

## What to Think About

### Thoughts That Win and Those That Do Not

#### What to Think About according to Islamic Religious Teachings

Have you heard of alchemy? Do you know that the copper of existence can be turned into gold with a tool called thinking? It is no wonder that God calls us to reflect on ourselves and the phenomena of creation. In fact, thinking is the only fuel for our movement, having an extraordinary power. Is there any other way rather than deep thought that can compensate for our wasted life in just an hour or even a moment?<sup>1</sup> Thinking is exactly what we need during our brief time in this world. It is an accelerator that propels us toward eternity. Interestingly, God's calls are also often invitations to reflect on ourselves, on the sky, night and day, the sun and the moon, the creation of beings and everything within our reach. However, why did God choose thinking among all possible tools? Where can the topic for thinking lead us, and what truths does it reveal?

To understand the purpose of thinking, we first need to know the purpose of our creation, which is becoming the perfect being that God intended for us. However, this transformation requires tools such as precise observation, attentive listening, sound thinking, and use of reason.

In fact, God says that thinking is the result of careful study, precise observation and attentive listening because a person who looks at phenomena through the lens of habit never realizes the greatness of God's creation nor understands his own role

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<sup>1</sup>. *Dastan-ha Wa Pand-ha*, vol. 5, p. 87; *Tafsir Ruhul Bayan*, vol. 8, p. 440.

as the center of creation in the system of existence. As a result, he cannot properly utilize the creations that God has placed at his service. For example, think about the wonderful world of fruits. At first glance, fruits are merely foods rich in vitamins that aid digestion, but this is not their only usage. Visually, fruits display beautiful colors and unique shapes. Aromatically, they can be relaxing, and they may also carry special nutritional or medicinal properties. We can only realize these features by reflecting on the quality of their creation and exploring our relationship with them. In fact, thinking and what to think about in general are the keys to discovering our connection with the entirety of creation.

### **A Tool Called the Intellect**

At first glance, the distinction between thought and intellect may not seem obvious. However, we must use the tool of intellect to think clearly and judge fairly, of course, not an intellect that is infected with illusions and fantasies, susceptible to doubt and temptation, or prone to faltering. This is because a faltered intellect cannot compare and calculate accurately; it fails to base its valuations on sound principles, and ultimately produces outputs that stray far from reality. The possessor of such an intellect may witness wonders of creation but pass by them indifferently. These wonders do not spark questions in his mind, nor do they make him reflect. Ultimately, such a person thinks about how phenomena happen, not what they are or why they occur.

For example, God has invited us to reflect on the sky and the earth. We look at the sky every day, but have we ever wondered that despite all the movement and successive atomic explosions in the sun, how the earth remains a place of safety

and peace for us? Right now, as you are reading this article, our planet is moving, yet we do not notice the various motions of the earth! Why did God design and create the sky in this way to protect us? Or instead of hearing the terrifying sounds of space explosions and terrible shifting of the earth's layers, God has filled our ears with the soothing sound of wind, flowing water, and birdsong. It seems that the whole creation works together so that we can tread the path toward our infinite truth, free from the chaos of the outside world. Yet, we ignore the wonders of the world that surround us both within and beyond; we are preoccupied with pursuing our worldly perfections.

### **How Can We Broaden Our Perspective?**

What is the reason that most of us gain so little from the way we observe the world? As mentioned earlier having the tool of thinking, that is, sound intellect, is essential, but it is not enough. We must also know what to think about. In fact, thinking is like operating a factory; despite having the most advanced devices, a factory still needs raw materials to produce items. Similarly, lacking meaningful content as the focal point of what to think about, we will be drowned in imagination and illusion.

Of course, since God has not abandoned us on this fateful path, He has provided us with the Quran as a source of guidance, allowing us to reach our true essence by reflecting on it. Through it, we realize that we are eternal beings and the equipment needed for our journey toward infinity must be acquired in the limited time we have in this world. We must be aware of our value and limitations, recognizing our insignificance compared to the Creator of the universe. Furthermore, we should ask ourselves: Who is the human being in whom all the manifestations of God, as

described in the Quran, are reflected and whose existence aligns perfectly with the mathematical structure of the universe?

By telling us what to think about, God has given us a road map for our journey toward the truth. In addition, by inviting us to reflect on these topics, He has also provided us with a way to speed up our progress along this eternal path. In the article "Seeing the Malakut of Objects; Why Do Most of Us Not See It?" we have discussed the stages of such reflection in detail.

In this article, we explored the importance of what to think about in moving toward our infinite truth. We explained that God constantly invites us to think about the heavens, the earth, the movement of the moon and the sun, the creation of beings, humanity, and what is at his service. It is the thought that ultimately helps us know our true self and defines our relationship with the system of existence. On this journey, we need both a sound intellect and valuable topics for thinking. Otherwise, we risk falling into illusions and fantasies and failing to reach our ultimate human goal.

Have you ever considered this perspective on what to think about? What are your most valued topics for contemplation?