



The Knowledge in Sufism

Publishing Date: 16.03.2016

Today, the concept of knowledge is one of the most important issues in the philosophy of science. It is called the “epistemology” (information science). The issues such as what knowledge is and how it occurs have occupied humans for thousands of years. In the present article we will discuss the concept of knowledge only in terms of Islamic Sufism.

The original meaning of knowledge is that one knows something about something. The concept of knowledge is defined in various ways and the discussion about his definition has continued all the time.

The famous Islamic Scholar Fahreddin Razi said that the knowledge can only be defined with itself and be known. Because the other things outside of the knowledge could be known only with the knowledge. Therefore, saying that knowledge could be defined with the others and be known, becomes a vicious circle. So according to this idea is impossible to define knowledge precisely. Maturidite, the famous Islamic Scholar, has asserted that the knowledge is an attribute which provides to its owner becoming of everything clear. This approach has been supported by the others scholars, as Nesefî, Taftazânî.

The knowledge understanding of Mutazila was rejected by both Maturidite and Ashari. Because Mutazila have thought information as a belief and have not seen any difference between information and belief.

There are two elements of knowledge which are separated from each other. One of them is knowing (the subject) and the other is known (the object). Each entity may not be object of information. There are also areas outside of the visible worldwide. These areas can not be perceived with the senses and they go beyond the senses. Therefore, they can not be objects of any positive information. However, it can be grasped by the mind. God belongs also to this area. Therefore we know

that He is beyond our knowing power. Thus, God is not the subject of knowledge, He is the subject of faith.

According to Maturidite, in order to reach an idea and information about the unseen realm, that is God, angels, afterlife, the grave life etc. should be applied to messages and mind. According to him the unseen realm is also an issue of faith. Therefore the information obtained through the mind has the character of faith. However, it is not any information which comes after faith, but rather forms the basis of a conscious faith which is far away from the imitating.

We can know only the outer face and appearance of the objects with senses and mind. Our knowledge is unable to penetrate the hidden meaning (wisdom) and the fact behind of the objects . We can only know by naming the observed things and expressing the concepts. We can only point out things taken from the senses. Therefore the senses allow the materials on which the mind thinks and processes. But it is possible to enter into the unseen realm only by the revelation, inspiration and discovery information. This is subject of information in Sufism.

Information Resources

There are three types of information resources in Sufism. They are senses, messages and mind. Messages are divided into two parts. The first is the information of revelation and the other is the message of Prophet. The information of the revelation is the holy book sent by God. The message of Prophet are the information that gives us the Prophet.

The mind makes possible the senses and messages as the reliable source of information. This concept is used as the seeing of mind. Because it is not important that people have mind, but rather it is

important that people use the mind. Quran directs people into consideration and contemplation. Quran informs on the people by preaching the use of such intellectual activity, through that they can reach the truth.

Types of Information

The information is divided into two parts. They are the eternal information and subsequent information. The eternal information is the knowledge of God. It is not anyway acquired and is not based on a reason. Only the creatures know through a reason and their information would be linked to a cause.

The subsequent information is occurred later. It is typically used for the information other than divine knowledge.

Knowledge in Sufism

Sufis do not deny that the knowledge could be occurred through senses and mental. But they agree that the true, reliable and complete information would be occurred only through revelation, inspiration and discovery. In their language this information called “Ma’refat” does not accept any doubt and has the sense that had occurred inside. The discovery is the cognition of the truth without any intermediary and the knowledge of the objects as they appear. Sufis call them as the divine knowledge, the information of the secret, the information of the unseen and the knowledge of the prophets and the wise men.

Thought does not always give the definite accurate information. The accurate information is however the knowledge thrown into the heart of the wise man. In other words it is a divine light that has been given

by God to His beloved servants as angels, prophets, wise men and believers.

According to Sufis, the knowledge, the knowing and the known are three things but have the same authority. The normal observer agrees that they are three things. But the people who see the unseen, see them as unity. The knowledge of Sufis are to get something or condition by heart in the form of its self. The knowledge is a quality that makes it mandatory to obtain a thing by heart. The heart is that knows and the known is that is obtained. It is extremely difficult to imagine the truth. According to Sufis three sources of information are discovery, sharia and mind. Senses are paths that lead to knowledge. The goal is to know something, but the realization of knowledge is not the aim.

The knowledge can provide the happiness being closed to God for the creature only by faith. However, the knowledge has an absolute superiority but its order is not known. Therefore, knowledge is superior to love.

The superior of the knowledge in terms of order is to know God. The most sublime way to know God is to know the manifestations. Under this there is the theoretical information. But under the theoretical information are the belief of people in general. They could not be considered as real knowledge. The information of manifestation is the most superior way to obtain the secret science.

What belongs to the Prophet are the proximity of fulfilling of obligatory worships, loving of God, His servants and things that lead to this love. What belongs to Khidr (one of the wise men) are the proximity of fulfilling of supererogatory worships, love of the servant and the information obtained by this love. This knowledge is about God. Therefore if one wants to get the knowledge of God he should increase the supererogatory worships besides the obligatory

worships. So he can know God with the highest consciousness and goes to afterlife with this consciousness and knowledge obtained.

All prophetic information are the revealed knowledge. Because prophecy is not acquired. The basis of knowledge of God's people consists of four things. They are to know God, to know the nafs (self), to know the world and to know the devil. Everything which has existence, should be based on divine truths. Therefore all information are inherent in the divine knowledge and all sciences are obtained from the divine knowledge. All sciences are limited to the four orders. Every order has also suborders. The four orders are scientific logic, mathematics, natural science and divine science.

The property of the human mind in accepting information is superior to the power of the thought. If one gets his information about God from the theoretical thinking, the devil would not submit to him. The devil gives him questionable evidence. If one gets his information about God through the manifestation, he is protected from any suspicion.

The real knowledge lead you to God and truth. If one needs estimation, a measure of the identification and a sharp vision, he would be in hazard. Measuring and weighing are considered as information. Estimating means weighted doubt, but the knowledge is essentially. When it is not possible to get the real information, we will decide with strong estimate . The knowing God through Sharia which transferred by a narrated chain is an absolute definite knowledge. If one agrees these narration, the suspicion will not hurt him in spite of the unknown connections. Therefore the knowing God definitely could be realized with Sharia.

Knowledge is an abstract meaning obtained from the forms by the senses in their perceived ability. The knowledge is a conceiving of the knowing and the inherent nature of knowing. The knowledge of God

is His image. God created Adam (ra) in this image. There is no real information outside of the information received from God. God knows and teaches. It does not enter any doubt into the knowledge learned from Him. We are the ones who imitate God. When the information is not received from God, its reality is coincidental. That is the idea that we take as our principle “... *Nothing can be compared with Him...*” (Al-Shura, 42/11). When an information comes to you from God, do not put it under the balance of idea and do not accept any way of reason which will get this information. Otherwise you will be destroyed immediately. Because the divine knowledge could not be put under the balance of idea.

In general the human is unaware of how his knowledge is attached to the known. So it is not possible any realization of partnership with God in knowing the known. In every aspect of the known is there an authority of destiny which can be known only by God. If the destiny is known, then its authorities could be known. If the authorities of destiny are known, then the servants would be independent in knowing anything and so remain contented.

There is no any order above the knowledge. The ignorance is death and the knowledge is the life. The knowledge is the greatest gift and the greatest miracle. It is a surround and a divine attribute. It is God's supreme favor. It is from the source of God's mercy. “*and they found one of Our servants to whom We had granted Our mercy and had given a knowledge from Ourselves.*” (Al-Kahf, 18/65).

The knowledge of God is eternal, but the knowledge of the creatures are recently. The information does not lose its truth. It is in every person with its own truth and as itself. It does not have any outer existence. So the knowledge are not existed but could be conceived on its original.

A sheikh can not be regarded as a master scholar, if he transforms his knowledge from the books and narrations, but not from the pleasure and divine manifestation. In a spiritual observance, the famous Sufi Ibn Arabi asked, "What is that knowledge?", he received the following answer, "It is a science which attaches to the known and the knowledge. All knowledge can not be known on their own, but with the attaching of this science.". According to this observance the knowledge can be known by spread of an information. In this way they become known by means of this spread. This is the data of the discovery. This discovery is not the discovery of forms, but it is the discovery of meanings.

Discovery information is the epitome of the divine friendship. God undertakes the business of His servants with the knowledge and bestow them the knowledge. So the servants learn through knowledge that He is not knowable. The mind can not perceive Him through their own ideas. God can not be contained in information. The information contained in the realm of human nature can only know the existence of God and the dependence of the creatures. The information of every particular in nature about God is a particular information. But it is not same for human. His knowledge of God cover the information of the whole realm about God.

The hearts live through knowledge and all objects come to life with spirit. Therefore information is called as spirit. There is only information which is given by God to His servants as helping messages. One thing can be known in its all aspects only by God, who embraces all things through the knowledge, the known may be finite or infinite, fixed or variable.

The first entity that accepted the knowledge by learning is the first mind. The first mind received the knowledge from God and understood it. Then God ordered him to write what he learned in the

Lawh-i Mahfuz (the protected tablet). God has created the Lawh-i Mahfuz from Himself and named it as Pen.

The earned information is information that is obtained while endeavor. Whatever is the information, the situation is the same. But the given information is not obtained by mind and any effort. The information of Singles (Efrad) and Khidr (Hızır) are included in this section.

The information of any God's friend can not go outside of the Quran and Sunnah. Therefore the information obtained through discovery or inspiration must be coincide with Sharia. If a scholar suggests some discovery information which are contrast to the Quran and the hadits of Prophet (sav), they are not considered as accurate and current information.

All the interpretations of the verses are not information. They are nothing more than self-warm up activities in order that you do not reject anything that brought prophecy. In this respect many Islamic scholars have refrained from interpretation of the verses. That is the state of the intelligent believer.

Are the manifestations and the discovery knowledge innovations not sanctioned by the Quran or the Sunnah ?

Some people think that the manifestations and the discovery knowledge of Sufis are innovations not sanctioned by the Quran or the Sunnah. They claim that these knowledge contradict them.

It is not true what these people claim. Because Sufism and the discovery knowledge of Sufis are the third and the last beauty of Islam. We have explained them in our articles in our web site. These articles are "[Three Beauty : Faith, Science, Sufism](#)"; "[The Beauty in the Science](#)"; "[What is the Sufism in Islam?](#)".

If these people read these articles, they will see the fact that the secret science has begun with the prophethood. But it was hidden to public in the first Hijri century. Because Muslim community was not ready at the beginning of Islam to understand the facts in Sufism. However the Prophet (sav) has taught the mystical science to his companions who were closed to him. Secrets knowledge have been passed up by Muslims in this way to each other. Therefore the lineages of all Sufi orders are reunited with the Prophet (sav). The real Sufism until today is a continuation of that period. Therefore to say that Sufism and the secret knowledge are innovations and contradict the Quran and Sunnah is absolute false.

Why do these people put forward these objections? There may be two reasons. Either they do not know the essence of Sufism or they try to deviate the Muslims from the true Islam. It is obligatory to Muslims to learn the true Islam. As we explained in our article "[Three Beauty: Faith, Science, Sufism](#)" the Islam is consisted of three stages which are faith, science and Sufism. Secret science is the main part of Sufism. So the Muslims have to learn these all three stages carefully and ought not to be influenced by the false Sufis.

The main aim of our web site is to give the Muslims true information about Science and Sufism. So we recommend the Muslims to follow our web site and to read the articles published here.

Conclusion

It is possible to pass on the concepts of substances, masses in the nature from the concept of information. Because the knowing of the existence of an object is an information. It is also an information to know that the object is a physical thing. The knowing of that a physical thing has a mass is also an information. The fact that a substance has

a mass can be understood only through the knowing that it has a mass. Therefore every property in the nature is understandable with emergency of the knowledge of the property. To be formed of this knowledge it is necessary to exist an information which spreads this substance. This spread is a result of that the Almighty God has the knowledge. The knowledge of God occur through His Name “Al-Knower” (el-Alîm). Therefore any resulting information in the substances occur through the manifestation of the Name “Al-Knower” upon all substances.

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