

103390 - Is looking at the universe and nature an act of worship?

the question

Is it true that looking at the universe and nature is like an act of worship?

Detailed answer

Looking at the universe and nature, in the sense of reflecting on what Allah has created in this universe, and seeing that as proof of the greatness and might of Allah, is an act of worship that increases one's faith and certainty. Hence the call to look at this universe and nature is given repeatedly in the Book of Allah, such as in the verses in which He, may He be glorified, says (interpretation of the meaning):

{Say, [O Muhammad], "Travel through the land and observe how He began creation. Then Allah will produce the final creation. Indeed Allah, over all things, is competent} [al-'Ankaboot 29:20]

{Then do they not look at the camels – how they are created,

And at the sky – how it is raised,

And at the mountains – how they are erected,

And at the earth – how it is spread out?} [al-Ghaashiyah 88:17-20]

{Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the [great] ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits people, and what Allah has sent down from the heavens of rain, giving life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and dispersing therein every [kind of] moving creature, and [His] directing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heaven and the earth are signs for a people who use reason} [al-Baqarah 2:164].

If a person looks at these created things and reflects on the wisdom behind their creation, the brilliance of their design, and how Allah, may He be exalted, has subjugated them, that will increase his faith and certainty, and he will be rewarded for this reflection of his.

The same applies to reflecting on the situation of nations and kingdoms that ceased to exist because of their disbelief and sin, and learning lessons from that, as Allah, may He be exalted, says about the people of Saalih and their lands, and the lands of Thamood (interpretation of the meaning):

{Then look how was the outcome of their plan – that We destroyed them and their people, all.

So those are their houses, desolate because of the wrong they had done. Indeed in that is a sign for people who know} [an-Naml 27:51-52].

As for simply looking at the universe and nature for pleasure and enjoyment, that is not an act of worship, but it is permissible, on condition that it does not distract one from an obligatory duty or cause one to fall into what is prohibited.

And Allah knows best.