



Rationality of Belief in Action
A Look at the Theory of Allāmah Tabātabāī
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Abstract: Man is a rational being and possesses the faculty of reason, which makes him quite distinct from animals or other creatures. In Islam, man is regarded as superior to other creatures, but this superiority has also created some responsibilities for him to do, including the necessity of being rational in his actions. We all feel ourselves responsible toward spiritual, mental, and physical affairs. Perhaps, the most important responsibility of ours is to keep rationalistic in our jobs. Therefore, it seems to be worthwhile here to elaborate upon rationality, making known its different sides as well as recognizing its criteria. Our approach to the problem of rationality from two Western and Eastern points of view will explore some of its width and depth. A comparison of views by some Western theorists with those of Allāmah Tabātabāī, one of the great Iranian contemporary Islamic thinkers, will broaden the boundaries of knowledge in philosophy and provide a bridge between different cultures..

The Etymology of ‘Aql and ‘Aqlaniyat

‘Aqlaniyat (rationality) is a gerund in Arabic taken from the adjective ‘aqlani. The word ‘aql (reason) itself is an infinitive that originally meant prohibition, forbiddance, or prevention.¹ ‘Iqal is taken from the same root with the meaning shackle or headband, something that keeps the camel from walking or running away. Uql or uqla, another derivative from ‘aql, has been used with the meaning of ransom, and ‘aql itself may also has the meaning of blood money, which prevents a bloodshed.²

Allāmah Mustafawi, in his enquiry about the word ‘aql, explains that the original meaning of ‘aql as an infinitive is "to distinguish the good from the bad or the right from the wrong in the course of Man's spiritual and material life, and then to protect the self or prevent it from going astray."³ He elaborates that ‘aql requires us "to use prudence, good understanding, perception, cognition, and expedience in order to meet the needs of our life." Mustafawi adds that we should also take care to abstain from carnal desires and violent passions so that we can be settled inside the truth and justice.

What we believe that exists in man and in other creatures having the power of reason, including the angels of God, is the same thing which is called ‘aql that is derived from the same Arabic root, the

¹ Ismail- ibn Hammad al-Jawhari, *as-Sehah*, Beirut: Dar al-Ilm le al-Malaeen, 1990, vol. 5 p. 1769.

² S1769; ‘abd an-Nabi ibn- ‘abd ar-Rasoul al-Ahmadnegari, *Mostalahat Jami' al-'oloum (Dostour al-'olama)*, Beirut: Maktabat Lebanon an-Nasheroun, 1997, p. 599. Most of the lexicologists have mentioned a single root for the word ‘aql to mean a band for fastening the legs of a camel.

³ Hassan Mostafawi, *at-Tahqiq fi Kalamat al-Quran al-Karim*, Tehran: Bongah Tarjomah va Nashr Ketab, 1360 sh., Vol. 5, p. 28.

infinitive 'aql, because it prevents man from going to baseness and indecency.⁴ Therefore, the duty of 'aql is to stop and forbid the man from doing unpleasant jobs or destructive work. This destructive work can be something material and physical such as damage to property, escape of camels, bloodshed, and loss of life or may be something of spiritual values like disgracing someone, causing them to lose esteem, prestige, honor, or other moral issues. Therefore, the presence of 'aql is the guarantor of good and desirable affairs to continue and the barrier of bad and unpleasant affairs to happen. Of course, it is questionable whether 'aql has two distinctive aspects or not; because what we understand from the literal meaning of 'aql is that the word had the practical sense of restricting and preventing, which, of course, is the requisite for timely stopping a person to distinguish the right from the wrong. This is just in the same way that Allāmah Mustafawi has used prudence, expedience, well understanding, and so on, as the requisites for the meaning of 'aql; and it is advisable, in my opinion, to take into consideration the recognizing of right and wrong actions as the essential conditions of 'aql but not intrinsic of its essence. If so, 'aql will first bear a practical sense by nature and will secondly take a theoretical sense by accident. Now, it is the theoretical sense that has become prevalent due to its long usage without concerning about its other practical senses.

In some European languages, two kinds of equivalents have been used for 'aql. For example, in Latin we have ratio and intellectus, in English reason and intellect, and in French raison and intellect. The former words denote to the partial 'aql, i.e. argumentation, and the latter denote to the general 'aql, i.e. intuition. Such usages, of course, are not absolute; each of them has been used in the meaning of the other. In Webster's larger dictionary, there are several meanings referred to by the word reason, such as argument, explanation, the foundation of thoughts and the like, or the faculty of argumentation. Reason itself is the argument or explanation.⁵ Intellect also means active 'aql, the power of understanding versus emotion or will. It is the immortal aspect of human soul, possesses the power of thinking, and so on (WTN 1174).

Another word that was used in some ancient European languages, but now it seems to have become largely archaic is nous with the original meaning of 'aqlani (an adjective of 'aql), that is, rational intellectual principle of the universe from which all the laws and rules of nature originate. The word nous has been used to mean primary or superior reason ('aql), sometimes it would mean human reason and at other times intuitive reason or intellect (WTN 1546). However, in both Persian and Arabic language we use the word 'aql to stand for three concepts: intellect, reason, and nous. As such, reasonable or intellectual is used for the adjectives of 'aqli or 'aqlani. But, to make them negative, we use the word "non-rational" for something that remains out of the realm of rationality or intellectuality, though it is not an antonym for 'aql, and we use the word "irrational" when something is against 'aql and opposite to it.

The Idiomatic Meaning of 'Aql

In Islamic philosophy and Kalām (Islamic theology), there are several meanings for 'aql. If one wants to enumerate them, there would be more than twenty definitions, which in the context here might annoy the reader. Instead, I will point only to the most important meanings of 'aql and then refer to its two more prevalent meanings commonly used by thinkers.

Islamic philosophers have sometimes named 'aql a pure essence that perceives the reality of objects,⁶ and other times a power that perceives abstract beings.⁷ But Ibn Sīnā considered 'aql to have several meanings including features that are always present in the mind, which are preliminaries for one's inference of his expedients and purposes; a faculty by which one can distinguish the good from the bad; a pleasant state in one's behavior, disposition and speech or the way of his choosing something. The three meanings mentioned above are common in everyday language, but there are eight additional meanings prevalent among philosophers.⁸ Some other meanings given to 'aql include every non-material feature of an existence whose job is

⁶ Ja'qoub ibn- Ishaq al-Kendi, *Rasa'el al-Kendi al-Falsafiyah*, Cairo: Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, p. 113.

⁷ Abounasr Mohammad ibn- Ahmad ibn- Tarkhan al-Farabi, *al-Jam' bayn Rayay al-Hakimayn*, Tehran: az Zahra, 1405 q, p. 33.

⁸ Hussayn- ibn- Abdollah- ibn- Sina (Ave Sina), *al-Hodoud*, Cairo: al-Haiah al-Mesriyyah 1989, p. 241.

⁴ Ahmad- ibn Faris, *Mo'jam Maqāiis al-Loḡhah*, Mesr (Egypt): Matba'at ai-Mostafa va Awladeh, 1389 q, Vol. 4, p. 64.

⁵ Philip Babcock Gove (editor in chief), *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of English Language Unabridged*, Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Volume 2, p. 1891.

the perception of the universals,⁹ abstract essence,¹⁰ and finally the comment of Mullā Sadrā¹¹ in his book *Asfār* in which one chapter has been appropriated to different meanings of 'aql with explanations cited there for many of them.¹²

Muslim Theologians also have their own meanings for 'aql including knowledge of the facts whose store is the heart, the heart itself, which is the very tender reality of man's life, and sometimes 'aql is called the servant of heart.¹³ 'Aql is also taken to be an instinct that, when healthy, causes the means of knowledge in necessities.¹⁴ Some philosophers view 'aql as an abstract essence separated from matter, but in need of matter while operating. 'Aql is also called rational soul; it is sometimes known as a spiritual essence or as a light illuminating the heart to cause man to recognize truth from falsehood; it is regarded as an instrument in the hand of soul.¹⁵ For example, in a particular chapter of his book *Behār al-Anwār*, the author Allāmah Majlessi refers to six meanings of 'aql.¹⁶

In philosophy, since ancient times 'aql has been used for its two general meanings or more precisely for its two applications. The first definition of 'aql is something abstract both in nature and in action; it is needless of matter. Many philosophers, based on the rule that from a single thing only issues a single thing, have become compelled to explain that a multimodal

world has emanated from a single existence. They have been forced to assume that a series of abstract 'aqls followed one another: the first 'aql was issued from the starting point of the world; then, the second 'aql emanated from the first 'aql and so on, and in this way multimodality gradually came up. They did not want to violate their rule, and it was not broken.¹⁷

In the second definition, 'aql is taken to be one of the human powers of the soul separating from feelings, illusions, and imaginations. 'Aql is able to perceive the universals and abstractions. We should say, in fact, that 'aql perceives the universals because of their being abstractions. Therefore, 'aql is the perceiver of abstract things. If 'aql is not subdued by animal instincts, it will not make a mistake. Human errors take place, because other forces like emotions, illusions, and imaginations overcome 'aql. If 'aql controls the mind and becomes dominant, man will not make any error.

The faculty of 'aql has two functions: intuitive and argumentative. This is the same division as the literal meaning of the word 'aql holds. These two functions are not irrelevant to each other, since argumentation itself is based on a transition from premises to a conclusion. This is due to the intuitive knowledge of a relation between premises and conclusion. If there is not such a relation, such transition does not take place.¹⁸

The division of human knowledge into two groups of self-evident and acquired knowledge arises from the same division of 'aql into intuitive and argumentative (i.e. intellect and reason). Self-evident knowledge is the output of the first operation of 'aql, that is, the output of intuitions and observations of 'aql. The second is the output of the second operation of 'aql, in a way that 'aql produces it by joining, connecting, and providing sciences and knowledge of the first group. Of course, this kind of reasoning, discussing, and arguing to draw out a result is of standard value depending on the laws of formal logic whose laws are also the result of the intuition of 'aql.

⁹ Mohammad-ibn-Ahmad-ibn Roshd (Ave Rose), *Resallah as-Sima' at-Tabi'i*, Beirut: Dar- al-Fekr 1994, p. 119.

¹⁰ Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi, *al-Mabahith al-Mashreqiyyah fi Ilm al-Ilahiyyat va at-Tabi'iyat*, Qom: Intesharat Bidar, 1411 q, Vol. 2, p. 436.

¹¹ Mohammad- bin- Ibrāhim, Sadr- al-Moteallehin (1571–1640) the great philosopher and Gnostic, Iranian founder of transcendental philosophy.

¹² Muhammad bin- Ibrāhim, Sadr- al-Moteallehin, "at-Tasawur va at-Tasdiq" in *al-Jawhar an-Nazid*, Qom: Intesharat Bidar, 1371 sh., Vol. 3, pp. 419-20.

¹³ Abuhamid Mohammad ibn- Mohammad al-Ghazzali, *Rasa'el al-Imam al-Ghazzali*, Beirut: Dar al-Fekr, 1416 q, p. 423.

¹⁴ As-Sayyed ash-Sharif Ali Jorjani, *Sharh al-Mavaqif*, Qom: Manshourat ar-Razi, 1370 sh, Vol. 1, p. 285.

¹⁵ As-Sayyed ash-Sharif Ali Jorjani, *at-Ta'rifat*, Tehran: Naserkhosro, 1370 sh, p. 65. [Henceforth cited as *T*].

¹⁶ Muhammad Bāqir- al-Majlessi (1627–1699) is an Islamic leader, narrator, jurist, theologian, an Iranian Muslim and the writer of the largest encyclopedia of Shiite tradition.

¹⁷ With the developments in philosophy, especially in transcendental philosophy, there is no longer any need to assuming a tenfold of different 'aqls in order to issue a plural world out of the single essence of God, though our philosophers, even those following the idea of transcendental philosophy, are still unwilling to give up belief in such assumption.

¹⁸ All philosophers and thinkers accept this logical relation and the intuitive knowledge of transition from the premises to the conclusion, but they have different views about how such transition happens.

Some philosophers have divided *‘aql* into two kinds of theoretical and practical reason. One group believes the division is inside *‘aql* itself. That is, we have two kinds of faculties for *‘aql*, theoretical and practical reason. The former relates to perception and the latter relates to ordering. Another group, however, believes that the two kinds of reason are not actually separate from each other but differ only in their perceived matters.

With regard to the semantic root of the word *‘aql* it seems more advisable to consider practical reason as an independent faculty whose work is operation. Even if we continue our work more carefully, it becomes clear that the principal job of intellect is the same as practical reason. Thus, it is proper to justify the viewpoint of those who have regarded practical reason as independent from theoretical reason and have known it as an independent faculty whose work is ordering and commanding.

Rationality, Reasonableness, Justification, and Warrant

Rationality has found a special meaning in philosophy, epistemology, morality, psychology, social sciences, philosophy of mind, mathematics, and logic. Here I refer to its epistemological meaning, but depending on our discussion, this can include additional meanings as well.

First, it is prudent to distinguish between two meanings of rationality: descriptive and normative. Its descriptive meaning is, in fact, the philosophical meaning of the word rationality. When Aristotle makes use of the adjective rational (*‘aqlani*) or sapient (*‘aql*) in order to distinguish humans from other animals, he has referred to the faculty of reason (*‘aql*) in man, by which he is able to understand, measure, argue, deduce, infer, and conclude something; and most of all, he is able to make a language having words and sentences. It is due to the same reason that traditional philosophers, while talking about the discriminative faculties of humans, have used the adjective "speaking" instead of sapient, rational, or intelligent. This is because the faculty of speaking is the most expressive attribute of rationality characteristic of man. It is also worth mentioning that some philosophers hesitate to attribute rationality exclusively to humans to separate them from animals and say that some animals such as chimpanzees and dolphins are also rational.

The adjective rational (*‘aqli*) means something emanated from the faculty of reason (*‘aql*). On this basis, rational can be an adjective for knowledge or judgment.

Knowledge also includes two kinds of attributes, theoretical and practical knowledge. Altogether, there are three rational (*‘aqli*) things: the first is the rational theoretical knowledge, which is the very knowledge of abstract beings, like concepts and general justifications; the second is rational practical knowledge, like recognizing of goodness, badness and necessity; and the third is the judgments of reason (of course, on the condition that we consider the status of judgment for reason) in this way (according to some definitions) *‘aql* either judges and requires a special action to be done, or forbids a special action from being done.

This definition of the adjective rational applies in philosophy. It is also used in epistemology as one of the subjects related to rational knowledge. Thus, we can talk about the rationality of rational knowledge. What is understood from the phrase rational knowledge is that it is a descriptive phrase showing things perceived by reason. Here, we do not want to claim that our descriptions are free from any appraisal. It is barely possible for any descriptions to be completely free from values. Many philosophers believe that every theory is value-laden by our mental frameworks. Also Muslim philosophers believe that existence and existential concepts are value laden; because existence is perfection, and every perfection has value. Thus, when existential concepts are attributed to something, we attribute a valuable thing to the concept. With value concepts I do not refer to a concept by itself but I refer to a concern about the acts and appraisals of doers together with a sort of hidden or manifest recommendation.

Some value concepts openly have recommendation charges. Words such as "must," "must not," "should," and the like, explicitly convey recommendations; some other value concepts implicitly impart recommendations like the words "good" and "bad." Of course, there is much disagreement in the analysis of such moral concepts, but we want here only to make use of value charges in these concepts as models. Rationality, in its normative meaning for example, has a strong value charge that is used in epistemology. Just as we can appraise rational knowledge in epistemology, we can also appraise and value rational judgments to distinguish their rationality.

In this essay the problem of rationality (*‘aqlaniyat*) is based on its second meaning; because we want to rationally appraise knowing or making believe as an action. Of course, we should note that the appraisal of knowledge might be made through different ways, one of which is knowledge itself, i.e. its real essence. The essence of knowledge can also be analyzed from two

sides: first, from the existential side and second, from its indication and expression. The existence of knowledge is usually discussed in metaphysic. There, they discuss the kind of its existence. This discussion usually takes place under one of the ten categories suggested by Aristotle. The most popular theory about the essence of knowledge puts it under the category of mental quality; some put it under "passion" and others under "relation."

Philosophers have investigated knowledge for its indicative and expressive aspect. In this regard, the relation between knowledge and its subject is not considered. Considered is only knowledge itself in relation with its object (i.e., whatever it indicates). This kind of discussion on knowledge is sought for in logic, although they have dealt with it in metaphysics too. While conversation centers on perception or on a division into conception and judgment, the indication side of knowledge is taken into account.

However, knowledge is investigated from a third side in epistemology, which is the relation of knowledge in its indication sense with the subject. Here, two different sides should be taken into account: (a) the indication and expressive aspect of knowledge of the fact for the subject, and (b) the practical aspect of knowledge because it is an action. In the first aspect, the concept of truth is applicable in epistemology, and in the second aspect, justification should be applied to the situation.¹⁹ Thus, knowledge is an action for which the subject has some responsibilities called epistemic responsibilities. Of course, we can also talk about epistemic rights, since the concept of rationality refers to such responsibilities and rights.

Normative concepts in epistemology are not used in one meaning and in the same method. Different epistemologists have given distinctive meanings to each of the above-mentioned concepts that differ from others. Thus, there is no agreement about the meaning of the concepts rationality, reasonableness, justification, or warrant; but we can point to the most prevalent applications of these words. Some Philosophers take the words rationality and reasonability to have the same meaning.²⁰ Other philosophers believe that rationality

takes place where there are no opposing reasons. In their opinion, rationality is the default status.²¹

Rationality is a concept of values. By saying that an action, belief, or desire is rational one has to show a positive approach toward it. Of course, this approach may have intensity or weakness but enjoys the positive charge of values. Roderick Chisholm discusses the concept of rationality and its other similar concepts such as justification, reasonableness, more reasonable than, certain, acceptable, probable, etc., along with its opposite concepts and terms related to epistemic appraisal.²² The normative nature of this concept means that rationality is not a subject related to the mere doing of an action, but it is concerned with the necessity and worthiness of that action. Reasonableness avoids going to extremes, it encourages to go in accordance with reason and to be moderate. Of course, reasonableness and rationality have some common semantic features, too. However, what makes these two words distinct is the sense of non-excessiveness in the concept of reasonableness which is not prominent in the concept of rationality.

Justification (*towjih*) is a word used so much in epistemology that many people (including Chisholm, see *TK* 6) have regarded it as the main axis in the discussions of epistemology, and this seems to be right. Justification does have a positive meaning. When we say that something is justified, we do have an assertive position about it. Thus, being justified is much better than not being justified. In epistemology, it is necessary to distinguish justification from truth, just as we should separate justification from utility in ethics. It is possible for a belief to be true, but we would not have any justification for it and vice versa. It is possible for an action to be useful but not justified, and vice versa.²³ Justification in epistemology is defined as aiming to reach the truth and abstaining from errors, and express

Malekian, *Rahi be Rahaii*, Tehran: Negah Moaser, 1381 sh., pp. 438- 439.

²¹ Paul K. Moser, "Rationality," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy: Supplement*, ed. Donald M. Borchert, New York: Macmillan, Simon & Schuster 1996, pp. 488-90, here p. 488. [Henceforth cited as *REP*]

²² Roderick M. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall 1989, pp. 5-15. [Henceforth cited as *TK*]

²³ Ernest Sosa, "Justification," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press 1995, pp. 395-6, here p. 395.

¹⁹ The concept of justification is not the only one, but the most prevalent concept on this subject.

²⁰ Malekiān says, "Rationality means complete submission to correct reasoning (and I mean by "rationality" this meaning)" Mostafa Malekian, "Din va 'aqlaniyyah" in *Naqd va Nazar*, 1380 sh. However, at a different place he considers intellectual intuition and non-inferential knowledge as valid Mostafa

the degree of goodness of a belief.²⁴

The traditional perspective about justification considers it as an affair related to proofs and evidences, which are necessary for knowledge. There are three famous theories about justification: (1) Foundationalism. This is a theory about the structure of justification saying that beliefs are of two groups: basic beliefs and non-basic upon other beliefs, but justification of non-basic beliefs is based on other beliefs, which are resulted from inference or good reasoning. (2) Coherentism. This is a theory that rejects the basic beliefs, saying that justification is always concerned with the amount of coordination of one belief with other beliefs. (3) Reliabilism. This is a theory that changes the traditional perspective of justification and denies the dependence of justification on proofs and evidences; instead, it relies on acceptable belief-making process and methods. The rate of reliability of process methods or processes will warrant the amount of truth in those beliefs (JE 434). "Warrant" is a term that Alvin Plantinga uses instead of justification.²⁵ In his opinion and from the viewpoints of some epistemic reformists (Calvinists), a belief is warranted only when sound cognitional faculties make it, functions in appropriate cognitional surrounding, and planned to aim at the truth. Plantinga is convinced that most of our beliefs have been warranted in this way. Plantinga tried to prove that the condition of justification for knowledge is a useless condition, neither necessary nor sufficient. In an example he supposes a person being affected with some mental disease that restricts that person's epistemic system. Even if such person makes all efforts to fulfill all epistemic obligations (what is necessary for the justification of beliefs) and will be able to justify the beliefs, nonetheless that person's beliefs will not be warranted, they cannot be relied upon as being true.²⁶

Reasonableness is a lower degree of rationality. The philosopher Mikael Stenmark tried to make a

distinction between rationality and justification. In his view, rationality presents conditions of legitimacy to believe while justification expresses conditions of public acceptance.²⁷ In other words, rationality expresses the conditions for the acceptance of belief for oneself, and justification is the conditions for convincing the others. Stenmark considers the warrant to be expressive of conditions for the truth of a belief (RS 288). In contrast, Plantinga considers justification to be the very deontological rationality (WCD 45-6) and brings up the means-end-rationality as being related to action. Plantinga does not regard belief to be action; therefore, he considers it irrelevant to the subject.

Plantinga also sets forth three other kinds of rationality: (1) Aristotelian rationality (descriptive rationality), (2) rationality in proper functioning of reason and (3) judgments of reason. Proper functioning of reason is, in fact, a part of the same thing that Plantinga calls warrant; because proper functioning has been conditioned for faculties of knowledge in the warrant, and so, this condition gives the same meaning or nearly the same meaning for rationality. It is certain that warrant requires the existence of those faculties too; therefore, Aristotelian rationality will also be a part of conditions for warrant. What Plantinga considers as judgments of reason is, in fact, self-evident judgments of reason such as $2+2=4$, the whole is larger than the part, combination of two opposites is impossible, or the syllogism all humans are mortal, Socrates is a human, therefore Socrates is mortal. If such rationality exists in a place, undoubtedly the necessary warrant will be acquired. However, the existence of such rationality is not necessary for warrant; that is, this is a sufficient but not a necessary condition for the warrant (WCD 108-16).

It seems that such distinctions between rationality and justification are barely acceptable. Justification is a particular understanding of rationality or a special rank of it, not something different from it. Internalists have considered justification a requisite for legitimacy of true belief. Legitimacy of belief is relative to the person himself and has not direct relation to convincing of the others. Therefore, the distinction that Stenmark makes between justification and rationality is not acceptable. Besides, we cannot restrict deontological rationality, as Plantinga says, to the internalistic understanding and take justification equivalent to it. It is true that justification

²⁴ Alvin Goldman and John W. Bender, "Justification, Epistemic," in *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. Ted Honderich, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995, p. 434. [Henceforth cited as JE]

²⁵ See Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant and Proper Function*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press 1993, pp. 20-24. Also Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press 2000, pp. 156-178.

²⁶ Alvin Plantinga, *Warrant: The Current Debate*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press 1993, p. 45. [Henceforth cited as WCD]

²⁷ Mikael Stenmark, *Rationality in Science, Religion, and Everyday Life*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 1995, p. 219. [Henceforth cited as RS]

has a deontological sense, but deontological criterion is not confined to justification; it is the broader concept of rationality, which is expressive of deontological criterion. On this basis, wherever justification exists, deontological criterion exists; but it is not the other way round; that is, wherever deontological criterion (of rationality) exists, there may not be justification.

Warrant may also be one of the meanings or degrees of rationality, on the condition that it can play the role of authoritativeness for the subject. However, if it cannot be the authoritativeness but be merely part of a series of causes for knowledge, it has no relation to rationality; and will act like other real affairs such as light or physical objects etc., which cause true beliefs.

Normative Rationality

Normative rationality is divided into two main parts, theoretical rationality and practical rationality. Theoretical rationality is applicable to beliefs and ideas, but already since ancient times, rationality of an action has also meant that it must be done. This is certain, but a difficulty will immediately arise: if we take rationality of something to mean the necessity of choosing that thing, many other things that we are not obliged to choose but are permitted to choose would be left out of the scope of rationality.

Theoretical Rationality

Some affirmative definitions of theoretical rationality are usually based on one of the two prevalent views in epistemology, foundationalism and coherentism. Foundationalism considers rational by referring to beliefs that are self-evident or those that have been inferred by a reliable method, while coherentism finds rational beliefs to be consistent with the majority of a person's beliefs.²⁸ Gert has tried to present a negative definition of rationality so that he may go beyond the quarrel between foundationalism and coherentism. He first defines irrational beliefs and then says any belief that is not irrational, is rational. In his opinion, an irrational belief is one that has an obvious conflict with what a person should know. This definition will be relative and its relativity will bring about different results from person to person; because the things a

person ought to know are not necessarily the same things that another one should know (*RCD* 675).

Theoretical rationality is concerned with the fulfillment of one's rational and intellectual duties and responsibilities. It is well known that this approach to theoretical rationality comes from René Descartes and John Locke, although we can find such a concept of theoretical rationality among Muslim Philosophers before the time of Descartes. Ibn-Sīnā, for instance, writes in the tenth mode of his book *al-Eshārāt* that it is incumbent upon you to abstain from refuting what seems strange to you; you ought to stop until you find a reason. Before it, you should consider the issue as a possible affair.²⁹ Ibn Sīnā's judgment over the necessity for stopping is expressive of an obligation in the acquisition of knowledge. Muslim philosophers have suggested many ideas about the conditions and circumstances when we can form a belief, when we have to stop or where we should refute an argument, all of which would concern theoretical rationality.³⁰

There are different ideas about our cognitive duties and responsibilities. The most famous and prevalent view is evidentialism. According to the evidentialists, our duty is to avoid believing in something unless we have a reason for its truth. After enumerating the conditions and traditional concept of knowledge, Laurence Bonjour claims that according to this view the rational duty or responsibility of a person is to accept the beliefs for which some reasons are adduced, and nothing else; because we usually do not have a straight way toward the truth. Thus, we should have justifications for our beliefs.³¹

Opposing the above position are non-evidentialists including Stenmark, who argue that instead of necessity for the existence of a reason to accept a belief, we should rather consider the necessity for preparation to avoid or change a life while encountering some adverse reasons (*RS* 25). Stenmark believes that we have rational permission to accept beliefs, even if we do not find

²⁹ Hussayn- ibn- Abdollah- ibn- Sina (*Ave Sina*), *al-Isharat wa at-Tanbihat*, Tehran: Moassesah an-Nasr, 1379 q, Vol. 3, p. 418.

³⁰ Most Muslim philosophers agree with Ibn Sīnā. They have stated the conditions of a belief to be rationalized without mentioning theoretical rationality. They say we are not entitled to accept or deny something if we have not found a proof for its affirmation or negation.

³¹ Laurence BonJour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1985, pp. 7-8.

²⁸ Bernard Gert, "Rationality," in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Robert Audi, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press 1995, p. 675. [Henceforth cited as *RCD*]

any reason to refute them. In other words, the *prima facie* principle is to accept a belief unless the opposite of it is proved (*RS* 25). Here is also the place to refer to contextualists who merely pay attention to real actions of people without any belief in *a priori* rules; whatever human beings do should be the sole criterion; there is no *a priori* criterion serving as guide for actions.

Ignoring or abandoning the duties and responsibilities toward knowledge results in non-rationality or irrationality of the beliefs. Of course, as we said before, there are different ideas about duties and responsibilities, but all those who accept theoretical rationality, admit that disregarding, violating or neglecting such duties or responsibilities will result in the non-rationality or irrationality of beliefs.

In his article on rationality, Jonathan Cohen enumerates all kinds of theoretical and practical rationality. In his view, there are six kinds of theoretical rationality: logical, mathematical, analytical, inductive, based on probabilities, and common.³² All these are methods leading to results with the help of primary principles, which are premises to analogy, evidence for induction, probabilities, or best explanations. Separating logical rationality from mathematical rationality has not any plausible justification; since both of them function by deductive method. That part of mathematics that has been based on mathematical induction is not out of the mentioned methods. Therefore, we cannot say mathematics is a process separate from deduction or induction. Furthermore, Cohen has left out historical rationality. Nevertheless, we might say that we make use of the best method of explanation to acquire historical sciences. However, the fact of accepting historical narration, without explanation, which is essential in narrative-historical sciences, is a method apart from the above-mentioned cases. Here, we should pay attention to "authority" as a factor for rationality. Cohen has left out the most important basis of theoretical rationality, i.e. "intuition", too. None of the six quoted kinds of rationality without intuition is valid. Intuition itself is the source of appearance for the primary principles of deduction, concluding and reasoning. It is also the source of validity for the reasoning and conclusion themselves. This means that intuition is both the source of validity for those kinds of rationality themselves and an independent source for knowledge and rationality.

In addition to these, Cohen has completely forgotten hermeneutical rationality.

Practical rationality is applied to actions. Many philosophers have taken practical rationality to be the same as instrumental rationality. A rational action is acting in such a way that it can bring about the most positive effect in attaining one's goals. Of course, most philosophers note the fact that many goals may interfere with another; that is, people cannot achieve them altogether. So, it is necessary that we consider a rational action as an action that assists us to reach our systematic goals in the best way (*RCD* 675).

Practical Rationality (Means-End-Rationality)

Many Philosophers believe that we should apply practical rationality in a broader sense. Then from this viewpoint, rationality will take its minimalist and broader sense to include being permitted (*RCD* 474-5). Nevertheless, there are also others, who have used both meaning together saying that rationality's meaning is based on what is obligatory and what is permissible (*REP* 488). Practical rationality is usually explained according to the concept of obligation or permission. However, two more concepts are used in the explanation of normative rationality as well. Some have suggested goodness to be used. In their opinion, if something is rational, it must be good. The other concept is the term praiseworthy for rationality. They consider something rational when it is praiseworthy; and this is against what is blameworthy (*REP* 488).

I suggest to draw a spectrum, and put on one side of it necessity or indispensability, and on the other side prohibition or forbiddance. On such spectrum, any level lower than necessity would indicate "preference" or "being better to do." Again lower than that, which is in the middle area, would be permissibility or being authorized, and still lower than that would be non-preference or disproportion or aversion; and the last part of the spectrum would be non-permissibility.

Usually, practical rationality is considered as means-end-rationality; that is, rationality in actions will not be achieved, but through exact deliberation over ends and examining the means of attaining them. As for how and what affairs should be taken into account, there are different opinions. Traditional philosophers used to regard necessary the deliberation on both ends and means in the actions. But David Hume used rationality only in the meaning of instrumental and believed that reason would make feelings and emotions serve man

³² L. Jonathan Cohen, "Rationality," in *A Companion to Epistemology*, eds. Jonathan Dancy and Ernest Sosa, Oxford: Blackwell 1992, pp. 415-20, here p. 415-6.

to attain his ends; and the choice of such ends is merely emotional not rational, i.e. it depends upon man's will.

Instrumental Rationality. In means–end–rationality, with a Humean attitude, ends do not have any functions in rationalization; it is only the efficiency of the means toward the ends, that play a role to the rationality and this is due to the means. Every means that can operate better to attain the goal will be more rationalistic. As a result, being rational in this sense is measured in relation with the amount of influence on achieving the end. In most cases, when we talk about rationality, we mean means–end–rationality, this concept of rationality is prevalent in decisions making and game theory. John Elster writes:

The theory of rational choice is, before it is anything else, a normative theory. It tells us what we ought to do in order to achieve our ends as well as possible. It does not tell us what our ends ought to be. (At least this is true of the standard version of the theory). Unlike moral theory, rational-choice theory offers conditioned imperatives, pertaining to "means" rather than to ends. [RS 27]

According to this theory, a rational individual is someone who asks oneself: "what do I or the group I belong to prefer want?" and then, one ought to struggle to make use of the best means and instruments in order to reach the ends and do one's best to provide them" (RS 27). Here, in fact, it is referred to two individualistic and socialistic perspectives in means–end–rationality or rational-choice theory.

In order to receive a clearer picture of means-end rationality or instrumental rationality, suppose that someone wants to go from one place to another. He thinks about the choice of a means: do I go by bus, by car or by bicycle? Several factors are involved in his decision- making, one of which is his end or ends. Cognitive factors also intervene. If his end is merely reaching the destination in an appropriate manner, he had better go by car; but if we add another end to the first one, for example exercising to keep healthy, in this case, it is more rational to ride a bicycle. Again, we may add to this some information about the weather condition, for example, when it is raining and cold, and riding a bicycle can cause him to become sick, then, it will be more rational to go by car just as it was the first choice to be more reasonable. Now if some other information is gotten about the street circumstances, for example when there is a heavy traffic in all the directions to the

destination, then it will be more rational to use a bicycle. Still, we may add some other factors to these conditions like one's ability or inability for pedaling all the way, economical use of a bicycle, expensive gasoline, one's financial situation, social dignity to ride a bicycle and a number of other things. Then, with the addition of every new factor, it is possible that a change will be made in the rationality of the decision. Thus, not only rationality will become relative in relation with ends, but also it will be relative in proportion to information, circumstances, and individual abilities. Thus, what is rational for an individual might be non-rational for another individual in different circumstances? Rimón Arron says, "Rational action means that an agent, after necessary contemplation, takes a decision that has the most luck in attaining his end."³³

Now with a little indulgence in this case, we may conclude: if a decision, a plan, an action, a belief, and the like are rational, it must lead to the attainment of an end or ends of an individual or a group or the society, or at least, it should look as if it would reach the ends. Rationality is the cause for an effective relationship between the means and the ends. Therefore, means–end–rationality or instrumental rationality can be defined in agreement with Stenmark as "rationality consists in the efficient pursuit of means for achieving certain implicit or explicit ends or goals" (RS 27). The use of "efficient" in this definition is expressive of efficiency of the means. As such, means–end–rationality might be better defined as rationality that consists in applying effective instruments in order to achieve certain implicit or explicit ends of an individual or a group or the society. Consequently, means–end–rationality can be perceived as rationality that requires the application of effective instruments for achieving certain ends.

Value Rationality. Many philosophers, including Nicholas Rescher, have opposed Hume. In their opinion, rationality, in addition to instruments and means, also applies to ends. With this respect, rationality refers to making use of appropriate instruments to reach appropriate ends whether our purpose is an action or a belief or a value.³⁴ Aristotle and Kant, who initiated two

³³ Raymond Aron, *Main Currents in Sociological Thought*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1965, transl. into Persian by Baqir Parham, Tehran: Sherkat Intesharat Ilmi wa Farhangi, 1377 sh., p. 2.

³⁴ William L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion: Eastern and Western Thought*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ:

great mental traditions, neither considered rationality as merely instrumental. Those two mental traditions, took some particular-ends like happiness as necessary for rationality.

Depending on what kinds of ends have intended, rationality will take some new divisions: political, economic, moral, aesthetic, epistemic, etc. If the goal is acquisition of truth, epistemic rationality will be at work. Some Philosophers believe that criteria for rationality are not merely epistemic. However, all kinds of non-epistemic rationality need epistemic rationality. As an example, take the case of someone who is seeking economic rationality. In ordinary conditions, he needs cognitive beliefs as to what means could better help him to attain his economic ends. Then, it seems more advisable to divide both rationality and irrational state into two principal groups: epistemic rationality/irrationality and non-epistemic rationality/irrationality (REP 488).

If we want to sum up all kinds of rationality clearly, we had better start from our last division basing it on means-end and accomplish it at the same time. The weakness of instrumental rationality is in its emptiness and futility. However, this emptiness can be removed by adding value to the end. Moreover, we should note that a valuable end would not be achieved with an anti-value means. Imam Ali (Peace be upon him!) says: "There is no benefit from a good attained through the evil."³⁵ Therefore, the value should be added to the means to make it means-value-rationality, or in brief: value rationality. In the means-value-rationality, if the end is acquiring knowledge and achieving truth, this rationality will be epistemic; but if the end is other than this, the rationality will be non-epistemic. Thus, means-value-rationality can be defined as "rationality consists in applying suitable instruments in order to achieve appropriate ends in actions, beliefs, or values."

Stenmark has named this definition "holistic rationality," but it seems more advisable to keep this term for another place and make use of means-value-rationality or, in brief, value rationality here; because it is evident that suitability of ends and means is taken into consideration. It is valuableness of the end which is the important main quality in the discussion of rationality, and that is why value is used instead of end. An appraisal is required when we pay much attention to the appropriateness of the ends; and only those ends

are regarded as rational that are worth pursuing. We can also apply the same appraisal to the means; that is, the means must be appropriate too. This appropriateness is taken into account from several aspects; one aspect is the value itself. If an end or a means lacks value, it is useless. Therefore, in the means-value-rationality, we pay attention to both the value of end and the value of means. Value in this kind of rationality involves moral value, aesthetic value, pragmatic values, values concerning will, desires, demands and the like, economic values, cultural values, political values and other values.

Some sociologists divide rational action into two groups: (1) rational action directed toward an end: an example of such an action appears, in its best way, in civil engineering when it deals with the construction of a bridge on the basis of precise mathematical calculations; and (2) rational action directed toward a value: in this case, the objective is an inherent end, an end which is not reasonable by itself.³⁶ This dividing is good in that it pays the necessary attention to the issue of value; but from another side it is not accurate; since it has not been able to define the issue exactly, as if the reasonableness of the end is something different from its valuableness; but as it was mentioned in the first definition, rationality is a synthesis of rationality of ends and means, either of them would be imperfect without the other. Then, we cannot speak of "rationality of action" or "rational action". Of course, if a person does not want to talk about rational actions absolutely and persists only in the rationality of means, they may deal with a relative rationality about means. However, when we talk about rational actions unconditionally and invariably, we must surely consider rationality of ends.

Now, why must the ends and means be valuable? If we, like most of Humean empiricist philosophers, think merely about rationality of instruments, what will happen and what problem will arise? Sir Isaiah Berlin, in his article on "Rationality of Value Judgments," gives a good example: Suppose someone having only instrumental rationality has approved of an end which is sticking pins into a flexible surface. It makes no difference for him whether that surface is a tennis ball or a part of human skin. The person has attained his end

³⁶ Lewis A. Coser, *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, transl. into Persian by Mohsen Salasi, Tehran: Ilmi, 1377 sh, p. 300.

Humanities Press 1980, p. 650.

³⁵ From the maxims in the book *Nahj-al-Blāgha* (K 31).

anyway, enjoying sticking the pins into such a surface. Now, can we consider his behavior as rational one? Yes, according to instrumental rationality, this behavior should be taken as rational, but we can never accept that sticking pins into a person's face for enjoyment could be a rational behavior (RS 34).³⁷ Of course, we can find a fault with this example and say that the end of the person is to enjoy pins into a soft area and there is nothing bad about enjoyment by itself. The problem here is that the person has not chosen a suitable means and a suitable place for his enjoyment.

The above argument still does not seem to be correct; because if values are not brought up in investigation of ends, there is no reason to talk about values in the investigation of means. Any means that can help us reach our destination under special conditions must be permissible. Then, the problem remains to be solved. Moreover, we may give other examples concerning the ends. If someone decided on destroying the world or tormenting humans, including himself, as an end and chose specific microbial bombs as the most efficient means that cause the most horrible diseases (which exert the most painful wounds on their bodies rather than killing them), could we say here that such actions were rational? Undoubtedly, the means he has selected to attain his end is so effective, but the major problem exists in the scope of the end. If someone chooses bad ends such as destruction, disturbance, crimes or starting troubles for himself and other people, without being necessary to prevent another worse evil, his actions would not be called rational.³⁸ Any means that he chooses on an ill-will or the intention of doing that evil cannot be rational, although it is the most effective; and this non-rationality is due to the unsuitability of the end he has decided on. A more important difficulty is that we want to judge on the generality of the action of a doer. Generality of actions will not be judged separate from the ends and results. We may not decide on one element of an action alone in abstraction; all other aspects must be called upon to be tried altogether in the court for the right judgment.

In the means-value-rationality there is only

one system of evaluation conceived as a spectrum constraining different degrees of positive and negative values from the upper extent of necessity and obligation to the lower extent of prevention and prohibition. Whatever has usually said about deontological rationality comes here. In other words, this kind of rationality with its development in the concept of obligations creates spectrum of ideas including values of actions; it lets the five known areas of values that supervise all our ends and means appear by the names of obligatory, recommended, permissible, abominable, and unlawful.

In means-value-rationality there are two kinds of rationality: cognitional and non-cognitional. Cognitional rationality concerns the information needed and non-cognitional rationality is related to the way a person acts. It is evident that, in the area of ends, we need information so that we may know which ends are in front of us and what influence each of them can have on the circumstances of our life or how important each one of them is, etc. Furthermore, in the area of means we need to get correct information about means, the rate of speed, care, and economy for each of them in order to reach the end.

Non-cognitional rationality applies to means and is expressive of the amount of practical efficiency of means. In any case, the means we choose must actually be both valuable and efficient. This efficiency is relative, that is, we measure the efficiency of the means in proportion of one to another, since, in relation to the specific goals, some of them seem to be more efficient than others are. Then, it would be more rational to choose those that are more useful. As a result, using the term "appropriate" with regard to ends involves three things: value, necessary information, and accessibility. This stipulation also concerns the area of means and requires them to have three things: value, necessary information, and efficiency.

As there is a need to an appraisal on the both areas of ends and means, the means-value-rationality would become relative from two sides and bear either intensity or weakness, because the appraisal system has a spectrum. When it applies to the ends or to the means, it sets them in usefulness at different degrees of intensity or weakness. This phenomenon is used in the Islamic philosophy by the term *tashkīkī* with the explanation that rationality is subject to relativity and variation. It varies in weakness or intensity in accordance with the above-mentioned factors. Thus, we may use comparative or superlative adjectives to

³⁷ Sir Isaiah Berlin, "Rationality of Value Judgments," in *Rational Decision*, ed. Carl J. Friedrich, New York: Atherton Press 1964, pp. 221-3.

³⁸ William K. Frankena brings up some matters on this ground saying such an enjoyment is not bad even if it produces other problems. See his *Ethics*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall 1973, ch. 5.

show their relativity in efficiency and usefulness such as stronger, lower, the most pleasant, and so on.

Laying the base of means- end rationality and promoting it to the perfection of value rationality, we should take care that we never mean to accept those teleological theories. Means- value (value) rationality is consistent with deontological theories. When we talk about the "end", we do not necessarily mean the very results of the deed or action; rather, it can be the fulfillment of an obligation. As an example in economic rationality, the end may be doing economic obligations such as bringing about profitability for oneself and for the others. Hence, when Kant, one of the greatest deontologists in morality, brings ends into view, he does not mean some kind of teleological theory.

By adding up the idiomatic meaning of rationality, one can say that rationality is brought up in the domain of action and if applied when humans or other creatures have authority in their operations. Outside voluntary and arbitrary domains of affairs there is no place for talking about rationality and this fact is understood from the cases of application for the concept of rationality.

Rationality and Authority

Rationality and irrationality are not of the kinds to be contradictory to each other. It is not that every being is either rational or irrational. For example, trees houses, mountains, plants, celestial bodies, mines, handicrafts, factories, administrative or educational buildings, streets, roads, automobiles, ships, etc., are not described with either of the two adjectives rational or irrational. They are outside the rationality domain. Furthermore, Eternal Being, details of intervening State, resurrection, Paradise, Hell, Spiritual Heavens, the Empyrean Throne, the Reserved Tablet, angels, and so on, are not described with the adjectives of rational or irrational.

Then, these two adjectives are not contraries because there is no extremeness of dimension between them, and as we said before, rationality occupies on area of a spectrum with different degrees of intensity and weakness. The case is the same with irrationality. Therefore, they cannot be contraries exactly. What remains, however, is that the two adjectives (rational, irrational) should be defined as privation and possession toward some attributes, or features, that is they can either possess that faculty or not. As an example, we may give the two attributes of life and death. The adjective dead cannot be attributed to walls (except in figurative meanings), but humans or animals accept the

quality of being either dead or alive. So are the terms rationality and irrationality attributed to beings and matters that can be rational or irrational.

As rationality bears a positive meaning charge, it can be given to the things that may accept virtues or vices. Rationality means: making use of appropriate means in order to attain appropriate ends. Now if we want to decide on the propriety of the end or of the means, we need deliberation, measurement, and appraisal to choose among the ends. The case is the same with the choice among the means. Therefore, we may, confirm the words of Nicholas Rescher when he wrote that when we are settled in a situation to decide on doing something, i.e. when there is a choice or a decision before us to make, it is the reason that can and must operate.³⁹ Then, rationality applies on the grounds where there is free will and there is a choice.

All kinds of rationality belong to the beings that possess free- will. It is obvious that humans, the fittest species, can have rationality and irrationality. Other beings also may be described with such qualities to the extent that they possess that power and that volition. Some animals enjoy some power of comparing and choosing; the angels and the Jinn, in religious literature of monotheistic Faiths are known to be endowed with the power of understanding and choosing too. Of course, in the literature of some other religions, all creatures of God have been granted enough power and understanding in proportion to their species. With this respect, we can talk about their rationality or irrationality at the degrees of their voluntary behavior.

Stenmark points to three features with which such creatures are described and indicates specific rationality for each of them. They all, in his opinion, have the power of decision-making: (1) Theoretical rationality is concerned with what we (or some other kinds of beings) should believe or accept. (2) Practical rationality is concerned with what we (or some other kinds of beings) should do or perform. (3) Axiological rationality is concerned with what we (or some beings) should value or prefer over other things (RS 5).

Practical Rationality of Beliefs

Rationality or irrationality acquires its significance in relation to ideas, views and thoughts. For example,

³⁹ Nicholas Rescher, *Rationality: A Philosophical Inquiry into the Nature and the Rationale of Reason*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1988, p. 2.

we say Imam Ali (PBUH) had rational thoughts and ideas, but the thoughts and ideas of the Khawārij⁴⁰ were irrational; the beliefs of the believers in God are rational, but the beliefs of those who believe in Satan are Irrational; the plans and programs of Imam Khomeini (his mind remain sacred!) for the Islamic Revolution of Iran, were rational but those of George W. Bush to cause changes in the maps of the world, especially in the Middle East, were mischievous and irrational; Iran's strategies confronting the United States are rational but the strategies of Taliban and *al-qā'eda* are irrational.⁴¹ The scale for something to be rational or not depends on the volubility of ends that have been chosen. It also depends on the efficiency and value of the instruments and means chosen to reach the ends. Some other things including propositions, statements, sentences, hypotheses, theories, assertions, etc., which are expressive of thoughts, ideas or imaginations of human beings, can be rational or irrational too.

All the above-mentioned facts can be either rational or irrational for the reason that an individual, a group or society is free to choose them. However, if some circumstances occurred in which these affairs became compulsory and not voluntary for them to do and they were imposed on the people in such a way that they did not have a choice or an option, then none of the affairs would be described as rational or irrational. Of course, we should note that in all the above cases the adjective "rational" could be ascribed to them even without considering determination or intention for them, on the condition that only the descriptive meaning is meant not the normative sense of rationality.

Summarizing the above discussion one can identify three things in the case of beliefs: preparations for believing, to believe, and the belief itself. There is no doubt that the preparations for believing are mostly at our disposal; there is rarely anyone to dispute it. However, there is some doubt about the act of believing to be voluntary. It seems that freewill plays a different part for different kinds of believing. As for a belief itself, when in the finalized form of a made product, volition no longer applies. In other words, after all preparations were made and the believing was set, we cannot take a decision any more unless we have made our mind to

destroy the bases and disarrange the establishment. At the same time, we should also note that rationality of beliefs is not merely restricted to the above-mentioned criterion; rather, we need to consider the other specific criteria in the theoretical domain too. What I have said so far about the propriety of ends and appropriateness of means will be regarded as a common principle criterion for the rationality. Therefore, look for special subsidiary criteria in every domain for rationality to apply.

Subsidiary Criteria for Rationality of Beliefs

The criteria for rationality are divided into two principal and subsidiary parts. The principal criteria are those looking over all kinds of actions, have generality of covering everything, and are expressive of general conditions for legitimacy of actions. However, subsidiary criteria of rationality reveal the conditions of specific actions. Stenmark performs such a separation and enumerates the subsidiary criteria for the rational acceptance of a collection of beliefs, theories, hypotheses, and the like, as follows:

- (1) It is logically consistent, that is, it avoids self-contradiction (the principle of internal consistency)
- (2) It is consistent with other theories (the principle of external consistency)
- (3) It is coherent, that is, its components hang together (the principle of internal coherence)
- (4) It is coherent with other theories (the principle of external coherence)
- (5) It is less complex than rival theories (the principle of simplicity)
- (6) It makes possible the prediction of new phenomena (the principle of predictability)
- (7) It provides illuminating explanations of puzzling phenomena (the principle of explanatory power)
- (8) It is more comprehensive than other rival theories (the principle of scope)
- (9) It is easier to apply than its rivals [are], that is, in a given situation it is practically more useful (the principle of practical applicability), and so on.

It seems, however, that Stenmark has not expressed one important specific criterion in theoretical domain and this criterion is:

- (10) It refers to the discovery of the truth (the principle of truth thinking)

The tenth principle was added because a primary end in theoretical issues is to discover truth; otherwise, we would not do anything at all. Any approach that

⁴⁰ A group who rebelled against Imam Ali (PBUH) and Muāwiyya at the time of wars and started heresy in Islam.

⁴¹ Two groups of terrorists who have always threatened the safety of the world.

ignored the discovery of the truth would deviate from theoretical rationality. This fact is actually the sub-category of the general principle of truth-centeredness that can be considered as one of the general standards for all kinds of rationality in the actions, thoughts and in all attitudes, so that it can make the action rational; or else, we may say that action has digressed from rational end; because an action is taken to be rational if it were truthful; otherwise, it would lose the principle of value.

In theoretical rationality we cannot merely think instrumentally; because if we only dealt with theories on the basis of their being practically efficient, we would digress from the truth and this would cause us to get involved in an improper mentality toward different facts to experience illusions or vain imaginations and become deluded, none of which would we desire nor demand. Thus, in preferring thoughts, ideas and theories, rationality requires us to pay more attention to their power of discovering the truth.

It may be argued that the truth will be discovered just from the same ways in which the above nine principles were introduced; all of them in fact lead to discovery of the truth. This idea is, of course, partly true; some of the principles are the same things that Stenmark has presented in agreement with the realist thinkers. However, in order to understand how to discover or approach the reality, there are other ways too. One of the ways is the conformity with the true intuition. Another way is the correspondence with the revelation (and this way is only open to those who believe in revelation, if the validity of the revelation has been confirmed through rational methods). Then, it seems to be worthwhile to consider the discovery of the truth itself, and in more accurate words, being focused on the discovery of the truth, as an independent criterion too.

Allāmah Tabātabāi and Rationality

In the Islamic world, the question of rationality has not been raised under the above title. The question, however, has been discussed on other grounds with detailed valuable explanations about the answer. However, the place where rationality has been discussed on more than any other place is in the science of methods of religious jurisprudence. The science is, in fact, the epistemology of inference from religious texts, which is not, of course, restricted to recognition of the methods in hermeneutics or the principles of interpretation of the Qur'ān and traditions; it also

includes methods of applying the power of reason and inference to be studied. We can also find a part of the discussion in some books written on the interpretation of the Qur'ān. Moreover, you may look up for a smaller part of the discussion over rationality in the science of Logic in the section of arguments.

This essay addresses some viewpoints of one of the great philosophers and contemporary commentators of the Qur'ān, Allāmah Tabātabāi, who has somehow dealt with this subject.⁴² The scope for a complete discussion from the perspective of Allāmah Tabātabāi is widespread; therefore I will go only to one dimension of the subject, epistemology, and address the matters in proportion to the needs.

Truth and Authoritativeness

The word "truth" is used with different meanings in different sciences. For Allāmah Tabātabāi, truth, in epistemology, is "a proposition which corresponds with reality." This is, of course, the most common meaning given to truth, but there are people who would not even agree on this meaning.⁴³

According to the above meaning, truth becomes the description of propositions. Whenever it is talked about truth, it is meant a perception that corresponds with reality and when it is talked about reality, the purpose is the real world in itself irrespective of human perception. Confronting the truth is untruth or lie. It is said about perception that it does not conform to reality.⁴⁴ Allāmah

⁴² Sayyed Muhammad Hussayn Tabātabāi (1902–1981), the Iranian philosopher, jurist, and commentator of the Quran, was the master of many great men in seminaries and universities today, such as Martyr Mutahhari, Master Javādi, Master Mesbāh, Sayyed Hossayn Nasr, Henry Corbin, and Shāyghān.

⁴³ Theories of truth in epistemology show this fact. In the new epistemology, coherence theory of truth, pragmatic theory of truth, and performance theory of truth are presented at the side of correspondence theory of truth. However, the correspondence theory of truth has been dominant more than two thousand years and now enjoys having the most advocates. In this regard, all thinkers usually lay the base of truth upon its corresponding with reality. For further information, you can refer to entries for theories of truth in the Encyclopedia of Philosophy by Paul Edwards under such titles on these grounds.

⁴⁴ Martyr Mutahhari, as the most important explicator of Allāmah's thoughts has expressed this very clearly.

Tabātabāi considers the goal of philosophy to be the distinguishing of real beings from imaginary or illusive ones with recognition of their causes; and he complies with "realism" to be the basis of his philosophy. The main characteristic of knowledge and perception, in his opinion, indicates "reality". Truthfulness is an attribute of what becomes known by our knowledge.

Allāmah Tabātabāi warns those who confuse two features of science: its indication and its authoritativeness. He says, "Whether we take 'authoritativeness' in the meaning: 'necessity of an action according to a reason which is authoritative,' or define it as an 'eliminator of apology,' or take it as a 'medium to affirm its affiliate,'⁴⁵ it will be different from the act of indicating and discovering reality. Authoritativeness from his viewpoint, is fictional and mentally established, while discovering is real.⁴⁶ Allāmah's precision in the matter is an accurate notice, which has been disregarded by some thinkers.

As indicated before, rationality is defined as making use of appropriate instruments in order to attain a well-chosen end. Identifying correct instruments and suitable ends is a matter pertaining to the power of reason. For this too, there are good methods that cause us to understand the accuracy of the results, which is the same appropriateness of the ends and means. Such ways and methods are the authoritativeness of reason.

Then, what is authoritativeness? In the science of Methodology of Jurisprudence, which is the most important science in the Islamic world related to epistemology, it is talked about authoritativeness of certainty and authoritativeness of supposition and probability, most parts of the discourse on the Methodology of Jurisprudence indicate centrality of

these authoritativeness. The purport of authoritativeness is to authenticate or to excuse (*munajjez* and *mu'azzer*).⁴⁷ These two features are like the two sides of a coin; together in a coin but not settled on the ground of the same time. Either of the two sides is potentially present while one of them is visible. So are the two features of the authoritativeness: one part of it is argumentation and reasoning but the other is not reasoning, like intuition. Either it has been able to discover the reality or not. If it has, we can call the authoritativeness authenticating (i.e., affirming and establishing a fact), but if it has not, we can call it excusing.

When authoritativeness used in the first positive sense, it renders the doer's result indispensable and certain, and there remains no excuse for the opponent to stand against it and if the opponent stands against the order, this person deserves punishment. The deceased Ayatollāh Sadr⁴⁸ in his book, *Durus Fi Elm al-Usool (Lessons in the Science of Methods)* considers the certainty of the authoritativeness as a right for the Lord to be obeyed in certain, suppositional and probable duties. In his opinion, the issue of authentication is for the duty to be clear even if the clarification is probable unless there is a kind of security and permission from the Lord's side denoting this opposition to the probable or suppositional duty. Of course, about the definite discovery of the duty, it is not significant that the Lord gives permission for the opposition. On this basis, they say it is not reasonable to negate the authentication of certainty, and its excusability.⁴⁹ As for the authoritativeness being excusing, although the result may be against the reality, the doer is excused about it and will not be called to account or blamed.

From the above discussion, we can understand the relation between rationality and truth. Rationality of a belief has no necessary accompaniment with its being right or wrong- Rational belief can be right or wrong; in the same way, the true belief can be rational or irrational. When the coin of rationality authoritativeness is tossed, it may settle on the side of authenticating or on the side of excusing. Authentication is the positive

See Sayyed Mohammad Hussayn Tabataba'ii, *Osoul Falsafeh wa Rawesh Realism*, Qom: Moassesah an-Nash al-Islami, pp. 102-4. [Henceforth cited as *OFR*].

⁴⁵ These, in addition to other commentaries on authoritativeness, have better been investigated in the science of methodology of jurisprudence.

⁴⁶ From now on when I use the word "fiction" or its derivatives like "fictional," I do not mean story or false things. Instead, I refer to mentally established (or mentally posited) concepts that are not real but related to the reality by a kind of similarity or a claim, and related to voluntary actions. Allāmah's view about fictional concepts will be explained anon. See Sayyed Mohammad Hussayn Tabataba'ii, *Hashiah al-Kifayah*, Qom: Bonyad fekri 'allamah Tabataba'ii, Vol. 2, pp. 179-80. [Henceforth cited as *HK*].

⁴⁷ Both features are implied from definitions given by Allāmah.

⁴⁸ Ayatollāh, Muhammad Bāqir Sadr (1934-1980), the jurist and contemporary master in the science of Methods, was martyred by Saddām.

⁴⁹ Sayyed Mohammad Baqir as-Sadr, *Dorous fi Elm al-Usool*, Beirut: Dar al-Ketab al-Lobnani & Maktabat al-Madrasah, 1406 q, pp. 33-6. [Henceforth cited as *DIU*].

side of authoritativeness, which affirms the reality and truth attaching with it; Excusing is the negative side of authoritativeness, which removes the obligation that the doer, in spite of his struggles to attain it, has not been able to get informed of it; and this is where no truth is accompanied with it.

Some thinkers believe that we cannot realize rationality without the truth. If our object of knowledge or the reliable supposition is not real, we cannot consider it as rational. It seems that their intention is that in the case of rationality, the object of knowledge or reliable supposition must be in conformity with the reason. On their view, the correspondence with the reason signifies the reality of the object, because the reason does not make an error; but as we said before, this definition of rationality, even if true, is out of our discussion here. Our issue is the rationality of the act of acceptance and belief making in us, not the conformation or non-conformation of object with the reason. We must have authoritativeness for every voluntary action, including our acceptance of beliefs, whether they correspond with the reality or not. The deceased Martyr Sadr specifies that authoritativeness of certainty, in its meaning of authenticating and excusing, is not conditioned to its correspondence with reality (*DIU* 40). Imam Khomeini (may his soul remain sacred!) too,⁵⁰ considers authoritativeness of certainty neither inherent nor real because of its way of discovery; rather, he takes it as a rational judgment that has been fictionalized (mentally posited) for certainty.⁵¹ However, it makes a difference on different grounds for whom and toward what there are authentication, indispensability of obligation and excusableness of the doer. In mathematics and logic, authenticating and excusing are toward the mere reason, in experimental sciences, they are toward experiential reason and in religious injunctions, they are in front of God, and so on.

In every action we perform, we need authoritativeness so that we may not be blameworthy toward individual reason, toward collective reason, in front of people and ourselves, before God, etc. and be entitled to act and practice and fulfill our obligations. Thus, we can say that rationality is having

authoritativeness. Rationality can be sought in its value, to give us the right of acting, and after acting, to excuse us from probable errors that we may make and remove possible blamed from us. Rationality causes us to serve God better and removes probable punishments, in the case of making mistakes.

*Practical Rationality from the Viewpoint of
Allāmah Tabātabāī*

Like many other thinkers, Allāmah Tabātabāī's perspective in practical rationality is that we should deliberate over the relation between ends and means. He considers the necessity of end and the existence of benefit in actions as general fictions (*OFR* 328). In his explanation of this matter, Martyr Mutahhari too, considers the necessity of a relation between ends and means. He assumes this because of expedience and purpose. He refers to the validity or nullification of fictions as the only rational scale (*OFR* 293). These two thinkers have not explained more than this around the subject, but we can deduce the necessity of efficiently and applicability of means from all of the things they have said in order to attain the ends and the values of such thoughts. This seems to be the same means-value-rationality, to which Stenmark has referred as holistic rationality.

Voluntary Acts and Awareness. In the opinion of Allāmah Tabātabāī, all animals, including human beings, have to satisfy a part of their needs, which are met for plants naturally, with the intermediary and direction of desires, enjoyment, volition, and thoughts. These affairs are, in fact, like tools and instruments that animal nature applies in order to accomplish the processes of the life. On this basis, an animal needs a series of voluntary activities to enable it to keep living and surviving. On the other hand, voluntary actions are done by thinking, so they have not concealed from the animal's intelligence; that is, the animal is aware of all physical functions performed by means of its volition and decision. As every voluntary action is performed for a specific end, the animal must be conscious of the ultimate result of its actions. From this, we can conclude that an animal is aware of both the acts done with the intervention of its thought and of the results gained from them. Moreover, since the animal's action is done with the stimulation of its nature dealing with external materials in which it must make some alterations, it has also to recognize and distinguish the materials of its actions. Beyond all

⁵⁰ Ayatollāh Ruhollāh al-Musawī al-Khomeini (1902–1989), the great jurist, scholar in Islamic methodology, philosopher and Gnostic, who established the Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁵¹ Ja'far Sobhani, *Tahzib al-Usool*, Qom: Ismailian, 13816 sh, Vol. 2, p. 298.

of these, it must be familiar with the methods which can better let the animal achieve its end by interfering and possessing the materials; because in some actions, there must be performed some exact and complicated changes that are necessary. Then, awareness of the special quality of the act and the animal's practical skill has always been taken into account. All these processes are much more complicated in human beings that are considered the most intelligent of animals (OFR 302-3).

In explaining Allāmah's view, Martyr Mutahhari states the following:

In addition to the above ideas and thoughts that no voluntary action will be realized without them (according to the sixth article of the book *Usool-e Phalsapheh va Ravesh-e Realism [The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism]* named *Edrākāt-e E'tebāri [Mentally Established Perceptions]*), a number of fictional thoughts are also at work, which are necessary at the start of a voluntary action. According to this, every volitional act, originating from an animal is preceded by a series of real thoughts and a series of fictional thoughts. [OFR 303]

Voluntary Actions and Desire. From the viewpoint of Allāmah Tabātabāii, every voluntary action done by an animal is originated from a desire and the end that is primarily meant by the animal to satisfy its desire. For example, a child first needs food and then an inclination mixed with excitement and enjoyment is felt inside the child, which we call hunger. This immediate excitement originates from the desire for food and the search that he/she makes to get the food is for the satisfaction of this desire, which we may call eating one's fill.

If in some cases, we seem to act unlike our desire, it is due to a stronger desire surely hidden in us, which is the very source of our action. For example, when we start acting generously contrary to our selfish desires, we feel and know that we have done something against our desire. Of course, the point is correct; we have acted against one or two desires, but we must know at the same time that there are other stronger desires in us that have become sources for our decision. One of such desires is called altruism opposite of egoism, which has overcome other selfish intentions and let them become the source of the good deed. If there were not such a desire, it would be impossible that our volition could be instigated to lead to an action (OFR 305).

Fictions. Up to now, I have used the word fiction in the explanation of Allāmah's views. Now, it is time to

elaborated on the concept and to clarify it. The word fiction (*e'tebār*) and its derivatives are used in various meanings in philosophy. The two meanings used by Allāmah are: (1) the concept that has no object out of mind to stand for it, which is almost opposite essence. This is the most common sense used in general. (2) Something which is necessary for a human or for an animal's active power or force. This sense has been used in a more specific way that we may call pragmatic mentally established (OFR 303).

In this case, a mentally established (*e'tebāri*) concept is a concept that is not actual but it has something similar to it outside. This is exactly like a metaphor. When we speak of figurative meaning, we liken the thing to a feature in an actual one. For example, we say, "Hasan is a lion," because of his bravery, which is the point of similarity. Otherwise, we know that he is not a fierce lion. Here, a mental establishment has been taken. Thus, calling Hasan a lion is fictionally not really; and this is the way the word has been used in the sixth article of the book *Principles of Philosophy and Method of Realism*. Allāmah Tabātabāi gives more explanations about fictional concepts and expresses their specialties in some definitions as follows:

- (1) These meanings are illusionary without any realization out of the mind. When we call a person "lion," we know he is not really a lion out there; but he is only imagined this way in the mind.
- (2) The new application for lion might be removed with a change in our mental state and feeling and turn into other applications like a mouse (if his action were cowardly) or into other things.
- (3) Each of the illusionary meanings is based on a fact; in other words, it can be regarded as a copy of that fact.
- (4) Such illusionary meanings, although unreal, have real effects and are not futile. (OFR 281-9).

Therefore, as stated before, fictional thoughts may be found in any voluntary action and are like the above example. Now, we should see why we need such fictional thoughts and how they enter the domain of our action. Here, I will mention some steps they take to come into use:

- (1) It is the ends or purposes of humans (or other animals that do voluntary and conscious acts) that make them move and go forward.
- (2) As we do our actions by thinking and perceiving, we must have an idea about our work and its object, (the materials on which the work is performed) and about the relationship between our ends and means too.

- (3) Active forces in us produce internal feelings.
- (4) Then, we give the way of our perceiving- feeling to the action, to the matter, and to ourselves. An example is the appetite for food, which is formed in the mind by the names of volition, the wanted and the person who wants it, which manifest themselves as action, matter, and man.
- (5) There is a "must" present in the situation, which operates as a relation between the practical faculty and its effect in such a way that we proceed to the things in front of us when we are hungry. Some of them we find edible but some others inedible. Then we say, "We should eat this, but we shouldn't eat that." Thus, this relation of obligation, which exists between the practical faculty and its direct outside influence, is real.
- (6) However, the process is not finished here. We put the same relation between the practical faculty and the perceptual image, which we had at the time of realization of the effect and activity of the faculty. As an example, while hungry, we think of eating enough, and then put the relation of necessity between ourselves and the internal feeling of eating enough, or the enjoyment gained from eating enough, and demand the state which is felt from it. Such relation is not real; it is fictional, which we show it by the word "should" or "must."
- (7) With the operation of our practical faculty a great number of these "should/ must" relations are put in their non- real cases and all the means for reaching the end (here, eating enough) are found to be felt necessary; whereas, they are not, in fact, necessary. Now, in our example of food, although we have set the object of should to be eating enough, it won't take place without letting the food go down the throat for swallowing, and swallowing won't be done without chewing the food, and chewing won't be done without putting it into the mouth, without picking it up, without approaching the food and so on, we attribute to all of them the adjective "necessary." On this basis, the fictional necessity is present in everything as the first fiction.
- (8) As all pieces of work have been fulfilled referring to one end, we give all of them the term "unity and oneness" and think of all as one job. (OFR 302-16).
- (9) The knowledge that causes humans and other animal's actions to become perfect immediately and directly is fictional knowledge not real knowledge; because fictional knowledge are as connectors between humans and their actual

movements, not real knowledge, although real knowledge is necessary and there is no fiction without reality (OFR 344-5).

Thus, from Allāmah's point of view, practical rationality is tightly connected with the concept of necessity. It mostly refers to the duty of practical faculty not to the preference or worthiness. This idea is worth thinking. As we said before, in the discussion on rationality, we cannot make use of only the concept of necessity to explain rationality; rather, it is necessary to consider a spectrum on one side of which we put the concept of necessity, on the other side, the concept unlawfulness, and in the middle, preferences of positive to negative and equalness. The five precepts in the religion of Islam are, in fact, expressive of the same practical rationality in which all the people believe, regardless of every religion, faith or school. It is not reasonable to make the judgments of practical reason restricted only to one of the five saying, "Every action issued from a doer if with the belief in "necessity" (OFR 316). This issue becomes clearer when we go to see different acts of humans in order to notice many of them happen due to their habits, because of ignorance or nervousness, as a result of mistakes and negligence, indifference, nonchalance, or lack of preference on one side, the choice of another without priority and the like.

Allāmah Tabātabāi in answering to these issues considers the fiction of the five precepts (necessary, recommended, permissible, abominable, and unlawful) much more recent than fiction of common necessity that exists in all actions. There is lot of things worth discussing around this issue, and the deceased Ayatollāh Mutahhari, the explicator of this book seems not to be in agreement with the deceased Allāmah, because he has left the point unsaid, to show respect for his master. However, some others have expressed the difficulty questioning this general fiction of necessity in all actions. His holiness Sheikh Sādiq Lārījāni, in his rejecting the opinion says, firstly, we do not find such a fiction in ourselves; secondly, there is no need to it, and the volition by itself is sufficient to do the work. Thus, we do not need the necessity fiction as a supplement for volition; thirdly, such a fiction is futile and useless, since it is not significant for anyone to make up fiction for oneself. If someone else, with priority of position makes up such an order, it is significant but no one might have such a superior rank for oneself.⁵²

⁵² Sadeq Larijani, "Ilzamat 'aqli wa Akhlaqi" in *Pajhooheshhaye Osouli*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1382 sh, pp. 21- 5.

Theoretical Rationality in Allāmah Tabātabāī

With regard to what we said in theoretical rationality, we should see the perspective of Allāmah about choosing the end and means. Furthermore, we should see whether he mentions another standard as the principal criterion for rationality or beings here the same specific criteria in theoretical domain. Allāmah Tabātabāī expresses the principal fiction perceptions under the title *The Principle of Following Knowledge* in the same article and then explains underneath the conditions of theoretical rationality. In Allāmah's view, the discussion over rationality in the domain of knowledge and science begins from Pragmatic Situation, because we, in our field of activity deal with the fact outside our mind and we are in demand of that. Everything we do, such as sitting, standing, talking, hearing, sleeping, waking, seeing, smell, drinking or eating are all voluntary activities consciously chosen. We deal with the affairs that are outside our mind to which we want to get. We want to go away from illusive affairs, because we like to act in terms of our realistic nature.⁵³ Then we inevitably find a way to become related with reality. The best thing we find is knowledge. For this reason, we fictionalize the knowledge as reality"; that is, the perceptive form outside our mind to be called "reality" and then consider the external effects taken from that knowledge and understanding as real (*OFR* 324-5).

Among various perceptive states, such as knowledge, supposition, doubt, and illusion, we deem only knowledge as valid and fictitious; because it is only knowledge that can connect us with the outside world, with perfect confidence. The other states of perception, because of their in stability and double-sidedness, cannot provide us with a strong and reliable ground for connection to outside. In other words, it is only knowledge that has authority of taking up the place of reality for us and nothing else. The other states of perception do not have such an authority; because that firmness and strength which exists in reality, is only found in the knowledge and not in doubt, supposition or illusion (*Ibid*: 325). Allāmah Tabātabāī, in his discourse on the *Methodology of Jurisprudence*, has also dealt with this subject saying that authoritativeness and necessity of acting according to the knowledge and accepting it is a rational affair without having any doubt in it. Humans fictionalize the knowledge and settle it in the position of

reality (*HK* 178-9). In summary, Allāmah says:

Then, we should judge that humans and every other living being could never dispense with fictionalizing knowledge opposite doubt and hesitation. They will fictionalize knowledge based on instinctive emergency, that is, they will take perceptual image as the very reality in the outside world. (Fiction of reality of knowledge, according to this article but of certainty, in terms of the *Methodology of Jurisprudence*). [*OFR* 325]

Fictionalizing of reality of knowledge signifies considering it as authoritative, giving it rationality of belief and practicing in accordance with it. Then we may say that the main indicator for authoritativeness of science is being directed toward reality, which means the same referring to discovering reality (the principle of truth thinking), which we talked about among the criteria for rationality of belief. How can we become assured of discovering reality?

On the basis of Aristotelian logic, which Allāmah also complies with, the first four criteria of Stenmark (the principles of internal consistency, external consistency, internal coherence and external coherence) are considered as the essential conditions for rationality of belief; because, as everybody knows well, the principle of contradiction and the necessity of bringing proof are among the firm bases of this logic for arguing and controversy.

As for the fifth principle (the principle of simplicity), Allāmah fictionalizes the principle of "choosing the lighter and the easier," which implies the principle of simplicity too (*Ibid*: 318). But about the ninth principle (the principle of practical applicability), finally at the end, under the topic a conclusion to all talks and discussions he brings up other fictions including the fiction of usefulness and end in action, which is a more common state of expressing the same principle of practical applicability.

As for the other three principles left, we did not find an explicit expression of his, but we can guess that Allāmah accepted these three principles; since they are reasonable principles and he has accepted the reasonable principles everywhere. It is true that fictionalizing of reality of knowledge of the principle of usefulness and end in action and of the principle of choosing the lighter and easier has followed the same rational principle.

Most of all is that Allāmah considers the authoritativeness of method of rational beings as inherent in it, in such a way that we cannot act against it (*HK* 206-7). As for those three principles being

⁵³ He explains this in the second and the third articles of his book in detail.

reasonable (principle of predictability, principle of explanatory power and principle of scope) we should say that what is reasonably expected from scientific theories is that they should be able to meet the expedients of the principles. If a scientific theory does not have the capabilities of explaining and predicting the phenomena, this theory will be, from the viewpoint of the wise, useless and non- scientific. Therefore, as a result, it can be said that Allāmah Tabātabāi's view on rationality of belief is very close to that of Stenmark and there is no essential difference between them.

Certainty and Supposition

After these reflections about argumentation of knowledge from the viewpoint of Allāmah Tabātabāi it is now time to address his understanding of knowledge. Are all kinds of knowledge involved in his epistemic rule by which belief and action can be argued about knowledge, or is it that only some of them are included in the rule?

From Allāmah Tabātabāi's viewpoint, the knowledge has divided in accordance with the amount of certainty and confidence that belong to it. Of course, we may divide the knowledge based on other qualities. However, what causes this difference is only the same characteristic. The primary principle is that we are looking for reality and so, we want to find a reliable way to let us attain reality; now, it is here that we set the knowledge in the place of reality and apply the rule of "being real" to it. What proves fiction of knowledge is the amount of its directing toward reality and nothing else. With regard to this fact, knowledge whether rational or traditional, whether empirical or historical, does not make any difference from that way. The difference is in the scale of realism of knowledge.

Based on the above quality, knowledge is divided into two kinds. In the case of certain knowledge, the circumstance is clear and the wise believe that certain knowledge settles in the place of reality. In other words, humans are created to intrinsically act by knowledge. Even if someone says to another, "If my order received to you in a scientific manner, do not accept it", whether he obeys the order or not, he has acted scientifically. Because if he obeys the order, he has acted according to the knowledge arisen from the order, and if he does not obey the order, still he has acted based on the knowledge conveyed to him. Then he has acted scientifically in either way (HK 206-7).

However, suppositional knowledge is somehow

doubtful. In the opinion of Allāmah, humans with regard to the principle of choosing the "lighter and easier" practically reject everything that is not important. We apply this method of choosing in hundreds of cases every day. One of such cases is suppositional perception. If our guess has more probability on one side, the other side will become unimportant; so, it will not be preferred. Strong supposition is taken the same position as certainty and is given the name of "knowledge" It may be called "reliable supposition" which is the circuit for humans actions, and it is one of the general fictions (OFR 326).

Allāmah gives an example for this and says that if they ask us how we know about something: we answer, "Mr. so and so told us." We take the words of another person as the reason for our knowledge about that event. Both the other people and we consider the news as knowledge.⁵⁴ In other words, the wise take some news that does not bring certainty, but has the conditions of creating confidence as knowledge. The wise thinkers do not pay attention to the opposite, less important side of the news and give it up (HK 191-2).

Allāmah Tabātabāi even goes further and says that authoritativeness of action according to the reliable supposition is put at the side of authoritativeness of certainty widthwise not lengthwise and those who put it lengthwise are wrong; because it seems as if they, with the abolishment of the less probable opposite side, first take reliable supposition as directional certainty, then they set it in the place of reality, which is wrong; because, we do not act about supposition with a two-stage method. Rather, we abolish the probability of the opposite side from the beginning just as we did with the certainty (HK 186-7). Therefore, summing up this part, we should say:

To the wise, authoritativeness is just for the knowledge and does not transmit to other things. However, to them knowledge is not restricted to dogmatic beliefs to which there is no probability of the opposite. Instead, every authentic acceptance that the wise do not give heed to as the probability of its opposite is considered as authoritative to them. One of such cases is the single news when we are confident about it (HK 210).

Conclusion

⁵⁴ In order to accept a piece of news as true, it is, of course, necessary for the reporter to have authenticity and reliability, which are assumed to exist here.

In an adding up of what we have said so far, we can say that from Allāmah Tabātabāī's view rationality, in general, is related to the domain of action. If it is used about theoretical issues, it may take the meaning of having authoritativeness on the acceptance of a view; that is, humans, in order to make a belief, must have authoritativeness so that they can do a rational action. Therefore, in the field of theoretical rationality too, they must obtain both the common criteria of practical rationality and the specific criteria of the belief domain.

Rationality is not attached to truth or reality, but it is inclined toward it; that is, when the belief-making has the authoritativeness in order to discover the reality, we set our knowledge and reliable supposition in its place. There is, of course, the possibility for an error or errors: An action may be rational but turns out to be erroneous. Although rationality is generally concerned to actions, limitations of human action too will transmit to it. As an example, we should point to limitations of individual abilities and differences in them, which cause a kind of relativity in rationality. Allāmah Tabātabāī considers this fact as a rational affair, which has emphasized on it in the religious laws. In the commentary of the following Qur'ānic verse: "Allah charges no one beyond its capacity, for it is only that, which it has earned and against it, and that which it has deserved."⁵⁵

He says the capacity is the same potentiality and ability of the individuals. They cannot bear obligations that are beyond their capacity. Duties or obligations in excess to their abilities cannot be obeyed. This fact is found both in the divine traditions and in the life policy of the wise. With respect to this, the rationality of individuals in their actions, including theoretical actions and the matters concerning the power of understanding will differ in proportion to their capacities. Accordingly, we cannot expect different people to have the same amount of Faith and to believe in what is beyond their perception.⁵⁶

Reply to Charles E. Butterworth (pp. 65-69)

First I should express my gratitude to Prof. Butterworth for his trouble in studying and making a review of the presented papers at KJSNA panel. A philosophical and critical view by a professor from another culture of an Iranian body of thoughts can open new horizons to the

discussion. Islamic culture has taught us that "Receive wisdom from anybody who offers it to you. Look at what one said, not at who said it," based on this bright saying of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, to find a word of wisdom one should cross the historical, geographical, and cultural borders; because science and knowledge does not know any border. So we try to make the best use of the critical views.

I deal with critiques from two perspectives: methodology and content analysis. First, I should state that the process used by Professor Butterworth in summarizing five articles (which amount to one hundred pages) into six pages is somehow wonderful. This process required substantial summarization and one couldn't expect a detailed analysis of all nuances. The compressed summary might have also led to some topical organization that didn't recognize how the scope of the essays went beyond the stated theme for the conference. From the alleged six common assumptions or presuppositions I disagree with at least some of them. For example, Professor Butterworth states, "Being has a divine origin, and information about it is to be derived solely from the Quran and hadith."

While I accept the first part of this sentence, namely that being has a divine origin (albeit not by mere blandly imitation but through rational arguments), I disagree with the use of "solely" its second part. Reason is prior to the Quran and hadith. Contrary to Christian faith, Islam considers reason prior to faith that is why, Islamic theology is rationalistic. That God whom reason cannot recognize, has no room in our culture. This is accepted by most of Islamic denominations, but Shia holds it more strongly earnestly than they do. Many hadith books such as *Bihār al-Anwār* and *al-Kāfi*, which are the most important Shiite hadith books, begin their books with a chapter titled "Reason" and/or "Knowledge." Of course, reason itself has some shortages or deficiencies. That is why we are in need of revelation and words of Infallibles (the Prophet or Imams). I have pointed to other sources in my paper after mentioning the basic and derivative criteria of rationality, which I agree in most part of it with Mikael Stenmark,

However, in order to understand how to discover or approach the reality, there are other ways too. One of the ways is the conformity with the true intuition. Another way is the correspondence with the revelation (and this way is only open to those who believe in revelation, if the validity of the revelation has been confirmed through rational methods). [p. 36 above]

⁵⁵ Sura al-Baqarah, 2: 286.

⁵⁶ Sayyed Mohammad Hussayn Tabatabaī, *al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Quran*, Qom: Daftar Intesharat Islami, 1417 q.

Islam considers four sources of knowledge: *'aql* (reason), *naql* (the Quran, *hadith*, and history), experience, and intuition. The Quran and *hadith* do not suffice us. The authenticity of the Quran and *hadith* is demonstrated through reason. These four sources are also utilized in ontology as well.

Another assertion by Professor Butterworth infers that, "It follows, then, that just as Islamic philosophy must be rooted in acceptance of the Quran and *hadith*, Western philosophy is erroneous because it is not focused on the divine." This assertion does not hold. To be rooted or not rooted in divine world is not a criterion for acceptance or rejection of a philosophy. Conformity of philosophy with rational criteria is the decisive factor for validity, which I have strongly stated in my paper where I displayed the criteria for rationality of thoughts and views independent of faith. At beginning of the essay I stated, "Perhaps, the most important responsibility of ours is to keep rationalistic in our jobs. Therefore, it seems to be worthwhile here to elaborate upon rationality, making known its different sides as well as recognizing its criteria."

After obtaining the independent criteria of rationality, I took a look at the Quran so as to determine what the Quranic view would be concerning the criterion of rationality and how much conformity it has with the independent criteria of rationality. However, this does not imply that a philosophy will be right if it is rooted in the Quran and *hadith*, and if not, it will be wrong.

Professor Butterworth seems to suggest that all essays concur in thinking that the best authorities for Islamic philosophy are Ibn Sina and Mulla Sadra; and neglect al- Farabi, Ibn Tufayl, Averroes, and Ibn Khaldun or pass over them in silence. In response, I'd like to clarify that though among Shiites three philosophers (Ibn Sina, Shaykh- e- Eshraq, and Mulla Sadra) are the most prominent, this does not imply the negation of others or neglecting them. If a work is of a historical dimension and relates to those philosophers we will pay attention to them and present their views. The topic of my paper, as its title says, is concerned with the views of a contemporary philosopher Allāmah Tabātabāī which I have viewed it from epistemological perspective. Of course, it was not possible for me to refer to all philosophers in this paper. If I presented the views of Plato, Aristotle, and those known as scholastics, it would amount to a voluminous book not just a paper. Here I should note that the history of philosophy is taught in Iranian universities as it is done in universities of the West. Many works have been published in Iran in

explanation of ancient philosophers, the Middle Ages, modern, and postmodern philosophers.

Professor Butterworth asserts that all papers have employed the literature of *Usul al- Fiqh (Principles of Jurisprudence)*. In my essay I have used philosophical literature especially the epistemological one. Many well-known philosophers of this field are included, such as, for example BonJour, Chisholm, Cohen, Elster, Gert, Goldman, Bender, Moser, Plantinga, Reese, Rescher, Sosa, Stenmark, and others. However, part of the *Usul al- Fiqh* is concerned with epistemological discussions. These discussions are found in chapters related to *hujja* (proof). Some important issues of linguistics, philosophy of language, and logic are also found in *Usul al- Fiqh*. In fact, *Usul al- Fiqh* has the capacity to be divided at least into four sciences. When I refer to the issues of *Usul al- Fiqh*, I am viewing them from epistemological point of view, not jurisprudential or exegetical one.

Professor Butterworth addresses some merits of my paper and then proceed to a critique, "Unfortunately, neither this exegesis nor the verse itself offers more than a sketch of theoretical and practical reason. Nor does Prof. Sadeqi provide a clear indication of why Tabātabāī deserves the attention he is accorded." The core of my paper is to argue that individuals' rational responsibilities are different and relative, because their abilities are different. This is a rational argument without reliance on the Quran and *hadith*. This rational argument is useful for comprehension of the Quran. It is also inferred that we should not expect people to have philosophical reasoning for their belief in God. This is not possible for all. In other words, as individuals' ability to perform the physical tasks are different, they are different in performing mental tasks. As a result it is unreasonable to expect different people have the same degree of faith. Please pay attention to the very last paragraph of my essay once more (see above). Concerning the lack of explanation, perhaps, Professor Butterworth is right. However in an essay so limited in scope, there is no room for investigating all the aspects of the problem. I set out to prove the relativity of rational duties as well as the relativity of the level of faith in individuals, nothing more.

Professor Butterworth is right when says that I have not made a clear indication of why Tabātabāī deserves the attention he is accorded. In fact Allāmah Tabātabāī is so famous in the world of Shi'a that there is no need for introducing him. His innovations in philosophy and tafsir (exegesis) are known to everyone. Since Tabātabāī

is not known outside of the Islamic world as he is inside, it is necessary to give adequate information about him.

Allāmah Tabātabāī (1902- November 15, 1981) is the greatest philosopher and *mufassir* (exegete) of the contemporary Muslim world. His philosophical works such as *Bidayat al- Hikmah*, *Nihayat al- Hikmah*, and *Usul- i falsafeh va ravesh- e- realism* (*The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism*) are taught in universities and Islamic seminaries of Iran and abroad. He is famous for *Tafsir al- Mizan*, the Quranic exegesis. It is the most important, comprehensive, and *ijtihadi* (to be able to give an opinion on religious law) exegesis of Shi'a. He was the teacher of many contemporary thinkers of Iran. Some of his students are Ayatullah Murtaza Mutahhari, Ayatullah Jawadi Amuli, Ayatullah Misbah Yazdi, Ayatullah Hasanzadeh Amuli. Seyyed Hossein

Nasr, Henri Corbin, Gholamhossein Ibrahimi Dinani, Gholamreza Awani, and others. Allāmah Tabātabāī introduced new theories into Islamic philosophy. He dealt with materialist schools in *Usul- i falsafeh va ravesh- e- realism* (*The Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism*). Answering the questions raised by materialists against the divine wisdom, he introduced some new matters such as fictions into philosophy. This discussion is of an *usuli* origin that I here view it from epistemological and ontological perspectives. I have utilized his discussion of fictions in the field of epistemology. His innovations in philosophical discussions made him worthy of study.

I again appreciate Professor Butterworth's comments and hope I can have the benefit of continued conversation.