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**VALUE OF KNOWLEDGE IN SAYYED 'ALI BIN 'USMAN  
AL-HUJWIRI (DATA GANJ BAKHSH)**

*El-Hücvîrî' de Bilginin Değeri*

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## Öz

Felsefe kelim ve tasavvufun epistemik kaynakları ve referansları farklılık gösterse de Tanrı,alem insan,ahlâk ve anlam boyutunda birer araştırma alanları olduklarında şüphe yoktur.Bu makalede tasavvuf felsefesinin Kuşeyri gibi öncü isimlerinden biri olan Hücûvî'nin (ö.1072) bilgi temelli anlayışını ortaya koymaya çalışacağız.Tasavvufun erken dönem teorisyenlerinde bilginin teorik ve pratik yönüne yapılan vurgunun ortaya çıkmasını önemli buluyoruz. V/XI.yüzyılın bu karmaşık ve sorunlu döneminde yazılan en önemli tasavvufi eserlerden biri, Kuşeyri'nin *er-Risale* adlı eseriyle el-Hücûvî'nin *Keşfu'l-Mahcûb* isimli eserleridir. Kuşeyri, Arapça olarak Tasavvufi ilkeleri ve sufilere durumlarını yazmıştı. Hücûvî ise eserini Farsça yazmış mutedil bir çizgide dinle hakikati birbirine bağlamış hakikatsiz bir din anlayışının gösteriş, dinden beslenmeyen hakikatin ise ikiyüzlülük olduğunu açıklamıştı.

Kuşeyri ve Hücûvî, tasavvufi hareketi kendisine bulaştırılan yanlışlıklardan temizlemeye çalıştılar. Onların yaşadığı çağda, tasavvuf imajı bu sözde ve sahte temsilcilerin sunduğu şekliyle kitlelerin tepkisine ve uzaklaşmasına yol açıyordu. Kuşeyri ve Hücûvî'nin eserlerinin giriş bölümlerini okuduğumuzda bu samimi insanların, kendi çağlarında tasavvuf algısının çöküşü karşısında ne kadar üzüntü ve acı duyduklarını ve bu yanlış imajı değiştirmeye ne kadar istekli olduklarını görürüz.

Hücûvî de sürekli bir hakikat arayışı, her alanda serbestçe düşünebilen bir akıl, yargı gücü ve bunu paylaşma tutumu ön plana çıkmaktaydı. Hücûvî, İbn Rüşd'ten önce, Kur'an'da ki düşünceyi teşvik eden ayetleri dile getirir. Allah'ın fiillerini ve hikmetini düşünmenin insanı zihinsel bir yetkinliğe ulaştıracağını belirtir. Hücûvî'nin sisteminde akıl işlevsel akıldır. Kur'an'daki "görmediler mi, bakmazlar mı" vurgularıyla yer alan ayetlerin Allah'n fiillerine bakmanın bunlar üzerinde düşünmenin önemini vurguladığını öne çıkarır. Hücûvî, felsefe tarihinin problemlerine değinir. Bilgiden şüphe eden ve onun elde edilemeyeceğini söyleyen sofistlere eleştiriler getirir. Hücûvî, ilmi amelden üstün tutanlar ile ameli ilimden üstün gören iki anlayışı da doğru bulmaz. Ona göre, bilgisiz davranış, davranış değildir. Bir davranış davranış kılan bilgi kaynaklı oluşudur. Davranışa yansımayan bir bilgi de bilgi değildir. Hücûvî, Farabi'nin gerçek filozof ve sahte filozofu ayrımı gibi, gerçek sufiyi sahte filozoflardan ayırmak için gerçek sufiyi özgür insanla özdeşleştirir.

*Anahtar kelimler: Epistemoloji, Felsefe ve tasavvuf, Bilginin Değeri, Hücûvî*

## Abstract:

The purpose of this article is to examine the relationship between philosophy and sufism. In the history of Philosophy there are many schools formed by different understanding of knowledge. Reason, experience and intuition being different aspects of knowledge constitute Rationalism, Experientialism and Intuitionism. Sufi may be considered a representative of intuitionist side. According to this approach solemn measure of our actions guided by intuition. This kind of knowledge has a transcendental feature. It is gifted not acquired. But if we go early formative period of school of sufism we see also priority of reason and value of rational knowledge.

As a case study we will shed light on al-Hujwiri (Data Ganj Bakhsh) In his system. Hujwiri, establishing a moderate link between the Revealed Law (sharia) and the Truth (haqiqa), and arguing that the Revealed Law without the Truth is a sanctimony while the Truth without the Revealed Law is hypocrisy. He tried to reconcile circumstances with truth and fight against fake and pseudo Sufis. He derived his strength in this struggle from his allegiance to the decisive informational authority of the Qur'an and the Sunna. Hujwiri had underlines, before Ibn Rushd, the Qur'anic verses that encourage thinking and reasoning. Contemplating about God's acts and wise purposes behind them gives an intellectual competence to a person. It makes reason operational.

Hujwiri also competently addresses philosophical problems. He criticizes the sophists who doubt that knowledge can be obtained.

*Key Words: Epistemology, Philosophy and sufism, Value of knowledge, al-Hujwiri*

## Introduction

Mysticism within Islam has a proper name, Tasawwuf. It's a matter of debate as to where this term came from. Some claim that it comes from Suf which means cloth, others are inclined to believe it is from "saf" which means order. Another group holds the view that it was from "Sophia" a rare group of people thought it was from "Safa" which means purification, or to cleanse the soul<sup>1</sup>. When reconsidering all of these explanations, we would like to emphasize that, *Sufism is a process of self actualizing, a turning and listening to oneself to sustain spiritual necessity, to emancipate the soul from the effects of the body.* Sufism, mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek to find the truth of divine love and knowledge through direct personal experience of God. It consists of a variety of mystical paths that are designed to ascertain the nature of humanity and of God and to facilitate the experience of the presence of divine love and wisdom in the world.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Saruhan, Müfit Selim, "A Comparison of The Usage of Metaphor in the Islamic Philosophers and Mystics", *Tasavvuf İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi*, 1 / 3, 100-127, Ankara Nisan,2000.

<sup>2</sup> Ayni, Mehmet Ali, *Tasavvuf Tarihi*, İstanbul 1992, pp. 22; İz, Mahir, *Tasavvuf, Mahiyeti, Büyüklüğü ve Tarikatlar*, İstanbul 1990, pp 75-79; Ateş Süleyman, *İslam Tasavvufu*,

*Philosophy* is one of the ways that intends to solve and develop answers for our life. Philosophy gives us chance to see different kinds of views. Philosophy supplies us with many possible thoughts and comments.

One may follow the way of religion which he or she found himself born already. Religion itself also contains questions and answers. Everybody might claim his own righteousness. Religion exhibits views concerning understanding of the world. It is because of this possible questions that religion finds many adherents.

Besides philosophers and religious man there is another group of people who only enter the laboratory explore the real things and do experiments. They are only interested in the question of “how” instead of “why”. The latter might have lead someone to some kind of metaphysics or a transcendental stage. Because of this fact this group refrain themselves from the question of “why”.

In the search of reality there are also a group of people who claim that one can attain eternal truth and knowledge by referring himself in this journey the question of “what can I know for myself. In this journey silence is a lightly and divinely route which educates every seeker of the truth. Listening to the voice of silence opens secret door. The more one listens to himself the more he begins to learn. In this kind of search for the truth, voice of self is the unique master of an eager disciple of secrets<sup>3</sup>. In generally mysticism is a looking to inner side of ourselves. Away from pressure of the external world, it is an attempt to hear a whisper of the real face of the things. It seems that mysticism is a way of apprehension of the meaning of life. In this spiritual intensely and process of perfection there are many paths should be passed by one. On the other hand religion, being in itself accept-

İstanbul, 2004, pp5-16; Öztürk, Yaşar Nuri, *The Eye of The Hearth*, Redhouse Press, İstanbul, 1988, pp2-15; Gökteş, Vahid, *Hicri IV. Asırda Buhara'da Tasavvuf, Kelâbâzi Örneği*, İstanbul 2008, pp.2.10; Haksever, A.C., *Tasavvufa Dair Güncel Meseleler*, Ankara 2015, pp.5-20; Akot, Bülent, *Tasavvufun 100'ü*, Otto yayınları, Ankara 2017, s. 5,15, 20,45.

<sup>3</sup> Nurbakhsh, *Sufism*, New York 1982, p. 65; Edward, Hall, *The Silent Language*, Eving Katherine, *Arguing Sainhood Modernity Psychoanalysis and Islam*, 1998; el-Kuşeyri, *er-Risâle*, 2/250-252; Nicholson, Reynold A., *Fî't-Tasavvufi'l-İslâmî*, (Hz. Azizi), Kahire 1956, p. 3-.35; Saruhan, Müfit Selim “Sufi and Religious Man in Islamic Thought”, Osh State University Press 2002.

ing this kind of thirst for the truth recommends and demands from its member to participate in the community.

Philosophy within the Islamic tradition includes “all intellectual schools within Islamic culture which have tried to attain knowledge of the reality of all things and ultimately the knowledge of the Origin, through the power of the intellect.” Also “philosophy includes both discursive (*bahthi*) philosophy and intuitive (*dhawqi*) philosophy and synonymous in meaning with theosophy (*hikmah*).” Thus, there is no distinction between philosophy (*falsafah*) and wisdom (*hikmah*).

<sup>4</sup> Issues centered around each school’s methods of acquiring knowledge (*‘ilm*) and discussions about the reliability of each method attaining to the truth. The interchange of ideas between Sufism and philosophy was augmented by their interplay with a third intellectual discipline, that of scholastic theology (*Kalam*). The theologians invalidated both the Sufis’ and philosophers’ claim to have discovered the truth of things. The divergence in perspective between the theologians and the philosophers and Sufis boils down to the same question and that is the method of acquiring knowledge and of attaining to the truth<sup>5</sup>

In the history of Philosophy there are many schools formed by different understanding of knowledge. Reason, experience and intuition being different aspects of knowledge constitute Rationalism, Experimentalism and Intuitionism.<sup>6</sup>

Sufi may be considered a representative of intuitionist side. According to this approach solemn measure of our actions guided by intuition. This kind of knowledge has a transcendental feature. It is gifted not acquired. Sufi accords his actions according to the orders of his hearts. Heart is the source of this intuitional communication. Knowl-

<sup>4</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, “The Relation between Sufism and Philosophy in Persian Culture,” trans. Hamid Dabashi, *Harndard Islamicus*, Vol.6, no.4 (1983), p.33; William Chittick, “Mysticism versus Philosophy in earlier Islamic History: The Al-Tusi, Al-Qunawi Correspondence”, *Religious Studies*, Vol. 17 (1981), p.87.;Moris Megavati, “Sufism and philosophy: the historical interaction between two neighbours “ <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct95/2.htm>; Bozkurt, Birgül, “Endülüsli Filozof-Sufi İbn Seb’in’e Göre Hakikati Arayanlar”, *İstem Dergisi*, sy.14, Konya, 2009, pp.283-309; Bozyiğit, Ahmet, *İbn Meserri ve Felsefesi*, pp. 128, Ankara 2017.

<sup>5</sup> William Chittick, “Mysticism versus Philosophy in earlier Islamic History: The Al-Tusi, Al-Qunawi Correspondence”, pp.88.

<sup>6</sup> Wallace Matson, *A New History of Philosophy, Ancient&Medieval*, N.Y 1987, pp.12-26.

edge comes from “Heavenly Preserved Table” (Levh-i Mahfuz) to reflection of heart sometimes like a flash of lighting and sometimes successively<sup>7</sup>.

In the case of Al-Ghazali we must emphasize that Al-Ghazali’s criticism of the philosophers is not a criticism of rationality, for he himself uses the rational method in the criticism. The following paragraph quoted from his “Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal” (The Deliverance From Error), which in a sense offers a systematic example of man’s search for meaning, satisfactorily shows that Al -Ghazali is quite a rationalist with his own system.

*“In order to be safe from error, knowledge should be so strong that even when someone claims that this knowledge is false and exhibits miraculous actions such as turning a stone into gold or creating a dragon from a stick in order to support his case, this cannot cause the owner of this knowledge to abandon it. If I know that ten is greater than three, then even if someone says, “No, you are wrong as three is greater than ten, and I will turn this stick into a dragon so that you believe me,” and does what he says, and even if I see it, this does not create any doubt in my knowledge. Yet I wonder how that man does that trick. I will not entertain any suspicion about what I know. Thus, I realized that the knowledge which I don’t know in this manner with certainty is not reliable. The knowledge that is not free from error does not represent the certain knowledge (yaqin).”<sup>8</sup>*

Al -Ghazali likens the relation between reason and revelation (*wahy*) to the one between the eye and the sun. For him, a person who is content with the light of the revelation, but turns away from reason is like the one who closed his eyes against the sunlight. Al Ghazali scorns imitation (*taqlid*) as a form of blindness. He advises seekers of truth that they should not be content with imitation, but attain the level of proof-based (*burhani*) knowledge. The titles and contents of the two books written by him represent a colossal heritage from Al Ghazali. In “Mi’yar al-’Ilm” (Standard Measure of Knowledge) and

<sup>7</sup> Gazzali, *Ihya*, III, 46; Inati, Shams, *A Study of Ibn Sina’s Mysticism*, London 1996, pp 7-14.

<sup>8</sup> Ghazali, “*Al-Munqidh min al-Dalal*” *The Deliverance From Error*, ed.J.Saliba and K.Ayyad, Beirut 1967, pp.1-5.

“Mizan al-’Amal” (Criterion of Action), he elucidates a balance between knowledge and action.<sup>9</sup>

al-Kindi, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina held that intellect (*al-’aql*) alone without the aid of the other two modes of acquiring knowledge -- revelation (*wahy*) or “unveiling” (*kashf*) was enough for man to understand the realities of things and to attain to the ultimate truth. They believed that the very act of acquiring knowledge requires a kind of illumination by the Active Intellect (*al-’aql al alfa”al*). al-Farabi and Ibn Sina studied and in some cases also practiced Sufism. Ibn Sina, though not a practising Sufi strongly supported Sufism. His “Fi Maqamat al-’ Arifin” (On the Spiritual Stages of the Gnostics) in the book *Isharat wa al-Tanbihat (Directives and Remarks)* is one of the most powerful defences of Sufism ever undertaken by a philosopher and his *Hikmat al-Mashriqiyah (The Oriental Philosophy)* is more inclined towards the Sufi perspective.

The Sufis such as Bayazid, Rumi and Ibn al-’Arabi held that man can attain to the ultimate truth only through personal and direct knowledge resulting from the removal of veils separating man from God. This second kind of knowledge called “unveiling” (*kashf*) or “direct tasting” (*dhawq*) can only come about through spiritual practice and divine self-disclosure. The locus of “unveiling” is the heart (*al-qalb*) as opposed to rational knowledge which relies on the faculty of the mind or reason. This God-given knowledge must be based on the outward support of the Qur’anic revelation. Finally, the theologians such as al-Ash’ari, maintained that truth could only be attained through the Qur’anic revelation and that both. “intellect” and “unveiling” tended to be misleading<sup>10</sup>

Sufi’s claims and so-called gifted knowledges are not justifiable by everybody. It has a subjective knowledge. It can not be acceptable unless it fits with reason. In this context if someone claims that inner

<sup>9</sup> Ghazali, “*Mizan al-’Amal*” (*Criterion of Action*) Kahire 1328; *Mi’yar al-’Ilm*” (*Standard Measure of Knowledge*) Beirut, undated, see for detailed explanation: Saruhan, Müfit Selim, “On The Ethical Rationalism of Al Ghazali”, *Journal of Islamic Research*, Vol.3.No:2 December, pp,51-66; Rotterdam 2010.

<sup>10</sup> Moris Megavati, “Sufism and philosophy: the historical interaction between two neighbours” <http://www.allamaiqbal.com/publications/journals/review/oct95/2.htm>.

voice of his heart orders him to jump from bridge to death we can not accept this and we can not believe that this voice comes from God, because we read from Qur'an suicide and to putting ourselves into danger is not allowed<sup>11</sup>.

Divines orders accords with orders of the nature. Anything is not compatible with reason and logic. It is also against to the spirits of eternal truth. Divine will recommends us love, compassionate, mercy, justice etc<sup>12</sup>. Any action against these values can be rejected from standpoint of view of Islam and any other religion. What we are trying to say in this context is that not every inner voice of ourselves is acceptable.

### Historical Background Before Hujwiri

The Muslim world was rife with chaos, strife and conflicts in political, religious and academic areas during the time of Sayyed 'Ali bin 'Usman al-Hujwiri, also known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (5th century AH/11th century AD). There were endless disputes among the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad and the sultanates which were attached to them only in appearance. The contention among the Islamic sects as well as internal rivalries of Sunni sects was breeding further debates. Disputes between philosophers and jurists (faqih) were so deep-running that it might halt free thought and debate. As reaction to these rivalries, Sufism (tasawwuf) emerged, and enjoyed widespread adoption by large masses. Political crises and intellectual chaos of disorder led to the general public's being divided into camps of diverse religious sects, each group's falling for fanaticism. This in turn gave rise to the spread of despair and pessimism among the people at large, filling their hearts with fears and agonies, and leaving them no place to go other than Sufism. Political strife and religious conflicts paved the way for Sufis to disseminate their principles. The fact that they carefully avoided the conflicts among sects played a great role in urging

<sup>11</sup> "And throw not yourselves with your own hands into ruin" Bakara 2/195.

<sup>12</sup> "verily God enjoineth Justice and the doing of good and gifts to kindered, and the forbiddeth wickedness and wrong and oppression. He warneth you that hoply ye may be mindful." Nahl 16/90.

people, statesmen and sultans to pay respect to Sufis. In this century, great Sufis in the Muslim world in general and Iran in particular. The leading Sufis of the first half of the 5th century AH (12th century AD) include Sulami (d. 1021), Kharakani (d. 1033), Abu Said Abu al-Khair, Abu Qasim Jurjani (d. 1058), and Qushayri (d. 1072). Sufism's rise to popularity also triggered the emergence of fake Sufis as some people joined the ranks of Sufis in order to benefit from their increased prestige. These people would help the spread of bid'ahs (innovation in religion) and superstitious beliefs, and lure people into abandoning Islamic rules.<sup>13</sup>

### Struggle Against Fake Sufis

The most significant Sufi works written in this most chaotic and problematic atmosphere of the 5th century of the Hegira include *Ar-Risalah* (Treatise) by Qushayri, and *Kashf al-Makhjoob* by Hujwiri. Qushayri wrote his works in Arabic, in which he described the principles of Sufism and the states of Sufis. Hujwiri, on the other hand, wrote in Persian, establishing a moderate link between the Revealed Law (sharia) and the Truth (haqiqa), and arguing that the Revealed Law without the Truth is a sanctimony while the Truth without the Revealed Law is hypocrisy. Both Qushayri and Hujwiri tried to revert the Sufi movement back to its original state by cleaning it from the wrong or distorted practices. In their times, Sufism, as practiced by so-called or false Sufis, would induce reactions in masses, eventually driving them out of true form of Sufism. The general public had started to see Sufism as a form of deviation from the Qur'an and Hadith.<sup>14</sup>

As one read the introductions to Qushayri's and Hujwiri's works, one can easily see how these authors sincerely feel sorrow and anguish in the face of the collapse of Sufism in their age and how they eagerly tried to eliminate the misconceptions about Sufism.

<sup>13</sup> Introductory Chapter of Turkish Translation by, Uludağ, Süleyman, *Keşfu'l Mahcub, Hakikat Bilgisi*, November, İstanbul 1982, pp.1-45

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. pp.12-43; Aşkar Mustafa, "Keşfu'l Mahcub", *Tasavvuf Klasikleri*, edited by Ethem Cebecioglu, İstanbul 2010, pp.125.

Kashf al-Mahjub is the first comprehensive book in Persian language on Tasawwuf. It was written at a time when Arabic was still the dominant language for expressing Islamic religious thought. Prior to Shaykh, masters such as Abu Nasr al-Sarraj and Abu Talib al-Makki had written famous Arabic treatises discussing Sufi thought and practice in terms of the standard religious sciences. Prince Muhammad Dara Shikoh (d.1069 A.H.) speaks of this book as follows:

*“Of the books on Sufism in the Persian language there is none so well composed as the Kashf al-Mahjub.” This treatise was a model for great Sufi biographer Fariduddin ‘Attar when he wrote his Tadhkirat al-Auliya.* Carl W. Ernst has expressed his views about this book as follows:

*“Kashf al-Mahjub is not simply a literary production, however, for it is an exposition of practical Sufism summarizing a wide tradition of centuries of reflections; the author wrote it at the request of a fellow-Sufi from his hometown of Hujwir. Kashf al-Mahjub is still one of the best descriptions of the Sufi path. It has been said that those who seek a guide in Sufism should do three things: pray for guidance, visit the tombs of great Shaykhs, and read Kashfal-Mahjub”.*<sup>15</sup>

Thus, Hujwiri attempted to ground true Sufism on the Qur’an and Hadith from the theoretical and practical perspective. He tried to reconcile circumstances with truth and fight against fake and pseudo Sufis. He derived his strength in this struggle from his allegiance to the decisive informational authority of the Qur’an and the Sunna. Qushayri’s and Hujwiri’s concerns and determination later inspired Ghazali, who managed to take to the completion the process of integrating Sufism with the essence of Islam.<sup>16</sup>

One of the characteristics of Sufism in this period was the increased influence of Sufism on the Persian poetry. We see that Hujwiri had a broad religious knowledge and was proficient in Arabic and Persian.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Sultan Shah, “A Study of the English Translations of *Kashf al-Mahjub*” From the *Kashf al-mahjub* (The Uncovering of the veiled) by ‘Ali ibn ‘Uthman al-Jullabi al-Hujwiri, known as Data Ganj Bakhsh in the Indo-Pakistan region. Translated by Reynold Nicholson. New Edition, London: Luzac, 1967, pp. 267–277.; al-Hujwiri, *The Kashful Mahjub*, Translation by Maulana Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani (Lahore: al-Faisal, 2001) pp. xiv-xv

<sup>16</sup> Turkish Translation by, Uludağ, Süleyman, *Kesfu’l Mahcub, Hakikat Bilgisi*, November, İstanbul, 1982, pp.87-98

Hujwiri referred to 236 verses from the Qur'an in his works. He used these verses not only to correct some of the misunderstanding about them, but also to expound the finer details of meanings and senses they contain and to employ them as a support for principles of Sufism. He mentioned and explained 138 hadiths in his books. He translated many of them into Persian. Hujwiri's books include about 500 quotes from Sufis. In his system of knowledge, external or apparent (zahir) is in harmony with inner or hidden (batin). In the final chapter of *Kashf al-Mahjub*, he not only describes the detailed rules and procedures concerning ablution, prayer, prescribed purifying alms, fasting, pilgrimage and other forms of worship from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), but also explain in a very concise way that their external (zahiri) aspects relate to our organs while their inner (batini) aspects are associated with our hearts.<sup>17</sup>

For instance, concerning the conditions that have to be met with respect to prescribed prayer (salat), he makes the following comments: "One needs to get rid of najasat (impurity or dirt) in appearance and of lust and base desires inside. One must clean his clothing from dirt in outer appearance and obtain it in the religiously permitted and lawful manner in terms of inner life. The qibla (direction) of the external world is Ka'ba while the qibla of the inner world is the Divine Throne ('Arsh), and the qibla of the mystery is observation. Struggling against one's carnal self is like standing erect (qiyam) during the prayer. Continuous remembrance of God (zikr) is like the recitation of the Qur'an during the prayer. The deep reverence to God (khushu') in prayer is not to know who stands next to yourself."<sup>18</sup>

His correct use of Arabic and Persian poems in *Kashf al-Mahjub* implies that he had a good literary education and also a fine literary taste.

Although he was a Sufi, Hujwiri would still make explanations

<sup>17</sup> Nicholson, R.A. (translator), *The Kashf al-Mahjub* (Lahore: Islamic Book Foundation, 1982), preface, pp.xix-xx; al-Hujwiri, *The Kashful Mahjub*, Translation by Maulana Wahid Bakhsh Rabbani (Lahore: al-Faisal, 2001) pp. xiv-xv Turkish Translation by, Uludağ, Süleyman, *Keşfu'l Mahcub, Hakikat Bilgisi*, November, 1982, pp.87-89

<sup>18</sup> Turkish Translation by Süleyman Uludağ, *Keşfu'l Mahcub, Hakikat Bilgisi*, November, İstanbul 1982, pp.87-98.

based on reason and logic, which is largely attributable to the fact that he was follower of the Iraqi school of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh). Hujwiri may be likened to Kalabazi, a Hanafi jurist (faqih) who wrote *Al-Ta'arruf li-Madhhab Ahl Al-Sufi* (A Description of the Way of the People of Sufism). Thus, it can be argued that the Hanafi school of law is open to the Sufi movement. Hanafi scholars who attach importance to reason and analogical reasoning such as Kalabazi and Hujwiri managed to avoid romantic Sufism and could assert their hold on a realistic approach to it.

### Knowledge in Islamic Thought

For linguists, *ilm* and *irfan* are synonymous. Ibn Manzur, the author of *Lisan al-Arab*, a distinguished Arabic dictionary, *arafa* means know someone or something. Tahavani defines *marifah* as absolute perception both conceptually and as judgment. *Marifah* is the perception of the simpler. For this reason, one cannot say, *Araftullah* (I perceived God). But we can say, *Alimtu hu*, (I have knowledge about Him). *Ilm* means grasping or truly comprehending something. This comprehension contains not only knowledge, but also value judgment about that which is comprehended. In Qur'an, *ilm* is one of most frequent words. It is both used for God, as in "He is All-Knowing," and for man.<sup>19</sup> Sufi is distinguished from other Muslims by the intensity with he seeks to know God.<sup>20</sup>

To demonstrate the value of knowledge, Hujwiri makes the following verse from the Qur'an his point of departure:

*"It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah"* (Sura Fatir, 35/28).

He draws attention to the following hadith: *"It is obligatory for all men and women to seek knowledge."*

For Hujwiri, human life is short, but sciences are too numerous to

<sup>19</sup> For etymological discussions on *ilm*, see Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab*, entry on A.L.M, Vol. 12, p. 417; Zabidi, *Taj al-Arus*, entry on A.L.M, Vol. 8, p. 405; Al-Mu'jam al-Wasit, Egypt 1961, Vol. II, p. 630; Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol. III, p. 568.

<sup>20</sup> Saruhan, Müfit Selim, "The Matter of Epistemology of Ethics in Islamic Theology", *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol.53, No.3. (Pages 269 - 278), London 2009.

learn. Thus, ordinary people do not need to learn all sciences. Most sciences facilitate and organize religious life (such as astrology, astronomy, medicine, mathematics, and fine arts). Astronomy helps determine or calculate the times of worship. Medicine facilitates diet while mathematics simplifies inheritance transactions. For Hujwiri, *practical value of knowledge stems from its ability to regulate or organize religious life.*

Man is supposed to deal with the sciences which are beneficial to humankind. In this context, Hujwiri quotes the following verse to justify this argument: “And they learn that which harms them and profits them not” (Sura al-Baqarah, 2/102) (*ve yeteallamune ma yedurruhum vela yenfaahum*) He then refers to the Prophet’s hadith: “I seek refuge in You from useless knowledge.”

Hujwiri stresses the importance he attaches to knowledge, saying, “It should be noted that it is possible to perform a lot of work even with a small bit of knowledge. Knowledge must accompany one’s deeds.” To back his case, Hujwiri quotes a metaphoric hadith of the Prophet. Thus, a person who worships without being knowledgeable about fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) is like a donkey driving a mill or wheel. These people cannot make any progress even if they make too many revolutions.

Hujwiri does not approve either considering knowledge as superior to deeds or treating deeds as preferable over knowledge. For him, an act done unknowingly cannot be considered as an act proper. Thus, the value of an act stems from its reliance on knowledge. Likewise, knowledge that is not translated into action cannot be considered as proper knowledge.

He first classifies knowledge into two as divine knowledge and human knowledge. Divine knowledge are the attributes of God. It is with Him. His attributes are limitless while human knowledge is limited.

Knowledge (*al-ilm*) is an esteemed attribute. To know is to enclose and explain what is known. Knowledge is an attribute that makes a living being wise and learned.

With His knowledge, God encloses existence and lack of it. His knowledge is indivisible. The order in His acts is proof of His knowledge.

For Hujwiri, human knowledge should be suitable for knowing God. The science of the Truth (haqiqa) and Sufism has three principles which are important for human beings:

- to know God and His unity;
- to know God's attributes and what these attributes imply; and
- to understand God's acts and wise purposes behind these acts.

Hujwiri had an intelligence that would always seek the truth, a mind that was searching for the facts, a reason that was capable of free thought in every field, a reasoning that could arrive at sound and accurate results, and a scholarly maturity and courage that would allow him to freely express his ideas and feelings.

Hujwiri had underlines, like Ibn Rushd, the Qur'anic verses that encourage thinking and reasoning. Contemplating about God's acts and wise purposes behind them gives an intellectual competence to a person. It makes reason operational. He points out that the verses which urge human beings to "reason, think, see, or consider" emphasize the importance of observing and contemplating about divine acts.

Hujwiri also competently addresses philosophical problems. He criticizes the sophists who doubt that knowledge can be obtained. His response to the sophists is as follows:

*"Is the knowledge that 'any knowledge about anything is not true' true? If they say, 'yes,' then they accept the existence of knowledge. If they say, 'no,' then it is impossible to oppose or deny what is not true or right. One cannot reasonably argue with such a person."*

There is his concern for knowledge at the heart of Hujwiri's description of false Sufis who go to extremes and say:

*"We do not have true and real knowledge about anything. Therefore, it is a better course of action for us to abandon or deny knowledge than to accept the existence of knowledge."*

For Hujwiri, this approach is proof of folly, perversity and ignorance. Knowledge cannot contradict with knowledge. It is not reasonable to abandon or deny knowledge based on another knowledge. This is the result of ignorance. He says that it is out of ignorance to

abandon or deny knowledge and an ignorant person is like a disbeliever in terms of its deserving censure or rebuke.

Hujwiri depicts a true Sufi as free in order to distinguish him from false philosophers.

Relying on Abu Ma'shar al-Balkhi's categorization, Hujwiri asserts that there three types of knowledge:

1) Knowledge from God: Sharia. It consists of divine commandments and injunctions.

2) Knowledge with God: All saints know God with this knowledge. If He does not introduce or depict himself, saints will not be able to know God.

2) Knowledge of God: it is the knowledge about the stations on the way to God and degrees of saints. One cannot acquire ma'rifa (gnosis) without accepting the Sharia. Quoting Sakafi, who said, "*Knowledge is life for the heart against ignorance, and light for the eye against darkness,*"

Hujwiri makes the following explanation:

*"Life of the heart is knowledge. The light for the eye of certain knowledge (yaqin) against darkness is knowledge as well. The heart of anyone who does have any knowledge about ma'rifa is dead with ignorance. The heart of anyone who does not have any knowledge about the Sharia is sick with ignorance. Hearts of disbelievers are dead."*<sup>21</sup>

Borrowing from Yahya ibn Mu'ath, Hujwiri cautions people about heedless scholars, sycophant scholars, and ignorant Sufis.

Hujwiri indicates the value of knowledge with the following concise passage: "Knowledge is an attribute with which all sorts of ignorance are eliminated. Anyone who does not learn science and insists on ignorance will become a polytheist. No one should be distracted from learning science. This demand should be perfectly stated and sought. You need to learn a lot in order to realize you know so little."

In this way, a Sufi has seeks access to the path of God. A true Sufi follows a method. On the other hand, a false Sufi commands unnecessary things.

<sup>21</sup> Turkish Translation by Süleyman Uludağ, *Keşfu'l Mahcub, Hakikat Bilgisi*, November, İstanbul 1982, pp.87-98.

In this regard, he says:

“If those who object to Sufism argue that the words Sufi or Sufism (tasawwuf) are not referred to in the Qur’an, there is nothing strange about this. This is true. However, if they deny the spirit or morality of Sufism, then this means denial of the religion introduced by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and his good morals.”

Hujwiri resorts to a remarkable simile in explicating his views about fana’ (mortality or transience) and baqa (permanence or subsistence) in a way to eliminate all misconceptions:

*“When a chunk of iron is placed into fire, the fire will destroy iron’s quality of coldness and blackness, giving it its qualities of warmth and redness. Looking at the furnace, one cannot distinguish between fire and iron. But the essences of the fire and the iron do not change. The fire is the same old fire and the iron is the same old iron. Likewise, when love for God invades a human being, it will destroy his qualities, giving him its own qualities. In this sense, as iron becomes feverish and flaming, man becomes divine and transcendental. This is the core of fana’ and baqa in Sufism.”<sup>22</sup>*

As a conclusion I want to emphasize that within mystical Islam (Tasawwuf), it is seen that knowledge is a key factor in the purification of the soul. It becomes clear throughout the study that knowledge cleanses people from ignorance and wrong behavior. It is observed that the human soul matures through knowledge which is then acted upon.

*Of course the Sufis never tire of emphasizing that the end of Sufism is not to possess such and such a virtue or state as such but to reach God beyond all states and virtues. But to reach the Transcendent beyond the virtues, man must first possess the virtues; to reach the station of annihilation and subsistence in God, man must have already passed through the other stages and stations. (Nasr, Living Sufism, p.58).*

*The Sufi who sets out to seek God calls himself a ‘traveller’ (salik), he advances by slow ‘stages’ (maqamat) along a path (tariqat) to the goal of union with Reality (fana fi’l-Haqq)... The Sufi’s ‘path’ is not finished until he has traversed all the ‘stages’, making himself perfect in every one of them*

<sup>22</sup> ibid

before advancing to the next, and has also experienced whatever 'states' it pleases God to bestow upon him. (Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p.28, 29).

The early mystics of Islam, however, devoted themselves primarily to the first of the three stages, that is, Purgation. To the mystics, *at-tariq* (the Pathway) was a method of self-purification acquired through the cleansing of the senses and through bodily discipline. Gradually the Sufis began to develop the second stage, the is, Illumination. Al-M uhasibi (A.D. 781-857), who pioneered with his disciples in the pathways of Purgation, was one of the first to declare that as purification brings freedom from the attachments of this world the Sufi might expect to arrive at the stage of Illumination and thence proceed to the unitive life in God<sup>23</sup>.

The whole of Sufism rests on the belief that when the individual self is lost, the Universal Self is found, or, in religious language, that ecstasy affords the only means by which the soul can directly communicate and become united with God.<sup>24</sup>

Sufism's engagement with scholastic theology and the development of theological doctrines that are distinctive to particular traditions within Sufism. In respect to the former, attention is paid to how Sufi texts addressed, explicitly and implicitly, major questions such as the nature of God, the soul, cosmology, theodicy, prophecy, soteriology, and eschatology.

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<sup>23</sup> Jurji, "Illumination - A Sufi Doctrine", *The Muslim World*, Vol.27, p.129).

<sup>24</sup> Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, p.59.

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