

An Examination of the Relationship between the Evolution of Intellect and Ethics based on the Narrations of the Book *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*

Muslim Muḥammadi^{1*}; ‘Abbās Farīd Afshār²

1. Associate Professor, Department of Shī‘a Studies, Faculty of Theology, College of Farabi, University of Tehran, Qom, Iran

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Islamic Studies, Faculty of Theology, University of Kurdistan, Kurdistan, Iran

Received: July 23, 2020 ; Revised: August 22, 2020 ; Accepted: October 5, 2020

© University of Tehran

Abstract

Specifying the conceptual identity of intellect and distinguishing it from knowledge, this article addresses ethical perfection as the main goal in the human perfection path. The purpose of this article is to specify the evolutionary interrelationship of intellect and ethics and the outcome of the effects of these two on the perfection of the human from the viewpoint of Islam in general and the narrations of the book *Ghurar al-ḥikam* in particular. The results of the study reveal that according to Imām ‘Alī’s (a) statements, there is an interrelationship between intellect and ethics, where ethics without intellect is imperfect and intellect without ethics cannot play its role correctly. In this article, first the essential and conceptual differences of intellect and knowledge are given. Then, the mutual evolutionary effects of intellect and ethics on each other and the role of these two in the evolutionary movement of the human are discussed.

Keywords: Ethics, Intellect, Knowledge, Nearness to God, Perfection

Introduction

Ethics has a high status as one of the main principles used by religion to make healthy the spiritual and mental atmosphere. On the other hand, intellect as one of the main indices and distinguishing aspects of the human from other creatures has always been under scrutiny. However, what has been less noted in the previous studies is the interrelationship and mutual effects of these two in order to provide the perfection path of the human.

In fact, answering the following questions is the ultimate goal of this study:

- What is the position of intellect and ethics – in case they accord – in the human’s attainment of the high levels of perfection?
- How and to what extent does each of them play their role?

Answering these questions will be based on the narrations of the noble book *Ghurar al-ḥikam* as well as scientific principles.

The conceptual identity of the word ‘ilm (knowledge)

The word “‘ilm” is used in different meanings: 1) definitiveness and certainty, as used in phrases such as “They are not certain about it” and “They only think so”; 2) the general

* Corresponding Author Email: Mo.mohammadi@ut.ac.ir

knowledge as against ignorance and lack of knowledge, as used in the sentence “Are the knowledgeable equal to the ignorant”; 3) knowing the rules and generalities that convey instances and details, as connoted in terms such as logic, philosophy, jurisprudence, and principles of jurisprudence. It is clear that the word “ilm” in this noble narration is related to the second and third meanings discussed here.

Knowledge has different divisions from various viewpoints. For instance, knowledge has been divided into innate and auditive knowledge, physical and religious knowledge, and intuitive knowledge and knowledge of the unseen.

Moreover, knowledge is sometimes categorized based on its benefits. From a religious viewpoint, the beneficial knowledge is of three types:

1. Decisive signs: these refer to the principles of beliefs, because their argumentations come from the decisive signs of the world and the decisive verses of the Qur’ān. In the noble Qur’ān, the evidences for the Beginning and the End are frequently mentioned as “āya and āyāt” (sign and signs).
2. The just obligation: this refers to the ethics. When it is good, it is derived from intellect and when it is bad, it originates from ignorance. It is incumbent upon the human to side with its good type and stay away from its bad type. The use of the word “just” in this term refers to median between the two extremes in this regard.
3. The right tradition: this refers to the rules of Islamic law, i.e., the licit and illicit. The exclusion of the religious knowledge to these three types is clear, and the book *Kāfi* involves these three types of knowledge that are congruent with the three realms of the humanity. That is to say, the ‘principles of jurisprudence’ is for the human intellect, ethics targets his soul, and the knowledge of licit and illicit regards his body. Likewise, Mullā Ṣadrā and Majlisī have considered these interpretations (exactly or with some differences in the generalities and particularities) to be part of the aspects. Similarly, the qur’ānic exegetes give in the same view in their interpretation of the verse “... to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture [the Qur’ān] and wisdom,” with a little difference. Shaykh Ṭūsī quotes Qutāda who says that the word wisdom here means sunna. Moreover, Imām Ṣādiq (a) says, “I observed that all knowledge of people is of four types: first, know your God; second, know what materials He has used in making you; third, know what He wants from you, and four, know what deviates you from your faith.” To sum this discussion up, it could be said that the beneficial knowledge from the viewpoint of the Qur’ān, the Prophet (s), and Imām Ṣādiq (a) revolves around the forgoing issues and other types of knowledge are considered as extra, as the Prophet (s) said in a tradition, “Its existence does not have any advantage or disadvantage.”

Ṣadr al-Muti’alīhīn presents a discussion in this regard and says, ‘Knowledge means knowing and understanding something as it is, and this is one of the Divine Attributes. Then, how can something be knowledge but it is extra and unfavorable?’ In fact, the essence of his discussion is that knowing something is better than not knowing it; how come that in the foregoing tradition, the Prophet (s) has considered only three types of knowledge as good and others as bad? Then Ṣadr al-Muti’alīhīn gives in a detailed response to this question. In summary, his response is that reprimanding knowledge is not because of the knowledge itself and knowing something, rather, it is because of its harmful consequences for the knower or others. Examples include the knowledge of sorcery, magic, and talismans by which their knowers separate the wife and husband, the knowledge of astrology that except for its beneficial part, is mainly a waste of time and life on learning some estimates and possibilities, or the difficult and complicated discussions of the true knowledge such as the discussion of the Divine Will that is extremely difficult to understand (Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 1: 38).

The conceptual identity of the term 'aql (intellect)

It was asked from Imām Ṣādiq (a) to describe intellect. He said, “Intellect is something by which God is worshipped and the paradise is achieved” (Mas‘ūdī, 1983: 6).

The narrations in this regard suggest that intellect is the same as the faculty of understanding and perceiving that moves the human toward goodness and righteousness and prevents him from badness and corruption, as the foregoing narration introduces intellect as a means to worship God and to achieve paradise ... therefore, the perfect intellectual is one who has that effect (Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 1: 11).

Another definition asserts that intellect is a divine light that separates the right and the wrong, by which the cognitions and consequences are clarified and the bad and vicious acts are avoided, and all good phenomena are noted. There is a disagreement among scholars on the definition of intellect. Some of them have described it as kindness, innocuousness, and affability, while others have said that [the intellectual person] does not oppress people around him, does not block another person’s rights, does not ill-treat anyone, forgives if he is oppressed, thanks God if he is prevented (from achieving is right), and shows patience when he is afflicted with a calamity (Māzandarānī, 2008, vol. 1: 383).

The relationship between intellect and knowledge

The relationship between intellect and knowledge – like their relationship with religion and ethics – is mutual. Imām ‘Alī (a) considers intellect as one of the sources of knowledge. It might even be construed from his statements that intellect is the most important source of the human knowledge and is the same faculty by which the human attains wisdom, i.e., the robust knowledge.

Making a comparison between thinking and feeling, he deems thinking as free from mistake but introduces feelings as capable of making mistakes.

In some other Islamic traditions, too, intellect is suggested as the leader of feelings and a strong support for them. The following traditions (from Imām ‘Alī (a)) can be given in this regard.

- Intellect is the essence and root of knowledge and the inviter to understanding (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1990: 108).
- You can achieve the height of knowledge through intellect (ibid: 71).
- The depth of wisdom is reached by intellect and the depth of intellect is achieved by wisdom (Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 1: 23). This refers to the mutual effect of intellect and knowledge.
- Thinking is not like seeing with eyes, because sometimes the eyes lie to their owners, but intellect does not deceive the one who has asked it for advice (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1990: 680).
- Intellects are the leaders of thoughts, the thoughts are the leaders of hearts, the hearts are the leaders of feelings, and the feelings are the leaders of limbs and organs (ibid: 98).

This way, intellect is the main source and origin of knowledge. On the other hand, Imām ‘Alī (a) considers knowledge and experience as one of the means to strengthen the intellect.

- Intellect is an instinct that improves with knowledge and experience (ibid: 91).
- Knowledge improves the intellect of the intellectual (ibid: 92).
- O’ you [the human]! You are evaluated based on your intellect. Therefore, enrich it with knowledge (Āqā Jamāl Khānsārī, 1987, vol. 3: 57).

Intellect is an instinct that is enhanced by experience. The experiences do not come to an end and the intellectual grows with them.

Therefore, both intellect increases knowledge and the knowledge enhances the intellect. Thus, if the human uses his intellect, he will achieve knowledge, and when he achieves

knowledge, his intellect increases. Then, if he uses the intellect that has got stronger, he will achieve more knowledge and so, his intellect improves. This might always continue and the intellect and knowledge enhance each other in an evolutionary interaction. It might be due to this that Imām says, “Intellect and knowledge are companions and do not get separated” (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1990: 95).

Reflection upon some statements of Imām ‘Alī (a) reveals that the need of knowledge to intellect is more than the need of intellect to knowledge. For instance, Imām (a) says, “Any piece of knowledge that is not corroborated by intellect is misguidance” and “Knowledge will be a trouble for someone whose knowledge is more than his intellect” (Laythī Wāsiṭī, 1997: 376).

To explain this, we might say that knowledge can be positive or negative, i.e., it is not necessarily positive and might not lead to human perfection. The knowledge and technology that results in the production of a weapon that kills thousands of humans in a few seconds is a piece of knowledge that has not been accompanied by intellect. Relying on the intellect and religion, the human can achieve knowledge that can lead him to perfection in all arenas.

The intellect never damages its owner, but knowledge without intellect is a big threat to its owner. Knowledge without intellect is like a person who has shoes but not the feet (Maybudī, 1982: 330). On the other hand, the intellect without knowledge is like a person who has the feet, but not the shoes. Such a person can pave the way, though with difficulty. However, having shoes without feet is useless and the person cannot move with those shoes.

There is a wise statement from Imām Kāzīm (a) in the book *Tuḥaf al-‘uqūl* about the relationship between knowledge, intellect, and religion, in which he says to Hushām,

People have been ordered to obey God and there is no way other than obedience. Obedience comes from knowledge and knowledge from learning, and learning is done using intellect. Knowledge would not be issued from anyone other than a theosophist, and the theosophist can be known through intellect (Ibn Shu‘ba Harrānī, 1984: 384).

Another example is the verse “” that refers to the close relationship between intellect and knowledge and deems thinking as a task done only by the knowers.

The main results obtained from the previous discussions are as following:

1. When there is intellect, there should necessarily be knowledge, and vice versa.
2. The result of intellect is the production of knowledge, as the knowledge might be a matter for the intellect.
3. Knowledge and intellect have mutual effects and influence each other’s evolution (Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 1: 31).
4. If intellect is accompanied by the divine light and corroboration, it will be emancipatory (ibid: 29).
5. Intellect has been bestowed upon the human before knowledge, and if there was not the intellect, the human could not achieve any kind of perception, as Imām Ṣādiq (a) said, “The basis of human personality is intellect” (ibid).
6. Qualities such as remembrance, thoughtfulness, precision in hearing or seeing, and attention to the innate disposition are different from knowledge and are signs of intellect.

The relationship between ethics and intellect perfection

Socrates considers the basis of ethics to be intellectual ugliness and beauty. In his opinion, good ethics regards acts that are deemed as beautiful by the intellect, and the bad ethics (that the human should be void of it) regards acts that are regarded as ugly by the intellect (Muṭahharī, 1993, vol. 21: 227).

In his book *Jāmi‘ al-sa‘ādāt*, Mullā Mahdī Narāqī deems the relationship between intellect and ethics as very close, and discusses them as the theoretical and practical intellects.

He mentions two faculties for the soul, namely the faculties of perception and movement, and considers two branches for each of these two faculties. That is, he suggests the two branches of theoretical and practical intellects for the faculty of perception (a stance that reveals the close relationship between intellect and ethics) and then introduces the practical intellect as the source motivating the body to do acts through thinking, and deems the general principles of ethics such as the goodness of truthfulness and the badness of untruthfulness to be the result of the combination of the theoretical and practical intellects.

Therefore, we might say that Mullā Mahdī Narāqī deems the relationship between ethics and intellect to be very close, in a way that he defines justice as one of the main ethical principles as “the practical intellect’s obedience of the intellectual faculty and following it in all its activities” or considering “the just human as one whose faculties of anger and desire are controlled by intellect and the religious law, the obedience of which is ordered by the intellect” (Narāqī, 2002: 48-49). This shows the deep combination of the ethical conduct and the intellectual orders that is evident in his assertions. As it is clear, the author of the foregoing book considers the intellect as the root of all ethical behaviors.

In his valuable mystic book *Sharḥ ḥadīth junūd ‘aql wa jahl*, Imām Khumaynī deems the good and the evil and the goodness and badness as the conspicuous figures of the armies of intellect and ignorance, and of course, takes goodness the same as the luminous, virtue-oriented innate disposition, and badness as the veiled innate disposition in the natural world (Khumaynī, 2007: 76). In addition, he takes the intellect as the general intellect of the macrocosm as the inward, head, and reality of the partial intellects, a luminous substance free from the carnal passions, and one of the first spiritual creatures (ibid: 21-22). Although this is somewhat different from the common definition of intellect and ethical good and evil, the concomitance between intellect and ethical good is evidently observable in it.

Master Muṭahharī believes that the way to ethical training is in the moderation of faculties. He says,

The human potentially has perfections that can be achieved when all faculties are at moderate levels. That is, the spiritual organs of the human are like his physical organs. There is no useless physical organ – e.g. hand, foot, intestine, eye – but each of them has a limit that has been naturally specified and enacted. For example, the hand should exist, but if it were twice its existing size, it would distort the balance. In the same way, if the same hand were smaller than its existing size, it would distort the balance. This is true for other organs and limbs. In the same way, the human needs all his faculties of soul; he needs passion, anger, and all other faculties, as well as other spiritual and carnal needs that all should exist. What is called justice in ethics is this spiritual balance and the moderation of all faculties (Muṭahharī, 1993, vol. 8: 545).

Mullā Ṣadrā considers the creation of the secondary capabilities and added aspects in the soul as the main axis of knowledge in the attainment of the reality of things. To create such a capability in the soul, he deems necessary the purification of the soul from sins and ethical vices as well as freedom from material and imaginary concerns. In fact, he introduces intellectual knowledge – and even the sacred knowledge – as the main and essential method of knowing realities. However, he takes the sensory, imaginary, and illusory knowledge to be valid only when they follow intellectual knowledge and adopt an intellectual functioning. On the other hand, he believes that the purification of the inward, the freedom of the heart from the unnecessary and worthless concerns, the purification of ethics from vices, the emancipation of the mind from temptations and impurities, and the extermination of the fire of carnal desires and illusions are the main ways to connect to the world of reality. All in all, the main criterion for the attainment of the realities – especially the realities of the Qur’ān and Ḥadīths – is a pure heart and transparent sight (Mullā Ṣadrā, 2004, vol. 1: 735).

Is intellectuality more important or ethicality?

The question is that in the training of the humans, should we address their ethical aspect or intellectual dimension? Should the Muslim society's movement be toward the perfection of intellect or ethics? What is the stance of religion in this regard?

Pertaining to this discussion are two sets of narrations. In one group of narrations, the perfect human is one who has achieved ethical perfection. These narrations introduce such a person as "God's most favorite person" (Ṭabrisī, 1965: 64), "God's most dignified person" (Qur'ān 49:13), "the most complete in terms of faith" (Najaf, 1986: 67), and "the best Muslims" (Kūfī Ahwāzī, 1982: 30). Consequently, these narrations set the perfect human as one who is adorned by the divine manners.

The second set of narrations involves those that take the human perfection to be his intellectual perfection. These narrations can be compromised with those of the first set in terms of meaning, because as we noted, the perfection of intellect is an introduction to the perfection of ethics. This has been suggested in the statement "The human achieves perfection through intellect" (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1990: 303). The consideration of intellect as a cause for the attainment of perfection does not disagree with the consideration of the ethical perfection as the ultimate goal, because the intellect and ethics have a vertical relationship rather than a horizontal one. There is a narration that takes the owners of intellect as possessing perfection, and this might mean relative perfection compared to the ethical perfection, "Anyone who has three qualities has achieved perfection: intellect, patience, and knowledge" (ibid: 330). This narration names patience, which is an important ethical trait, because patience is the sign of intellect and is required for the achievement of knowledge. In fact, a person will be successful in the achievement of knowledge who has intellectual patience.

In another narration, the level of religiosity is introduced as equal to the level of intellect (ibid: 87, 702, 452), while still another narration asserts that the level of religiosity can increase with the improvement of affability (Pāyanda, 1945: 233) and takes the perfect affability as the way to achieve the perfection of religion. These two narrations can be compromised with the same reason. Of course, this narration is useful here if we consider the perfect human as a religious one and the religiosity as the cornerstone of human validation and – in fact – believe in the equality of the semantic referents of the perfection and religiosity.

One of the main evidences that confirm the foregoing claim is the tradition that reads, "The basis of the human personality is intellect, and intelligence, understanding, memory, and knowledge derive from the intellect. The intellect completes the human, leads him, gives him sight, and is the key to his affairs" (Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 1: 29).

This tradition refers to the essentiality of the intellect and its role as a sign of perfection. This way, it confirms the relative perfection of intellect.

In fact, the two terms used in this tradition (namely "essentiality" and "perfecting") have semantic identity only when intellect is not considered the ultimate perfection of the humans and is rather a mediator. The reflection on the content of these narrations reveals that the intellect causes the human perfection when it is accompanied with other things or that the intellect is a basis and criterion for the measurement of the human dignity.

Instances of the relationship between intellect and ethics

The relationship between intellect and ethics is mutual. Therefore, some narrations are given and analyzed that refer to the interaction of these two phenomena.

The effect of intellect on ethics

The reflection on the narrations and the qur'ānic verses indicates that the establishment of the good and bad traits in the human and the adoption of divine manners need a deep knowledge of religion, and the attainment of this knowledge requires the correct use of intellect.

The narrations in this domain can be categorized into several groups.

In a group of narrations, some ethical traits are introduced as the result of intellect. Examples include sincerity (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1990: 228), generosity (ibid: 124), tolerating others (ibid: 328), affability (ibid: 377), and modesty (ibid: 67), among others. In these narrations, the intellect is likened to a tree. This simile indicates some interesting points.

- The intellect has different effects in different branches of manners.
- Many ethical manners of the human have intellectual origin.
- The intellect ascends toward perfection (similar to a tree movement).
- Trees provide shade and fruit; similarly, the intellect produces ethical manners and supports human behaviors.
- Trees benefit the humans and other creatures with their wood, leaves, and fruit; similarly, the intellect is useful to the humans with all its branches.
- Trees need raw materials and root for their growth and effectiveness; similarly, the intellect needs knowledge as its root and thinking as the provider of scientific materials.

Another narration discusses the role of intellect in ethical manners and says,

“God bestows intellect to the blissful and does not give it to the miserable. The sign of an intellectual person is that he pardons the ignorant, forgives the oppressor, treats his subordinates with modesty, tries to excel his superior in showing goodness, thinks about what he says (if it is good, he says it and so benefits, and if it is bad, does not say it and remains safe). When there happens turmoil, he seeks refuge in God and stops his hand and tongue from acting. When he sees a virtue, he imitates it. He does not lose his modesty and does not show greed. These ten qualities can be used to know the intellectual person.

The signs of an ignorant person are that he bothers his companion, violates the rights of his subordinates, shows rudeness to his superior, and talks without thinking. His speech is ugly and his silence comes from his obliviousness.

He rushes toward turmoil and endangers himself, and when he sees a virtue, he turns away or is slow in moving toward it.

He does not fear his past sins, nor does he stop committing future sins. He is clumsy in doing the good acts, and does not heed what he has lost. These are the ten qualities of the ignorant who is deprived of the intellect.”

All in all, some narrations depict a key role for the intellect. For instance, a narration says, “The human achieves goodness due to the intellect.”

The corrective role of the intellect

The other roles that some narrations attribute to the intellect is its preventive and corrective effect on the intellect¹ that is, it fights against negative manners that drive the human from the height of honor to the inferiority of dishonor. These include behaviors such as extravagance²,

1. The intellect corrects everything.

2. The sign of intellect is that you act moderately, do not spend extravagantly, do not breach your promises, and show patience when you get angry.

anger¹, lust², and other ethical vices³ that are forbidden in Islam and are not supported by the intellectual argument, either⁴.

These narrations indicate that intellect is not only an argument provider before action; rather, it shows its effect during the ethical action in the form of an active supervisor and a strong corrector.

The intellectual identity of ethics

Some narrations clearly assert that the intellect is the origin of ethical manners, and up until ethics is not full of intellect, it cannot be considered complete ethics. In other words, any ethical manner is a sign of the intellect outpouring. Narrations such as “Apology is a sign of intellect” and “One of the signs of intellect is acting justly” are evidences for this claim.

The set of forgoing narrations can be summarized as follows. There is no ethics without intellect, and intellect has theoretical (such as guidance) and practical effect (such as correction and prevention) on ethics. Moreover, ethical evolution is not possible without intellect.

The effect of ethics on intellect

The behaviors resulting from the ethical virtues and vices have their specific positive and negative effects on the human intellect. These can be examined in two groups.

The minimizing effect of ethical vices on the intellect

Behaviors such as pride⁵, the love of worldly life⁶, following the carnal desires⁷, and various intoxications for “power, property, youth, knowledge, and others’ praise”⁸ are among the qualities that can be used to identify the weakness or lack of intellectuality due to their presence in a person. For instance, the intoxication resulting from wine removes the power to think and reflect. Likewise, a person who follows his carnal desires in fact follows his heart. These desires might originate from properties, youth, power, or any other factor. Of course, some qualities that cause weakness or destruction of intellect cannot be easily identified.

Imām ‘Alī (a) says, “Whenever a man cuts a joke he separates away a bit from his wit” (Nahj al-balāgha, 1999: 737).

Of course, the question is that how a quality such as stubbornness in manners, undue jokes, or worldly enticements (ibid: 393) affects the intellect. This question can only be answered precisely by the pure and infallible people.

In brief, as it is evident, the undesirable ethical traits lead to the decadence of intellect, prevent the intellect from shining and guiding the person, and make the person incapable of understanding the intellectual reasoning of others. Suchlike people need more precautions to detach from those carnal desires and find the guidance path.

1. Ibid

2. When the intellect is completed, the lust decreases.

3. The intellect cleans (the human) from every vice and orders him to do every virtue.

4. The vigor of intellect prevents the human from any bad deed.

5. Pride corrupts the intellect.

6. The love of the world corrupts the intellect, makes the heart deaf to the wisdom, and brings about painful punishment.

7. Carnal desires corrupt the intellect.

8. It is apt for an intellectual person to protect himself against the intoxication of properties, knowledge, praises, and youth, as there is a vicious wind arising from each of these intoxications that destroys the intellect and lowers modesty.

The contrariety of ethical vices and intellect

Although Islamic narrations have not deemed some qualities of soul or ethical behaviors as destructors of intellect, the existence of these traits totally prevents the correct performance of the intellect. In other words, a kind of contrariety exists between these qualities and intellect. These qualities involve arrogance (ibid: 731)¹, “libidinous pleasure” (Tamīmī Āmudī, 1990: 771)², “far-reaching desires” (ibid: 145)³, and “following the carnal desires” (ibid: 47)⁴.

A comparison between these and the aforementioned sets of narrations indicates that some traits both prevent thinking and destroy the intellect. An example is following the carnal desires, which is referred to as the enemy of the intellect, because if an enemy has the ability to destroy its opponent, it will do so; otherwise, it will try to weaken the opposing party.

The behaviors and traits that augment intellect

On the positive side of the discussion, there are ethical manners that might enhance the intellect. Examples include what follows.

The observation of good etiquette

One of these qualities is the observation of etiquette in various spheres of life. Of course, it has different types, including the conventional etiquette, social etiquette, religious and divine etiquette, etc.

The narration “Etiquette corrects the intellect” (ibid: 416) refers to the religious and divine etiquette, because the etiquette that is against the divine etiquette does not enhance the intellect, because there is congruency and harmony between the divine and intellectual etiquette. Another narration moves beyond this and calls etiquette as one of the main requirements of intellect, “Everything needs intellect, and the intellect itself needs etiquette” (ibid: 510).

Adornment with the divine etiquette is the same as the application of the divine commands in every part of life, from the birthday to the time one should leave this world. In fact, we might assert that the absolute obedience to the Absolute Ruler of the existence enhances the intellect.

Kindness

Kindness is among the factors that are used to assess the human (ibid: 673). Therefore, the noble Prophet (s) was at the height of kindness and grace toward all humans, because according to the narrations, he had the complete intellect. An example is his great effect on the attraction of people to Islam.

Patience

The prevention of anger – which is named “patience” in the narrations – is called the minister of intellect. On the other hand, numerous narrations have called the angry person as one void of intellect. Considering these two points, it gets evident that patience (as an ethical behavior) and intellect are interdependent (ibid: 555)⁵.

1. Arrogance is among the worst enemies of intellect.

2. The intellect does not go into the right path if it relies on libidinous pleasure.

3. Beware that the far-reaching desires makes the intellect unwary and cause it to forget God. Consider the inapt desires as lies, as the desires are deceptive and their owners are deceived.

4. Carnal desires are the enemy of intellect.

5. The intellect is not adorned until it gets accompanied by patience as its minister.

According to the Islamic texts, what causes us to call a person as amiable is that he has virtues and is free from ethical vices. According to a narration from Imām Ṣādiq (a), what causes us to achieve intellectual perfection is amiability (Kulaynī, 2008, vol. 1: 27).

Moreover, numerous similar narrations and qur'ānic verses order the human to perform ethical virtues and stay away from ethical vices so as to achieve intellectual perfection and consequently attain the excellent and virtuous ethics.

Conclusion

When discussing the relationship between intellect and ethics, we should not mistake the meaning of intellect and knowledge. However, some people who have discussed the relationship between these two or their contradiction have in fact addressed the relationship between ethics and knowledge.

Moreover, there is interdependence between intellect and ethics, and ethics without intellect or intellect without ethics is meaningless. More importantly, intellect helps the humans' intellect evolve as good ethics helps the humans' intellect evolve; they finally help the humans move toward existential perfection.

In addition, the intellect will not have its true efficiency without scientific growth, and knowledge will not be effective in helping the human attain his perfection if it is not accompanied by intellect and thinking.

The points obtained from the discussions of this article can be summarized as follows.

1. There might be some narrations that seemingly imply a contradiction between religion/ethics and intellect. These might be compromised with these narrations. That is to say, suchlike narrations do not intend to call religion or ethics as anti-intellectual; rather, they refer to their intellectual unfathomability, i.e., some religious or ethical discussions cannot be understood with the majority of human intellects, but rather, they can only be understood by the intellect of the perfect humans.

Therefore, this lack of understanding by some people cannot be used to attack these discussions as something unintellectual. Although some religious discussions can be understood only by religious scholars and be justified by their intellectual argumentations, the contemporary scholars of other disciplines might not have a correct understanding of those concepts, and it might be the scholars of the coming eras that can reflect upon those ethical or religious issues.

2. The educational institutions of Iran, including the universities, should either change the identity of the training institutions (i.e., put their main emphasis on the education and training of the students) or at least set their main purpose on the ethical training. In order to attain this purpose, they might use the intellect and knowledge so as to achieve the human society's growth and advancement as their scientific product.
3. The relationship between ethics, intellect, and knowledge can be illustrated as the following diagram (which indicates the interactions of these three elements).

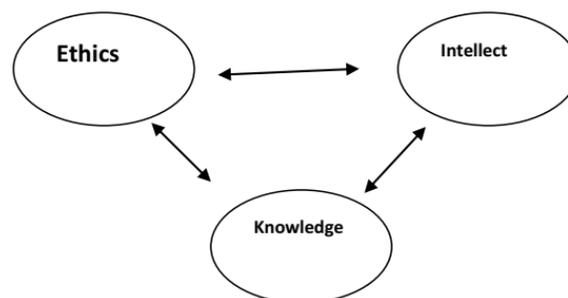


Figure 1. The intertwined and interrelated effects of intellect, knowledge, and ethics

References

The noble Qur'ān

Nahj al-balāgha (1999). Translated by Muḥammad Dashtī, Qom, Mashhūr.

Āqā Jamāl Khānsārī, M. (1987), *Sharḥ Āqā Jamāl Khānsārī Ghurar al-ḥikam wa durar al-kalim*. Tehran, University of Tehran Publications.

Ibn Shu'ba Ḥarrānī, Ḥ. (1984), *Tuḥaf al-'uqūl*. Translated by Aḥmad Jannatī, Tehran, Amīr Kabīr Institute.

Khumaynī, R. (2007), *Sharḥ ḥadīth junūd 'aql wa jahl*. Tehran, Institute for compilation and publication of Imam Khomeini's works.

Kūfī Ahwāzī, Ḥ. (1982), *Al-Zuhd*. Edited by Ghulām Riḍā 'Irfāniyān Yazdī. Qom, Al-Maṭba'a al-'Ilmiyya.

Kulaynī, M. (2008), *Kāfī*. Edited by Dār al-Ḥadīth, Qom, Dār al-Ḥadīth.

Laythī Wāsiṭī, A. (1997), *'Uyūn al-ḥikam wa al-mawā'iz*. Edited by Ḥusayn Ḥasanī Bīrjandī, Qom, Dār al-Ḥadīth.

Mas'ūdī, A. (1983), *Ithbāt al-hidāya*. Translated by Muḥammad Jawād Najafī, Tehran, Islāmiyya Publications.

Maybūdī, Ḥ. (1982), *Dīwān Amīr al-Mu'minīn (a)*. Translated by Muṣṭafā Zamānī, Qom, Dār Nidā' al-Islām li-Nashr.

Māzandarānī, M. (2008), *Sharḥ furu' Kāfī*. Edited by Muḥammad Jawād Maḥmūdī and Muḥammad Ḥusayn Dirāyatī, Qom, Dār al-Ḥadīth li-Ṭibā'a wa al-Nashr.

Mullā Ṣadrā, M. (2004), *Sharḥ Uṣūl Kāfī*. Edited by Muḥammad Khājawī, Tehran, The Institute for Cultural Studies.

Muṭahharī, M. (1993), *The collection of the works of master Muṭahharī*. Qom, Ṣadrā Publications.

Najaf, M. (1986), *Ṣaḥīfa al-Imām al-Riḍā (a)*. Mashhad, Imām al-Riḍā (a) International Congress.

Narāqī, M. (2002), *Jāmi' al-sa'ādāt*. Qom, Dār al-Tafsīr Publications.

Pāyanda, A. (1945), *Nahj al-faṣāḥa*. Tehran, Dunyāy-i Rushd.

Ṭabrisī, F. (1965), *Mishkāt al-anwār fī ghurar al-akhbār*. Najaf, al-Maktabat al-Ḥaydariyya.

Tamīmī Amudī, A. (1990), *Ghurar al-Ḥikam wa durar al-kalim*. Edited by Mahdī Rajā'ī. Qom, Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī.