

Intellectual Cultivation: Quranic Perspective considering Surat Al-Kahf

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Abstract

This article attempts to explore the Quranic instructions that contribute to intellectual growth. Intellectual cultivation is the process of developing our mental capacity in order to make sense of things and comprehend them on a deeper level. The inductive method and the analytical method will be used to study and categorize the Quranic guidelines found in Surat al-Kahf that if implemented will empower a person's critical thinking. The study shows that the believer is distinguished with a clear awareness, thought, and vision of the reality of life and its occurrences. The research will also discuss the role of reflection and other spiritual practices such as *Dhikr* (remembering Allah), *khalwa* (meditating in solitude), *shukr* (gratitude) in the enhancement of our intellectuality and spiritual awareness.

Key Words: Intellectual, *al-Kahf*, Reflection, Materialism, *Khalwa*, *Shukr*

Introduction

Surat al-Kahf presents to us the story of Mūsa and al-Khiḍr where it highlights Mūsa's quest in seeking higher intelligence by accompanying al-Khiḍr and learning from the knowledge Allah granted him. Mūsa informed al-Khiḍr when he finally reached him:

“Musa (Moses) said to him (Khidr) "May I follow you so that you teach me something of that knowledge (guidance and true path) which you have been taught (by Allah)?"
[al-Kahf:66]

The intellectual inquiry and attaining knowledge are essential parts of Islam. The first verses Allah revealed in the Quran commenced with the idea of knowledge, Allah states:

“Read! In the Name of your Lord, Who has created (all that exists), Has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous, Who has taught (the writing) by the pen.” [al-‘Alaq 96: 1-4]

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Cambridge dictionary defines intellect as the ability to understand and to think in an intelligent way:³ Therefore, an intellectual is one who has an ability to think and understand things, especially complicated ideas.⁴

Allah created human beings and provided for them the tools to attain knowledge. Allah says:

“And Allāh has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight, and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allāh).” [al-Nahl 16:78]

Imām Assa’dī comments on this verse: “Allah distinguished these three organs: the hearing, the seeing, and the heart for their honor and virtue because they are the keys to attaining knowledge. Allah granted the human being the rest of the parts of the body, and gradually developed the body until the person was fully formed, so this person may become grateful by using what Allah blessed him with. This gratefulness can be expressed by using these blessings in the obedience of Allah, and whomever uses them for any other reason they will have his body testify against him”⁵. Thus, the person must use these senses to gain the most virtuous asset: beneficial knowledge; the person must then translate the knowledge gained into molding his behavior and thus be able to give thanks to Allah, as indicated by the end of the verse “so you might give thanks” [Quran 16:78]. This thankfulness entails having the knowledge that Allah is our creator and that all blessings are ascribed to Him.

Allah has certainly honored human beings by granting them the blessing of the intellect. Without the intellect, the human would not know his Lord and the path to Him, nor would he be able to distinguish the good from the bad. Allah says:

“And We have certainly honored the children of Adam and carried them on the land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference.” [al-’Isrā:70]

The Quran empowers the intellect and encourages the individual to employ the highest faculty he was bestowed by His creator: the *‘aql* (mind). In order to engender a sound intellectual understanding that would lead a person to recognize the greatness of his Lord and thus compel him to surrender in obedience, Allah reminds the individual

“Indeed, in the creations of heavens and the earth, and the alteration of the night and day are signs for those of understanding.”

³ "INTELLECT | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." Cambridge Dictionary. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/intellect>.

⁴ "INTELLECTUAL | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." Cambridge Dictionary. Accessed February 25, 2019. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/intellectual?q=intellectual>.

⁵ Abdurrahmān Asa’dī. *A. Tafsīr as-Sa’dī or Tafsīr al-Karīm al-Rahmān fī Tafsīr Kalām ‘al-Mannān*, 1st edn. (Mu’assasat ‘ar-Risālah, 2000), 445

Those who remember Allah (always, and in prayers) standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, 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! (Exalted be You above all that they associate with You as partners). Give us salvation from the torment of the Fire." [’Alī Imrān: 190-191]

In essence, spirituality is the gateway to intellectual enhancement, and when the believer is involved in cultivating his connection with Allah by worshipping Him, remembering Him, reflecting on His words, and exercising *taqwa* (god-consciousness), the believer will attain exceptional insight and consciousness that will aid him in achieving success in this life and the next.

1.0 The Role of Reflection in Empowering the Intellect

1.1 Reflecting on Allah’s Creation Leads to the Acknowledging the Creator

Surah al-Kahf encourages contemplating Allah’s universal signs and considering the reality of all matters. Of the matters that Surah al-Kahf demand one to contemplate are Allah’s favors and the reality of this world. Allah, the Exalted, says:

Indeed, We have made that which is on the earth adornment for it that We may test them [as to] which of them is best in deed. And indeed, We will make that which is upon it [into] a barren ground. [al-Kahf :7-8]

Imam Ibn Ashūr comments about this ayah that in mentioning His creation as an adornment, Allah simultaneously draws a person’s attention to the favors He has been given – a world created in the most perfect way possible that is aligned to a person’s inclination toward beauty and glamour. It necessarily follows that recognition of this adornment awakens the mind to the existence of its creator and draws attention to the inadequate gratitude expressed by the individual to the Creator.⁶

Allah mentions to us that one of the attributes of those who have sound intellect is that they are in constant reflection over His creation; Allah states:

“Indeed, in the creations of heavens and the earth, and the alteration of the night and day are signs for those of understanding.” [’Al-’Imrān 3:191]

Reflecting over Allah’s creation is an act of worship that is almost abandoned by many Muslims. It is an act of worship that plays a role in increasing one’s faith and instills a great sense of reverence for the Creator in the heart and mind of the Muslim. A true and sincere Muslim with a heart that is alive, a sharp insight, an awareness of the wonder of Allah’s creation in the universe, and certainty that his hidden but most majestic hand is what controls the matters of the universe and the affairs of the human beings, will then be in a constant state of mindfulness of Allah. He

⁶ Ibn Ashūr, Muḥammad Al-Ṭāhir, *Al-Taḥrīr wa Al-Tanwīr*, (Tūnis: Al-Dār Al-Tūnisiyyah, 1984), vol. 15, 298.

will see the effects of His unlimited power in every waking moment of his life and in every event that occurs in the universe, thus increasing in his faith in and remembrance of Allah as result of reflection as in the aforementioned verse.

1.2 Reflecting on the Reality of Life

Surah al-Kahf calls one to contemplate the reality of this world - that it is transient and bound to end - and the fact that it is the realm of our test and trial. Allah says:

“And present to them the example of the life of this world, [its being] like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and [then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is ever, over all things, Perfect in Ability.” [al-Kahf: 45]

Allah compares this world to water, which does not stay still in one place; thus, this world does not last for anyone. Just as water does not stay in one state, neither does this worldly life. Just as water evaporates and does not last, this world is ever-perishing. Just as one cannot enter water without becoming wet, no one enters this world without being subjected to its trials and harms. Just as water can be beneficial and conducive to life in certain amounts, but harmful and lethal when that amount is consumed in excess, this world can be beneficial to a certain extent.⁷

1.2.1 The Fruit of Knowing the Reality of Life

Taking the parable of the transience of life into account makes the believer disinclined from this world and covetous of what is with Allah, and pushes him to turn to Allah and devote his worship to Him. Allah says:

“Wealth and children are [but] adornment of the worldly life. But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope.” [al-Kahf:46]

The fruit of knowing the reality of this world is that a person will then exert himself in the good deeds that will have a lasting impact. This exertion includes all acts of worship and attaining nearness to Allah, Mighty and Majestic. Notice how when Allah gives the parable of this world, its reality, and its transience, he mentions that there are two types of things in it: one type that is its adornment, which only a few will enjoy temporarily: these are wealth and children. The other is one that will remain and continually benefit its owner - these are the good deeds of lasting impact. The realization of this dichotomy by the intellectually sound and mindful person will

⁷ Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Hashimī, *Shakṣiyyat-ul-Muslim kamā Yaṣūghuhā ‘al-Islam fī ‘al-Kitāb wa ‘As-Sunnah*, (Dārul-Bashāir ‘al-Islāmiyyah, 10th ed. 2000), 470. Hossam Moussa Mohamed Shousha, Jamal Ahmed Badi, *The Role of the Heart in the Thinking Process*: <https://journals.iium.edu.my/jiasia/index.php/jia/article/view/717> vol 15-3. P 47.

motivate him to strive for the hereafter and not be swayed on his journey by the adornments of this life.

1.3 Materialism Clouds the Intellect

As humans, our paradigms are shaped by our beliefs, experiences, and those things we hold dear to our hearts. While the true believer's worldview is guided by his love for Allah and longing for His pleasure, those whose hearts are diseased by covetousness and greed restrict their worldview to only those things that fulfill their desires and feed their egos. Their desires ultimately become gods besides Allah that cloud their spiritual insight and lead them astray. Allah, the Exalted, says,

“Have you seen ‘O Prophet’ the one who has taken their own desires as their god? Will you then be a keeper over them? Or do you think that most of them listen or understand? They are only like cattle—no, more than that, they are astray from the ‘Right’ Way!” [Al-Furqan:43-44]

When we reflect on the story of the two men, we can observe from the rich man how materialism leads to shortsightedness and impairment of the intellect. The owner of the two gardens took his desires as an *ilah* (lord, deity), blinding himself from the truth and reality of matters. He ascribed the reason for his affluence, wealth, and success solely to his own knowledge and skills. His love and desire for the world not only made him arrogant towards his companion but also led him to *ghurūr* (self-deceit) which blinded him from beholding the Ultimate cause behind his success, Allah. The owner's reference to himself and that which he owns using the pronoun “أنا”, “I”, is indicative of his self-centric and individualistic view of the world. This egocentrism ultimately led to his own self-destruction. Allah, the Exalted, says,

“And he had fruit, so he said to his companion while he was conversing with him, “I am greater than you in wealth and mightier in [numbers of] men.”

“And he went into his garden while in a state (of pride and disbelief) unjust to himself. He said: “I think not that this will ever perish.” [al-Kahf: 34-35]

Commenting on the internal mental state of the rich man, Yusuf Ali states: “The arrogant one was puffed up with his possessions, his income, and his large family and following, and thought in his self-complacency that it would last forever. He was also wrong in looking down on his companion, who, though less affluent, was the better man of the two. It was not wealth that ruined him, but the attitude of his mind. He was unjust, not so much to his neighbor, as to his own soul.” He further comments “grasping spirit of the materialist. In his mind “better” means more wealth and more power, of the kind he was enjoying in this life, although in reality, even what he had rested on hollow foundations and was doomed to perish and bring him down with it.”⁸

⁸ The Holy Qurān: *English Translation of the Meaning and Commentary* (by Yusuf Ali). (Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah: King Fahd Holy Qur-ān Printing Complex, 1988), 830

Allah, the Exalted, warns the believers from following in the footsteps of those whose heedlessness blinded their view of the reality. Consequently, they take their desires as guides which shape their worldview. Allah, the Exalted, says,

“...and do not obey he whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his own lusts, and whose affair has been lost.” [al-Kahf:28]

Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah provides a deeper look at the verse, stating, “If the heart becomes rusted, its owner will not be able to see things for what they are. So, he will see falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood, because when the rust builds up, it causes a fog that prevents him from seeing things as they are. So, if the rust builds up and blackens the heart, his understanding and comprehension become ruined; he will not accept the truth as truth, and will not reject falsehood as falsehood.”⁹

Neglecting the remembrance of Allah and being heedless of His signs will prevent the person from having the spiritual insight, and he will see things with the lens of materialism and desire, not the divine light. Allah says,

“And who does more wrong than he who is reminded of the Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of his Lord, but turns away from them forgetting what (deeds) his hands have sent forth. Truly, We have set veils over their hearts lest they should understand this (the Quran), and in their ears, deafness. And if you (O Muhammad SAW) call them to guidance, even then they will never be guided.” [al-Kahf: 57]

One of the greatest corruptions of our world is that the materialists impose their lifestyle as a standard on the people and leave those with less material possession to feel dismal about their conditions. This inversion of the material vs. spiritual reality creates a society that puts wealth over intellect and character. As a result of this inversion, people’s vision becomes clouded to the transience of this *dunia* (life) and the permanence of the *akhira* (hereafter).

Islam does not condemn the acquisition of wealth and does intend for the believers to be in clash with worldly materials; rather Islam encourages us to work and seek God’s provisions and directs us to use the blessings of Allah to construct earth and as means to draw near to Allah. Many of the Messenger’s *sahaba* companions were very wealthy such as Abū Bakr, ‘Uthman Bin ‘Affān, and ‘Abdurrahmān Bin ‘Awf but they did not let their wealth control them; in fact, they controlled their wealth and used it to help others and support great causes. The Messenger said:

“Sound wealth is very excellent for a righteous man!”¹⁰

1.4 Reflecting on Allah’s Book

⁹ Ibn al-Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah, *al-Wabil as-Sayyib min al-Kalimi at-Tayyib*, (Cairo: Dārul-Ḥadīth, 3rd ed. 1999), 40

¹⁰ Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, Sulaymān bin Aḥmad al-Shāmī, *al-Mu’jam al-’Awsaṭ*, Taḥqīq: Ṭāriq Bin Awaḍ Bin Muḥammad, (Cairo: Dārul-Ḥaramayn), Vol.5, 22, Ḥadīth no. 9012. Graded Sahih by Al-Albānī

The Quran also encourages reflecting upon Allah's book. Allah's book is of the greatest things to contemplate. Allah says:

“[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.”
[Şād: 29]

Imam as-Sa'di highlights that the wisdom of the revelation of Quran is for people reflect over its verses and extract its knowledge, paying attention to its subtleties and wisdom. Reflecting over it, considering its meanings, and repeatedly contemplating over them will bring its blessings and good fruition. This urges the individual to reflect over the Qur'an, showing us that it is of the most virtuous actions, and that reciting it while reflecting over it is better than reciting it quickly without achieving its objective. “Those of understanding” are those of sound intellects who incorporate in their reflection every form of knowledge and every intended meaning. This shows that one's understanding and intellect will dictate how much they will internalize and benefit from this book.¹¹

Surah al-Kahf emphasizes this understanding. Allah, the Exalted, says:

And We have certainly diversified in this Qur'an for the people from every [kind of] example; but man has ever been, most of anything, [prone to] dispute.
[al-Kahf:54]

Allah tells us that He struck every possible example in the Qur'an for us, taught us all types of lessons, and provided all types of proofs therein so that we could pay heed, turn to Him, learn from these lessons, and avoid the practice of associating others with Allah and worshipping idols. But, as Allah says, the human being is, above all else, mostly argumentative, not yielding to truth, and not taking heed of warnings.

This statement is also a condemnation of those who misdirected their intellectual energy to argue with falsehood and lust against their prophets without proof and reason; Allah says about the disbelievers who argue with their messengers:

“(and they) disputed by means of falsehood to refute therewith the truth. So I seized them (with punishment), and how (terrible) was My punishment!” [Ghāfir:5]

1.5 Reflecting on the Stories of Past

Surah al-Kahf, which is itself composed of four stories, exhorts us to contemplate over stories, particularly of the past, so that we may take heed and learn lessons from them. These stories are the Story of *young men of the cave*, the story of the *two men*, the story of *Mūsa and al-Khiḍr*, and the story of *Dhul-Qarnayn*. When introducing the story of the men in the cave, Allah says:

¹¹ Asa'di. *A. Tafsīr as-Sa'dī or Tafsīr al-Karīm al-Rahmān fī Tafsīr Kalām 'al-Mannān*, 471

“Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?.” [al-Kahf: 9]

The Muslim’s duty is to reflect on all of Allah’s verses, which Allah called upon His servants to contemplate. This reflection is key to faith and the path to knowledge and certainty. Allah mentions that there are lessons in the stories of the Qur’an for those who reflect:

“There was certainly in their stories a lesson for those of understanding. Never was the Qur’an a narration invented, but a confirmation of what was before it and a detailed explanation of all things and guidance and mercy for a people who believe.” [Yūsuf:111]

2.0 Spiritual Practices that Contribute in Intellectual Cultivation

2.1 To Practice *Khalwa*

The word *khalwa* can be translated as “seclusion”, and in Islamic spirituality, it is used to refer to withdrawing oneself from *Dunya*’ (life), the manifest world of form, typically for a period of intense meditation and reflection.¹²

Of the practices most conducive to intellectual growth and development of thought is solitude and contemplation in a serene environment that is comforting to the soul. The men in the cave left the environment of polytheism and corruption to the cave in order to be in a place that would allow them to worship Allah and be alone with Allah, especially in such trying times. Allah indeed granted them success, as Allah says:

“[The youths said to one another], "And when you have withdrawn from them and that which they worship other than Allah, retreat to the cave. Your Lord will spread out for you of His mercy and will prepare for you from your affair facility." [al-Kahf: 16]

Our Prophet and role model Muhammad removed himself from Mecca and its people, and stayed in the cave of Hira’, contemplating Allah and His creation. While he was in this state, the revelation from Allah came to him.

How direly are we, in our times, in need of getting away from the glamour of life and its never-ending toil, to be alone with Allah in a place where there is tranquility, and to reflect on Allah, His creation, and that which would benefit us in both our worldly and religious affairs. The Prophet ﷺ informed us that one of the types of people who will receive the shade of Allah, on the day when there is no shade but His shade, is “a man who remembers Allah in private, and his eyes shed tears.”¹³

¹² "Spiritual Seclusion: Khalwa in Islam." Spiritual Excellence Portal. July 13, 2018. Accessed February 22, 2019. <https://www.spiritualexcellence.com/blog/spiritual-seclusion-khalwa-in-islam/>.

¹³ Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad Ibn Ismā‘īl. Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī: *The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari: Arabic-English*. Translated by Muhammad Muhsin. Khan. (Riyadh-Saudi Arabia: Darussalam Pub. & Distr., 1997), Vol. 8, 264-265, Hadith 6479

Solitude aids the purification of the soul and helps clear the mind. It elevates the mind to the state of knowing reality of one self which leads to a serene submission and humility towards Allah.

2.2 To Sit with People of Superior Intellect

Surah al-Kahf shows the importance of spending one's time with people of intellect. In fact, Mūsa's meeting al-Khiḍr and following him was for the purpose of seeking knowledge and higher intellect.

Allah says:

And keep yourself patient [by being] with those who call upon their Lord in the morning and the evening, seeking His countenance. And let not your eyes pass beyond them, desiring adornments of the worldly life, and do not obey one whose heart We have made heedless of Our remembrance and who follows his desire and whose affair is ever [in] neglect. [al-Kahf:28]

This ayah contains a command to spend one's time with people of sound intellect. Ibn Ashūr notes one of the qualities of those who believe is that they are people of sound intellect: "One should spend his time with the people of virtue and superior intellect, and those with enlightened hearts, not those who make the immediate matters their primary concern and focus, neglecting to reflect on realities and adopt noble virtues; they are too arrogant to spend time with the people of virtue."¹⁴

Spending time with the people of intellect enriches one's intelligence, and it helps a person to see clearly what is normally unclear; not seeing the clarity of matters may harm the person and when a person is around those with deeper insight they will show us that which benefits us and alert us to that which harms us ; an example of this is when Sulaymān was marching forth with his army and reached a valley which Allah calls Wādin-Naml (valley of the ants), as Allah says:

"Until, when they came upon the Valley of Ants, an ant said, "O ants! Go into your nests, lest Solomon and his troops crush you without noticing." [An-Naml:18]

The ant was alert and felt the danger approaching and she made a clear alarming announcement to the rest of the ants to enter the nests. This ant who had the insight saved the rest of ants from inevitable destruction. When we surround ourselves with those who have insight, compassion, sound intellect and expertise, they can help him to make the right choice. It is as the Prophet said: "He who seeks counsel will not lose, and he who seeks guidance will not regret."¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibn Ashūr, , *Al-Taḥrīr wa Al-Tanwīr*, vol. 15, 305

¹⁵ Aṭ-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muḥjam al-'Awsaṭ*, vol.1, 368, Ḥadīth no. 2225. Grade: Ḥadīth Daʿīf

2.3 *Dhikr* Remembering Allah

Allah states,

“And remember your Lord when you forget and say: "It may be that my Lord guides me unto a nearer way of truth than this." [al-Kahf:24]

Allah reminds to remember him if we are in state of forgetfulness, as it will remove it, and Allah will facilitate for His servant remembering what he forgot. It is also a command for those who forget to remember Allah and not to be from the heedless.¹⁶

In this verse, Allah makes a connection between remembering and invoking Him to reaching a state of *rashada* which linguistically means the right path or guided way. *Rushd* is a state of intellectual capacity where the person has reached his full mental maturity and excellence in managing his affairs¹⁷. This is an indication that remembering Allah leads to a higher degree of intellectual guidance that is facilitated through spiritual guidance.

Dhikr of Allah is not merely a plain word said on the tip of one's tongue. *Dhikr* is a state of spiritual and moral consciousness that allows the believer to live his or her life in the companionship with Allah's commands and prohibitions. A person making constant *Dhikr* is more likely to remember what pleases and displeases Allah, paving a clear path to nurture a character built of Quranic and Prophetic guidance. One who makes *Dhikr* sees things in the light of Allah so his or her awareness cannot be compared to a person who sees with the light of anything else. Being in a state of *Dhikr* enables the person to navigate the diverse circumstances in life, especially in times where there may be difficulty discerning the right perspective. We see an example of this reliance on the remembrance of Allah to illuminate one's difficulties through the example of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyah, may Allah have mercy on him, who, when he found some complex matters difficult to understand, would say: “O You who taught Ibrāhīm, teach me;”¹⁸

Allah Says:

“Those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah - Islamic Monotheism), and whose hearts find rest in the remembrance of Allah, Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.” [ar-Ra'd: 28]

Remembering Allah causes the person to have a peace of mind and heart; this state of tranquility will cause the person to behave peacefully with himself and others.

2.4 *Shukr* Gratitude

In the story of the two men we see that the believer's view of the world always returned to Allah and saw Him as the Primary and Ultimate cause behind all things. He not only attributed the owner's garden to Allah, but he also reminded his neighbor that his very existence depended on

¹⁶ Asa'di. *A. Tafsīr as-Sa'dī* or *Tafsīr al-Karīm al-Rahmān fī Tafsīr Kalām 'al-Mannān*, 474

¹⁷ *'al-Mu'jam 'al-Wasīf*, (Publisher: Dārud-Da'wa) vol.1, 346

¹⁸ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jaūziyyah, *I'lām 'al-Muwaqī'īn 'an Rabil-'Aālīmīn*, (Beirūt: Dārul-Kutub Al-'Ilmiyyah, 1991) vol.4, 198

Him. The ultimate gift and joy of the believing companion was found in his faith, not material possessions, as he states:

“But as for me, He is Allah, my Lord, and I do not associate with my Lord anyone.”

[al-Kahf: 38]

This verse indicates that the most valuable gift is having faith; in fact, it is faith that brings so much joy in our hearts as the Prophet said:

“There are three qualities for which anyone who is characterized by them will relish the sweetness of faith: he to whom Allah and His Messenger are dearer than all else; he who loves a man for Allah's sake alone; and he who has as great an abhorrence of returning to unbelief after Allah has rescued him from it as he has of being cast into Hell.”¹⁹

After this proclamation, he reminded his neighbor to recognize that what this neighbor had was from the bounties of Allah, the powerful, and that being the case, the neighbor needed to show gratitude to Him,

“And why did you, when you entered your garden, not say, 'What Allah willed [has occurred]; there is no power except in Allah'? Although you see me less than you in wealth and children.” [al-Kahf:39]

Shukr (gratitude) is realizing that whatever we have is from Allah which necessitates giving thanks to Him for His blessings and bounties, and using the blessings as means to draw close to Him.²⁰ .Gratitude motivates a person to center his or her intellect around Allah and focus on what matters. Gratitude, in this manner, rectifies our hearts and minds by helping a person realize that everything is from Allah, who may grant and take as He pleases.

¹⁹ Al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad Ibn Ismā‘īl. *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī: The Translation of the Meanings of Sahih Al-Bukhari: Arabic-English*. vol.1, 61-62, Hadīth no. 16

²⁰ ‘Uwaydah, Muḥammad Naṣruddīn, *Kitāb Faṣl al-Khitāb fī ‘Zuhd war-Raqāiq wa al-Ādāb*, book accessed online <https://al-maktaba.org/book/32027/3704>

Conclusion

This conclusion comprises of the most important finding in this research regarding intellectual cultivation in the Qura'n:

- 1- Intellectual inquiry is Quranic duty upon every Muslim.
- 2- Quran empowers intellect and encourages the human to employ the mind in order to engender sound intellect and understanding that would the person to acknowledging his Creator.
- 3- Reflecting on Allah's universal signs leads thus increasing in his faith in and remembrance of Allah.
- 4- Reflecting the reality of this world motivates the person exert himself in the good deeds that will have a lasting impact.
- 5- Materialism clouds intellect and makes the person have a self-centric and individualistic view of the world. In addition, Materialism will blind the person from seeing things for what they are.
- 6- This inversion of the material vs. spiritual reality creates a society that puts wealth over intellect and character. As a result of this inversion, people's vision becomes clouded to the transience of this *dunia*, life.
- 7- Reflecting on the verses of the Quran empowers the mind with sound understanding.
- 8- The practice of *khalwa* solitude in order to contemplate and reflect aids the purification of the soul and helps clear the mind. It elevates the mind to the state of knowing reality of one self which leads to a serene submission and humility towards Allah.
- 9- Accompanying with intellectuals enriches the one's intelligence, and it helps a person to see clearly what is normally unclear.
- 10- *Dhikr*, Remembering Allah, facilitates for the person to reach the state of *rushd* which is a state of intellectual capacity where the person has reached his full mental maturity
- 11- *Shukr*, gratitude, motivates a person to center his or her intellect around Allah and focus on what matters.

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