

Reflection on Emerald Hills of the Heart

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Literally meaning thinking on a subject deeply, systematically and in detail, reflection is the lamp of the heart, the food of the spirit, the spirit of knowledge and the soul and light of believers' way of life. Without reflection, the heart is darkened, the spirit becomes exasperated and life is lived at a superficial level devoid of meaning and profundity...

Reflection is such a light in the heart that good and evil, harm and benefit and beauty and ugliness can be discerned and distinguished from each other through it. Again, it is through reflection that the universe becomes a book to study and the verses of the Holy Book disclose their meaning and secrets more deeply.

Reflection is a vital step to take a lesson from what is going on around us and draw conclusions from it. It is also a golden key to open the door of experiences, a seedbed where the trees of truth are planted and the pupil of the eye of the heart is opened. It is because of this that the greatest of mankind who is the foremost in reflection as in all other virtues, upon him be peace and blessings, declares: There is no act of worship as meritorious as reflection. So, reflect on the bounties of God and the works of His Power. But do not attempt to reflect on His Essence, for you will never be able to do that. By this declaration, in addition to pointing out the merit of reflection, the glory of mankind, upon him be peace and blessings, determines the limits of reflection and reminds us of the limits of our capacity.

In fact, in its verse, "They reflect on the creation of the heavens and earth (3.191)", the Holy Book presents to our views the book of the universe with its way of creation, the peculiarities of its letters and words, the harmony and coherence of its sentences, and its firmness as a whole. By drawing our attention to the universe and calling us to think about it, the Holy Book shows us one of the most beneficial forms of using the power of reflection.

To reflect on and study the revealed book of God, the Holy Book, and try to follow it in all our thoughts, conceptions and acts; to discover the Divine mysteries in the book of the universe and, through every new discovery which helps man to deepen and unfold in belief, to live a life full of spiritual pleasures along a way of light extending from belief to knowledge of God and therefrom to love of God; and then to progress to the Hereafter and God's good pleasure and approval: this is the way to become a perfect, universal man.

One can use one's faculty of reflection in every field of science. However, rational and experimental sciences can only be a first step or a means to reach the final target of reflection, which is knowledge of God, provided the mind of man has not been deformed and led astray by wrong conceptions and premises.

Studying existence as if a book and reflecting on it can give the desired results and provide ceaseless information and inspirations provided it is admitted that things with all their attributes are created by God. This is what is aimed at and should be done by those who attribute all things to God with utmost conviction and who have attained spiritual contentment through knowledge, love and remembrance of God.

Reflection should be based on and start with belief in God as the Originator of all things. Otherwise, although it can finally reach God if it finds Him at any stage of its 'journeying,' it will not be able to go further than conviction of God's existence and Unity. Whereas reflection that is based on and starts with belief in God as the Creator and unique Administrator of all things, progresses and deepens without interruption with new discoveries and develops into further and further dimensions. That is, since such a reflective activity starts with God having the Names the First and the Outward and progresses toward Him as the Last and the Inward, it will progress uninterruptedly and not come to an end. Encouraging people to such a reflection, focused upon a determined aim, entails encouraging them also to learn and use the methods of the sciences that study the ways of manifestation of existence.

Since with all their elements and compounds, the heavens and earth are the property and kingdom of God, studying every incident, thing and quality in the book of existence also means studying the ways of the exalted Creator's disposal of existence. The way of the one who can study and comprehend this book of existence accurately, and design his life accordingly, will be the way of guidance and righteousness, and his final station will be Paradise where he will drink of the blessed water of Paradise. Contrary to the people of loss and perdition who wander in the pits of heedlessness and ingratitude to God Who is the true Owner of all the infinite variety of beauties and bounties in the world, those following the way to Paradise equipped with reflection recognize the True Giver of all bounties and obey Him in consciousness of what believing in Him means. They travel from gratitude to being provided with all kinds of bounties and from bounties to gratitude, in the footsteps of angels, the Prophets and the truthful and loyal, and do everything incumbent upon them so as to be able to thank God for His blessings. On the 'vehicle' of reflection and with the help of remembrance of God, they surmount all obstacles appearing on their way and, progressing from taking necessary measures (to attain their goal) to submission and from submission to committing all their affairs to the Power of God, they fly through the 'heavens' to their final destinations.