
SYED AHMED'S NATURALISM AND MODERN EDUCATION: AN INTERPRETIVE APPROACH

Abdul Khaliq Aboya

Assistant Professor,
Department of Philosophy, University of Karachi,
Sindh, Pakistan.
Email: akaboya@uok.edu.pk

Irfan Muhammad

Assistant Professor,
Department of Philosophy, University of Karachi,
Sindh, Pakistan.
Email: irfan@uok.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to address some of the essential features of Syed Ahmed's naturalism as a method of interpreting the possibility of man's progress, particularly in the field of education in the context of revealed text. This may help one to understand his modernist theory of education and naturalism in the context of Islam (revealed text), and make one realize that Islam is not an obstacle in the way of progress, provided it does not lead one astray from the teachings of Islam proper. In the first section, I will briefly make some reference to some of the currents of naturalism proposed by western thinkers in nineteenth-century Europe (West) as a background in order to typify how it is different from the religious naturalism inspired by the revelation, expounded by Syed Ahmed. In the second section, I will argue why Syed Ahmed's naturalistic argument is an effort to develop a methodology to provide a rationalistic explanation of Islam and in no way an attempt to replace God with nature. Unlike his western contemporaries, Syed Ahmed's theory of nature is rooted in the revealed text. Hence, in my view, according to him, nature is not real in itself and like the world, man and any other creature, it is also a creation of God. It entails that nature in separation from its creator has no meaning and is always governed by the laws set down by God. The above arguments are not only helpful in enriching one's perspective of Syed Ahmed's conception of naturalism but are also crucial to establishing how one can draw a modernist theory of education from his naturalism.

KEYWORDS

Naturalism, Islam, modern education, revealed text, God, rational interpretation, progress

INTRODUCTION

Currents of Naturalism in the Nineteenth Century Europe

To have a clear picture of nineteenth-century naturalism, one should better evaluate it in terms of shifting phases of human history with reference to religion and science. Franklin L. Baumer in his book, *Modern European Thought: Continuity and Change in Ideas, 1600-1950*, claims that the nineteenth century is a Century of Becoming (Franklin, 1977). He cites Ernest Renan as saying that the most significant creation of the nineteenth century is its way of thinking historically about the world. History is not simply a “comprehension of the past,” but a sense of ceaseless movement and progress in human life. In other words, history is the ‘science of becoming’ capable of explaining nearly everything; even God himself is thought to “develop” along with man and nature. From its outset, the nineteenth century experienced a sharp decline in traditional religion (Christianity) which treats God as a transcendent Being rather than immanent. It results in a spiritual crisis. This decline sees its revival in the form of ‘nature mysticism’, which justifies God as an immanent reality discovered through religious experience. Due to this shift from transcendent to immanent God, according to Baumer, Carlyle declares the nineteenth century the “Unbelieving Century” in which God has become non-existent bounded by his own ‘rational laws’ (Franklin, 1977). Another dimension of ‘nature mysticism’ can be found in Schleiermacher, who reduces religion to an individual’s feeling. He claims that “True religion” “is sense and taste for the Infinite,” to be found in man’s inmost soul, in “feeling”. Hence Franklin has aptly interpreted Schleiermacher’s conception of religion as individualized, psychologized and emotionalized (Franklin, 1977). Such religions lead towards the divinization of nature which renders God dependent upon the process of nature. It seems to follow that Schelling has synthesized God, man and nature, representing nature as “visible spirit,” culminating in man himself, and Spirit as “invisible Nature”. He interprets nature as an organism, alive, creative, and becoming. In Baumer’s view, Herder observes this becoming of nature in cultural diversity. He claims that nature has bestowed its gifts to different nations according to their climate and culture. Due to its diverse manifestations it helps in the development of mankind. He believes that each culture in a historical process emerges as a unique soul (*Geist*), exhibits preeminently in its religion, language and literature, grows like an organism and ultimately becomes a living whole greater than its individual parts.

Looking at naturalism from a scientific perspective, one can refer to Beatrice Webb, who states that the problems of the mundane world can be resolved through science, which transforms the consciousness of a new motive: the emotion of self-sacrificing service from God to man. This shift from God to man seems to be evident in Comte’s positivist approach to provoke one to give up the search for ‘Absolute notions’, the origin and destination of the universe and focus upon the possibility of increasing one’s power over nature to keep knowledge within the ‘observational bonds’. He

argues that "Theology and metaphysics, which characterizes the thinking of the former ages, is now superseded by positivism" (Franklin, 1977). It seems that Baumer tends to convey that Saint-Simon under Comte's influence claims that the worth of religion consists in being one and the same time, scientifically credible, psychologically satisfying, and socially useful. This gives rise to the 'Religion of Humanity'. It seems that this higher form of religion convinces Feuerbach to declare that "Theology is Anthropology", as he believes that religion is objectified in human nature. By reducing religion to human nature, he moves on to establish that God is a creation of man in his own image, out of his own needs and changing ideals. This depersonalization of God, to use the Hegelian phrase, leads Feuerbach to explain the historical progress of religion in this way:

"That what by an earlier religion was regarded as objective, is now regarded as subjective; that is, what was formerly contemplated and worshipped as God is now perceived to be something human" (Franklin, 1977).

This divinization of man has further gained ground in Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. He projected nature as a "cosmic process" without any design which gave rise to a new conflict between theology and science. His theory of evolution claims that man under the supervision of nature is dependent upon cosmic processes rather than God. This view leads Darwin to separate nature and man from God. For him, naturalism has no place for God. In support of science, Huxley states that nature is neither moral nor immoral, but non-moral. In his view, man requires no divine providence to develop a 'worthy civilization' and can achieve this goal on his own. This view according to many Christians contradicts the Bible as it criticizes their established beliefs concerning 'nature' and the 'destiny of man' and undermines man's ability to think in abstract terms. Bergson tends to counter this overwhelming impact of science with his doctrine of intuition. A kind of reaction against scientific thinking encroaches on the whole epistemic realm and results in determinism and impediment of freedom. Scientific attitude compels one to enlarge one's influence over things due to its emphasis on practical utility rather than comprehension. "Intuition" not intellect gives true knowledge of nature and life. Intuition is an instinct that becomes conscious of its own being and can attain all-encompassing knowledge about nature, whereas intellect could have access to a few "states" and "instants". Bergson suggests that one should give up "scientific habits" to form a clear idea of nature.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the key elements of Syed Ahmed's naturalism and its role in facilitating human progress, especially in the realm of education within the context of the revealed text.
2. To demonstrate that Syed Ahmed's modernist theory of education is compatible with naturalism in Islam, emphasizing that Islam can support progress without

deviating from its core teachings.

3. To compare Syed Ahmed's religious naturalism with Western naturalism of the 19th century, highlighting their differences and unique characteristics.

4. To clarify Syed Ahmed's perspective on nature as a creation of God, and how this perspective contributes to a modernist theory of education grounded in his naturalistic approach.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research article, qualitative research methods are employed to comprehensively investigate the essential features of Syed Ahmed's naturalism and its implications for human progress, particularly within the realm of education and the context of the revealed text. The primary qualitative methods used in this study can be summarized as follows:

Textual Analysis

The research incorporates textual analysis to delve into the writings and works of Syed Ahmed, as well as relevant religious texts. This method helps uncover and interpret the nuances of his naturalistic philosophy and how it relates to the concept of progress in education.

Comparative Analysis

A crucial component of the research involves comparative analysis. It seeks to juxtapose Syed Ahmed's religious naturalism with the naturalistic perspectives proposed by Western thinkers of the nineteenth century. By contrasting these viewpoints, the research aims to highlight the distinguishing characteristics of Syed Ahmed's approach.

Argumentation and Rationale

The research involves in-depth argumentation and rationale to elucidate Syed Ahmed's naturalistic stance. Through qualitative analysis and discussion, the study aims to present his methodology for providing a rationalistic explanation of Islam, emphasizing the non-replacement of God with nature.

Interpretation and Perspective Enrichment

The research is geared toward enhancing readers' understanding and perspective of Syed Ahmed's naturalism. Qualitative methods related to interpretation, discourse analysis, and the synthesis of ideas are employed to achieve this objective. This approach assists in shedding light on the intricate aspects of Syed Ahmed's conception of naturalism. Through the application of these qualitative research methods, this article endeavors to offer a comprehensive exploration of Syed Ahmed's naturalism, paving the way for a more profound comprehension of its implications for education

and progress within the context of the revealed text.

Naturalistic Foundations of Modern Education: Syed Ahmed's Approach

Unlike his Western counterparts, Syed Ahmed draws his theory of nature from the revealed text. For him, nature is not something real in itself as conceived by some of the Western thinkers. He believes that nature like the world and man is also a distinct creation of God (Khan, 2008). Nature in isolation from its creator has no meaning and is governed by the laws set down by God. He puts aside all the accusations leveled against him that he treats nature as God (Khan, 2008). His naturalistic argument is merely a methodological effort to give a rationalistic explanation of Islam and in no way an attempt to replace God with nature. He is of the opinion that the essence of faith consists in knowing the meaning of the revealed truth. Keeping this aim in mind he writes that disagreement among scholars concerning religious issues is a blessing rather than a discord as it reflects their commitment to understanding the true spirit of religion instead of merely relying on *taqlīd* (imitation). He is appreciative of both kinds of scholars. One who supports the idea of imitation, others who utilize their cognitive faculties to perform *ijtihād* (rational interpretation). The commonality between them is that both are keen to submit before the will of God in order to live a life according to the dictates of Islam. He goes with imitation as far as it is consistent with the meaning of the revealed text which is the object of understanding. It is meaningless if it is adopted for its own sake and may lead one astray from the word of God. In fact, he emphasizes that one should deliberate in order to develop a culture in which one engages oneself in an argumentative process concerning religious affairs to have knowledge about things in a way intended by God. It means that one should do away with all those things regarding Islam which are based upon heresy and the result of interpolation and not related to Islam in any way. Syed Ahmed says that one may, for the sake of understanding, argue that Islam is a religion revealed by God Who is also the creator of nature one may find some compatibility between nature and the revealed text. It implies that the natural make-up of this universe is so designed by the creator that one reflecting upon some of the verses of Qur'ān can discover the relationship between the work of God (nature) and the word of God (revealed text).

Syed Ahmed's naturalism is not a metaphysical doctrine like the one conceived by some of the thinkers in the West. It is an attempt to make one realize that the essence of one's being lies in utilizing one's cognitive faculties to reflect upon the scheme of things working harmoniously to run the affairs of the universe (Khan, 2008). This may strengthen one's belief in God but in no way entails that one's belief is dependent on this method. In other words, one may understand Syed Ahmed's naturalism as an endeavor to develop an epistemology drawing upon some of the verses of the Qur'an which invites one to utilize one's rational and empirical faculties. Throughout his writings, his emphasis on experiential as well as rational aspects of one's nature is

quite evident. He argues that the natural makeup of man is such that one may expect that one would explore all the potentialities one is endowed with to understand things in a way one is supposed to. To substantiate this claim, one may refer to some verses of the Qur'an, referred to by Syed Ahmed encouraging one to experience the plan and harmony in nature. For instance verse 185 of *Sūrat al-a'raf*:

"Do they see nothing in the government of heavens and the earth and all that Allah hath created?"

This verse at once attracts one's attention toward the wonderful underlying scheme and plan in the creation of the universe which convinces and prepares one's mind to think in order to acknowledge God's power, glory and goodness. It means that the said verse invites one to observe the signs of brilliance, plan and the power of the creator to content oneself with the faith which is the natural expression of one's being. Another verse in this context he cites is the verse 75 of *Sūrat al-An'ām*:

"So also, we did show Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, that he might have certitude".

This verse speaks that those willing to see the spiritual world of reality can see beyond this physical world. In this verse, God refers to the story of Abraham, who instead of relying upon his ancestral Gods, conceives reality in spiritual terms. Such an act of Abraham is the first step towards God. With the help of the said verse, Syed Ahmed attempts to convey that man is naturally created in such a way that if he utilizes his intellectual capacity he will grasp the spiritual glories behind the magnificent powers and the laws of the physical universe (Khan, 2008).

To further justify his claim that man is naturally capable of growing intellectually he argues that everything in this world has its own peculiar nature and cannot go against it because they have been created in such a way. For instance, a fish cannot survive on land. Likewise, man is naturally so created that potentially he is able to think and experience the world in order to develop his understanding in a meaningful manner. Dealing with the problem of freedom and determinism in the context of one's natural constitution, Syed Ahmed argues that this question does not pertain to Islam as it presumes that man is either free or bound in his actions. If one studies human nature one may realize that man is bound in his acts in two ways. One is related to one's external affairs and the other is concerned with one's natural makeup. According to the former, one's acts become adapted due to certain influences such as society, training, surroundings, education and tradition. In such a situation one thinks that one is free and unmindful of the influences. The latter suggests that more or less in every human being there is an all-encompassing ability called *qūwate-e-fikrī* (thinking power) and one can discover it by reflecting upon one's own being. This naturally gifted ability also helps one to distinguish between right and wrong and may prepare

one to decide things in normative terms. It also provides an impetus to reform oneself by enabling one to follow the right path which being *mukallaf* (responsible) is the most essential feature of man and distinguishes man from other creatures. In fact, Syed Ahmed seems to convey that man listening to the voice of nature can act responsibly. For, one's nature if it is truly explored helps one realize one's thinking power implanted by God at the time of creation and paves the way for critical analysis of the text which may result in better understanding. For, the truth will remain the truth no matter what people think about it. It needs to be cognized on a normative plane. It means that it is one's utmost responsibility to strive in pursuit of truth instead of merely relying on *mansūs* (stipulative, textual).

To further elaborate on the idea of man's ability to think which ensures the possibility of mental growth and helps one to look into the hidden nature of things, Syed Ahmed states that every man is endowed with an ability called *nūr-e-qalb* (light of heart) or *nūr-e-firat* (light of nature) which enlightened Abraham to recognize the truth as mentioned in the Qur'an in verse 79 of *Sūrat al-An'ām*:

"For me, I have set my face, firmly and truly, towards Him Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to Allah."

According to Syed Ahmed, this verse conveys Abraham's conviction for truth. Despite the fact that Abraham was brought up in an environment where religion was based upon idol worship, he never gave up his pursuit for truth. He utilizes the light of heart granted by God to explore the metaphysical magnificence behind this apparent world. The worshiping of idols never appeals to him and, in the words of Syed Ahmed; he defies the legitimacy of his ancestral tradition and religion. Due to his deep-hearted commitment to truth and ultimate reality, he eventually finds reality in the form of Divine Being (God) and declares that there is no God but Allah who is the source of all creation.

Syed Ahmed's naturalism is sometimes criticized on the pretext that it adopted the methodology of natural science to justify the existence of God. It gives an impression that natural science is superior to revealed text and shatters one's belief in God. Syed Ahmed attempts to mellow down such an impression. He states that such a belief which prefers natural science over the revealed text assumes that natural science and naturalism have the same subject matter to deal with. He claims that natural science and naturalism have different subject matters and one should not relate them. Hence, the claim that reliance upon natural science renders God *ma'zūl* (separated from the rest of the world) is not justifiable. For instance, natural scientists deal with how the specific quantity of oxygen and hydrogen make water and do not bother why it so happens and who creates and makes such combinations possible. While the *necharī ilāhīyyūn* (naturalist theologians) are inclined to explore the hidden nature of things

instead of focusing on how things exist. They are interested in knowing the divine plan behind this apparent world by applying cognitive faculties to the revealed text to understand the purpose and meaning of creation instead of confining oneself to mere appearance.

Responding to the question of those who believe that the existence of natural law leads one to infer God's suspension, Syed Ahmed says that the creation of natural law by God in no way assumes that He has no role to play in worldly affairs. This misperception is due to one's narrower conception of God which treats God only as a creator and not as a sustainer. Another problem is the misperception regarding the law of nature about which some of the thinkers assume that Syed Ahmed is exploring the metaphysics of nature (naturalism as a doctrine); as an independent entity apart from God. On the contrary, he is interested in highlighting the underlying metaphysical principles required to develop naturalism as a method of understanding as mentioned earlier. To further elaborate and clarify his stance on the differences between naturalism and natural science Syed Ahmed opines that the scholars of natural science can be divided into three groups (*firqe*). One represents those who believe that the cause behind the creation is matter and its various combinations and the world is dependent on this principle. They state that natural law is immutable and cannot be understood with the help of natural science therefore it is beyond comprehension. Thus, it is useless to claim that God exists as the first principle. According to Syed Ahmed such admirers of natural science are known as (atheists). Others are of the view that the realm of natural science is essential for all kinds of knowledge. And because natural science cannot prove the existence of God they prefer to remain skeptical about the existence of God. They argue that God may exist but one has no access to any such knowledge. Such natural scientists are called *lā adriyyāh* (agnostics). Thirdly, those who are in favor of nature and the law of nature and believe that both things are created by God. Such scholars in the past were known as *hukmā'* (prudent) theologians and in this era are known as naturalists or followers of *thayth* (proper) Islam. Syed Ahmed's aim in dividing natural scientists into these three categories is to make one realize that his theory of naturalism is an attempt to establish a relationship between God and nature and to convey that nature has no meaning without God. In other words, it tends to illustrate that the law of nature is created by God and being a creator of the said law, He is not bound by it.

Another argument concerning Syed Ahmed's naturalism and the question of God's suspension can be examined in the light of his idea of the law of causality. The law of cause and effect is just another expression of the law of nature. C.W. Troll describes this in this way:

"Sir Sayyid's theologically founded argument for the existence and inviolability of the law of nature in general and single laws of nature in particular, are clearly stated in

the eight principles of the usūl al-tafsīr: God has made verbal promises in the Qur'an and will never break them. Some of these promises constitute the law of nature upon which the universe is created. The law of nature is a procedural (operational) promise (WA 'dah-i 'amalī). Part of this law of nature has been disclosed to man by God, and part of it (though not much) man has himself discovered. But that discovered is undoubtedly the operational promise of God, the infringement of which would equal the infringement of God's verbal promise, which cannot happen" (Troll, 1979).

Syed Ahmed differentiates between 'illat (cause) and 'illat ul 'alal (First Cause, God). In his view, the most important thing one needs to understand is the process of cause and ma'lūl (effect) in relation to the First Cause. For, cause itself is a relative term and could be the effect of some other cause. First Cause cannot be separated from the cause either directly or indirectly, being the cause of every effect. It is not limited to any particular causal relationship between events or things. It means that the meaningfulness of the apparent causal relationship between events needs to be understood in the context of the First Cause. To illustrate his idea of causation in connection with the impossibility of God's suspension, Syed Ahmed refers to the meaning of *ahātah* (all-encompassing knowledge) in verse 54 of *Sūrat al-Hā Mīm*:
"Ah indeed! It is He that doth encompass all things!"

The said verse speaks of God's omnipresence and at the same time addresses those who due to their short-sightedness do not conceive God as a Being whose knowledge encompasses everything and for this reason, they do not believe in the Day of Judgment. But they are not aware that such a day is unavoidable and they will be accountable for their deeds. This verse reflects God's magnificence as it conveys that God is an ultimate reality and nothing is beyond His comprehension for He is the One who created everything and ensures order. Another verse Syed Ahmed cites in this connection is the verse 35 of *Sūrat al-Nūr*:
"Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth".

In this verse, according to Syed Ahmed God uses the *tamthīl* (simile) of light to convey that as everything is dependent on light for its manifestation similarly all things are dependent on God for their existence. For this reason, at so many places in the Qur'an God articulates Himself as *Khaliq* (creator) and in the said verse as *nūr* (light). Light is something that shatters darkness and enlightens one's perspective. It means that any attempt to understand the First Cause by reflection upon the law of nature does not lead one to interpret God's suspensionⁱ. Such a question arises if one mistakes naturalism as a metaphysical doctrine and treats it as something real in itself instead of as an epistemic effort, as conceived by Syed Ahmed. For man cannot know things in a way God knows them due to his finite intellect. Thus, the question about God's suspension after He creates a perfect law of nature seems absurd. To better understand

the said issue one can, refer to some of the Qur'ānic verses mentioned above which entail that the existence and survival of everything is dependent upon God and for this reason, no question concerning the suspension of God due to the natural law after creation in running the affairs of this world arises.

DISCUSSION

From the above discussion, one can imply two crucial ideas expounded by Syed Ahmed in his writings which played a significant role in the development of his thought as they provide an impetus to rethink the intellectual tradition of Islam. Such an attitude may help the Muslims of India to march along the lines of progress like any other nation in the world. One is naturalism and the other one is modern education.

1. **Naturalism:** In order to analyze his theory of naturalism, one should better differentiate it with the various facets of naturalism developed in nineteenth-century Europe. As I have mentioned earlier Syed Ahmed's naturalism is merely an epistemic effort to rationally explain the relation among God, man and nature as well as the purpose of man's creation. It is in no way, a metaphysical doctrine as conceived by some of his European counterparts, particularly in nineteenth-century Europe, which tends to establish nature as reality apart from any divine being. According to Syed Ahmed, various laws of nature symbolize the majesties of God's underlying schemes and the fixed pattern necessary to run the affairs of this universe. Many critics of Syed Ahmed have unjustifiably attributed his naturalism as an attempt to develop a parallel religion under the influence of modern sciences and Western notions of naturalism and labeled him as *haḍrat-e-nachariā* (naturalist people). Syed Ahmed's response to such critics is thought-provoking and needs to be understood in its true spirit for which he aptly referred to verse 30 of *Sūrat al Rūm*.ⁱⁱ

“So set thou thy face steadily truly to the faith: (establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which he has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard religion: but most among mankind understood not”.

Syed Ahmed is of the view that the purpose behind the advent of Islam is to help mankind to get rid of all those restrictions imposed by the people in the name of tradition and custom, upon the true nature of man which is supposed to actualize its naturally embedded potentialities in accordance to the Will of God. To further substantiate his point concerning the meaning of nature in the context of Islam, he truly refers to Shah Wali Allah and Ibn-e-Abbas, who have translated “God's nature” as “God's religion” in their commentaries of the Quranⁱⁱⁱ. It means that the best way to explore the implicit intricacies of nature lies in expressing one's natural talent without any fear of so-called traditions and customs by utilizing one's rational capacity to understand and interpret the revealed text in order to grasp the true meaning of

religion.

2. Modern Education: In my view, Syed Ahmed's theory of modern education is a logical corollary of his theory of naturalism and can be understood in the light of his views concerning the Eastern sciences and the Western sciences. Syed Ahmed is one of the most firm proponents of Western education and he appreciated Lord Macaulay's proposal for inculcating Western sciences and English as a medium of instruction in the Indian education system. He is critical of those who are of the view that Macaulay being a religious person believes that Asian culture and religions are outdated and irrational and wants to replace it with new education. Syed Ahmed claims that new education is the need of time for the Muslims as well as for the Hindus because he wanted them to get familiar with the wisdom and the ways of learning prevailing in the West liable for the success and advancement of the English nation. It is due to the efforts of Macaulay that the government has decided to promote European sciences and philosophy in India and also established three universities on the pattern of the West to fulfill the said goal^{iv}. Syed Ahmed claims that it is difficult to understand why the majority of the people in India, particularly in Punjab are making hue and cry in favor of eastern sciences. He believes that these sciences mainly include three languages such as Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian. He explains that undoubtedly these are the great languages but the true meaning of education does not lie in acquiring knowledge about these languages. And if we consider Arabic and Persian literature we will realize that albeit being expressive and aesthetically loaded it is incapable of invoking one's natural abilities due to its mythical and romantic character appeal to one's emotions rather than reason. Another problem with this literature is that mostly it is produced to please the nobles and rulers. Syed Ahmed explains that philosophy and the science of logic and other disciplines that have developed in the West could be the source of inspiration for the people of India and they can benefit from it on a larger scale in order to improve education, philosophy, and logic^v.

Syed Ahmed tends to construe that the growth of civilization and man depends upon one's ability to recognize one's natural talent ingrained by God at the time of creation. This may lead one to actualize one's potential in the process of education. It means that his idea of modern education needs to be understood in the nexus of naturalism drawn upon the revealed text which is the ultimate source of theory. He wanted to emphasize that the changing conditions of life, advancement of knowledge and the existing state of the Muslims are the most considerable factors one needs to address. These factors are required to be assessed in the light of rational faculty and sensory faculty provided by nature to man in order to develop a better understanding. As I have explained earlier that the way Syed Ahmed's naturalism is different from Western naturalism, likewise his theory of modern education also owes its origin in the revealed text. The term modern is not new in its entirety because in no way by

using this term Syed Ahmed wishes to replace it with tradition as claimed by some of his opponents. It entails that his theory of modern education tends to develop a flexible attitude of mind which is supposed to be receptive and ready to acquire knowledge in any field without any consideration of its origin in terms of Western or eastern sciences. He believes that such an approach is essential to come across the Western sciences without any bias which may turn productive in terms of one's own context and at the same time provide an impetus to evaluate things rationally and critically.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the content of the article, here are five recommendations for further research:

Historical Comparative Analysis: Future research could expand on the comparative analysis of Syed Ahmed's naturalism with Western naturalism further. This could involve a historical comparative study of how naturalistic philosophies have evolved within the context of different religious and cultural backgrounds, providing a broader perspective on the subject.

Empirical Application of Naturalism in Education: Building on the insights from this article, research could explore the practical implementation of naturalistic principles in contemporary education systems, particularly in societies where Islam plays a significant role. Investigating how naturalistic ideals align with modern educational practices and curriculum design would be valuable.

Interfaith Dialogue and Naturalism: Given the relevance of religious texts and revealed wisdom in the article, future research might focus on interfaith dialogues about the compatibility of naturalism with different religious traditions. Exploring how naturalistic concepts can foster greater understanding and cooperation among various faith communities could be a worthwhile endeavor.

Influence of Syed Ahmed's Naturalism: A more detailed examination of the influence of Syed Ahmed's naturalistic philosophy on modern educational theories and practices, especially in Islamic countries, could be undertaken. This would involve studying the extent to which his ideas have been integrated into educational policies and institutions.

Philosophical Implications of Naturalism: Further research can delve into the philosophical implications of naturalism as a method for rationalizing religious texts. Exploring the broader implications of using naturalism to interpret religious scriptures in various belief systems, not limited to Islam, would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this approach.

These recommendations aim to extend the knowledge and insights generated by the current research, exploring new dimensions and applications of naturalism in education and interfaith contexts while deepening our understanding of its historical and philosophical significance.

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