Wednesday, November 20, 2013

Topic: Intercession #2

“**And no intercessor will they have amongst their associates, and they will be disbelievers in their associates.”**

**Rum (30):13**



Pay attention to how Allah uses the words ‘intercessor’ and ‘associates’ in this verse:

What is being said?

If you associate something with Allah, that thing can NO longer be an intercessor for you.

* What does it mean to associate anything with God’s deity?
	+ It means giving the power to control/create/own to a being other than God

I say that God is the owner of the universe BUT in reality I commit ‘shirk'

* Practical Example: Ascribing the joy I experience to a created being, claiming that the created being is my source of happiness
	+ The Source of happiness is the One who gives existence to everything
	+ Created beings cannot give existence to anything at all
* We have to always question who the real Source of everything is and apply this in all aspects of our practical life

If we fail to see the real, true Source behind everything in creation, we will end up attributing power (of creation) to created things - i.e. **associating** a deistic quality with created things

Re-cap: Intercessor is someone/something that connects you to the Creator

- If we associate ‘lordship’ to created things, that thing cannot connect us to the true Creator but rather binds us to the object itself.

When I am interacting with things in creation, I have to be sure about its Source of existence

* The Owner of both the ‘laws/emotions/natural tendencies’ and the ‘physical object’
* If I fail to be aware about who the Source is, I will attribute the qualities that I interact with, to the objects themselves

If our understanding of the word intercession has a trace of association with God, the Quran rejects it.

Rather, the concept of intercession in the Quran, distinguishes God’s power as separate and as something that cannot have associations.

Can the food itself nourish me?

* No.
* We have to be careful in our claims when we say things such as ‘the food nourishes me’
	+ Nourishment itself needs a Source
	+ Who is the Source?
		- Can it be the food? Does the food have power over itself to nourish you?
		- No. In reality, as we observe if we carefully investigate:
			* Food needs to be created.
			* The act of nourishing needs to be created.

Pay attention to how the action of communication is taking place between created things:

* Communication between cells (white blood cells repairing wounds)
* Movement in the universe (setting and rising of the sun, earth around its own axis, etc)
* There is harmony in existence

How does this harmony exist in such perfection?

* I cannot attribute it to the objects themselves
* This harmony, the qualities that are present in all of creation, are GIVEN
	+ We have to always look at the properties that exist in everything

Intercession (*shafa’a)*

Associating God’s qualities with things in creation (*shirk)*

If I don’t associate the quality of things with possessing its independent power of creation, only then can the objects be intercessions for me.

* But if I attribute any quality to the object itself (that the object is the cause of the effect I experience), the object is no longer an intercessor BUT an associate
	+ We have to make a distinction between my perception of the event and the real object itself

Are you an associate OR are you an intercessor?

* If I perceive my source of existence as the factor that is EDUCATING the child, I am seeing myself as an associate of GOD (I have associated His creator-ship to myself) not an intercessor

**“And warn by the Qu’ran those who fear that they will be gathered before their Lord – for them apart from Him will be no protector and no intercessor – that they might become righteous.”**

**An’am (6) :51**

You have to first exist before you can have the agency to create anything else

* If something exist, it has to have been BROUGHT into existence
* The One who brings into existence must be OUT OF THIS UNIVERSE
	+ Why?
	+ Because, how can One who gives existence, be in need of existence
	+ Contradiction!

In this verse, the usage of protector and intercessor (*shafa’s)*  are used together to convey a point

* Intercessors and Protectors are the SAME if you see that the protector has the power to intercede between you and the Creator

*If something intercedes between you and God (i.e. it connects you to your Creator), it is in essence also a protector for you because in connecting you to your Lord, you are protected*

Nothing can give existence to itself

* Every moment has its own independent existence
	+ We have to firmly establish this understanding
	+ Otherwise our belief in God has no real foundation because we will separate belief from our day-to-day matters

Example: Mother is educating the child

* The mother has to intercede and take care of the child BUT she should not attribute the power to create/making the child grow, to education or to herself
	+ That is, do not say: The child grew up to be fine young man because his mother educated him
* The mother did not educate him. She has no power to create anything.
	+ Rather, the mother, at every moment, chose for the child to see a lesson in every incident and uses the tool of education made available to her
* We are just using/choosing one way or the other from among the already existing concepts of education
* We cannot create anything

We have to be careful to understand that the concept of ‘protector’ has no power to create

* But from the way it is created, I am able to perceive the mode/laws of creation (the way God creates)
* The mother has no power to create
* Education has no power to make us grow

The mother’s role is to choose from the options present

* Then, you are the ‘protector’ of the child BUT you have no claim/association with the action
* Only then, you as the intercessor are a protector

**“Verily, all those whom you invoke beside God are but created beings like yourselves; invoke them, then, and let them answer your prayer – if what you claim is true!**

**Have they feet to walk with Or hands to lay hold with? Or eyes to see with? Or ears to hear with? Say: “Call all those to whom you ascribe a share in God’s divinity, scheme against me, and give me no respite!”**

A’raf (7): 194 – 195

Everything (both the physical matter and the qualities in the matter) are created.

* Think about it: If we cannot be the source of existence of our power of speech, the sun cannot be the source of existence of the light it emits
* Everything needs a Source of Existence to exist

If I cannot be the source of existence of a cell, how can what is within the cell be the Source of their properties?

False concept:

1. If there was no air, I would die (Negative reasoning)
* Scientific conclusion: Air is a source of life
* Quran says: If you think that air is the source of life, ask the air molecules if they can be the source of life? (Positive questioning)
	+ The air molecule itself has NO choice, will, knowledge, volition
	+ How can I attribute any power to it then?

Quranic methodology: Guides us towards making firm conclusions by investigating the ascribed qualities

Example: I want nourishment

* We may say that tomatoes are the source of nourishment for me
* Quran says: Ask the tomato if it can give me energy to sustain my life?
	+ Does the tomato have any means to operate my existence (Methodology: Ask a positive question)
	+ The tomato needs a source itself

Use the Quranic methodology to understand and question your claims to reach a conclusion about it

* Don’t subscribe to unfounded claims

Can I give existence to my intellect, knowledge, and movement?

* Everything is being given to me
* Knowledge itself has NO choice to create itself

Our feet cannot be the Source of walking, nor can our hands be the source of taking/grasping

* But if you attribute the ‘effect’ to the ‘cause’, rather than to the Creator of the whole universe, we are told to ask: Does the ‘cause’ have the ability to fulfill the effect?

‘Have they feet to walk with’ – Do the things we ascribe power to have the ability to accomplish the result?

* Quran is presenting a simple understanding based on our human characteristics
* We don’t need complicated mathematical or scientific concepts to understand our reality

**“And they worship other than God that which neither harms them nor benefits them, and they say, “These are our intercessors (**intercession is rejected because the created object are given association with God) **with God “Say, “ Do you inform God of something He does not know in the heavens or on the earth? Exalted is He and high above what they associate with Him.”**

**Yunus (10): 18**

We have been trained to ignore that everything is happening as a result of a Conscious Will

* The way things are coming into existence are given the term ‘natural’ or operating as a ‘law’
* In doing so, the Conscious Will that functions and creates everything is masked
* Don’t get fooled by the play of words used in secular science

Quranic language is so simple and smooth

* It presents to us a rational mode of thinking
* All we need to do is to use our human-given intellect to reach our conclusions
	+ We should not say that ‘ I believe so and so BECAUSE I am a Muslim’
		- Political and social identities have no reality

You have to say: I don’t believe that causes have an effect AND hence I am Muslim.

Nothing other than God, has the power to choose to create through decisions, etc

* Look at an atom
	+ Does it have the power to choose how it wants to exist?
	+ If it does, don’t bother believing in God because you would not need to believe in a Creator.

**“Is it not to God that sincere religion is due? But those who take for protectors other than God (say) : “We only worship them in order that they may bring us nearer to God…”**

**Zumar (39):3**

**Reducing these verses to grave-worshipping is too simplistic.**

* **This is a general principle that is applicable in every matter**

When we say that something will bring us nearer to God, we are attributing ‘power’ to the object itself. In doing so, we are seeking protection in these objects, which has no power themselves, apart from God.

* By such a way, we are committing *shirk* because we have just associated power to things other than the Creator.

Be careful of falling into a divergent way of thinking in which we split our beliefs from our practical lives.

Example:

1. My father is taking care of me
2. My God created my father.
* You separated the actions done by your father and your belief that God created everything
* All the actions of my father have been created by God
* All my dad did, was to choose a certain way of action between the choices he was presented

**“Say: Call on those - besides Him - whom you fancy: they have neither the power to remove your troubles from you nor to change them.”**

**“Those whom they call upon, themselves seek the means of access to their Lord-- whoever of them is nearest-- and they hope for His mercy and fear His chastisement; surely the chastisement of your Lord is a thing to be cautious of.”**

**Isra (17): 56-57**

We cannot stop at just saying that God is the creator of the universe.

- We have to connect ourselves from the macro world to the micro world and vice versa

- Who can be the Creator of a thing in this world? The answer will be: The One who creates the whole universe.

* Who can be the Creator of the universe? The answer will be: The One who creates even the smallest thing in it.

**“Say: Call upon those [beings] whom you imagine [to be endowed with divine powers] beside God: they have not an atom’s weight of power either in the heavens or on earth, nor have they any share in them either, nor does He have any helper from among them.”**

**Saba’ (34): 22**

The Quran is training us in *tawhid*

* Once we establish the Oneness of God, all our ‘problems’ will be solved
* We need to study the Quran instead of just repeating and imitating culture

**“And certainly you have come to Us alone as We created you at first, and you have left behind you the things which We gave you, and We do not see with you your intercessors about whom you asserted that they were (God's) associates in respect to you; certainly the ties between you are now cut off and what you asserted is gone from you.” An’am (6): 94**

God will reward me because of my prayers

* It wasn’t you who created the prayer
* If you don’t pray as a means of connecting yourself with Him, when you die, your prayer will remain in this world, which means it has no value

**“They do not possess any means of intercession, but such a one as has received permission (or promise) from the Most Beneficent God”**

**Maryam (19): 87**

If you attribute everything in creation (the food you eat, the wind that blows) to God, you will see that it is acting (providing you with nourishment) by His permission.

* God created them, that is why they exist
* The Creator is One

**Hadith: Abu Umamah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:**

**I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, "Read the Qur'an, for it will come as an intercessor for its reciters on the Day of Resurrection."**

**[Muslim].**

The Quran will be an intercessor

* If you read the Qur’an in order to know what is true and right
* It will guide you because it is the guiding speech of God
* As a printed book It has no independent power within itself
* If you follow the Quran and say: This is what is sent to me to guide me in this world, you will understand that the Quran is guiding you by the permission of God and it is taking you to God (interceding for you)

**“O Prophet! Lo! We have sent you as a witness and a bearer of good news and a warner,**

**And as a one who invites to God by His permission, and as a lamp that gives light.”**

**Ahzab (33): 45-46**

If our attitude to the Prophet is that : I am getting guidance from God but the Prophet is not the Source of anything, then the Prophet will be an intercessor for me

* If I follow his teachings, as instructed by God, the teachings of the Prophet will be an intercessor for me to connect with God
* The Prophet and the message received from the Prophet are ALL from God

**“There has been for you in the Messenger of God an excellent example for anyone whose hope is in God and the Last Day and [who] remembers God often.”**

**Ahzab (33): 21**

The Prophet is the intercessor ONLY if I follow him

* We should not idolize anyone, including the Prophet
* But we should follow the Prophets, because they have been given the qualities of good examples, in order to reach (be connected to) God

**“Indeed there has been an excellent example for you in Abraham and those with him,..”**

**Mumtahanah (60): 4**

Not only in Prophet Muhammad BUT also Prophet Abraham.

Why should we love the Prophet?

* Do you love the food you eat?
	+ Yes. But the love for the food is not the main purpose of your life
	+ The love guides you about your Lord…
* Similarly, you love the Prophet because he is bringing you the news of God by His permission
	+ He is NOT the source of guidance
	+ Your love of the Prophet should guide you back to God
	+ If you just love him without being guided back to God, you are not seeing him as an intercessor BUT rather associating him as a partner

**“There has been for you in them an excellent example for anyone whose hope is in God and the Last Day. And whoever turns away - then indeed, God is the Self-sufficient, the Praiseworthy.”**

**Mumtahanah (60):6**

All messengers are from God.

**“Say: If you love God, then follow me, God will love you and forgive you your faults, and God is Forgiving, Merciful.”**

**Al-I Imran (3): 31**

If you want to reach God, follow the teachings of the Prophets, which have been given to them by their Creator.

* The Prophets are interceding between me and God by carrying His message for me

**Narrated Anas:**

**The Prophet said "None of you will have faith till he loves me more than his father, his children and all mankind."**

Why do we love the Prophets?

* Because they are bringing to us, the news of our Lord
* They are teaching me how to connect to God
* If I love the Prophetic teaching more than my father’s, I am saying that my Prophet’s choice is more valuable than my father’s choice
	+ In doing so, I see that the Prophet’s choice is more worthy of my following because He is the best of God’s message bearer
* I love the Prophet because of what makes him a prophet (i.e. being a message bearer from God)