

Gnosis ('*erfān*) and Reason ('*aql*): The Case of Hafez, the Persian Poet

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Abstract

The world is now witnessing the frequent occurrence of situations where modern Western knowledge, the superiority of which is taken for granted without any shadow of a doubt today, fails to make its expected contributions. Against this backdrop, the very meaning of modern knowledge that places ultimate value on the work of reason is now called into question. Already, Westerners themselves have long been seeking a clue to this question outside Europe, which has caused a paradigm shift in thinking and thus is highly significant. This paper explores a clue to answer this question by examining the works of Hafez, a Sufi poet active in Persia in the 14th century. He understood reason (*aql*) as dichotomous to gnosis (*erfān*), and wrote poems based on this understanding. In doing so, he eventually expressed skepticism and even objection to communications that rely on the work of reason, namely “words.” If we are to verify the malfunction of “rational” words, we have to completely break up the ordinary function of words by use of metaphors that betray “common sense.” In case of Hafez, he destroyed Islamic common sense by writing about “drinking” and “love affairs,” which, paradoxically, led to the unfolding of the profound world of gnosis, along with the world of ultimate Islamic knowledge. By examining and shedding light on this process, we may be able to find a clue to overcome the serious state of self-disunion, namely the gap between speech and comprehension that annoys us today.

Keywords: Hafez, Gnosis (*erfān*), Reason (*aql*), Persia, Mysticism

This miserable man-God is with him all the time, but he has not seen him and

From afar, cries; My God, my God!

All the nonsense that Reason (you yourself) did here is;

What Samaritans did towards the rod and white hand.

Hafez, *Divan-e Hafez*¹⁾

بیدلی در بر او الٰه خدا با او بود
او نمیدید پیشش از دور دست دارا میکرد
این همه شنبه و نوشش که میکرد اینجا
ساماری پیشش عصا و دیرضا میکرد

Introduction

The superiority of modern Western knowledge has been taken for granted without any shadow of a doubt since the late modern period until today. Recently, however, there have been an increasing number of cases where this knowledge fails to work properly in a variety of fields. Modern Western knowledge, which reached its peak in the 19th century, is best characterized by emphasis on reason. In other words, the greatest confidence is placed on the work of reason, and the conclusions reached through it are believed to be closest to the truth. With absolute trust in human intellect at its core, this conception rapidly spread around the world like wildfire, not naturally, but largely compelled by force.

It is true that knowledge based on this conception has certain universality, but it is also true that this knowledge was established in the limited historical context of the Western Europe of the 18th century to the 19th century. Against the backdrop of the increase in the complexity of modern social relationships, therefore, an increasing number of problems have arisen that can no longer be solved by “reason.” This situation is not peculiar to developed countries in the West (including Japan) alone, but can be commonly observed in other parts of the world with different historical backgrounds. The state of “self-disunion,” which is characteristic of modern people, is caused by the anxiety we feel when we discover that the conclusions reached through rational and logical thinking do not help us solve problems. Already more than 50 years ago, Mircea Eliade wrote:

Now, the proper frame of mind for discovering the meaning of a typical human situation is not the “objectivity” of the naturalist, but the intelligent sympathy of the exegetist, the interpreter. It is the frame of mind itself that has had to be changed.²⁾

Eliade maintains that now that the Western way of thinking originating in the 19th century is no longer capable of playing its expected role, Westerners have to change their frame of mind. He also argues that in order to break the deadlock, Westerners should give up their self-centered independence and have dialogue with “others,” with special focus placed on Asian “primitive” culture.³⁾

As this argument shows, doubts have been cast upon Western knowledge among Westerners themselves, while, at the same time, new proposals were presented. Though we need further validation before concluding that a clue to solutions to ongoing problems can be found in the Asian “primitive” culture, Eliade’s view is still highly suggestive, as it calls into question the validity of modern Western civilization itself and its system of meaning, which has been customarily accepted by Japanese intellectuals who have embraced Western

civilization almost blindly.

In general, “intuitive knowledge” is considered to be antonymous to “rational knowledge.” Intuitive knowledge comes in various forms and has been accepted as “true” knowledge anywhere at any time in the history. Today, demand is growing to re-evaluate the significance of intuitive knowledge, against the backdrop of the inability of modern Western rationalism to cope with contemporary problems. Based on this understanding, this paper attempts to explore the current situation surrounding knowledge in greater depth.⁴⁾

Part 1: Preliminary Consideration – Rational Knowledge and Intuitive Knowledge

A. Characteristics of modern Western knowledge

The process of developing modern Western knowledge started from observing objects closely, including humans, in the world of physical phenomena. Then, data was collected, analyzed, and eventually generalized to produce certain rules. The main purpose was to apply these rules universally. Rules so developed were believed to be applicable not only to the fields of natural science and physics, but also to the field of humanities. Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) is one of the main advocators of this view. This section will shed light on the thought of William Kingdon Clifford (1845–1879), a representative figure of scientism in the 19th century. As a leading advocator of scientism, which was becoming popular in those days, he held a view that stood in sharp contrast to those who believed in the importance of religious factors.

We have, then, come somehow to the following conclusions. By scientific thought we mean the application of past experience to new circumstances by means of an observed order of events. By saying that this order of events is exact we mean that it is exact enough to correct experiments by, but we do not mean that it is theoretically or absolutely exact, because we do not know. The process of inference we found to be in itself an assumption of uniformity, and we found that, as the known exactness of the uniformity became greater, the stringency of the inference increased. By saying that the order of events is reasonable we do not mean that everything has a purpose, or that everything can be explained, or that everything has a cause; for neither of these is true. But we mean that to every reasonable question there is an intelligible answer, which either we or posterity may know by the exercise of scientific thought.⁵⁾

As shown above, he was adherent to the philosophy of scientism almost to an excessive degree. At the core of his view is the thoroughgoing empiricism started by David Hume. Of course, humans are the subjects of experience. Clifford believed that the same principle could

be applied even to understand the ethical activities of humans. He maintained that even if something remains unknown to us at present, it just happens to be so, and it will be eventually revealed to us by the power of human reason, without question.

In *The Will to Believe*, W. James sharply criticized Clifford for his skepticism toward “believing,” in a sarcastic manner. He wrote:

And that delicious *enfant terrible* Clifford writes: “Belief is desecrated when given to unproved and unquestioned statements for the solace and private pleasure of the believers....Whoso would deserve well of his fellows in this matter will guard the purity of this belief with a very fanaticism of jealous care, lest at any time it should rest on an unworthy object, and catch a stain which can never be wiped away...If (a) belief has been accepted on insufficient evidence (even though the belief be true, as Clifford on the same page explains) the pleasure is a stolen one....It is sinful because it is stolen in defiance of our duty to mankind. That duty is to guard ourselves from such beliefs as from a pestilence which may shortly master our own body and then spread to the rest of the town....It is wrong always, everywhere, and for everyone, to believe anything upon insufficient evidence.”⁶⁾

By quoting Clifford’s words shown above, James states that Clifford’s argument amounts to Pyrrhonism and that such cosmic emotions find no use for Christian feelings.⁷⁾

Knowledge acquired through the methodology of scientism is, in fact, only “partial knowledge,” or knowledge about a fragmented part of the object of observation, in most cases. However, such fragmentary knowledge was considered reliable and “correct” due to its lucidity. Needless to say, this understanding is inseparably connected with the role of reason.

B. Problem with rational knowledge

The problem with the modern Western way of thinking is that we have accepted newly acquired knowledge without clear understanding of what it means in the context of the entire picture. Information given to us has been fragmented in the process of its acquisition, and thus we cannot see how the information relates to the entirety. This can upset our mental balance and sometimes cause mental disorder. We may be able to deal with a highly specialized problem extremely well, but fail to grasp the whole picture. This disorder is typical of modern people.

Further, words play a role in the development of the disorder, as words can create a dilemma between the intention to achieve full “lucidity” and the inability to correctly convey

the meaning of the intention. While this problem is relatively minor in the field of natural science, it causes serious consequences in the discipline of humanities that explores the values and mental issues of humans. Upon the conceptualization of words, a diversity of meaningfulness is reduced to one sign, while a word that originally has only one meaning is fragmented in a number of conceptual contexts. Once a speaker or writer has accepted a word as having a certain conceptual meaning within himself, the intention of the speaker or writer is forced upon listeners and readers when he uses the word, without regard to what the word means to the latter. The problem is that even if such an intention is forced, the listeners and readers can understand the word only within the limited range of meanings they have learned through their personal experiences. In reality, people understand the words of others only vaguely. It is hoped that they have a correct understanding even if in a small way, but they may wrongfully believe that their understanding is correct. This is a tragedy for modern people. Toshihiko Izutsu discusses the relationship between modern science and words in his *Ishiki to honshitsu – seishinteki toyo wo motomete* (Consciousness and Essence – A Seeking of the Oriental Spirit) as follows.

Language is a system of phonetic signs, and linguistic signs can play their role simply because they can denote and point to objects, or in other words, they have “meanings.” Exploring how they can denote and point to objects, or analyzing and shedding light on the structure of meanings, is one of the core interests of modern philosophers. In science-oriented modern American philosophy and modern British empiricism, the meaningfulness of words and their philosophical significance has been attracting the interest of thinkers, and is subjected to cutting-edge, detailed analysis. Following this trend in the world of thought, many popular books have been written about meanings in the realm of thinking in everyday context. These books discuss how we can use words in a meaningful way and avoid the risk of speaking meaningless words, thus emphasizing the importance of the right use of words and also the right way of thinking, and teach the techniques necessary to do so. It is considered a shame for modern people to use words meaninglessly and be caught in a thought that does not make any sense. This is because speaking meaninglessly in whatever manner goes against the scientific thinking that essentially governs the common sense of modern society. Scientific thought, with non-contradiction and consistency as its principle, demands meaningful use of words, among other things.⁸⁾

Izutsu also argues that, in *Zen koan* (questions in Zen training), “questions about words are raised in a paradoxical way, namely, in a thoroughly meaningless way.” Zen philosophy pays no heed to historically accepted metaphysical essential meanings of words, and thus has no trust in words in the first place. This attitude is well reflected in a Zen phrase, *gonmutenji*

(words cannot express things).⁹ Such distrust in words is apparent also in Islam, as shown in the works of Hafez, the Persian poet, to be examined in this paper.

C. Intuitive knowledge

This section will discuss “intuitive knowledge” as opposed to “rational knowledge.” As seen in section A above, James sharply criticized the pro-scientism attitude and insisted that some knowledge can be grasped by intuition. He adopted a methodology of thoroughgoing empiricism to discuss intuitive knowledge. It may seem contradictory to apply this methodology for such a purpose, but experience is the only way to understand the meaning of what is happening in the phenomenal world. While James, who held a doctoral degree in medicine, admitted that he had no religious mystical experience himself, he collected as many experiences of saints and magi in the past as possible and examined these experiences by comparing them with information gained through his own experience as a doctor. Thus, he established the well-known four categories of mystical experience, which are:

1. Ineffability (The person who has had a mystical experience cannot describe his experience in words)
2. Noetic quality (The experience brings special insight to the person)
3. Transiency (The experience is short-lived)
4. Passivity (The subject feels a loss of control)

These are four characteristics of mystical experience.¹⁰ Among them, characteristics (1) and (2) bear special importance for this paper, so let me discuss them in greater depth below.

This issue is deeply associated with our cognitive ability.¹¹ From the viewpoint of the modern Western subject-object dichotomy, the observing subject (I) is detached from the object perceived, and both are fixed in their positions. Setting aside conceptual recognition, the object is assumed to exist *a priori* as a reality, and thus is accepted as an “existing thing” without question. Through the work of the reasoning of the subject, the knowledge about the “existing thing” is segmented and then further fragmented until finally fixed. This process is considered to be about gaining knowledge, or recognizing the object. The assumption of the undeniable existence of a pre-defined object prevents the observer from exercising his rational faculty, which is supposed to work flexibly. This contradictory situation has given rise to various problems. Directly antithetical to the conventional notion of subject-object dichotomy is the view that the meanings of specific phenomena unfolding before us are defined through the process of the interpretation and selection of our everyday experiences based on the certain vague “feeling” that we have at the very beginning of our recognition process, which may be called a “pure experience.” In so arguing, this view defies the

undeniable existence of a pre-defined subject and object. For example, each of us has a “pure experience” or “feeling” about something “red” as part of our formative experience, and through the process of interpretation or selection based on such an experience and feeling, we know that the object we are seeing is “red.” Without such a formative experience, we have no way to determine whether the thing before us is red or not. The problem is that our experience of recognizing something as “red” is a very “personal” and “specific” one, and cannot be shared with anyone else. Even if I recognize something as “red,” this recognition is exclusively mine, and cannot be shared even with a person closest to me. Under the pressure of necessity, we call the “feeling” of the color that can be shared among us to some extent “red” by way of conceptualization using words. Through use of words, our personal experiences are segmented and meanings are generally defined. Yet, the gap in recognition between me and others still remains unfilled.

In the light that even the visually recognizable concept of “red” is so difficult to share, it is simply evident that far greater difficulty is encountered in sharing the recognition of intangible objects that cannot be seen with the eyes, tasted with the tongue, or touched with the hands, such as gnosis (*ʿerfān*), which is the theme of this paper. This is because words have little power to describe a mystical experience, though they have been believed to be the most efficient means of giving a rational account of things. Clearly, there are limitations to the power of our reason, which is inextricably related with the function of words.

Religious experience itself is simply beyond any words because of its ineffable absolute particularity. After all, no one can understand a religious experience of others without undergoing the experience himself. In this case, conventional words are often rendered useless.

Based on the preliminary consideration mentioned above, let me next discuss Sufism and the background of Hafez, prior to the part of “Main Consideration,” where their specific details are examined.

Part 2: Sufism¹²⁾ and the Background of Hafez

In Islam, the path leading to gnosis (Sufism, *tasawwof*, *sūfigarī*) is usually considered in two contexts. One is the view of the world (*ʿerfān-e nazarī*) and the other is the practical aspect (*ʿerfān-e ʿamālī = tariqat*). This paper does not discuss these two contexts in depth but provides the minimum necessary information on the basic characteristics of Sufism to understand the thoughts of Hafez.

First, the view of the world of gnosis (*erfān*) has the following characteristics.¹³⁾

1. The thought of “oneness of being” (*vahdat al-vojūd*) is at the core of the view of the world. Those who have achieved gnosis (*āref*) surpass the level of ordinary people who gain knowledge by comparing something with other things. They realize that God is the only “existence” and the only “being” through the recognition of the sheer greatness of God that defies comparison with any created beings.
2. The existence of God has several “phases.” The world comes into existence as the manifestation (*tajallī*) of the only God. God created the world to manifest Himself.
3. Perfect justice (*ād*), beauty (*zibā’ī*), and balance (*tavāzon*) exist in the world.
4. Created beings eventually return to the truth (= God). All men originate from God. Those who have departed from God aspire to return to God, their very origin, in the end.
5. The world has an end and resurrection (*ma’ād*).
6. Men are a macrocosmos (*‘ālam-e kabīr*) and the world is a microcosmos (*‘ālam-e saghīr*).
7. Philosophers believe that reason brings them to perfection and that reason is the essence of men. On the other hand, awakened people (*āref*) do not think that the perfection of man lies in the perfection of reason. Men travel a path until reaching perfect being. While philosophers rely on reason and inference, awakened people need the assistance of diligence (*mojāhada*), abstinence (*riyāzat*), purification of the soul (*tahdhīb-e nafs*), love (*‘eshq*), and action (*solūk*). Among these, “love” takes on an especially important meaning and should be emphasized.

This paper will discuss the characteristic numbered (7) above in detail in Part 3 “Main Consideration.”

Next, let me discuss the practical aspect of the path to awakening. Various manuals were written on the stages of practice (*manzel*, pl. *manāzel*) to reach awakening.¹⁴⁾ A number of books on Sufism indicate a certain common tendency in these manuals, and various views have been presented by Western researchers. For example, Cyprian Rice divided the path into seven stages, namely: (1) Repentance and conversion (religious awakening); (2) Awe of God; (3) Abstinence from worldly life; (4) Poverty; (5) Patience; (6) Trust in God; and (7) Satisfaction.¹⁵⁾ After completing all these stages, seekers of gnosis reach the stage of union with God (*fanā*). Others have divided the path to gnosis into tens or even one hundred of stages, but basically there is no substantial difference among them. Seekers who are to embark on a journey to awakening first resolve to break away from worldly relationships (to leave behind family, friends, property, etc.) and then advance to higher stages step-by-step.

Needless to say, this idea is not limited to Islam only, but it is commonly seen in various religions around the world. It should be noted, however, that Islam, unlike Buddhism, does not permit awakened people to renounce the world. Instead, those who have finished the journey to gnosis are supposed to return to the secular world and live in a Muslim community (unma) as “persons who have elevated themselves to a higher state.”

Based on the understanding of the basic characteristics of Sufism, I will next touch on the background of Hafez below.

Hafez is a famous Persian poet, whose real name is Shams al-Dīn Muhammad. Very little credible information about his life is known to us.¹⁶⁾ Reportedly, he was born in Shiraz in the central southern part of Iran in 1326 or 1327 and died there in 1388 or 1389, but opinions differ over the years of his birth and death. In his childhood days, the Il-Khanid dynasty was gradually heading to a collapse, while local rulers were increasing power. His father, Bahā al-Dīn (or Kamāl al-Dīn), moved with his family from Isfahan to Shiraz and died when Hafez was a little child. It is reported that after spending all the property left behind by his father, Hafez’s family met with financial difficulties, but Hafez himself seemed to receive traditional education more than sufficiently, as eloquently evidenced by the extensive range of knowledge incorporated in his poems. His outstanding intelligence is simply obvious also from the fact that “*hāfez*” is a title granted to people who have learned the entire Quran by heart.

In general, Hafez’s life is divided into three periods.

The first period is during the reign of Abū Eshāq, which lasted until 1353. This is his adolescent period, during which he is deemed to have enjoyed his life under the patronage of Abū Eshāq. However, Abū Eshāq was later ousted from Shiraz and eventually killed by Mobārez of the Muzaffarid dynasty. This incident drastically changed the life of Hafez and brought sorrow and suffering to him.

The second period was from the tyrannical rule of Mobārez to 1384 when the reign of Shāh Shojā’ ended. Mobārez placed people under oppressive Islamic rule. Hafez did not serve this ruler directly, and lived in obscurity for four to five years. After Shāh Shojā’ replaced Mobārez, the new ruler extended his generous patronage to Hafez, and the poet’s talent came into full bloom during this period.

The third period was until the death of Hafez. After Shāh Shojā’ died, the poet sought new patronage despite his advanced age.

Among them, the second period is considered the most important for the life of Hafez. Hafez was in his middle and early senior years during the long reign of Shāh Shojā', which spanned 26 years, when he reached maturity as a poet and achieved great success. In contrast, Hafez, as a lover of freedom, had an almost unbearably tough time during the strict Islamic rule by Mobārez that preceded this period. Reportedly, during these hard days, he experienced countless hardships and sufferings and reached the state of gnosis (*'erfān*).

Various stories have been told about the life of Hafez, who is credited to have written poems about the deepest truth of God. He could be a court poet, an atheist, just a profligate (*rend*), or a mendicant ascetic (dervish). With a variety of theories existing about his identity, it is not easy to portray this poet in one single framework, while the danger of describing Hafez as an "ideal person" based on a certain pre-fixed image has often been pointed out.¹⁷⁾ With full awareness of this danger, this paper will examine the theory that holds Hafez as a law scholar, which is most suited for the purpose of this paper.

Motahhari holds that Hafez might not be a "professional" poet on the grounds that he wrote very few poems and that he was not so renowned as a poet, a mendicant ascetic, or a Sufi, though Motahhari admits that Hafez could be known as a poet not only in Shiraz but also outside Iran, as Hafez himself explicitly mentioned in his poems.¹⁸⁾ Hafez wrote about 600 poems during his lifetime, which amounts to 15 poems a year on an average supposing that he was active as a poet for 40 years. In this regard, a marked difference is observed between Hafez and other famous Islamic poets such as Nezāmi (1141–1203), Ferdowsi (934–1025), and Rūmi (1207–1273). In his poem, Hafez wrote about "throwing away" *zi*, a traditional wear of Sufis, but there is no knowing whether he wore *zi* himself or not. In addition, Hafez was not given the title of poet or *'āref*. While it is widely known that he was called the "Tongue of the Unseen" (*lisān al-ghaib*), this designation was given to him after his death, according to Motahhari.

Opinions differ as to whether Hafez was a Sunni or a Shia. According to record, after the Mongol invasion in the 13th century, successive Khans converted to Islam in the early 14th century. Especially, the prevailing notion that Uljaytu, whose reign was between 1304 and 1316, converted to Shia Islam gives us some grounds to believe that Hafez was a Shia. Motahhari did not cast the slightest doubt on this view, and this paper also supports the view that Hafez was a Shia in the following discussion. Unlike Sunni tradition, Shia-Sufis customarily do not disclose who their mentors are. Those who have attained a high level of gnosis occupy a position that is different from *morshed*, *shaykh*, or *ostād*, and they are given greater importance than in the case of a Sunni. Traditionally, Shia Muslims have not been informed of who is the wisest man in their days. Accordingly, it is often the case that a man

has attained a state of gnosis without his wife and children knowing. According to Motahhari, Hafez traveled the path to gnosis alone, without following any mentor or instructor, and reached awakening.¹⁹⁾ Therefore, we have no direct evidence that explicitly shows that Hafez was an awakened man (*āref*), except for his poems. Based on this understanding, and in consideration of the last designation given to him before his death, Motahhari concludes that Hafez was known to the public as a scholar, rather than as a dervish, Sufi, or *āref*.

This theory can be of extremely great importance for religious scholars (*ulama*) such as Motahhari. This is because understanding Hafez as just a profligate or a court poet is hardly acceptable by those who embrace gnosis (*erfān*), the innermost depths of Islamic wisdom. In exploring the meanings of gnosis and reason, which is the main purpose of this paper, the attempt to understand the poems of Hafez from the standpoint of religious scholars of Shia Islam has a special significance because of their (Shi'a scholars') emphasis on the work of reason. It is very interesting to explore how Hafez's "blasphemous" poems, which are to be discussed in the part of "Main Consideration" of this paper, can be interpreted from an "orthodox" Islamic viewpoint (though limited to the Shia tradition). Through this process, we may discover the similarities and differences in the meaning of "reason" between the days of Hafez and our time, and this discovery may lead us to a new horizon of knowledge.

Part 3: Main Consideration

A. Hafez's poems about gnosis

In this part, I will refer to the poems of Hafez to highlight the issues that need to be addressed. His poetry anthology, *Divan*, contains about 30 poems in which the terms "reason" (*'aql*), which is one of the keywords of this paper, and "man of reason, man of sanity" (*'āqel*) are used.

Generally speaking, reason (*'aql*) is defined as the ability to think using concepts, as opposed to the ability to deal with objects perceived by senses, and it is recognized as one of the principles of the faith (*osūl-e dīn*) of Shia Muslims. Though *'aql* is not necessarily equivalent to reason in a modern Western sense, it is characterized by the ability of men to make "rational" judgment, which is in contrast to the attitude to understand things intuitively or illogically. According to *Osūl-e Kāfi*, one of the four major collections of Imami hadith in Twelver Imami Shi'ism, reason was granted to men by God, as this paper will discuss later. Especially in Shia Islam, the importance of reason is explicitly demonstrated by the emphasis on the exercise of *ijtihād* in juristic interpretation.

As shown above, the work of reason (*aql*) is an inseparable part of the everyday life of men (Muslims). However, too much dependence on the work of reason can bring fatal contradiction to faith. As discussed in the part of “Preliminary Consideration,” we may say that this contradiction has manifested itself in today’s society extremely radically. Characteristically, Hafez’s poems, which were written in historical and geographical circumstances completely different from ours, are underlain by the belief that the rational judgment of men is an obstacle to the path to ultimate knowledge (gnosis). Though there are few exceptions, reason and gnosis are portrayed as conflicting concepts in the poems of Hafez, as typically shown by the following poem.

In the beginning when Your magnificent light appeared,
 Love was found and it lighted up all the world.
 It appeared and saw your face and the angel did not have love;
 Its essence became fire out of this zeal and it hit Adam.
 Reason wished to burn the light by means of that fire;
 The lightening of zeal flashed and put the world into confusion.
 The claimant wished to come and see the secret;
 The Unseen Hand came and hit the chest of this claimant.
 Others are all happy with the dice of their fate;
 Our grief-seen heart was there and increased the grief
 Lofty heart wished your dimple;
 Hand touches her ringlet one after another
 Hafez wrote , that day, the letter of love for you;
 That was the day when he erased the foundation of joy of heart.²⁰⁾

در ازل بر تو حضرت نوری زدهم زد
 عشق پیدا شد و آتش بر عالم زد
 جلوه‌ای کرد ز نسبت به ملک عشق نداشت
 عین آتش شد ازین غیرت بر آدم زد
 عقل خواست که آن طالع را بزد
 برق غیرت بهشت جهان بهم زد
 مدعی خواست که آید بهمت شاگرد
 دست نایب آمد و برست زین باجم زد
 دیگران از طقمست بر عرض زدند
 دل غم‌سینه ما بود که رسم غم زد
 جان غوی بپسند عابد زندان بود
 دست در حلقه آن لطف نم اندر نم زد
 حافظ آن روز در باب نغم عشق نوشت
 که قلم بر سر است باب دل ختم زد

In this poem, there was “love” along with light at the beginning of creation. Especially, it was love for the Creator (God), and the love was extended to the entire world, including Adam (a man). However, the man attempted to understand the “love” with the power of “reason,” or rationality. The “claimant” (*modda'i*) in this poem refers to reason, or the attempt of the man to explore the meaning (or the secret) of “love,” the ultimate purpose of human existence, using the brain. Displeased with this attitude, the “invisible hands” (*dast-e ghaib*)—God—hit the blasphemer (*nā-mahram=the claimant=the Adam*), the man, on the chest and threw him out.²¹⁾

As discussed above, love is the ultimate goal of Sufism, and absolute importance is given to the relationship between those who love (men) and the Beloved (God). Men are supposed to drop everything in pursuit of love. To reach such a state of mind, those traveling the path to gnosis have to go through tens of stages (*manzel*, *pl. manāzel*) and states (*hal*, *pl. ahvāl*).

Basically, the path starts from resolution (conversion) and continues to higher levels of the abandonment of lust, acquisition of spiritual virtues, and union with God, and finally reaches the stage of gnosis (awakening).

The state of awakened people (*'āref*, *'oraffā*) is beyond any ordinary words. Therefore, Sufi poets used various metaphors to describe the state.

With bright water of wine, a Gnostic did ablution;
 Early in the morning, he did pilgrimage to the tavern.
 The moment a golden goblet disappeared;
 The new moon of *'Eid(festa)* appeared around the goblet.
 Good for the prayer of a man, who because of pains (of heart)
 Did ablution with water of eyes and blood of *jegar* (liver).
 The prayer leader, who was preoccupied by long prayer
 Washed his robe with the blood of a daughter of a grape tree.
 My heart bought a disturbance of my life for her ringlet;
 I do not know what profit I got from this transaction.
 If the prayer leader of the community asks today;
 Tell him Hafez did ablution with wine.²²⁾

بآب روشن می‌سازد غسلی طهارت کرد
 علی الصبح باج کیخانه را زیارت کرد
 همین که گشت از زین بر نخلان گشت
 جلالت عید در دست عیادت کرد
 خوشامد از دنیا که می‌گزارست بر
 بآب دیده خون گشت که طهارت کرد
 امام خود را که بر شش برشت از در
 بخون دختر ز حسن تو در طهارت کرد
 دلم ز طلع زلفش بجان خریدم
 چه سود دیدم تا که گم گم این تجارت کرد
 اگر امام جماعت طلب کند امروز
 خبر دهیم که حافظی طهارت کرد

And in another poem, Hafez says;

Last night a hermit, who has been in seclusion, went to the tavern;
 And broke his oath because of his desire of wine.
 The mystic, who used to break the goblets at banquets till yesterday
 Became wise and sane with a sip of wine.²³⁾

زایه خلوت نشین در شب میبند ز شد
 از سر میبند آن وقت با سر میبند ز شد
 صوفی خلوت گس می‌طعمه تیغ می‌گسست
 باز یک گسب صوفی عاق و فرزند ز شد

.....

These poems written by Hafez are simply astounding. It is a public knowledge that alcohol consumption is an absolute taboo (*harām*) in Islam. Yet, the first poem is about an awakened person (*'āref*) purifying himself with, of all things, alcohol (wine) before worship (normally, water is used for purification [*tahārat*]). Literally, this poem says that Hafez himself drank alcohol, and in fact, many readers have interpreted the poem in this way. The second poem describes that a hermit drank alcohol and became wise (*'āqel*) and sane (*farzāneh*). At the same time, however, these expressions can be interpreted as metaphorical. Literally, this poem means that an Islamic wise man went to a tavern and drank alcohol. In Sufism, however, alcohol (*sharāb*, *bādeh*, *mei*, etc.) is widely known as a symbol of an ecstatic experience given by a revelation from the truly Beloved (*ma'shūq*), namely God, and is

synonymous with the destruction of reason and rationality.²⁴⁾ Another similar poem goes:

Last night our *pir*(spiritual guide) went from the *masjed* to a tavern,
 What should we do, friends of the same path, after this?
 How do we disciples, face the *qiblah* when
 Our guide faces in the direction of the tavern?
 Let's live together in the ruins of our path
 'Cause this is the way of our fate from the very beginning
 If Reason knows the heart bound by her ringlet gives such a pleasure;
 Even wise persons will get crazy because of our chain of intoxication.
 Your face manifests a sign of grace upon us;
 From that time on, there is nothing but grace and goodness in our fate.
 With your heavy heart , does anything shake it during a night
 Because of our fire-like sigh and the burning of heart at night?
 Hafez, be quiet, our arrow of sigh passes through the heaven;
 Be compassionate with your life and avoid our arrow²⁵⁾

دوش از مسجدی حیات زانم پیر ما
 چیست باران طریقت بعد ازین تیر ما
 ما مریضان دی سوی قبله چون آیم چون
 روی سوی خانه نفس اردارد پیر ما
 در جزایات طریقت ما بنیمست دل تویم
 کجا حیات پیرین نقت در صد از دل تقدیر ما
 عقل اگر داند که دل بر بند لاش چون است
 عاقلان دیوانه گردند از این زنجیر ما
 روی تو بیستی از لطف بر ما نش کرد
 زمان زمان طریقت خوبی نیست از تیر ما
 با دل سنگینت آیا هیچ گزیرد شبی
 آه آتش ناک و سوز سینه شمشیر ما
 تیر کز ما زگردون گذرد و حافظ خموش
 حکم کن بر جان خود پیر من از تیر ما

This poem is no less astounding than the above poems. This poem says that an elder annoyed his disciples by drinking alcohol. The phrase “the heart bound by her ringlet” literally means being fascinated by the curly locks of beautiful women. However, the elder is supposed to have devoted his life, both physical and spiritual, entirely to God, and thus he had nothing to do with worldly rationality. According to this poem, the rational persons (*‘āqelān*) who cannot understand the pleasure of being with God feel envious as long as they have rationality. This logic appears to make no sense at all if we try to understand and interpret it by ordinary reason, as indicated in the consideration of the first poem quoted above. It is beyond the understanding of ordinary “rational person.” A common-sense interpretation suggests that the poet was a perfect atheist, who made light of God and even blasphemed against God. Seen from another angle, however, this poem can be interpreted quite differently—this poem is meant to call into question the conventional way of “rational thinking” that we have taken for granted. Of course, the concept of rationality in Islam is not necessarily equal to that in a modern Western sense, as discussed above. This issue will be discussed in a greater depth in the next section, in the context of Orthodox Shi’ism (Twelver Imami Shi’ism).

In light of the historical background, the seeming incomprehensibility of this poet can be explained by the following three factors. (1) Assumedly, it was during the reign of Mobārez that Hafez seriously set about writing poems concerning gnosis. During this period, strict Islamic rules were imposed on people, which resulted in the restriction of freedom and

the prevalence of people who pretended to obey the rules formally for fear of punishment. Such a situation must have been unbearable to this poet, a man of freedom who called himself a profligate (*rend*). (2) At the same time, attention should be paid to the fact that there were many hypocrites who claimed to be awakened people, which, though, was not limited only to the reign of Mobārez. Not only regular people, but also Sufis lived a double life, pious outwardly but entirely different inwardly. It is likely that Hafez felt doubts about these people and attacked them. In fact, in one of his poems, he wrote, “Preachers who show their dignity on the pulpit do something different in their private place.”²⁶⁾ While this was not true for all Sufis, it seems deniable that the poet’s ethical and moral anger toward them was a main motivation for him to write such poems. (3) In addition to the historical and socio-economic background and ethical motivation mentioned in (1) and (2) above, the poet could have a pure religious motivation stemming from his personal experience of achieving union with God and gaining gnosis, as indicated by Motahhari. Here, allow me to repeat that this paper supports this assumption.

I will discuss this issue referring to an especially well-known poem of Hafez, which is considered to be one of his best poems written about gnosis.

For years our heart has been seeking Jamshid’s glass of us,
 Begging from strangers what it already owned;
 Seeking from lost men on the sea-shore
 The pearl that is outside the confines of place and being.
 I took my difficulty to the old Magian priest yesterday,
 So that, with his firm insight, he might solve the riddle.
 I found him joyful and smiling, a goblet of wine in his hand,
 And in that mirror he was beholding a hundred sights.
 I asked him: When did you obtain this world- looking mirror, wise man?
 He answered: On that day when He created the blue vault of heaven.
 This miserable man-God is with him all the time, but he has not seen him and
 From afar, cries; My God , my God!
 All the nonsense that Reason(you yourself) did here is;
 What Samaritans did towards the rod and white hand.
 That dear friend, said he, on whose account even the gibbet raised its head,
 His crime consisted in manifesting divine secrets.
 If the Grace of the Holy Spirit helps once again,
 Others too may do what Christ did.
 I said to him: What does the chain of the tresses of fair idols mean?
 He replied: Hafez is complaining of the heart of the beloved!²⁷⁾

ما لمانا دل طلب جامجم از ما میکرد
 و آنچه خود داشت زینجا ز ما میکرد
 گوهری که ز صدف کون مکان بر دست
 طلب از گشت مکان این یا میکرد
 مشکل خویش بر پیشان بر دم آورد
 کو تا ناید قطعه سخن صفت میکرد
 دیدش خرم خندان قدح ماه دست
 و اندر آن آینه صد گونه تماشا میکرد
 گفتم این جام جهان بین تو کی دادی گم
 گفت آن روز که او را آفرید خدا میکند
 بی دلی در بر او اله است با او بود
 او نمیدانست از دوزخ دارا میکند
 این همه بعبه و ترفیش که میکرد اینجا
 سامری پیش عصا و دینیا میکند
 گفت آن بار که ز گشت سر او بلند
 بچرخش آن بود که است از روی میکند
 فیض روح القدس اربانه در دنیا
 دیگران هم بکنند و بیسیما میکند
 گفتن ملت از لطف تبار از بی حیت
 گفت حافظ گلگرای از دل شیدا میکند

The Cup of Jamshid is *Jām-e Jam(shīd)* in the original Persian text. Jamshid is a legendary ancient Persian king, who made a great many inventions and had the ability to speak with God. However, his desire to be worshipped as if he were God eventually caused him to lose divine favor. The term “the cup (or mirror) of King Jamshid” has been often used by Persian poets as a metaphor for “a secret spiritual tool” or “a vessel to access cosmic knowledge.” In this poem, “I,” as a spiritual seeker, was for years in search of truth and knowledge to understand the meaning of the world, or the meaning of life, the ultimate purpose of our existence. In this pursuit, I, so foolishly, asked other “wise men” for what was inside me. I have asked the meaning of “existence” to people generally known as wise men, who could be nothing more than “those lost on the ocean’s shore.” The typical act of folly, as described in this poem, is the attempt to use reason to achieve the understanding of this meaning, as is phrased in the very first poem in this chapter which runs as “Reason wished to burn the light by means of that fire.” In the end, I visited “an old Magian priest (*pīr-e moghān*) in a tavern” and asked him the meaning of existence (life). He lifted a cup (mirror) in which the reality of the world is reflected, and said that he had possessed it since the beginning of the world. The term *pīr-e moghān* formally means a Zoroastrian elder. As the elder is not a Muslim, there was no problem in his running a tavern and offering alcoholic drinks. According to Motahhari, the cup (*qadah-e bādeh*) is a metaphor for our own mind, and what the poet means here is that the elder in the tavern is searching into his own mind.²⁸⁾ That is to say, the figure in this poem (his heart) calls God as if He were far away, without searching into his own mind, not aware that God is always with him (“but he has not seen him and from afar cries, My God”). Some argue that this description is not meant to emphasize the miserable state of Man. Instead, it can be interpreted to indicate the potential ability of Man to see the truth and everything in the world by opening up the inner self. For this ability, Man is called a macrocosmos.²⁹⁾

While Hafez wrote other similar poems, I think the above poems suffice for the purpose of exploring the characteristics of the poet.

Next, I will discuss the traditional understanding of *‘aql* in the doctrine of Twelver Imami Shi’ism so that we may clarify the meaning of *‘aql* in the above poem.

B. Reason (*‘aql*) in Islam – In the case of Twelver Imami Shi’ism

Osūl-e Kāfī, one of the four major collections of *hadith* in Twelver Imami Shi’ism contains a chapter titled the *Book of Reason and Ignorance (Ketāb al-‘aql wa al-jahl)*.³⁰⁾ According to this chapter, the most important role of reason is “knowing God,” which means knowing God’s act of creation described in the Quran (including the *Last Judgment* and the righteous act of Man) and its significance.

Reason (*'aql*) was given to Man at the beginning of the creation, with which to judge good and evil. In Section 14 of this chapter, 75 pairs of virtues and vices are listed, and at the top of the list of virtues and vices are, respectively, reason (*'aql*) and ignorance (*jahl*).³¹⁾ Through the work of reason, we can gain knowledge (*'elm*). There are two items of proof (*hojjah*) for the guidance of Man—one explicit and the other implicit. The former (explicit) proof means Prophet Muhammad and the twelve Imams, and the latter *'aql* (Section 12).³²⁾ To be more specific, the words of Prophet Muhammad and Imams teach obedience to external divine laws, i.e. *sharia*, while reason (*'aql*) guides men to the truth of God internally. However, a majority of people fail to follow the guidance of *'aql*, and only few can think using it properly (Section 12).³³⁾ In a world fraught with misunderstanding and agitation, *'aql* enables men to understand the right words (Section 20).³⁴⁾

Most importantly, though *'aql* is a gift from God, it is not used by all men, or it is often used in an incorrect manner. For example, even if a man performs religious duties (*'ebādāt*) that seems perfect, his deed is not considered right if he does so only formally without using *'aql*. Men without *'aql* are regarded as being unable even to live a normal human life. We need the assistance of reason (*'aql*) to deepen wisdom (*hekmat*), and that of wisdom (*hekmat*) to deepen reason (*'aql*). In this way, reason and wisdom (knowledge) are inseparably linked to each other.

These descriptions give us a clue to understand, though to a limited extent, why Hafez repeatedly disregards reason (*'aql*) and men of reason (*'āqel*), and even portrays reason as an obstacle to the path to gnosis in his poems. Perhaps, this may be partly attributable to the difference in the meaning of reason between the present time and the days of Hafez. In other words, it is the difference in the focus of life between these two time periods. Today, we place ultimate importance on the work of reason when developing human capabilities to the fullest or when considering our *raison d'être*. On the other hands, people in the days of Hafez were seeking the truth of God, the absolute being outside the human world, as their purpose of life. For them, reason is just a means to achieve this purpose. Of course, I am not saying that seeking knowledge about God has always been the most important purpose of life for an absolute majority of people throughout history; however, there is no doubt about the difference in the mental state between the people of the days when life was more or less centered around God and people living in today's human-centric society. Living in an "advanced" capitalist society, modern people are less concerned about "turning away" from God and living an "atheistic" life. Also in the days of Hafez, there must have been many people who did not use their *'aql* for its originally intended purposes. What matters here is that though *'aql* was gifted by God as a fundamental necessity of man, only few people could

fully retain and exercise it. Hafez blamed these people who could not rightly use *'aql*, (such people constituted a majority), especially those who wrongfully believed they used their *'aql* properly. Even worse were those hypocrites who intentionally pretended to religious piety (*reyākārān*)—they never endeavored to know God, which is the most important goal for men, and got further away from this goal. This may be similar to the situation surrounding us today, though in a different dimension.

Criticizing such “misguided” people for being ethically and morally wrong, however, was less important to Hafez than writing about “gnosis,” which he himself must have experienced. To be more precise, as a Sufi poet, doing so was quite natural for him. For truly awakened people, communicating the truth of God known to them to people having the power of intuition has greater significance than the “passive” practice of criticizing others. However, communication using words is always accompanied by serious problems as indicated in section (1) B above. Based on this understanding, let me go back to the problem with modern people discussed earlier in sections (1) A and B.

C. Gnosis and Reason

As I have briefly discussed earlier in the part of “Preliminary Consideration,” the modern way of thinking and recognition is characterized by absolute dependence on rationality. Of course, when we do something, we usually rely on “rational” judgment, which is especially true for economic activities. Not only in purely economic fields but also in our daily life, we usually act in a manner that enables us to “minimize waste,” and “achieve the best results with the least amount of efforts.” In taking action, we may rely on past experience, customs, or, sometimes, sophisticated mathematical knowledge, but in the end, our own judgment is given the ultimate importance. Reliance on rationality in this sense is most evident in the field of science. Science explores rules that can be applied at any time and any place. Such rules must be universally applicable under different physical conditions. In reality, however, human knowledge covers only a small part of the universe, and it is rendered useless in the face of the recent increase of events that defy ordinary human understanding. Under the circumstances, we have been torn between choices—whether to optimistically “believe” in human ability as advocates of scientism of the 19th century did, or to admit the limits of human ability and devise measures to cope with the newly emerging situations.

At the stage of history when humans did not have scientific knowledge, people depended on “irrational” means such as superstitions and magic. Even the rise of sophisticated world religions could not bring improvement to human society. Religious conflicts have continued, in which religious believers claiming their superiority over other religions have often brought about devastating consequences. In this sense, they are worse

than atheistic believers in scientism. To avoid misunderstanding, let me mention that the responsibility for such consequences rests with people who uphold the faith in the transcendental being but eventually choose to place excessive confidence in human ability and judgment.

Basically, many religions teach the powerlessness of humans and the relativity of human ability by worshipping a “Transcendental Other.” It is one of the important missions of these religions to make people aware of the necessity of “relativizing” human ability by abandoning the “absolute” confidence in their ability. When people admit their powerlessness in the face of the absolute truth, they learn that it no longer makes any sense to assert themselves. The process to this awareness starts with completely destroying the existing value system that has been taken for granted, or in other words, upsetting or re-examining common sense practices prevailing in our daily life. This process may open up new possibilities.

In this regard, the argument of Izutsu that attention should be paid to the work of the “meaninglessness” of words, which is quoted in section B of the part of “Preliminary Consideration,” bears special importance. The same methodology is adopted in Zen *koan*, but in the case of *koan*, the meaningfulness of words is presented in a thoroughly paradoxical way to induce the emergence of an entirely new picture, as mentioned earlier. In his argument, Izutsu refers to the case of Hallāj (858–922) who, in Hafez’s poem quoted last in the preceding section, is described as “the friend, the one put on the cross” for disgracing God by shouting “I am God (*anā al-haqq*).” Izutsu also discusses the case of Bayazid Bestamī (?–874), focusing on the transformation of the persona within himself (a shift from his self-perception as a man to identification with God).³⁵⁾

In exploring the dramatic positive/negative relationships arising between “selfness” and “otherness” in this sense, Izutsu quotes a lengthy confession of Bestamī as part of his consideration of the “transformation of persona,” which deserves serious attention.³⁶⁾ Bestamī’s confession about his transformation from “selfness” to “otherness” is rather redundant, and there remains some doubt as to its credibility. However, experimental factors are an inseparable part of human judgment as indicated earlier in the discussion about the methodology of James in section C of the part of “Preliminary Consideration.” For this reason, I will accept this kind of confession as possibly credible to a limited extent.

Unlike Bestamī, Hafez did not use direct expressions. Instead, he used metaphors. This paper has been written on the assumption that profound gnosis (*erfān*) is contained in Hafez’s poems, which means that the words uttered by Hafez were not used, at least, according to traditional Islamic common sense standards, or more specifically, that they were

not used within the semantic field shared commonly by ordinary Persian people. If we read Hafez's poems using our common sense, we will have to take a critical view toward his poems just as religious scholars of Hallaj's days did. However, as the poet himself boasted that "gnosis" is inherent in all his poems, I think it is worthwhile to believe his words and interpret his poems accordingly.

By using such blasphemous words, Hafez aimed, among other things, to communicate the truth of God that can never be forever recognized as long as we are bound by common sense. Therefore, Hafez had to entirely break down the framework of common sense. As an awakened man, he had no other choice, as gnosis cannot be understood using ordinary reason. Remaining within the framework of common sense is an obstacle to achieving gnosis. The world of gnosis and that of reason are divided by an ineffable, daunting barrier, which, at least, cannot be conquered using ordinary reason and rationality. Hafez could break the barrier by using words because he had the insight that could be gained only through the extraordinary experience of achieving union with God.

In this sense, there must have existed and still exist people who were inspired by the words of Hafez and who felt a strong stirring in their heart that they had never been known before, even if very few in number. The effect of the words of Hafez is essentially different from that of rational persuasion—these words stimulate emotions and have the power to cause the fundamental transformation of human qualities.

Meanwhile, whether to accept such power or not eventually depends on individual sensibility and, ultimately, religious faith. However, there are a wide variety of ways to accept such power, as indicated in section C above. After all, this is "my" own very personal issue. It is said that love (*eshq*) is at the core of the religious position toward the gnostic thought. Love, in this case, refers to a quest for return to and union with the Being you truly love, who is supposed to be with you at all times but whom you have been departed from (*ferāq*). The power of this quest is in a dichotomous relationship with rational judgment. For this reason, the only way to make people aware of the truth of this love is to take extraordinary measures, which includes writing about drinking, which is prohibited in Islam, and love affairs, not permitted in asceticism. Of course, Hafez's poems can be interpreted as describing the real life of a profligate who drank alcohol and had love affairs with women as indicated earlier, and in fact, some Persian readers have interpreted his poems literally and enjoyed them. Such an interpretation is not necessarily wrong. However, if we read this type of poem literally, the result is either that we simply take some pleasure in reading them, or that we feel annoyed by the lack of the consistency of "rational" meanings. On the other hand, if these poems were a profession by an awakened person who actually "experienced" union with God, then these

words have the power to make a breakthrough by completely destroying the “rational” world governed by “reason” and opening up new perspectives. Encountering the world of “meanings” different from those taken for granted gives us the power to reinvent ourselves as new men. It may have hidden potential to instantly overcome the contradictory situations that face us today. Yet, such an encounter is possible only through highly personal “experience.”³⁷⁾ There no other way, and Hafez’s poems give us just a hint, nothing more.

In Place of a Conclusion:

Out of the approximately 500 lyric poems (*ghazals*) written by Hafez, this paper has examined a few of the poems in which the term reason (*‘aql*) is used. We have no definitive conclusion as to the questions raised in this paper. All we can do is provide an explanation on his poems to a limited extent. Here, we may be reminded of a well-known tale of moths.³⁸⁾ I guess there is a world visible only to those who have taken action at the risk of losing everything, like the moth that flew into candle flame at the cost of his own life. As such a world now defies my personal understanding, allow me to close my discussion here.

Notes

- 1) The original poems of Hafez in Persian quoted in this paper are taken from Mohammad Qazvinī, Qasem Ghani, *Dīvān-e Hāfez-e Shirazi Entesharat-e Milad*, 4th ed., 1381 (2003). In addition to the Qazvinī/Ghani version, there are several other versions, among which some discrepancy is observed in the use of words and the forms of stanzas. This discrepancy is due to the reliance of the editors of these versions on different texts. Even in the same poems, therefore, there are various patterns of arrangement for words, and lines, and meanings. Such discrepancy is not discussed in this paper except for a few cases, for it is not the purpose of this paper. This issue will be addressed later in another paper that I am currently writing. In addition to the Qazvinī/Ghani version, I referred to the following versions to write this paper: Khānlari, Parviz Nātel, *Dīvān-e Hāfez, Khājah Shams al-Dīn Mohammad Ghazaliyāt*, Tehrān, 1362 (1984), Anjevi, Sayyid Abū al-Qāsem, *Dīvān-e Khājah Hāfez-e Shirazi*, 1361 (1983), Motahhari, Mortazā, *Ayeneh-ye Jām, Dīvān-e Hāfez*, Enteshārāt-e Sadrā, Tehrān, 1380 (2002).
- 2) Eliade, Mircea, *The Two and the One*, tr. by J.M. Cohen, The University of Chicago Press, 1962, p.11.
- 3) *Ibid.*, p.12.
- 4) In the process of discussing this issue in this paper, I published the following two “research notes.” “What knowledge means (part 2) – On metaphysical knowledge (Sufism),” *Japanese Language and Culture*, 37th issue, Center for Japanese Language and Culture, Osaka University, 2011, pp. 25–46, and “What knowledge means (part 3) – Stages leading to theosophy and acts of the awakened (saints),” *Japanese Language*

- and Culture, 38th issue, Center for Japanese Language and Culture, Osaka University, 2011, pp. 205–225.
- 5) Clifford, W.K., *The Ethics of Belief and other Essays*, Prometheus Books, New York, 1999, pp.25-26.
 - 6) James, William, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy, and Human Immortality*, “The Will to Believe” p.8.
 - 7) *Ibid.*, p.10.
 - 8) Izutsu, Toshihiko, *Ishiki to honshitsu – seishinteki toyo wo motomete (Consciousness and Essence – A Seeking of the Oriental Spirit)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1991, pp. 355–356.
 - 9) *Ibid.*, p. 360.
 - 10) James, William, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Routledge, London, 2008, p.267.
 - 11) To explore this issue, I referred to the following books: Washida, Kiyokazu, *Genshougaku no shisen – bunsansuru risei (View from phenomenology – Reason that breaks up)*, Kodansha, 2008; Descartes, Rene, *Shousatsu (Meditationes de prima philosophia)* tr. by Miki, Kiyoshi, Iwanami Shoten, 1970; Descartes, Rene, *Houhoujoesetsu, (Discours de la methode)* tr. by Ochiai, Taro, Iwanami Shoten, 1989; Nishida, Kitaro, *Zen no kenkyu (An Inquiry into Good)*, Kodokan, 1914; Husserl, Edmund, *Descartes teki shousatsu (Cartesianische Meditationen)* tr. by Hamauzu, Shinji, Iwanami Shoten, 2005.
 - 12) To discuss Sufism, I referred to the following: ‘Abbās Alī ‘Omīd-e Zenjānī, *Tahqīq va Bārresī dar Tārikh-e Tasawwof*, Tehrān, 1346 (1968), Ali b. Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, *Kāshf al-Mahjūb of al Hujwīrī*, The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism, tr. by R. A. Nicholson, London, 1976, Arthur J. Arberry, *Shiraz: Persian City of Saints and Poets*, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1960, *Sufism, An account of the Mystics of Islam*, George Allen & Unwin LTD, London, 1969, Awhaduddin Kirmani, *Heart’s Witness, the Sufi Quatrains of Awhaduddin Kirmani*, ed. by Bernd Manuel Weisher, tr. by Peter Lasborn Wilson and Weisher, Tehran, 1978, Baldick, Julian, *Mystical Islam An Introduction to Sufism*, Taulis Parke Paperbacks, London, 2000, Attar, Farid al-Din, *Muslim Saints and Mystics, Episodes from the Tadhkirāt al-Auliya (Memorial of the Saints)* by Farid al-Din Attar, tr. by A. J. Arberry, Routledge, London, 1966, Farid al-Din Attar, *The conference of the Birds*, tr. by Afkham Darbandi and Dick Davis, Penguin Books, 1984, Ibn Arabi, *Ibn Arabi The Bezels of Wisdom*, tr. by R.W.J. Austin, Paulist Press, New York, 1980, Corbin, H. *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, tr. by Nancy Pearson, London, 1978, *ag Creative Imination in the Sufism of Ibn Arabi*, Bollingen Series, Princeton Univ. Press, 1969, *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth, From Mazdean Iran to Shi’ite Iran*, tr. by Nancy Pearson, Princeton Univ. Press, 1977, Laleh Bakhtiar, *Sufi Expressions of the Mystic Quest*, Avon Books, New York, 1976, Mortazā Motahharī, *Āshenā-i bā Olūm-e Islāmī*, Tehran n.d., *‘Erfān-e Hāfez*, Qom, 1383 (2001), Nicholson, Reynold A., *The Mystics of Islam, An Introduction to Sufism*, Schocken Books, New York, 1975, Rice, Cyprian, *The Persiaqn Sufis*, George Allen & Unwin LTD, London, 1964.

- 13) Motahhari, *'Erfan-e Hāfez*, pp.11-15, pp.84-106. The thought of “oneness of being” is discussed in greater detail in the latter part.
- 14) See my research note “What knowledge means (part 3),” pp. 209–213.
- 15) Rice, *op. cit.*, pp.39-66.
- 16) For the life of Hafez, I referred to: Anjevī, Sayyid Abū al-Qāsem, *Divan-e Khājah Hāfez-e Shirazī*, 1361 (1983), pp.45-151, Arberr̄y, A. J. *Shiraz*, Browne, E.G., *A Literary History of Persia*, vol.3, The Tartar Dominion (1265-1502), pp.271-319, *Encyclopaedia of Iranica*, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hafez-I>, and the commentary in *Hafez shishu (Poetry Anthology of Hafez)*, tr. by Kuroyanagi, Tsuneo, Toyobunko, Heibonsha, 1995.
- 17) For example, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Hafez ii. Hafez’s Life and Times, p.6.
- 18) Motahhari, *'Erfān-e Hāfez*, pp.19-34.
- 19) *Ibid.*, p.22.
- 20) Qazvini, *op. cit.*, p.101.
- 21) Motahhari, *op. cit.*, pp.104-105.
- 22) Qazvini, *op. cit.*, p.88.
- 23) *Ibid.*, p.113.
- 24) Some major metaphors are shown in Arberr̄y, *Sufism*, pp.113-115.
- 25) Qazvini, *op. cit.*, pp.7-8.
- 26) *Ibid.*, p.132.
- 27) *Ibid.*, p.95, the author based the translation of this poem on Rice, *op.cit.* but changed slightly and added a few lost lines.
- 28) Motahhari, *op. cit.*, pp.119-121. This poem is considered to be the most felicitous description of the mysteries of gnosis, and has been attracting the interest of many researchers. Main papers discussing this poem include: Arberr̄y, *Shiraz*, pp.166-168 and Rice, *op.cit.*, pp.73-75.
- 29) Though not touched on in this paper, discussing the role of Sufism in modern society became popular in the 1970s, when all of society was fraught with hopelessness resulting from the Vietnam War, which appeared to have no end. It is interesting to note that the following books were published around this period. Arasteh, Reza, *Growth to Selfhood, The Sufi Contribution*, Routledge, London, 1980 and Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Knowledge and Sacred*, The Gifford Lectures, Crossroad, New York, 1981. I give brief consideration to the notion that men are a “macrocosmos” in *Islam kaku-meī no seishin (Spirit of Islamic Revolution)*, Kyoto University Press, 2011, Chapter 6.
- 30) Kolainī, *Osūl-e Kāfī, eteqādī, ejtimāī, akhlāqī, elmī*, ed. tr. and annotated by Hājji Sayyid Javād-e Mostafavī, Tehrān, n.d. 6 vols. The issue of “reason” is discussed in vol.1.
- 31) *Ibid.*, pp.23-27.
- 32) *Ibid.*, pp.14-23.
- 33) *Ibid.*, p.17.
- 34) *Ibid.*, p.28.
- 35) Izutsu, *op. cit.*, p.229.

- 36) Izutsu, Toshihiko, *Islam shisoshi (History of Islamic Thought)*, Chuokoron-sha, 1991, p.458.
- 37) In my research note “What knowledge means (part 2),” pp. 38–42, I discuss the difficulty in understanding the mysteries of gnosis, referring to Otto, Rudolf, *Seinaru-mono (Das Heilige)*, tr. by Yamaya, Seigo, Iwanami Shoten, 1986, Tsuji, Naoshiro, *Upanishad*, Kodansha, 2002, and Kishimoto, Hideo, *Shukyo shinpishugi – Yoga shisou to sinri (Religious mysticism – Yoga thought and psychology)*, Taimeido, 1973. I also point to the extreme difficulty in communicating the “state of an awakened mind” to others in “What knowledge means (part 3).”
- 38) Attar, *Tdhkirāt al-Auliya (Memorial of Saints)*, p.206. This tale is also contained in an Indian scripture, *Baghavadgita*. However, the latter clearly places emphasis differently from the former—in *Baghavadgita*, the act of burning oneself has obviously nothing to do with religious ecstasy. Hafez mentions moths a few times in his poems. In the Persian tradition, a moth is often used as a symbol of union with the object of worship and yearning.