



ALI 295: The Nature of Knowledge in Shi'i Narrations

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The Types of Knowledge

- Type One: علم; Knowledge, Basic Understanding
- Type Two: معرفة; Deep, Cognitive Comprehension, “Knowing with the heart...”
- Type Three: حكمة; “Wisdom,”

Defining the Intellect

- Hadith says that when Allah (swt) created the intellect he said:

و عزتي و جلالتي، ما خلقت خلقا هو احب الي منك، و لا اكملتك فيمن احب

- The intellect is that which allows us to know, understand, comprehend, reflect.
- When a man asked Imam Sadiq (a) to define the **عقل** he responded:

ما عبد به الرحمن و اكتسب به الجنان

- The **عقل** is **محدود** thus it needs to have the support to gain in knowledge and understand “the reality of all things...”

What Does it Mean to Reflect?

- The intellect needs to take certain steps to allow it to be receptive, and amongst the most important steps is to reflect.
- The human intellect needs to reflect on the “signs of Allah”
 - The cosmos
 - Our own selves
 - The verses of the Qur’an
 - The Ahlul Bayt (as)

Imam al-Kadhimi's Advice to Hisham bin al-Hakam

- Narrated in Usul al-Kafi, Chapter 1, Hadith 12
- Also narrated in Tuhaf al-Uqool, Hadith One in the section of the Hadiths of Imam al-Kadhimi (a)
- The Imam begins the hadith by stating;

يا هشام! ان الله بشر اهل العقل و الفهم ...

- “Oh Hisham! Surely Allah has given the good news to the people of intellect and understanding...”

Imam al-Kadhim's Advice to Hisham bin al-Hakam (II)

- Imam al-Kadhim says to Hisham:

يا هشام! ان الله تبارك و تعالى اكمل للناس الحجج بالعقول

- “Oh Hisham! Surely Allah the Exalted and the High [presented] the evidences over the human being by means of the intellect...”
 - The are two types of حجة which are present over us:
 - The Prophet and Messengers
 - The Intellect

Imam al-Kadhim's Advice to Hisham bin al-Hakam (III)

- Imam al-Kadhim says to Hisham:

يا هشام! قد جعل الله ذلك دليلا على معرفته بان لهم مدبرا

- “Oh Hisham! Surely Allah made it (the AQL) an evidence toward gaining knowledge of Him; that He is the Organizer.”

يا هشام! ان العقل مع العلم

- “Oh Hisham, surely the intellect comes with knowledge...”
 - What is the relationship between knowledge and intellect?

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ

- And as for these examples, We set them forth for men, and none understand except those who have knowledge. (29:43)

Imam al-Kadhim's Advice to Hisham bin al-Hakam (IV)

- Imam Kadhim (as) presents some advices toward Hisham bin al-Hakam:
 - Oh Hisham! Surely Luqman said to his son:
“Humble yourself toward the truth, and you will be amongst the most [intellectual] of people.
 - تكن اعقل الناس
 - Imam continued to quote Luqman saying: “Oh son! Surely the world is a deep ocean. Surely many have drowned it in! So make sure your ship is Taqwa in Allah and your provisions, faith in Allah.

Imam al-Kadhim's Advice to Hisham bin al-Hakam (V)

- Oh Hisham! God did not send down the prophets and the messengers except that the people know God...so the best of them is the one who responds to that call, and knows Him
- Oh Hisham! Surely God presented over the people two proofs. The apparent proof and the hidden proof. The apparent are the messengers, the prophets and the Imams. And in regards to the hidden, it is the intellects.