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Functions of Intellect ('Aql) Prior to Human Existence

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Abstract

Intellect ('Aql), as a spiritual creation of God, has been independently created and bestowed upon humans. Intellect, prior to its association with humans, has functions. This research focuses on the functions of intellect in the realm of ethics to clarify whether intellect, in its cognitive dimension, only comprehends "facts" or also comprehends "oughts." It needs to be determined what functions intellect has in its non-cognitive dimension (desire, will, and external actions). Based on the narrations of the Imams and utilizing a narrative-focused approach in analyzing the narrations, we have concluded that intellect, in the domain of epistemology, recognizes existents and oughts, and this recognition occurs in two domains, namely "sign and language" and "analysis and inference." The linguistic ability and the skill of expressing intellect verbally are one of the cognitive functions of intellect that can be addressed independently. In addition to perception, intellect also has functions in the realm of behavior. Power, will, choice, desire, and practical action are among the functions of intellect. Intellect can possess all the behaviors of angels and spiritual beings, such as "acceptance, refusal, prostration, speech, and supplication," as mentioned in the Quran.

Keywords

Intellect ('Aql), desire, moral action of intellect, functions of intellect, recognition of oughts.

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