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Imam Farahi's View on Rationality: A Framework for Modernity Discourse

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Abstract: Imam Hamiduddin Farahi (d. 1930) is one of the legendary Islamic scholar, philosopher, theologian and exegetist of the Quran of the modern era. His works cover reconceptualization and reactivation of the idea of coherence in the Quran, redefining all Islamic sciences and disciplines which have been regarded as necessary to understand the Quran or which have originated from the Quran giving the centrality and discernment to the Quran. He challenged many of the prevailing discourses in the field of Quranic sciences, sciences of hadith, jurisprudence and its principles, logic, theology and philosophy, and field of Arabic grammar and rhetoric. This paper aims to study his thoughts on the role of reason in the Islam and how Islam nurtures and trains the reason in its own way. To achieve this aim, his book on the science of the argument of the Quran namely, *Hijaj-ul-Quran* in addition to few other books on the same topic is consulted by employing content analysis methodology. The findings show that the discussion of compatibility of reason with revelation is the result of misunderstanding the latter two. As a matter of fact, reason and revelation goes together complementing each other and there is no possibility of any kind of contradiction between the two. The Quran not only encourages the use of reason, rather it provides some rules and mechanism to further develop the ability of reasoning to a higher altitude which is not easily attainable without painstaking effort and long exercise.

Key Words: *Reason, Revelation, Islam, Hamiduddin Farahi, Development, The Quran.*

Abstrak: Imam Hamiduddin Farahi (d. 1930) adalah salah seorang ulama Islam yang terkenal, ahli falsafah, ahli teologi dan pentafsir al-Qur'an zaman moden. Karya-karyanya meliputi rekonseptualisasi dan pengaktifan semula idea koherensi dalam al-Qur'an, mendefinisikan semula semua sains dan disiplin Islam yang telah dianggap sangat perlu untuk memahami al-Qur'an atau yang berasal dari al-Qur'an yang memberikan sentraliti dan pengertian kepada al-Qur'an. Beliau mencabar banyak wacana yang lazim dalam bidang sains al-Qur'an, sains hadith, perundangan dan prinsip, logik, teologi dan falsafahnya, dan bidang tatabahasa dan retorik bahasa Arab. Makalah ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pemikirannya tentang peranan dalam Islam dan bagaimana Islam memupuk dan melatih pemikiran atau akal dengan cara tersendiri. Untuk mencapai matlamat ini, bukunya mengenai sains penghujahan al-Qur'an iaitu, *Hijaj-ul-Qur'an* dan beberapa buku tambahan lain mengenai topik yang sama dirujuk dengan menggunakan metodologi analisis kandungan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa perbincangan tentang kesesuaian akal dengan wahyu adalah akibat salah faham kepada kedua-duanya. Realitinya, akal dan wahyu bersatu melengkapi antara satu sama lain dan tidak ada kemungkinan sebarang percanggahan antara kedua-duanya. Al-Qur'an bukan sahaja menggalakkan penggunaan akal, sebaliknya ia menyediakan beberapa kaedah dan mekanisme untuk mengembangkan lagi keupayaan pemikiran ke tahap lebih tinggi yang tidak mudah dicapai tanpa usaha yang sungguh-sungguh dan latihan yang panjang serta berterusan.

Keywords: *Akal, Wahyu, Islam, Hamiduddin Farahi, perkembangan, al-Qur'an.*

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Introduction

Imam Hamiduddin Farahi is one of the famous Islamic scholar, philosopher, theologian and exegetist of the Quran of the modern era. His works span from reformation to reactivation of the idea of coherence in the Quran, revisiting all Islamic sciences and disciplines which have been regarded as necessary to understand the Quran or which have originated from the Quran that gives the centrality to the Quran. He challenged many of the prevailing discourses in the field of sciences of Quran, sciences of hadeeth, jurisprudence and its principles, logic, theology and philosophy, and field of Arabic grammar and rhetoric.

Imam Farahi was born in 1862 in a small village in the district of Azamgarh in India known as Phariha. From there he took the word Farahi which, in Arabic means native of Phariha. He was the cousin of prominent Indian historian and theologian Shibli Numani (d. 1914) who laid down new foundations of research and study of the history as well as *Sīrah* of the prophet. From the very early age, Farahi learnt many languages including Arabic, Persian, Urdu and later in Aligarh he learnt Hebrew from the German orientalist Joseph Horovitz (d. 1931). He also studied modern disciplines of knowledge from Aligarh Muslim College. He served as teacher of Arabic Language in Karachi, Professor of Arabic in MAO College, Aligarh, and later, developed the idea of a university where all religious and modern disciplines will be taught in Urdu, which later came into existence as Jamia Osmania, Hyderabad.

Since long Farahi was much dissatisfied with prevailing approach among the scholars toward the Quran and he reached to the conclusion that there are problems with methods and principles of understanding of the Quran which affects the whole Islamic ethos and Islamic discourse. Farahi abandoned his career from Jamia Osmania and went back to his district Azamgarh where he took charge of a *madrasah* known as Madrasah al-Islah in 1925. Remaining time of his life he devoted to serve this institution and developed the alternative discourse to interact with the Quran.

Farahi wrote many books and monographs, common denominator among them is to revive the centrality of the Quran in every field of Islamic and human studies. In a very short time, Farahi spread his work to so many themes and areas that time did not permit him to accomplish all his works. Therefore, many of his manuscripts were left in the form of drafts and notes which saw the light of publication after his demise.

Some of his theories and thoughts are presented briefly herein:

1. **Coherence of the Quran:** His most remarkable and significant work is the idea of coherence of the Quran. Even though this idea was not a new one per se, but he introduced this idea *de novo*, providing strong evidences for this theory and further presenting methods and application of his theory. His books *Dalā'il al-Nizām* and *Nizām al-Qur'ān wa Ta'wīl al-Furqān bil-Furqān* are most important in this theme. He defined the *Nizām*: as being the whole *sūrah* (chapter in the Qur'an) a collective unit such as each *sūrah* is correlated with preceding or succeeding *sūrah* or any other *sūrah* which is before or after that same as each verse is coherent and correlated with preceding or succeeding

verses and sometimes having some gap between them as some verses stand as explanation or clarification of something (*Mu'tariḍah*). So, the Qur'an, by virtue of this coherence, stands as a single unit having a very deep and meaningful arrangements and coherence from the beginning to the end (Farahi, 1388). He applied this theory on a number of chapters of the Quran.

Later, his disciple Amin Ahsan Islahi (d. 1997) wrote a complete exegesis of the Quran in Urdu *Tadabbur-i Qur'ān* following the theory of coherence.

Subhani further crystallized and consolidated this theory and its application in his works, *Ima'ān al-Naẓr fī Nizām-il-Āiwa al-Suwar* and *al-Burhān fī Naẓm-ul-Qur'ān* (Farhat, 2001).

2. **Principles of exegesis:** Second major theme of the sciences of Quran where Farahi paid his copious attention was the methods and principles of interpretation of the Quran. Even though, he didn't compose any specific book on that, but he wrote many monographs and drafts emphasizing on that, for example, *Ima'ān Fī Aqsām-al-Qur'an*, *Al-Takmil fī Uṣūl al-Ta'wīl*. Later, Amin Ahsan Islahi and Enayatullah Subhani wrote extensively drawing on the same line. Two latest books of Subhani namely, *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Taḥbīr fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr* and *'Iqd al-Jumān fī Taqwīm Tadabbur al-Qur'ān* contributed enormously and provided a complete framework to deal with the Quranic interpretation as well as dealing with any guidance from the Quran.
3. **Arabic Rhetoric:** Farahi was among those who indulged in classical Arabic very deeply so that they can understand the Quran in such a way as people of the time of revelation used to understand. Consequently, he pointed out the differences which had taken place in the long span of time in the taste of Arabic rhetoric which acted as obstacle in the understanding of the Quran. *Asālib al-'Arab* and *Jamharāt al-Balāghah* are the books where he discussed this thoroughly. In *Mufradāt al-Qur'ān*, he discussed vocabulary of the Quran in the light of original, pre-Islamic meaning.
4. **Science of Creed ('Aqīdah):** Farahi revisited the discourse of creed in the light of the Quran and challenged quite a many prevalent concepts and presented the principles extracted from the Quran to reexamine the discourse of 'Aqīdah. *Al-Qā'id ilā 'Uyūn-al-'Aqā'id* is the monograph where he dealt with the matter of creed. This was not a very well-explained and clearly illustrated work, hence, later many scholars elaborated its contents and concepts. (See for example article of Iqbal Farhat and Enayatullah Subhani in special issue of *Majallah Al-Hind*, volume no, 7, 2018).
5. **Hijaj al-Qur'ān:** This is the book which is the object of the present study and focus of this paper. Here, he challenged, many assumptions of logics, theology and philosophy focusing the Quranic method and way of argumentation and discourse. It is worth mentioning here that most of his works have been studied, expanded and applied and further developed except the thoughts of this book which is less deliberated and discussed. This paper attempts to present some of his thoughts with reference to this remarkable book.

Reason and Muslim Mindset

Intellect is one of the crucial and decisive factors in humans. Be it the cognitive development or the rise of the communities, intellect plays a vital role in both of them. It promotes healthy outlook and provides a conducive environment for development of individual and society. It facilitates discoveries and inventions. Intellect is the sole tool to discover oneself, teaching human beings how to build the world they live in as well as to govern it. It ennobles society and civilizes people.

One of the major causes for the decline of the Muslims throughout history and their failure to strongly represent their outlook lies in their hesitation, inability, misunderstanding and sometimes even hostility towards intellect. Consequently, they fell prey to various ideologies, attitudes and regulations, which would have never been endorsed, had they resorted to intellect in their discourse and narratives. Since they isolated themselves from cognitive praxis, they failed to meet the objectives of their religion and its universal message and also in representing it.

After their initial golden era, Muslims could not develop further because it required *Ijtihad* and contemplation, failing to achieve civilizational success, as it entailed cognizance for each discovery and innovation. Intellect which was a pure bounty and the best method to unravel the Quran was discarded in such a way that it was regarded as a proxy of Satan and an evil to be avoided and discarded. Anyone trying to use intellect was considered deviant. Therefore, religious scholars became reluctant to consider the real importance of intellect. On the other hand, rational and skeptic people had a self-complacency to defeat the religious narratives through intellectual discourse.

In this milieu, it has become imperative to return to the Quran and explore the role and significance of intellect, and the emphasis on the use of the intellect and the development of the intellect.

Farahi (2008) proclaims, reason is the divine light whereby human beings are distinguished from the animals, and this is the criteria which demarcates right from wrong (Farahi, 2008: 184). The objective of the revelation of the Quran was to liberate the people from blindness, arbitrariness, conjectures, so as to enable free thinking using their intellect and fighting against every obstacle, power and hindrance which forbids the cognitive praxis, so that they can get the solutions for all their ongoing needs and challenges in the light of their intellect, but it failed to happen so. Misuse of reason caused people to stay away from the reason itself and it was an unprecedented hazard in the history of a community which was sent for the whole humanity.

Farahi (2008) says, many people who are concerned with religiosity and the study of Quran and Sunnah think that reason contradicts with the divine truth. Mistakenly, they assume that faith is based on the information of apostles and recognized only through miracles. Whatever they have taught us about faith and religion, we are to accept by relying on their statements and their arguments, had reasons been able to show the right path, revelation would have not been necessary. To augment the narrative, they argue that if it was so, Allah would not have appreciated the belief in the unseen (*imān bil-ghayb*). This approach permeated among the religious people so much that people

believed that the obligation to believe in all the religious precepts are based on the fact of their being revealed by Allah. Hence, we are obligated to adhere to them without being concerned about their objective and wisdom behind them. Since they adopted this view, they became alienated from the use of reason and intellect. To ponder on the signs of Quran was much beyond them.

Observing philosophers and theologians who based their thoughts on reason and rationality, but proved incompetent and unsatisfactory in their rhetoric, they formed their opinions regarding intellect and started abhorring rationality itself. As a matter of fact, their mistakes lay not in reason per se, but rather they were overwhelmed with the philosophical dilemmas. Henceforth, they turned away from the right path of reasoning which was revealed to them through the book and the teachings of Prophet.

It is now necessary to highlight the ways to bring people close to contemplation and pondering over the signs and evidences put forth by the Quran and make them use their reason and thinking (Farahi, 2008: 175).

The Importance of Reason in Quran

The Quran gave a very high position to reasoning. It is noteworthy that the Quran nowhere gives caution or any form of regulation or restriction in the context of reason. The Quran is very confident in each and every claim it makes that those are substantiated by intellect and reason, and its rejection of any assumption or concept that reflects inconsistency with the reason. It is very evident from the Quranic description that revelation and reason are in full harmony and congruence. The Quran desirably promotes such a mental frame which draws on the evidence of the reason, whose faith is embedded in the intellect and whose points are justifiable with rationality. Instead of relying on miracles, the Quran promotes rationale-based comprehension as the basis for belief and creed.

Farahi says, among the divine books, the Quran is promoting reason the most, which directly addresses the intellect, draws attention to rational arguments and appreciates rationalist approach and discourages people from blind faith. This is a very strong and apparent fact that cannot be denied (Farahi, 2008: 226).

In the Quran, there is not a single place where intellect and rationality are decried nor is the Quran disparaging of people who use their reason and thinking, not even tacitly, let alone in clear words. It never mentions reason as a factor of deviance. On the contrary, it denounces inhibition of using intellect.

Farahi says: Allah says regarding the reason, ‘And He places obscurity on those who does not use reason’. Here, Allah has clearly mentioned that if someone does not use their reason, obliquity would follow, and they would not be able to demarcate between right or wrong and subsequently, they would be vulnerable to fall prey to all evils (Farahi, 2008: 176).

Highlighting the Quran’s admiration of using the reason, Abbas Mahmud ‘Aqqād (d. 1964) notes, ‘The Holy Quran mentions intellect and reason in glorifying terms and

extols its usage and adherence to it. It is not mentioned in subordinate or co-incidental manner. Whenever there is an injunction or restriction, believers are encouraged to use their reason to rationalize it and deniers are condemned for not using it. Moreover, what in contemporary psychology is described as different functions of the mind, the Quran encompasses all of these functions and promotes it' ('Aqqād, 1986: 1).

Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328) also proposes the same opinion regarding intellect, that reason and religion cannot have conflict. However, being cautious, he placed certain conditions/limits to reasoning. He says:

Whatever can be extracted or inferred by the clear reasoning can never contradict with the *Sharī'ah*. But the result of the absolute reason can no ways be against what is known from the verified tradition. I reflected on the discussions people have about rationality and figured out that whatever exists in the scripture, all the reservations against them can be disproved by reason itself. I thought even over the very crucial and fundamental matters like Oneness of God, His attributes, destiny (*Al-Qadr*), prophecy and resurrection. I further realized that scripture is never in opposition to reason. Rather, the part of the tradition which is alluded to as being contradictory to reason is based on either fabricated or weak narrations, which are so anemic that even if they do not contradict with the reason they still cannot be used as evidence. We are definitely familiar that Prophets convey some facts which might be astonishing for the reason but can never be in contradiction with it. They may inform of things which are beyond the grasp of rationality but not the irrational (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991: 1: 147).

In our religious and theological literature there are lengthy discussions on the inconsistency and disharmony between reason and revelation, which is very strange for the Quran. In the scriptures, reason and revelation stand together in opposition to arbitrariness and baseless conjecture. The Quran categorically appreciates reasoning without any conditions or requisites.

On the complete synchrony and harmony between reason and revelation, Farahi in his book, *Hijaj al-Quran* makes very interesting and remarkable argument. Some of the excerpts are presented below.

“Intrinsically, human beings derive guidance and contentment through reason, and argue against something through reason, gain knowledge through it, whether it is absolute knowledge or knowledge derived through deliberation and reflection. Revelation comes only to motivate and activate the ability to use reason, to be rational, to orient it rightly, to uplift its level and to corroborate it. Therefore, revelation has promoted reasoning, and appreciated those who use their reason. Abraham is a good parable of using reason. While his people were preoccupied with, and indulged in conjecture, he substantiated his arguments with reason. Allah says: and we bestowed aforetime on Abraham his rectitude of conduct, and well were we acquainted with

him. Behold! He said to his father and his people: what are these sculptures, to which you are devoted? They said: we found our fathers worshipping them. He said: Indeed, you and your fathers have been in manifest stray. They said: Have you brought us the Truth, or are one of those who jest? He said: Nay, your Lord is the lord of the heavens and the earth, He who created them, and I am among witnesses to this Truth” (Farahi, 2008: 174).

“Rationality is the criteria whereby all the religions will be gauged, were it not so, the demarcation between right and wrong will be a matter of sanctimoniousness and self-righteousness” (Farahi, 2008: 197).

“To believe in prophets and revelation means to recognize what reason accepts and heart is satisfied with, and hence the revelation embodies evidences substantiated with reason” (Farahi, 2008: 288).

“In a nutshell, revelations talk through reasons and rationality and hence, the use of the reason is encouraged and promoted in the Quran. However, it entails its use in a proper way and directed manner because every power is vulnerable to misuse” (Farahi, 2008: 233).

“Reason and the ‘religion of nature’ are invariably in complete harmony” (Farahi, 2008: 183).

“Be aware of the fact that our path is the path of rationality, we believe in only what reason accepts are satisfied with it. Revelation and messengers are in full congruence with rationality, like light is in relation to the sight. And this has been clarified in all divine books and the Quran is more than clear on this point” (Farahi, 2008: 185).

The Use of Reason in the Rulings of the *Shari‘ah*

Farahi (2011) perceives *Shari‘ah* from a very different view. When he explains the reason behind revealing the fundamentals and larger issues of *Shari‘ah* in the scriptures while leaving a big room for specific rulings for deduction, he asserts two objectives out of this. Firstly, the invention of something demands time and a certain period to go through development and reach the perfection and it is no exception with the Quran, and this is the perfection of *Shari‘ah* to provide the path to reach to the perfection thereof. Secondly, the objective which is very interesting and thought-provoking is that by providing the fundamentals and overarching principles and leaving the details it offers the system of nurturing and training the ability of the reason, and subsequently, it facilitates the development of the people by making them habitual of using the rationality.

He deliberates, Allah did not send the *Shari‘ah* in the way that it covers all major and minor issues and provide instructions for them, and this is with the aim that lest the

reason fades away and becomes paralyzed. It is observable in the Quran that it leaves spacious room for our reason to roam around so that human can continuously develop their abilities and skills (Farahi, 2011: 33). Farahi is peculiar from all the other Islamic scholars when it comes to explaining the processes of deducing rulings in the *Shari'ah* and the pattern of the *Shari'ah* in offering limited fundamental and generic guidance by ascribing it to the objective of developing the capability of the reason and cognizance.

Development of Rational Thinking through the Quran: Methods

The Quran functions as a guide for reason and Farahi sees reason as sight and revelation as light. The Quran also elucidates that its teachings are completely in tune with reason. Here, due focus will be given to the fact that the Quran nurtures reason and has expounded methods of developing and nurturing rationality so that if someone involves sincerely with the Quran, he will get a best suited environment and processes for developing rationality. This is a very interesting and important topic which is less discussed and deliberated. Farahi has discussed it though brief and short, it engulfs lots of eye-opening facts and insightful meanings. According to Farahi, following methods are disseminated in the Quran:

First Method: Development of Reason is Mutually Conditioned with The Constant Use of Reason

Realization of human potential and utilization of natural resources have been subjected to struggle and action and they in turn are predicated on intellect. Necessary capabilities have been endowed and provided to man then left to work upon and discover potential in their person and in the nature and utilize them. These capabilities and powers increase and proliferate as much as they are practiced and exercised, and their outcomes materialize simultaneously.

This is the approach which is upheld by the Quran in regard to the development of the ability to use reason. It is by no means implied that when a believer, as soon as he embraces Islam is exposed to the hidden capacity of reason and rationality and becomes a rational person. Instead, the Quran encourages his followers to keep using their reason and intellect so that they can reach higher level of rationality. Farahi says:

“The Quran explained basic teachings related to unity of Godhood, and injunctions of the religions with full details, but the development of reason is conditioned on the utilization of reason and there is no other way apart from that” (Farahi, 2008: 131).

Second Method: The Quran Considered Itself as the Means of Reasoning and Using Intellect

As mentioned earlier, as much reason will be used, its capacity will grow. The Quran not only encourages the usage of reason but also provides a good place for development of intellect through reflection in its verses and signs of Allah. The Quran, before being a book of do's and don'ts, before being a book of piety and virtue, is a book of rational arguments, signs and evidences. These evidences and signs require deep reflection and cognitive praxis. The Quran is not only a good workshop for developing rationality, but it also points to a wider and larger world to be regarded as the workplace for the rational

exercise. Surprisingly, anyone who ponders on the Quranic signs unwittingly reaches to a much wider world of signs.

Farahi says, the Quran presents itself as the workstation of rational thinking and encourages the reason to indulge in everything which comes into its realm. For example, the Quran says,

“Do they not contemplate on the Quran or are their hearts locked up”
(47:24).

“Verily, in this are signs for those who reason” (20:54).

He then mentions innumerable signs and symbols which call for the use of reason (Farahi, 2008).

The Quranic evidences, in nature are rational and they address human reason. The Quran satisfies its readers constantly with logical evidences. Consequently, using reason to understand these evidences it leads to a point where reason becomes very efficient until it becomes accustomed to using reason and asks for rational evidence, choosing reason over any other ground such as reverence or force to accept any view. It needs logic to think and leave no vacancy for conjecture. Ubiquity of an opinion, emulation of scholars or imposition by rulers, all have no impact and there can be no compromise with rationality. The attitude of accepting opinions based on rational evidence brings development in the personality of human beings. It makes them free and develops will power instead of blind following. They develop their own opinion and take their own decisions. They design their priorities and take responsibility to fulfill them. No human being should be entitled to impose his decision on the others in the matters of this life or the hereafter. Everyone should freely and rationally think and decide his present and future path. Here lies a very huge difference between a person who simply follows others and emulates them. The one who is presented with the evidence and rational arguments from Allah about the important matters of his life and he accepts only after being content with them. Reason based attitude is characterized primarily by the absence of any imposition and voracity. On the other hand, the people who speak without evidence and rational grounds rely on force or imposition or greed or any other unethical means to make their views accepted.

In Farahi’s words (2008: 221): ‘Truth can be arrived at only through the reason-based thinking. When human beings determine to use their reason and try their best, Allah bestows them with guidance. There is no force from any prophet or teacher (*murshid*) because human needs only evidence. Similarly, there is no force from Allah because He guides only those who seek guidance. Therefore, Allah says:

“Verily, Allah does not do injustice with people in aught, it is they who wrong their own soul” (10: 44).

“And also said: let there be no compulsion in religion, truth stands out clear from error” (2: 256).

Third Method: Encouraging the Use of Reason

Human beings are distinguished from others by their reason and their capacity to make rational choice but at the same time, they are comfort-seeking and ease-loving in their natural disposition. Especially when it comes to the use of reason they fall short of that because it is a hard task to rationalize. Admittedly, the Quran encourages use of reason to make rational arguments, think, and contemplate the signs of Allah. It denounces the people who lock up their hearts and minds. This is a very common reoccurring theme throughout the Quran.

Aqqād says: “We should always remember that it is not without any wisdom that reason has been encouraged over and again repeatedly in the Quran. Rather, it is the spirit of religion and its summary. Anyone who is aware of the reality of this religion as well as the reality of human nature will as well as the addressees of the divine message can expect nothing less” (Aqqad, 1986: 12).

Syed Qutub (1996) while explaining the verse (10: 100) says the people who abandon the use of their intellect and reasoning, Allah puts obscurity and permanent doubt on them. He further elaborates that the latter two are among most severe spiritual illness. Therefore, whosoever abandons the use of their intellect, encounters the same consequences and ends up with denying and rejecting all the truth.

Fourth Method: Stress on Evidences and Signs Instead of Tangible Miracles

In this context, it is worth mentioning that the Quran stresses on introspection and reflection in the evidences and signs within and without man, instead of tangible and material miracles. The Quran prefers signs and evidence in inner self and outer world where reason is persuaded to function. Suleiman Nadwi says, “It gets apparent and clear while reading the Quran that it does not give much weight to material miracles, rather it always attracts to the original spirit of Prophethood. Contrary to Christianity where focus is clearly on the miracles, Islam calls for thinking, contemplating and understanding to believe in the truth” (Nadwi, 2000). ‘Aqqād writes:

“Islam is the religion whose miracles can be found wherever reason contemplates. It is not the religion whose miracles become hindrance for the reason and which asks to blindly surrender. We should be aware of the fact that miracles are of two kinds and it is imperative to know this so that we can differentiate between the different kinds of miracles, which ones should be sought and which ones, being rational beings, we should avoid. The former is the one which invariably addresses human rationality, and which exists everywhere. But this miracle is not used to convince the people who cannot be satisfied through the reason. In fact, the one who cannot be satisfied through the reason, miracles also cannot protect him from going astray. Islam is a balanced religion, it fulfills the requirement of the reason and maintains the equilibrium between everything. It can be considered as a miracle from each and every aspect. It is not the religion of miracle which abandons the reason and fails to satisfy it. Instead it is the religion of reason and to use the reason is a duty in this religion” (Aqqad, 1986: 80).

It goes without saying that physical and tangible signs are not very helpful in fulfilling the objectives of guidance. The reason is that the people who believe and adopt the message of the understood and implicit signs do not need the tangible signs and on the contrary those who do not believe in such evidences do not, in general, believe in tangible signs either. Furthermore, the Quran prefers the signs of meanings and concepts as they touch directly the minds and the hearts and increase the capacity of thinking and using the reason and subsequently giving the contentment and confidence. Ibn ‘Ashur while explaining the verses “*and you didn’t use to recite any book before this book nor you transcribe that with your hand*” (29: 48-51) point out that being a readable thing the Quran is greater and higher than other tangible and visible signs because the former requires the use of reason and thinking which is undoubtedly higher than other senses. Henceforth, the Quran is most suitable as to be a miracle in the upcoming era of knowledge which the humanity is going to experience (‘Ashur, 1983).

Fifth Method: Provides Effective Rules for Rational Argument and Thinking

Farahi (2008) observed that the Quran not only includes so many rational arguments and parables of using the reason, but it provides many rules and foundations for rational thinking and contemplation which are quite different from ubiquitous modern rules.

He said: “I found many rules of rational argument and justification in the Quran which were closer to the reason than those of Greek logic and more appealing to the heart. Those principles were stronger and more mature than those of philosophers and theologians and I wonder why people overlooked them” (Farahi, 2008: 21).

Even though Farahi could not present all those rules and principles, but what he has presented has much to further deliberate and extract for those who want to draw on this line using their reason. One of those principles is that best way to verify the rationality of something is that it should be concordant with the human nature.

Farahi says: “The Quran roots its evidences on the definite natural phenomena which cannot be denied by reason. This belief is at the core of all sciences and works in relation to reason. This belief is placed in the depth of human beings and it is hidden as fruits within the peels and soul behind the veil” (Farahi, 2008: 93).

Sixth Method: Abundance of Fine Rational Evidences

The Quran is a book of evidences, with plenty of proofs and arguments which focus and address both reason and heart. These evidences are grounded in the belief which is hidden in the human beings. Nonetheless, they are not as clear and elaborate as we find in other books. Neither are these in that coherent order that we are accustomed to. Rather they are very calculatingly presented. Oblivious and inactive minds cannot catch them. They require sharp minds. They are the dilemmas which are just there for reason and understanding to reach out. They are embedded in such a way that if someone uses his reason and brings his mind into action, strong evidence and clear signs will continue to uncover. Since, this strength of evidence is released after a long reasoning exercise; it appears as a discovery and gives a deep feeling of contentment.

Farahi says: “Among the objectives of the Quran is the nurturing of ability to use reason and wisdom, as it has been clearly mentioned at some places, therefore a large number

of deliberate evidences have been presented so that readers can learn how to use the reason and deduct deep meanings. Sometimes, to achieve this, the Quran points at some evidence without elaborating it in order to make readers use their cognizance. Even sometimes, he merely points at those natural principles which embody the foundations of justifications. Because of this deliberate and deep expression, many fail to grasp its evidences and covert meanings. Had the Quran explained the evidences and arguments in jam-packed details, minds would not have been trained. Instead of using the reason people could have become accustomed of simply memorizing things. Allah has sent His messengers as the best teacher of wisdom. He did not limit to uncovering some truths rather He made the minds potent as such that by using intellect they could keep learning and reaching new heights of knowledge and wisdom. This necessitates the training of reason and intellect to make them aware of new principles of thought and they can achieve assurance in their knowledge and purity in their ethics. All these were parts of Almighty Allah's plan to teach mankind the wisdom. In a nutshell, most of the Quranic evidences function as the brightness for the sight and thunder for the activation of the reason. The Quranic expression are closest to rhetoric of speech and nature. It addresses concurrently both, the mind and the heart. It combines between logical and psychological arguments" (Farahi, 2008: 27).

Hindrance in the Use of the Reason and its Remedy

The Use of reason is as much part of human nature as the use of senses but, in effect, humans prove to be very idle in using the reason and intellect. In his small world he dominates and controls everything, but in a wider and larger universe he falls short of any understanding and wanders or strays without any clue.

Farahi said: "Human beings put much effort in mathematics, engineering and physical sciences when it comes to metaphysics they become helpless and start following whims and baseless conjectures. This is an evidence that they need Prophethood. If most intelligent and brilliant minds hold an irresponsible view on certain issue, it should be recognized that intellects are not, in this context, autonomous and independent and they must follow something. To explain it in a parable, sights don't possess their own light, rather they use the light which falls on them and they become capable of seeing and if they don't endorse that light they will become useless being dazed by darkness. Similarly, intellect needs light by its nature and it becomes active when it gets light but when it denies accepting light, it loses its capacity to think and work" (Farahi, 2008: 127).

The Quran has mentioned some causes of intellectual inability and rational ineffectiveness and proposes remedies for that. Some of them are mentioned here:

Preoccupation with Tangible and Material Objects

Intellect's realm of working is beyond mere tangible and material objects of the world. Therefore, who confine themselves in such physical and material entities, having no room for what is beyond them, deprive themselves from the attainments of rational discoveries. And such people have been condemned intensely in the Quran.

In Farahi's words, "Most people are unmindful about what will follow this life because they are engrossed with their present and physical life and physical sciences. For this, the Quranic evidences touch human nature and promote intellectual and rational involvements. Nevertheless, there are people who don't use their reason and lock their minds. In a number of verses, the Quran induces to use the reason and think freely. For instance, the Quran says: Do they not use their reason, or they have locked up their hearts, and many such expressions. This forgetfulness comes out of obsession with physical and empirical activities exclusively. Consequently, they limit their thinking ability on the widespread signs of beauty and wisdom and mercy and glory to material world around them and here, the Quran refers to them as animals or even inferior. Allah says: they possess the hearts but they don't think, they have eyes but they don't see, they have ears but they don't listen they are like animal or in most deviance (6: 179), they are interested to know about the material things of their life but they are heedless regarding the life hereafter (30: 7), therefore, shun those who turn away from Our message and desire nothing but the life of this world. That is as far as knowledge will reach them. Verily, your Lord knows best those who stray from His path, and He knows best those who receive guidance (53: 29-30)" (Farahi, 2008: 25-26).

Content in Little Indolence in Desire of Better

When human beings become happy and content with little and low things and live for trivial, they cause their intellects to limit its capacity. These people neither benefit from revelation, nor reason gives them any guidance. Intellects bring prominence, but they regress and decay. They fall sick in such a situation. The Quran attempts to cure their sickness.

Farahi (2008: 101-2) says: "Sickness of intellect is much more hazardous and bewildering than that of body. The way cells and senses fall sick and they stop working and finally vanish, so do intellects and reasons. The knowledge endowed in human nature does not, necessarily, become comprehensible for human beings. It requires endeavors and struggles to uncover them and attain them. To be happy in backslide result in inability to achieve great and high goals. That's why the Quran substantially focuses on sickness of intellect and mind. The health of heart and mind is more inevitable than the forms and conditions of evidences as the ability of sight is more important than the tools of sights (spectacles). Logic concentrates exclusively on the forms and contents of evidences and justification while main significance goes to the mind that thinks and his intellectual and rational foundations.'

Following the Conjectures and Whims

Revelation can never conflict with reason rather they both clash with conjectures and whims. Hence, the Quran frequently warns from following them and whoever follows them disregard the demands of the intellect.

Farahi (2008) says: "A believer will always adhere to the reason while a nonbeliever will follow it only where it concords with his own conjecture and desire. Allah says about such people: they follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire. Even though there has already come to them guidance from their Lord (53: 23)."

The limited desire of this world encumbers the people from aiming for higher goals. Their conjectures impede them from thinking freely about truth and embracing it. The biggest challenge for the truth and reason are conjectures and whims. They prevent from attaining knowledge as well as doing good deeds.

Conclusion

The Quran aims to construct such a believer who can confidently and persuasively engage in discussion and debate over its message and convey the same to others. It wants to equip him so that he can persuade with reason and not entice with avarice or strike down with fear. The real strength lies in rational persuasion. The Quran does contain warnings as well as glad tidings, but these are not to shut down the voice of reason, rather it is there to awaken the slumbering intellect. The believer constructed by the Quran does not live in the fear of losing his or others' conviction due to failure of rationality in his belief system. He does not require death for apostates or shutting down proselytizing and propagation of other religions to protect his religion and belief. In fact, he is foremost in safeguarding the freedom of belief and propagation as it will grant him the opportunity to prove his belief to be rationally sound. Without a shadow of doubt, it can be said that making recourse to Quran will truly increase intellect, rationality, perspicacity and sagacity, leading to a successful and happy life. As Farahi elucidated, success is conditional on three things: Intellect, knowledge and good deeds.

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