Thought in Quran

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Introduction

There is no doubt that thinking, as a differentiating feature between man and animal, has a particularly significant position in man's material and spiritual life. This significance has been approved and emphasized in some verse in holy Quran. For instance, we can point to the important role and function of thinking in formation, reinforcement, and deepening of man's faith principles such as monotheism; prophecy; resurrection; adherence to morals; deep comprehension of commandments and worship philosophy; knowledge of prosperity and redemption path; proper knowledge of one's self and other creatures; and a deep comprehension of divine revelations. In the present research, through a quoting method and rational analysis of some of Quran verses, the above-mentioned functions and other significant functions of thinking in man's worldly and otherworldly life would be studied.

Thinking grounds in holy Quran

Thinking, in general, is of two kinds: 1. It's whether religious. 2. Or nonreligious. By religion, we mean the affairs between the man and the Lord. Therefore, man's thinking is whether about themselves, their characteristics, and actions or about their lord, His characteristics and actions and thinking includes only these two types and no more. In the present discussion, we concentrate on thinking in the religious affairs.¹

There are two sorts of religious thinking: thinking about the nature of God's names and characteristics, and thinking about God's creatures.² The very thinking about the nature of God's names and characteristics is also of two kinds: desirable thinking and prohibited thinking.³

Thinking about God's nature, names, and characteristics

The desirable thinking about God's nature is not thinking about God's essence and His identity and quality. It rather aims at proving God's existence and glorifying and sanctifying Him which has always been the goal of prophesy and the mystics' aspirations. Holy Quran is loaded with the knowledge of God's nature, names, and characteristics and the result of this

¹ Mohsen Kashani, the previous, p. 243
² Rouhollah Khomeini, Explaining Forty Narrations, Tehran: The institute of spreading Imam Khomeini's works, 2nd ed., 1371, p. 191
³ Ibid, p. 192
knowledge is to know God's epiphanies, manifestations of His power, and this world's creatures because by sensible pondering over God's nature, we'll find out His power and science. Thus, thinking about God's nature of course not its details and quality is the best worship.  

**Invitation to thinking about introvert and extrovert world**

Since thinking about God's nature can lead man to the obliquity and wandering, the holy Quran invites people to reflect on God's creatures. That's why we say the creatures are of two kinds:

1. Creatures whose essence cannot be known and, therefore, it's impossible for us to know them and there are many of them. God says in Quran:

> سُبْحانَ الَّذي خَلَقَ الَْْزْواجَ کُلَّها مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الَْْرْضُ وَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَ مِمَّا لا يَعْلَمُونَ.  
> Glory is to Him who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know.

And also:

> عَلى أَن نُبَدِّلَ أَمْثالَکُمْ وَ نُنْشِئَکُمْ في ما لا تَعْلَمُونَ.  
> In order that we may bring in your place the likes of you and make you grow into what you know not.

2. Creatures whose essence can be known in brief, but not in detail; it is possible for us to reflect on their details. They are of two types: one that can be perceived by eyesight and the other that cannot be perceived by eyesight like angles, jinn, and devils.

According to holy Quran verse, what can be perceived is divided into two signs that is introvert and extrovert:

> سَنُريهِمْ آياتِنا فِي الْْفاقِ وَ في أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَ وَ لَمْ يَکْفِ بِرَبِّکَ أَنَّهُ عَلى کُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهيد.  
> We will soon show them our sign in the universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is a witness over all things?

Extrovert thinking includes reflecting on all details and wonders of this world from the sky, earth, and mountains to history of the past nations and the result is theology and the obtained knowledge is called "extrovert cognition". In fact, the extrovert is the world outside human being. And introvert thinking that focuses on human being's inside world is, in fact,

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4 Ibid, pp. 192-194  
5 Yasseen / 36.  
6 Al-Vaghea / 61.  
7 Mohsen Kashani, the previous, p. 257  
8 Al-Fosellat / 53.
pondering on man's creation; the quiddity and conclusion of their souls, etc. The result of introvert thinking is anthropology that is an introduction for theology.9

Thinking about Extrovert world

Extravert or "Afaq" in Arabic is the plural of "ofoq" that means horizons or areas and districts.10 It connotes the areas outside human soul such as the sky and the earth and their habitats and includes, in general, the natural tangible world called world of physics that can be perceived by the five senses. In case man uses their power of thinking to know the extravert world and its creatures, they will able to obtain safety and theology.

While interpreting the following verse,

سَنُريهِمْ آياتِنا فِي الْْفاقِ وَ في أنفُسِهِمْ ...

the Shiite and Sunni interpreters have explained the meaning of "الأفاق" as follows:

1. It stands for the heavens, stars, and elements on the earth.

2. It stands for what happened to the past nations that were mostly those who rejected and disobeyed prophets sent by God.11

In this section, we elaborate on the concept of "Afaq" or the extravert world.

1. A journey in creation of the heaven and the earth

وَ مِنْ آياتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّماءُ وَ الَْْرْضُ بِأَمْ ....

And among His signs one is that the heaven and the earth are established by His order.

Among this world's phenomena, the heavens and their various levels, galaxies, planets, stars, and solar system are particularly wonderful and amaze any viewer. First, we represent some implications of holy Quran on heavenly beings and invitation to pondering over them.

لْخلقُ السَّماواتِ وَ الأَرْضُ أَفْتَرَ منْ خَلقُ النَّاسِ وَ لَكِنْ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لا يَعْلَمُونَ.

Certainly creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than that of the man, but most people do not know.12

9 Marzieh, Ramezani, the previous, pp. 49-50.
10 Mohammad Hossein Tabatabaee, the previous, vol. 17, p. 647.
12 Al-Qaffer / 57.
And the heaven we raised in high with power, and most surely we are the makers of things ample.  

(3) وَ جَعَلْنَا السَّماءَ سَقْفاً مَحْفُوظاً وَ هُمْ عَنْ آياتِها مُعْرِضُونَ.

And we have made the heaven a guarded canopy and yet they turn aside from its signs.  

(4) ﷲ الَّذي رَفَعَ السَّماواتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَها ثُمَّ اسْتَوى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ وَ سَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَ الْقَمَرَ کُلٌّ يَجْري لِأجلِ مَسْنَوى يُدْنِى الْأَمْرَ فَحُذِّبُ الآياتِ لِعِبَادِهِ بَلَاءً رِيَاسِمَ تَوقَعونَ.

Allah is He Who raised the heavens as you see without any pillars and He is firm in power. And He made the sun and the moon subservient (to you); each one pursues its course to an appointed time. He regulates the affairs, making clear the signs that you may be certain of meeting your Lord.  

(5) الَلَّذي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَماواتٍ طِباقاً ما تَرى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمنِ مِنْ تَفاوُتٍ فَازِجٍ البَيْصَرَ هِنَّ تَرَى مِنْ فُطُور.

Who created the seven heavens one above another. You see no incongruity in the creation of God. Then, look again, can you see any disorder?

So, look at the sky! And see its army that is the clouds, wind, thunders, lightning, hail, snow, meteor, etc. Take a look at the cloud which is a very tender and delicate body, but think how it protects the heavy rain and carries it, just like an agent appointed by God, to the far away cities and seas. God invites man to reflect on the movements of clouds; their components; rainfall; and hailstone:

أَ لَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَََّ يُزْجي سَحاباً ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكاماً فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلالِهِ وَ يُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّماءِ مِنْ جِبالٍ فيها مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشاءُ وَ يَصْرِفُهُ عَنْ مَنْ يَشاءُ يَکادُ سَنا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالَْْبْصارِ.

Do you not see that Allah drives along the clouds, then gathers them together, then piles them up, so that you see the rain coming forth from their midst? And He sends down the clouds that are (like) mountains wherein hail, afflicting them towards whom He pleases and turning it away from whom He pleases. The flash of His lightning almost takes away the sight.

He also invites man to reflect on wind and rain:

إِنَّ في خَلْقِ السَّماواتِ وَ الْأَرْضِ وَ اخْتِلافِ اللَّيْلِ وَ النَّهارِ وَ الْقَلَبِ الَّتي تَجْري فِي الْبَحْرِ بِما يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَ ما أَنزَلَ اللََُّ مِنَ السَّماءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيا بِهِ الَْْرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِها وَ بَثَّ فيها مِنْ کُلِّ دابَّةٍ وَ تَصْريفِ الرِّياِِ وَ السَّحابِ المُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّماءِ وَ الْأَرْضِ لَِْياتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ.

13 Al-Zariat / 47.
14 Al-Anbia / 32.
15 Al-Raad / 2.
16 Al-Molk / 3.
17 Al-Noor/43.
Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea to profit man and the water that Allah sends down from the cloud, then revives the earth with this water after its death and spreads all kinds of animals on the earth, and the changings of the winds and clouds made subservient between the earth and the heaven, there are signs for those people who understand.18

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّماءِ ماءً فَسَلَکَهُ يَنابيعَ فِي الَْْرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعاً مُخْتَلِفاً ألوانهُ ثُمَّ يُهْجَعُ فِئَرَةً مُصْفزًا ثُمَّ يَبْعَطَ خَطَأً إِنَّ فِ ذلِکَ لَذِکْرى لُِْولِي الَْْلْبابِ.

Do you not see that Allah sends water from the cloud, then makes it go along in the earth in springs, then brings forth therewith herbage of various colors, then it withers so that you see it growing yellow, then He makes it something crushed and broken into pieces? Most surely there is a reminder in this for the men of understanding.19

اللََُّّ الَّذي يُرْسِلُ الرِّياَِ فَتُثيرُ سَحاباً فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّماءِ کَيْفَ يَشاءُ وَ يَجْعَلُهُ کِسَفاً فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلالِهِ فَإِذا أَصابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشاءُ مِنْ عِبادُِ ِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ.

Allah is He who sends forth the winds so they raise a cloud, and then He spreads it forth in the sky as He pleases, and He breaks it up so that you see the rain coming forth from inside it. Then when He causes it to fall upon whom He pleases of His servants, lo! They are joyful.20

2. A journey in creation of animals, plants, and inanimate objects

A subject matter in the area of thinking and reflection is plants, flowers, and trees that can be found everywhere on the earth from the soil surface and oceans to the highest points in the air. Some plants are so small that they can be seen only through microscope and some others are so big that roads have been passed through their giant trunks. There are many different sorts of plants spread on the earth; over 300,000 kinds of plants have been studied and named by botanists ever since.21

Now, we refer to the holy Quran's verses:

أَوَ لَمْ يَرَوْا إِلَى الَْْرْضِ کَمْ أَنْبَتْنا فيها مِنْ کُلِّ زَوْجٍ کَريمٍ * إنَّ فِ ذلِکَ لَايَةً وَ ما كانْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُؤْمِنينَ.

Do they not see the earth, how many of every noble kind we have caused to grow in it?

Most surely there is a sign in that, but most of them will not believe.22

وَ نَزَّلْنا مِنَ السَّماءِ ماءً مُبارَکاً فَأَنْبَتْنا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَ حَبَّ الْحَصيدِ.

18 Al-Baghara / 164.
19 Al-Zomar / 21.
22 Al-Shoara / 7 and 8.
And we send down from the cloud water abounding in good, and then we cause to grow thereby gardens and the grains that are reaped.

وَ هُوَ الَّذي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّماءِ ماءً فَأَخْرَجْنا بِهِ نَباتَ کُلِّ شَيءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنا مِنْهُ خَضِراً نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَراکِباً وَ مِنَ النَّخلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوان  دانِيَة  وَ جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنابٍ وَ الزَّيْتُونَ وَ الرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهٍ انْظُروْا إِلَى نَعمَةٍ إِذَا أَفْضَلتِ وَ يَدُّهُ إِنَّهُ فِي ذَلِكَ لَْياتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ.

And He is Who sends down water from the cloud, then We bring forth with it buds of all (plants), then We bring forth with it (foliage) from which We produce grains piled up (in the air); and of palm tree, of the sheaths of it, come forth clusters (of dates) within reach, and gardens of grapes and olives and pomegranates, alike and unlike. Behold the fruit of it when it yields the fruit and ripening of it. Most surely, there are signs in this for a people who believe.

In this honorable verse, God Almighty reminds man some elements created by His unlimited power for those who have reason and insight to ponder over their creation and find their ways to the monotheism and the unity of God. Some of these reminders are about heavens; some are about rainfall and feeding vegetables, fruits, plants, animals, and men and about growing plants.

If we observe the earth, we'll see God Almighty has grown all kinds of trees and plants including beans, grains, grapes, olives, palms, pomegranates, and countless sorts of fruits various shapes, tastes, colors, and features and has preferred some of them to others while all of them are watered by the same water.

He cause to grow for you thereby herbage, and the olives, and palm trees, and grapes, and of all the fruits. Most surely, there is a sign in this for a people who reflect.

وَ فِي الَّأرضِ قِطَعٌ مُتَجاوِراتٌ وَ جَنَّاتٌ مِنْ أَعْنابٍ وَ زَرعٌ وَ نَخيلَ صِنْوانٍ وَ غَيْرُ صِنْوانٍ يُسْقى بِمَاءٍ واحِدٍ وَ نُفَضِّلُ بَعْضَها عَلى بَعْضٍ فِي الْأَلْقَانِ إِنَّ في ذَلِكَ لَْياتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ.

And in the earth there are tracks side by side and gardens of grapes and corns and palm trees having one root and (others) having distinct roots; they are watered with the same water, and we make some of them excel others I fruit. Most surely, there are signs in this for a people who understand.

The interpretation of this verse is as follows: The reason why we said the current system of the world is based on the measure and Providence of God Who is not a part of the world and all entities are subservient to His will and Providence is that there are adjacent farms and fields on earth whose soil is alike regarding their quality and features and in their soil do gardens of grapes grow that produce fruits very different in shape, color, taste, size, and quality from each other and also crops that are quite different in kind and the wheat and barley grown in one area differs from those of other areas and also dates grow in the same

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23 Qaf / 9.
24 Al-Anaam / 99.
25 Al-Nahl / 11.
26 Al-Raad / 4.
soil, some of which are alike and some others are not although they are watered by the same water and grown in the same ground and We prefer some to others because of the favored advantage We recognized in their characteristics. Now if someone says this variety is caused by some external natural factors, we respond "Yes", but we also ask "What's the direction of this difference in external and internal factors?" If you stem the reason of this difference, we will ask again about the cause of that reason's difference until you will get to the matter common among all physical entities and all components of this matter are alike. It is crystal clear that a matter common and alike in every creatures cannot be the final cause of the differences; therefore, you'll have no other answer but, above all other causes, there is a cause that has brought the material world into existence and created many countless forms and shapes as well. In other words, there is a sole unique cause possessing sense and will and these differences are according to His different wills and hadn't been occasioned by His different wills, nothing would have ever been differentiated from other things. However, please notice that the verses that introduce the variety in creation based on the variety of God's will, do not deny the cause-and-effect principle.

Now think of the utilities and properties of plants and how God has put these wonderful utilities in herbal medicines. Some people feed on them; some use them as nourishment; some as resuscitator; and some as killer. Some plants produce warmth and are useful; some eradicate bile in stomach and some turn into bile; some remove phlegm and melancholy and some change into phlegm and melancholy; some are refreshing and some are hypnotic; some are energetic and some are weakening. All in all, no plant grows on the earth without a utility and man cannot penetrate into their hidden truth. And to plant each one of them the gardener has to follow a certain procedure.

If we want to discuss all types of the plants and their features and wonders thoroughly, it'll take a long time. Thus, it is sufficient to elaborate on each sort slightly and good enough to drive you to the thinking path. And it was the wonders of plants.

Among other signs of God are the various types of animals which are divided into those that fly and those that walk. Those that walk are also divided into the ones that walk on two feet and the ones that walk on four, ten, or a lot of feet as we see in some insects and worms. Animals are also categorized in some other ways based on their shape, feature, and nature. Observe the fowls in the sky; the wild beasts on the deserts; and the domestic animals to see the wonders that ensure you about the greatness, power, and wisdom of their creator. Most surely, it is impossible to describe all their wonders because if we only want to depict all the marvels hidden in a fly, an ant, a bee, or a spider, we will fail.
Have they not seen the birds above them expanding (their wings) and contacting them? What it is that withholds them save the beneficent God? Surely He sees everything.  

In Al-Nahl sura, God almighty has restricted the cause of keeping birds in the air to Himself. Although, from one hand, we see some natural cause involved in birds’ flying in the air, and from the other hand, we know that God almighty has approved cause-and-effect principle in Holy Quran and accepts the causality of the natural cases, how comes that He rejects it about birds’ flying? The point is that birds’ flying and what keeps them from downfall in the air the way it establishes the cause of flying is caused by God almighty and His creation. In fact, it is God that has brought the cause of flying into existence. Therefore, the true final cause is exclusively God almighty even though it is suspended to the natural adjacent causes.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) describing the creation of the birds and its wonders says:

And He established what He created in various forms; He created birds set in the cracks of the earth, wide valleys, and over the mountains. They have different shapes and wings while they are subservient and flap wings in the air gaps. He created them with these clear wonderful shapes and they didn't exist before. He created them with strong joints and bones and withheld some them to fly very high for their big and heavy bodies (like ostriches and storks) and made them fly close to the earth. And because of His ability in creation that is based on wisdom and goodwill, He has given the various birds various colors; so, some of them have only one color without being mixed with any other hues and some others have one color on all limbs while they have a collar of quite contrastive hue.

Among His other signs are the deep seas that have surrounded the earth. They are sections of the green sea that has covered the entire earth so that the lands and mountains uncovered by water are only some islands in comparison and the rest of the earth is beneath water. Now observe the wonders of the seas because as the vastness of the seas is several times as wide as that of the earth, so is the wonders of their animals, plants and gems. And because of the wonderful vastness of the sea, there lives such a giant animal that when their backs get out of water, people suppose they are islands till they land on their back and make a fire, then the animals feels the heat and starts moving and only then they come to know that it is an animal not an island.

And He is Who has made the sea subservient that you may eat fresh flesh from it and bring forth from it ornaments which you wear, and you see the ships cleaving through it, and that you might seek of His bounty and that you may give thanks.
And the two seas are not alike: one is sweet that subdues thirst by its excessive sweetness and is pleasant to drink; and the other one is salty and burns by its salt. Yet, from each of them you eat fresh flesh and bring forth ornaments that you wear. And you see the ships cleave through it that you may seek of His bounty and that you may be grateful.\(^{35}\)

The point is that holy Quran has attributed man's conquering the seas to God and mentions the ships navigating in the seas as signs of God. These statements and phrases are sufficient reasons for greatness and significance of the seas and the transporting vehicles moving in them (ships) which have been compared to the mountains in Quran:

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\text{وَ مِنْ آياتِهِ الْجَوارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ کَالَْْعْلامِ.}
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And among His signs are the ships (moving) like mountains in the sea.\(^{36}\)

These are some conducive and impressive grounds that provoke the thinking power and penetrate into the secrets of the seas as components of the living world.

Thus, observe how God almighty creates the pearl and rounds it up in its shell deep beneath water, how He grows coral in the hard rocks under the sea, and besides think about the amber and other precious gems ejected by the sea or brought out from the sea. Then, observe the wonders of the ship and how God keeps it on water and heads out the merchants and traders on it and makes them control the ship to carry their goods around the world, and then He sends the wind to move the ship and teaches the sailors the direction, path, and time of the winds. The marvels of God's creation cannot be described even in thousands volumes of books.\(^{37}\) Among other signs of God are mountains; the gems lending to the mountains; and the mines in the earth. Thus, think about the mountains and how gold, silver, copper, and turquoise are extracted from them, and observe how God has guided men to extract and refine these mines and make dishes, equipment, coin, and jewelry out of them.\(^{38}\)

And the mountains, how they are firmly fixed! And the earth, how it is made a vast expanse?\(^{39}\)

Why do you not reflect on the mountains and how firmly they are standing, and their roots, like nails, have fixed the sections of the earth, and streams flow from their resources, and how they preserve the mines in their chests? Why do you not reflect on the creation of the earth and the way it is spread so that it is suitable and convenient for man's settlement and transportation, and its possession and seizure for man is made possible? So, the general design of this world is undoubtedly planned by God and, thus, He is the only Lord of the

\(^{35}\) Fater / 12.
\(^{36}\) Al-Shora / 32.
\(^{37}\) Mohsen Kashani, the previous, pp. 272.
\(^{38}\) Ibid, p. 269.
\(^{39}\) Al-Ghashia / 19 & 20.
heavens and the earth and whatever creatures between them and eventually the only Lord of the human world too.  

Then, regard other resources of the earth such as oil, tar, iron, sulfur and even salt which is considered the nethermost and only needed to make the food tasty; however, if a city is deprived of it, its people will be soon destroyed. Also, think about the mercy of God almighty and how He created some lands as natural salt marshes so that when it rains and water gathers on them, it will be salt water and not drinkable. In fact, there aren't any inanimate objects, animals, and plants not involved in such wisdoms and nothing has ever been created in vain, but everything has been created properly and rightfully as it deserves the glory, munificence, and kindness of the Lord.  

What was said was only few selections of the living world and nature in particular and we finish it here and do not go any further because the wonders of the world and creation have no ending and even if we write about it for many years, we won't be able to depict it thoroughly and each day we will discover something new. We can make some conclusions from this brief study of the world:

1. The divine signs and blessings are so great, immense, and vast that they provoke thinking in men and amaze them and eventually end at their intellectual growth because the thinking power grows by its being used. The following verse represents this concept:

وَ إِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللََِّّ لا تُحْصُوها إِنَّ اللَََّّ لَغَفُور  رَحيم

And if you would count Allah's blessings, you will not be able to number them; most surely Allah is forgiving and merciful.  

2. Pondering over divine signs leads to realizing His power and in this way man finds out about their own weakness and triviality compared to the power and greatness of the Lord and finds themselves in the need of His power.

3. Although the greatness, variety, and infinity of the signs of God's power are quite apparent in all areas of the nature and universe, not every man dose think about them. Only those men who are qualified in terms of consciousness and awareness are capable of realizing them and remembering them. In this regard, the Glorious Quran says:

قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْْياتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ...

… truly we have made the communication plain for a people who know.  

The glorious Quran's method in inviting man to think about the natural world is based on two fundamental principles including rational reasoning and objective reasoning. To prove this, we can refer to many verses in Quran that emphasize the rational reasons and taking their advantage in explaining the natural phenomena, and besides in noticeable number of verse, it has been strongly recommended to observe the natural phenomena in order to

40 Mohammad Hossein Tabatabaee, the previous, vol. 20, pp. 259 & 260.
41 Mohsen Kashani, the previous, pp. 296.
42 Al-Nahl / 18.
43 Al-Anaam / 97.
comprehend their truth. The mixture of these two factors, thus, can be efficient in knowing the world deeply.

In general, the category of thinking about the natural world is so vast that we have no choice but to be satisfied to this little discussion so far. In over 750 verses, the holy Quran refers to the natural phenomena and calls them the divine signs. Moreover, Quran represents most of its examples and explanations through natural world and asks man to reflect on them. Quran has beautifully praised the nature and depicted the accurate connection of nature and God and the sensible connection of nature and man. As a result, Quran has set the human thinking free from the chains and illusions by offering man a correct and reasonable knowledge of the existence and nature.44

If we notice the divine wisdom in the life of a bee, we will find out that it is a marvelous life and the fact that how and where this little insect gets the wonderful consciousness it possesses can be justified by no material means. The Lord says in holy Quran:

وَ أُوْهِيَ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذي مِنَ الْجِبالِ بُيُوتاً وَ مِنَ الشَّجْرِ وَ مَا يَعْرِشُونَ فَامَنَكِي سَبْئُ رَيْبٌ ذَلِّلْ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ يُطُوْنُهَا شَرْابٌ مَّا خَلَفْتُوهَا فِيهِ شِفاءً لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذلِكَ لَْيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَکُروُنَ.

And your Lord revealed to the bee saying: Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build. Then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your Lord submissively. There comes forth from within it a beverage of many colors, in which there is healing for men. Most surely, there is a sign in this for a people who reflect.45

3. Thinking about introvert world

The extravert world, with all its greatness, wonders, and rare variety in different categories, stimulates the thinking power in human and fuels it and provide it with specific subject matters and concepts.

There is another world versus the external one called the internal or introvert world that is the man themselves and is much more complicated, mysterious, and amazing than the external universe. The Arabic term to name it is the world of "anfos" which is the plural form of "nafs" and "nafs" means "self, the essence of the soul". Compared based on their mysteries and marvels, human internal microcosm is considered to be greater than the external macrocosm. Thus, thinking about man's internal world must be given a specific priority and must be paid deeper and more comprehensive attention because man can, through thinking, find a way to their secrets lying deep beneath their inside world. That's why in the glorious Quran and narrations, man has been invited over and over again to reflect on their selves. This knowledge of man from themselves is called "introvert cognition" that beside "extrovert cognition" is known to be a certain path, or even the closest and most accurate path to theology. The extrovert journey, which is searching for the discipline maker by noticing the

45 Al-Nahl / 68 &69.
discipline and for the creator by viewing the creation, is praised and recommended in case it leads to the introvert journey. In this regard, the holy Quran says:

وَ فِي الْأَرْضِ آياتٌ لِلْمُوقِنينَ وَ في أَنْفُسِکُمْ أَ فَلا تُبْصِرُونَ.

And in the earth there are signs for those who are sure and in your own souls too. Will you not then see? ⁴⁶

And likewise, we read in narrations:

من عُرِفَ نَفْسُه فَقَدْ انتَهَى إِلَيْ غَيْبَةِ كُلُّ مَعْرِفَةٍ وَ عِلْمٍ.

Whoever knows their selves, they have reached the highest point of whatever knowledge and cognition. ⁴⁷

من عُرِفَ نَفْسُه، فَقَدْ عَرَفَهُ رَبُّهُ.

Whoever knows their selves, they will properly know their Lord. ⁴⁸

4. Thinking about man's actions and characteristics

Now we elaborate on thinking about man's actions and characteristics to differentiate their honorable traits from their dishonorable ones. Man's actions and characteristics are of two kinds: the outward characteristics including worships and sins, and inward characteristics including the savior and the fatal. These characteristics (outward and inward) are whether favored or disliked by God. ⁴⁹

A) Thinking about sins

Man must check on their seven limbs (tongue, ear, eye, stomach…) to make sure whether they are committing any sins in order to stop wrongdoing or they committed any sins in the past in order to repent. For instance, sins such as lying, accusation, ridicule, boasting, backbiting, etc. are committed by tongue and man has to reflect on their implausibility and evilness and on how to quit them. Or they must think about their hearing power and whether they listen to backbiting, lying, and vain words and more importantly about how to avoid these wrongdoings. They must also think about their stomachs and whether they disobedient the Lord by eating and drinking pelf or if through gluttony they increases their lust and keep away from God while getting close to the Satan. Therefore, man must investigate their body limbs every day to know what sins they have committed or are committing in order to avoid the sins and protect their limbs against the temptation of committing sins.

B) Thinking about worships

⁴⁶ Al-Zari'at / 20 & 21.
⁴⁷ Abdul Vahid Ibn Mohammad Taamimi Amedi, the previous, p. 232.
⁴⁸ Mohammad Bagher Ibn Mohammad Taghi Majlessi, the previous, vol. 2, p. 32.
⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 49.
In this regard, man must refer to their religious rituals and obligations to know how to accomplish them. He must, then, return to their every single limb and think about the tasks that are obligatory for each one. For instance, they must say: Eye is created to observe the divine signs in the heavens and the earth; be used in praising and worshiping the Lord; and to study Quran and the traditions. Moreover, they must check their tongue, all their body members, their wealth, and even their livestock, slaves and children because they are means by which man can obey and follow God. As an example for tongue, they can think and say: Through preaching; investigating the poor people’s condition; making a pious man or scholar happy by saying something nice to them, I can approach the Lord because these are favored by Him.

C) Thinking about the fatal characteristics

Some fatal characteristics are wrath, lust, stinginess, vanity, duplicity, jealousy, etc. Man must investigate their hearts and ponder over these heart illnesses to see whether or not they suffer from them. For instance, when they feel arrogance and haughtiness inside, they must remind themselves this folly and say: Why do you consider yourself great while those who are great in God's eyes are truly great and that will not be known until the doomsday and after death. If man feels arrogant because of doing something nice, they must think and say it has been done by my body limbs, power and will, none of which, in fact, belongs to me but they belong to God and He has kindly granted them to me: He created me, my power, and my will and made me move. If this is the case, how can I ever be proud of what I have done? The same must be done about other deadly traits.

D) Thinking about the saviors

Some saviors are repentance; remorse; patience at the time of hardship; thanksgiving; fear and hope; piety in the world, sincerity in worship; loving God; obedience; etc.

Every day and night, man must reflect on these traits, which are means to approach the Lord, to know which ones are missing in them. These pleasant traits are the result of sciences and sciences are the result of thinking. If man wants to repent their sins, first, they must study them; think about them; and zoom them out in their hearts. Then, they must think about the warnings and threats given about them and how they are to confront God's wrath and punishment. Then, they would truly feel sorry for what they did. If man wants to feel grateful to the Lord, they must carefully notice the superb beauties God has granted to the nature and the gifts and blessings He has granted to them. If they want to feel the fear of God, they must think of their inward and outward sins and remember the death; Nakir and Monkar's inquiries; grave pressure; the snakes, scorpions, and worms that will surround them in the grave and profoundly ponder about them. And also, they must think whether they are among the North companions and therefore folks of the hell or the Right companions and thus folks of the heaven.50

As a way of conclusion, if men wants to know the religious path through knowing their inward, they must get used to reflecting on the above-mentioned matters from dawn to dust, and they can even prepare a notebook and write all the saviors, worships, and fatal traits

50 Ibid, pp. 245-50.
down in it and compare all their actions to them in order to reform the defects in their practice.

The methods of training thought

What is stated in Quran is always ahead of man and man must attempt to catch up with it. The deeper, vaster and more developed the insights have become, the more congruous man has found themselves o glorious Quran. A Holy book that is the eternal miracle of the prophet must rightfully be like this. Since holy Quran has invited the human society to contemplation, reflection, and intellection over 300 times, it has stated these recommendations as if it were teaching the methods of thinking. In many cases, the holy Quran raises questions and challenges the reader's thinking power. Both holy Quran and narrations stimulate the thinking power in man in two ways: firstly, through mentioning the terms such as reflection and intellection, and secondly through bringing up some topics of discussion that challenges the thought. For instance, in a verse, there may not be the terms reflection and intellection cited, but the very verse itself may be an intellectual and rational reasoning needful of thinking.

The methods of training thought in Quran include:

• Observing carefully
• Listening carefully
• Talking carefully
• Using sensory and visual phrases
• The purposeful repetition of the questions or phrases
• The vowing "ands" before the sensory phenomena
• Comparing the mutual affairs
• Providing the concept without explanation
• The direct reference to using the intellect
• Using conditional reasoning and argumentation
• Remembrance of Allah
• Attention to the goal
• The direct raising of the question
• Life problems
• Using intellectual reasoning
• Emphasis on training the children in their childhood period

51 Look at Abdullah Javadi Amoli, the previous, p. 271.
Conclusion

Since the glorious Quran has recommended thinking, it has stated the thinking grounds because contemplating on those grounds and subject matters will enrich our thinking power and lead us to insight and cognition. As we get more familiar with holy Quran, we will come to know that every single verse in Quran, even "In the name of Allah, the beneficent the merciful" is thought provoking and each verse has invited man to thinking and provokes man's mind in a specific way. That is why reading Quran must be accompanied with precision, attention, and thinking if we are truly going to penetrate into the depth and purposes of the various verses of Quran.