



Innovation and Philosophy

NAYANKUMAR JITENDRABHATT
B-402, Ayodhya Apartment,
Maheshnagar, Zanzarada Road, Junagadh
Gujarat (India)

Abstract:

Innovation is very much an ethical matter because ethics is fundamentally concerned with anything that can promote or hinder human wellbeing. So ethics is relevant to assessing the goals of innovation, to the process by which it is carried out, and to evaluating its outcomes. The problem is that innovation brings risks. Some of those risks are of course borne by the innovator, by the entrepreneur. Others are borne by society. For one thing, we often don't fully understand which category a particular innovation will end up in until years later.

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1. Scientific Knowledge and Approach

After reading literature by some of the world's leading experts on innovation – Clayton Christensen, Henry Chesbrough, John Kao, James Andrew, and Harold Sirkin – I was fascinated, but, alas, also frustrated. Innovation is the production of new knowledge that generates value. It is about fresh ideas that give rise to novel products, services, and processes, new management methods, and original designs and inventions that generate greater profits for firms, regions and countries.

Most experts agree that there are no ready-made formulas or recipes for how to innovate. But is it possible to create the appropriate conditions – to filter ideas and execute plans, and thus to facilitate creativity – under which innovation may flourish? Managers can perhaps be taught how to nurture innovation by creating an environment that stimulates and encourages individual freedom, creativity, and constructive criticism. Innovation is more likely where it is possible to defy restrictions and authority; where individuals and groups are allowed to ignore conventions; where a mixing of ideas, people, and cultures is permitted and stimulated; and where management techniques enable firms and industries to acknowledge, identify, and learn from errors as quickly as possible.

Above all, innovation will blossom wherever it is recognized that innovation must be open to the physical world and to the world of ideas, and that, because no firm, no process, and no invention has a guaranteed future, everyone should be prepared for uncertainty. Innovation may increase even more when firms and managers realize that even the most successful firms-those that “have done everything right” – may languish and disappear. In brief, innovation will only truly take off with the understanding that the world is rapidly changing, extremely dynamic and volatile, and that the future is unpredictable.

These are great ideas, but as I went through these texts I found them to be rather familiar sounding- I had the feeling that somehow and somewhere I had already studied them. I soon realized that these clever ideas had already been developed by the theory of knowledge and the philosophy of science. Indeed, innovation is simply a subset of scientific knowledge.

According to the school of rational criticism, when existing theories can neither explain nor solve current problems, the formulation of new hypotheses – and thus new scientific knowledge – is, like

innovation, more likely to flourish when constructive criticism is openly allowed and encouraged. Here, too, the formulation of new ideas and hypotheses quite often takes place at a far remove from the authority of experts, because experts, like business managers, often become prisoners of their specializations and backgrounds.

Scientific knowledge is more likely to emerge in environments where it is accepted that there are no prescribed or logical methods for formulating hypotheses; that they may be the result of sudden inspiration; or that they may come from dreams, from other disciplines, or from people that belong to different professions or have different backgrounds.

Once a plausible hypothesis is formulated, it must be tested against all existing theories and against all available experience and information. It has to be subject to open criticism from all directions, and only if it survives these tests and criticisms may it be adopted as tentative and conjectural new knowledge. Science and knowledge are made up not of winners, but of survivors of continuous and systematic efforts to refute. Theories are never certain and must always be prepared for an uncertain future. Or, as Karl Popper put it, truth is never definitive and error is always probable.

No book on innovation that I have read makes the connection between innovation and the theory of knowledge and philosophy of science. This is unfortunate, because the theories of innovation may be subject to all the questions, conjectures, and answers that these disciplines have developed with respect to scientific knowledge. Should business administration students and future business managers immerse themselves in the philosophy of science, they would not only become more knowledgeable and have greater respect for science; they might also become more rigorous and more competent, have greater respect for other disciplines, and be more humble.

At the same time, philosophy professors and students might also profit from the questions that challenge firms and industries. They might broaden their scope and find that they, too, can contribute to the productivity of firms, industries, and the economy in general. But it is past time that some basic principles in the theory of knowledge and of philosophy of science are introduced into schools of business administration.

BELIEF + LOGICAL ARGUMENT + CRITICAL EVIDENCE = ABSOLUTE REALITY

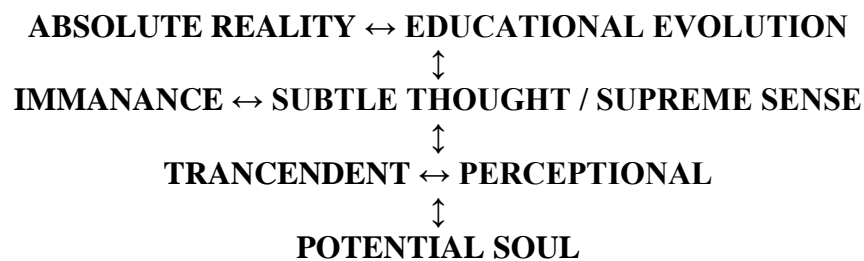
1.1 Spiritual Approach

The spiritual way of life is perhaps the most intriguing and enigmatic of all arts and sciences. The reason behind this difficulty in understanding and living the life spiritual is that this arduous adventure on the part of an individual is connected with so many subtle factors and calls for such dexterous adjustments from moment to moment that the entire process or effort is practically beyond the reach of the common man who is used to what we may call a happy-go-lucky attitude of total abandon to instincts, prejudices, routines and movements along beaten tracks of stereotyped conduct and behavior in his personal and social life.

It is by a rare good fortune, we should say, that a person gets fired up with the spiritual ideal, sometimes by causes which are immediately visible and at other times for reasons not clearly intelligible even to one's own self. Broadly speaking, a spiritual aspiration may be stirred up in the heart of person by frequent association with spiritual adepts or masters, continued study of spiritual literature for a long time, or even a sudden awakening to facts brought about by the perception of blatant contradictions, sufferings and sorrows in life, as well as an unexpected shot of an insight arisen into the transiency and ultimate vanity of everything earthly and phenomenal. These may be regarded as some of the visible causes of the rise of a spurt of spiritual aspiration in the mind of a person, though these visible features have deeper unseen causes extending outside the ken of the powers of the conscious human level. But the fructification of intense virtuous deeds performed in the previous lives and the right efforts put forth in such earlier incarnations of the soul may act as

invisible causes of the manifestation of profounder spiritual urges even in an early age in one's present life.

The pressure of a spiritual sense of values can take one by surprise and lead one to such personal and social attitudes which may startle people around and force them into a conviction that something is rotten in the state of Denmark. This may lead to a kind of social tension between oneself and others, though only for a short period of time, initially, and drive one to an adoption of such a gospel of life as may set oneself in a sort of disharmony with the atmosphere prevailing outside, if not entirely put upside down the accepted etiquette and ethics of the society into which one is born and in which one has been brought up. The spur of the spirit from within can for a time face the strongest forces of the world and blow like a whirlwind uprooting trees which stood firmly on the ground so long and casting out roofs of houses and temples which have been held so dear and sacred. It may even break the walls and ramparts of affection towards those who cannot but be regarded as indispensable relations of oneself, near and dear as one's own skin. In this sense, the upsurge of the spirit from within is a sort of revolutionary violence sprung upon everything around which is normally regarded as morally good, socially necessary and traditionally inviolable. This force of the spirit rising from within may even look like a terror to the sacredness of earthly formalities, a fire of doom that has come upon all the loveable values of life.



Subjective mind in psychological perception cannot conduct the concept of Absolute Reality, and innovative approach doesn't accept this fluency. So the great philosopher and mathematician Adam pattinsson said, "Doesn't matter, contemporary education system forget the quotient of philosophical subtle, then I totally disagree with the contemporary education system. When such a spirit takes possession of the individual, there can arise a feeling that nothing in the world is worth anything and the only thing worth the while is the realization and the experience of the Supreme Being. It is under such conditions that a person hurries forward to places of seclusion, to temples, churches, monasteries, nunneries, ashrams or convents, with the hope that here, perhaps, are chances available for obtaining facilities in leading a contemplative spiritual life. And we have, thus, the spiritual seeker in a holy cloister.

1.2 Ethical Approach

Such is the sorry state of affairs now that even at the end of the period of exile there is a need to live incognito for a time, lest the unfriendly forces should wreak vengeance upon the audacious goodness of a noble aspiration which is so offensive to the philistine world of social hypocrisy. We observe very clearly that everything in this world is in a state of flux and change. The process of renewal in life is a principle underlying the law of creation. In the same way as we believe in the immutable and enduring character of the law of change, we are also forced in certain immutable concepts and to consider them eternal and everlasting. Among these immutable principles are the laws of morality and human excellence which we are forced to observe of the judgments of sound reason and to lead our lives in accordance with them.

One of the most significant factors underlying the success and failure of societies, their triumph and defeat, is the moral factor, whose decisive role in the lives of nations is so evident and conspicuous that no one can deny it. The real nature of the human being lies in its unlimited capacity for

development and perfection. These capacities, faculties, and aspirations are embedded in man's very being and precede his consciousness of his own self. In the opinion of educationists and experts in training, the control of emotions and feelings and their confinement within certain moderate limits is the most fundamental problem of human life.

Any kind of development in a person's spiritual faculties must be regarded as an enduring asset. Their growth and nurturing is far more important than the knowledge and information that persons gather at various levels, because they use their inner capacities at every moment of their lives. On the other hand, the practice of moral principles involves a certain amount of hardship and privation. Often there is a contradiction between these principles and certain human urges. As a result, the satisfaction of these urges becomes possible only by turning one's back on those principles. Hence a training that does make spirituality its basis cannot resist the shattering blows of instinct. Those who lack the safeguards provided by spirituality are soon carried away by the winds of desires. Because such a training lacks a force that is durable and stable so as to be able to sustain a person in advancing the pressure of desires in all circumstances.

Bertrand Russell says: Praise should not be given for anything that should be a matter of course. I should give it for a new development of courage or skill, and for an act of unselfishness as regards possessions, if achieved after a moral effort. All through education any usually good piece of work should be praised. To be praised for a difficult achievement is one of the most delightful experiences in youth, and the desire for this pleasure is quite proper as an added incentive, though it should not be the main motive. The main motive should always be an interest in the matter itself, whatever the matter may happen to be. All moral instruction must be immediate and concrete; it must arise out of a situation which has grown up naturally, and must not go beyond what ought to be done in this particular instance. The child himself will apply the moral in other similar cases. It is much easier to grasp a concrete instance and apply analogous considerations to an analogous instance than to apprehend a general rule and proceed deductively.

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