

The place of thought and thinking in Qur'an

Dr. Sayed Taghi Kabiri

Department of Theology, Khoy Branch, Islamic Azad University, Khoy, Iran
Kabiri_st@yahoo.com

Abstract: One of the specific priorities of man in comparison with other creatures is intellection and thought. Noble Qur'an, as an original and necessary source, confirms this essential point and enforces the importance and necessity of thought. The existence of this special favor of Allah namely thinking, thought and reasoning, is assumed as an important and necessary issue everywhere in individual and social life of human, including practical and theoretical discussions, religious and theological duties even in countering Qur'an verses. This research aims to demonstrate the place and importance of thought and thinking with relying on Qur'anic verses and to discuss its extension in all levels of human life.

[Sayed Taghi Kabiri. **The place of thought and thinking in Qur'an.** *Life Sci J* 2013;10(1s):189-193] (ISSN:1097-8135). <http://www.lifesciencesite.com>. 31

Key words: Qur'an, thought, intellection.

1. Introduction

Among the important recommendations of Holy Qur'an and Immaculate Imams, is thinking. Thought and thinking has such a crucial role in human life that it's impossible to go in the path of human growth and achieve perfection without thinking. This is the reason that it vital to discuss about thinking and to clarify it according to trusted sources like Devine sources. Showing its place, has specially an important role in the promotion of educational atmosphere of contemplation.

Imam Ali says that thinking and thought is the first attribute of intuitive people: "An intuitive person is a person who thinks about whatever he/she hears" (Nahj – Al – Balaghah, 1379, sermon 214).

In fact thought is an affair that has emersion in all human beings and also in every aspect of human life, and without it, humanity is a meaningless word.

2. Terminology

Thought and thinking are among the words that have been frequently used in Arabic and Persian texts. These two words and their derivatives have been frequently used in Qur'an verses and also in Immaculate Imams' words. In fact these two words have the same meaning. And for philologists, thought means:

"A dynamic and consecutive force that brings man from unknown to science". (Ragheb, 1412, 643)

Most researchers often discuss and study the infinitive "thinking" to explain and clarify this word. Some of the interpreters technically say that thought which is rooted from thinking, is a full review of the existing data in mind, in order to find some unknown subjects. (Tabatabayi, 1371, 372-373)

It should be mentioned that some other words have been used in Holy Qur'an and tradition to

explain and clarify the meaning of thought and thinking. Though, each of these words have its special meaning, but we can say that all these words have similar meanings to thought. These words are: Reflection, reasoning, understanding, Tafaghoh, comment, vote, wisdom.

So it is essential to notice the words that have similar meanings when studying Qur'anic verses and narratives to clear and clarify the position of thought in Islamic texts, specially Qur'an.

3. Necessity of thought

Since the existence of wisdom in the human body, has distinguished him among creatures, Correct and consistent use of wisdom will be one of the necessities of his life. In other words, the contriver of wisdom is a requirement for growth and excellence in the process of real perfection. And this means a wisdom that has the duty of thinking beyond the affairs and events in this world. That is why some scientists say that contemplation means "to look beyond affairs and thinking about the meaning of them". (Toreihi, 1403, 298/3 .MirzaKhosrovani, 1390, 16/8)

Thinking has been proposed as an important duty in Islamic texts and This duty applies to all areas that takes place within the existential contemplation. It's obvious that its final objective should be to achieve to Allah.

Imam Sadigh(A.S.) says about the quiddity of wisdom: "Wisdom is something that Allah the Merciful is worshipped by it and Heaven comes from it". (Koleini, 1365, 11/2)

In fact, we can say that all Allah verses have been sent down by Allah for flourishing wisdom, and all the prophets and messengers have tried somehow to change human life and also to make his actions wise.

This is the reason that Holy Qur'an constantly invites human being toward thinking and contemplation in the signs and symptoms of the existence. Repeated addressing of Qur'an such as: "Don't you think?", "Perhaps you think", "They understand", "So you don't see?", "They think", "So you don't think?", "So they don't feel?", "So they don't meditate?", "They understand", "So it is necessary to consider", "They remind" and ... multiply the necessity of thought and thinking.

Some of these verses are noted here for instance:

1. "Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the difference between the night and the day, and the ships which sail through sea with goods which is of use to mankind, and the rain which Allah sends down from the sky and makes the earth alivetherewith,after its death, and the moving {living} creatures of all kinds that He has scattered therein, and in the whirling of the winds and the clouds which are held between the sky and the earth, are indeed Signs for those people who ponder and use their wisdom"(Qur'an, Baqarah,164).

2. "Do you {Jewish religious leaders} enjoy right conduct and piety on the people, and forget to practice it yourselves, and yet you recite the Scripture? Will you not use your reason?" (Qur'an, Baqarah, 44).

3. "And [O, Messenger!]this is the straight path of your Creator & Nurturer, in deed we have made clear the words of Revelation for those who accept admonition"(Qur'an, An'am,126).

4. "Say [O Messenger!]: Have you ever thought if Allah had decided to make the day enduring to the Day of Judgment, who but Allah, the Almighty could create for you the night in which you could rest? Will you not see?" (Qur'an, Ghasas, 72)

5. "Do they not think within themselves that Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them but based on the necessity and for an appointed term which one day will come to the end? The truth is that most of these people do not believe in the Hereafter and and the Meeting with their Creator and Nurturer"(Qur'an, Room, 8)

6. "Man should pounder about his own creation to see of what he is created. (Qur'an, Tariq, 5)

According to these verses and the like, we can say that the necessity of thought is very clear in Islam. It should be mentioned that the wisdom that is addressed in Islam, is the wisdom by which the facts are understood and thus the backend of human remains safe from slipping and degeneration. And this is the wisdom that is the opposite of corruption and misdirection, and not the wisdom that opposes insanity and has the minimal perception. Because

insanity causes the elimination of duties in all religions and even every tradition and custom, but corruption and misdirection don't cause the elimination of duty in Islam, and no one can refer to the elimination of duties because of misdirection and corruption, like creasy people, because intellectual rigor doesn't remove the blame and also doesn't prevent the punishment of someone who has failed to do his duty.(Egad, 1379, 23)

4. The value and dignity of thought

One of the points of Qur'an is the importance it gives to intellect and its reliance on wisdom and intellect, and all those who had a fairly judgment about this book, have noticed this property of Qur'an.In Islamic texts, wisdom and thought are not only among necessities of life, but also have a high position. This subject is so important that Sherafat (honor) and values of human has been introduced as his thinking.

In terms of narratives of Immaculate Imams the reward and remuneration will be given to the extent of people's wisdom. This has been narrated from Imam Bagher:"the reward is to the extent of wisdom"(Koleini, 1365, 10/1)

Also Imam Sadegh says to Hisham: "O Hisham!, Allah has promised understanding people with good tidings and told: Give good news to those people who listen to all speech and follow the best of all" (Majlesi, 1404, 132/1)

Thought and thinking has such a valuation in Islam that intellect is the source of all good, and religion is discussed along with wisdom and intellect. The Holy Prophet, Muhammad,(P.B.U) says: "Truly all goodness is understood by wisdom and those who don't have wisdom, there is no religion for them". (Noori, 1408, 210/11)

In comparison with other religions and schools, Islam has given the most importance and value to wisdom and thought, and believes that Shari'ah(religion) and wisdom are complements and corroborated to each other, and they have a coordinated relationship. In other words, measure of status and dignity of human beings is to the extent of their wisdom.

It has narrated that someone was defined unto Allah's apostle, Mohammad. The prophet asked about his intellect and wisdom. They said: "We talk about his meditation and virtue". The prophet asked again about his wisdom and said: "The fool person miscarries from his stupidity more than dissolute and guilty, and the truth is that human being accedes to Allah to the extent of his/her intellect". (FeizeKashani, no history, 35).

Also the Holy prophet accounts few actions and deeds of the wise person beyond actions of

unknowing one, because they are based on thought. He says: "Allah has distributed nothing among His servants which is more excellent than wisdom, so sleeping of the wise is better than vigilance of stupid, and also hesitance of the wise is beyond the war and fighting of stupid in Allah's way". (Majlesi, 1362, 37/1)

It's obvious that wisdom, here, means using the wisdom which is the same as thinking and thought, as we have in some narratives that thinking for an hour is better than meditating for a whole year. It has come in Ayashi interpretation that Imam Sadiq said as an explanation for the verse: "Just wise people remember and have the truth in their memory": "Thinking for an hour is better than meditating for a year". (Ayashi, 1380, 208/2)

5. The relationship between thinking and breeding

In Islamic teachings breeding has an special position and Holy Qur'an knows it as an important objective of prophets and enforces it: "It is He who has sent among the unlettered a messenger from themselves reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the book and wisdom, although they were before in clear error". (Qur'an, Jomo'ah, 2)

Since the basis of Islamic school is on thought and intellection, its education and cultivation system should also be based on this principle. So far as thinking has been introduced one of the methods of breeding. Maturely their relationship is mutual. This means that thinking is impossible without breeding, and also no breeding will be transcendental without the fund of thinking.

The prophecy of training is to create a healthy inner personality and its final objective is having assurance for behavioral and social norms and values. The prophecy of teaching is to culture the mind and thought and dehiscence of rational capacities for the cognition of outer environment, and acquiring the power of thought and the correct use of wisdom to solve problems, is its final end.

In progressive breeding system, teaching isn't merely to instruct abstract contexts or to transfer cultural educations of the past to children's mind, rather it means learning and teaching, teaching and learning, and this is taking and paying the teachings that causes psychic evolutions and behavioral changes, and it's clear that the change in behavior isn't continuous and creative without formation of thought and thinking. If the change in behavior has just innate or sentimental origin, it will be something transient and uncontrollable and it won't have creativity and continuation. So any type of change in behavior should include all rational and spiritual aspects, and teaching should be coordinated with

breeding to cause informed perfection. The first step of breeding the power of wisdom and intellect is ordered, rational, and systematic teaching to the extent that one can solve problems and transfer learning by the use of his own knowledge and think about them.

(Hashemi – e – Rakavandi, 1372, 94/1)

In fact we can say that Islam, mainly, pays attention to the training of wisdom and thought, and the teacher should train the students' wisdom and thought rather than transferring knowledge to learners' memory. The teacher should train the learners' intellectual energy and their creativity to bring up his/her inference power and reasoning.

Imam Ali (A.S) says: "There are two types of science: The heresay one from outer world and the agreeable one that is in human's nature, and the first one won't be useful if it's not agreeable". (Majlesi, 1404, 2184/1)

The agreeable science is the one that has origin in human's nature, the science that the human being doesn't learn it from other persons and this is the same as the creativity of the person. (Motahari, 1362, 4)

Most people acquire heresay science through breeding and learning, but just a few of them own the agreeable one, and they can uplift their heresay science by agreeable one and make it useful. Here we can see the importance and role of breeding in training wisdom and achieving to agreeable science. This is the reason that there is an invitation to both science and intellect in Islam. Science means teaching and learning, but learning isn't merely sufficient, and the most important issue in learning is thinking about the things. (The same)

One sensible property of Islamic breeding is analyzing and discussing mentality, and finally criticizing the speech. In Islamic texts, we have been invited to criticize speech and words of others.

It has been narrated from Jesus Christ(A.S) : "Take the right and truth even it's from void, and deny vain even it's from the right(ones) and criticize the speech". (Barghi, 1371, 229-230)

Qur'an has praised the critic people and said: "Give good tidings to those servants who listen to the whole words and choose the best of all". (Qur'an, Zumar, 17-18)

This means that abrupting the truth from vain, true from false, and also strong from weak by the use of wisdom is one of Allah's real servants' properties.

Imam Ali(A.S) : orders HarithHamdani not to rely on his hearings and says: "Don't iterate all the hearings which is a sign of lying, and don't disbelieve that hearings are false, because it's a sign of folly". (Nahj – al – Balaghah, 69th letter)

6. Backgrounds of thinking

Qur'an has noticed dependencies and backgrounds of wisdom while encouraging thought and intellect. According to Qur'an, Allah's verses have been presented around the world and inside the people themselves, so that right and truth could be unfolded for people: "We will show them our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it's the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a witness"? (Qur'an, Fussilat, 53)

According to this verse, all the existence world is the sign of Allah, and can be background for thinking to make the truth clear.

Despite the fact that all creatures can be belongings of man's thought, but Qur'an has mentioned some of these backgrounds in numerous cases.

a. *Thinking about the heavens and the earth*

Allah has encouraged man to study and think about the creation of heavens and the earth, in many verses in Qur'an. In fact, He invites man to think about these two signs [the heavens and the earth] and numerous material and spiritual favors in them as a background for human being so that he come to the end that the creation of the existence is objective. In other words, this thinking should bring man to Robubi monotheism.

"and think deeply about the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): "Our Lord! You have not created (all) this without purpose, glory to You! Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire" (Qur'an, Al - e - Emran, 191).

b. *Thinking in Nature*

The Holy Qur'an not only pays attention to thinking about the heavens and the earth, but also mentions some examples of these creatures and remembers the need to deep thinking and objective thinking in them. Such as rain and water (Sura Nahl, 10-11), the emergence of gardens (Sura Ra'd, 4), the sun and the moon (Sura Nahl, 12). The day and the night (Surah Junes, 67), the wind (Surah Jasiah, 5), animals (Surah Bagharah, 164), fire light (Surah Room, 24), fire (Surah Vaghe'eh, 71-72), sleeping (Surah Room, 23), seas (Surah Jasiah, 12-13), paths (Surah Taha, 53-54), honey bee (Surah Nahl, 68-69), and ...

By noticing Qur'anic verses it is clear that all Allah's creatures specially the nature and its different favors deserve thought and deep thinking, because they are Allah's creatures on one hand, and on the other hand they are created for human being and they are all for him. So the fact that nature is for man and for his interests, has Monotheistic lessons for the people who think.

c. *Thinking about human*

Islam has emphasized some fields for thinking that has valuable results for man like: human being, the origin of human being, the quality of creation, and finally the purpose of creation (Surahs: Room, 8, 21, 28; Maryam, 66-67; Yasin, 68, 77, 79; Taregh, 5-9; Ghafer, 67; Vaghe'ah, 58-59; Haj, 18; and ...). For instance, Allah has mentioned all steps of human creation from the beginning till death, in Surah Ghafer, verse number 67, and then encouraged and ordered man to think deeply about these steps:

"He, it is Who has created you (Adam) from dust, then from a Nutfah [mixed semen drops of male and female discharge (i.e. Adam's offspring)] then from a clot (a piece of coagulated blood), then brings you forth as children, then (makes you grow) to reach the age of full strength, and afterwards to be old (men and women), though some among you die before, and that you reach an appointed term, in order that you may understand".

d. *Thinking on the fate of others*

The study of past history and previous relatives and ancestors and warning from them has many positive effects in human life, and his worldly and hereafter happiness. In fact the one of the objectives of Qur'anic stories is an underlying for man to think about the fate of other people. In Surah A'raf, verses 175-176, Allah says after stating the story of Bal'am - e - Ba'oura and denying the mission of prophet Moses (Ghomi, 1367, 248/1): "So relate the stories, perhaps they may reflect". (Qur'an, Qasas, 176)

7. Results

1. In Islamic texts, especially Qur'an, thinking and thought are highlighted and very important to the extent that we see hundreds of verses in this regard with the words Contemplation, intellection, meditate, consideration, Tafaghoh and ...

2. From the point of view of Isla, although the existence of wisdom in the nature of man is a priority, but the condition for his growth and uplift to achieve true perfection, is the governing of his wisdom. That is the reason that thinking and thought are introduced as important duties.

3. The measure of prestige and dignity of man is to the extent of his wisdom and intellect. Insofar as the worship and servitude of man to Allah is to the extent of his wisdom. That is the reason that thinking for a single hour is introduced better than worshipping for a whole year in the narratives of immaculate Imams and prophet.

4. Since the base and principles of Islamic schools is based on the principle of thought and reasoning, The educational system is based on the same principle, too. Of course the relationship between thought and education is mutual and reciprocal, And the target of both is excellence of

human personality and achieving him to Robubi monotheism.

5. Qur'an has expressed the dignity of human thought while expressing fields and topics of human thought and wisdom in numerous cases. For instance, we can imply thinking about heavens and earth, nature, human, the fate of other people, and.

Resources

1. Holy Qur'an
2. Nahj – al – Balaghah: Dashti, Mohammad translation: Mashhoor Press: 1379, first edition.
3. Barghi, Ahmad – bin Mohammad – bin - Khalid: Al - Mahasin: Dar – al Kotob – al Eslami press, Qum, 1371.
4. RaghiebEsfahani, Hossein – bin - Mohammad: Al – Mofradat – fi – Gharib – al – Qur'an: Dar – al – Elm – al – Shamiah press, Beirut, Dameshgh, 1412, first edition.
5. Tabatabayi, Mohammad Hossein: Al – Mizan – fi – Tafsir – al – Qur'an: MoosavieHamdani, Seyed Mohammad Baghir translation: Qur'an lecturers society press, 1371, first edition.
6. Toreihi, Fakhr – al - Din: Majma' – al - Bahrein: Mortazavi bookstore press, Tehran, 1403, first edition.
7. Eghad, Abbas Mahmood: thought as an Islamic duty: Atayi, Mohammad Reza translation, Islamic studies institute of Imam Reza's Holy Shrine: Mashhad, 1379, second edition.
8. Ayashi, Mohammad – bin – Mas'ood: Ayashi interpretation: Elmiah (scientific) press, Tehran, 1380.
9. Feiz – e – Kashani Mohammad – bin – Mortaza: Al – Mahajjat – al – Baiza': Islamic press office, Tehran.
10. Qumi, Ali – bin - Ebrahim: Qumi interpretation: Dar – al – Kotob press, Qum, 1367, fourth edition.
11. Koleini, Mohammad – bin - Jacob: Al - Kafi: Dar – al – Kotob – al – eslamiah press, Tehran, 1365.
12. Majlesi, Mohammad Baghir: Bahar – al - Anvar: Al – Vafa institution press: Beiroot, Lebanon, 1404.
13. An explanation to Holy prophet's family's news called Mer'at – al - Oghool: Dar – al – Kotob – al – eslamiah press, Tehran, 1363.
14. Motahari, Mortaza: Breeding in Islam: Al – Zahra press, Tehran, 1362.
15. MirzaKhosrovani, Ali Reza: Khosrovani interpretation: Eslamiah press, Tehran, 1309, first edition.
16. Noori, MirzaHossein – bin - Mohammad: Mostadrak – al – Vasayel: Al – al – Beit institution press, Qum, 1408.
17. HashemiRakavandi, Mojtaba: Education and human personality: Scientific compass of Qum, 1373.

12/26/2012