

Lesson 1: Seeking God

*Why do we think about God and study ways of knowing the Creator of the universe?

1. Love of awareness and becoming familiar with our world is within all of us.

We all want to know, in truth: Did this elevated heaven, with its beautiful stars, this extensive earth, with its heart-rendering views; these various creatures; beautiful birds; various kinds of fish, the seas and flowers ; the blossoms, plants, abundant trees, whose tops reach towards the heavens; did all of these things come into being of their own free will or were all of these wonderful forms painted by an expert, a powerful painter?

Beyond all of this, the first question which comes to mind for all of us is: Where did we come from? Where are we? Where are we going? If we know the answers to these three questions, how happy will we be! That is, if we know where our life began and where it will finally end and what duties we have now, our searching spirit tells us: you must not sit quietly until the answers come.

It often happens that in an automobile accident, a person is injured and becomes unconscious and for his treatment, they take him to a hospital. When his condition has improved a bit, and when he awakens, the first thing which he asks of those around him is, "Where am I? Why did you bring me here? When can I leave here?" All of these questions show that a person cannot remain indifferent and not ask these questions.

Thus, the first thing which sends us looking for God and understanding of the creation of the world of existence is our very thirsty spirit of search.

2. A sense of thankfulness: Pretend that you have been invited to a very important affair and all means of convenience have been provided for you but, because you have been invited through your brother, you do not know the host well. The first thing you will want to do when you enter the gathering is to find the host to thank him.

When we look at this wide-spread created world and the multiple blessings which have been provided for us: eyes which see, ears which hear, –sufficient intelligence, various physical and psychological

abilities, various means for living and for earning our livelihood, we automatically begin to think about trying to know He Who has given us all of these blessings and even though He does not need our thanks, we still thank Him and, until we do this, we are unhappy with ourselves and feel we have not done a duty. This is another reason why we begin to search to come to know God.

3. The bond between things to our benefit and things to our harm with this example: Pretend that we are going on a journey and we reach a cross-road in which there is a great deal of commotion. Everyone warns us not to stop at this cross-road because there is great danger there. Each group invites us to go its way. One group says, "The best way is to go East." Another says, "Go West. It is the best road." The third group invites us to a road or a way which is between the other two, saying, "This is the only way of saving yourself from danger and reaching your home safely.

This is the way that will give you happiness and security and be a place of refuge for you." Would we allow ourselves to choose a way without study? Will our mind allow us to stop there and not choose any way? Clearly not.

Rather, our mind and our wisdom tells US to begin immediately to study and research, to listen to the words of each group carefully and accept whichever way has the most correct signs, speaks the truth and has convincing reasons for taking that way. Having assured ourselves of the right way, we take it and move forward.

In life in this world, also, we have such a condition.

Different religions and schools of thought invite us to take their way, but as our fate, our fortune and misfortune, our progress and backwardness depends upon our study and making the best choice, we are obliged to think about this and prevent ourselves from falling into misfortune, corruption and difficulties.

This is yet another reason which invites us to search for the Creator of the world. The Holy Quran says,

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ

"So give good tidings to my servants, those who listen to the sayings and follow the best of it ... "
(39: 17-18)

Think and Answer

1. Other than what your mother and father have told you about God, have you seriously thought about Him?
2. Can you say what the difference is between 'searching for God' and 'knowing God'?

3. Have you ever felt a deep sense of spiritual love for God when you have whispered your prayers to Him?

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