

Integration Article # 5

## **WHICH IS BETTER? THINKING OR WORSHIPPING**

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This article expands the ideas introduced in the preceding article: thinking, worshipping and integration. The answer to this question may surprise you. Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be unto him) said in a Hadith, "An hour of thinking is better than a year of worshipping" This Hadith appears in Al-Ghazali book in Arabic (Revival of Religious Sciences, Volume 4, page 423.) The Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings be unto him) ordered Muslims to think about the creation of Allah and not to think about that-ul-laah (the essence of Allah.) According to the reference just cited (page 423-424), another Hadith says, "Think about the creation of Allah and don't think about "that-ul-laah"; you will not be able to." The human mind is limited and cannot cope with the Limitless.

Imam Al Ghazali in his book entitled Ja-wa-herul-Quran (The Jewels of Quran) categorizes knowledge into two types: 1) Fundamental Knowledge, and 2) Supplemental Knowledge. The Fundamental Knowledge has three layers: "that-ul-laah" (the essence of Allah), se-fa-tul-laah (the attributes of Allah) and af-aa-lul-laah (the aayaat /creations of Allah). These are the main principles of knowledge; they are honored and dignified because of whom and what they study.

The third type of knowledge is too vast to account for. To count Allah's creations and record them you would need enough ink that equals the water of the ocean (and seven similar oceans) and pens that could be manufactured from all trees existing in the world. Allah says in the Quran (Luqman 31:27), "And if all the trees on earth were pens and the ocean (were ink), with seven oceans behind it to add to its (supply), yet would not

the words of Allah be exhausted (in the writing): for Allah is exalted in Power, full of Wisdom.” Allah’s creations are beyond counting and are forever continuing. Each of Allah’s creations is an aayah and each aayah comes from the same origin, Allah the Creator, the Owner and the Sustainer of the Universe.

How often do we think about the creations of Allah? This is the million-question paragraph. How is earth held in space with no visible pillars? How is heaven raised? How is it built? Why are stars located where they are? Why does the sun appear smaller than earth? Why do we have day and night? Why does the weather keep changing? Why do we have salt water in the oceans while we have fresh water in the rivers? How do clouds form? Who paints the sky in the rainbow? Who produces water, rain, snow and ice? Why do some families have boys only, while others have girls only, while others have both and while others have neither? Why do fruits and vegetables vary in color, shape and nutritional value in spite of their single origin in earth and water? Why do animals and birds cover themselves the way they do? Why are oceans filled with different creatures with beautiful colors? How do animals and birds communicate with each other? Who taught the bees to manufacture honey? How do cows, camels and goats produce milk? Why does the camel have one or two humps? How do electric eels produce cold electricity? Why do people have different looks, shapes, sizes, colors and minds? Where do these questions come from?

Asking millions and millions of questions about the creation is acceptable. I am sure that we can spend hours and hours asking all kinds of questions about each kind of Allah’s creation: stars, space, earth, rocks, water, air, plants, animals, birds and human groups. When we ask about how we think, we invite the contributions of many sciences: Cognitive psychology, Mathematics, Neuroscience, Operations research, Logic, Philosophy, Psychology, Psychiatry and Social psychology. Finding answers to your questions is recommended but there will be always unanswered questions. Questions about the essence of Allah, however, are not acceptable; haven’t you heard about this aayah? “There is nothing whatever like unto Him” (Ash-shurah 42:11)

Allah obligates Muslims to reflect upon the Qur’an, “Then do they not reflect upon the Qur’an or are there locks upon (their) hearts?” Qur’an (Muhammad 47:24.) The encouragement to think comes in at least 169 aayaat.

According to the Qur'an, Allah instructs Muslims to study and gain knowledge in all aspects of the universe ( Yunus 10:101). Muslim learners and teachers should not turn away from any verse, or if they do, they would be in violation of the Qur'an. Allah states in the Qur'an, "And how many Signs in the heavens and the earth do they pass by? Yet they turn (their faces) away from them!"

In my last article, I focused on thinking from the Quranic viewpoint; but this article introduces what the Hadith say about thinking. Our Prophet encouraged his companions to think. We all know what the Prophet (Peace and Blessings be unto him) said to Mu'az when he sent him to Yemen." How will you rule? Mu'az answered: according to the Book of Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) asked: What will you do if you don't find it in the Book of Allah? Mu'az replied: according to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. The Prophet (PBUH) said, what will you do if you don't find it in the Sunnah? Mu'az answered: I will think hard and then follow my opinion. The Prophet (PBUH) said: Alhamdu Lillah who guided the messenger of the Messenger of Allah"

No discussion of thinking is complete without touching on "consultation." It is an Islamic tradition to consult with others before making major decisions. Consultation makes you see things clearly and think properly. Consultation reduces the impact of the blind spots all of us have. Even the Prophet was ordered to consult with others. The Quran (Al Imran 3:159) instructs: "and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him). "

**Here is the verdict: To think is to worship and to worship is to think.** The Quran says so; the Hadith confirms it; Life attests to it; Science welcomes it and the Mind approves it.