

The Comparison of “intellectuality” in Ibn Khaldun and Imam Muhammad Ghazali’s Viewpoints

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Abstract: Discussing and arguing the range of intellectual knowledge and its boundaries, are not a new issue among the scholars; however, this discussion has been among them, and has arranged one of their significant mental concerns. On the other hand, this discussion has existed among the followers of all the religions including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and it can be stated that this discussion has affected the history of human thought. In the range of religions, there has always been a difference among the types of followers’ viewpoints on this issue; some group has relied on the sanctity and dignity of the religion, and believed that rationality can never touch religion. The other group has decreased the dignity of religious doctrines and has denoted superiority to the intellect and its data, and the third group, have continually tried to match and harmonize these two tools. Therefore, the present article, tries to conduct a comparative study on intellectualism from the perspectives of Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, as one of the basics of these two scholars’ anthropology.

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1. Introduction

“Intellectualism” in Persian has been translated as “wisdom,” in French it has been translated “Raison,” and in English “Intellect Intelligence,” and in Latin “Ratio Intelligentia” however, in the lexicon, it means “forbidden and prohibited.” It is named in this way, since it is like the camel tethered, because the intellect deters its owner deviating from the right way, similar to the tethered, which stops the camel. The populace applies the rationality in three meanings; first: it means the human’s dignity, so, its definition is that the intellect limits the human in speech, gestures, behaviors, and authorities. Second, it is said to the general sentences, which are achieved by the human. Therefore, the intellect is a collection of meanings, which are collected in the mind, and it is like the preparations through which all the purposes and materials are perceived. Third, it means the correctness of the basic nature in the human. Therefore, it is defined as the power, which perceives the good, evil, defect, and perfection of things. The philosophers have used the intellect in the following meanings: 1. the first meaning is that they have been stated that the intellect is the extensive essence, which perceives the facts of objects. This compound essence is not perishable from the faculty. This essence is naturally immaterial, and is simultaneous with it in practice. Quoting to the immateriality of the intellect exists in most of the philosophers writing: Farabi says that the intellect faculty of the extensive essence is symmetrical with the material, which exists after the death of the body, and is a unique essence and is the human’s fact. Wherever Ave Sina

names the intellect faculty, the title of essence is given to it. He believes that the essence that is far from the intellect faculty is the intellect, and it is just the self of speech, to which everyone is mentioned. 2. The second meaning is defined as: the intellect is the faculty of the self, from which the meanings, imaginations, compounds, and the comparisons are derived. The difference between the intellect and sense is that the intellect can separate the form of the material and formats, but the sense cannot. Therefore, the intellect is the immateriality and abstraction faculty, which separates the forms of the objects of their materials, and perceive the general meanings such as essence, body, cause and effect, fate, and good and evil means. This faculty owns different stages for the Islamic philosophers. First, is the monstrous intellect, or the absolute talent of perceiving the comprehension? It is attributed to the monster since the self is similar to the superior monster, which is free from the general forms in its nature at this stage. It is synonymous with the potential intellect and it is the intellect, which is like a writing tablet with nothing actually written on it. Second, is the acquired intellect, which includes the intellect to the necessities and the self-talent to acquire the theories with the necessities? Third, the actual intellect, which means that the theories are acquired through repetition in the intellectual faculty, so that superiority is achieved for this faculty and the owner, is able to present the meaning forms whenever he likes without any effort for recalling. Four, the Active intellect: where all the theories are present in the intellect and they do not get absent. In the Islamic scholars’ beliefs, the active intellect is

present beyond the human intellect which imparts the meaning forms to the existence and perishable world. These forms are present in the active intellect since it is active. However, these forms are only received as the result of passivity of the universe. When the connection of human intellect to the active intellect intensifies, it knows everything on its own, which is called the divine intellect. According to Aristotle, all these issues indicate that the agent intellect is the intellect that abstracts the general meanings or forms from the sensual and slight formats; while the passive intellect is the intellect in which impression is formed. 3. The third meaning of intellect is that it is the faculty of impact on decision making, i.e. it is the power to distinguish good from evil, and right from wrong. This discrimination is not acquired through comparison and thought, but it is achieved directly and naturally. It seems that as "Razi" believes, it is the instinct, the requirement of which is the knowledge of general and obvious affairs. "Descartes" has this meaning in his consideration, and stated that the first principle of his method is that nothing is regarded as the right, generally, unless its facts turned on as the intellect improvisation. In this regard and in this meaning, the intellect is against velleity, which prevents the human from the discriminating faculty. The fourth meaning of intellect is that intellect is the natural faculty of the self, which prepares it for acquisition the scientific cognition. This scientific cognition is separated from the religious cognition, which is based on revelation and faith (Gottfredson, L. S. (2004).

The fifth meaning of revelation is assuming that the regular a priori collection of intellect is the cognition, such as the principle of contradiction, the principle of causality, and the principle of finality. What distinguishes these principles is that, they are general and independent in comparison with the necessary experience. Leibniz believes that a human is distinguished from a non-human through perceiving the eternal and necessary facts. Therefore, the human is created and formed in the intellect and science, and soars to the cognition of his nature and perception of God. *Monadologie* is the meaning, which has been expanded under the influence of Kant in a new philosophy. The sixth meaning of intellect is that: the intellect is the faculty by which the direct intellects to the absolute facts are achieved for the self. If we believe in the unity of intellect and its subject, intellect means the absolute self. In this meaning, the intellect is something independent of us, and we perceive it from the outside, such as breathing the air. Any of us knows that in his body, some intellect is limited, the laws of which cannot be right, unless they are derived from the stable eternal general intellect. 7. The term of intellect refers to the

total collection of the self-duties that belong to the achievement of cognition including imagining the law, and the arguments to name a few. Its synonym in French is "Intelligence," and its synonym are mind, and understanding, and it is something except intuition and instinct. The faculty of fast understanding is called intelligence. 8. The absolute and the practical intellect: Kant attributes these two terms to what is in mind in comparison with the previous experience. By this, he means a transcendental faculty, which implies the previous basics and is independent of experience. If we consider that it is including the previous basics of scientific cognitions, it is called the theoretical or reflection intellect, and if we consider it, according to the previous basics of the ethics laws, it is called the practical intellect. Kant has applied the intellect in one absolute and specified meaning, and has attributed it as the faculty of higher intellectual, which creates some abstract meanings in our existence, including the meaning of self (ego), the meaning of God, and the meaning of universe. By this meaning, the intellect does not stand against experience, but it stands against the cognition (engenderment). This intellect has a specific scientific arena including the ethical certainties such as the meaning of the freedom of the eternal self, and the existence of God. 9. The constitute et raison Constituent Raison, according to Lalande, the Constituent Raison is the faculty, by which every human can extract the general and essential principles of the relations. This intellect is the same for all the people. However, the constitute et raison is the collection of rules and regulations that we trust in our reasoning's. This intellect is different in terms of people and time. Despite these issues, it is always tending to the unity. It seems that the Constituent Raison is wise, and the constitute ET raison, the rational. 10. Is the intellect attributed to the intellect? It is named as intellectual bases, intellectual sciences... Hegel says that every rational is really the existence, and every real existence is rational. And it is an intellect, which means theoretical, and reasonable. In psychology, the intellectual life stands against the passive or the conscious life and the active life. The intellectual values are against the artistic and ethical values. 11. The wise, is the orator existence or the one who is characterized by intellect. Everyone who says the human is the wise existence, he means that the human is distinguished from the animal by the intellect. Moreover, the wise means the one who think correctly and his sentences are correct about the objects, and do the correct job, and the condition for being wise is that the person is benevolent opposite to the unwise who uses his thoughts in evil deeds, and therefore he is not called

the wise, but he is called smart or cunning. 12. The originality of intellect, means the priority of the intellect, and is applied as the following meanings: first, the belief that every existence owns some cause, so that there is nothing in the world without the absolute reference. Second, is the belief that the origin of cognition is the previous and necessary intellectual principals, not the emotional experiences, because these experiences do not get the general intellect? In this meaning, the originality of intellect equals with “ampirisme,” and its followers believe that whatever exists in the intellect is as the result of emotion and experience (ampirisme). Third, is the belief that the intellect is the condition of experience (ampirisme) possibility? Fourth, faith and belief in the intellect faculty to discern the facts, the reason of which is that the rules of intellect are according to the rules of external objects, and every existence is rational, and every rational is the existence. Therefore, when it is stated that: the intellect is able to dominate all the objects, it is without any assistance or help from the heart, instinct, or religion. Their theory is against the theory of fideistes, who believe that the intellect is not able to discover the fact, and the inspiration and revelation are only able to discover it. 4. The originality of intellect in some of the religious scholars’ term means the faith belief is in accordance with the precepts of intellect. The originality of intellect is in three parts according to this definition: first: the intellect is the necessary and adequate condition for recognizing the religious truths. Second: avoidance of any opinion, the proof of which is not possible by the intellectual principals. Third: advocating the faith opinions when their religious validity was assumed so they can be proved intellectually. 13. Intellectualism is to say that whatever is existence is returnable to the intellectual principals. It is the religion of Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Wolf, and Hegel, and is specifically attributed to a theory, which attributes the sentence to the mind, involuntarily. Therefore, there’s no chance for the conscious and voluntary phenomena in the deed of the mind. Intellectualism is against the voluntarism, which means it knows the effect of will in sensual life more than the effect of intellect (Taitclin, Anna (2004).

2. The Intellect from the Perspective of Ghazali

One of the hardships that one might face in Ghazali’s works is the incompatibilities that are seen in his works, and one of them is his various statements about “intellect”. Ghazali, sometimes limits the intellect in terms of reasoning, and sometimes he enters it into the realm of faith, and it seems that the meaning he infers from the intellect is not the previous-stated meaning. Sometimes it seems that his confidence in intellect is weakened or

limited, and sometimes he denotes a full consideration to it in all the fields (Hughes, A .2002). Anyway, according to Ghazali, the intellect is led in the beam of Sharia, and the one who has not collected the intellect and Sharia together, has lost something; the intellect is the interpreter and the explainer of the Sharia and Sharia is the leader. He believes that in the conflict of quoted evidences with intellect, the intellectual reason is prior, and where some frequency, conflict exists is impossible to be created between the intellectual and the quoted reasons. Ghazali analyzes the intellect in this way: Be aware that there is an eye in the human’s heart, whose perfection attribute is exactly in this way, and it is the one, which is sometimes interpreted as the intellect, soul, or the self (ego). Leave the expressions alone, because whenever naming is abundant, synonymy increases for less knowledgeable people. By this expression, we mean, the meaning by which the wise is distinguished from the baby, animal, and insane. According to the philosophy, it is called “intellect.”(Morris, James W. 2008). One of the most significant issues under the tile of intellect is the relationship between the intellect and the Sharia. Despite all the Ghazali’s analysis on the intellect, he believes that its insight is limited and the way to the oracular issues and heavenly universe, is blocked. Moreover, he believes that the foot of intellect and reasoning, and discovering the secrets of creation, and recognizing the existence is lame and non-obedient. According to Ghazali, above the stage of intellect, there is another stage of perfection, at which another eye of intuition opens, and the human is able to perceive the unseen, and the future issues, and all the other issues, which are not possible to be perceived by wisdom. He knows Sharia as the external intellect, and the intellect as the internal Sharia, which are united, and unanimous. Despite this issue, he believes that the boundary of Sharia and intellect in terms of recognition and cognition is different, and believes that they are separated from each other, and states that the arena of intellect is limited in recognition of the objects and cognition of the facts, and the radius of its perceptions is limited at a certain distance. The intellect is able to discover only the generalities, without perceiving its details as they are; however, the Sharia, is both aware of the generalities, as well as their nature and details, and the difference between these two is clear. Therefore, as Ghazali believes, the cognition of Sharia is more complete than that of the intellect, and therefore, it is necessary for the intellect to seek the Sharia in the minor issues, and in fact the Sharia is the intellect higher and premiere than the nature of the intellect, itself. Therefore, if these two become united, they will turn into a united intellect, which make no

mistake in their perceptions and mysticisms. However, if they are separated, the intellect will make mistakes and errors in the minor issues⁶. Furthermore, on one hand, Ghazali criticizes the absolute imitator, who has removed the intellect from the judgement completely, and knows him unwise and unaware, and on the other hand, he criticizes the followers of the absolute intellect, who trusts only in the intellect, severely, and discouraged the humans from this extreme, and suggests that the both factors should be considered (Hennig, Boris (2007).

3. The Intellect in the perspective of Ibn Khaldun

In order to study the intellect in the perspective of Ibn Khaldun, we first state the issue of causality in his perspective slightly. "Taha Hossein" stated that Ibn Khaldun believed in the issue of causation, it is stated on the issue of intellect, and not similar to the perspectives of the opponents of the intellectual philosophy such as Ghazali, and Hume. Although "Taha Hossein" declared that in the origin of causation, Ibn Khaldun believes that there are some exceptions such as the things that take place in the field of miracles, and greatness⁸. Anyway, it is possible to state Ibn Khaldun's opinion about the origin of causation, regarding the chapter that he has written on the issue of the word. When he writes: "all the incidents in the universe, whether the human or the non-human deeds, are inevitable of the means and reasons prior to them, with which they have been created in the place of habits, and the existence is completed with them..., and the form of the effect of these means is unclear in many of their causes. Because recognizing those means is stopped on the habit and their companionship is through the citation to the appearance and the fact of its effect and impact is passive. "What is given is only a bit of science." Therefore, we are ordered to deny it and pay attention to Allah, the creator of the means (Weiss, Dieter (1995))." In these expressions, the effect of Ghazali on Ibn Khaldun is completely clear, and it can be stated that Ibn Khaldun, is higher than Ghazali in terms of emphasis on the inability of the human reason in understanding the quality of the means impact in creating the incidents. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun gets closer to the contemporaneous scientific tendency. Similar to Ghazali, he believes that we perceive the origin of causation through habit; however, he mentions to the issue that this habit is not safe from errors and mistakes, because our knowledge is limited to the means and therefore it is necessary to be attentive to "Allah", the creator of means. Therefore, according to Ibn Khaldun, the sciences which human investigates and distribute with the purpose of education and training is in two types; One type: is the natural sciences, which is

understood by his own thought, the second type: is the sciences quoted, and the human understands them from the one who has created them. The first type: is the cognition and philosophy and it is the cognition to which the human can find a way with the nature of his own thought, and recognize the issues, the reasoning method, and the kinds of its trainings with the perceptive faculties of his own so that the human is able to recognize good from evil since he owns the faculty of thinking. The second type: Are the traditional (quoted) sciences. These sciences are all documented to the awareness of the religious legislator. There is no place for intellect in these sciences, unless the secondary issues attach them to the principals. It means that the issue of religion is based on the facts that have been revealed by God. However, the issue of science is based on the facts that are possible to be recognized with the natural intellect without any external help, and this natural intellect has three stages in the perspective of Ibn Khaldun: 1. the distinguishing intellect, 2. the experiential intellect, 3. the theoretical intellect.

4. The Similarities and Differences between Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun viewpoints about the Intellect

It seems that Ghazali's viewpoint about the originality of intellect has been more effective than his viewpoint about the originality on causation on Ibn Khaldun. Similar to Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun believed that the human intellect is limited and it is not able to perceive the existence facts, except in a limited area, from which it cannot go further. This opinion has been stated in a dispersed way in the introduction and in different positions. In one of these positions, he has stated that "do not imagine that your wisdom is able to govern the universe, its means, and the explanation of the whole existence, because it is a foolish imagination. It should be noted that at the outset existence is limited for any perceiver to the perceptions of his feeling (Ibn Khaldun.2008) and does not exceed from that, while the fact of the issue is something contrary to that, and the right is beyond that". There is no doubt that Ibn Khaldun has obtained this opinion from Ghazali, because one can see some strange similarities between the sentences of Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun especially in stimulating the intellect to a pair of balances. However Ibn Khaldun has gone much further than Ghazali in interpreting the intellect. As we observed, Ghazali believed that the intellect is incapable of perceiving the divine issues. However, Ibn Khaldun believes that in addition to the divine issues, the intellect is incapable of perceiving the social issues. Ghazali stated that those, who only study the intellectual sciences, will decrease the perceptions and intuitions as much as they scrutinize the divine sciences. While,

Ibn Khaldun believes that in addition to that, their insight will be decreased in the perception of politics and other social issues (Ibn Khaldun.2008).

Ibn Khaldun has written a chapter in the introduction under the title of “on the issue that scientists are the farthest people in terms of politics and its methods¹²” By scientists, he means the ones who follow-up the postulates. He says about them, that they are used to scrutinize the concepts and separate them in their mind and abstract them as the general issues, to decree on them generally, and try to match the general implementation above the politics and other policies of the community; therefore, they are absolutely unsuccessful in politics. In the viewpoint of Ibn Khaldun, politics make the researcher needy to the stages of development- as it is found in the external universe. It happens many times that the common intellectual generalities are contrary to the minor issues existing in the external world. Therefore, a common man with an average IQ is more successful than a philosopher, because he has observed the issues with his emotional nature, and he does not predicate the sentence with the analogy or generalization. In fact, he is like a swimmer, who does not keep distance from the seaside when the sea is wavy. At the end, Ibn Khaldun writes that “... based on this, it is made clear that the philosophical talent is not free from mistakes and errors, because there are many abstractions in it and no one pays attention to the perceptible issue...” Ibn Khaldun has stated his idea more clearly at the end of another chapter of the introduction under the title of “Annulment of the philosophy and the destruction of its followers.” He mentions the philosophy that is followed by the philosophers is incapable in two respects: one from the angle of theology and the other from the angle of physical creatures, which is called as the natural generality by the philosophes. The inability phase of logic from this angle is that the mental results achieved from definitions and analogy is uncertain and not compatible with the external facts. “Except in the issues in which the intuition is evidenced, and in this case that the intuitive evidence is superior. Therefore, where are the proofs for which they are looking? (Ibn Khaldūn. 1967)

It gets clear, from here that Ibn Khaldun has expanded Ghazali’s thought and has placed it in a position upon which Ghazali does not agree, because Ghazali does not credit the sensory perception and similar to the predecessors, he believes it is insignificant and abolished. It even can be stated that Ghazali believes in two kinds of logic in the thought. One of them is the “Aristotelian Logic,” which is valid in all the sciences-except-theology. Yet, the other one is the “intuitive logic” that is stated in the issues related to theology. While, Ibn Khaldun adds

another logic named “sensory logic” to these two logics, which is valid in perceiving the social issues. It seems that Ghazali wanted the social issues to be subordinated by Aristotelian logic similar to natural sciences. While Ibn Khaldun states that although such sciences as geometry, and mathematics, are affected by the Aristotelian logic, recognizing the society is not subordinated by the above-mentioned logic. In his idea, recognizing the society is necessarily derived from the senses. And if “abstraction” increases, no one can escape from its negative consequences. In Ibn Khaldun’s viewpoint, sense is much more suitable than the logical induction/deduction and intellectual abstraction in perceiving the social affairs; therefore, Ibn Khaldun believed in three kinds of logic rather than two kinds (Ibn Khaldun.2008):

1. Intuitive logic: which is suitable for the divine and spiritual affairs?
2. Intellectual logic: which is suitable for inductive/deductive issues such as Maths, Geometry?
3. Sensory logic: which is suitable for social and political issues?

5. Discussions

Nowadays, the comparative study is highly significant in the field of research. Since the comparative studies like the present one, supply the reader with the common and distinguishing points as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the scientists and scholars and furthermore, provide the intellectual contexts among the followers of religions, these studies are more significant. This issue, however, seeks to provide a major purpose, which is the comparative assessment of the verbal opinion of Ghazali with that of Ibn Khaldun. Therefore, exploring their viewpoints, is in fact exploring the viewpoints of the two Islamic scholars, especially by regarding the fact that both Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun are philosophers, speakers, and the heirs of Islamic tradition. Of course, it is highly significant to know that Ghazali’s life has been the incursion arena of different courses of thought, and some part of his life has been spent by learning the knowledge of language and word, and he has been regarded as the theologians of Ash’ari School. Yet, another part of his life has been spent in the jurisprudence. He has spent the end of his life to mysticism by ignoring all the previous knowledge. This article paid more attention to the final part of his life, which is the period of mysticism, and this period of his life is the aim of comparison with that of Ibn Khaldun. Therefore, it can be concluded that although Ibn Khaldun is affected by Ghazali in some issues, there are clear differences between their viewpoints. In the

field of intellectual sciences and discussions, Imam Muhammad Ghazali has priority and precedence to Ibn Khaldun, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Ghazali owns more works and he has entered the

issue of intellect much deeper than Ibn Khaldun. However, the framework of both discourses is traditional, and the both scientists criticize the issues of intellectual field from different perspectives.

Table1: The comparison of Intellect in Ibn Khaldun and Ghazali Viewpoints

Distinguishing Points	Common Points	The common and distinguishing points between the viewpoints of Ibn Khaldun and Ghazali
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ibn Khaldun has gone much higher than Ghazali in the review of intellect. Ghazali believed that intellect is incapable of perceiving the divine issues. However, Ibn Khaldun believed that in addition to the divine issues, intellect is incapable of perceiving the social issues. 2. Ghazali stated that the people, who just focus on intellectual sciences, will decrease their perception, as much as they scrutinize the divine sciences. 3. Ghazali believed in two kinds of logics: one of them was the Aristotelian logic that is valid in all the sciences-except theology, and the other one, the "intuitive logic", which is related to the theological issues. While Ibn Khaldun added another logic named "sensory logic" to them. 4. Ghazali believes that the sensory perception is not valid, and similar to the previous philosophers regards it insignificant and abolished; however, Ibn Khaldun, believes that the sensory perception is valid in perceiving the social issues. 5. Ghazali wanted the social issues to be subordinated by the Aristotelian logic similar to the natural sciences; however, Ibn Khaldun states that although such sciences as geometry and mathematics are affected by the Aristotelian logic, recognizing the society is not subordinated by the above-mentioned logic. In his idea, the social recognition, is necessarily derived from the senses, and in the case of increasing the "abstraction" and the distance of sense, there is no escape from its negative consequences. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. They both believed that the human intellect is limited, and believed that it is incapable of perceiving the existence facts 2. On the issue of intellect, neither of them had serious innovation, and each of them quoted some part of the predecessor. 3. Each of them is the critic of philosophers and philosophy from a specific perspective. 4. They both, believed that the Sharia is the winner in the discussion of intellect and Sharia, and believed that the intellect should be in accompany with the Sharia. 5. One can see a close similarity between the expressions of Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun, especially in the simile of intellect to a pair of balances. 	

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