



## Sufism and Rationalism

Publication Date: 23.11.2019

The most widely used objection arguments of the opponents of Islam are that religion has nothing to do with reason and science. These objections are constantly raised in society. In these objections, it is stated that the regulation of the social life of Islam is contrary to the nature of the substance and will harm the society, not benefit. Since those who make these objections do not fully understand the concept of reason and science, these objections seem reasonable to them. Many people in society agree with these objections because of their inadequate understanding of the issue and believe that the Islamic religion should stay out of society. They are unable to fully comprehend the

reason and knowledge and fully comprehend the Islamic religion. The negative publications in society have certain influence on it. People do not try to research on these issues by themselves and have a wrong view of life both in terms of knowledge and belief.

In this article we want to express that the truth is not the case and how the concepts of reason and knowledge are perceived by both the philosophy and the Islamic religion. Many articles about Islam's understanding of science have been published on this website. If both this article and the articles we published earlier are examined, it will be revealed that the prejudices about Islam in society are wrong.

For this reason, the concept of reason will be discussed first and then the basic ideas and contradictions of the rational movement will be examined. From this point of view, what are the sciences of mind and their inadequacies will be explained. In order to overcome these contradictions and inadequacies, the science of secrets will be explained. In addition, the concept of nature will be discussed and the views of Islam on this subject will be explained. We hope that this study will be beneficial for people.

## **What is Reason?**

The concept of reason has been discussed in many ways throughout history and various definitions have been given. According to the acceptance of almost everyone, mind is an essence and power of unknown whose nature is not known. The word el-Akla (mind) in Arabic means, forbidding, preventing, restraining, and connecting. As the term of philosophy and logic, it is an intangible force that comprehends the truth of existence, constitutes concepts by abstraction and makes propositions between concepts and has comparative power.

According to the Qur'an, it is the mind that makes man obliged by divine commandments. The Islamic Scholar Ragip al-Isfahani, in his book "The Curriculum", defines the mind "as a power to obtain information and the information obtained by this power".

The Qur'an says that only those who know can think (Ankebut, 29/43). Because non – Muslims do not use this power and this knowledge well, they are criticized in the following verse: *"They are deaf, mute, blind; therefore they cannot*

*think*” (Bakara, 2/171). In the following verse the people are warned: “*He gives a bad punishment to those who do not use his mind*” (Yunus, 10/100). In the verse (The Kingdom, 67/10) it is stated that the people who use of their minds will be saved from the punishment of hell. “*Allah explains the verses so that you can think.*” (Al-Baqarah, 2/242) describes the function of reason.

The word reason (el-Akl) in the hadiths has been used in terms such as connecting the camel, restraining. In one hadith, the word “keyyis” is used in the meaning of reason. Keyyis is the one who takes control of his self and is prepared for after death” (Tirmidhi, Resurrection 25).

In terms of Sufism, it has been said about reason:

The first thing Allah has created is the mind. Allah created him in the first degree of the breath of Rahman in Amâ. The first reason has been created by Allah without any means. Allah Almighty created the first mind and gave him the information that allows him to be superior to other beings. When Allah created the Perfect Man, he gave him the degree of the first reason and taught him the truths about substances which are not know by the mind before.

Reason is the first being which is the divine light and created by God without any model. Allah Almighty has created the universal self from the mind. This is the Levh-i Mahfuz (the protected tablet). He has a lower degree in being divine light than the mind.

The first mind, before the creatures were created, wrote Amâ and the truths contained in Amâ to the Levh-i Mahfuz. Accordingly, while the first master was the first mind in the realm, Levh-i Mahfuz was the first student to learn from a created master.

The universal self is the first being that comes out of the first mind. The universal self is in the opposite of mind like Eve opposite Adam. The self accepts from mind only things that are common and similar in itself. He will never learn things which are not in common.

Ibn Arabi, in his book “Fütûhât-ı Mekkiyye” says about the mind:

“The mind receives knowledge directly from God without any means and he is carrier of all known things which are exalted and low down. While the mind takes from the God, the self takes from mind and from self occurs acts.

The realm of powerful and ecstatic angels does not take anything from the first mind, nor does the first mind have any authority over them.

The first mind gives information the things below it and its information spreads to everything which are related to.

There is no connection between God and servants other than kindness, cause other than judgment, and time other than past eternity. Out of this, there is only blindness and confusion.

God has divided the mind between people. The mind is divided among people according to order and degree. While He gave one to an amount and He gave another the double of it.

### **Philosophy of Rationalism**

Rationalism is the philosophical approach that advocates that the source of knowledge is reason and that true knowledge can only be obtained by reason and thought. Accordingly, absolute and universal knowledge can only be obtained through reason and deductive approach. The basis of this philosophy lies in two assumptions: First, that each individual has equal and unchangeable rational and logical principles; the second is the existence of various a priori and manifest invariant truths.

According to this philosophy, the exact example of knowledge is mathematics. According to them, knowledge of facts and substances can only be reached by reason. In this respect, rationalism is the opposite of empiricism. However, a philosopher can be both rational and experimentalist from a broad perspective. There are examples of this in the history of philosophy.

As an extreme thought, rationality argues that knowledge can be achieved completely by pure reason without trial. However, apart from this extreme point, many rational philosophers have taken a certain amount of consideration into empiricism.

It is thought that rationality first emerged with Elea School. The first rational philosopher was Parmenides (515 BC - 460 BC). According to him, sensations are things that can change. Therefore, they cannot be the basis of knowledge. After Parmenides, his student Eleon Zenon (490 BC - 430 BC) advanced rationality and grounded the idea of rationalism. Later Plato (427 BC - 347 BC) shaped rationality

as a theory with the theory of ideals. Plato adopted the deductive method as the principle of rationalism.

The most important names of the rationalist tradition in the West are Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz.

Descartes (1596 - 1650) put forward the concept of cartesian spirit and expressed various arguments about metaphysics. Thus, the idea of human ontological dualism emerged. These views put forward in the second half of the 17th century are accepted even in today's societies.

De Spinoza (1632 - 1677) refused Descartes' cartesian mind-body dualism by developing his own metaphysics. He also denied that God existed separately from the created world.

Leibniz (1646 - 1716) put forward the metaphysical ideas he developed. According to Leibniz, the world created by God is made up of conscious, same small beings. He named these beings monad. According to him, God has created our world as the best and most perfect of all possible worlds.

This movement of philosophy was subjected to great criticism in the 18th century. The most important criticism in this regard came from Kant (1724 - 1804). In his book "Critique of Pure Reason", Kant criticized and attempted to unite the inadequate aspects of both empiricism and rationalism.

In the same period, different understandings about rationality were put forward. In spite of the different definitions, they all have in common the acceptance of reason as a measure of accuracy. The highest representative of this view is Hegel. Hegel (1770 - 1831), with the dialectical method, has tried to base rationalism in itself. Hegel's following statement is the most concise expression of the whole rational tradition: "Everything that is real is rational, everything that is rational is real."

Since the late 19th century, Hegelian ideas have been targeted by Logical Positivism, which is a fundamentalist and irreconcilable form of experimentalism. Thus, the foundations of rationalism were tried to be destroyed. However, logical positivism collapsed because of its own internal contradictions and difficulties. Because, although they wanted to eliminate all metaphysical arguments, they placed the principle of "verifiable" in the center of their own thoughts. The status of this principle is not fully defined.

When positivism collapsed, rational ideas emerged again. The attempt to cover up the necessary truths about the essential nature of reality has once again prompted the philosophers. It was tried to construct expressions of philosophy that would express not only what is right but what should be right. In the search for essential truth, the expectation has been promised for the extreme type of rationality that seeks to transcend the limits of sensory experiences.

### **Knowledge Understanding of Rationalism Philosophy**

While rationalism seeks essential truth, each philosopher has developed his own understanding of knowledge. Each one of them has put forward a number of different ideas in order to open up the places where the predecessors were blocked. All in one place have encountered contradiction and inadequacy. This is because they do not want to admit that reason is limited.

Since the beginning of rationalism philosophy the various understanding of information has been put forward.

According to rationality, the main source of information is the mind. Rational intuition is the source of all or part of our a priori knowledge. According to them, the highest happiness of man is to use the pure institutional power of reasoning.

A priori knowledge, according to them, is acquired before the experiment. If the correctness of a proposition is made independent of any sensory observation, that proposition is known as a priori. According to this, a prioritization is an opportunity to access information independently of the senses.

For this reason, deduction has an important place in the rational understanding of science. However, it is controversial whether the final starting points can be proved by their logical inference. How can these starting points be known? If they could be proved, they wouldn't be the last thing to do with the system. Every proof had to stand somewhere. In order to solve this problem, the experimenters imported induction principle as well as deduction. According to them, we cannot be directed to the right information by induction automatically. The way to attain the latest information is to know scientific principles through rational intuition. The key to this rational pure mental knowledge is the light of nature. This is an innate gift given to us by God. As a result, scientific knowledge

method was put forward as a priori owing to both rationalists and experimenters.

Philosophers want philosophy to unveil the unchangeable and eternal truths about the universe. However, it is doubtful whether the deductive certainties of mathematics will lead to the expected results.

The theory of innate ideas, on which the basic principles of rationalists are based, was later criticized and counter philosophies were produced. All of them, however, were intended to cover up the necessary truths about the essential nature of absolute reality. However, none have succeeded in establishing a complete and flawless structure. This is inevitable.

This was expressed by some philosophers. In his book "Criticism of Pure Reason", Kant pulls down the assumption that the mind has access to the knowledge of the ultimate reality. According to Kant, the only possible information is the "phenomena" in of objects which are the experimentally observable properties of the physical world. It is not possible to reach the knowledge of the ultimate, spontaneous world of things.

In his book "Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature", Richard Rorty (1931 - 2007) states that the philosophers have to leave the understanding of philosophy, which suggests that the universe is made of simple, clear and distinct things can be known, that the essence of their knowledge can be reached. According to Rorty, philosophy should understand that all concepts should operate within a certain conceptual framework, rather than attempting to lay the foundations of all knowledge. The interpreter philosopher can produce interpretations and solutions under a certain worldview, but he cannot go beyond his position and make "objective" judgments on them. The idea that the criterion of being true is the criterion that will lead us to absolute truth should be abandoned.

This view is in accordance with Sufism's understanding of knowledge. Because the information obtained in the apparent world does not give all the absolute information. The secret information is needed about him. This is only partially possible with the science of secrets.

## **Sufi Criticism of Philosophy of Rationalism**

We can criticize the understanding of knowledge examined above within a general Sufi framework.

Intellectual sciences are those that are realized with the provision of necessity in human or by examining the evidence with the way of learning the direction of evidence. Some of them are correct and some are wrong.

Those who engage in the science of reason are based on the data of what they consider evidence in their own beliefs. What they consider as evidence indicates that one part of the being is based on the other.

Although a matter is conceivable, there are differences of opinion about it. The reason for this is the difference in creation in thought. Therefore, it is inevitable that differences of opinion exist in every conceivable problem. We see these in the thoughts about the rationality philosophy. The effort to incorporate all thoughts and combine them into a single theory could not work. In future it will not work for the reason we wrote above.

All evidence of rationalists cannot be cleared of doubts. The source of the disorder in their thinking is that the creatures have ruled over God who created them. Almost all rational scientists have put forward an opinion about the essence of Allah. But rational thought cannot comprehend the essence of Allah. With intellectual thought, it is not possible to surround the order of beings, nor can the essence of being be known. Rational philosophers have spent their lives only for issues attainable with reason, and thought that their lamps are illuminated by the light of truth. They did not consider it necessary to obey the prophets, and they were mistaken in assuming that they could attain absolute truths in their minds.

Doubt, suspicion, astonishment and theoretical research are neither light nor dark. On the other hand, the mind is light. Ignorance, polytheism and irrationality are dark. It is necessary two lights for something to emerge. The first is the light of perception, the second is the light of intellectual. Therefore, rationalists cannot reach the real knowledge of the essence of every being in the realm through mind. Through mind, the continuity of souls and their existence in afterlife cannot be known. Because the necessity of the existence and absence

of the possible substance is not based on rational evidence. If this were the case, his possible truth would have been altered.

When the rationalists could not see the qualities they had limited, they denied God. Denying God in the world and the hereafter originates from the fact that rational thought has come to the fore and limited God.

### **The Science of Secrets**

The subject of secrets is revelation, inspiration and discovery. This information is something that the mind cannot comprehend on its own.

It is a must for all intellectuals to run to the breezes of divine generosity. Because, as stated in a hadith, *"Allah has breezes, run to them"*.

Ibn 'Arabi, in his book *"Fütûhât-ı Mekkiyye"* says:

"The Unseen is a mirror for God. When God manifests in the mirror, the forms and essence of realms found in the divine knowledge are reflected in the mirror. Allah has hidden wisdom in the substance that no one knows him except Allah and those whom He has revealed. Therefore, in the verse, "Jinni and People" is called. In this respect, jinni refers to the part hidden and learned from Him, while people means visible part."

In the manifestations of Allah Almighty, the power of opinion and reason disappear. This is the position of the wise people and the lovers. Therefore it is the first condition of path of spirituality to forget the "masiva" that is everything else except Allah, and ascension to the exalted presence. Unless the heart mirror is cleansed of world rust, it is impossible for God to appear there. Therefore, the person who is stuck in masiva ornaments, which is limited to world science and knowledge, is despised and disreputable in spirituality. Because it is impossible for the world's sciences to come together with the higher sciences of the divine realm. Their coming together is of the kind of coming together of opposites and therefore impossible.

In this regard, Imam Rabbânî says in his book *"Divine Inspirations"* that

"The innate being is the opening and discovery of its real truth by Sufis. In other words, it appears only after the disappearance of the signs of creation by Allah. His appearing is the simple appearing in the total order of existence."

Reason cannot perceive the secret science unless the innocent prophet declares it. The understanding of knowledge of the secret science is expressed as follows: Knowledge, knowing and known is the three things that have the same provisions. The observer considers him to be three. But the one who sees the unseen, sees as one.

Knowledge is that the heart obtains something according to its real and absolute state. Knowledge is a quality that obliges the heart to obtain something. Knowing is heart and the known is that is obtained. It is extremely difficult to imagine the truth of knowledge. However, knowledge is to perceive the perceived things according to the state of itself.

No one's knowledge relates to infinity. Knowing the truth is not through the mind, but through the heart.

Intelligent people are those who are aware of the knowledge that God has dedicated to the prophets and the saints who follow them outside of the usual way of learning, such as teaching and working. Mind cannot obtain this knowledge about God in terms of its power of thought. This information, without any research and reading, thanks to be alone with God is opened to the holy man.

The minds did not realize that everyone who had an opinion about Allah created a vision in his self that he called Allah. Everyone worships this imagination he has created in his own self, and that is Allah, not another.

Reason is a quality of creation, and therefore God has not been characterized by it. If the Sharia had not limited the deportment of lust in the world, there would be no space for the mind to walk.

Ibn Arabi's following poem about the science of secrets summarizes what we say:

God you realize through discovery,  
It's not the God you know with the idea, don't forget,  
Because the idea cannot exceed its rank  
Sometimes it happens, but it is in what it has,  
Provisions on substance are contradictory,

Provision through discovery has unknown basis.

### **Philosophy of Experimentalism**

Empiricism is an assertion about the nature and origin of human knowledge. It is the claim that all human knowledge ultimately comes out of sensory experience.

Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC) was the founder of experimentalism. According to Aristotle, a substance (the ultimate carrier of qualities) is not an abstract form, but a concrete individual. For example, a particular person or a horse. Aristotle openly denies that an universal beauty can be a substance.

According to Aristotle, goodness was not a transcendent. For him, goodness is something embodied or exemplified in particular things.

Aristotle argues that true scientific knowledge must contain precise logical proofs from the first principles.

Aristotle accepts that the final starting points themselves cannot be proved by logical inference. If they could be proved, they would not be the final principles of the system. Every proof would then have to stop somewhere. But how can these starting points be known? According to Aristotle, these are one of two ways of learning that accompanies deductive reasoning. This is called induction.

According to Sufism, induction is not an appropriate way of knowing God. Induction does not represent real information. Because the mind states that Allah does whatever He wills and that no creature is compared to Him, nor that any human is compared to Him.

The reason that induction does not express knowledge at this level is that it is possible, or even realized, to repeat countless orders in the forms accepted by every original.

Allah does not manifest twice in the same way to a single person, nor does it appear to two person in a single way. From this we understand that the induction does not express information. For this reason, neither the case nor the authorities, nor the range, nor the manifestations relies on induction.

## What is Nature?

Philosophers accept nature as a substance. They sometimes believe that it is equivalent to God. They reason to determine its essential qualities.

But this understanding contradicts Sufism. Because according to Sufism, nature is not a material being created. The nature is inherently an existing being in mind, not outside. On the other hand, God is inherently present both externally and in mind.

While the nature accepts, God gives and affects nature. In this respect nature is the great and exalted mother of the world. The world can see its works but it cannot see itself.

Universal nature is the first thing that arises from the universal self through the mating of the first mind with the universal self. The purpose of this is that Allah Almighty wants the emergence of the world.

The world is proof to Allah. Allah says *"Do they not look? and Allah counts the creatures one by one so that we can provide proof to Allah."*

The Qur'an says for those who think that we exist because of reasons, not on occasion:

*"Don't even attribute a partner to Allah. Allah first created the reasons, then created you through them."*

Whoever knows that the metamorphosis in existence is the provisions of the abilities of the substances, knows also that it is the Lord who reveals them.

Anyone who cannot comprehend the unity in the multitude counts these qualities as relationships and relativity in different directions, which is the method of the rationalists. From the perspective of absolute unity, it is impossible for the mind to think that the existence of the realm can occur.

Allah manifests in nature to anyone who believes that it is nature that created him. To anyone who believes that God is in any way, manifests Allah in the way that he believes, and without any increase the authorities take place.

## **Result**

The philosophy of Rationalism has put the reason at the center of everything, claiming that the real knowledge will be obtained through intelligence. Since 2,500 years, this philosophy has been studied by philosophers, but a complete and coherent theory has not been established. This is because they do not admit that reason is limited. With the help of philosophy, every philosopher wants to cover the absolute and eternal truths about the universe. However, it is doubtful that the methods they use will lead them to this goal. Because they are based on the idea that reason is enough to understand and explain everything. But this thought has not been realized until today.

The reason of this is simple. The information obtained in the visible realm does not give all of the absolute information. The hidden information is needed for the knowledge of absolute truths. This is only partially possible with the secret sciences. One reason for the disorder in the thinking of rationalists is that the created ones judge God who created them. But rational thought can never comprehend the essence of Allah. Rationalists cannot reach the real knowledge of the self attribute of every being in the realm through reason. Continuity of souls and substances after dead can not be known through the mind.

Because the necessity of the existence and absence of the possible things is not based on rational evidence. If this were the case, his possible truth would have been altered. When the rationalists could not see the qualities they had limited, they denied God and fell into blasphemy.

Muslims should try to understand the intellectualism under this view. Otherwise, they will fall in the wrong faith. This is the case of deprivation. However, it is the duty of the Muslim to understand and use aspects of the intellectual sciences that apply to the world. The data of science and mathematics have extremely important applications in world life. It is necessary to benefit from these. However, the above warnings must be observed.

We wish that Allah Almighty protects all Muslims from the false understanding of intellectualism.

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