1. Introduction

One of the human’s personality characteristics which enable him/her to know the unknown is the power of intellect and thought. The word intellect (Aql) has not entered into the Quran in an infinitive form but its verbal derivatives have been employed in the Quran verses with terms such as (Na'qilu), (Ta'qilun), ('Aqaluhu), and (Ya'qilun) about 50 times.

In these verses, assuming the concept of intellect as an instrument for thinking and learning about the facts, the holy Quran has mostly insisted on activating the intellect, i.e. reasoning (Ta'aqqul). So mentioning the wonders of the world of being, it considers them as signs for those who employ their intellect. For example, it is stated in the verse 164 of surah Al-Baqarah:

“Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, in the alternation of the night and the day, in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind, in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead, in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth, in the change of the winds and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth (here) indeed are signs for a people that are wise.”

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For this very reason, the Quran has compared those who have deprived themselves from thinking with animals (Al-Anfal, 22):

[For the worst of beasts in the sight of Allah are the deaf and the dumb, those who understand not] and announces the result of negligence in applying the intellect to know the facts as ill-fated destiny and arrival into the hell. (Al-mulk, 10) [They will further say: Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not now be among the companions of the blazing fire]

2. synonyms of intellect and related concepts

Another subject-matter which reveals the position of the intellect in the Quran is to pay attention to the synonyms and related concepts with intellect which has a broad and prevailing application in the Quran verses.

Some of the most important of these words are:

- Thought (Fikr) and Thinking (Tafakur):

  [Then to eat of all the produce of the earth and follow the ways of thy Lord made smooth, there issues from within their bodies a drink of varying colors wherein is healing for men, verily in this is a sign for those give thought] (Al-Nahl, 69).

- Heart (Qalb):

  there will be for them therein all that they wish and there is more with us (Qaf, 35).

- Heart of the matter (Lub), singular of (Albab):

  Behold, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understating (Ali-Imran, 190).

- Understanding (Nuha):

  Eat for yourselves and pasture your cattle, verily in this are signs for men endued with understanding (Taha, 54).

- Evidence (Hijr):
Is there not in these an adjuration or evidence for those who understand (Al-Fajr, 5).

- Reason (Hilm), singular of (Ahlam):
  
  Does their reason tell them to say this or is it because they are a rebellious people? (Al-Tur, 32)

- Realization (Fiqh):
  
  [Many are the Jinns and men we have made for Hell: they have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, nay more misguided for they are heedless of warning] (Al-A'raf, 179).

The symmetrical meaning of these terms with the term of intellect could be seen in the works by these scholars: Ibn Manzur, 685/1, Ibn Faris, 17/5, Ibn Athir 433/1, Qomi, 419/2, Johari 138/2. The other point in knowing the meaning and the truth of the intellect is paying attention to the antonym words or their contradictory words.

The most important word opposite to Intellect is Ignorance (Jahl) which has a prevailing applications in the verses and traditions and for this reason, Al-Kulayni has started his work entitled “The book Al-Kāfī (The Sufficient Book)” with the chapter of Intellect and Ignorance and thereby, he narrates traditions from the religious leaders to show the contradiction of intellect and ignorance.

One of these traditions, is a speech from Imam Reza (PBUH) who has stated, everyone's friend is his intellect and his enemy is his ignorance (Al-Kulayni, 11/1). It can be said in the contrast of intellect and ignorance, intellect becomes closer to the meaning of science and those who exhibit the power of intellect in themselves, they are captivated in the bush of ignorance. So, Joseph (Yusuf) describes his brothers while kidnapping him and throwing him into the well as ignorant: He said, are you aware of what you did with Joseph and his brother, when you were ignorant? (Yusuf, 89).

In some verses and traditions, intellect has been used opposite to stupidity for instance those who were disclaiming the religion of Abraham which in the interoperation of the Quran have been termed as foolish: And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly? Him we
chose and rendered pure in this world and he will be in the Hereafter in the ranks of the righteous (Al-Baqarah, 130).

In a wise statement, Imam Ali (PBUH) states: *Intellect is a source of proximity to God and stupidity is a source of distance from Him* (Amadi, 111).

The last point in this part is that intellect in the Islamic teachings is a relative and of two positions. It is such that some of the humans have been depicted as people in lack of intellect and oppositely, some others as the wisest people. Features such as fear of God, being submitted to the divine commandments, detachment from sins, tolerance in dealing with people, awareness of one’s faults, and adopting silence are the signs of wisdom and to the extent that an individual becomes skilled with these features, he will enjoy a position higher than intellect and wisdom. (See Amadi, from No. 960 to 976).

3. The Authority of the Intellect in Verses and Traditions

The holy Quran has been sent down to guide the human. In this targeting, all people are addressed by the Quran:

[Ramadan is the month in which as sent down the Quran, as a guide to mankind, also clear signs for guidance and judgment between right and wrong, so every one of you who is present at his home, during that month, should spent it in fasting. But if anyone is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period should be made up by days later. Allah intends every facility for you. He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period and to glorify Him. In that He has guided you and perchance ye shall be grateful (Al-Baqarah, 185).]

But it is clear that holders of logic and wisdom grasps the messages of the Quran faster than others. So, concerning the understanding of the wise people about the facts of the universe, the holy Quran states:

*Behold, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understating* (Ali-Imran, 190).

In the same manner, in various verses, the Quran invites to pay attention to the existing wonders in the universe – including heavens and the earth and even the existence of human. (For example see: Al-Zariyat, 20-22; Fusilat, 5; Al-Qashiyah, 17-20; Al-Nahl, 69). On the other hands, the Quran rebukes those who
have accepted the beliefs based only upon imitation of their fathers and do not employ their own intellect and wisdom to learn about the facts (Tabatabaei, 420/1). It states,

*And when it is said to them, "Follow what God has sent down," they say, "No; but we will follow such things as we found our fathers doing.' What? And if their fathers had no understanding of anything, and if they were not guided? The likeness of those who disbelieve is as the likeness of one who shouts to that which hears nothing, save a call and a cry (a beast) deaf, dumb, blind they do not understand (Al-Baqarah, 170-171).*

According to some of the verses, human can attain the knowledge of facts through two methods: One is to listen to the prophets’ and wise peoples’ admonishes and guidance and the other is to use his own intellect and understanding in knowing about the universe and its wonders. Other than these two statuses, he will be like animals and will rebuke himself in the Hereafter. As in Surah Al-Mulk, there is a quotation from the infidels:

*They will further say: Had we but listened or used our intelligence, we should not (now) be among the companions of the blazing fire. They will then confess their sins: But far from Allah's mercies are the companions of the blazing fire. (Al-Mulk, 10-11)*

The result of all the verses which were present is that intellect in human’s existence is a valid instrument to learn about the facts. The Quran recognizes the result of human’s intellect, because if the Quran invites human to intellect and thinking, but the result of his intellect and thought is lack of access to facts, such as work will be void and useless. *The Quran is wise (Yasin, 1) and it is a book which has been sent down by the wise God (Al-Ahqaf, 2).* With such a confirmation that the Quran has given on intellect and practicing it, i.e. reasoning, the intellect in the human’s existence is converted into an evidence, an evidence by which human will be questioned in the resurrection day why he has not put himself under its influence and instead he has obeyed his passion and self-will. Surah Al-A'raf states:

*Many are the Jinns and men we have made for Hell. They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle – nay more misguided for they are heedless of warning (Al-A'raf, 179).*
Apart from the Quran verses by which the authority of intellect is easily understandable, among the Islamic traditions, there is a unique tradition on the authority of the intellect by the seventh Imam. In this long tradition which has been included by Muhammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī in the book of "The Intellect and The Ignorance", with a reference to the Quran verses about intellect, its significance and function in human’s existence has been discussed.

In a part of the tradition, Imam (PBUH) announces the philosophy of appointment of the prophets (PBUH) to grow the intellect of human’s intellect. In this route, the individuals who enjoy a higher knowledge, will be the best people responding the call and mission of the prophets and will acquire the highest degrees in the world and Hereafter proportional with their intellect and wisdom (Al-Kulayni, 16/1). However, the most important phrase of the seventh Imam Al-Kazim’s tradition is:

*God had put two authorities for every human: an apparent authority (outside his being) and Inner authority (inside him), the apparent authority includes the prophets and Imams and the inner authority is the peoples’ intellects (ibid).*

There is a similar tradition from Imam Reza (PBUH), when Ibn Al-Sikīt, asks him, "what authority does exist for people today?", Imam Reza (PBUH) states:

*The authority of intellect, because it is in the light of intellect that one who assumes truthfulness towards God and attests Him is distinguished from the one who assumes falsehood towards God and deny Him. Ibn Al-Sikīt says, "Oath on God that this response is real" (Tabarsi, 433/2).*

4. The role of intellect in knowing the facts

Referring to the verses of the Quran and Islamic traditions, the role of intellect and its function in learning about the facts is clarified. The facts which are the subject-matters of knowing the intellect have various branches and

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2. That is to the interpretation of Ali (PBUH) in Nahj Al-Balaghah which announces the prophetic mission: One of the objectives of the prophetic mission was to free the treasures of reason from the superstitious (Seyed Razi, The 1st Sermon).
diversities of which their main three subject-matters are pointed out in the following lines:

4.1. The role of intellect in acquiring the cognition of beliefs

The most important field of acquiring the cognition of the facts is the domain of human beliefs and issues which are related to his philosophy of creation, in this domain, theology, ontology in the philosophical meaning, perception of the prophetic mission and eschatology exist. Understanding this matter that the universe has a creator and that creator has created the universe based on wisdom and grace and the universe has a course and motion to attain one day to its ultimate location and resurrection, all and all are within the domain of rational cognition. (For detailed discussion, see: Sobhani, 299/3).

According to the verses of the holy Quran, theology is in the human’s innate but in the material life, sometimes there happens forgetfulness for human and sometimes inclination towards imaginative idols. It is in these cases that by addressing the recipient of the message, the Quran invites him to a rational judgment:

Then is He who creates like one who does not create? So will you not be reminded? (Al-Nahl, 17)

Also where it says:

Or were they created by nothing, or were they the creators [of themselves]? (Al-Tur, 35)

The first phrase refers to the causality rule and that no phenomenon can be without any cause and the second phrase is referring to the circle and that self-creation is a circle (Sobhani, 300/3) and the circle is void. Theology in the prophetic missions has also been associated with using the rational reasoning of which one sample is the Abraham monotheism. In facing his tribe, he announced the fall and set of stars, moon and sun as the sign of instability and weakness as an idol, consequently he directed his attention towards a God who is the creator of heavens and the earth. Also in confronting with the idols, he attacked them by an ax and destroyed them but he left aside the big idol as the annihilators of other idols to make people understand that the idols are not able to create profit or damage.
In a debate with Nimrod, asking him to make the sun to shine from the west instead of the east, he made him in a status of bewilderment. (For details see: Al-An’am, 74-79; Al-Baqarah, 258; Al-Anbiya, 58-66).

Here a question might arise and that is with regard to the cognition of God through introduction made by the prophets, what is the role of intellect in the cognition of the God? Isn’t that the narrative teachings are the bases for acquiring the cognition of beliefs? In response, it can be said that prophets by their prophetic missions through their miracles have proved their truthfulness and then present their teachings to the public. In other words; presenting miracle is the truthfulness document of the prophets. But what factor has been the cause for understanding miracle as something different from other similar affairs such as magic, magic tricks? Is there any other force apart from the power of intellect to be able to understand the miracle and consequently the truthfulness of the prophets?

Thus, the role of intellect in cognition of beliefs becomes clear. If theology is at the top of the beliefs which is obtained through rational reasoning for human, it is possible to consider the perception of other beliefs such as the cognition of the prophet, Imam and, Eschatology in the length of it.

4.2. The role of intellect in acquiring the cognition of the entity and the nature

There are many verses in the Quran which have recommend to thinking and contemplation on the wonders existing in the nature and even the parts of human being. Such as:

And on the earth are signs for the certain [in faith], And in yourselves. Then will you not see? (Al-Dhariyat, 20-21)

The phrase "then will you not see", is to see with the eye of human’s heart and being which is in fact the same rational attitude. From the perspective of the Quran, the whole universe is full of the signs of power of the God. As He states:

And how many a sign within the heavens and earth do they pass over while they, there from, are turning away (Yusuf, 105).

The method of the Quran is to name one or many phenomena of the entity phenomena on certain occasions and announces that there are signs in these
phenomena for the wise people. Among the phenomena which the Quran invites the wise people to think about them, one can mention the followings:

Creation of heavens and the earth, regular change of day and night, movement of ships in the seas, rain generating clouds, winds blow, raining, revival of the nature, germination of flower and plants, honey bee and its location finding in the heights and producing the honey, creation of human and wonders of the creatures in the creation of human such as difference in colors and languages of individuals, etc. (for detailed information see: Al-baqarah, 164; Al-Nahl, 69; Al-Rum, 20-27; Ali-Imran, 190).

The Quranic phrases such as "Most surely there are signs in this for people who ponder" or "Most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect" shows this reality that by rational thinking about the phenomena of the universe, in addition to access to the rules of the nature, it is possible to grasp the divine power in creation of the phenomena and that the universe of creation has not been created by accident and for futile purpose.

4.3. The role of intellect in understanding the ethic and its standards

Another subject which in the viewpoint of the Quran is within the realm of cognition of the intellect is ethic and its standards. In the perspective of the Quran, the base of goodness and evil and distinguishing the ethical virtues from the evils and ugliness have been entrusted in the human being inherently. The Quran states:

And [by] the soul and He who proportioned it, and inspired it [with discernment of] its wickedness and its righteousness, (Al-Shams, 7-8)

Thus, human intellect irrespective of religious laws teachings is able to know the good and bad and in general virtuous and evil. And have shown him the two ways? (Al-Balad, 10) that means the two ways of good and evil. This Qur'anic concept was then discussed by the theologian groups among the Muslims under the topic of "rational goodness and badness". Some of the Islamic groups like Ahl al-Hadith (The People of Hadith) and Ash'arites considered the denial of competency of intellect in the domain of ethics and distinguish between the goodness and evil, but oppositely, groups such as Mu'tazilis and Twelver, while confirming the competency of intellect, believe in the rational goodness and badness (Hasani, 263).
This means that human intellect can grasp the goodness of ethical virtues and badness of the ethical evils. In other words, human intellect considers attributes such as justice, righteousness, loyalty to promise, cooperation with others as affairs being favorable innately and recognize them as ethical virtues and the religious decree is nothing but confirmation and solidification of the rational decree in the domain of ethical issues. So, in verses such as:

Indeed, Allah orders justice and good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality and bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded (Al-Nahl, 90).

The command of the Quran is to observe the ethical issues and distance from the evil attributes is nothing but emphasize on innate and rational understanding of human virtues.

Another point is that ethics in the view of the scientist and scholars is divided into two theoretical ethics and practical ethics. The theoretical ethics means knowledge about ethical standards and attributes including good and evil, virtues and vices and practical ethics means obligation to observe the ethical virtues and decision on distancing from the vices and ethical unpleasant features. As intellect has necessary capabilities to distinguish virtues from vices, in the same way, the decree of intellect as the inner prophet of human is to encourage human to observe ethical measures and distance from the ethical vices. In other words, the practical ethics in the human character relies upon the command of the practical intellect (For details see: Javadi Amoli, 44 & 68).

This is the same matter which has been pointed out in the tradition of Imam Sadegh (PBUH) as the definition of intellect which read: Intellect is the same power, in the light of which, the beneficent God is worshipped and the divine paradise is achieved (Al-Kulayni, 11/1).

Finally, it is worth noting that with all competencies and capabilities which is provide for the intellect in the perspective of the Quran, the human intellect has certain limits and damages which has not been discussed in this paper. Acquiring cognition and knowledge about the essence of the divine attributes, legislation of religious decrees, understanding the details of the religion and the philosophy of some of the commandments are among the matters which are not within the realm of human intellect but human accepts them obediently in the light of faith in God of the universe (for detailed discussion on the limits of
intellect, see: Asef Agah, 188-195; Javadi Amoli, 56: Perceptual restrictions of the intellect in the domain of religion).

5. Conclusion

Reasoning, i.e. to employ the intellect and power of intellect in knowing the facts of the universe has an important position in the Qur'anic verses.

In the Qur'anic verses and Islamic traditions, the power of intellect in in human is like an inner prophet, so the decrees and judgments of the intellect are valid and authoritative and is in agreement with the prophets’ and Imams' guidance.

The realm of intellect in knowing the facts, is a vast realm and encompasses diverse matters such as theology, ontology, anthropology and ethics, i.e. to distinguish the ethical virtues from the vices. The practical intellect also directs human to perform virtues and to stay away from the vices.

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