

Two sources of knowledge

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

Man always tries to reason things out. The chapter entitled Al-Ahqaf (The Sand Dunes) of the Quran, tells us that there are two genuine sources of authentic knowledge which will enlighten us in this regard. The translation of this verse is as follows: Say, "Have you thought about those you call upon apart from God? Show me what they have created on the earth. Or do they have a share in the heavens? Bring me a Book revealed before this or some other vestige of knowledge, if you are telling the truth" (46:4).

According to this Quranic verse, there are two sources of authentic knowledge — revealed knowledge and scientific knowledge. Revealed knowledge is authentic, because it comes directly from God Almighty. And scientific knowledge is authentic because it is based on the Laws of Nature. Other than these two sources, there is no third source that may be credited as being reliable. In this sense, the Quran and Nature are

like each other's counterparts. What is revealed in the Quran is hidden in Nature, and what is in Nature is revealed in the Quran in a language understandable to man. The Quran can be understood by acquiring a good command of the Arabic language or by having recourse to its correct translation. By applying the scientific method, what is hidden in nature can be understood by unfolding it.

There are two sources of knowledge — religious knowledge and secular knowledge. Religious knowledge is based on divine revelation and secular knowledge is based on scientific discovery. Someone who wants to be a right thinker must acquire these two kinds of knowledge. All other knowledge besides these two kinds is speculative. These two kinds of knowledge are complementary to each other. Revealed knowledge justifies scientific knowledge and scientific knowledge confirms revealed knowledge.

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