

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ISLAMIZATION PROCESS AN ANALYSIS OF ALPARSLAN AÇIKGENÇ'S APPROACH TO KNOWLEDGE

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ABSTRACT

Alparslan Açıkgenç, who is in search for a permanent solution against the Western civilization, defines the construction of the Islamic civilization as “a real issue that demands an urgent solution.” This is urgent, because on one side, the hegemony of the Western civilization based on the understanding of positivist knowledge and materialistic – mechanical being keeps leading to new tragedies, while on the other hand, the postponed reformation of what is Islamic causes postponement of universal salvation. Islam already exists as a civilization with the exact meaning of the word, but in terms of comfort provided by and the mission endowed by a civilization, it has excessively become/been made incapably. An Islamic civilization for repairing the humanitarian and social damages created by the Western civilization, solving the problems of Muslim societies and the universal salvation of humanity, may only be possible by “Islamizing” the approaches on being, knowledge and values within an Islamic view of the world. Açıkgenç shows that the categorical divisions that are positioned between emotion and intelligence, sensory and mental, physical and metaphysical, matter and soul, subjectivity and objectivity, knowledge and morality, daily experience and religious experience, intuition and the mind in an absolute sense but not reflecting the reality will be eliminated by Islamizing knowledge, and therefore, the division between being and knowledge may be prevented. In the sensory and the mental that are actualized in a certain world view, he involves religious experience which comes from intuition and moral maturation. He shows that division the understanding of knowledge necessarily causes divisions in humanitarian, physical and social being. He proposes Islamization of knowledge as a possible way to get over the multidimensional dichotomies of the Western civilization.

Keywords: Epistemology, Knowledge, Islamization of Knowledge, Alparslan Açıkgenç, World View, Islamic Civilization

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The case is as Marx described: Most philosophers have so far been contented with saying words and describing the world. The function of academic philosophical texts that are confined to two-dimensional texts or lose their influence after being presented in academic settings has been either curbed or lost. Additionally, the fame and participants of philosophy have increased in the last quarter century, and this should be associated with the need for philosophy's role of integration, synthesis, as well as elimination of the division among disciplines. On the other hand, the most obvious phenomenon that accompanies works such as applied ethics and philosophical therapy is that some real-life problems of ours are not psychological, economic or political, but completely philosophical.¹ Moreover, when institutions such as technique, environment, ethics, science, politics and religions are isolated from a philosophical framework, the problems in these should be discussed in terms of "temporary solutions".

According to Huntington's thesis of clash of civilizations, the determining factor in international alliances and agreements is no longer "ideologies" after 1990s; after this point, the class will be between the Western Judeo-Christian civilization and the Eastern Islamic civilization, or, it will be possible to define all clashes with two groups.² In the conflict theory, in the vision of the Western civilization an even in the case of a possible fellowship of the earth, Islam remains an opponent that must always be kept under check. If Muslims desire to repair the humanitarian and social damages created by the Western civilization, carry out a vision that will satisfy the responsibility of bringing salvation (*silm/İslam*) and peace for the world (*amr bi'l-ma'ruf, nahy 'an'il-munkar*), and resist the domination of what is Western in the clash of civilization, they may think that constructing a knowledge-based Islamic civilization is an urgent duty.

The fact that Islamic civilization is here and now circulates poverty and desperation which requires an urgent analysis. Many Muslim thinkers considered the West as a basis and used it to define the issues in Muslim societies. The conclusion they reached is almost this: In comparison to the West, Muslim societies have fallen behind. Both Muslim societies and the Western civilization are responsible for this lagging behind. This is because the imperialist West secretly exports culture along with exporting modernity and technology. Muslim societies have experienced lack of self-confidence, identity erosion and loss of vision against the developed civilization of the West, and they became strangers to their own past. This finding is followed

1 Lou Marinoff. *The Big Questions: Therapy for the sane or how philosophy can change your life* (New York: Bloomsbury, nd), 14.

2 Samuel Huntington. "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, 72, 3 (1993): 22-29.

by these two critical questions: i) Why did Islamic societies fall behind the West? ii) Is Islam an obstacle for progress? "The questions have been debated in Muslim countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran and Malaysia."³ Many philosophers prioritized the issue of "Islamization" of Muslim societies.⁴

Although it emerged 20 centuries later than Judaism and 6 centuries later than Christianity, Islam is today the second most prevalent religion with 1.6 billion followers constituting almost one fourth of the world's population by 22.3%.⁵ Reclamation of or rebuilding the Islamic civilization – we will see what Açıkgenç calls this later – is an urgent project for a philosopher: an architecture of ideas that should be employed after being prepared before it expires. Sociological projections support the idea that Islam will be a religion accepted by 1 in every 3 people in the world in only a century, and therefore, it will be in the first place by passing Christianity, which is now followed by 31.5% of the world's population.⁶

Açıkgenç, who utilizes the qualified function of philosophy mentioned above for researching the opportunities of creating an "alternative civilization" to the Western knowledge, science, approach on being and values (namely the Western civilization) that is criticized in multiple senses but held responsible for humanitarian tragedies, environmental disasters and social injustices today, starts this issue by reanimation of the understandings of the Islamic civilization, whose prototype was produced before, on knowledge, being and values and revision of some of its aspects. He prioritizes the synergy of knowledge and faith in the basis of Islamic civilization. Therefore, he places an updated, animated, constructed Islamic civilization in front of the future state of the diseased by dominant Western civilization. Beyond a description, analysis and synthesis in his philosophical reflection, he actualizes the real meaning of philosophy as an initiative that is for creating an actual situation.

Açıkgenç, equates Islamic civilization and Muslim societies; he isolates the issue from the

3 Mahmut Hakkı Akın. "Aliya İzzetbegoviç Düşüncesinde Kültür ve Medeniyet" in *Aliya İzzet Begoviç: Özgürlük Mücadelecisi ve İslam Düşünürü* (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 2015), 108.

4 Ibid, 109.

5 For the number of followers of religions, see: *Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life, Demographic Study (2013)*. "The Global Religious Landscape". The Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. 18 December 2012. Retrieved 18 March 2013.

6 The current fertility rates seem to be 3.1 for Muslim women, 2.7 for Christian women, 2.1 for Jews, 2.4 for Hindus, and 2.5 on world average. If this trend goes on, the Christian-Muslim parity will drop down to 2% for the first time in history in 2050, and when we arrive at 2100, Christian population will remain 34% and Muslim population will increase up to 35%. Based on these trend, the most prevalent religion in the next century will be Islam. See: *Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life, Demographic Study (2015). The Future of World Religion: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050*. April 2015. http://www.pewforum.org/files/2015/03/PF_15.04.02_ProjectionsFullReport.pdf.

context of abstract superior culture, superior identity or geography, and transfers it into the context of tangible personal and social life. Açıkgenç's approach, which is not a sociological or psychological analysis or theorization, finds a lack of an epistemology which exists in the source of many intellectual problems and prioritizes systematic and genuine values. He suggests that the intellectual or social problems of the Islamic world may only be solved by an Islamic understanding of being, knowledge and values created in a framework of its genuine values that can be defended consistently.

I. ISLAMIZATION: A CIVILIZATION PROJECT

Açıkgenç starts with "Islamization of knowledge", which is one of the three compulsory conditions for an Islamic civilization. The epistemological analysis of the current situation shows the way the study will follow. Açıkgenç is seen to discuss the issue that Muslim societies are getting away from what is Islamic in the understanding of knowledge within the four contexts below:

- Mentality issues (problems about the mindset)
- Lack of a system
- Corruption
- Logical inconsistency

The main elements of the solution proposed by Açıkgenç for these deep-rooted problems are knowledge and "worldview". We are using "worldview" in quotes due to the special meanings assigned to this concept by Açıkgenç. He constructs worldview here under three main conditions:

- Understanding of knowledge
- Understanding of being
- Subjective-unique values

They say "one who knows and one who does no are not the same", but it is seen that the actual skills is not knowing, but "being able".

Knowledge as an initiative should only be an acquisition that leads to action in the subject, mobilizes the subject. This humane regard that also covers the personal decision towards knowledge, also paves a way that may be traced and sustained within the civilization. Existence that can obtain the knowledge of being, clearly obtains this knowledge by personalization and

actualizes it within the conditions in its surroundings. Subjective conditions are logical tools for showing the identicalness of a civilization within itself by its separation from the others. Identicalness to one's self is only possible by being distinguished from others. "Unique value" also carries that added value created by the knowledge encountering its source. If civilization could sustain the values that are unique to it, it would not be corrupted, and the minds of people would not be confused.

In Açıkgenç's approach, the "mind" refers to a much more specific phenomenon than the spiritual skill of the brain to create thoughts: the worldview in Kuhn's terminology which resembles "paradigm". Açıkgenç, due to understandable reasons, calls for complete renaissance like some others do by going into the roots and establishing a solid foundation, rather than a reform. This call is definitely different from those that are expressed in the tone of an entropic nostalgia such as the call "Let us get back to the past, to the Golden Age!" or the strongly traditional call "Moving away from the religion and the Qur'an is the root of our problems." The call itself, although the jargon of "Islamic civilization" and "unique values" preferred in the call reminds one of renewal of old arguments, it cannot be compared to the old ones as the area of being it turns towards is the intellectual world rather than social practices, its basis is a holy text (text of the Qur'an) rather than traditional authorities, its terminology is of not theology but philosophy, and finally, it turns towards construction of a new civilization rather than reclamation of the existing civilization. In other words, Açıkgenç invites people to a utopia that has not been achieved in the past but is possible like Islamization of the mind on a philosophical level.

Açıkgenç, while looking for a clear or absolute starting point in his initiative of establishing the foundation of the construction of a mindset, takes the holy Qur'an as a reference: the Qur'an is the measure of the beginning and the end, the process, and what is the truth. For example, the sensible world descended from the Qur'an and clearly included in the Islamized philosophical mind is open to references that are closed to Plato and Kant (observable world). The subject of experiment and observation that provides a source of knowledge that cannot result in doubt in contrast to the sophists and sceptics, is exactly the sensible world and its experiential (*empirical*) knowledge. Experiential knowledge, maybe by the reasons whose arguments were also listed by Plato and Kant, harbors knowledge that goes beyond experience. It is even seen that the Qur'anic text which brings into attention such a source of knowledge contains numerous transcendental pieces of knowledge. If a text itself can propose the guidance of a transcendental being by referring to a realm that transcends experiment, it primarily awakens

the thinking and believing mind to a realm of being for its unique source and to a unique type of knowledge. Açıkgenç does this by using Qur'anic concepts in his epistemological and ontological foundations, and excluding the classical terminology that takes up a broad space in Islamic philosophy and leads to deep discussions.

With a philosophical attitude, Açıkgenç, finds an irreducible relationship between civilization and worldview, between worldview and assumptions of being-knowledge-values; he defines philosophy as a science that develops "understanding". Worldview, which emerges as a result of consistent systematization of the understanding of knowledge and being, is beyond being exclusively a philosophical description, but it carries a vital power that creates individual and social life in a certain style, and reproduces it in some of its aspects. Knowledge emerges as civilization as a result of a long mediation. The interaction of knowledge-civilization changes based on the speed of production, dispersion and consumption of knowledge. While the debate here on the mediation of civilization through knowledge and science sees out-of-context for the analytical mind, considering the creation of context for post-system thought as a formula that provides value production, it forces calling for help from philosophy as the most essential producer, carrier and founder of subjective-cultural values. It is clear that philosophy can achieve this, in a field that Ghazali did not find an issue criticizing but was inadequate in seeing the truth of, with a new type of mental attitude or one that goes beyond the boundaries of others, probably via its unique principles and techniques.

II. POSITIVIST EPISTEMOLOGY AND ITS SIDE EFFECTS

Descartes' contribution is distinguishing the body and the soul from each other, and transferring this distinction between matter and thought, subject and object. Descartes provided two arguments that would be improved and strengthened by positivists later. 1) *Being able to obtain the subjective knowledge of the material universe that is independent from subjective-local-cultural values*, 2) *Being able to make a sharp distinction between the physical and the metaphysical, materiality and spirituality*.

The rapid development adventure of modern science that started in the 17th century created a powerful influence on individuals and societies with the understanding of a mechanical universe described by the mechanics of Newton and Maxwell. This powerful mechanical effect led to assigning a power that can solve everything to science, where matter is in the foundation

of everything and everything is subject to a mechanical law.⁷ This approach which negates the realm of *gayb* (the invisible world) described by the holy Qur'an and raises the visible realm to the status of the one and only reality, is described as materialist in terms of ontology and positivist in terms of epistemology. The arguments here are listed as the following:

- 1) Observable universe is reduced to mechanical principles and material existence without sufficient evidence
- 2) Being is limited to observable existence

In the most general sense, this situation led to equating being and appearance (*phenomenal, visible*) by referring the boundaries of knowledge. More specifically, positivism, a scientific theory, seems to have resulted in a certain style of worldview. As observed by many, most scientists especially dependent of Newtonian mechanics had a materialistic worldview.⁸ Positivists, especially neo-positivists believed that there is a necessity to sharply separate the boundaries between physics and metaphysics that seemed blurred. They reduced science to what is physical, and accused all activities that are outside science of being metaphysical.⁹

The positivist worldview affected other societies in a multidimensional way by exporting science and technology and via imperialism, colonialism and Westernization: the tendency to adopt the Western understanding of knowledge did not take too long to show itself among Muslim societies.¹⁰ Such that, the positivist style of thinking was often showed as the reason for the dilemmas (*crises, aporia*) experienced by Muslim societies that moved away from religious references and got closer to secularism in the process of Westernization. For example, philosophers such as Naquib al-Attas, Hossein Nasr and Mulla Sadra argue that there is this type of an "epistemological deviation" in the intellectual crises that found in the Islamic world. Their recommendations for a solution are almost common: systematic and consistent reorganization of the philosophy of Islamic knowledge and science. The aforementioned philosophers noticed that this attempt of "reorganization" has two aspects: 1) Firstly providing a critique of positivist epistemology, 2) Then reproducing Islamic knowledge based on the conditions of the era.

In the field of being and knowledge, the top criticism for modern science that is based on mechanism and positivism is that while studying the nature and the individual, it used the

7 Mevlüt Uyanık. *Bilginin İslamileştirilmesi ve Çağdaş İslam Düşüncesi*, (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2001), 139-140.

8 Alev Alatlı. *Şimdi Değilse Ne Zaman?* (İstanbul: Zaman Kitap, 2007): 75.

9 Philosophers of Vienna School such as Carnap, Ayer, Wittgenstein reduced science to facticity, and limited the duty of philosophy by analyzing scientific propositions. Philosophy was reduced to a mission of distinguishing between what is scientific and what is metaphysical.

10 Uyanık, *Bilginin İslamileştirilmesi*, 7.

experimental method which excludes, looks down upon or rejects all metaphysical sources of knowledge, especially religion and revelation, it resorts to incomplete inductive inference, and makes definitions using a reductive binary logical approach. Additionally, criticism of the positivist paradigm often involves sociological analyses on the crises and disasters experienced by Europe.¹¹

III. AÇIKGENÇ'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH: ISLAMIC INTERPRETATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Açıkgenç, defines knowledge as “mental accumulation” in the most general sense. All types of accumulation in the mind are the products of the “knowledge acquisition process”, namely information-processing.¹² The knowledge acquisition process has two stages: 1) *Natural stage*: These are acquisitions of the childhood period where the mind has not yet been structured by the society, and here, children utilize the sensory and mental skills they develop from birth (a priori). 2) *Artificial stage*: This is concerned with knowledge obtained in the process of socialization. These are discussed in two categories as theoretical and practical.¹³

a. Reclassification of Knowledge

Açıkgenç reclassifies the practical pieces of knowledge in the natural and artificial stages as “experiential (daily) knowledge” and theoretical pieces as “scientific knowledge”.¹⁴ While daily knowledge is unsystematic and without methodology, it is provided to people “implicitly” in their experiences; therefore, it is innate, it is provided by life experiences. Scientific knowledge is obtained by systematic work using certain methods and techniques; therefore, it is knowledge obtained by will and effort.¹⁵ Based on its methods, scientific knowledge should be discussed in three different groups: i) *Factual knowledge*: the sensory knowledge of the visible or factual world. ii) *Transcendental knowledge*: knowledge that can be sensed through “internal experience” as in humanities and social sciences fields of philosophy, history, sociology, law. Açıkgenç describes revelation, which is not the subject of any science, as absolute transcendental knowledge, it

11 See, Önay Sözer. *Avrupa'nın Krizi* (Ankara: Dost Yayınları, 2007).

12 Alparslan Açıkgenç. *Bilgi Felsefesi* (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2002), 151.

13 Ibid, 148-150.

14 Ibid, 151.

15 Ibid, 18.

can only be comprehended through faith and devotion.¹⁶ iii) *Daily knowledge*: knowledge in sciences that are based on application and technique such as applied ethics, economics and medicine that is created by both types knowledge.

b. Sources of Knowledge: Sensory, Emotional, Reflexive and Intuitive

According to Açıkgenç's epistemology, the source of knowledge has two skills as perception and the mind. One communicates with external world via perception, and internal world via the mind/consciousness.¹⁷ Senses which constitute the source and the means of knowledge, according to some philosophers, may provide incomplete or incorrect impressions as they are limited to a certain field.¹⁸ For example, Socrates does not see impressions that are received via the senses (*doxa, supposition, notion*) as knowledge, but he reminds that one may envision over these impressions to reach the truth and emphasizes the function of the senses in the process of knowledge acquisition.¹⁹ Aristoteles accepted the data based on the senses that are common in humans and animals as the first stage of knowledge, but argued that sensory knowledge “is not reliable” as it cannot answer the question “why?” As knowledge always turns towards the universal, it may be related to the universal forms within singular ones. The senses are common among all people and obtaining sensory knowledge is relatively easy.²⁰ For Al-Farabi, knowledge is a process that progresses from sensory knowledge towards rational-mystical knowledge by getting perfected; the least qualified – the most imperfect stage of this process is the sensory knowledge in the visible world.²¹ Descartes, who looked for clarity and universality in knowledge, started his theory of knowledge with a search for a method that may protect the mind from the delusion of the senses.²²

According to Açıkgenç, the initiation of all types of our knowledge is “sensation”. We perceive the external reality by our senses. In the interaction of senses with external reality objects, some impressions called “sensory perceptions” are formed in the mind, and these are

16 Alparslan Açıkgenç. “A Concept of Philosophy in the Qur'anic Context”, *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 11:2 (1994): 155-181, p. 162.

17 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 152.

18 Nihat Keklik. *İslam Mantık Tarihi ve Farabi Mantığı* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1969): 2-4.

19 Plato. *Theaitetos*, trans. Macit Gökberk (Ankara: MEB Yayınları, 1945), 98.

20 Mübahat Küyel. *Aristoteles ve Farabi'nin Varlık ve Düşünce Öğretileri* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi DTCF Yayınları, 1969), 54-55.

21 Filiz Şahin. “Bilgi-İnanç Bağlamında Farabi'nin Bilgi Felsefesi”, *Uluslar Arası Farabi Sempozyumu Bildiri Kitabı* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2005), 16.

22 Rene Descartes. *Metafizik Düşünceler*, trans. Mehmet Karasan (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1962), 123.

the sources of sensory knowledge.²³ In this case, sensory perceptions can be not knowledge, but its material. This is because perceiving external reality (*perception*) and arriving at the awareness of perception (*comprehension*) are different things. For knowledge, multidimensional conscious activity of the mind is required; perception that occurs naturally does not create knowledge. Consciousness as awareness cannot be considered as a cross-section of the mind. Açıkgenç states the following:

[D]ivision of perception as internal and external comes from the characteristics of it that extend towards the interior and towards the exterior. With the sense of consciousness, we can only extend toward our internal world; however, when we extend towards the external world with our eyes, we can be aware of what we acquired via this organ through consciousness. Yet, consciousness cannot extend to the external world.²⁴

What extend towards the external world are our senses. Consciousness, in a way, senses the personal internal world, while in another way, notices the perceptions of the external world. What consciousness is may be debated epistemologically, but as sensory perceptions are physiological, they are not the subject matter of epistemology. How sensory perceptions are formed and the what their nature is, are the subjects of research for experimental sciences such as physiology and psychology.

Açıkgenç's epistemology involves "emotional activation". Emotional skills, as in the case of sensory skills, come from birth. For example, the ability to "love" comes from birth, but emergence of love takes place through an epistemological process. Thus, for sensory perceptions to occur in us as feelings, they have to activate emotional skills. When this feeling emerges mentally, "emotion", which corresponds to this feeling in emotional skills, emerges. The same is applicable for emotions such as pity, hate, fear, joy, happiness.²⁵ Açıkgenç, as opposed to the previous cases, proposes the contribution of emotions in epistemological processes. According to Açıkgenç, emotion (*feeling*) creates a mental situation or is created by a mental situation. One aspect of emotions is perception, while the other aspect is intelligence. With the mental emergence of their emotions, individuals enter an emotional situation. In this emotional situation, the person shows an emotional reaction if feelings are dominant,

and a rational reaction if the mind is dominant.²⁶ Açıkgenç describes the relationship between senses, emotions and consciousness as the following:

"Perceptual consciousness" is completely sensory; "mental consciousness" is completely conceptual. The guarantee of self and the existence of the physical universe is provided by the mental consciousness. Mental consciousness starts to operate after the data of sensory consciousness is transferred to the mind; it is in the mind where all skills of perception and thoughts are. The self (id, ego, superego) is a product of mental consciousness. Therefore, mental consciousness may also be called "faculty of the self". According to Açıkgenç, "[T]he self, [...] is a compound emotion".²⁷ "Consciousness" which emerges in cooperation of emotional data such as pity, love, anxiety and desire and mental consciousness and is called "perceptual intuition" also is a compound emotion. From here, two types of knowledge acquisition capacity may be reached: 1) *Sensation capacity or sensory perception*, 2) *Emotional capacity or emotional perception*.

These two perceptions are the **starting point** (*first source*) of all our knowledge. The mind operates over the data it receives from these two sources, analyzed them and produces new information independently of them.²⁸ While the sensory data satisfies the initial condition and affects the content in all stages of factual sciences, it only serves as the initial condition for sciences such as logic and mathematics. The distinction that needs to be focused on here is that perceptual data is not the synonym of "experience". Experience is a type of knowledge, not perceptual data; it is the type of knowledge that is the closes to the objects that are created by the mind from perceptual data.²⁹ Kant defined perceptual data that have been provided by sensory organs but not yet processed by the mind as the "raw material" of knowledge. According to Açıkgenç, perceptual data are processed in the mind. This is called "thinking". The initial knowledge created by thinking is usually daily (*casual*) knowledge known as "general experience" or "knowledge of life". The knowledge on "specific experience" which is established upon general experience but deemed to be towards application exceeds the boundaries of casual knowledge, and it has now evolved into scientific knowledge. For specific knowledge, Açıkgenç provides the example of making fire by rubbing two pieces of wood together. Specific experiences are in mediation with skills. For example, having the knowledge on making fire and applying this knowledge require skills in different dimensions. Knowledge becomes more

26 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 154.

27 Ibid, 155.

28 Ibid, 155.

29 Ibid, 159.

23 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 152.

24 Ibid, 153.

25 Ibid, 154.

abstract starting from general experiences and going towards specific experiences; it turns into laws, principles and generalizations.

Factual knowledge is based on experimentation and observation as technical types of general and specific experience. This is why factual knowledge differs from both types of experiential knowledge (general and specific experience). Experimentation and observation requires usage of specialized methods in experience. According to Açıkgenç, the factor that leads to formation of disciplines of certain types is distinct methodological differentiation. Today, we call disciplines based on experimentation and observation "science". "Casual knowledge" forms based on factual sciences. This is the knowledge of sciences such as medicine, engineering, ethics. Transcendental sciences are the types of knowledge that are the furthest from other types of knowledge in terms of isolation from objects. Thus, the knowledge in this field represents the **final stage** of knowledge acquisition.

The second source of knowledge is the **mind**. Sensory and emotional perceptions are transferred to the mind for them to be thought of through concepts, and this way, they are turned into mental content.³⁰ With the two capacities, the self (mental consciousness) and imagination (imagery), the mind interacts with the perceptual data. The self elevates both the external and internal perceptions up to the level of consciousness, and serves the formation of emotions by reflecting a different and high-level sensation that consists of these perceptions or our reactions to these perceptions. These emotions are reanimated in the mind through capacity of **imagination**. Imagination, therefore, provides the emotion with mental content, and transfers it to the mind, which itself is our capacity to think, for it to be thought of. The mind is the place where all perceptual data are thought of. As it appears, imagination should be a sub-faculty of the mind; as the mind provides a "voluntary" judgment after the process of thinking, the "will" becomes an upper faculty of the mind.³¹

The **mind**, which is a capacity that is unique to humans; is the faculty for thinking and comprehension, the power to distinguish that holds the person responsible. It was used with the meanings of the essence that comprehends things that are invisible and unbeknown indirectly, namely through senses and those that can be known directly through observation, the power to comprehend.³² Açıkgenç analyzes two types of thinking as **cognitive** and **mental**. Cognitive thinking is the entirety of processes that take place in the mind on perceptual data,

while mental thinking (reasoning) is thinking that the mind operates by itself. Açıkgenç:

[The mind] facilitates the act of thinking via some principles it creates independently of experience or information it has obtained from experience. Again, it facilitates the operation of reasoning using a set of patterns it has formed through the same processes.³³

As the main function of the mind, as Descartes argued, is "thinking", the mind never stops thinking, it always thinks. However, for the knowledge reached by the mind to be correct, it needs to use basic principles of logic in the thinking process. Here, Açıkgenç refers to types of reasoning such as induction, deduction and analogy, and logical principles such as consistency, validity, noncontradiction and sufficient reason.

Intuition, which has been described with definitions such as a type of intellectual proximity that moves one towards discovering the interior of objects;³⁴ power to know that leads to comprehending the materials and the nature as a whole without dividing it;³⁵ direct comprehension or comprehension without an intermediary, and the clear, certain and absolute principle that suddenly appears in the mind, is generally discussed under three parts as sensory, mental and metaphysical.³⁶ Discussions about intuition still revolve around Ghazali and Bergson. Ghazali's definition as "one who has not tasted does not know, one who has not reached cannot comprehend,"³⁷ makes it completely subjective, but this carries the claim that this subjective experience also provides universal, exact and generally accepted knowledge. According to Ghazali, intuitive knowledge has as much certainty as experiential knowledge that emerges in the clear mind. Intuition is the source of knowledge especially in fields that surpass the boundaries of the mind.³⁸ Ghazali thinks: The senses are limited to an extent that they cannot be our sole source of knowledge. A person has an "eye of the heart" that is called "intuition" which is more capable than senses and powerful enough to know the essence of objects.³⁹ If the subject is related to the metaphysical world, it should be left to the heart;

33 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 158.

34 Henri Poincaré. *Bilim ve Hipotez*, trans. Fethi Yücel (İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1998): 320.

35 Süleyman Hayri Bolay. *Felsefi Doktrinler Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Akçag Yayınları, 1999), 77.

36 Mehmet Vural. *İslam Felsefesi Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2003): 27; Halife Keskin, *İslam Düşüncesinde Bilgi Teorisi* (İstanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 1997), 97.

37 Mehmet Vural. *Gazali Felsefesinde Bilgi ve Yöntem* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2004), 149.

38 Ibid, 92.

39 Bolay, *Felsefi Doktrinler*, 210.

30 Ibid, 158.

31 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 158.

32 Taftazânî. *Kelam İlmi ve İslam Akaidi (Şerhu'l Akaid)* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 1999). 115-116.

knowledge should be obtained with a spiritual or inner experience, that is, through intuition.⁴⁰ Descartes describes intuition is clear knowledge without an intermediary that is obtained regarding reality. For example, the direct knowledge of a person on their self is intuitive.⁴¹ For the true knowledge of being, intuition is a more reliable source than deduction, imagination and the senses.⁴²

The capacities of knowledge we have discussed so far follow the hierarchy in the beginning of the knowledge process. However, the case is different for intuition. According to Açıkgenç, the mind can reach knowledge without following this order. Our capacity that reaches a conclusion by passing by all steps of knowledge is “intuition”. As a mental capacity, intuition actually makes an “inference” by assuming all steps of knowledge.

According to Açıkgenç, epistemologies that have not included emotion are incomplete. Senses do not provide the perception of the transcendental field even at their furthest limits. However, emotions can provide it if they are improved by personal effort. A person has the capacity for skills that may make sense of the factual and transcendental fields. If some of the aforementioned epistemological sources are missing, the person cannot comprehend themselves and their environment in a meaningful sense.

c. A Radical Initiative: The Limits of Knowledge That Are Broadened and Associated with Personal Virtue

Can a knowing subject know about a spirituality that surpasses its limits? Is an interaction between the subject and transcendental beings possible? Açıkgenç argues that an epistemology should be formed on the distinction of the visible and the invisible in Qur'anic texts. For several philosophers, ontological distinctions determine epistemological distinctions and limits. For example, according to Kant and logical positivists, things that are not experienced by senses are beyond the limits of knowledge. Certain knowledge of something that cannot be experimented on or observed cannot be obtained.⁴³ On the other hand, in Al-Farabi's gradual system, the physics-metaphysics distinction is preserved, but knowledge in the process from mystical knowledge towards metaphysical knowledge seems possible in all stages.⁴⁴

According to Açıkgenç, there is not enough evidence on that knowledge is restricted by

the number of senses, sensory threshold and illusions; evidence may be found for the opposite. For example, we can know tangible objects through senses, and intangible objects through emotions. Reducing knowledge to sensory experience that takes place in space and time, naturally means rejection of metaphysics. If we cannot broaden the concept of experience, we exclude the broad abstract-spiritual universe that we comprehend through emotions that affect our behaviors such as fear, anxiety, passion and love, and be limited to make do with the sensory knowledge of the factual universe that consists of tangible objects.⁴⁵ Emotions provide the knowledge of abstract objects by being the source of experiences. Experience should be broadened by defining it as the accumulation created in the human mind by objects in different ways. Açıkgenç, at this point, lists three different types of knowledge in three different fields:

- Perceptual knowledge of the factual field: knowledge of tangible and physical objects obtained through experience,
- Emotional knowledge of the transcendental field: knowledge of intangible and metaphysical objects obtained through affection,
- Casual knowledge of the practical field: knowledge of behavior and practice.⁴⁶

This way, human knowledge that was limited by space and time was saved from this narrow window, and experience gained new meanings.

According to Açıkgenç, the basis of debates on the power, limits and dimensions of knowledge is that philosophers do not distinguish fields of truth from each other. In his initiative to establish a philosophical system based on Qur'anic text, Açıkgenç maintains the traditional distinction in the form of the *invisible* (*gayb*) and the *visible* (*şehadet*) with addition of “âlemi berzah” and “âlemi misali”. With Abu Ishaq's definition, the invisible is “everything that is outside the knowledge of people but told to them via prophets.”⁴⁷ *Gayb*, whose meaning was broadened by going beyond its dictionary meaning, refers not to “ontological nothingness”, but to epistemological and linguistic incapacity-limitations of a human. According to Açıkgenç, whether they exist or not, hidden or invisible beings that the person cannot comprehend “for now” or “yet” are “gaybi”. *Gayb* is not a universal obscurity; something that is knowable for someone may be *gayb* for another. This situation is the phenomenon called “*nisbi gayb*”

40 Mehmet Bayrakdar. *İslâm Felsefesine Giriş*, 5th Edition (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2003), 216.

41 Poincaré, *Bilim ve Hipotez*, 320.

42 Descartes, *Metafizik Düşünceler*, 15-17.

43 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 91.

44 Şahin, *Bilgi – İnanç Bağlamı*, 17.

45 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 93.

46 Ibid, 91.

47 Necati Kara. “Kur'an'da Gayb”, *Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* (1999), 1(1): 55- 57.

(relatively invisible) by Abul-Beka. Abul-Bake uses the expression “mutlak gayb (absolutely invisible)” for universal obscurity.⁴⁸ For Açıkgenç, gayb is a universe that cannot be sensed.

Gayb is discussed in two interrelated dimensions as epistemological and ontological. According to Açıkgenç, the Qur'an provides the invisible world for attention along with these two dimensions of it. The concept of “âlem'ül gayb ve ş-şehade (the invisible and visible worlds)” represents its ontological dimension, it leads one to perceive gayb and şehadet as two universes of existence. The Qur'an describes gayb in general as the universe that is not the subject of human senses and cannot be known by humans.⁴⁹ In this usage, gayb refers to subjects that cannot be seen, experienced, that are non-sensible but transcendental; while şehadet refers to the experiential knowledge of the observable, experienceable and sensible universe. Açıkgenç argues that gayb is accessible for people in some of its aspects by some skills in addition to intelligence. Thus, he describes it in two categories.

Transcendental gayb: Transcendental knowledge may be reached by intrinsic experience and guidance of revelation. Therefore, this is gayb that can be known. The responsibility of a person for transcendental knowledge is comprehension and faith by comprehension. The information in Qur'anic texts about gayb mainly take the heart as a basis. However, for the heart to perform this function, the person should lead a righteous (virtuous) life. Thus, the knowledge dependent on heartfelt experience is subjective, universal judgments cannot be derived from it. There is another critical distinction in Açıkgenç's epistemological approach: Açıkgenç, as opposed to Kant's approach of a static mind, considers a mediation in the historical process and with leading a virtuous life. The association of this moral life with ethical capacity is clearly, categorically included in an epistemology for the first time.

Absolute gayb: It is in vain to try to obtain the knowledge of this world that is absolutely not accessible. The entity of Allah, heaven-hell, immortality, nature of the afterlife are included among subjects in the absolute gayb. Absolute gayb can never be known. The responsibility of a person for absolute gayb is faith without interpretation in such knowledge transferred via revelation: submission.

Açıkgenç describes the relationship between these two types of knowledge as: “Absolute gayb is the basis of gayb that can be known; the road to absolute gayb passes through knowable gayb, that is, faith by submission to absolute gayb is only possible by opening up the known

aspect of gayb with faith!”⁵⁰

The thesis of the unity of existence proposed by Açıkgenç requires both universes to have complementary characteristics. It is understood from the approach gayb is accessible by some people that the line drawn by Açıkgenç between gayb and şehadet is not solid-absolute. Although Kant limited intelligence by phenomena and isolated it from historical development, not only does Açıkgenç broaden the world of experience in cooperation with intelligence and the heart for the person who exists in the şehadet world, but the person also makes it possible to obtain the knowledge of gayb. According to Açıkgenç, the thesis that precise information on metaphysics is impossible (Kant) results in a “conflict” that has to be solved. However, gayb or metaphysics is not irrational. It is actually not possible to categorize being precisely.

Scientific and factual truths are constant and fixed, they are not temporary or open to interpretation; they are based on experiments, observation and measurement which constitute the essence of sensory experience; they usually have mathematical certainty. Proving or disproving these is possible only by the scientific method. Once they are directly or indirectly “discovered” or “confirmed”, they do not change.⁵¹ No theory or hypothesis in science is accepted as “true” without being proven through observation or experimentation.⁵² The only criterion for scientific information is the complete correspondence between the judgment and the object (correspondence).⁵³

The emotional knowledge of the transcendental field, like in science, is absolute; however, it is not fixed, but dynamic. In fact, in one aspect, it is fixed and unchangeable, and in another aspect, it is dynamic. This dynamism refers to maturation and development. For example, the answer to the question whether there is a creator of the universe requires transcendental knowledge. Whichever answer may be given to this question, its answer is absolute and certain. That is, the transcendental truth corresponding to this answer is either positively or negatively absolute. Therefore, this question by itself is not a question that cannot be answered, because a transcendental truth is not the subject of the methodology of factual truth.⁵⁴ For example, faith is not a subject that can be universal for everyone; whether faith is the truth or not can also not be tested by the empirical method. Additionally, this does not pose an obstacle for faith to be a truth. Followers of every religion accept their belief to be true and the objects they believe

50 Alparslan Açıkgenç, “İslami Bilim ve Felsefe Anlayışı”, *İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi* (1990), 4 (3): 175-189, 186.

51 Ibid, 124-125.

52 Cemal Yıldırım, *Bilim Felsefesi* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1993), 18.

53 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 125-126.

54 Ibid, 126.

48 Ahmet Fethi Polat, “Kuran Ayetleri Işığında Gayb Bilgisi ve Mugayyebâtı Hams”, *Bakü Devlet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları* (2004) 2 (2):17-18, 63

49 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 131.

in to exist. The possibility of different religions exists as belief is a subjective truth. According to Özcan, the flexibility in the phenomenon of faith actually provides opportunities for every religion to defend their own belief system, develop evidence, and indeed, save itself from the mental status quo in the metaphysical field.⁵⁵ From the subjectivity and flexibility here, Açıkgenç derives a conclusion in favor of free will. The criteria of transcendental truth must be objectively subjective. If metaphysics had an objective criterion, it would also have mathematical certainty. Therefore, the correspondence model would not be valid for metaphysics.⁵⁶

d. Accuracy, Precision and Truth

Sophists and sceptics rejected the possibility of certain and universal knowledge as they saw the source of all knowledge as sensory perception that is different in everyone which occasionally makes mistakes. Sceptics of academia with the same approach went further and tried to show that the mind and logic can reach different results. Whether with the anthropomorphic thesis that considers individuals as criteria one by one or the illusion thesis that is based on differences in sensory thresholds, desensitization and stimulation levels, rejection of universal knowledge is far from being realistic for several philosophers. This is because, either little or much, everyone is sure that they know something, and consensus may be achieved on some logical and mathematical truths. In his work named *Theaitetos*, Plato discussed the crises that are debated everywhere today contained by the two theses that are excessively relativistic.⁵⁷ Aristoteles states that the claim that universal knowledge is impossible is based on the hypothesis that “correct judgment cannot be made on what is dynamic,” such a judgment is reached actually by a small number of singular observations; however, when the emotional world where existence is dominant is compared to the universe, it cannot even be a part of it.⁵⁸

According to Descartes, the knowledge of the material universe cannot have mathematical certainty, while the knowledge of the spiritual universe can. For example, the absolute truth of the idea of god and soul is obvious.⁵⁹ Descartes finds certainty in such metaphysical knowledge in the confidence that god will not mislead, in addition to logical principles. Açıkgenç, who followed Descartes, suggests that absolute knowledge can be accessed in the metaphysical field

which cannot be tested using scientific methods. On the other hand, the epistemic certainty in the factual field is dictating; it restricts and threatens human freedom. Free will is possibly only in the spiritual universe, where subjective reality is experienced. Transcendental truths may change based on the person, time and space, they are open to interpretation. The issue worth noting here is that transcendental truths cannot be relative in the sense used by sophists of sceptics, because what is in question here is the way of interpretation, reception and comprehension of a truth, not the truth itself. The differences and subjectivities in comprehensions do not affect the transcendental truth that is already absolute and subjective. As Bayraktar stated, it is not possible for as many truths to exist as there are discourses of truths.⁶⁰

Each field of truth must have a unique criterion for truth.⁶¹ As the interim expression of factual truth is metaphorically called truth, we also perceive these as truths. If there were a judgment agreed upon by all people and this judgment corresponded to its object, it would be the truth in the real meaning of the word. However, such a truth may be outside of and independent from us. Açıkgenç does not suggest the relativity of this and the truth.

According to Mengüşoğlu, there is always only one truth and it is the same for everyone; it does not change among people, it is absolute. If truth were relative, it would not enlighten human life correctly. Daily life would have no foundation and it would be shaken.⁶² In fact, according to Açıkgenç, instrumental values and truth are confused here. It is normal that personal meanings attributed to truth are different. While the wind is cold for a person who feels cold, it is cool for a person who feels hot. The meaning of foods differs between someone hungry and someone full. Açıkgenç, although the field of being and values he refers to changes due to its existence independent from personal interest, accepts such knowledge as the truth. If they have been implemented in daily life and in a pragmatic sense, these are now truths.

According to Açıkgenç, trueness and truth emerge in the interaction between the subject and the object. Fact is the quality of objects and situations that are independent from the subject. Relativity of truth is about its object; a part of truth is absolute, while the other part of it is relative. Based on time and space, some truths may be true or false. If a subject finds its judgment to be “true”, this should be accepted as truth.⁶³ While it does not reflect reality, the sincere belief of a subject about its knowledge makes that knowledge a truth.

55 Hanefi Özcan. *Epistemolojik Açidan İman* (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1990), 37.

56 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 127.

57 See, Plato, *Theaitetos*, 65-66.

58 Aristotle. *Metafizik*, trans. Ahmet Arslan (İstanbul: Sosyal Yayınları, 1999), 220-221.

59 Descartes, *Metafizik Düşünceler*, 173.

60 Mehmet Bayraktar. *Bir Hristiyan Dogması: Teslis* (Ankara: Ankara Okulu Yayınları, 2007), 268.

61 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 128.

62 Takiyettin Mengüşoğlu. *Felsefeye Giriş* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 2005), 82-83.

63 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 125.

e. The Idea of Generalizable Emotions: Contribution to the Debate on Objectivity and Subjectivity

According to Açıkgenç, all kinds of verbal judgment that can be generalizable (universality) may contain objectivity. The condition of objectivity for a statement is that it is generalizable. Generalization is dependent on “intelligibility” and “communicability” conditions. As scientific knowledge has mathematical certainty, it limits free will. A person is not capable of accepting or rejecting objective knowledge.⁶⁴ Subjectivity is provided in unique personal experiences, and as opposed to the general view and according to Açıkgenç, it can be communicated to someone else. The claim of uncommunicable personal experiences is related to the limitations of linguistic possibilities, not the nature of experience. If suitable and adequate concepts are produced or developed, all personal experiences may be communicated; therefore, subjectivity may be generalized. Açıkgenç says:

[K]nowledge that can be verbally told can be universalized. Here, “possibility of universalization” is actually the “possibility of making something abstract”. While saying “Socrates is a person”, there is a transition from the tangible to the intangible. Beyond making something abstract, we want to emphasize the meaning of “generalization”. This means, if I tell you an emotion of mine that I consider to be “subjective” to you and you understand it, I can make a generalization as ‘this emotion is the same for all people’.⁶⁵

Hence, emotions may be universalized. The possibility of the subject to become universal has critical importance, but several philosophers found this impossible. This is because universality is accepted as a condition for being applicable for everyone. Açıkgenç asserts that possibility of universalization of personal beliefs should be demonstrated to show that they are based on a truth. If Açıkgenç claims that there are generalizable truths in subjective experiences, through a new epistemology and ontology, he should either completely eliminate or soften or blur the absolute distinctions placed by previous epistemologies between subjectivity and objectivity and those placed by previous ontologies between universes of existence. According to Açıkgenç, the epistemological distinctions placed between subjectivity and objectivity in knowledge are also not absolute, as in the case of the one between universes of existence. Scientific information which becomes prominent with its characteristics of

being objective is actually not completely purified of its subjective factors, and it cannot be. Similarly, metaphysical knowledge which is known for its characteristics of being subjective harbors objective elements. This is because both types of knowledge are based on experience. Intuition and inspiration are two sources that achieve the objectivity in metaphysics. While emotional skills take place in space and time, they provide supra-temporal/spatial knowledge as time and space cannot be limited. Additionally, isolating emotional skills from senses is an unrealistic attitude. As it may be understood, as in the boundaries of knowledge, Açıkgenç's epistemology has a blurredness and a holism based on this blurredness in terms of the sources of knowledge. The objectivity in subjective knowledge is presented in a form that is called “yakın” (nearly certain). The subjective knowledge of metaphysics may be communicated to others by providing evidence.

IV. AÇIKGENÇ'S VIEW ON PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

Science is a collection of mental-rational activities based on impartial observation and systematic experimentation conducted on external and objective phenomena.⁶⁶ Science as an act of searching for the truth provides an organized entirety of information that everyone can agree on and is applicable.⁶⁷ While Einstein defined science as “the effort to achieve compatibility between sensory data (perceptions) that are deprived of any kind of order and logically organized thought,” Russell defined it as “the attempt to find phenomena regarding the world by observation and reasoning based on observation, and then find the laws that connect these phenomena.”⁶⁸ Generally speaking, definitions of science emphasize that it is reached as a result of experimentation and observation, it is far from personal opinions and speculative imagination, it has an objective nature, and its accuracy is proven.⁶⁹ It is also indispensable for science that the phenomena whose trueness is proven are determined by reliable methods and presented in a systematic way.⁷⁰

66 Ahmet Cevizci. *Felsefe Sözlüğü*, 5th Edition (Istanbul: Paradigma Yayınları, 2002), 162.

67 Cemal Yıldırım. *Bilim Felsefesi* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1973), 16-17.

68 Ibid, 17-18.

69 Alan Chalmers. *What is this Thing Called Science? A New and Extended Edition* (Brisbane: McPherson's Printing Group, 2013, fourth ed.), 33.

70 Howard Selsam. *Din, Bilim ve Felsefe*, 2nd Edition (Istanbul: Sarmal Yayınevi, 1995), 98.

64 Ibid, 94

65 Ibid, 96.

a) Conditions That Make Science Possible: Mesh of Concepts, Conceptual Framework and Worldview

According to Açıkgenç, requires four basic conditions as a certain subject, a method, a knowledge based and a theory.⁷¹ In his epistemology, Açıkgenç discusses knowledge in two categories as “essential” and “scientific”. Experiential knowledge is knowledge that we obtain without a method or a system along the ordinary flow of life, and has great importance for leading our life. Açıkgenç states that this knowledge occurs in us by itself through life with a method that we did not develop which exists in us innately. As opposed to experiential knowledge, scientific knowledge is the knowledge a person willingly obtains in a methodological and systematic way around a certain subject. We try to access this knowledge whose method we develop ourselves through human effort.⁷² Therefore, the method becomes that main condition that facilitates being scientific; this separates it from daily knowledge that is unsystematic and free of a specific method. Theories are pieces of knowledge that are not certain yet; they may change in time. The information that becomes “knowledge” may be considered as “scientific phenomena”. Açıkgenç talks about three main mental attitudes for scientific activities: 1) *Narrow mesh of scientific concepts*, 2) *Conceptual framework*, 3) *Worldview*.

1) *Narrow mesh of scientific concepts*: Scientists work with a narrow set of field terminology; science is not possible without the terminology that communicates accumulation of knowledge. Terminology provides an “understanding or approach” that is unique to the field; it is acquired by science education. Therefore, terminology, that provides the quality of being scientific for an activity and is defined as “mesh of scientific concepts,”⁷³ for example, also provides philosophical works with a quality of being scientific. It is now possible to study philosophy, religion, metaphysics and art with a scientific attitude with the help of the narrow mesh of scientific concepts.

2) *Conceptual framework*: Science needs more than the terminology of a single discipline, for example, general theories that will guide all disciplines of science. Knowledge, truth, method, evidence, theory are elements of a broad conceptual framework. For example, conceptual frameworks like classical mechanics, theory of relativity, quantum mechanics or chaos theory direct the course of multiple disciplines of science.

3) *Worldview*: Terminology and theory may be meaningful and functional within a general worldview. The distinguishing element of Açıkgenç's epistemology is the critical position represented by the concept of “worldview”. Worldview, as for all people, also affects scientists. The mind operates within a worldview. In the thinking system of Açıkgenç, an implicit but irreducible relationship is proposed between worldview and systems of epistemology and ontology.

According to Açıkgenç, the mind is powerful enough to comprehend the universe and the universe has a structure that can be comprehensible by the mind. Therefore, he defines a relationship between the mind and the universe, between rationality and reality which resembles the hypothesis by Hegel as “what is rational is real, what is real is rational.” Açıkgenç says the following about worldview:

When our sensory perceptions start to perceive the objects around us, the first step in knowledge acquisition is taken. Sensory perceptions are transmitted to the mind through faculties of information we know as the five senses, which are also known as “external senses” in the tradition of Islamic scholarship. Our mind creates a conceptual wholeness from existing sensory data using its own capacities such as intelligence, imagination, intuition, consciousness and will. This wholeness is what we call “worldview”.⁷⁴

Everything from the first sensory data to later experiences broadens the human mind. The mind creates a comprehensive framework among all types of sensory data, concepts and terms that makes sense of all of these. The mind necessarily operates within this framework that is known as worldview, because it is the “unobservable basis of human actions”.⁷⁵ In the context of the concept of worldview, Açıkgenç, corrects the positivist claim that science is a rational-logical activity by determining that it works based on worldviews. According to positivism, “knowledge in all fields of existence may only be obtained correctly and objectively by the human mind and such an effort to obtain information may be called science.”⁷⁶ Positivism deems all claims outside the boundaries of experience and pure intelligence “interpretation” or “nonsense” and pushes these out of epistemology. Nevertheless, according to Açıkgenç, intelligence cannot accompany all levels of humane existence.

71 Alparslan Açıkgenç. *Scientific Thought and Its Burdens* (Istanbul: Fatih Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000), 44.

72 Ibid, 17-18.

73 Alparslan Açıkgenç. “Bilim Epistemolojisine Yeni Bir Yaklaşım”, *Bilimname Dergisi* (2003), 2:53-74, 56.

74 Açıkgenç, *Bilim Epistemolojisi*, 64.

75 Ibid, 64.

76 Alparslan Açıkgenç. *İslam Medeniyetinde Bilgi ve Bilim* (Istanbul: İslam Yayınları, 2006), 21.

In the Western approach of science, it is possible to follow the deep signs of the harsh influence of positivism. Indeed, there is a dominant approach that a relationship cannot be established between science and religion or between science and morality, but the capacity of this to bring comfort and salvation is either very limited or nonexistent considering the tragedies experienced by the West in the last century. On the other hand, it is not possible to carry out such a form of science within the worldview of the Islamic world. That is, in Islam, both knowledge and science contain humanitarian value and utility. In no conditions can science be isolated from the worldview that is based on social conditions and humanitarian values and produces values. Scientific objectivity is a goal of methodology, not a quality of scientific knowledge.

According to Açıkgenç, the factor that provides scientific activity with its context is worldview. As activity without context is not possible, a scientific activity that is “isolated” from all external conditions cannot be possible. Context is also not sufficient for production of scientific knowledge. As mentioned above, there is also a need for a broad conceptual framework, and this framework is surrounded by a worldview. Açıkgenç's concept of worldview that resembles Thomas Kuhn's concept of paradigm provides a person with an a priori point of view not only in science but also all kinds of activities such as art, politics, education, religion. Worldview contains ontological, epistemological and axiological arguments.

In another sense, science is a specialized type of knowledge that requires specialized setting and context. Worldview, which contains within itself all the conditions of this specialized setting, is the “unobservable” basis of science. The observable basis of science is the social and environmental conditions (*ambient context*) from which it emerges. According to Açıkgenç, the possibility of science is dependent on the coexistence, simultaneous presence of these two bases.⁷⁷ The indispensable element of scientific activities, their fundamental condition is ambient context; it is almost impossible for science to be institutionalized in cultures where an ambient context has not been established yet. Societies deprived of this context only imitate other cultures, but this transfer of science and technique is far from making structural contributions to the conceptual structure and scientific development in their own countries. As Açıkgenç expresses:

77 See, Alparslan Açıkgenç. “The Environmental Context for the Advancement of Sciences”, *Islamic Studies* (2000), 39, 571-579.

Sciences cannot develop by importing. In other words, achieving development in sciences cannot happen through importing science. On the contrary, it happens by preparing the mental setting required for sciences to develop. The only way to achieve this is to develop a worldview that will sufficiently serve as a setting for sciences.⁷⁸

Although science is an objective activity with a certain methodology, we cannot say that it progresses with the same speed and in the same direction in different societies. As an indicator that it is not an impartial activity without context, the level of scientific development differs based on societies and geographies.⁷⁹ Mediation of scientific activity with localization is transferred into the context of worldviews by Açıkgenç. It is inevitable that studies of sociology of science, epistemology of science, ethics of science, history of science or politics of science in the context of worldviews will result in cultural, archeological and anthropomorphic studies. It is clear, as this approach will also support, that previous studies of Thomas Kuhn on Western philosophy of science, Kantian epistemology and neo-positivists analyses for example, are considered to be generalized, abstracted and reduced studies.

b) Local Development of Scientific Process

According to Açıkgenç, although the forms of societies' relationships with knowledge are different, “knowledge acquisition activities” are found in the initial phases of the processes of scientific knowledge development in all societies. Indeed, causality does not work in social life as it does in the nature; the same action meets a different reaction in each society. As social events cannot be defined and described as isolated systems, it is difficult to explain them with simple causality analyses. Because they do not display law-based orders as in nature, when social and humanitarian events are attempted to be explained scientifically, rather than subsequent chains of action-reaction, they are aimed to be understood mostly by multiple causality relationships that occur simultaneously, that is, by models of mutual interaction. Therefore, the case described by Açıkgenç emerges: although science appears to be universal, each society develops a form of knowledge acquisition that is unique to itself.

According to Açıkgenç, when problems that are waiting for solutions increase in dynamic societies (stage of *problems*), the amount of knowledge that is produced to solve these also increases (*accumulation of knowledge*). Later comes the “disciplinary stage”, where problems

78 Ibid, 166.

79 Alparslan Açıkgenç. “Felsefenin Mahiyeti ve İşlevi”, *Düşünen Siyaset Dergisi*, 18 (2003), 33-45, 34.

are grouped, and knowledge is categorized and classified which brings systematization. At this stage, similar problems and issues are gathered under a single category to form a comprehensive structure, they are discussed with a similar methodology, and examined in detail. Grouping and categorization are actually a task of denotation. Similar phenomena and information are gathered under a single concept in the “naming stage”. Scientific disciplines arise by systematic organization of interrelated information, phenomena, subjects and laws under the same name (*becoming a disciplinary stage*). Scientific activity may now be conducted under the umbrella of scientific disciplines (Stage of *Advancement* which leads to the emergence of a scientific tradition).⁸⁰

In fact, this way, Açıkgenç has localized the adventure of development of science and types of branching. On the other hand, as he stated that science emerged in all societies by following the subsequent stages mentioned about despite different speeds and forms, he generalizes his explanations on the “nature of scientific activity”. Accordingly, science becomes an activity that can only be produced by following its hierarchical stages one by one.

c) Priority of the Qur'an Which Leads to Knowledge for Sciences

Açıkgenç's instructions on Islamization of knowledge aims to achieve the possibility of knowledge and science based on Qur'anic text. According to Açıkgenç, the Qur'an has theoretically and practically influenced the scientific work in the Islamic world. As the journey of knowledge and science in the Islamic civilization, which is a “civilization of science” depends on a written book (the holy Qur'an), this case is different from other civilizations. Since the 1st century in the Islamic calendar, special attention has been paid to “science”, and “knowledge” has had a special place in the collective memory and sensibility. The source of this process which increases the value of knowledge is the Qur'an. Most Qur'anic texts directly or indirectly refers to or contains knowledge. The case is the same for the hadith, which are the prophetic interpretations and humanitarian reflections of the Qur'an. The attempt to be affected (inspired) by the Qur'an and the Prophet or apply these in all aspects of human life is dependent on the inspiration and encouragement of the Qur'an, which leads the way for salvation. Qur'an leads people towards the phenomena of “knowing” and “knowledge in all aspects of life, encourages them to investigate what is not known. As a result of the Qur'an prioritizing sciences this way, thousands of branches of knowledge have developed in Islam.”⁸¹

80 Açıkgenç, *Felsefenin Mahiyeti*, 35.

81 Açıkgenç, *İslam Medeniyeti*, 25.

The way the Qur'an presents information is, is not in a form independent from subject distinction that is based on ambiguity, but it is in the imperative form which represents obligation. According to Açıkgenç, this is why Islam firstly created an information society with a strong tradition of knowledge within itself; as a result of this the knowledge that accumulated in the society reached the level of science, and finally a scientific civilization was established.⁸²

The proposal of Açıkgenç is the urgency of developing a new understanding of knowledge that is centered around the Qur'an. There is no specific epistemology readily provided by the Qur'an. After all, the Qur'an is not a book of philosophy or science. However, an epistemology (an information theory) may be created based on the types of knowledge and sources provided in the Qur'an. It will be more suitable to name the theory formed as a result of this not as a Qur'anic information theory but as an “Islamic information theory” for it to be binding for other Muslim intellectuals.⁸³ What is meant by “being Islamic” here is the mindset of a Muslim. The purpose of knowledge in the Islamic understanding of knowledge is a specialized “utility”, not utility which means “pragma”. Thus, knowledge should bring one who knows closer to Allah and provide them with salvation. Each piece of knowledge is based on one of the names of Allah.⁸⁴ Therefore, knowing, in a way, is knowing the names in the presence of Allah, which may be described by Platonic terminology as universal ideas.

The Qur'an for Açıkgenç is not a text of philosophy, while the information contained in it may be explained in a philosophical sense and in a systematic way. This is because the Qur'an provides us with issues that may be subjects of human knowledge in the broadest sense in two categories. 1) Subjects that can be observed or experimented on, whereas the knowledge created by examining and investigating these is called “experiential knowledge”. The field of experiential knowledge is the realm of *shahadah* (the Visible or Material Realm) and its source is the sense organs. 2) This is the transcendental knowledge of issues that surpass experimentation and observation. The field of transcendental knowledge is metaphysics, and its source is revelation.⁸⁵ The Qur'an, as opposed to the claims of many, does not state that these two universes of existence and knowledge are completely distinct-different. The realms of *ghayb* and *shahadah* are two compatible parts of a whole.⁸⁶ These two fields are worlds that contain

82 Ibid, 26.

83 Mevlüt Uyanık, Mevlüt. *İslam Felsefesinde Kalbin Anlaması* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2005), 71.

84 Açıkgenç, Alparıslan. “İlmi Zihniyet ve İslam”, *Yeni Dergi* (1994), 2: 86-89, 87.

85 See, Alparıslan Açıkgenç. “İslami Bilim ve Felsefe Anlayışı”, *İslami Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 4: 3 (1990) 175-189, 183.

86 Açıkgenç, *Bilgi Felsefesi*, 143-144.

each other and are required for each other. Because of this two-way relationship, they cannot be considered separately. "When they are considered separately, not only will connections to the truth be severe, but some irregularities and problems will also arise in both personal and social lives of people".⁸⁷

In scientific activity, it is not possible to put the "*asmâ*" (names) which is considered to be "metaphysical" or its worldview in parentheses or leave it outside the laboratory. The Western positivist understanding of knowledge and science which excludes worldviews constructed a wall between religion and science in time, therefore, leading to reduction of confidence in belief and faith; finally, it brought disaster and restlessness instead of salvation and peace. As opposed to this, experiencing a disaster due to moving away from Allah has not taken place in Islamic science. In contrast, belief and faith became stronger in those who went deeper into science. The ethics, aesthetics, politics and epistemology of science have been discussed as a whole related to each other and Allah.

V. CONCLUSION: THE CONDITIONS, NECESSITY AND GROUNDS OF ISLAMIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Açıkgenç believes that it is possible to have epistemologies and philosophies of science that are different from positivist epistemology which is a product of the Western worldview. Science is not isolatable from social and subjective conditions as claimed by positivism. The argument of experimental and mental ground regarding the source of knowledge is incomplete as it excludes emotions, intuition, and religious experiences that is reached by moral maturity; it misses the comprehensiveness of being, personhood and society. Positivism, which is an understanding of knowledge and being that is intertwined with the Western worldview, emerges from the reductionist approach in the sense of incompleteness. That is, positivist epistemology and mechanical ontology reduce the person into body and intelligence, being into body and matter, and knowledge into objects; it becomes incapable of seeing the humanitarian and social reality whose multidimensional reflections we encounter in real life, or the intertwined hierarchical layers of being.

The views of Açıkgenç that are based on the Qur'an regarding knowledge and science has qualities of being multilayered, systematic and comprehensive. Accordingly, it is not possible

to discuss views on knowledge and science in individual and social life or in a culture and civilization independently of an approach on being and values, or consider a view on ethics, politics and aesthetics independently of an approach on values. According to Açıkgenç, the type of relationship societies establish with knowledge is the main factor that determines the value of knowledge, presuppositions regarding the sources and limits of knowledge, and the structure, form and course of the culture and civilization they construct. Islamization of knowledge is seen as a required first step for proper reconstruction of the Islamic civilization that emerged in later stages of a culture that was formed along with the Islamic way of life. It is possible to track the initiative of Açıkgenç to Islamize knowledge with the following key concepts: Knowledge, objectivity of knowledge, subjective objectivity, redefinition of being scientific, scientific method, information, theory, the scientist's point of view, ambient context of science, terminology, development process of science and its stages, dynamic social structure, worldview, sensation, intelligence, consciousness, intuition, emotionality, moral maturation, unity and hierarchy of existence.

In Açıkgenç's philosophical system, knowledge and science are considered as an organism living with the person; it is not independent of or far from the person; it provides meaning and direction to human life; it shapes thoughts and lifestyles. There is a living and tight relationship between science and the individual, and between the worldviews of people and their understanding of science. The personal approach on science is an extension of the person's worldview.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 77.