

## Exploring Styles of Thinking in the Qur'an and their Implication on Man's Perception

### Bentuk-bentuk Pemikiran di Dalam al-Qur'an dan Kesannya Terhadap Persepsi Manusia

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#### Abstract

This study examines the thinking styles and its implications on the development of man's perception. Applying the textual analysis method, the study analyzes various styles of thinking portrayed in the Qur'an and its impacts on the human intellect and behaviour. The thinking styles of the Qur'an are very effective in bringing the much needed progress and development to human lives on this planet, particularly the Muslims who are lagging behind the other communities in various sectors of life. The research findings indicate that the Qur'anic approach towards thinking besides being critical is creative, analytical and contemplative. Through identification and application of the thinking styles cherished by the Qur'an, the Muslims and the rest of humanity can live a meaningful and productive life in this world.

**Keywords:** Qur'an, Style of Thinking, Perception, Creative Thinking, *fikr, tafakkur*.

#### Abstrak

Kajian ini meneliti bentuk-bentuk pemikiran dan kesannya dalam perkembangan persepsi manusia. Dengan menggunakan kaedah analisis tekstual, kajian ini mengenalpasti pelbagai gaya pemikiran yang digambarkan di dalam al-Quran dan kesan-kesannya terhadap perkembangan intelek dan tingkah laku manusia. Gaya pemikiran yang ditunjukkan di dalam al-Quran merupakan teknik yang sangat berkesan untuk membawa kemajuan dalam kehidupan manusia terutamanya umat Islam yang begitu ketinggalan dalam pelbagai aspek kehidupan berbanding masyarakat lain. Hasil kajian ini telah menunjukkan bahawa pendekatan al-Quran dalam aspek pemikiran bukan hanya suatu yang kritikal bahkan juga kreatif, analitis dan kontemplatif. Melalui penerapan gaya pemikiran yang termaktub dalam al-Quran, umat Islam khususnya dan

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manusia sejagat amnya akan dapat menjalani kehidupan di dunia ini dengan lebih bermakna dan produktif.

**Kata Kunci:** Qur'an, Gaya Pemikiran, Persepsi, Pemikiran Kreatif, *Fikr*, *Ta-fakkur*.

### **Introduction**

Investigating styles of thinking in the Qur'an is not a new topic in the history of Islamic thought because early as well as contemporary Muslim scholars have undertaken this study in the hope of explaining the purpose and application of the Qur'an in our daily life. Al-Kindi (8001-873 CE), Ibn Sahl (940-1000 CE), Ibn Haitham (965-1039 CE) who pioneered the science of optics, Ibn Sina (980-1037) who is considered as the father of medical science and Ibn Khaldun as the father of sociology were among the early Muslim scholars who were interested in the topic on styles of thinking in the Qur'an. In contemporary times, Abu Elkheir (2001) felt the need to teach thinking in order to develop an analytical study on thinking from the Western and Islamic perspectives. He produced an Islamic thinking curriculum from the Islamic educational principles and goals. Rosnani (1996) argues that al-Qur'an invites man to observe and reflect upon the reason behind the creations of the universe and prohibits man from making groundless assumptions, conjectures and practice of blind imitation. The Qur'anic style of thinking enables the human mind to develop in a creative manner. It is believed that when the human mind is developed in that way it will be able to solve problems faced by man and will enable him or her to think creatively, logically and productively. According to Jamal Badi (2004), thinking is a form of worshipping Allah (swt) that should be done with all purity of intention (*Ikhlās*) for a good purpose. The Qur'an has adopted numerous different styles of thinking to be creative in the process of its revelation in order to explain the divine message to humanity. Utilizing human intellect and senses as tools is the Qur'anic guidance in order to ensure its teachings and applications in all aspects of human life. Ironically, during this era of information technology, the Islamic input of creative thinking is missing in the spiritual and material development in many works produced by Muslims today.

Given this context, there is a need to identify the Qur'anic styles of thinking and examine their implication on man's perception. The main aim of this study is to identify the patterns of thinking mentioned in the Qur'an. Particularly, the Qur'anic ways of thinking that refer to people of different levels of cognition. Besides that, this study will briefly review

the responses of the Muslim scholars in order to further enhance the scientific inquiry and rationality for a better understanding of the divine message of the Qur'an. The paper also asserts how the Qur'anic styles of thinking can unify Muslims' perception in creativity. Finally, it also provides some possible suggestions to enhance the role of the Qur'anic contribution in developing the skills of creative thinking.

### **Meaning of *al-Fikr* or *al-Tafakkur***

*Al-Fikr* means "thinking", which includes creative thinking, problem solving, decision-making, critical thinking<sup>1</sup> and logical reasoning. Thinking style also involves the appropriate use of knowledge, and this ability is not developed spontaneously. *Al-fikr* or *al-Tafakkur* according to linguists is "pondering or contemplating."<sup>2</sup> It is a process of reflection on the discourse of something. It is an information or perception, which develops through senses, imagination, speculation, hypothesis and intellection. It is a conception, which leads to strengthen person's faith toward his creator and better understanding about His attributes. The Holy Qur'an has used different terms towards understanding thinking and its styles, such as *al-Tadabbur*, means analyzing, thinking deeply, and understanding completely the meanings of the words. The Qur'an says: "Men who remember Allah (swt) standing, sitting and lying down on their sides and contemplate the wonders of creation in the heavens and the earth."<sup>3</sup> The Qur'an aims to motivate man's intellect to be creative in order to develop his personal, social, cultural, economic, political, historical, and scientific dimensions. The Qur'an argues that 'will they not think deeply about the Qur'an? Or do they lock their hearts.'<sup>4</sup> *Ta`aqqul* means using one's mind in the right way. One finds *Ta`aqqul* mentioned in the Qur'an (22:46) when Allah calls "Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts and minds may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not their eyes that are blind but their hearts which are in their breasts". The Qur'anic styles of thinking aim to express claims and judgments based on proofs and evidence. Those proofs are not based on doubt and vain as the the Qur'an says: "This is

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<sup>1</sup>Morris, W. Ed., *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. (USA: Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981).

<sup>2</sup>Jamal Badi, *Creative Thinking: An Islamic Perspective*, (Malaysia: IIUM press, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> Q. 3:191

<sup>4</sup> Q. 47:24, 6:65

the only book, there is no doubt in it", or no conjecture in order to avoid biasness, arrogant mentality or whims in forming opinions and giving judgments. The Qur'anic study shows that there are mainly two purposes; i. seeking evidence to prove a claim made by the desires of the disbelievers against the Qur'anic argumentations or challenges. The Qur'an the following challenge when it calls the disbelievers: "if you are truthful, produce evidence in order to prove your claim". This Qur'anic argumentation implies against pagans and polytheists who worship more than One God. It also challenges them to bring any evidence to justify their claim. ii. Abstaining from assumption and conjecture. The Qur'an describes that a believer should avoid assumptions (zann), which are considered to be sinful acts. The Qur'an also warns evildoers not to rely on conjecture because most of the disbelievers think about their lives based on conjecture, which is not a right things for them to do. The verse 53:23 argues that the Qur'anic guidance is a firm and certain information with logical and moderate approaches for the people of understanding. Conversely, ignorant people provide information according to their desire or guess. The Qur'an also condemns and warns people who follow their desire for personal interests, prejudices, or forms of biasness as the revealed book argues that people should not obey the lust of the heart that may influence them to do injustice. The Qur'an also warns against the consequence of following lust or vain desires, which lead people astray. When one follows lust and desires his/her becomes sealed from receiving and seeing truth and justice. Moreover, there will be a covering upon his/her sight and hearing. As such, he/she will not gain true knowledge of a thing that is happening around him/her. Under such a condition, he/she will be most likely will base his knowledge and judgment on conjectures. Following blindly one's evil desires is a sinful act that can abstain a person from realizing the true guidance of Allah.

### **Islamic Perspective of Creative Thinking and its Significance**

Thinking style in Islam promotes the human intellect/mind to be creative and innovative at the same time. Furthermore, it also encourages one to be a critical thinking thinker. The Islamic concept of thinking in a way disciplines the intellect to skillfully conceptualize, apply, analyze, synthesize and evaluate information gathered through observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. Richard defined creative thinking as the ability to engage in a rational discourse with intellectual standards such as clarity, accuracy, de-

cision, precision, and logic, and to use analytic skills with a fundamental value orientation that emphasizes intellectual humility, intellectual integrity, and fair-mindedness. Thinking style develops the skill of creative thinking for understanding objects. Here, the word object is used to refer to things that interest us. It is what we experience about things that interest us, not necessarily derived from what those things may be within. The creative thinking style lays emphasis on looking at possibilities or on providing solutions from the available possibilities. In our daily life, we often use terms like creative thinking, constructive thinking, and critical thinking interchangeably to refer to the ability of the human mind to deal with complex and perplexing situations. In a way, all the three abilities of the mind are interrelated that bring the dynamism out of individual. The thinking style towards promoting creative thinking is a topic of wide scope at the various levels for a wide range of task domains (Lubart-1994). Thinking style not only applies to an individual, but also to a society and a whole lot of others in many other fields of human activities. At an individual level, thinking style may help one to solve his/her problems in his daily life. At a societal level, this can lead to new inventions and social programs. In the economic sector, it can produce new products or services or create job markets. In the field of religion, it can help an individual to strengthen his/her faith towards the Creator, better understanding of His attributes, power and to bring the individual to the realization of his/her responsibilities towards the religion and society. In Islam, thinking style has a role in improving one's creative and critical use of the intellect, to generate new knowledge, to achieve the nearness to God, realization of other forms of life around him/her also for the advancement of science and technology<sup>5</sup>. It also enables one to pursue their creative endeavors for implementing moral perception in everyday life. It also motivates one to develop a new dimension of human success in this world and life after death. It is considered as a form of *Ibadah*(worship). By applying thinking styles, Muslim intellectuals can develop creative ways to solve the problems faced by man and society. *Ijtihad* as a tool is used by the early Islamic scholars as well as the contemporary scholars to invent and discover scientific instruments and technological equipment for the well-being of humanity. Throughout Islamic history, Muslim intellectuals developed the concept of *Maqāṣid al-Shariah* through *Ijtihad*

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<sup>5</sup>Ali, Muhammad Mumtaz, *The Foundation and Critical Thinking*, (American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences), Fall 2016, Vol. 33, Issue 4, p132-144, 13p. Publisher: International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT)., Database: Complementary Index.

in order to protect and promote five essential values of humanity, namely; religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. The aim is to facilitate the improvement and perfection of human conditions on earth<sup>6</sup>. This style of thinking according to the Qur'an is therefore, an essential tool for intellectual, spiritual, moral, social, political, economic, scientific and technological progress for human benefits. In the light of the Qur'anic style of thinking, creativity means innovation and discovery, which should be value laden and lead towards the creation of a better world for humanity to live. All inventions and innovations are approved in Islam so long they do not cause harm to human lives and nature. Any act of creativity that causes harm to the survival of the human species on this planet is shunned by Islam. That sort of an act is considered as a sinful act and those who promote and involve in it will held responsible on the Day of Judgment. The Prophet of Islam said: "and whosoever introduces an evil practice in Islam, will shoulder its sin and the sins of those who will act upon it, without diminishing anyway their burden". Furthermore, not only those who initiate evil and harmful acts are sinful, but also those who promote them.

#### **Why Do We Need To Study The Qur'anic Style Of Thinking?**

Continuous change and development are facts of life. Worldwide political events occur unpredictably and with amazing speed. Religious values protect man's dignity and his inborn quality. Economic indicators reflect increased instability in the marketplace, while scientific and technological advances continue unabated and provide a new understanding about our world and ourselves. In such a condition of the world, how can we make decisions with so much volatility and how will our decisions affect our careers, families, and ourselves? Can we make an wise decision based on our intellect, intuition, or emotion without revelation? One may argue that human intellect enables man to contribute in the field of science and technology but without religious values and divine norms, those contribution may misguide people from the guidance of their lord. People may forget the real purpose and responsibility of their creation as a servant and vicegerent of God Allah. The revelation as the divine guidance provides ways of thinking to study the book of the universe and to realize its mysteries. God sent many prophets with the revealed books to answer the questions raised by man and provides guidance to live on earth as His *khalifah*. It is therefore, essential for man to understand the

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<sup>6</sup>HashimKamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 1999

Qur'ānic styles of thinking and use them for the well-being of humanity as applied by the early Muslim scholars during the golden age of Islam in order to solve the problems faced by man and society.

### **The Qur'ānic Styles of Thinking and their Impact Inquisitive Thinking Style and Man's Perception**

Asking questions is one of the most effective tools in teaching and learning, which leads to the development of new connections in the brains neutral network and enables a person to develop a new idea and concept. Provoking questions is a general phenomenon of the Qur'ān to be creative and critical such as “Do they not contemplate within themselves? Allah has not created the heavens and the earth and what is between them except in truth and for a specified term. And indeed, many of the people in the meeting with their Lord are disbelievers”.

Man may develop his/her perception by asking questions about the physical environment and the incidents that occurred around them. Given below are some examples:

- a. Knowing Allah (swt) Unity and uniqueness and the realization of His power and domain are things the Qur'an calls on humanity to ponder over. The following is one such example from the Qur'an is: “Say, who it that sustains you in life in the heavens and earth is? Or who is it that has power over your hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And who is it that rules and regulates all affairs? They will soon say, “Allah (swt)”, say, Will you not then show piety to Him”.
- b. Provoking man to think and drawing his/her attention on the fact that Allah (swt) is the Creator of everything from the tiniest particles to the vast universe with exactness and precision. As the Qur'ān argues that all creations are governed and regulated according to the manifested laws and there is no change in His laws.
- c. Asking man to construct the calendar by the use of the movement of the sun and the moon as a symbol and the alteration of the day and night in order to know the time and date. The verse 6:96 mentions that God Allah (swt) is the Cleaver of the daybreak and He has appointed the night for tranquility, and the sun and the moon for the reckoning and the verse 2:189 answers when people ask prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) concerning the new moon, the Qur'ān replays that they are signs to mark fixed periods of time in the affairs of men and pilgrimage.

d. When asked on the Islamic ruling on alcoholic drinks and gambling (2:219), the Qur'an answers "'In them is great sin and [yet, some] benefit for people. But their sin is greater than their benefit."

e. The verse 3:137 advises man to travel through the earth in order to know the consequences of the people who denied the truth, and learn from them not to repeat such mistakes in his life.

f. The verse 6:99 asks human intellect to observe the processes of rain and its effects and the processes of the production of vegetation, corns, fruits and gardens. How does Allah supply rain through cloud, which grows different types of vegetation and corns and their functions for human benefit? The rain also produces the thick clustered grains, clusters of dates hanging from the sheaths, gardens of grapes, olives, pomegranates and the ripe fruits. All are signs of Allah for people of understanding.

The above verses addressed to human intellect to think about the processes of the creatures of Allah for man's survival. By contemplating on the questions raised in the Qur'an, the reader can have better understanding of the issues being put forward. This means only those who read the Qur'an in the proper way with the neutral mind, will internalize this inquisitive thinking<sup>7</sup>. Once Ibn Abbas, a very knowledgeable companion, was asked about how he managed to cover a wide spectrum of knowledge in a short period of time, he replied: "By an inquisitive tongue, and comprehending heart". There are three types of questions raised by the Quran for human understanding. The first type provides new information. The second provides clear and obvious information for the readers with the objective. While the third type questions man. In order to get the correct answers, man on his part needs to think, ponder and contemplate over the issues raised by the Qur'an.

#### **Argumentation Thinking Style**

In Arabic *Jadl*, means argumentation or expressing claims, and judgments based on proofs and evidence, based on certainty and not on doubt or conjecture to avoid bias, personal interests, or whims in forming opinions and giving judgments. Argumentation refers to negotiation by way of fiqh or struggle or controversy in order to compel or influence one's opponents. Arguing is human nature, created by Allah (swt), who asked the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to argue and debate against the polytheists in a constructive and convincing manner as the verse 16:125 advises that "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom

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<sup>7</sup>Jamal Badi, *Creative Thinking from Islamic Perspective*, (Malaysia: IIUM press, 2004)



and beautiful preaching and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious". The Qur'ān offers sound means that can be utilized to support the truth, find it, and accept it on the basis of true evidence and sound arguments. For example, Allah has asked the Jews to produce evidence to prove their claims in saying "none will enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian". In this regards, the Qur'ān challenges people by saying: "Produce an evidence for what you are claiming, if what you say is true!" Argument and debate are permissible with the people of Book in a constructive manner. Such debates would help unveil the truth and eventually pave the ways to establish proofs for the authenticity. The Qur'ān says: "And dispute you not with the People of the Book, except with means better than mere disputation."

### **Analogical Style of Thinking**

Analogical style of thinking is a tool to develop the scientific theories and explore the mysteries of the universe created by Allah God. It is a psychological process, which guides man to improve man's perception and understanding. This process needs two components in order to understand the objective of the subject. One is the target and the other is base or foundation. The Qur'ān attempts to explain the target and to elaborate the base in order to understand the target. Based on the said components when a man makes an analogy he should map features of the base onto features of the target. By mapping the features of the base onto the target, new features of the target may be discovered, or the concept of the reality. The Qur'ān provides many examples in order to understand the features of target and the base. For instance, when the Qur'ān exemplifies the nature of hypocrites with a man who kindled a fire when it lighted all around him, Allah (swt) took away their light and left them in utter darkness. They then all lost their way, so hypocrisy, deception and arrogance may win temporary applause but the true light of faith and sincerity are not in their hearts. In this case, the target is hypocrite and the base is a temporal fire. The aim of this analogy is to modify the faith of hypocrites and it argues to reject hypocrisy and believe firmly in the oneness of God. In this case the target is hypocrites and the base is fire, rain and cloud, because the Qur'ān extensively mapped the perception that the hypocrites to discourage disbelievers to be involved with polytheism, hypocrisy and disbelief, the Qur'ān made an analogy to a thirsty man in the desert with the deeds of unbelievers, which are like a mirage in the desert. In this case, a thirsty man is the base but unbelievers are target to motivate them for the realization of their deeds. Therefore, it is necessary

for a man to utilize his/her analogical style of thinking in order to realize the reality, his duty and final goal as a servant of Allah God.

### **Emotion Style of Thinking/ Empathetic Thinking**

Emotion means a strong feeling towards one another. It is the ability to understand another person's feeling, which is the part of a person's character that consists of feeling<sup>8</sup>. Providing emotional statements in the Qur'an shows the care and mercy of Allah (swt) to His servants in order to touch the hearts of the readers and listeners. The verse 2:186 responds that "when my servants ask you about Me behold, I am near, I respond to the calls of the supplicant when he calls on Me. Let them then respond unto Me and believe in Me, so that they might follow the right way".

The above verse implies the word 'care' is value-guided practice with emotion and feeling. Care is an essential for living creatures from the Creator. Everything that we do in our life for instance, solely depends on the Mercy of Allah. Man is required to care for himself and for others around him in matters related to socio-economy, cultural, psychological and spiritual problems. Care involves feelings of acceptance and acts of giving and sharing as Allah (swt) accepts the prayer of a transgressor upon his repentance. The Qur'an identifies two main states of feeling and expression; hope and fear in order to show His care towards His servants. The first is not to be despair of His Mercy in any situation and the second is to be cautious on matters related to faith and action. Adam and Hawwa for instance, were asked to leave the Paradise with hope and fear. The verse 20:123 explains that whosoever follows the guidance of Allah, he/she shall neither go astray nor shall be stressed, but whoever turns away from His reminder, certainly, for him is a life of hardship, and Allah shall raise him/her up blind on the Day of resurrection. The glad tid-ing is for the believers who follow His guidance instead of their desire with taking care of themselves as well as others. However, this style of thinking involves ultimately individualized cognition and motivation in a constructive manner. A person should learn for instance, to deal with his/her emotion, which is related to his motivation, goal mastery and cognition. Motivation is self-discipline, which is the best management technique of an individual. For example, empowering a person in manag-

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<sup>8</sup>Rowe, Alan, J., *Creative Intelligence, Discovering the Innovative Potential in Ourselves and Others*, (New Jersey: Pearson Education, FT press, (on line version), Inc. Sweden, T. M. A. and Adlouni, M. A, 2004).

ing his/her own behavior, task, time and responsibility enables him/her to learn how to manage him/herself emotions and how to free him/her from stress. Positive effects of the person generate transformational behaviour and perceive difficulties as challenges for self-growth and self-transformation (Moyere & Turner-2002). People with positive emotions are resourceful and are able to widen their scope of resource through motivation.

### **Rational Thinking Style**

Rational thinking style is a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements and so on. The process of thinking is to identify the difficulties, to formulate hypotheses, to make guesses, to test, re-test the deficiencies, to find the solutions, possibly to modify them and finally confirm the results. Rational thinking enables a thinker to be creative and innovative in order to solve problems and challenges faced by man and society. The purpose of thinking is to understand the existence, Oneness and Attributes of Allah and to realize His glory and power who should be worshiped. Believing in the Oneness of God Allah can be rationalized through understanding nature instead of believing blindly in Him. The verse 21:22 argues that 'had there been therein in the Heavens and the earth gods beside Allah (swt), then verily both would have been ruined. Glorified is Allah (swt), the Lord of the throne, High is He, above all that evil they associate with Him. The said verse rationalizes hypothetically that if there is more than One God, both the heavens and the earth would collapse. The rationality is man's evaluation power and exceptional quality, which makes him/her superior over all creations. Man therefore, should use it to discover the truth and reality and internalize its outcomes into his/her character. Rationality as an instrument keeps the person courageous, confident, resourceful, strong, self-confidence, self-assurance, and self-consciousness. It is the central office, which controls, directs, and coordinates the varied activities of all the innumerable organs of the body. It receives messages from each of the senses, interprets them, sends the proper replies to the organs concerned so that the body reacts appropriately and registers all the information received in the archives of the memory, evaluates the informant and accepts the reality and true information<sup>9</sup>. The Qur'an refutes

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<sup>9</sup>Kazi, M.A., *In: Islam: Source and Purpose of Knowledge. Proceedings and selected papers of Second Conference on Islamization of Knowledge*, (Herndon, Virginia: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1982 & 1988). p. 179.

the views of disbelievers who deny irrationally about the recreation of life on the Day of Judgement by the command of Allah (swt) and argues that the One who is able to create something from out of nothing, it impossible for Him to recreate the second time? The verses of 36:77-78 argue that "Is man, then not aware that it is We who created him out of a mere drop of sperm and he shows himself endowed with the power to think and to argue that who could give life to bones that have crumbled to dust? Say: He brought them into being the first instance will give them life once again seeing that He has full knowledge of every act of action".

### **Hypothetical Thinking**

Hypothetical thinking from the Qur'anic perspective, is a process of exploring possibilities and consequences of different aspects of the word such as situation, events, people, things, and places with the use of imagination and mental simulation. In the process of exploration, a thinker must combine both sources i.e. intellect and revelation in order to understand the reality and the truth. The purpose of this style of thinking is to increase human intellectual ability by exposing it towards the truth. The verses 52:35-36 for instance, argue that "were they created by nothing or were they themselves creators, or did they create the heavens and the earth"? No, they have no firm belief. The verse 52:37 also asks the human mind for hypothetical thinking that "do they have the treasures of their lord or are they the tyrants with the authority to do as they like"? The verse 37:24 signifies that who is on the right path? Is the one who believes in the Oneness of Allah or the one who denies His existence? Off course, the denier has clearly gone astray from the right path. The verse 37:24 implies that one of the parties is lying and it says so in an assertive way. In this way it does not offend the other party, as it is not in an argumentative form. Some exegetes (*mufasirun*) argued, it is a very strong way of telling the *Mushrikīn* that they were lying without putting it directly. Hypothetical thinking is used by a believer supporting the Prophet Musa against the Pharaoh. Allah the Almighty, says; "And a believing man of Pharaoh Family, who hid his faith said: "Would you kill a man because he says: My Lord is Allah (swt), and he has come to you with clear signs (proofs) from your Lord? And if he is a liar, upon him will be his lie; but if he is telling the truth, then some of that (calamity) wherewith he threatens you will befall on you". Verily, Allah (swt) guides not one who is a transgressor and a liar<sup>10</sup>! Hypothetical style of

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<sup>10</sup>Q. 40:28

thinking is one of the tools to differentiate between the reality and unreality, true and false and right and wrong.

### **Thoughtful/ Introspective Thinking Style**

The Qur'ān draws the attention of mankind to understand and realize the existence and the Oneness of Allah and His power, to realize the purpose of His creation and to know His laws through the observation of the creation of the universe.<sup>11</sup> This has been explained in the Qur'ān, when Allah says: “in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alteration of night and day and the ships which sail through the sea with that which is of use to mankind”. A man must use his/her intellect to study the sky, the stars, the sea, and the natural phenomena in order to discover the purpose of the creation of the universe and the relationship between man and universe and between man and Allah and he/she should of how this world is made subservient to man. The sun and moon for example is used to keep tract of the time, day, month and years. Man therefore, should appreciate God's mercy and blessing provided to him and to all other creations<sup>12</sup>. The universe as a book of knowledge reminds a thinker to understand his/her duties and responsibilities upon all living and non-living creatures and it also reminds him/her to remember God for His kindness and mercy provided upon human beings as well as all other creatures. The book of knowledge also leads a thinker to discover how does the whole system of the universe run, which has been made subservient to mankind in order to cultivate the earth and establish civilization, to establish His laws on earth.

### **Visual Thinking Style**

Visual thinking is the ability to think and communicate in images. This style of thinking provokes our imagination when we face a certain situation as the Qur'ān describes the terrible situations before the day of judgement such as the verse 22:2 states that the earthquake hour is a terrible thing, ii. Describing the misconduct of disbelievers towards the message of Allah by rejecting its guidance is another example such as the verse 74:50-51 informs that people will be frightened like a wild animal; donkey, iii. Touching the hearts and feelings of the reciter or listener as the verse 7:54 describes that Allah is the One who created the heavens

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<sup>11</sup>Iqbal, Muhamamd, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, (New Delhi, KitabBhavan), 12th ed. Ch. V., 2012). pp. 124–45.

<sup>12</sup>Q. 2:164

and the earth gradually in six days, and posed over the throne, He brings the night as a cover over the day, and the sun, the moon and the stars subjected to His command. The example shows that man has to use his/her intellect to observe the creation of Allah and to realize His glory and power. The verse 67:7 argues that blessed is He in whose Hand is the dominion, and He is able to do all things and who created life and death to test man to know who among mankind who is the best in his/her deeds.

### **Metaphorical Thinking Style**

The word metaphor derives from the Greek word, "metha" means 'over', or 'to carry'<sup>13</sup>. Therefore, metaphor means "the carrying of the meaning of one word over to another word". Metaphor is a figure of speech containing an implied comparison, in which a word or phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another<sup>14</sup>. For example, "ocean of my sleep" means "a deep sleep". It is using one thing to describe another thing. It is a figure of speech using analogy or close comparison between two things that are not normally treated as if they had anything in common. The word metaphor has two meanings: literal and metaphorical meanings. In many chapters of the Qur'an, instead of the literal meaning, the Qur'an uses metaphor. In the Qur'an, there are many words used to describe the metaphorical meaning instead of literal meaning. Using a metaphorical word is considered as one of the miracles of the Qur'an to prove the word of Allah and the authenticity of it. The following will be some examples: in verse 26:84, the word 'lisān' is used as a metaphorical word because *lisān* means 'tongue', but it is used to express a word or expression, in the verse 14:4, the meaning of the word 'lisān' is to express 'language', in the verse 3:7, the word 'ummun' means 'mother', but it is used to describe 'the basic or fundamental of the Qur'an', in the verse 28:59, the word 'ummiha' means 'the center of the city', in the verse 2:187, the 'libās' means 'cloth or dress or garment, but it is used here to describe the meaning of the function of husband and wife and their relationship, in the verse 25:47, the meaning of the word, 'libās' is to analogize the condition of the night, in the verse 2:223, the word 'harth' means 'cultivation of the soil or tillage, but it is used to analogize a wife is tillage for her husband, in the verse 3:103, the word

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<sup>13</sup>Olive Classe. (ed). "Metaphor and Translation", *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English*, (London: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers), vol. 2.

<sup>14</sup>Moore, W. Edgar and McCam, *Creative and Critical Thinking*, (Boston: 2nd edition, 1985), p.p.15-20

'*hablu*' means rope or cord, but it is used to describe the pure essence of Allah, in the verse 3:112, the meaning of the word '*hablu*' is covenant, and in the verse 48:10, the meaning of the verse is 'the hand of God is over their hands', but it is used to express the power and control of Allah. There are some metaphorical words, which provide meaning in order to strengthen, to promote, to prove something, as a source of encouragement to do good deeds and so on. The verse 41:39 argues to prove something, which is beyond the reach of human perception such as resurrection. The example of the earth barren means a dry earth, which becomes wet after having rain and "the earth is dead" does not mean the earth dies like other living creature but it is dry, which is not able to produce any life until being wet. The verse 2:261 promotes and encourages to do good deeds with a metaphorical approach such as the likeness of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is as the likeness of a grain of a corn from which grows seven ears and each ear has a hundred grains in it. This example just is to encourage a believer to perform an act of charity, donation or *sadaqah*. In the verses 56:16-17, various metaphorical words are used to express different meanings such as believers in Paradise will be served by immortal boys with cups, jugs and a glass flowing with wine, fruits, the flesh of fowls, a reward like preserved pearls and so on. The above examples show that man is allowed to use a metaphorical word or example for giving different meaning by using a similar word.

### **Instinctive Thinking Style**

This style has to do with the insight and inspiration that Allah bestows on the Muslims. It is only those who use their reason and intellect in the right manner, enlightened and inspired by Allah's revelation that can have this insight and inspiration. The Qur'an refers to the incident of Samiri who made an idol and misguided the Children of Israel. Prophet Moses asked him, what is the matter with you? He responded by saying: "I saw what they saw not, so I took a handful of dust from the hoof print of the horse", however, the idea of polytheism came in his mind, which was from his evil desire. Prophet Moses criticized him and asked to go away and lived alone exiled away from the believers and ordered to burn the idol<sup>15</sup>. The path of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) is the true path with certain knowledge without any doubt who invited people to the Oneness of Allah. His knowledge neither is based on the desire of his heart nor assumption nor the stories of the past but on the basis of full

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<sup>15</sup> Q. 20:96

of true knowledge. Instinctive thinking occurred in the mind of Prophet Moses' mother in safeguarding her son from the aggression of Pharaoh is another example in the Qur'an<sup>16</sup>.

### **Scientific thinking style**

Scientific thinking refers to man's thinking ability to undergo observation, experiment and hypothesis by using the intellect and senses that enables the individual to realize and understand the greatness of his Creator, His Essence, His Attribute, and His Glory<sup>17</sup>. It also promotes to man on how to utilize its discoveries for the development of his material and spiritual well beings. In the Qur'an, around 750 verses encourages man to study nature and find the scientific facts about the earth, mountains, oceans, the astronomical and physical world and their parts. Man, interestingly has discovered some facts of the physical world through the scientific process, described by the Qur'an. In recent times, many well-known scientists agreed that there is no contradiction between the Qur'anic description of scientific facts and recent discoveries made in the field of science. Interestingly, all scientific data of the Qur'an were made one thousand five hundred years ago. In that sense, the Qur'an explained to humanity on the creation of the heavens and earth much earlier than modern science. Besides that, Muslim scholars believe that there are many more scientific ideas of the Qur'an that will be discovered and appreciated in years to come with the latest development in modern science. All this more from the world of science will confirm and testify the divinity of the Qur'anic message to humanity. According to the Qur'an, the general tools for studying natural phenomena are senses and intellect. Scientists may use both to develop science and technology through observation, experimentation and hypothesis. Furthermore, the Qur'an mentions that there are many realities in the physical world that we do not perceive through our senses and intellect. The Qur'an says: "But Nay, I swear by that which you see, and that which you do not see". Some people argue that experimental works made by scientists are fact while theoretical aspects of science developed by them are speculation. The Qur'an addresses to the human mind to study natural sciences in order to be closer to Allah (swt) through His signs and to discover His power. The Qur'an says: "Say consider what is it that is in the heavens and the earth,

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<sup>16</sup>Q. 28:7

<sup>17</sup>Bakar Osman, *The History and Philosophy of Islamic Science*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2012). p. 4.



and the signs and warners do not avail a people who would not believe”. “Allah (swt) is He who raised the heavens without any pillar that you see. Made the sun and the moon subservient to you, each one pursues its one course to an appointed time. He regulates the affair, making clear the signs that you may be certain of meeting of your Lord”. “And, He has made subservient for you the night and the day, the sun and the moon, and the stars are made subservient by His commandment, most surely there are signs in this for a people who ponder. He also made subservient the sea that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships ploughing through it”. The Qur’ān mentions on the origin of mankind: created from clay<sup>18</sup> and describes details about the development of human fetus in conformity with the most modern scientific knowledge. Allah (swt) created man from an extract of clay because the seminal cells that are derived from the food drawn from the earth in whatever form it may be then make him sperm of the semen and place him in a firm resting place inside the mother’s womb. After the fertilization, it becomes a clot of congealed blood and then a lump of flesh. At the fetal stage cellular differentiations start becoming prominent and then it becomes bones with muscles. Thereafter, this human body evolves alongside with certain other faculties through divine inspiration into another creation. The diversity of color and language indicates the absolute power of Allah who forms and designs according to His will and no one is able to change what has been planned by Him<sup>19</sup>. The verses of 7:10, 189 and 51:49 address to man’s intellect to think and realize his position and his responsibility on earth such as life and death of living creature, the creation of male and female and their multiplication from one to another through the evolutionary process without any gap. Living and non-living things are created in pairs and the earth is in a state of motion and it has gravitational pull by which everything is drawn towards it. The verses of 21:33 and 35:13 continue that the heavenly bodies move on along their orbits and the sun and the moon have also their orbits along which they move on incessantly and the moon has no light of its own, which is the reflection of the light of the sun. There are many more verses in the Qur’ān, which are impregnated with scientific truths. Only a few outstanding issues here have been pre-

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<sup>18</sup> Q. 6.2, 15.26

<sup>19</sup> Maududi, Abul Ala, *Tafhim al-Qur`an (Towards Understanding the Qur`an)*, Birmingham: Islamic Mission Dawah Centre, edited by Ansari Z. I., Abridged version of *Tafhim al-Qur`an*, 2011). p. 59. Commentary 93.

sented for the readers. The Qur'an contains food not only provide food for thought for the religious scholars but also for man of science and philosophy.

Based on above discussion, it is clear that styles of thinking are perceived by Islamic scholars as means and methods from the Qur'anic perspective, which enable man's intellect to develop the perception to be creative and innovative in order to solve problems faced by humanity. Style also promotes him to improve critical thinking, logical reasoning, and the appropriate use of knowledge. Human intellect/mind is the property of Allah as an instrument while the Qur'an is His guidance for humanity and therefore both should be used for developing man's correct perception and prosperity. In Islam, seeking knowledge is an obligatory for the sake of Allah in order to protect life, religion, wealth, dignity and honor because when a person gains knowledge and realizes his/her mission in the life, he/she is deemed as the true servant and vicegerent of Allah.

Today it is essential for Muslim scholars to understand the styles of thinking in the Qur'an and convey the true teachings of the Qur'an and their relevance to the contemporary and eternal life. There is a need for Muslim scholars to make a clear declaration to all communities about the misconception and misinterpretation of the Qur'anic teachings made by people who are against it. Islam and Muslims condemn all types of misinformation and baseless allegation made against the noble teachings of the Qur'an. In the world today, there are individuals, groups, organizations and states which carryout propaganda and campaigns against Muslims and their religion. Such groups, peach that Islam is a religion that promotes violence and terror attacks on others who do not follow the religion. In the wake of the hate campaigns against Islam, Muslim scholar should rise to the occasion and explain to the world the true knowledge and beautiful way of life explained in the Qur'an.

### **Conclusion**

Understanding the styles of thinking from the Qur'anic perspective is essential for Muslims in particular and the whole of humanity in order to be creative in solving problems faced by man and society. In contemporary time, the styles of thinking from the Qur'anic perspective can be used as a means or method by all neutral minded individuals. It is believed that the styles of thinking mentioned in the Qur'an can provide one with the correct worldview to realize his/her position, duties, respon-

sibilities and to discern the relationship of human to both the physical and unseen worlds. Moreover, the Qur'anic methods can improve his/her relationship with the Creator and universe. It is also acknowledged by many Muslim scholars that the Qur'anic ways of thinking will enable man to solve his personal, spiritual, intellectual, political, economic and social problems. In a way, it also prepares the individual to face the challenges that come from the external world. Following styles of thinking explained in the Qur'an assures human progress and prosperity in this world and a state of felicity in the hereafter. In order to achieve the aforementioned goals through the use of Qur'anic thinking skills, it is necessary to be conscious about our religious beliefs and reconstruct our social, political thoughts on sound and valid modes of thinking in accordance with the guidance of the Qur'ān and the tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

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