecemeal in order later to utilize the results thus obtained for constructing a true picture of Reality as a whole. That is, it is therefore the sake of Philosophy and as a means to Philosophical knowledge. If and so long as Scientific inquiry does not serve this purpose, its knowledge— value is doubtful, whatever its utilitarian value (cf., e.g., the doctrines of Mach and the Pragmatists).

I now come to consider Philosophy as (*hikmah ‘amaliyah*) as Practical Philosophy. As such, Philosophy is the realization of the ultimate End of Man based on Theoretical Philosophy (*hikmah nazariyah*) or the knowledge of the universe and of the End of Man. That it is the realization of our ultimate End itself signifies that it is an End— in— itself. The realizing of my ultimate end is valuable in itself; it is supremely valuable and is not valuable only as a means. Can we say this of any other branch of study? No. Simply because every one of them is only theory even “if it were turned to practice, i.e. if we take action that can be based on it, the object of the action is not this realization of the ultimate end of man. The object in such cases is only to produce something (material sciences) or produce some event (mental sciences). But that, if an end, is only a means to some further end, i.e., it is not an end in itself. Thus we see that as an End— in— itself Philosophy is incomparably more valuable than any other branch of study indeed more valuable than all of them put together. It is of those who combine (*hikmah nazariyah*) with (*hikmah ‘amaliyah*); that the Prophet of Islam said: (كاد الحكيم ان يكون نبيا) they are Philosophers in the true sense of the word, they are Sages, they are *hakim*. That very few attain to this stage, does not detract from the inherent value of Philosophy. It only shows that the value of Philosophy is very high; that Philosophy is well nigh the “highest stage of Human Perfection.”

Now I come down to the “Advantage of Philosophy” in the ordinary sense of the word i.e., to the consideration of Philosophy as a means to other ends.

Gentleman, one who studies Philosophy, develops the habit of thinking for himself— thinking impartially, systematically and comprehensively to get clear on the profoundest problems of man. The study, therefore, develops his distinctively human, i.e., his rational faculties more than any other branch of study. He sees things better than others, his reasoning becomes sounder and his judgment more profound. These qualities certainly help you in the conduct of life and in all its concerns. Further they bring you another and still greater gain, viz, they help you in the conduct of life and in all its concerns. Further they bring you another and still greater gain, viz, they help you to gain the respect of your fellow men, which is one of the biggest and noblest gains man can covet.

Moreover, Philosophy tends to ennoble your character. The contemplation of eternal truths about the nature of the Universe and of Man raises you above the petty concerns of life, creates a desire to get nearer to the world of Eternity and Truth, and prepares the Soul for a higher and spiritual life. Further, the understanding of the nature of Virtue and Vice, which Moral Philosophy promotes, is one of the greatest motives to Virtue— indeed, the only real and tenable motive according to Kant. The insight into the nature of the Beautiful and the Ugly with which the Philosophy of Art (Aesthetics) provides you, improves your Taste and Judgment of Art— it puts you in a better position to determine the truly beautiful and to enjoy it, and to become a better critic (of art). The consideration of the nature of Religion, which is the function of the Philosophy of Religion broadens your horizon— makes you large— hearted and tolerant, qualities of character which betoken greatness of soul, and not indifference, as one is prone to think. Gentlemen, these are spiritual advantages of the highest order; and no branch of study other than Philosophy offers them in their completeness.

Let us now speak of Practical Advantages, i.e., advantages of a more mundane sort— of the sort which people generally have in mind when talking of advantages and disadvantages and with reference to which they are prone to doubt the usefulness of Philosophy. By Practical Advantage they mean

Advantage in Life— Life taken in the ordinary sense of the word. Something is advantageous in this sense if it brings Success in life. Now success in Life is essentially success with your fellow men; and success with men mainly depends on your understanding of men, (i.e., on what is known as common sense)— on your understanding of yourself and of others. Now, Gentlemen, I maintain that Philosophy pre- eminently brings this understanding. It brings this understanding, because it is primarily the study of man in his rational and his empirical nature. The former you have in Metaphysics (Epistemology, Ethics, Aesthetics, etc), and the latter in Psychology. You get accustomed to observe facts of human mind and their interconnections, and you have the proper categories under which to subsume them. This combination of acts and concepts constitutes understanding. All successful men, especially great men possess this faculty of understanding other men. In this consists the secret of their success? A proper training in Philosophy is a discipline in the exercise of this faculty of understanding; and if you will use it in the concerns of life, it will certainly bring you success with your fellow men.

Hence it is, Gentlemen, that a proper training in Philosophy is of the greatest advantage in Statecraft, in Administration, in Law, in Education, even in Medicine and Theology— I shall consider them one by one and give illustrations. Statesmanship and Law— giving deal with men as a society. Therefore success in them depends on knowledge of society— on knowledge of its actual state, its inherent tendencies, and of the goal of Man to which society is to be led. In other words, it depends on psychological observation and metaphysical thought. That is why many a great statesman has been a keen student of Philosophy. To mention a few instances, Alexander the Great was a disciple of Aristotle, Fredrick the Great a student of Kant (through Kiesewetter). The Great French Minister Richelieu was a philosopher; so was Bismarck, the great German Chancellor. The great Harun al-Rashid and Mamun al-Rashid lived in the company of philosophers; so did Akbar the Great; Nizam al-Mulk Tusi and Abu al-Fadl were great ministers, and both were students of Philosophy. In our own times Asquith and Balfour were graduates in Philosophy. Indeed I am told that the proportion of graduates of Philosophy (of “Great” men) among English ministers has been very large. In the Executive Line, insight into the actual working of human mind, i.e., psychological observation (though not so much into its principles, i.e., metaphysics) is the secret of success; and Criminal

Psychology is of utmost importance for the Police. In the Judicial Line, i.e., for the Judge and the Lawyer, criminal psychology is again of great advantage; while Psychology in general, Ethics and Philosophy of Law are highly conducive to the understanding of men and law. Moreover the capacity to apply law to particular cases, i.e., the capacity to deduce, and the capacity to argue and to detect fallacies in arguments capacities which the study of Logic develops, are of paramount importance for the Judge and the Lawyer both. Gentlemen, the Statesman and the Legislator deal with the citizens *en masse*, the Executive and the Judge with them rather as individuals. Education in the highest sense prepares the individual for it requires insight into the actual working of his mind; in other words it requires Psychology. Hence it is that Child Psychology is becoming so important for the educational line— for the teacher, though unfortunately educational authorities do not yet seem to realize the importance of metaphysical training. But, Gentlemen, there can hardly be any doubt that, other things being equal, a student of Philosophy is more likely to be a successful and a great teacher than a student of any other subject. Even in the medical line, specially the medicine of mental and nervous ailments; training in Philosophy is highly advantageous. You must understand the mentality of your patients and you must be able to analyze their psychological and nerve— complexes. This can hardly be denied after the achievements of Freud, Jung and Adler. The education of a physician in ancient times and among Muslim's bears ample testimony to it. Philosophy was an integral part of their education. The connection of medicine and Philosophy has been so great that the word (*hakim*) has come to mean a physician. Even today when specialization is running amok and destroying the true purpose of education, when it has separated the two, the deep connection of the two is at times realized by, thinking men; and I have seen men passing from Medicine over to Philosophy in German universities. So for Physical Medicine; in Spiritual Medicine (guidance on the spiritual path) the value of Philosophy of Metaphysics and Psychology has never been denied. In the Theological line the importance of Philosophical training has been generally recognized in Europe. It was recognized by Muslims also. But it is not recognized by them today— indeed our Moulvies are apt to frighten people from Philosophy. But I am sure, gentlemen, that there will be no true theologians amongst us unless and until a thorough training in modern philosophy, specially moral philosophy and metaphysics is made compulsory for them. For, in the first

instance, the theologian has to deal with men— he must understand them— he must know psychology. In the second, he has to guide them to the goal of man— he must know moral philosophy. And in the third, he has to meet the sceptic and the Atheist— he must know metaphysic. The study of philosophy is, therefore, absolutely indispensable for him. Thus, Gentlemen, you see that philosophical training is an asset of great value in life and in so many vitally important walks of life (professions) which bring you also money.

If we turn now from individual to mankind, and look at the question from the stand point of culture or improvement of mankind, we find that philosophical thought has given lead in all departments of human life— in all “values”. And that lead it must give, because this lies in its very nature. For it is the profoundest thought of the fundamentals of all departments. Take the balance. Sciences all of them begin in Philosophy as special aspects of its problem. They take principles from philosophy, and they return to philosophy as their goal, when they try to rise high or to go deep into their fundamentals. In ancient times it is difficult to distinguish the scientist from philosopher, e.g. the philosopher Thales, Anaxamander, Anexamines are physicists; Pythagoreans and his school are mathematicians; Democritus is a mechanist and Aristotle gave principles to all sciences for thousands of years and before very modern times, including Muslim times, philosophy was an integral part of the education of a scientist. In modern times too the first and the greatest scientists— those who gave science its principles are philosophers, e.g. Descartes gave the principles that “all physical change is to be explained as quantitative”— as an arrangement of extended particles, that “matter and motion were constant”; Leibniz reduced matter to “force” and announced the principle of “continuity”, Kant gave us the principle of “evolution” on which the world process is to be explained. And scientists who have tried to go deep into their subject— to go to the fundamentals of it, have come to philosophy for inspiration, e.g. Newton, Mach, Einstein come from physics to Philosophy— are physical Philosophers; Poincare, Whitehead, Russell came from mathematics; Huxley from biology; Herbert Spencer from mechanics; William James, Jasper from medicine; etc. Take Morals and Politics. Great ideas come from Philosophers and revolutionize the world. The philosophies of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle gave the ideal of life and politics to the world for a long time, and even today is exercising considerable influence. Hobbes’ *Leviathan* ruled English Politics long enough and is the origin of some

peculiar political and juristic doctrines of English law. Rousseau by his 'Return to Nature' causes the French revolution, which was in reality a revolution in the concepts of statecraft. Kant gave us the notions of "Eternal Peace" and a "League of Nations" and with Hegel and Hegelians still rules the political thought in Germany and outside. Karl Max and Engel were disciples of Hegel, and given rise to European Communism and Russian Bolshevism. And Nietzsche's "Will-to-power" and concepts of "Superman" and "Aristocratic" Morality are at the basis of Fascism of Mussolini in Italy and Nazism of Hitler in Germany— they are moreover strongly coming to the fore in the world of today in the form of the call for Dictatorship. In Jurisprudence again, philosophers give the fundamental conception, e.g., the thought of Stoics is at the foundation of the great system of Roman Law which is still ruling the world; the thought of Kant gave the constitution of the United States of America, and has been a potent factor in Germany. Take Education. Pedagogy has been regarded as a vital part of Philosophical systems. Nearly all great educationists are philosophers, e.g., Socrates and Plato, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Herbert. Fine Arts again have in all ages been profoundly influenced by Philosophy. Great art is the expression of great philosophic ideas. Idealistic art (in Greece, in Middle Ages, in modern times) has been influenced by philosophic idealism; and Realistic Art inclusive of the Impressionism of today by the "realistic," "Philosophy, i.e., by Positivism and Empiricism. The great mediaeval poet Dante has the Philosophy of St. Augustine behind him. The greatest of German poets Goethe is inspired by the Philosophy of Spinoza; Schiller and Tennyson by the Philosophy of Kant; while Shakespeare is identified by some with Bacon, the philosopher. The great poets of Islam, Rumi and Hafiz, Mir and Ghalib etc., have Islamic mysticism, an outcome partly of Greek Philosophy, behind them; Hali is inspired by Sir Syed, one of the greatest philosophic minds of his day; and Iqbal by his own Bergsonian and Nietzschean Philosophy. Turning to a still higher domain of human culture, viz., Religion, we find that in so far as it becomes theology or *Kalam*, it is through and through influenced by Philosophy, e.g., Hindu Philosophy is the philosophizing of the Hindu mind on Hindu scriptures, and takes the place of religion with it. Christianity is in its very foundations influenced by Greek Philosophy (St. John's Gospel, and the Doctrines of St. Paul), by the Philosophy of St. Augustine, of St. Thomas, of Duns Scotus, all philosophers. In Islam there are two Schools of Theology, the Mu'tazilah and Asha'irah. Mu'tazilite

movement was influenced by Greek philosophy. Abu al-Hudhayl and Nazzam are philosophers. Ash'arism is the reaction to Mu'tazilah and naturally all great Ash'arites e.g., Ghazali and Shah Wali Allah are philosophers. And Mysticism or (Sufism) which claims to be the pith of all religion, has always been inspired by philosophy. Plotinus is inspired by Plato, and Plotinus and Plato have inspired Christian and Muslim Mysticism. Indeed the whole of Islamic mysticism is philosophizing on religious experience. Indeed, Gentlemen, the non- Semitic mind is inclined to go further and regards mysticism- the attempt to come in tune with the ultimate Reality, as Philosophy itself. It would claim therefore that all great, Founders of Religions were Philosophers- for they grasped reality and realized the Ultimate End of Life, and therefore instituted religions for the guidance of man e.g. Krishna, Buddha, Tao, Confucius, etc. Hence it is that Plato told Farabi in a dream about mystics that ("They were the real philosophers".)

Gentlemen, you have now seen what Philosophy has done for Mankind and what it does for the Individual- you have seen what are the advantages of Philosophy as an End- in- itself and a as a means to other ends. I believe you will not any more regard it as an idle study and will unhesitatingly take to it. But, Gentlemen, Philosophy is not a matter of choice. Whether you will it or not, you cannot help philosophizing - you cannot help facing the problems of Philosophy. You cannot help reflecting on the nature of the universe and your relation to it. What is it All? What am I? What is my Function Here? Whence I come and where to I go? A rational being cannot help putting these questions. Further, he must have an answer to them. Therefore, every man has a Philosophy in this larger sense of the word. The only difference is how you will have the answers: (1) by hearsay? As the general run of man seems to do, or (2) by self-thought? as an educated man will have it. If by self- thought, then will you have it (a) by random, spasmodic and crude thinking? or (b) by careful, systematic and clear thinking? The ordinary man of education takes the first course; the student of Philosophy the second.

The former has only the opinion, the latter the knowledge—knowledge as far as man can have it. You can, Gentlemen, make your own choice, now which course to follow about these gigantic problems of man with which Philosophy deals. The problems are unavoidable. That is why in Germany

they are making Philosophy compulsory in schools; in Germany School Final is equivalent to our B. A. ordinary. For no education is complete without this knowledge, and therefore, no educated man must be left without it. The Germans always had Philosophy as a compulsory subject in Universities; German Universities correspond to our research classes. It is why they are at the head of all nations in all disciplines and all sciences— they are at the head simply because a German scholar as a man of philosophical training has a broader outlook and go deeper into the subject and consider it more comprehensively than others.

We have so far considered philosophy as a branch of study in itself. Its advantages are, we have found, great. Let us now compare it with other branches of study briefly.

Physical sciences and the economics are the two characteristically modern branches of knowledge. Both are highly conducive to civilization, i.e. to the physical and material comfort of man.

Who can, at this time of the day, deny the astounding utility of physical sciences— of the conquest of nature and the consequent use of its powers for the ease and comfort of man, which they have brought about? Because of the development of physical sciences the modern age has become the age of Industry. Economics consequently goes with it, for it is the science of wealth which is the condition as well as the result of industry; it is, as the Germans call it, the science of goods that are wealth. And wealth is the only means which brings us comfort and ease.

Indeed, when you think of the usefulness of a branch of knowledge, you have mainly the physical sciences in mind. They open up a number of professions for you e.g. medicine, engineering and mechanics of so many kinds; while economics is helpful in banking and trade. It is here that we Orientals are backward, especially we Muslims and it is mainly because of physical sciences and economics that Europe is ruling the world. And that is why our illustrious vice chancellor has so emphatically directed his attention to the development of the study of physical science in our university, and that is why the hearts of us all are with him in his efforts. But mark, a need may be a pressing need of the time being; that does not make it the greatest

or the highest need of man.

But the forces of physical nature as well as wealth are after all valuable only as means to the comfort of man. Gentlemen, they are means – they are not in themselves his end. And they are means to his comfort– and clearly comfort is not his highest end. And, gentlemen, they are means which do not really seem to achieve this end i.e. comfort or happiness! The modern age is the unhappiest of ages. The application of science to practical life has multiplied the material needs of man– needs which never know satisfaction, needs which leave no time for him for his spiritual development. The world was happier when it had fewer needs; it had more time to attend to its soul. That is why it produced greater souls– philosophers, reformers, poets, artists than the modern industrialized world has done. We had more culture, more development of higher faculties then; we have more civilization, i.e. more means of material comfort today which also not even increase our happiness. In contrast to these branches of knowledge philosophy tells you not these means, but the End of which you ought to realize in yourself; and it tells you not a low end, viz, Comfort, but the highest end, the realization of which brings you peace and internal happiness, which is the essence of comfort also thus from the standpoint of higher utility for man, there is really no comparison between philosophy on the one side, and physical science and economics on the other. Further, physical science studies nature and not man; while economics considers man only on a lower level, viz., as to his material needs and material aspirations. Physical science and economics do not give you a proper understanding of man. Philosophy gives it. A student of philosophy is therefore more likely to have success with his fellow human beings, than a student of physical science or economics. Gentlemen, even where, on the face of it, physical sciences seem to be of paramount importance in human concerns, e.g., in modern warfare, it has been found in great war that the students of faculty of arts– of which philosophy is such a prominent member– have proved more successful than the students of the faculty of science. The reason is clear. War is in the first instance a human concern. The object with which you have to deal in it are men and material; and the material is to be used by men. On success with men will therefore your success primarily depends. So also the disastrous after-effect of the great war, viz., the huge financial and economical crisis of the world today, will not be solved by calculating financiers and money– grabbing merchants

who are following the exact law of economics, but by strokes of statesmanship i.e., by men who understand human nature and can consequently give it a turning in the right direction. They have begun their work.

Excluding economics, the two main branches of study that need to be considered in the faculty of arts, are history and language and literature— as the Arabs called them (*tarikb wa al-adab*).

History is certainly the study of man in his empirical existence and hence it tends to increase your understanding of your fellowmen. It is therefore, greatly conducive to success in life.

Therein history is akin to psychology. I won't say, as is commonly said, that history is not a science, that it cannot be a science— that it is not a scientific study, as it does ascertain general laws of human nature and its development. The eminent new Kantian philosophers, Wideband and Racket have put the point to rest. Philosophy in them has gone to fundamentals— to the fundamental nature of history and brought out its distinctive feature over against natural sciences and justified it. *Naturwissenschaft* (psychology included) gives laws because it deals with the phenomena in their individuality, in their full concreteness, i.e., as unrepeatable and unique. Hence the function of history is to describe individual phenomena and to determine their individual causes. And this it has been doing since the great Muslim philosopher Ibn Khaldun gave the lead and changed mere chronicle to history proper.

Gentlemen, I would only point out that history, though it is study of man, is not the study of man in his fundamental nature; and therefore the understanding of man it brings, is essentially defective so at least in higher departments of practical life i.e. statecraft, legislature, justice, art, theology, the utility of history is less than philosophy; while its utility with reference to the highest end of man is hardly any. That is also why when a historian aspires to profoundness he invariably becomes a philosopher— he passes over from history to philosophy of history. The cases of Lord Bryce and Montesquieu the author of “spirit of laws” are evident. The other day, our distinguished pro-vice chancellor, though basing all his contentions on history, was, in his thoughtful address becoming so philosophic.

The study of language is the study of modes of expression. It certainly helps you in expressing yourself to others well, which power easily passes for brilliance and becomes a source of admiration and advantage. Literature, moreover, enlarges and deepens your understanding of man and thereby may become a means of success in life. All this is true in general. But clearly the understanding of human nature which language and literature bring is not the clearness of insight into its fundamental constitution and empirical, completeness, metaphysics and psychology afford. The understanding of human nature which literature brings consists in the accessional peeps of the poet into the realm of truth which, comes before the eye of his mind in the guise, rather the disguise, of imagination and figurative (symbolic) thought.

From 'the standpoint of material advantage which the study of language and literature brings, clearly neither Arabic nor Persian nor Sanskrit, nor even Urdu, is of much importance today. English, indeed, is of the greatest importance – of use in India for earning a livelihood. But that is merely, a historical accident. It is not the nature of English. Only because it happens to be, for the time being, the language of ruling race, it is useful to learn English and to attain to efficiency in it. It is for this reason that we have English as the medium of instruction in our schools and universities but because English is the medium of instruction therefore, the study of philosophy today includes the study of English. The comparison between English and philosophy therefore restricts itself only to postgraduate study where only one subject can be taken. And there the advantages of special study of English do not seem to be so venomous. Indeed the higher study is of no special help in any of the lucrative professions– i.e. in statecraft and administration, in law and justice, in theology, medicine and engineering. Even in the teaching profession, an Indian who takes the M.A. or doctors degree in English is not, on the whole, in a better position than one who takes the same degree in philosophy or history or economics.

Thus gentlemen, you see that philosophy is not so very useless a subject as those ignorant of are so very prone to give it out to be. Indeed, as I have brought out in detail, its cultural value is greater than that of any other single subject I feel tempted to say, it is greater than all other subjects combined. And in utilitarian value too is considerable and compares favourably with that of other subjects as you might have realized by this time.

And, gentlemen, philosophy is a subject for which the Muslims in particular have shown a great predilection. In it they brought light to the then benighted world and thereby prepared the ground for renaissance and for modern philosophy and science— to, which we owe the existence of modern Europe. They were teachers of Europe for centuries and Europe still remembers though grudgingly, the debt it owes to them. Again it was philosophy which the Muslims of India in particular specially cultivated. The late savant, professor Horoviz was of the opinion that no nation in the world has studied philosophy more than the Muslims of India. Why then should we lag behind our ancestors? The Muslims as a nation are specially gifted for the subject. They possess exactly the qualities of mind which made Greeks so fit for it— qualities which today are making Germans and others so fit for it— I mean the qualities of careful observation and active logical thought. That is why Muslims are called, like Europeans, a practical people. And, gentlemen, philosophy is not passive thought or day dreaming. It is active, consistent and rigorous thinking.

Gentlemen, gifted with adequate powers of mind, blessed with such a glorious tradition in philosophy, why should you lag behind other nations less gifted for the subject, and lag behind your noble ancestors? Was the ancient philosophy more valuable than the modern? I assure you, on the authority of personal knowledge, that that is not the case. Indeed the modern philosophy is immensely more valuable than the ancient. I know this, come and study with me, and you will realize for yourself.

Gentlemen of the Philosophical Society, you have come, I welcome you heartily. I will do, with the help of my learned colleagues, all we can to initiate you in this great subject. Do you realize the duties you have thereby taken upon yourself? Firstly you, ought to draw as much advantage from the subject with my colleagues and myself as you possibly can. This society which I have the honour of addressing tonight and to which you belong, gives you an appropriate field for the development of the power of thinking for yourself, thinking for yourself which makes essence of philosophy. Take part in it, take a genuine and serious part in the debates that may be held and in the papers that will be read. Try to make your society a success, and that will be taken to your success in co— operative life. In doing so you will also have the advantage to my mind, a very great advantage— of coming in closer

contact with riper philosophical minds, especially with your teachers in philosophy.

Secondly, you ought to try, by example and by percept, to revive the philosophical spirit among the Muslim students. Try to dispel those confusions about philosophy which are beclouding the soul of Muslims of India today and which are keeping them behind other people in the race for philosophic culture— the race in which are for long they used to be ahead of all others. – And remember, the Quranic verse:– “One to whom (*bikmah*) (philosophy) has been given, verily, to him great good has been given.”