

## Intellective Faculty | Rational Person vs. Intelligent Person

### What Is the Intellective Faculty, and What Is It to Be Rational?

*If there is no intellect, the soul will be in agony.*

This may seem like a simple sentence at first glance, but the faculty of intellect is so important that its absence will ruin us. The faculty of intellect is a criterion for recognition, decision-making, and setting priorities in our limited lifetime. It is the intellect that directs our aspirations, concerns, motivations, norms, and what we love. In fact, the intellect changes the source of our desires; if we are rational, we seek the origin of everything. The scope of the faculty of intellect is confined within the boundaries of the material world.

Like sense perception, imagination, and estimation, the intellect has a boundary beyond which it cannot go. Looking at scientific laws and formulas that fall under the intellective faculty, we see that many of them cannot be refuted.<sup>1</sup> For example, two plus two always equals four.

Another characteristic of the intellect is that it fully knows itself. The intellect knows itself and is aware of its shortcomings, if it is not under the influence of imagination and estimation, it impartially knows what it knows and what it does not know, it even admits when it does not know something.

In this article, we will discuss the manifestations of the intellect and define the “rational person.”

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<sup>1</sup>. It is clear that here we do not mean unproven scientific hypotheses and the very new definition of science that the West has presented, but we consider science as those mathematics and laws that can be proven.

## **The Intellect at the Service of Animality**

If the intellect is under the influence of estimation or imagination, it will start making excuses and will constantly seek to justify its irrational and delusional decisions by fabricating various reasons. Like the head coach of a team whose wrong decisions has led to his team's defeat but blames external factors under the pressure of the media.

A healthy intellect has a correct relationship with rational matters. It can think, understand, discover, and in other words, perceive intellectual matters. If someone asks us, "Do you want one million or one billion dollars?" we normally choose one billion dollars. If we give an answer contrary to this without any reason, it becomes evident that our intellect is not functioning properly. Or if we choose limited beauty over absolute beauty, it indicates the low level of our intellectual perception. In fact, our plans, inclinations, affections, and attachments all demonstrate the extent to which our intellect and understanding function correctly.

## **Different Manifestations of the Intellectual Faculty**

But what is this intellectual faculty that is so important? What parts does it consist of, and what status does it have in our existence? The intellectual faculty is the fourth level of our existence. It is higher than estimation and lower than supra-rational faculty, and it finds inner peace in its partner, which is rational matters. Rational matters include everything that is comprehensible and perceptible to our intellect.

The intellective faculty manifests itself in various forms, one of which is the theoretical intellect, and it is a state where the intellect itself governs us. It is the theoretical intellect that discovers the world, understands laws and rules, and is interested in acquiring knowledge and sciences. The intellect perceives the essence, principles, and rules, and theoretical intellect is the manifestation of the intellective faculty. The highest expression of this part of the intellect is when a person dedicates himself completely to acquiring knowledge or science, but only uses it for scientific purposes. What we call 'intelligence' is considered to be a part of the theoretical intellect.

Another manifestation of the intellect serves imagination and estimation, which we addressed in the previous lesson.

However, there is another manifestation of the intellect, which we refer to as rationality or practical intellect. Rationality is that aspect of the intellect which determines what is right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood. In fact, this manifestation of the intellect occurs when the theoretical intellect serves the supra-rational or human dimension of existence.

Rationality helps us recognize that in order to achieve happiness, we must turn to our human dimension, i.e., our supra-rational faculty. It is this manifestation of the intellect which is addressed by God and prophets. If the intellect does not have the ability to distinguish, even prophets cannot do anything. Each of us should be accountable to ourselves and others based on the level of our practical intellect, not the amount of theoretical intellect or knowledge we have acquired.

## **What Is It to Be Rational?**

In today's world, we usually consider someone rational if she can handle her own life and the affairs of those around her efficiently, and if she has received an education, has wealth and possessions, knows politics and leadership, and in general, has a good grasp of how to live and make the most out of this world. But who is truly rational, and what are the signs of possessing a sound intellect?

To answer this question, we first need to clarify that when we refer to "intellect," we are not necessarily talking about intelligence. From the perspective of practical intellect, it is possible for each of us to possess different levels of intelligence, but being intelligent does not necessarily mean being rational. It is possible for someone to be a scientist but use their knowledge to build a bomb and kill people. Naturally, we do not consider such a person to be rational.

A good way to determine the level of our intellect is to examine what we are inclined to and how we spend our time and life. What are our priorities in life? Do we have a tendency to be content with the limited or the unlimited? Do we pursue the transient or the eternal? In these lessons, we will practice and refine these criteria and the way we value different matters in life step by step.

In this article, we defined the intellectual faculty and discussed its importance and characteristics. We clarified the distinction between theoretical and practical intellect and emphasized that the level of our intellect can be discerned from our inclinations and tendencies. We stated that if we are rational, we do not trade unlimited eternity for a limited world. Furthermore, we reminded ourselves that the degree of rationality influences our aspirations, concerns, motivations, and lifestyle.

If you are interested in learning more about the last faculty of the soul, that is, the supra-rational faculty, we recommend studying the next lesson.

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