



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON  
CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2014  
(ICCI 2014)**




**October: 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2014**

**Venue: Conference Room, Kulliyah of Information & Communication Technology  
International Islamic University Malaysia**



**DEPARTMENT OF FUNDAMENTAL AND INTER-DISCIPLINARY STUDIES  
KULLIYAH OF ISLAMIC REVEALED KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA**



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# **Barriers Hindering *Tafakkur* (thinking) from an Islamic Perspective**

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## **Abstract**

Islam is a comprehensive and unique religion that captures all spheres of human endeavours. It does not only explain the creation of man but it captures the various concepts and compositions of man such as soul, hearth, thinking etc. Little attention of recent studies on *Tafakkur* explicitly elaborates on the vitality of barriers and hindrances that curtail *Tafakkur*. Therefore, the primary objective of this paper is to examine some implicit and explicit barriers that undoubtedly hinder *Tafakkur* from Islamic perspective. The methodology used in this paper is document analysis and it is as well a library-based research. The findings of this paper identified some barriers to *Tafakkur* such as: *Jahl*, *Al-I'rāl*, *Taqīd & Ta'Ālūb*, *Hawā*. Hence, it recommends that, the identified predicaments to *Tafakkur* must be addressed through Islamic educational system, enlightenment and sensitization. It is hoped that if this is addressed, *Tafakkur* will be fruitful and positively utilized by Muslims in promoting various spheres of human endeavours in the Muslim world.

## **Introduction**

Philosophers, psychologists and neuroscientists have dabbled into the various arguments and understanding on thinking. It is interestingly noted that, thinking and soul are captured in the Glorious Qur' n. Nonetheless, the Qur' n is not a scripture of philosophy which captures philosophical discourse; it is a Divine Revelation that has no doubt. Since knowledge and wisdom is core discourse of philosophy and prime importance, therefore, thinking forms a central climax and an emphatic vocal discourse in research on knowledge. Thinking skills have been categorized differently from various perspectives.

Some Greek philosophers have categorized thinking into first-order-thinking and second-order-thinking. With this submission, many Muslim scholars such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and many others have been influenced by the divisions of thinking. Nonetheless, Qur'an captures thinking but does not portray thinking like the way the Greek and Muslim philosophers portrayed it. Qur'an explicitly and simply discusses thinking ambiguity and presents thinking as an integral disposition of man.

### An overview of Tafakkur

Indeed, human age is determined by its level of thinking and its ability is determined by the level of its knowledge. Verily, the basic foundation of knowledge is determined with the output of the fruitful outcome of thinking. Undoubtedly, ignorance according to the Islamic standpoint inhibits the level of thinking. Thinking is an obvious ability and measure to determine justice and it is a bench mark for evidences or juxtaposition for the acquisition of sound meaning of a topical issue. Thinking ability of and its illuminating light by man enables him to differentiate between truth and falsehood. Nonetheless; ignorance is an impediment and obscurity for the clearer thinking and understanding. It has been interestingly submitted that, the ignorant people tend to think that the truth. Hence, it is essentially vital to argue that, knowledge and love to pursue it will help in addressing the ignorance as one of the major barriers to thinking among the contemporary Muslims.

In this paper, ignorance is of two kinds namely: ignorance of knowledge to manage the system or mundane affairs (Jahal on Fardh Kifayyah) and ignorance of divine knowledge or knowledge to manage oneself (Jahal on Fardh 'Ayn). Either knowledge about formal or later aspect, it could be a hindrance or a barrier to thinking. In this paper, focus is given to the later as a result of the fact that, though, human thinking is powerful however; alone does not have the ability to capture the unseen things such as good and bad fortunes. Likewise, thinking without divine guidance does not possess the strength and ability to enact rules and regulation guiding human affairs especially in attaining prosperity in this life and hereafter. As a result, man needs a necessary rules and regulations which show him the direction towards success.

Islam is a comprehensive and unique religion that captures all spheres of human endeavours. It does not only explain the creation of man but it captures the various concepts and compositions of man such as soul, hearth, thinking etc. Indeed, the conception of Tafakkur has denoted to be integrally part of Islam and more importantly, it is regarded as an act of worship. Indeed, Allah has referred to 'Ulul Alb b in several verses in the Qur' n. It appears sixteen times in the Holy Quran. For instance, in Surah Al-Baqarah (Q2:179, 197 & 269); in Surah Al-Imran: Q3: 7 & 190); Surah Al-Maidah: Q5:100); Surah Usuf (Q12:111); Surah ar-Ra'd (Q12:19); Surah Ibrahim (Q14:52); Surah Sa'd

(Q38:29 & 43); Surah az-Zumar (Q39:9, 18 & 21); Surah Ghafir (Q40:54) and Surah at-Talaq (Q65:10)<sup>1</sup>. People of understanding are sound mentally and there is no confusion in their thinking and no ambiguities in their ideas but the show servility of obedience to the will of Allah<sup>2</sup>. According to Al Qaradhawi, the vitality of thinking is stressed emphatically in the Qur'an. For instance, the *aqala* i.e. he thinks appears 49 times in the Qur'an<sup>3</sup>. Al Imam al- Ghaz I is one of the prominent Muslim scholars who extensively discusses the aforementioned barriers as inhibitors or predicaments to thinking. Similarly, Muhammad Aliyy al-Juzuww has elaborately discussed the understanding of thinking and soul from the perspectives of the Qur'an and Sunnah<sup>4</sup>.

Onwards, there is an important assertion by one of the French Orientalists who submitted that, the word thinking is not used as nominal connotation in the Qur'an which indicates negativity<sup>5</sup>. Contrarily to the submission of the French Orientalist, if thinking is used as verb or action in the Qur'an, nonetheless, the usage of its synonyms is used as nominal which is used severally in the Qur'an.

Indeed, from the ascetic perspective, it is interestingly noted by Al Imam Al-Ghazzali that, thinking plays an important role in the life of Muslims; however he asserts that ignorance is one of inhibiting factors to an effective thinking. A number of Qur'anic verses have invited man to think and ponder over the sign of Allah in creation, but man turns away from it. The alternation of day and night is great signs for man to think of and to be acquainted with the great Power of God in controlling the universe.

Undoubtedly, the Divine Scriptural Book, Qur'an is encyclopedic covering all aspects of life. Since the Qur'anic approach is not contrary to human nature, hence it invites man to think over the creation of God. However, repudiation and turning away from the reality explicated in the Glorious Qur'an is a great barrier to thinking

A number of scholarly works have extensively discussed the Qur' nic explanation on *Tafakkur*. However, little attention of recent studies on *Tafakkur* explicitly elaborates on the vitality of barriers and hindrances that curtail *Tafakkur*<sup>6</sup>. The subsequent subheading explains the Barriers or Impediments to *Tafakkur* :

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<sup>1</sup> Hasaan Zakariyya K. (2013). Who are the UlumI Al-Bab (Men of Understanding, p.2

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Kathir (1426 A.H./2005). Tafsirul Qur'an al-Azim, Cairo, Daru bin al-Haitham, vol. 2, p. 1552.

<sup>3</sup> Yusuf Qaradhawi (1997). Al-Aql wal Ilm fil Qur'an al-Karim. Maktabah Wahbah: Cairo

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Aliyy al-Juzuww (1983). Mafhumul Aql wa Qalb fil Qur'an was-Sunnah. Darul Ilm lil-Malayin: Lebanon: Beirut.

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Ali Al-Juzwi (1980). Mafhumul Al-'Aql wal-Qalb fil-Qur'an was-Sunnah

<sup>6</sup> Jamal Ahmed Baid (2001). *Tafakkur* from a Qur'anic Perspective. Gezira Journal of *Tafakkur*, vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 1-38

## Barriers or Impediments to Tafakkur

As Qur'ān explains the vitality of Tafakkur, some prominent Muslim scholars have elaborated on the paramount importance of thinking and reasoning in comprehending the divine scriptural book. Qur'ān mentions certain factors that influence Tafakkur in a negative way leading to deception, falsehood, ignorance, disbelief and misguidance.

Of such factors are: Ignorance and not being aware of the truth (Jahl), turning away from the Truth (Al-I'rāḥ), traditionalism and blind following (Taqlīd & Taḥlīṭ), Lusts and desires (Hawā), Arrogance (Takabbur), Hypocrisy (Nifāq), Reliance on Conjectures, Conscious rejection or denial of the truth, after being convinced about it (Juhūd) Rejection of Truth (Juhūd), giving the lie to the messages of God (Takdhīb), the role of Satan in influencing human perception and envy and jealousy.

### 1. Ignorance and not being aware of the truth (Jahl)

Islam emphasizes on the significance of knowledge and it declares ignorance as unacceptable for the adherents of the religion. Qur'ān asserts that knowledgeable people and ignoramus cannot be equated. Similarly, Islam stresses on the vitality of thinking and ignorance is one of major hindrances that inhibit positive thinking. On the basis of foregoing elucidation, it is explicitly inferred from the Qur'ānic verse that, ignorance is a major barrier for man to ponder over the truth. In Q6: 111, Allah says of disbelievers thus:

“Even if we were to send down angels unto them, and if the dead were to speak unto them, and even if We were to assemble before them, face to face, all the things that can prove the truth, they would still not believe unless God so willed. But (of this) most of them are entirely unaware”<sup>1</sup>.

The above quoted verse indicates that it is ignorance about the truth of the Qur'ān that makes the disbelievers deny the truth of the divine message. In the above verse, Allah replies the polytheists concerning their insistence that He should send down the angels or raise dead people as a condition for believing His messenger. However, because of their deep ignorance, which is the opposite of knowledge, none of these miraculous things would convince them to actually have the belief in the divine message<sup>2</sup>.

Based on the above quoted verse, Abu Ja'fari asserted that, many of the unbelievers are ignorant of because they thought the truth about the divine message was from the Prophet's whims and caprices. It is further reiterated that, ignorance mostly lead people to show mockery at the message of Allah and His Prophet. This is undoubtedly a great predicament to proper and clear thinking.

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<sup>1</sup> Q6:111.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ashur: al-Tahrir al-Tanwīr

Imam Tabar is of the opinion that, Hajaj bin Jurayj asserted that, the verse was descended unto the Prophet that different signs are from Allah the Almighty, but the disbelievers do not believe when it is explained to them. 'Ibn Abbas posited that, the verse was revealed about those who have gone strayed from the right path. Qatadah is of the opinion that, Allah forbids Muslims from insulting the gods of non-believers so that they do not abuse God because they are people of ignorance. Ordinarily, the occurrence of any of those things should serve as a proof and motivation for man to think and acknowledge the Power behind their possibility. But this thinking ability has been beclouded by ignorance to recognize the truth.

In another verse, Allah states that:

“And We brought the Children of Israel across the sea; and there upon they came across people who were devoted to the worship of some idols of theirs. Said the children of Israel: (O Mûsa (Moses)! setup for us a god as they have gods!). He replied: (Verily, You are people without any awareness of right and wrong!)”<sup>1</sup>.

The above verse is very lucid as regard to the ignorance of children of Israel when an attempt was made to ignorantly imitate people who devoted their lives to idol worship. Indeed, they do not think properly of the implication and danger in the imitation of the ignoramus. Verily, their request for the setting up a god shows their low level of thinking. Instead of thinking properly before requesting for a god is an indication that they were ignoramus. As a result, ignorance is a clear hindrance to the properly thinking.

## 2. Turning away from the Truth (Al-I'rÊl).

Islam is the true religion that invites its adherents to the truth. Then the non-believers turn away from the truth of the divine message. Allah has challenged non-believers repeatedly in the Qur'an that that why man should not ponder over things. It is said that:

[So long as We keep their hearts and their eyes turned away from the truth, even as they did not believe in it at the first instance: and so We shall leave them in their overweening arrogance, blindly stumbling to and fro]<sup>2</sup>.

In the above verse, Allah explains that he turns the hearts and eyes of the polytheists from recognizing the truth. Heart is mentioned before eye because it is the most important human organ. As a platform for thinking process, it has impacts on eyes and ears which serve as its agents. So both their hearts and eyes have been turned away from thinking by means of which to

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<sup>1</sup> Q7:138.

<sup>2</sup> Al-An m: 110.

recognize the truth (al-Razi). Allah says: [And so, when they swerved from the right way, God let their hearts swerve from the truth]<sup>1</sup>.

The people of Israel ignored their messenger, Musa, by disobeying his command as regards the guidance to which he was calling them. In turn, Allah caused their hearts to swerve so much that it was impossible for them to be guided to the truth path<sup>2</sup>. So deviation from the truth makes it impossible for the polytheists to think about the convincing signs that Allah has sent through His messengers.

The fore going elucidation indicates that, people are turning away from the path of Allah without concrete evidence. Therefore, such habit or attitude undoubtedly inhibits positive tafakkur.

### 3. Blind Imitation and Intolerance (Taqlīd & Taʿāṭub)

This part explains the blind imitation (Taqlīd) and intolerance (Taʿāṭub) as predicaments for positive thinking. Stagnation and decline of the Muslim Ummah immensely contribute to the blind imitation and intolerance which affected thinking for the progress of the Ummah. There was prevalence of blind imitation and factionalism among the Muslims. The collective intellectual profundity that existed in the medieval period where Ijtihad effectively promoted thinking was affected with the emergence of blind imitation among the Ummah. Thereby, many of the followers of schools of thought (madhhab) used to blindly follow the madhhab without justification or evidence from sound proofs.

There are many schools of Islamic legal thought which many subsequent generations blindly adhere to their madhhab. There was promotion of individual madhhab which weakens the positive tafakkur. Undeniably, the blind imitation enormously contributed to the intellectual stagnation and decline among the Ummah. The Ijtihad that encouraged thinking was stagnated; hence there was agitation for the original thinking, idea and pristine Islamic legal system that can promote positive thinking among the Muslims.

There was an agitation for the permanent closure of Ijtihad<sup>3</sup>. It is unfortunately that blind imitation that subjugated the thinking has confined Islam to a limited number of madhhab. As a result of intolerance and narrow-mindedness by the adherents of madhhab, they rated the scholars whose names are attached to madhhab as being prophesized by the prophets regarding the importance of their personalities and madhhab. Indeed, an attempt to correct this inimical view is considered heretical.

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<sup>1</sup> al- aff: 5.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Ashur: al-Tahrir al-Tanwīr.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Husayn adh-Dhahabi, ash-Sharīʿah al-Islamiyyah, Egypt, Dar al-Kutub al-Hadeeth, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1968, p.12.

More pathetically, those that repudiate to adhere to the aforementioned madhhab are considered as apostates. The extent of intolerance has been reflected on the detestability of moving from one madhhab to another madhhab. Even it was forbidden by the conservative adherents to madhhab that it is not allow that one follower of madhhab marry another person from another madhhab. Additionally, creative activity is also affected by the escalation of blind imitation. This is the reason why the disbelievers used to follow their forefathers blindly. The Holy Qur'an has confirmed this that:

[But when they are told, (follow what God has bestowed from on high), some answer, (Nay, we shall follow only that which we found our forefathers believing in and doing). Why, even if their forefathers did not use their reason at all, and were devoid of all guidance?"<sup>1</sup>

Following the path without knowledge or evidence is a bad practice which stands condemnable in the sight of Islam. It makes one unable to use one's thinking faculty that has been endowed him by the Creator. Logically, this act of blind following is baseless: If someone has followed a line of argument advanced by another person, the former has actually deviated from the pattern of the latter.

Further, it is interestingly noted in the Qur'an that:

"When he (Ibrahim) said to his father: "What are these images, to which you are devoted?" The said: "We found our father worshipping them. He said: Indeed, you and your fathers have been in manifest error. The said: "Have you brought us the truth or are you are one of those who play about?" He said: Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them and to that I am one of the witnesses"<sup>2</sup>

Since the person so followed had based his argument on knowledge and proof it follows therefore that the follower should also base his argument on knowledge and proof just as his master had done. Doing otherwise would mean an aberration and deviation. The above verse came after a previous one where Allah has warned against following the dictates of Satan. This implies that there is no difference between the act of blind following and subscription to the dictates of Satan. It also encourages independent thinking as against blind following of one's whims and caprices or ideas and thoughts of others without proof [al-RĒzĒ].

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<sup>1</sup> al-Baqarah: 170.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Anbiyyah:52-56

#### 4. Lusts and desires (Hawā)

Islamic theological discourse is not relating divergent view on the power of God in creating everything in the universe. However, there have been divergent opinions as to whether human actions are created by God or it is socially constructed or shaped either towards negativity or positivity. In the divergent opinion among the scholars, some opinions are predominantly based on lusts and desires without concrete evidences. In fact, regarding the personality of the prophet that he does not speak out of his personal whims and caprices, Allah said that: "You companion (Muhammad) has neither gone astray nor has erred. Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. And it is only a Revelation revealed"<sup>1</sup>.

The above quoted verses are explicit to explain that he did not speak out of his volition but follows whatever, Allah descended through angel Jibril. Similarly, the four rightly guided successors after the Prophet were concerned about following the commandment of Allah and his Prophet. For instance, after the Battle of Yamamah when many memorizers of the Qur'an were killed, Umar advised Abubakar as the Khalifah to compile the Qur'an into a booklet form as we have it today. However, Abubakar was very reluctant in compiling the Qur'an into a booklet form.

From the above explanation, there are two important things here to be deduced. First, Umar was creative in generating ideas in solving the likely problem that Muslims might have had in the future when it was possible to lose the original content of the divine Book. Second, Abubakar hesitated because he did not want to follow he lusts and desire in doing what was not done by the Prophet when he was alive. Later, Abukar reason along with Umar and compiled the Qur'an. Neither Umar nor Abubakar followed his personal volition regarding the opinion as regard to the compilation of the Qur'an.

More so, during the time of Khalifah Uthman, Islam had spread to different places in different parts of the world, thereby, people were reciting the Qur'an with different dialects but not out of their lusts and desires but it was due to the fact that Arabic was not their original language. Therefore, Khalifah Uthman made an effort to standardize the Qur'an which was not based out of his lusts and desires.

But unfortunately, after the first generation, there are prevalence social vices among the Muslims. Theological discourse is important to explain certain tenets of Islam, however, many intellectual opinions among the Muslims were dominated by lusts and desires.

[Has thou ever considered the kind of man who makes his own desires his deity]<sup>2</sup>

In the verse, Allah expresses surprise at the attitude of the non-believers

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<sup>1</sup> An-Najm: 2-4.

<sup>2</sup> al-J thiyah: 23.

who considered as god their own desires. As in the subsequent verse, they wrongly assumed that they would have a better life in the hereafter just as they had it while on the planet. This wrong assumption was based on their own desires which dictate for them. For taking their lust desires as god, Allah has enveloped them with all sort of misguidance such as obstinate minds and weak souls.

Thus, their reasoning faculty becomes incapable to reason correctly even though the proofs are convincing enough. [Ibn Ashur]. Indeed, this is a big vacuum that paved way for lusts and desires which hindered the creative thinking among the Muslims. Thereby, it is paramount to fill the gap in the existing body of knowledge on the theological discourse especially towards addressing lusts and desires as an impediment or barrier to tafakkur.

#### 5. Arrogance (Takabbur):

This is another important predicament to thinking in Islam. There are many Qur'anic verses that explain the danger in arrogance which affects proper thinking. For instance, Allah the Almighty says:

[From My messages shall I cause to turn away all those who, without any right, behave haughtily on earth: for, though they may see every sign of the truth, they do not believe in it, and though they may see the path of rectitude, they do not choose to follow it—whereas, if they see a path of error, they take it for their own: this, because they have given the lie to Our messages, and have remained heedless of them]<sup>1</sup>

In the above verse, Allah has vowed to misdirect from His messages, namely the understanding of the Qur'Ēn, those who behave in an arrogant manner on earth. [Ibn KathĒr] When they are thus misdirected from understanding such messages, it would then be difficult for them to have the ability of thinking and reflecting those messages. There is no reason for this unfortunate fate other than their arrogance and haughtiness.

Because arrogance inhibits one from using one's reasoning faculty to think about available facts and evidence, and eventually to accept the truth. This attitude is true of tyrannies and dictators such Firġawn when prophet MĒsĒ was sent to him and his people. Allah mentioned this attitude to the Prophet Muġammad in connection with his experience with the unbelievers from the Quraysh tribe, who had rejected the former's message on account of their wealth and social status, which made them become arrogant. [al-ManĒr].

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<sup>1</sup> al-A r f; 146.

## 6. Hypocrisy (NifĒq)

Indeed, many verses of the Qur'an explain the behaviours of the hypocrites. They appear to be Muslims but in actual sense they are with the disbelievers. Many verses in the Qur'an bear testimony that the Prophet peace be upon him cannot identify their identities but only Allah knows them. Allah said that:

"Have you not seen those who were forbidden to hold secret counsel and afterwards returned to that which they had been forbidden, and conspired together for sins and wrong doing and disobedience to the Messenger (Muhammad) and when they come to you, they greet you with a great wherewith Allah greets not, and say within themselves why should Allah punish us not for what we say! Hell be sufficient for them, they will be burn therein. And worst indeed is that destination!"<sup>1</sup>

The above is very clear to show the attitude of the hypocrites and indeed, it is a big barrier that hinders proper thinking. It is pathetic that the hypocrites used to greet the Prophet (S.A.W.) with a negative greeting which the Prophet himself could not easily identified but Allah revealed their conspiracy to the Prophet. Similarly, the extent of the attitude of the hypocrites reflected in the collaboration of their leader, Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul and the disbelievers during the plan for Hijrah by the Prophet (S.A.W.) and the Muslims. The negative attitude of the hypocrites that is further buttressed thus in the Qur'an:

"They are the ones who say: Spend not on those who are Allah with Allah's messenger until they desert him". And to Allah belong the trearues of the heavens and the earth but the hypocrites comprehend not. They (hypocrites) say: "If we return to Al-Medinah, indeed the more honourable (Abdullah bin Ubai bin Salul) the chief of hypocrites at Al-Madinah) will expel therefrom the meaner (i.e. Allah's Messenger). But honour, power and glory belong to Allah and to His messenger (Muhammad) and to the believers but the hypocrites know not"<sup>2</sup>.

In the above verse, Allah replied the hypocrites who had threatened to not give money in charity to the Companions of the Prophet. It was reported that Abdullah Ibn Ubai a leading hypocrite had urged his fellows to subject the followers of the Prophet to want by not giving them money. So they would be forced to desert him in Madinah. He also threatened that when they arrived in Makkah, he and his fellow rich would deal with the Prophet and his followers. But Allah retorted that to Him belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth; however the hypocrites do not understand this truth. [al-RĒẓ&al-BaghwĒ]. Their hypocrisy has blinded their reasoning faculty that could enable them have

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Mujadilah:8

<sup>2</sup> Al-Munafiqun: 7-8

that consciousness in them; that whatever wealth they possessed was but from the limitless treasures of Allah, and that He gives whomever He likes. So they did not have monopoly over it.

### 7. Reliance on Conjectures

Indeed, conjecture has many other synonyms such as: supposition, speculation, imagination, assumption, surmise and many others. All these related to not following the facts and based a particular opinion on the reasoned judgment but it is based on conjectural viewpoints. In this regard, there are many Qur'anic verses that have explicitly elaborated on the negative effect of reliance on the conjectures. For instance it is stated in the Qur'an that:

“Now if thou pay heed unto the majority of those who live on earth, they will but lead thee astray from the path of God: they follow but other people's conjectures, and they themselves do nothing but guess”<sup>1</sup>

Allah advises the Prophet in the above verse against following the line of most people because their mission is to mislead and misguide. In their belief, conducts, and actions, their only basis is to guess based on their whims and caprices. They are far from basing their judgments on the truth. [al-Man'Er]. The act of guessing is the easiest way of arriving at decisions, though in the long run the outcome cannot be regarded as valid. It is an antithesis of critical thinking which might be difficult and require some time. However, it leads to a proof-based conclusion. Therefore, the Prophet has ensured that his disciples or companions did not rely on conjectures but they relied totally on the reasoned judgment and evidences from the divine revelation and his Sunnah. This means that, apart from the Qur'an, the personality of the Prophet also served as an important text in the life of the companions through which they learned from and transformed their lives. This undoubtedly helped them to avoid conjectural opinions on religious issue. It is not doubtful to assert that, conjecture is also a barrier to *tafakkur* which must be unreservedly addressed among the Muslims. In addition, Ibn Qayyim is of the opinion that, conjecture relates to take a particular thing as an object of worship without sure knowledge over it from Almighty Allah which is considered as worldly false deities<sup>2</sup>.

### 8. Conscious rejection or denial of the truth, after being convinced about it (Ju'Ēd)

Indeed, ignorance of the truth is different from deliberate repudiation of

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<sup>1</sup> al-An' m: 116.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Qayim, J. (1422A.H/2002). *I'lamul Muwaqi'ina an Rabb al-Alamin*, Cairo, Darul hadith, vol. 1. P.48.

truth. Deliberate rejection of truth is known as JuġĒd or Takdhġb. There is no benefit in repudiation of truth and reality. The illuminating light of truth unveils the darkness of falsehood. Indeed, it has been succinctly shown in the glorious Qur'an that, Allah has destroyed many people in the past as a result of the rejection or repudiation of the truth. They have ignorantly denied the truth and they liked to be praised with what they have not done.

Denial of the truth or turning away from the truth is a fundamental hindrance to the thinking ability or thinking skill. The abstinence from turning away from the truth is integrally important to awake the ignoramus people from their slumber in order to activate their thinking potentials.

There are many verses in the Qur'an that projects the rejection of truth. In fact, this is very commonly attributed to the people of Israel. For instance, the Israel have read about the arrival of the final messenger in their divine book, but when he came, they all rejected his personality and his message. The Holy Qur'an affirms this thus:

"And (remember) when Isa (Jesus), son of Maryam (Mary), said: O Children of Israel! I am the Messenger of Allah to you, confirming the Taurat (Torah) which came before me and giving the glad tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name is shall be Ahmad. But when he (Ahmad i.e. Muhammad) came to them with clear proofs, they said: This is plain magic"<sup>1</sup>

"But when Our light-giving messages came into them, they said, this is clearly but spellbinding deception!, and in their wickedness and self-exaltation they rejected them, although their minds were convinced of their truth"<sup>2</sup>

The above quoted verse is very explicit as regard to the rejection of the people of Israel regarding prophethood of Muhammad, but despite the fact that they know about the message, they deliberately rejected it. Furthermore, The Prophet was informed by Allah on how Pharaoh and his people rejected Prophet Musa's signs despite the fact they were convinced of their validity and truthfulness. They could have succumbed and accepted such convincing evidences were it not for their arrogance which led them to deny the plain truth. Thus they were destroyed because of that. With this, Allah was warning those disbelievers who rejected the plain truth brought by the Prophet [Ibn Kathġr]. Their conscious rejection of the truth beclouded their objectivity and did not give them the opportunity to ponder and think critically and accept it.

[Nay, but they are bent on giving the lie to everything the wisdom whereof they do not comprehend, and here its inner meaning is yet to become clear to them. Even those who lived before their time

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<sup>1</sup> As-Saff:6

<sup>2</sup> al-Naml:13-14.

give the lie to the truth: and behold what happened in the end to those evildoers](Yūnus: 39)

The above verse tells of the attitude of the disbelievers; they were given to rejecting the truth without considering and thinking about evidences that have been provided. Their hasty decision to regard as a lie the truth actually blinded them. Thus they could not see reason in what has been brought to them despite its vivid validity. [Ibn ‘Ashur]

#### 9. The role of Satan in influencing human perception.

The Qur’ān has considered Satan as an avowed enemy of mankind. It all started when he refused to prostrate for Adam as commanded by Allah; except for him, the Angels all obeyed Allah’s command. For disobeying Allah’s command, Satan is therefore cursed. Thus he has vowed to remain a fierce enemy of Adam and his progenies, to mislead them perpetually. Allah says that:

“O ye people! Eat of what is on earth, Lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one, for he is to you an avowed enemy. For he commands you what is evil and shameful, and that ye should say of Allah that of which ye have no knowledge”<sup>1</sup>.

In the above verse, Allah therefore warns mankind against following the path of Satan, because, he is bent on dictating the evil doings for human beings and asking them to do what they do not know about. (al-Baghwi). The Satan’s powerful whispering, calling, promising, and insinuating can overshadow and tamper with human ability to think and perceive his falsehood.

In Islam spiritual development of man is important. However, Shaytan devil has aggressively said he will lead man to the wrong way. In this regard, he played negative role in influencing man in involving in many atrocities. He does not want man to prosper in this life, he commands man to involve in bad things. Partaking in bad behaviour, it emotionally affects man’s psyche. Inferably, it affects the mind and thinking. As a result, devil affects man’s thinking despite the fact that it emphasises on the vitality of rationality.

Therefore, it is important that man protects himself from the negative influence of devil in respect to the thinking because thinking itself is considered as worship. Since man cannot safeguard himself from the devil’s influence, he needs to seek spiritual protection from Allah. It is important to assert that man has no power except by Allah’s will. This must be ringing in the mind of whose thinking is affected by devil by showing servitude and servility of obedience to Allah. The Holy Qur’an says: “Say! Verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds”<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Baqarah: 168-169.

<sup>2</sup>Qur’an 6:162

Similarly, seeking closeness to Allah through forgiveness is essential because the person that devil influences may be affected with his thinking, therefore, such person must seek forgiveness from almighty Allah. The Holy Qur'an confirms this that:

“And seek forgiveness from your Lord, He was ever forgiving. He will let loose the sky for you in plenteous rain, will succor you with wealth and sons, will assign to you gardens and will assign to you rivers”<sup>1</sup>.

The above Qur'anic verse indicates that, the victims of Shaytan's influence on his thinking must seek for Allah's forgiveness. Therefore, he must pray to Allah (s.w.t) for spiritual strength and emotional stability. This is also confirmed in another verse of Qur'an that: “O our Lord! Do not condemn us if we forget or fall into error”.<sup>2</sup> Again, O our Lord! Do not deviate our hearts after you have guided us”<sup>3</sup>.

Based on the above verses, the victim of shaytan's influence on his thinking which affects his proper thinking needs to be always seeking for positive thinking by wishing the countenance and nearness to Allah (s.w.t). Therefore, such a victim needs involve him/herself in supererogatory worships after performing daily obligatory prayer in order to foster his neatness to Allah.

Furthermore, there are various types of emotional problems that Shaytan uses to influence man's thinking negatively which Allah describes in the Qur'an such as: jealousy, love, hatred, terror, fear, sadness and among others. In solving the psychological disturbance of devil's influence on one's thinking, there are different ways to solve this such as fear of Allah, love of Allah, humility and gratefulness.

Allah says in the Qur'an that: “The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the most Allah-fearing among you”<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, the victim of devil's influence on his thinking should purify his heart through the fear, love, sense of humility and gratitude to almighty Allah (s.w.t). Once this is attained, the negativity ascribed to thinking through the whispering of Shaytan will be solved. Hence, striving against the plot of Shaytan is significant in addressing the wishful thinking of devil.

In Islam, contemplation and positive thinking is important in piloting the affairs of Muslims as act of worship. Indeed, feelings, emotions, thinking and perceptions are essential part of human behaviours. The influence of shaytan in shaping man's thinking negatively is acknowledged. Indeed, negative and wishful thinking emanate from Shaytan. It is Shaytan that influences man's think through waswasah which is known as whispering. It is

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<sup>1</sup> Qur'an 17:10-12.

<sup>2</sup> Qur'an 2: 286.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'an 3: 8.

<sup>4</sup> Qur'an 49: 13.

thereby asserted that; man should seek protection the waswasah of Shaitan which results to the predicament for the positive thinking. According to Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawzi, waswasah there are two vital key words related to it which are: khawatir and shahwah<sup>1</sup>. It is further noted that, Khawatir is considered inner thought that command bad behaviours while shahwah is an emotional state of mind that entertains thinking through waswasah and khawatir whereby the commandment of Shaytan, is adhered to. Therefore, waswasah; khawatir and shahwah must be addressed as integral component used by the devil in affecting man's thinking negatively.

As an attempt to get rid of the influence of Shaytan in man's thinking and other negative concepts such as insinuation (waswasah), the suggestions of the Muslim scholars are important. Of such Muslim scholars are: Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi, Ibn Miskawayh, Al-Ghazali and Al-Balkhi, and many others. It is reiterated by al-Balkhi abu Zayd that contemplation has significant impact on man's health<sup>2</sup>. Inferably, this means that, healthy thinking brings positive impact to oneself and the society at large.

Further still, The pertinence of positive meditation or contemplation is painstakingly mentioned by Al-Ghazali in his famous treatise, Ihya' 'Ulumu al-Din<sup>3</sup>. It is reiterated that, Muslims must be conscious of positive thinking in order to refrains from any plot of Shaytan in influencing man negative ideas and thinking because it can affect the harmonious existence of man in the society.

Additionally, the contemporary eminent Muslim psychologist, Malik Badir has interestingly discussed various mechanisms in avoiding the negative influence of Shaytan on man's thinking.

Specifically, it is asserted that:

"Modern medical research has also shown that all the other Islamic prescriptions, rules and desirable behavior have their undisputed values in protecting the physical and psychological health of believers. For example, bodily cleanliness, which believers acquire as a result of ablution (wudu') before the five daily prayers, the ceremonial bathing (ghuzul) before Friday prayers and after marital intercourse, and other Sunnah practices, have their obvious sanitary aspects. Similar invaluable benefits are seen in every practice performed by Muslims whether in their worship or general exercise of Islamic teachings: for example, the physical exercise in performing the five daily prayers, the health values of fasting and the avoidance of overeating that leads to obesity-which are mentioned in several sayings of the Prophet, and in the following

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, Miftau Dar Sa'adah. Riyadh: Ri'asat al-Ifta', n.d., p.183.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Zayd Al-Balkhi, Masalih al-Abdan wa al-Anfus, M.S. 3741 (Instabul: Ayasofya Library). Photocopied by the Institute of Arabic-Islamic sciences, Frankfurt, A.M., 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Ghazali, Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din, vol. 3, (Beirut: Darul Qalam, n.d.), pp.56-59.

Qur'anic verse: "Eat and drink, but waste not by excess (Q7:31)"<sup>1</sup>.

The above quotation is shows crystal clear various religious rituals that can safe Muslims from the plot of Shaytan influencing their behaviours negatively and more pathetically, their thinking.

#### 10. Envy and Jealousy.

In fact, this is another barrier to thinking. Indeed, there are many testimonies in the Qur'an in this regard, for instance the envy and jealous of Shaytan to Adam made him not to bow for him when he was commanded by Allah. Allah says that:

"And (remember) when We said to the angels: "Prostrate yourselves before Adam" And they prostrated except Iblis (Satan), he refused and was proud and was one of the disbelievers (disobedient to Allah)<sup>2</sup>.

The above quoted verse is also clear as regard to the refusal of angel to prostrate for Adam. Similarly, the people of the people among the Jews were envy and jealous of the last prophet and his followers. Allah states in the Qur'an that:

"Quite a number of the people of the Book wish They could turn you (people) back to infidelity after ye have believed, from selfish envy, after the truth hath become Manifest unto them: but forgive and overlook, till Allah accomplish His purpose; for Allah hath power over all things"<sup>3</sup>.

In the above verse, Allah warns the community of the believers against the trick of people of the book (the Jews) who were bent on causing confusion for them in an attempt to mislead them. Although their book contains prophesy about the Prophet Muhammad being the last seal of Allah' messengers, they refused to follow the message of this last messenger. Nothing save selfish envy has made them refuse to acknowledge the message of Prophet Muhammad despite the fact that they had adequate first-hand information about him. (Ibn Kathīr). Thus envy constitutes a major stumbling block which often stands in the way of human beings to think correctly. The amount of evidence available in their book and in the Qur'an should spur them to use their reasoning faculty which could lead them into accepting the truth. But this was not possible because of their envy and jealousy.

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<sup>1</sup> Malik Badri (2000). *Contemplation: An Islamic psycho spiritual study with an introduction by Shaykh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi*. Cambridge University Press: London.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Baqarah:34

<sup>3</sup> al-Baqarah, Q2:19

## Conclusion

The paper has explored the significance of thinking in Islam and various predicaments or barriers to thinking among the Muslims have been discussed. The chapter has indicated that Ulul Al-Bab is referred to as men of understanding in sixteen places in the Qur'an because there is no barrier for the thinking and reflection about the sign of Allah. The paper is explicit on the Qur'anic references to the barriers to thinking among the Muslims. Of such impediments to thinking as elucidated in this paper are: Jahl, Al-I'rāq, Taqlid & Ta'ātib, Hawā. It is therefore recommended that, the identified predicaments or barriers to Tafakkur must be addressed through Islamic educational system, enlightenment and sensitization. If this is addressed, Tafakkur will be fruitful and positively utilized by Muslims in promoting various spheres of human endeavours.

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