

How Does Knowing the Human Being Bring Us Closer to Knowing God?

Knowing the Human Being, the Gateway to Knowing God

As children, we would hold the mirror in front of the sun and by turning it, we would follow the light reflected in our surrounding objects. The reflected light has the sun's color, heat, and brightness, yet at a lower intensity. When we see the reflected light, we know it is not the sun. But by examining the characteristics of this light, we can discover the qualities of sunlight. In other words, the mirror is a tool for **reflecting** the light of the sun.

We humans have a role similar to that of the mirror: we **reflect** God's attributes. The heat and light reflected in the mirror cannot be compared with the heat and light of the sun, it is like comparing a tiny particle to an infinite source. Similarly, the degree to which **God's attributes are manifest in us** cannot be compared to **God's attributes**.

Indeed, we are a **manifestation of God's names and attributes**. Just like a mirror, the more we purify our souls, the more we take on and manifest His attributes. Considering ourselves His mirror, it is reasonable to follow that whoever knows **himself** will then know **God**. If we do not know **God**, it is because we have either **forgotten** our '**true self**' or have trekked the wrong path in our **self-knowledge**.

The Human Being, the Mirror of God

The more we get in touch with our **spiritual dimension**, and the more our true self takes control of us, the more of **God's attributes** we manifest. Our **spiritual dimension** or the supra-rational faculty is the same breath which He bestowed upon us, and it includes all His **names and attributes**. If we want to succeed in **knowing God**, we must **know ourselves the right way**. In doing so, we ensure that we will not be misguided by the inanimate, vegetative, animal, and intellectual dimensions, and we will not mistake them for our divine and spiritual dimension.

In fact, just as our existence is like a mirror in which we can see God, it can be like a veil. That is, if it becomes a means in which we see **ourselves**, it will be the thickest veil in front of our eyes.

Our Perception of Ourselves

Looking in the mirror, the first image that we see is a **person**. A **person** who has been with us since childhood. We have called it "I." This **I** has grown up, changed, and now has a role in family and society. It has parts that are always visible to us, like our face and body. Whenever we look at **ourselves**, we see them. That is why we feel so much love for them, and the slightest change in these parts are important to us.

However, we have other parts that we cannot see by looking at **ourselves**, such as our internal body organs, thoughts, identity, and personality traits.

But which **self** are we referring to when we say, “whoever knows himself, knows his Lord”?¹ Whatever we have thought about our ‘**self**’ up to now are the **manifestations** of different dimensions of our existence, not our **true self**.

Our image in the mirror is our inanimate dimension which, like all objects, has shape, weight, and volume. The part that grows, reproduces, and eats is our vegetative dimension. Another part that gets married and has responsibility in society is our animal dimension. Finally, the part of us that is interested in discovering the mysteries of existence and scientific laws is called the intellectual dimension.

So which of these parts constitute our **self**?

God’s Treasure Within Us

All the parts that we mentioned, along with the spiritual dimension, make up our ‘**true self**’ or ‘**I**.’ In fact, the first step in **self-knowledge** is perceiving, knowing, and differentiating between these dimensions. We must know that our essence is a mixture of all these parts and that each of them acts as a means for the development of our spiritual (human) dimension.

It is this spiritual dimension that contains signs of **God’s names** and **attributes**. We are familiar with these **attributes** because we have them within us. If we had never experienced them, we could not recognize that they exist. As you know, if we did not have an innate sense of beauty, we could not recognize beautiful things.

¹. A saying by Prophet Muhammad

Similarly, if we have not felt able and powerful within, it would be impossible for us to recognize them in the outside world.

We can find God outside of ourselves with the **attributes** that He has embedded in us. In order to see God beyond phenomena, we must see the world through the lens of our **spiritual dimension** as it is the only dimension that is familiar with **God's attributes**. Otherwise, for example, we see eyes, may be surprised by their beauty, and may even write poems about them without paying attention to the tender mercies of their **Creator**. We see a mountain and rejoice at its grandeur, but we do not perceive its **Creator's** magnificence. We see our mother, adore her love and kindness, but this does not remind us of **God's** kindness. Ultimately, if we do not look at the world from the right perspective, we can see nothing but the outward appearance of phenomena, and as a result, we will never succeed in finding and **knowing God**.

Why the Human Being?

Let us refer once again to the valuable hadith that, "Whoever knows **himself**, surely knows his **Lord**."

But why the human being?

Why, among all the creatures, is it important to **know the human being**?

Why is knowing the human being the key to **knowing God**?

To answer these questions, let us take the example of a traveling loved one. Different situations remind us of them, but certain things remind us more of them, things which have more signs of them. For example, their picture on the wall, their

ring, the glasses they left behind, or anything else that they used and loved more reminds us of them more.

The same rule applies to the universe. All creatures have signs of God, and each of them, more or less, **manifests the attributes of God**. However, among all of them, the **human being manifests His attributes** in the most comprehensive manner. Thus, if we want to find the path to **knowing God**, the only creature that can help us in this regard is the **human being**.