

4th May 2022

Reflecting

**“A soul without reflection, like a pile
Without inhabitant, to ruin runs.”**

Edward Young, Night Thoughts (1742)

The grave of Martin Luther King Jr is situated in the National Historic Park in Atlanta, Georgia, which bears King's name. The marble tomb has been placed in a reflecting-pool of blue water and bears this powerful quote from one of King's most famous speeches: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, I'm Free at last." As I stood alone by the grave in the early hours of a summer day in 1989, the reflecting pool spoke to me of my own need to reflect. As I looked at the inscription of King's name and the years of his birth and death, it struck me that he was only thirty-nine years old when he was assassinated. That day I was two months short of my fortieth birthday. Reflecting on that was as disturbing as it was powerful.

On a recent break in Lochaber, I took a walk along the banks of the Caledonian Canal from Banavie to Gairloch. The clouds were cotton-wool balls floating in a radiant blue sky. The canal was mirror-calm. It was a photographer's paradise, and the walk was regularly interrupted with another stunning reflection to capture. And this time it was the reflections in the canal's stillness that prompted other moments of my own reflecting, and I was right back at Martin Luther King's grave and its reflecting pool. If that day in 1989 was a reflection on what I'd done thus far with the thirty-nine years of my life, my reflection by the Caledonian Canal was about what I'd done with the years since.

Conclusions? That's not important here. What is of much greater importance is this: the value of times for reflecting. But why should I wait for a reflecting pool round a famous grave or the mirror-calm reflections of a canal to encourage me to reflect? Shouldn't I be reflecting on life, faith, values, relationships *all* the time, and certainly more often than I do? Shouldn't a process of reflecting be built into my daily living and not left to random chance or circumstance – years apart?

Now, there's a thought that's surely worth reflecting on today. Perhaps a time of reflection for you too?

A prayer for today

Lord, show me the need to reflect, and prompt me to learn from these reflections. Amen

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