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<u>Home</u> > <u>Shared Religious Foundations of Education: Islam & Christianity</u> > <u>Epistemology</u> > Obstacles of Knowledge and Cognition

Epistemology

Epistemology is taken from the Greek word episteme, which means knowledge and science. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge; the branch of philosophy that inquiries into the nature and possibility of knowledge.

It deals also with the scope and limits of human knowledge, and with how it is acquired and passed. It also investigates related notions, such as perception, memory, proof, evidence, belief and certainty (Mounter, 2005).

Thus it can be said the central question includes the origin of knowledge, and the place of experience in generating knowledge, and the place of reason in doing so; the relationship between knowledge and impossibility of error; the possibility of universal skepticism, and the changing forms of knowledge that arise from conceptualizations of the world (Blackburn, 2005).

It is said in Christianity that we have been endowed with the ability to gain some reliable knowledge about reality (Peterson, 1986). It is believed in Islam that it is possible for man to know and recognize, i.e. to have knowledge and cognition.

Motahhari (1989) says in this regard that one of the reasons of possibility of man's cognition from the viewpoint of the Qur'an is this fact that it invites the humans to cognition, then it is evident that the Qur'an does not invite men to an impossible thing.

It is also believed in Islam that knowing and cognition is not a material process. Sadr (translated by Marashi Shushtari, undated) says that cognition is neither material nor as a phenomenon penetrated or reflexes into a material (like brain), because it is contrary to the material rules.

Status of Knowledge and Cognition

The following issues are among the reasons why Islam believes that knowledge and cognition are very important:

1. Adam was prostrated by the God's angels when all of the facts of the universe were instructed to him: "And we taught Adam the names, all of them." (Qur'an, 2:31) It meant by the word "names" in the above verse, "the named" i.e. all that the entire name is applied to it, that is the being itself and its truth. That is the reason the word "name" has been interpreted as "the named" in this verse.

It also follows from this verse that the aptitude and potential of knowledge and cognition has been trusted in man's nature and it can be concluded that the humans can take efforts to actualize these potentials. "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name there of" (the Bible, Genesis 2: 19).

"And Adam gave names to all cattle and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found a help meet for him" (Genesis 2: 20). The human being's potential knowledge of God is indicated in Rom. 1: 19 were it is said that what can be known about God is evident to human in general, although the ungodly deny God's existence (Renn, 2005).

2. Knowledge and cognition can be the factors of man's elevation: "God will raise up in rank those of you who believed and have been given knowledge" (58:11), or the Qur'an asks: "are equal those who know and those know not" (39:9). And this means that those who know are better than those who do not know.

The Qur'an believes that although all humans beings are equal, but there are four factors that cause a man to be higher than the others: knowledge (58:11), piety (49:13), faith (58:11) and jihad (holy war) for God's sake (4 95).

It should be noted that if man has really the necessary knowledge, he will surely have the other three factors of elevation, i.e. piety, faith and striving for God's sake, and definitely such properties when mixed and blended with knowledge can save the individual and the society.

The Bible considers wisdom and knowledge higher than strength: "a wise man is mightier than a strong man and man of knowledge than he who has strength" (Prov. 24: 25).

- 3. witness bearing of the knowledgeable has been along with the witness bearing of God, and His angels: "God bears witness that there is no God but He and the angels, and men possessed of knowledge upholding justice" (2:18).
- 4. It is the knowledgeable and scientist that fear God: "even so only those of His servants fear God who have knowledge" (35:23). It can be deducted from this Qur'anic verse that if person does not fear God as it deserves, then we can doubt I his ranks of knowledge and science.

It may be that such a person possess a superficial science, but undoubtedly has not acquired a real and essential knowledge, which can affect his attitude and behavior. It is not inopportune that the Qur'an

says in another verse "he who fears shall remember" (7:10).

Comparison of these two verses show that it is real knowledgeable and scientists that will soon notify and receive the necessary advices. "The eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love" (the Bible, Psalm 33: 18).

However, according to the Bible, as far those who do not fear God: "I have a message from God in my heart concerning the sinfulness of the wicked: there is no fear of God before their eyes" (Psalm 36: 1).

- "Therefore fear God" (Ecclesiastes 5: 7). "Whoever fears God will avoid all (extremes)" (Ecclesiastes 7: 18). However "Because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days not lengthen like a shadow" (Ecclesiastes 8: 13).
- 5. It is only the erudite that understand God's exemplum and will ponder them: "And those similitude's we strike them for the people, but none understand them save those who know" (29:93).
- 6. We should always want God to increase our knowledge continuously: "And say, 'O my Lord, increase me in knowledge'" (20:114). God's prophet was ordered from God to want Him to be increased in knowledge because knowledge and thus submission to God is unlimited, so we should definitely have such a desire.
- 7. "Pen" has become deserving for God's oath in the Holy Qur'an: "by he pen, and what they inscribe" (68:1). God swore by soul of the prophet of Islam (15:72), the sun (91:1), and moon (84:18), stars (53:1, 55:6), etc. and He has also swore by "the pen", and this indicates the magnitude of the Pen.

It is not also surprising that, according to Islamic traditions and narrations, black ink of the religious and pious scientist has been preferred to the martyrs' blood (Imam Ja'far Sadeg) because it due to the knowledge, statements and pens of them that the love to martyrdom is created.

- 8. The first verse revealed to the prophet of Islam, after "In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful", was: "Recite: In the Name of Thy Lord who created" (96:1).
- 9. God admires Himself in the Qur'an with the property of "the most generous" when he taught man that which he did not know "*recite: And thy Lord is the most Generous, who taught by the pen, taught man that he knew not*" (96:4, 45).

It is interesting to be noted that when God "created" man, He admitted Himself with the property of Generous: "*O man! What decided thee as to thy Generous Lord who created thee?*" (82:6). But when "taught" man, He admired Himself with the property of "the most Generous", and this indicates that "teaching" to man is more important than man's creation.

The aim of man's creation has been knowledge and awareness: "It is God who created seven heavens, and of earth their like, between them the Command descending, that you may know that

God is powerful aver everything" (65:12).

It is in the light of such knowledge that man can reach the ultimate goal, or the most ultimate goal of creation, i.e. submission to God, therefore it deserves them man appoints such goals for his life, and does always take steps towards them so that he might not be separated from all that he has been created for, that is he should always be acquiring knowledge, and increasing ranks of his submission to God.

In continuation of this discussion, it can be said that one can achieve a real faith, and have the success of establishing prayer and payment of Zakat (alms) as it deserver (4:162), and becomes certain and aware of Islam and the Qur'an truth (34:6; 22:54) and bear witness to this fact that there is no God but the One God (3:18) in the light of knowledge.

The Glorious Qur'an introduced the deaf and the blind ones who do not contemplate as the worst world creatures (8:22). The Qur'an severely complains of those who dispute about God without any knowledge and guidance (22:8).

Thus it is not for nothing that Noah seeks refuge to God not to want God that which he is unaware of, and Moses seeks refuge to God not to be of the ignorant and unaware ones (2:67).

Considering the verses and Islamic narrations mentioned in "Al Hayat, v.2", it can be deducted in characterization of the magnificence of the knowledge that the erudite and scientists are like the stars in the sky that guides man, intercession of the erudite will be accepted by God, the erudite are as a bright candle among the humans that give them lightness, God likes the seekers of knowledge, the most valuable men are the most knowledgeable ones, jurisprudence and thoughtfulness is the key of insight and completeness of worship and factor of man's elevation towards high stages and ranks in the world and in the Hereafter.

Looking at the erudite face is considered as worship. Visiting the erudite is higher than seventy Kaaba's circumambulation. There is not a faithful to sit down before knowledgeable unless the exalted Lord will tell him-you that sat before my friend, I will place you and that knowledgeable in the Paradise by my glory and honor.

To whomsoever the wisdom is given, an abundant bounty has been given to him. Knowledge and science is like a light that cause man's deliverance and man's exit from darkness. Imam Ali considers the value of knowledge so great that no honor is like it (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Hekmet 113) that is the origin of every goodness (Ghorar-al-Hekam) and is the head of every bounties (Ghorar-al-Hekam), and it is venerable estate (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Hekmet 5), and is the highest the most beautiful treasures (interpretation of lbn-e-Abi-al-Hadid).

No one should be considered great until his episteme and knowledge have been tested (Ghorar-al-Hekam), there is not a movement unless in which man needs knowledge (Tohaf-al-Oqul p. 152), thus

the seeker of such a knowledge is like the one who does Jihad for God's sake (Rauzah-al-Vaezin), therefore those endowed with knowledge will remain as long as the world lives (Rauzal-al-Vaezin), and if there is a distinction and privilege it is for the knowledgebase'.

Thus, the man who esteems such an erudite, in fact he has esteemed his Lord (Ghorar-al-Hekam). Therefore, we see Imam Ali orders us to teach such a knowledge (Imali-al-Sadug), and say that the one who teaches him a word, he has made Ali as his slave. Taba-tabaie (translated by Gerami Qumi, 1999) says that in spite of this fact that Qur'an has invited the people to thinking, rationalization and notification in more than three hundred verses, there is not seen even one verse in the Qur'an in which God has ordered His bondman to believe in the Qur'an or anything else from His presence ignorantly or go away blindly.

Ja'fari (1981) after stating this fact that there are about 730 verses in the Qur'an regarding knowledge and its details, adds that knowledge from the viewpoint of the Qur'an is a light that separates man's rational life from irrational life.

By inspiration from verses and Islamic traditions cited in "Al Hayat, vol. 2", the following characteristics can be mentioned for the knowledgeable and scientists:

- 1. Fear and awe from God (33:39; 35:28; 22:54)
- 2. Knowledge to God (Prophet of Islam: Tohaf-al-Ogul/ 21; Imam Hossain: Tohaf-al-Ogul/ 172; Imam Sadeg: Tohaf-al-Ogul / 269; Al-Khesal / 21; Al- Behar: 2/27).
- 3. Seeking knowledge foe God (the prophet of Islam: Rauzat–al–Vaezin. 11)
- 4. Thinking and seclusion [from bad people] (prophet of Islam: Makaram-al-Akhlag / 543; Tohaf-al-oqul / 22; Imam Ja'far Sadeq: Al-Kafi 1/49; Amali-al-Mofid / 121; Al-Behar: 72/203).
- 5. The effect of knowledge on heart (prophet of Islam: Al-Behar 2/33; Imam Ali: Nahj-al-Balaghah /1127, 909; Tohaf-al-oqul / 160, 377; Imam Ja'far Sadeq: Al-Behar: 2/33).
- 6. Humility and the purification of soul (Imam Ja'far Sadeg: Al-Kafi 1/37, 2/41).
- 7. Piety (Imam Ja'far Sadeg: Al-Behar 2/49)
- 8. Abstinence (Imam Ali: Ghorar-al-Hekam : 305)
- 9. Usefulness (Prophet of Islam: Al-Behar 1/216; Imam Mohammad Baqer: Al-Kafi 1/33; Imam Ja'far Sadeg: Al-Kafi 1/33; Imam Musa Kazem: Al-Kafi: 1/38).
- 10. Distribution of knowledge (Imam Ali: Nahj-al-Balaghah / 1304-1305; Al- Behar 2/23; Imam Musa Kazam: Rejal 455).

- 11. Overcoming carnal desires and preventing hypocrisy (prophet of Islam: Meshkat-al-Anvar / 245; Monyat-al-Morid-al-Hadidi 193, 195; Safinah-al-Behar 2/532; Imam Ali: Al-Kafi: 2/300; Monyat-al-Morid / 193; Makarem-al-Akhlag / 558).
- 12. Loving the poor and paying attention to the weakened (prophet of Islam: Makarem-al-Akhlag / 558; Imam Ja'far Sadeg: Al-Behar 22/327).
- 13. Proficiency and domination to different sciences (prophet of Islam: Rouzah-al-Vaezin / 10; Imam Ali 2/121).
- 14. Referring to the Qur'an (Imam Mohammad Begher: Al-Vasael 4/830). 15. Reminding God when seeing them (Imam Ja'far Sadeq: Al-Kafi 1/39).
- 16. Being the best people after the immaculate Imams (prophet of Islam: Al-Behar: 2/110; Imam Hasan Askari: Al-Behar: 2/32).

Wisdom and knowledge are so important from the viewpoint of the Bible that it says: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judge the earth" (Psalm 1: 10). "And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this of man to be exercised there with" (Ecclesiastes 2: 13).

"I communed with my own heart, saying, Lo! I am come to great estate, and have gotten more wisdom than all they that have been before me in Jerusalem: yea, my heart had great experience of wisdom and knowledge" (Ecclesiastes 2: 16). "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge" (proverbs 12: 1).

"Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing and benefits those who see the sun. Wisdom is a shelter... wisdom preserves the life of its possessors" (Ecclesiastes 7: 11, 12). "Wisdom brightens the face and change its hard appearance" (Ecclesiastes 8: 1). "Wisdom is better than weapons of war" (Ecclesiastes 9: 18).

It should also be noted that having knowledge and wisdom can cause a particular and holy sorrow in the Person, because he knows something and some facts the laymen do not know: "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Ecclesiastes 2: 18).

In the OT, knowledge is experiential and relational. The "man of sorrows" in (Isa.53:3) "is acquainted with" (Heb. "knows") grief, i.e., he has experienced grief when the prophet Hosea announces that there is "no knowledge of God in the Land" (Hos. 4:1), he is equating knowledge with loyalty faithfulness.

To know God is to be in relationship to God (Hos. 6: 6) knowledge of God involves reverent obedience to him (Prov. 1:7). The same is true on the human plane: to know another is to have a relationship with that person. Knowledge can have the abstract senses of realization (Judge 13: 21), rational discourse (Job. 15:2), and insight into the nature of reality (Job 12: 3; Eccl. 1: 16).

In the NT knowledge can also be experiential and rational, as in the OT (e.g., "The Lord knows those who are his"; 2 Tim. 2: 19). In general, however, the NT uses knowledge in a more theoretical sense, consistent with its range of meaning in Greek. For instance, knowledge of Jesus is insight into a revealed truth, namely that Jesus, against appearance, is actually the eternal Word of God (John 1: 10).

Because knowledge, both in Greek philosophy and in Hellenistic religion, can have an abstract, even mystical quality, the Apostle Paul could be critical of knowledge, casting it as inferior to the supreme virtue, love (1 Cor. 8: 1–3). The Apostle Paul's words in 1 Cor. 13: 8 ("Love never ends. But ... as for knowledge, it will come to an end") would not make sense to an OT prophets for whom, in Hebrew terms, knowledge of God is equivalent to love for God (Ps. 91: 14) (Mobley, cited).

Wisdom" can be the result of "Knowledge" and "Understanding": "For the Lord gives wisdom, from his mouth come knowledge and understanding"(Prov. 2: 6). Similarly: "The tongue of the wise dispenses knowledge" (Prov. 15: 2). These three concepts are to be with each other, so that one without another is incomplete and meaningless.

Therefore, it is the wise who can acquire knowledge and teach it to others: "The lips of the wise spread knowledge" (prov. 15: 2). Or: "The mind of him who has understanding seek knowledge" (prov. 15: 4). According to the above points: "When a wise man is instructed, he gains knowledge" (Prov.21: 11).

Thus it is up to all of us to consider the following command: "incline your ear, and hear the words of the wise" (Prov. 27: 17). "Wisdom" and "Knowledge" come from the same Spirit: "To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit" (1 Cor. 12: 8).

Thus, "Wisdom" has a near relationship and connection with knowledge, in fact: "Wisdom, next, is the knowledge of divine and human matters and the causes of these" (4 Mac. 1: 16). And if a man to be wise, his knowledge will increase like a flood: "The knowledge of a wise man will increase like a flood and his counsel like a flowing spring" (Sir. 21: 13).

The Bible has pointed out to knowledge of God in many cases. The majority of these verses indicate the greatness and comprehensiveness of this knowledge: "The Lord is a God of knowledge" (1 Sam. 2: 3).

"Thou hast knowledge of all things" (Ps. 119: 66). "All the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord" "They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountains; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Prov. 1: 7).

"The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Prov. 1: 7). Undoubtedly, if all bondmen do know the above facts regarding the knowledge of God, and that God really knows all that we think and do, the Probability of doing evils in secret and public and doing good in all of us will definitely increase, without which "hypocrisy" will pervade the society.

God Himself has praised knowledge: "The eyes of the Lord keep watch over knowledge" (Prov. 22: 2). Evidentially knowledge has many good results and uses that God and the religious texts have taken such an emphasis on acquiring it.

It is in the light of knowledge that interpersonal relations and communications with people would be possible, as it deserves: "Give, me now wisdom and knowledge to go out and come in before this people" (2 Chr. 1: 10).

This particular kind of knowledge may be considered as a branch of social science which causes man to preserve his personality and have a desirable moral character before the people. Ruling people is possible by knowledge: "... and have not even asked long life but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself that you may rule my people over whom I have made you king" (2Chr. 1: 11).

Kingdom has its own mysteries, secrets and techniques which are all discovered by knowledge. Enjoying a happy and pleasant life in gained by knowledge "Knowledge will be pleasant to your soul" (Prov. 2: 10).

Knowledge causes one to see the entire universe as it is, and do all good behaviors as it deserves, seeing the truth of the life, can reach man to status in which he is secure and has no worldly grief.

Knowledge, from the viewpoint of the Bible is of great importance and considerable merit. It is more valuable than the entire world. Thus, it is up to man to seek wisdom and knowledge in all his life and all over the world, and ask God to give him such a magnificent possession.

"God answered Solomon, 'Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked possessions, wealth, honor, or the life of those who hate you, and have not even asked long life, but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself' "(2Chr. 1: 11). In the light of such a knowledge and wisdom it is possible for man to acquire: "riches, possessions, and honor, such as none of the kings had" (2Chr. 1: 12).

Therefore, it is quite reasonable to be told that: "Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold" (Prov. 8: 10). And knowledge is certainly the most precious jewel: "There is gold, and abundance of costly stones, but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel" (prov. 20: 15).

That is the reason why: "By knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches" (Prov. 11:9). Receiving the necessary "Knowledge" may be synonymous with gaining "The law of life": "He bestowed knowledge upon them, and allotted to them the law of life" (Prov. 13: 16).

Knowledge is the awareness of man in relation to the harmonies and orders of the life and the universe, so: "Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid" (Prov. 12:1). Possessing a great knowledge causes man not to omit anything from the law of the Lord or His commandments.

On the other hand, teaching the necessary ordinances and judgments is possible by such a great knowledge (1Eser 8: 7). And knowledge in needed in everything: "In everything a prudent man acts with knowledge "but a fool flaunts his falsely" (Prov. 13: 16).

And if a man wishes to reach the goal of his creation, he should certainly have knowledge, because those who have not knowledge in this field will surely go astray: "It is not good for a man to be without knowledge, and he who makes haste with his feet misses his way" (Prov. 19: 2).

A life worthy of the Lord is necessarily along with increasing the knowledge of Him "To lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1: 10). Such a life, according to this verse, is pleasing and fruitful in every good work.

Knowledge and teaching are among those valuable things which will surely benefit all men: "Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongue, how I shall benefit you unless, I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or leaching?" (Cor. 14: 6) "By knowledge the righteous are delivered" (Prov. 11: 9).

Even, all men can be saved in the light of coming to the knowledge of the truth: "Who desires all men and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1Tim. 2: 4). The characteristic of wisdom in comparison with money is that: "The advantage of knowledge is that wisdom preserves the life of him who has it" (Eccl. 7: 12).

While the money requires to be preserved. Therefore, it can be said that the Spirit of the Lord, and the fear of Him, shall rest upon the righteous and knowledgeable: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11: 2).

Therefore, knowledge is so valuable that: "An intelligent mind acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge" (Prov. 18: 15).

The highest part of the body, the heart, is the real position for "wisdom": "Wisdom will come into your heart" (Prov. 2: 10). In this case, "Knowledge will be pleasant to your soul" (Prov. 2: 10).

Therefore, the standard and criteria for might and magnificence is wisdom and knowledge, and according to this: "A wise man is mightier than a strong man, and a man of knowledge than he who has strength" (Prov. 24: 5).

Not only the ability of man but the stability of the earth also is due to knowledge and the men of understanding and knowledge: "When land transgresses it has many rulers; but with men of understanding and knowledge its stability will long continue" (Prov. 28: 2). Thus, it is up to all men to consider the following command: "Apply your mind to instruction and your ear to words of knowledge" (Prov.23: 12).

Even, knowledge, wisdom and understanding are so important that one can pray God that these characteristics to be granted to him and the competent men: "And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (Col. 1: 9).

Because God has said that "let light shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2Cor. 4: 6). It is through the knowledge of our Lord that we can escape the defilements of the world (2pet. 2: 20). Man's knowledge is imperfect (1Cor. 13: 9). On the other hand, man's is filled with the Spirit of God (Exod. 31:3).

In the knowledge of God, grace and peace are multiplied to man (2Pet. 1: 2). Therefore, it is up to all of us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord (2Pet. 3:18). And in the light of such knowledge, "insight" will be given to man: "Knowledge of the Holly One is insight" (Prov. 9: 10). Without insight, are the words of those who speak, without knowledge" (Job. 34: 35). And if one who is perfect in knowledge is with man, in this case, truly his words are not false (Job. 36: 4).

Those persons who suffer from lack of knowledge do not distinguish the facts of the creation, and so: "They are all without knowledge; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; dreaming, lying sown, and loving to slumber" (Isa. 56: 10).

Then, how would it be possible for them to have even the least part in a real happy life, while they are quite unaware of acquiring the real joys and happiness? Though, they may sometimes feel a superficial and false security: "You felt secure in your wickedness, you said, "No one sees me" (Isa. 47: 10).

All the evildoers who commit the worst crimes have no real knowledge: "Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread, and do not call upon the Lord?" (Ps. 14: 4) And undoubtedly such people: "Have neither knowledge for understanding, they walk about in darkness" (Ps. 82: 5).

Therefore, it is clear from the above facts that the evildoers are among the fool whose presence must be left, for there we do not meet words of knowledge (Prov. 14: 7). And these people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: "my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hos. 4: 6). One the other hand, some people suffer from a "false and superficial knowledge and understanding" Which has led them astray: "Your wisdom and your knowledge led you astray, and you said in your heart, "I am, and there is no one besides me "(Isa. 47: 10).

Therefore, such beguiling wisdom and knowledge must not be mistaken for the real and actual knowledge and understanding that save man from all sorts of evils and sins, not the origin of crimes and bad needs. In fact: "The knowledge of the ignorant is unexamined talk "(Sir. 21: 18). A falsely called knowledge is, if fact, ineffective or untruthful in the knowledge of our Lord (2Pet. 1:8).

Therefore, we should definitely avoid from all sorts of falsely called knowledge which can certainly lead

to different contradictions: "Avoid the Godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge (1Tim. 6: 20). But these two dangers, that is lack of knowledge and a falsely called knowledge, can both be removed by acquiring a good and real knowledge and understanding.

Tools and Ranks of Knowledge

It is believed in Islamic that things are first comprehended by appearing senses followed by the intellectual and reflective operations (Sajjadi, undated). Islam appoints scientific thinking as the basis for everything in the life, and the wise and the sage are those who choose the scientific method as the basis of their thinking, because it is this method that leads man towards remembrance and understanding of God and Divine piety (Mahjub, 1987).

Motahhari (1999) believes that senses, intellectual and heart can be considered as the tools or means of man's knowledge and cognition. Therefore, it can be concluded that observation" (seeing accurately along with reflection) of the being and the universe can cause man to reach to a real knowledge and episteme (29: 19–20; 50:6–11; 88: 17–20).

That is the reason why the Holy Qur'an invites humans to observe the universe phenomena (6:99). Considering different speeches of Imam Ali, one can result that he considers "sense", intellect" and "heart" as the most important tools of man's knowledge and cognition, the heart here is meant "the right soul."

"Heart" can be considered as one of the main tools for cognition and insight: "Let the words of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (the Bible, Psalm 19:14). Therefore, the fact that some knowledge comes through sense perception is a point which a Christian epistemology would grant (Peterson, 1986), but sense perception is not sufficient for a complete and comprehensive cognition.

As God has stated His religion – based verses in the Holy Qur'an, he has also placed His existence – related verses or tokens (the universe and its components) in the nature. As His verses in the Qur'an are sacred, His verses/tokens in the universe and nature are sacred too.

As it requires thinking and rationalization to comprehend and understand the verses of the Qur'an (4:82), it also requires thinking and rationalization to comprehend and understand and to take lesson from God's verses (tokens) in the nature, that is a person can reach, for example from seeing a tree's leaves, to God who observes and contemplates.

Sa'di, one of the most famous Muslim and Iranian poets, says that each leave of the green trees is a scripture full of the cognition of the creator, in the sight of the wise. The Qur'an says that taking lesson from the universe requires seeing eyes (3:13), pure intellect (12:111) and enlightened heart (79:26) (Baqeri, 1991).

The Glorious Qur'an takes emphasis on this fact that there are signs in the creation of the heavens and the earth, but for men possessed of minds who remember God (3:190–191), and how many signs there is in the heavens and in the earth that some people pass by turning away from them (12:105).

Those who have the success and chance of thinking in the heavens and the earth will come to a position in which they will see the creation of the universe goal – centered and will become certain of resurrection and Hereafter and will identify the creator of the being free from all defect, and deficiencies (3:191).

The Qur'an says that it requires thinking (45:13; 16:10–11) or intellection (2:164; 30:24; 16:12) to comprehend the Divine tokens in the universe. Even, deliverance from the Hell is possible by intellection (67:10).

The Qur'an using such question as "did you not see; do you not see; did you see? etc." confirms considering the senses in man, and using such statements as, "for the people who intellect, the people who reflect, the people who notifies, the people who comprehend, etc", confirms the importance of the intellect in man (Tabatabaie, 1987).

The Qur'an does not content itself with introducing eyes and ears (senses or primary source of knowledge) as the bounties that man should give thanks to God for them, but it also names "heart" as one of the other of these bounties: "and He appointed for you hearing, and sight, and heart, that haply so you will be thankful" (16:78).

The Qur'an severely complains of those who only know an outward part of the world's life and they are headless of the Hereafter (30:7). These group should be of those who do not purify their hearts, and do not apply their thought and intellect and content themselves with the superficial senses.

Imam Ja'far Sadeq says that the senses cannot comprehend anything except with guidance, as it is impossible to walk in darkness (Ershad / 124; quoted in Al-Hayat: vol. 1). He also says that the senses cannot comprehend the things in themselves, and there is no way for cognition for them without heart; the heart is the guide for the senses, the heart remains after the destruction of the senses (Behar 59/61; cited from Al-Hayat, vol. 1).

That's the reason the Qur'an calls the unpurified and uneducated, that is the infidel, the squanderer, the doubter, the paramour and the cruel as aberrant and deviated: "even so God leads astray the unbelievers" (40:74), even so God leads astray the prodigal and doubter" (40:34), "and thereby He leads none astray save the ungodly" (2:26), "and God leads astray the evil doers" (14:27), because they are the blind who have eyes and do not find out the truth of the affairs and do not reach insight: "they have eyes, but perceive not with them" (7:179).

Or, according to the Bible, "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: 'you will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused. They hardly

hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would hear them" (Matthew: 13–15).

According to the Qur'an that's because their bad behavior which is due to their undeveloped interior, is like a veil which has caused their darkness and their not receiving any light: "that they were earning has rusted upon their hearts" (83:14).

These persons, according to the Prophet of Islam, the more increase their appearing and superficial science, the more they will become away from God. According to Baqeri (1991), the "heart" can be the factor of comprehension and intellection (22:46), the factor of feeling and reaction (3:159), and the factor of action and practice (2:225).

He concludes from this that the concept "heart" is synonymous with the "soul", because these three categories are the manifestations of the "soul." Thus, just as the soul is defined as inciting to evil" (12:53), when it orders to badness, the heart is in a similar case called "sinful heart" (2:283), and just as the soul is defined as "at peace or at rest soul" (89:28) when it is saved from badness and finds comfort, the heart is in such case defined as "at rest heart" (13:28).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the most complete cognition is possible when individuals apply their senses to think on those things they have sensed, while have purified their hearts from all sorts of contaminations and sins. So much is certain that the purification of heart from sins or the purification of the soul will cause man to comprehend the facts of the universe as they are.

But wherever man's heart is contaminated to sins, it will not surely reflect the truth light because of those sins or rusts. Thus, it is possible to find and discover the points and subtle things from the universe in the light of purified heart without which this was not possible at all. How often in such a state, man can hear a voice and a call from the individual trees' leaves, sky stars and desert gravel stones and take lesson from them one of which is not found in the formal school books.

In one of the issues addressed in Nahj-al-Balaghah (Khotbeh 185), Imam Ali states that if humans thought about the great power of God and His abundant bounties, they would surely return to the way of God, and would fear the doom of the Hell. In this statement, Imam Ali brings up thinking, which is a manifestation of "intellect and reflection", as a tool for knowledge and cognition of the right way.

Imam Ali adds that but the hearts are unable and sick and have lost the power to think about Divine power and God's boundless powers that be guided to the straight way. Therefore, it can be deducted from the expression that "heart", i.e. the right soul, can be considered as one of the means (tools) or ways for knowledge and cognition.

Imam Ali continues his speech asking why humans do not observe that small things that God created. It is concluded from this sentence that Imam Ali considers man's senses as one of the tools or ways of man's knowledge.

Imam Ali in another part of Nahj-al-Balaghah (Khotbeh 133) compares a man who uses senses, intellect and heart (an insightful person) with a man who contents himself of using only his superficial senses (a blind man) saying that: "the insightful person turns away from the world, but blind person turn his face towards the world; the insightful person takes provision from the world, but the blind person takes provision for the world."

It is quite evidential that those who can be granted knowledge that have been competent and qualified for its reception, as the Bible confirms: "Whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, those taken from the breast? (Isa. 28: 9).

"Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice, and taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40: 14) "He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding" (Dan. 2: 21). Knowledge is granted to those who are worthy of its reception.

The believers in God's commandments can receive such a knowledge: "Teach me good judgments and knowledge, for I believe in thy commandments" (Ps. 119: 66). The above verse illustrates that good judgment and knowledge are something that should be taught by God to His righteous bondmen. That's the reason why, "Fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1: 7).

And "Law" is so important in obtaining the necessary knowledge that it can be proclaimed that: "Through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Rom. 30: 20). Acquiring knowledge requires competence and capacity, and so: "The mind of a fool is like a broken jar; it will hold no knowledge" (Sir. 21: 14).

One of the necessary factors for acquiring knowledge, is" understanding", and thus, "knowledge is easy for a man of understanding" (Prov. 14: 6). Evidentially without possessing necessary qualifications, one cannot be granted wisdom and knowledge: "A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain" (Prov. 14: 6).

Therefore: "The simple acquire folly, but the prudent are crowned with knowledge" (Prov. 14: 18). "Reprove a man of understanding, and he will gain knowledge" (Prov. 19: 25). A good and precise "listening" to good persons and competent sources can cause the listener to arrive at knowledge of truth: "Who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at a knowledge of the truth" (2Tim. 3: 7).

Therefore: "If you love to listen you will gain knowledge, and if you incline your ear you will become wise" (Sir. 6: 33). "The satisfaction of God" from his bondmen may be the reason why they are granted wisdom and knowledge on behalf of God: "For to the man who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy" (Eccl. 2: 26).

In the above verse, "joy" is mentioned along with "wisdom" and "knowledge." So, it appears that the real joyful life which is full of happiness is the result of a real wisdom and knowledge. Because of these two, man can possess an insight and intuition by which he can reach a position to see the universe and its different parts and relations as they are, and formulate his behaviors as he should, and evaluates the

beautiful life, as it deserves, and then nothing could disturb him.

On the other hand, the sinners, those who are really away from wisdom and knowledge, because of the lack of understanding, theirs will be a disturbing and depressive life: "To the sinner he gives the work of gathering and heaping, only to give to one who pleases God. This is also vanity and a striving after wind" (Eccl. 2: 26).

Those who God has not love them: "God did not choose them, nor give them the way to knowledge" (Bar. 3: 27). So far as one doesn't fear God he will not definitely reach a position to receive the light of the knowledge and to understanding the mysteries of the creation, so: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1: 7).

Therefore, those who understand the fear of the Lord will surely find the knowledge of God" (Prov. 2: 5). And those men who did not choose the fear of the Lord, were among those who hated knowledge (Prov. 1: 29). Similarly: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 9: 10).

"Righteousness" can cause a man to acquire a particular understanding and knowledge by which he will be able to know the facts of the world, including the rights of the poor, etc.: "A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge" (Prov. 29: 7).

Therefore, those who have not yet learned wisdom, are not to be expected to have a good knowledge of the Holy One: "I have not learned wisdom, nor have I knowledge of the Holy One" (Prov. 30: 3). "Goodness", "knowledge" and "instruction" three valuable and sacred words which can be mentioned with each other so that "Goodness" can lead to a good "knowledge" and "instruction", and on the other hand, a real "knowledge" and "instruction" can be due to goodness, because a good knowledge can't be acquired only in the light of goodness: "I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourself are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another" (Rom. 15: 14).

"Wisdom" and "knowledge" can be considered as valuable treasures which are hid in good and aware men: "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2: 3). And it is due to significance of accompanying "Love" and "knowledge" that it is necessary in all worships that these two complementary components to exist, without them the worship would have no effect on the worshippers and the others: "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge" (Phil. 1: 9).

Therefore, man should desire a steadfast "love" and 'knowledge" of God: "I desire steadfast love not sacrifice, the knowledge of God" (Hos. 6: 6). Such a "love" will lead to increase in "knowledge" of the God and on the other hand, such a "knowledge" will cause man's loving relationship with God, and this is the connection between the "brain" and the "hearth" or the "cognitive" and the "emotional" aspects of man's personality.

Thus, those hearts which are knit together in love can have all the riches of assured understanding and

the knowledge of "God's mystery of Christ" (Col. 2: 2). All powers, understandings and knowledge, without "love" will be nothing: "And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but I have not Love, I am nothing" (1Cor. 13: 2).

And it is necessary for all men to make every effort to supplement their faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self – control, and self – control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with Godliness (2Pet. 1: 5 – 6). Thus, the following concepts should be considered in this field; "Purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine, Love..." (2Cor. 6: 6).

That's because in competent men is the spring of understanding, the fountain of wisdom, and the river of knowledge" (2Esdrs).

On the other hand, it can be concluded that Islam believes in three stages for knowledge (Ebrahim Zadeh, 1990):

Knowledge by reason (102:5) that is a deductive knowledge and is acquired through rational reasoning and its accuracy is based on the accuracy of the presupposed introductions. Therefore, there is the possibility of error on it.

Knowledge by objectivity (102:7) that is a comprehension or indirect knowledge and is acquired through senses. The reasoning method in this knowledge is based on induction so it is exposed to errors, but because of being based on experience (observation or instruction) its certainty is more.

Knowledge by truth (69:5) which is direct and insight based on knowledge, here, the experience acquired from these states has more certainty. The Divine guidance in the first place, in such a way applies to the bondmen.

Tabataba'i (undated) divides the knowledge to two categories: obtaining –based knowledge and present knowledge. In obtaining – based knowledge, the presence of essence is clear for the knower, but in present knowledge, the existence is clean for the knower.

In other words, according Mesbah Yazdi (1986), in present knowledge, the man's awareness is direct, but in obtaining – based knowledge, the man's awareness is indirect. Ebrahim Zadeh (1990) says that the Qur'an considers the present knowledge as true knowledge (knowledge by truth) and without any error, and the obtaining – based knowledge is acquired through thinking, reflection, intellection, observation and experiment.

He believes that obtaining – based knowledge has three stages sensory stage, imagination stage, and the intellection stage.

Sources of knowledge and Cognition

It is meant by the phrase "sources of knowledge and cognition", those things we can receive knowledge from them. According to this definition, even the tools of knowledge (sense, intellect, heart) can be considered as the resources of cognition, because we can receive knowledge from each of them.

On the other hand, each of these can be considered as tool, means or way of knowledge or cognition by which we can receive the necessary knowledge from the "sources of knowledge." According to this interpretation, we can receive knowledge from "nature or universe, including from man himself, history and books", using the above tools.

Thus, it is possible to consider God tokens in nature and in man's existence, history and the books as the resources of knowledge. It is interesting that the primary and main sources of knowledge are nature, man and history, and the secondary resources for knowledge are the books, because the books reflect the parts of the main resources, while we often consider the books as the main and primary resources of knowledge and cognition.

It is believed in the Holy Qur'an that the being and existence of man (51:21), and earth (Dhariyat) can be a manifestation of God's tokens and the source for knowledge and episteme. It is also believed that traveling and trip on the earth can cause humans' hearts to acquire wisdom and they accept the truth (22:46), thus this can be considered as a knowledge resource.

Considering different sayings of Imam Ali, it can be concluded that he also considers God's tokens in the universe (including in man himself), history and the book (here the Qur'an and Nahj-al-Balaghah) as the most important resources of knowledge.

Imam Ali states that a man who knows himself, he has attained the peak of every knowledge and episteme (Ghora-al-Hekam). That is the reason why Imam Ali believes that whosoever knows himself, has really recognized and know his God (Ghorar-al-Hekam).

Regarding God's tokens in the nature, Imam Ali says that each of the creatures of God in nature, including the sun, moon, plants, trees, water, rocks, etc. are all deserving for man's observation, i.e. we can receive a suitable and deserving cognition and knowledge from them: "Therefore, you look at the sun, moon, vegetation, plants, water, stones" (Nahj-al-Balaghah; Khotbeh 185).

Imam Ali, concerning history, believes that the one, who knows history and life days, will never neglect readiness for the future (Al Kafi 8/23). Thus, history can give man cognition and can be considered as one of the knowledge resources.

Imam Ali, regarding the glorious Qur'an, as the highest scripture and book, says; "Learn the Qur'an for it is the fairest of discourses and understand it thoroughly for it is the best blossoming of hearts.

Seek cure with its light for it is the cure for hearts" (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Khaboteh 110). This statement shows that learning the Qur'an and thinking in it cause man to reach a real knowledge by which man's heart and soul are delivered from all sorts of illness, evil thinking and evil seeing.

Imam Ali, in another part of Nahj-al-Balaghah, say: "no one will sit beside this Qur'an but that when he rises he will achieve one addition or one diminution – addition in his guidance or elimination in his (spiritual) blindness" (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Khotbeh 176).

Eventually one of the branches and subdivisions of the increasing of the guidance and decreasing the depravity is an increase in man's knowledge and episteme. Therefore, it can be claimed that the Qur'an can be considered as one of the most important of man's resources of knowledge. Motahhari (1998) says that nature is one of the sources of knowledge man's senses are a tool for acquiring knowledge from nature.

He introduces rational or logical reasoning, i.e. deduction or reason, as the second tool for knowledge, and he believes that this tool is valid when we considered intellect as resource of knowledge. He introduces heart as the third knowledge resource, and considers the purification of the soul as a tool of knowledge for this resource.

Obstacles of Knowledge and Cognition

The Holy Qur'an introduces the following issues as the most important obstacles of knowledge and cognition:

- Soul turbidities (2:282; 62:2; 57:28)
- Concupiscence (28:50; 45:23; 47:4)
- Blind friendship (41:17; 29:38)
- Self conceit and snobbery (40:50; 45:31; 7:46; 27:14)
- Truth denial (27:14; 46:26)
- Inclination to worldly desires (57:14)
- Thought sediments (40:83; 5:104; 2:170; 28:36)
- Imitation from family and environment (5:77; 26:69-74; 43:22-24)

Imam Ali introduces the following issues as the most important obstacles of knowledge and cognition:

- Not purification of the soul (Ghorar-al-Hekam)

- Cardinal desires (Njah-al-Balaghah, Khotbeh 1 and Hekmat 211)
- Loving blindness and ignorance (Ghorar-al-Hekam: Nahj-al-Balaghah, Khotbeh 109)
- Self admiration and haughtiness (Ghorar-al-Hekam; Nahj-al-Balaghah, Hekmat 113)
- Covetousness (Al Vasael, vol. 1, cited from Al-Hayat, vol. 1)
- Anger (Ghorar-al-Hekam)
- Denial and stubbornness (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Hekmat 179)
- Long worldly desires (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Hekmat 275)
- Force and compulsion (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Hekmat 193)
- Being despotic in opinion (Nahj-al-Balaghah, Hekmat 116)

The glorious Qur'an introduced the prophet of Islam as a messenger of good news and a warned for all humankind (34:28), and explains the philosophy of his mission as the guidance of human being to the straight path and sending them out from different kinds of darks (5:15–16; 65:10–11), as the Qur'an which is a revealed collection from God to the prophet causes guidance and compassion (45:20), but to receive such a guidance, one should prepare in himself the necessary conditions and background, for instance, he or she should be of men certitude (45:20; 51:20) and piety (2:2) and faith (7:203; 30:52–53).

Such a person will definitely be guided to the best words and to the way of the exalted God (22:24). The truth of the knowledge from God will be given to those who have Divine piety (2:282), because both guidance (29:69) and giving knowledge (2:32) is from His presence.

But, as mentioned, one should acquire the necessary merit and should make enough effort (29:69), but those contaminated hearts that have stretched the veil of sin upon themselves, will surely be deprived of the receiving truth and guidance (39:22; 22:46; 18:57).

Thus, in this field adherence of knowledge and faith (4:162; 34:6; 22:54; 3:18; 45:20; 7:52; 30:52–53; 43:40; 10:42–43) and adherence of knowledge and practice (2:44; 15:99) is of great importance.

In the Bible, the phenomenon of "knowing" is predicted of both human beings and God. In some cases, "knowing" involves state of "moral awareness", for example, Gen. 3:5, 22; Isa. 7:15 speaks of "knowing good and evil." Knowing sin in one's life, in the sense of being made aware of its existence, is indicated in Lev. 4:28; Sam. 12:17; ps. 51:3; Jer. 14:20; Ezek. 20:4.

In positive contexts, Exodus. 18:20; ps. 119:152 refer to knowing the law of the covenant and its obligations similarly, prov. 1:2; Eccl. 1:17 speak of knowing wisdom; and ps. 25:4 refers to knowing the ways of God. Great importance is placed in the OT on knowing God. Jer. 31:34; Hos. 2:20 express the

desire to know God intimately (Renn, 2005).

If enough teaches otherwise and does not agree to the Godly teaching, they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicious and constant friction between people of corrupt mind" (1 Timothy 6:2–5).

"Keep reminding God's people of this thing. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen" (2 Timothy 2:14). "The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful" (Timothy 2:24).

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