



Concept of Knowledge in Sheikh-ul Aalam's Philosophy and its Relationship with Practices of Life

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Abstract

The epistemological deliberations are extended across the philosophical history right from the ancient Greek. Sheikh-ul Aalam, who is inveterate as the flag bearer of Kashmir elucidated the essential facets of knowledge, its suitable utilization and methods of expressions. The pseudo-scholars of his era created an inconsistency amid the minds of people that offered an ample source for dissemination of misapprehension among the communities. The forged impression of several significant religious and philosophical characteristics had produced an ideological slit. He condemned the so-called scholars and furnished an appropriate account of knowledge and its association with the life practices. He through his poetic word communicated with the people who came centuries after his era. The paper attempts to explain how Sheikh-ul Aalam presented the magnitude of epistemological delicacies and expression of obvious disparity with memorizing of erudite facts and information.

Keywords: Knowledge, Pseudo-scholars, misapprehension, Ideological Slit and Life Practices.

Introduction

Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani or Nund Reshi prevalently known as Sheikh-ul Aalam along with other honorary names like 'Tajulauliya-i-Kashmir and Alamdar-i-Kashmir' was endorsed by both the Hindu and Muslim community of Kashmir. He has to his credit for laying the foundation of an indigenous Muslim Reshi order during the fifteenth century in Kashmir. He expressed such a powerful mystic poetry that he became the protector and epitome of Kashmiri culture. Sheikh-ul Aalam's poetic word is popular throughout Kashmir and has been scattered orally by generations among the people of Kashmir. Sheikh-ul-Aalam left behind all those things which were bonded to material world. He initially isolated and dedicated all his time in meditation in order to overcome and conquer the appetite of self, thus to strengthen his spiritual influence. Sheikh-ul-Aalam attained the epistemological essence of various metaphysical dimensions of universe. The poetic word of Sheikh-ul Aalam is very prominent, prestigious and esteemed at every angle; each couplet of his poetry has a unique appeal and unparallel combination of words. The influence of Sheikh-ul Aalam can be seen as the holiday is observed across Kashmir valley at government/public level in his remembrance even the same day festival is celebrated at his resting place (Charar-i-Shareef).

Methodology

The approach for the current study is qualitative, which is based on non-quantitative methods and assumptions. The Qualitative studies focus on subjective experience which can be expressed through various approaches of this method and here we may take up one of them known as "Content Analysis" that focus on documents and concerned material. The document is typically not disseminated beyond the individual or group. The study is conducted using approximately the same kinds of sampling, coding and interpretive steps as other types of qualitative design. Although

content analysis focuses on materials, sampling considerations are essentially the same as in research with human participants; here snowball sampling is adopted for selecting the data and sources. The constant comparative method was employed to identify discrete categories or themes through a largely inductive process. The researcher attempted to find the instances of themes that already are believed to be important; hence the information collected was analyzed in this way for drawing conclusions, developing interpretation and finding the results.

The Sheikh-ul Aalam: A Landmark in Kashmiri Literature

Centre for Sheikh-ul-Aalam studies: Markaz-i-Noor a research centre has been established in 1998 at University of Kashmir where research is being conducted on his thought and practice. The scholars in the said field have put forth enormous and diverse research findings from time to time. The research output is found pertinent in almost every challenging situation of life which becomes an eye opener for the upcoming research scholars with wider horizons. The relevance of Sheikh-ul Aalam's thought in contemporary era is completely supported by the fact that the couplets, similes, metaphors and idioms used in poetry are in no way obsolete. The poetic word of Sheikh-ul Aalam is full of experience and observation along with the supremacy of intuition serve as a foundation for the existence of his thought. The verses contain discussion on religious aspect in perspective of social and philosophical delicacies. The inconsistency among the various schools of thought may be abridged by the introduction of Sheikh-ul Aalam's viewpoint of peace and conflict resolution universally (Mohi-ud Din, 2019). The different spiritual views have been evolutionized in Kashmir that embraced Buddhism, Shaivism, Hinduism and Islamic Reshism. There appeared spiritual guides and religious leaders in the valley among which Sheikh-ul Aalam and Lalla-Ded have attained incomparable fame across the literature; both were popular figures among all the communities breaking the communal barriers by the virtue of human friendly approach (Ahmad, 2019).

Sheikh-ul Aalam: Practicing Knowledge and Humanistic Approach

The loftiness in poetic word of Sheikh-ul Aalam keeps it alive as it touches the themes associated with morality and human values. The thinkers opine that moral values are identical in each frame of reference as originates from Supreme while sects promote division as they belong to humans. The national and religious moral code changes when customs and traditions are given prime importance. The values are supported by religious teaching, although inherent values in all human species those are similar in nature, never changes. Sheikh-ul Aalam nourishes the human relationship and tries to realize its standard and importance (Tilgami, 2019). Sheikh-ul Aalam's character perforated a flecked stance that helped the socio-religious preachers to continuously contemplate over the paradigms which may simultaneously work out the dual pathway programme, one that leads to eternal truth that is the creator and another to the development of one's personality, which is leading one to creator's premises. Among all the attributes associated to Sheikh-ul Aalam, his Humanistic thought spectacularly stands to be the shaft of his philosophy that provides support to his tenets of reflection (Farooq, 2017). The poetry with all its artistic glory and value is the finest channel to express the inexpressible. Sheikh-ul Aalam used a specific expression of poetry 'Shruk' to present mystical experiences. It is obvious from the language of 'Shruk' that it has come up from an extra ordinary intellectual state in which communication is of a higher order than the common thoughts or dialogue. Sheikh-ul Aalam's innovative brilliance brought the contrasting thoughts together in similes and metaphors instructive about what they have in common (Farooq, 2016).

Sheikh-ul-Aalam: Knowledge and Practice

Sheikh-ul Aalam purely focus on practicing the theory, he considers the gaining knowledge similar to keeping gold in a safe. He actually relates the word knowledge with that of its practical utility wherever the term is used. The pragmatic approach of gaining and utilizing knowledge is the only

way of justifying the epistemological cache. Knowledge is not only a source of economic enrichment but an instrument for the exploration of physical and metaphysical worlds. He used the term 'Mullah' for the then Pseudo-scholars of Islam, those who do not practice what they preach therefore creating a state of confusion among the common masses in the field of religion, epistemology and education. The couplets reveal that he was having an apparent imminence that in future the knowledge would be a source for earning matter only. As per Sheikh-ul Aalam, Scholar in the chaste form is the one who has rationale for arriving at knowledge. Sheikh-ul Aalam admires the scholar who is actually carrying out learning all the way through existence. Sheikh-ul Aalam's couplets due to traditional approaches of research remained confined to the literal meanings and limited interpretations, although there is a scope for major intellectual gateways. The dissemination of information devoid of practicing is sharing of bookish facts. To reform the society through switching of information and facts into knowledge, Sheikh-ul Aalam had explored entire Kashmir thrice during his life time (Gauhar, 2012).

Realization of Origin of Knowledge by Gratifying its Needs

Sheikh-ul Aalam was in disagreement with the pseudo-scholars of his era irrespective of affiliations to school of thought. Sheikh-ul Aalam explained the importance of environmental safeguard and the methods to retain its balance as well. Everybody should recognize the call for highlighting the teachings of *Reshism* concerning ecology so that our people would understand the importance of nature and its resources (Geelani & Wani, 2017). Sheikh-ul Aalam while speaking about the some pseudo-scholars of his era explains, the scholars have kept the knowledge attainment confined to production of wealth only and suffer from the clash of vested interests of each other, and are actually in delusion to think themselves as scholars. The misapprehension of material chattels had eradicated their stance to serve humanity as a moral goodwill. The student's tongue and hands are getting tired of reading and writing respectively, even not enough to free their heart from yearning of material assets, as a result failed to develop thought and vision. Scholars have lost the attention of their existence while studying but are nothing more than donkey carrying load of books instead of those who realized the complexities of heart as connectivity between knowledge and Supreme take all the triumph. The prudent and scholarly groups bestow people with life in the form of knowledge, of every drop, there originates vivacity. The content of bookish knowledge penetrates every nerve of student during reading but illustrates worthlessness when assessed within. Who is going to light a lamp in these stormy and windy nights of darkness? Knowledge and practice can perform the charge eradicating darkness of ignorance. He used symbolic styles for expression of knowledge, ignorance and its relationship (Gauhar, 2012).

Demonstration: An Effective Method of Knowledge Expression

Once Sheikh-ul-Aalam was invited to a feast and arrived at the host wearing shabby clothes. Gate keeper did not recognize him and was not allowed to enter the party. He came again after replacing the dress with new one. Sheikh-ul-Aalam entered wearing a stunning swathe and was honored with the admiral position and all the invitees started for lavish dinner but Sheikh-ul-Aalam extended out his sleeves and put them onto the plates full of food, people around him got surprised and asked the reason, *Sheikh-ul-Aalam replied: Eat you rich clothes eat "The feast was not for the poor like me, it is for the wealthy who dress in with rich clothes and long sleeves.*

Discussion

Sheikh-ul Aalam used various thought provoking metaphors and symbols to make people understand the actual meaning of knowledge. He everywhere invalidates the dry reception of information without soaking it with the moisture of practice. The fruits can only be produced with a proper combination of seed and water in the soil. He voiced very affective words in regional vernacular to evoke the minds and hearts of locals. It is mind and heart that controls the body, thus he emphasized the importance of mind and heart relationship in producing proper knowledge. The target was to

create such a society which is full of ethics, morals and values. His poetic word is not only confined to his era but benefited people after centuries. The couplets are very fresh in feelings and relevant when analyzed in the backdrop of present situation which is the marvelous characteristic of his poetry and thought. The relationship of theory and practice is evident from his own life and the establishment of school of Reshism. The school of Reshism is nothing more than that of Sufism with strong focus on pragmatic attitude.

Conclusion

There are various issues presently with social set-up of Kashmir. When the situation is examined, there seems more problem in social segment compared to other dimensions. Social reformation done by Sheikh-ul Aalam was a great input, at present the impressions of which have remained restricted to the books only. Sheikh-ul Aalam explored the traditions of Kashmir in various zones and regions, contributed in elimination of social imbalances and irregularities. He reformed and developed the culture that remained tagged with his name and fame. The Sheikh-ul Aalam's teachings relate knowledge with the practices of life. He attempted to bridge the gap between information and practical utility of it, which produced knowledge. The philosophy and thought of Sheikh-ul Aalam is here advocated to be the part of curriculum in educational institutions which may help in eradication of value crisis and develop a proper insight regarding pure knowledge.

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