

Iqbal's Epistemology

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Abstract

Dr. Mohammad Iqbal (1877- 1938) is a philosopher and poet of the East. He is also known as a politician and reformer in the history of sub-continent. At his times Muslims were facing some serious social problems and the understanding of knowledge seemed to be against the letter and spirit of Islamic teachings. Such degenerated understanding of the knowledge leads towards the ossification of human mind and spirit. Iqbal holds that once this sort of understanding prevails in the society the doors for justification of injustice and corruption will be opened in the name of 'religion' and 'science'. Therefore, he took the charge to reconstruct the religious thought. His building of reconstruction stands on three main pillars; metaphysics, epistemology and law. The purpose of this paper is to focus on epistemology.

Knowledge is understanding or comprehension of reality of things. Holy prophet PBUH said, "God grant me knowledge of the ultimate nature of things." (Iqbal, 1989, p.2)¹

The Holy Quran says that God has taught Adam (human being) names of some of His creatures (Al Quran: 2-3), which proves the importance of knowledge about the reality and nature of things. In the process of knowledge all our instinct, nature and intuition plays the basic role; in the same way our thinking, interpretation and intellect is also important. Our hypothesis and interpretation leads us to reality and recognition through which we come to know it. All the principles used during the process of recognition and knowledge constitute philosophy which is technically called epistemology, in which reality, nature, sources, limitations and truthfulness of knowledge is narrated as basic discussions. So epistemology is the other name of philosophy. Epistemology is just like philosophy because it deals with things and their existence. Moreover it is wonder, which is forcing human being since time immemorial to know about the basis of this universe. Man does not know about the reality, yet he thinks that he understands and knows. We differentiate a thing from the other as air differs from water or a mountain is not a river. It is human nature to differentiate between the things. It is reason which enables us to differentiate. It is because of reason that man first has given universe a central position in his thought. He raised questions about the basis of the universe. Thales was the first person who gave universe the central position in his thought and considered that universe was basically made of water. The Quran says as well:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ

"We made out of water every living thing" (Al-Quran 21:30)

At the time of Socrates, instead of universe external to mind, mind became the centre of thought. Sophists when setting aside their attention from universe, focused on man, the first question which arose was "what is knowledge? Famous sophist Protagoras says:

"Man is the measures of all things; of what is, that it is; of what is not, that is not" (Stace, 1953, p.112)

¹ I have tried my best to find out the source of the aforesaid Hadith but could not find the real source but I have found this Hadith mentioned in the following books. For Example, i. Ameer Ali Syed, Tafseer e Marahab ur Rahman-(Urdu), Vol.9, p.227; ii. Moulana Noor ud din Jaami, Lawa'ih (Persian), p.3; iii. Syed Faiz ul Hassan Faizi, Lawa'ih(Urdu), p.13; , iv. Kashf al- Mahjub (Persian), p.242, 581; v. Mirsaad ul Abaad, p.170, vi. It is written in the footnotes of Maktoobat-e-Imam Rabbani(Urdu), p. 548 that this tradition has been narrated by Imam Ghazali in Mazmoon and Hazrat Shah Abdul Haq Dehelvi in Madaraj e Nabuwwat.

According to this quotation every individual is free to set the standards. Following this way the objectivity of truth is abolished and truth becomes only subjective. Philosophy of Protagoras is under the influence of the philosophy of Heraclitus. Heraclitus under the influence of the philosophy of motion and change came to the conclusion that as everything is in motion, at every moment so it is impossible to get knowledge of it because it is necessary for getting the knowledge of anything that, the thing must remain static in its natural position at least for some time.

On the other hand if knowledge is limited to that which can be felt through our five senses its objective state cannot be properly justified. Gorgias has tried to prove three propositions.

1. That nothing exists:
2. That if anything exists, it cannot be known:
3. That if it can be known, the knowledge of it cannot be communicated. (Stace, 1953, p.117)

Socrates tested moral laws in the light of modern theory and logically proved their validity. He considered that knowledge can only be gained through reason and it is a mean to form concepts. Gorgias's teaching is impossible while Socrates knowledge is communicable. According to him the question of "why" is more important than "how". Socrates rejected Sophists by saying "Not man but God is the measure of all things" (Radhakrishnan & Raju, 1966, p. 74).

Plato also followed Socrates by overlooking knowledge gained by sense perception. He said that from sensation we cannot gain knowledge in the real sense. Plato and Aristotle consider reason as real source of knowledge. After them the whole philosophy remained under the influence of Greek rationalism and all philosophers become in favour of this hypothesis that, reason is the only source and criterion for truth.

Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz considered reason while Locke, Berkley and Hume thought of experience as source of knowledge. In writings of Kant and then Fichte the theory of knowledge remained very important. Kant named philosophy as Critique of knowledge. Knowledge starts from thinking when something or its being is discussed; in fact it is the discussion about that particular thing and its existence. A question arises here that whether an epistemologist is also an expert of existence and metaphysics. Universe has two aspects.

1. Physics
2. Metaphysics

An epistemologist has to know about the reality from both aspects. During seventeenth century where as so many tendencies in human thinking have been changed, it has also been felt that reality cannot be known by dividing knowledge into different compartments. Knowledge should be gained in the background of observations and perception. To achieve this goal Kant performed an important role in epistemology by harmonising the two sources: sense perception and reason.

As Iqbal (1989) says:

"In Germany rationalism appeared as an ally of religion, but she soon realised that dogmatic side of religion was incapable of demonstration. The only course open to her was to eliminate dogma from the sacred record. With the elimination of dogma came the utilitarian view of morality, and thus rationalism completed the reign of unbelief. Such was the state of theological thought in Germany when Kant appeared."(p.5)

According to rationalism the source of knowledge is reason which connects a few ideas already present in human mind and provides us a path to achieve understanding. As these ideas belong to reason, so they should remain aside from senses.

On the other hand empiricists claim that reality can only be grasped by observation and experience. During seventeenth century when scientific approach progressed by leaps and bounds, man thought that by virtue of science he was about to reach at the core of reality. Bergson observed the material system of life critically and reached the conclusion that it was no way right approach to apply scientific methods in search of reality. He did not deny that reason was a source of knowledge. But he thought that it was not possible to achieve reality unless reason does not try to know reality through intuition.

This point alludes towards the same aspects of universe which we have already explained i.e. knowledge can be gained through reason but reason should be involved for the purpose for which it is meant. Thinking over the physical aspect of the universe, invention and research, conquering the elements, how to collect energy from air and light, know about the reality of life and try to know about the command which has united universe in a unique relationship of unity. Reason divides reality into pieces but we are in need of the whole knowledge of reality. Bergson does not consider reason as useless but thinks it like Iqbal as a street light for finding a way out. In Bergson's theory of struggle for existence, consciousness is the first condition. Consciousness is again divided into two categories. One being instinct and the other is reason; instinct uses organized instruments i.e. organs and parts of the body. Worms and insects are its main examples. On the other hand reason uses unrecognized instruments.

Iqbal criticizes rational argumentation. He wants the solution of life along with its all unsolved problems. For this purpose sometimes he takes the advantage of thinking and at the other time he dives into concentration and intuition, yet he is not disappointed from attaining the knowledge of reality through reason. The rationality is not limited to logical propositions and abstract ideas. It has its own limits which belong to solid facts, having its own functions which are to be performed by it.

Muhammad Rafi-ud-din expresses this view about intuition as a source of knowledge that the duty of intellect is only to instigate our intuition in order to arrive at some unity. It only focuses its attention on the relation among the parts of unity but cannot perceive the whole. To have the perception or knowledge of unity does not come under its routine. As soon as our intuition arrives at the door of the knowledge of unity, our intellect has left away long before. Intellect shows us the path to reach at our destination but does not accompany us up to the end.

Now the question arises that Iqbal criticizes reason and at the same time he confesses that reason is a source to get knowledge. Moreover philosophy of Iqbal provides a basic platform for experience gained through sense perception as a whole, and then to which school of thought Iqbal may be referred? Answer is clear that Iqbal cannot be attached to any one of three schools of thoughts: empiricism, rationalism or intuitionism. According to his epistemology sense perception, reason and intuition all are sailing in the same boat of organic unity. He fully understands that light coming from one side alone cannot explore all aspects of reality. Problem of existence should be studied from all angles (scientifically and religiously) so that some clear, evident and well established ground may be formed. He has presented his own theory of knowledge which tries to perceive ultimate reality directly through experience of intuition and indirectly through thought.

It is wrong to say that Iqbal was against reason. As contrary to it this is true that Iqbal knew about limitations of reason and understood that reason can partially comprehend reality. Sublime form of reason is intuition and its top most and elevated form is revelation by virtue of which reality can be understood as a whole. The journey of reason from partial towards whole, in the view point of Iqbal, is an organic link between reason and intuition.

Among Muslim thinkers Ghazali and Ibn e Rushd both became the victim of criticism of Iqbal. Ghazali put the religion on foundation of philosophical scepticism which in no way is suitable to nature of a religion. On the other hand Ibn e Rushd presented the theory of active intellect which was absolutely against Quranic saying according to which emphasis has been laid upon the importance of human self.

Iqbal does not want to ignore this material world altogether. This material world is the part of the organic whole to which we want to reach. Iqbal does not consider this universe as purposeless. The Holy Quran repeats so many times that universe is a reality, it is not aimless.

رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا

(Al-Quran 191:3)

“O our Sustainer ! Thou hast not created [ought of] this without meaning and purpose”

It is a meaningful and serious reality. Quran considers wisdom as virtue of great value and wisdom is the same thing which is the aim of philosophy and science. The main aim of religion is to develop greater consciousness in human being regarding connection and relationship between God and universe. Religion is not only the name of faith and theories or only adopting sentimental moral attitudes but it is something far more than it.

Its aim is to gain and develop close relation with life and basic source of its being. The aim of religion is consciousness of ultimate reality and to enhance our internal understanding more and more. Religion also has the element of reason. As far as principles of faith are concerned, Professor Whitehead is of the view,

“Religion on its doctrinal side.....is a system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended”. (Iqbal, 1989, p.1)

With reference to Prof Whitehead, Iqbal (1989) says:

“That is why Professor Whitehead acutely remarked that ‘The ages of faith are the ages of rationalism’ (p.2)

Religion and philosophy each needs an intellectual base for its fundamental principles. Reason and intuition are two different sailors for same destination, one partially and the other completely attains the goal of ultimate reality.

Iqbal has a rational attitude. He does not preach superiority of any one neither of reason nor of senses, senses which are baffled cannot guide towards knowledge. This is reason which is responsible for producing relevance, discipline and harmony in senses which guides us towards knowledge. Complete understanding of reality needs reason as well as sense perception, which are both inseparable. Iqbal emphasizes observation and scientific experience. He takes full advantage of modern scientific theories and does not believe it to be the last word for any perceptible side of a being. Perceived reality in fact is indication of ultimate reality and in this connection empirical attitude attaches us with it. Iqbal after limiting strangeness between reason and intuition throws light upon observation through sense perception with reference to the Holy Quran and in this regard strongly criticises Plato who thinks that no real knowledge can be gained through sense perception. Iqbal (1989) says:

“Plato despised sense perception, which, in his view, yielded mere opinion and no real knowledge” (p.3)

Islamic teachings are totally different from Plato’s teachings. According to the Holy Quran creation of the universe is based on reality. It is not complete, static and unchangeable. The Holy Quran considers the cycle of day and night amongst the great signs of existence of God and draws human attention to observe these verses of God and think attentively. Iqbal’s view about universe is also dynamic. In his theory purposefulness, change, variety, innovation, and evolution are evident as its essential elements. The Quran has invited to observe nature and conquer it.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ
الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ مَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ
مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ
وَتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

“ Verily, in the creation of the heavens and of the earth and the succession of the night and day: and in the ships that speed through the sea with what is useful to man; and in the waters which God sends down from the sky, giving life thereby to the earth after it had been lifeless, and causing all manner of living creatures to multiply their own: and in the change of the winds, and the clouds that run their appointed courses between sky and earth: [in all this] there are messages indeed for people who use their reason”. (Al-Quran 2:164)

The above *ayat* clarifies two points. Firstly, that knowledge by sense perception is reliable source of knowledge. Secondly observation and comprehension through sense perception is also beneficial but for the wise people only. Distinction between rationalism and empiricism at last comes to an end. Reliability of observation or knowledge gained through senses will only be correct if observing personality is wise.

Iqbal (1989) says:

“The Quran recognising that the empirical attitude is an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity, attaches equal importance to all the regions of human experience. As yielding knowledge of the Ultimate Reality which reveals its symbols both within and without” (p.12)

The Quran says:

وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

(Al-Quran 16:78)

“He has endowed you with hearing, and sight, and mind, so that you might have cause to be grateful”

Observation is necessary for gaining the knowledge of hidden and open secrets of realities of the universe. Man listens, sees, knows and gets knowledge. It was not difficult for Allah to create people with the belief that they would have faith in God. As will of God is totally rational and He could not perform any irrational thing, this is why He left the selection of one path out of the two at man’s own discretion so that he should decide from his own wisdom. When man searches and sees around himself he takes full advantage of his intellectual capabilities and observes attentively over universe.

The Quran says:

الْمُرُوءَ أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِيَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا

(Al-Quran 27:86)

“For, were they not aware that it is We who had made the night for them, so that they might rest therein, and the day, to make [them] see?”

﴿ مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَى وَالْأَصْمَى وَالْبَصِيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ
هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴾

(Al Quran 11: 24)

“These two kinds of man may be likened to the blind and deaf and the seeing and hearing. Can these two be deemed alike in [their] nature? Will you not, then, keep this in mind?”

It is quite clear that those who can see and who cannot see and those who can hear and who cannot hear are not equal in knowledge. When we see and hear, we think over it. As man advances in gaining knowledge, senses help him. Senses provide him only superficial knowledge, but man has to go ahead of it. His target is to reach the reality. Man starts from observation and reason assists him. Realities gained through sense perception are tested and known in the light of reason. Then these both are complemented by a third source. That third source according to Iqbal is ‘intuition’. Therefore, it is clear that not only observation but reason also side by side with observation is necessary for having knowledge.

“...Iqbal’s epistemology is constructed on the pattern of Quranic epistemology in which sense perception and reason are the initial stages of the acquisition of knowledge.” (Anwar, 1996, p.69)

The Quran has alluded to the three categories of knowledge.

1. *Ilm ul Yaqin*
2. *Ain ul Yaqin*
3. *Haq ul yaqin*

First category of knowledge is *Ilm ul Yaqin* (certainty of the reason) that one believes in a fact or statement supported by some proofs and evidences. The Quran says:

كَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ

“Nay, If you could but understand [it] with an understanding [born] of certainty” (Al-Quran, 102:5)

The second category of knowledge is *Ain ul Yaqin* based on sense perception.

ثُمَّ لَتَرَوْهَا عَيْنَ الْيَقِينِ

“In the end you will indeed, most surely, behold it with the eye of certainty” (Al-Quran, 102:7)

The third category *Haq ul Yaqin* the highest one, in which the knowledge is gained by one’s own involvement and direct contact with the reality. This is the stage where heart or soul but not mind is active.

وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ

“For, verily, it is truth absolute !” (Al-Quran, 69:51)

Iqbal has thus expressed his views about this category.

“The ‘heart’ is a kind of inner intuition or insight which, in the beautiful words of Rumi, feeds on the rays of the sun and brings us into contact with aspects of Reality other than those open to sense perception.”

Iqbal (1998) tells us that the source of his thought is Quran.

گر دلم آئینه بے جوہر است
در بحر نم غیر قرآن مضمراست
روز محشر خوار و رسوا گن مرا
بے نصیب از بوسہ پاکن مرا

(p. 173)

When Iqbal claims that the basis of his thought is Quran then it is not possible that he may hate reason because Quranic teachings do not contradict reason. Iqbal opposes only that attitude where field of knowledge is limited i.e. depending upon reason only. We are to get the knowledge of ultimate reality after coming out from baffling matter of logical propositions and abstract ideas. God has gifted man appropriate mental faculties. He is a part of hustle and bustle of life and deep seated ambitions of this world but he has to face enormous contradictions. Now it is his duty to try to be familiar and make intimacy with these opposing forces by overcoming and moulding them according to his own use. If he is unable to do so his spirit becomes dead and he comes down at the stage of dead matter. External life and progress of man depends upon that he should make internal relations with the universe and these relations can only be formed by virtue of knowledge. The Holy Quran has given much importance to worth observing parts of the nature. Observation of the universe clarifies two things.

1. Universe is multiplicity

2. This multiplicity has discipline and harmony

If we believe in multiplicity of existence in the universe then philosophy of theology presents two pictures. First being which completely separates man from God. The other picture is like that in which multiplicity and abundance should also be believed but there should be some relationship between the universe and God.

If we believe in first form then man becomes much inferior in thought and helpless due to total strangeness and separation between God and man. He feels himself lonely and left alone in this vast universe and Iqbal's philosophy of stability of ego or self-consciousness becomes useless altogether. Iqbal believes in individual ego and collective ego to the extent that he considers ultimate reality as an ego, too. The second form is closer to philosophy of pantheism. Iqbal believes in multiplicity in the universe. This is due to the multiplicity that man struggles to go higher and higher in research. Philosophy of pantheism reflects deep relation with ultimate reality but Iqbal does not like to meet with ultimate reality at the expense of multiplicity.

One way of intimacy and communication with reality is that we should observe the signs of God and take hold of them. The other way is that direct relation with reality be produced in the same way as it is revealed in our inner self. Quranic naturalism proves that man is attached with nature. According to Iqbal scientific observation of nature brings us closer to reality and enhances our internal comprehension to have more deep insight for it. In other words our ambition to have the knowledge of reality increases. Iqbal considers study of nature such an intellectual observation as mystic in search of reality tries through intuition to reach the intimate knowledge of God.

“The knowledge of Nature is the knowledge of God's behaviour. In our observation of Nature we are virtually seeking a kind of intimacy with the Absolute Ego; and this is only another form of worship”. (Iqbal, 1989, p. 45)

Reality is an organic whole and scientific knowledge in no way can reach its limits. Scientific analysis and evaluations are never complete. Universe is an organic unity and different relations in it are linking different contradictions. With the help of different scientific methods research is conducted on any single part of this organic unity and then scientists generalize their hypothesis.

Iqbal is fully aware of the reality that experimental science provides sectional and fragmentary knowledge of reality. This knowledge at its place is believable and also beneficial but this cannot give us the knowledge of the ultimate reality in complete sense.

“There is no doubt that the theories of science constitute trustworthy knowledge, because they are verifiable and enable us to predict and control the events of Nature. But we must not forget that what is called science is not a single systematic view of reality. It is a mass of sectional views of reality ___fragments of a total experience which do not seem to fit together” (Iqbal, 1989, p.33)

We understand things with reference to their parts. For example we see a picture. In addition to its colour, sketch, lines and angles we reach at the idea which was in the mind of that artist. This is intuition which takes us to the internal world of that artist who made this picture. At once when we instead of observing mutual relationship of the parts of a unity we feel a unity as a unit and think that we have gained the knowledge of something, then at that time the functional faculty of our intellect comes to an end and intuition starts functioning. Leaving aside the evident side of reality we cannot reach the intrinsic side of reality. Khalifa Abdul Hakeem writes in Hikmat-e-Rumi that there is an interior of every exterior, in the same way every exterior has an interior; that is why world of creation cannot be without shape.

If we focus our attention towards our own selves and analyse our consciousness we come to know that our consciousness is only an aggregate of changing conditions from moment to moment. We are in a continuous phase of changing. We enter from one condition to another. Sometimes we feel heat and sometimes cold, we are happy or sad. Our life, senses, feelings, intentions and thoughts remain divided in these different states.

“There is nothing static in my inner life; all is a constant mobility, an unceasing flux of states, a perpetual flow in which there is no halt or resting place” (Iqbal, 1989, p. 38)

According to Bergson conscious conditions are in a permanent flow which is indivisible. In this continuously changing consciousness, verification of “time” is necessary. Bergson thinks that time and change is very important. Iqbal follows Bergson as far as the importance of change and time is concerned but he goes deeper regarding consciousness and exposes two aspects of human self:

1. Efficient self (*Nafs-e- Fa “al*)
2. Appreciative self (*Nafs-e- Basir*)

Under the influence of efficient self or *Nafs-e-Fa* “*al* we are related to the outside of the world and when appreciative self or *Nafs-e-Basir* is in action then we study our own conscious deeply. Whenever we find some time for deep concentration, efficient ego is suspended and appreciative ego comes into play. Our intuition travels deep into our own selves and reach the real centre of sense perception. According to Bergson intuition is such a function by which we get at the intrinsic reality of something and coincide ourselves with that reality. Through intuition we come to know about the real nature of reality and comprehend reality as an indivisible whole. Bergson considers motion, change and time a reality, according to him ultimate reality is such a change which stays nowhere. Material things and conscious states both are based on motion and change. Intellect has reformed a continuity of time and moment to ease itself in the chain of flow of time. Reality is a change without succession in which past, present and future cannot be divided but it may be an open possibility. Up to here Iqbal fully agrees with Bergson.

قریب نظر ہے سکون و ثبات
ترپتا ہے ہر ذرہ کائنات
ظہر تائیں کاروان وجود
کہ ہر لحظہ ہے تازہ شان وجود

(Iqbal, 1998, p.454)

سکون محال ہے قدرت کے کارخانے میں
ثبات اک تغیر کو ہے زمانے میں

(Iqbal, 1998, p.173)

Iqbal's thought has an effect of Bergson's thought. It is right if we say that Iqbal has been much impressed by the philosophy of Bergson. But where Bergson considers change to be reality Iqbal does not agree with him and he insists that God, not change is real.

As far as intuition is believed to be a source of knowledge, Bergson is of the opinion that intuition is the basis of his philosophy and Iqbal has also considered intuition as an authentic source of knowledge. Bergson and Iqbal have no enmity with reason. Both consider reason as a means to get knowledge.

“Now, maintains Iqbal, there is a level of experience over and above the normal level; and that level is experience by intuition. It is unique experience, and experience of its own kind, and essentially different from every other kind of experience. It is other than perception and it is other than thought. It reveals to us a reality which is grasped neither by perception nor by thought”.
(Enver, 1973, p.19)

Reason focuses attention on the time factor of reality while intuition considers external aspect of reality. Outwardly these two forces appear opposite but it is really not so. These both together have an access to reality. Dr. Jameela Khatoon (1997) writes:

“Intuition and intellect may be visualised as a double edged sword in man's hand. With one edge he invades the ultimate reality; with the other he invades the universe.” (p. 28)

In History of Islamic Philosophy Ghazali due to his philosophical scepticism has completely removed rationalism from Islam. Being disappointed from rational thinking he moved towards mystic experience and tried to make religion free from science and philosophy. It happened so that reason and intuition became completely separated from each other and there could remain no relation between the two. Iqbal strictly criticises this attitude of Ghazali.

To him reason being limited is due to the fact that we have attached ourselves with serial time whereas our thought has an unlimited individuality in it. The example of thought is just like a seed having hidden in it the unity of a fully fledged tree. It is just possible for thought to comprehend infinite. In order to know the nature of knowledge Ghazali turned his attention towards other sources of knowledge. He goes ahead step by step with doubt and in the act of searching knowledge with trustful sources goes on rejecting sense perception and reason one by one. To come towards certainty from doubt is very important procedure in the field of epistemology. Ghazali started his journey of knowledge through examining sense perception and came to the conclusion that knowledge so achieved is least reliable. Then he turned his attention towards other source of knowledge. That other source of knowledge was reason but later when he could not achieve his goal through reason he also discarded it.

In modern philosophy Descartes's method of doubt is so similar to that of Ghazali's method that they seem to be copy of each other. Descartes also started his thought with doubt, and he doubted even his own existence. The difficulty in accepting intuition a systematic source of knowledge in mystic and spiritual knowledge is that both fields of knowledge are neither systematic nor do they have their own rules and regulations. This is the reason that spiritual knowledge cannot be placed at the level of systematic and clear cut knowledge. We cannot find out definite and final result from them. With the passage of time it is possible that there may be some type of advancement in research that spiritual knowledge can be put under the caption of dependable knowledge.

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* (I have also written an article titled *Iqbal ka Nazriya e Ilm* (urdu) published in *Iqbal* 2006. This article is a re-creation of Iqbal's concept of knowledge in the light of new research.