Halaqa: Wednesday, March 26, 2014

Topic: How does the Quran present God (part 3)

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ

“Know, then, [O man], He is that there is no deity save God…”

Muhammad (47): 19

If a person does not enquire who He is, the Quran cannot speak to this person

* There needs to be questioning first.
* ‘No question, no answer’

Quran’s description is not to be understood from God’s perspective

* We describe Him through our observation in this world
* We cannot describe God through His nature

While you are searching for He (the One who is behind everything in this world)

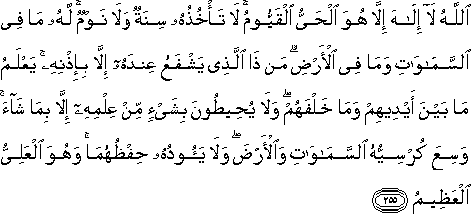
1. Search for the One who is responsible for everything/nature of my existence/nature of things around me
2. Investigate through observation

* Quran says: You will not be able to find anything in this world that is the source of existence of anything (*la ilaha)*
* Only then can you describe God as *illAllah*
  + He is the One who is doing everything in this world
  + Nothing in this world can be Him or take up any of his qualities

This is the only way we can describe God. Any other way is incomprehensible because the Creator is beyond the nature of this world

* Don’t force yourself to imagine God
* There is no way to do it other than to base your understanding of God on concrete negation (negating the quality of deity in anything else)

**002.255**



**Sahih International: “**God! Other than whom there is no deity except Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him. Unto Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth. Who is he that intercedes with Him save by His leave? He knows that which is in front of them and that which is behind them, while they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He wills. His Throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime, the Tremendous.”

Analysis of the verse:

“**Other than whom there is no deity except Him”**

* From my observations, I see that nothing has the power to assign/create/decide in this world. But the world exists. There must be a Source of existence.
* By investigating creation around me, I see that nothing in creation can create itself or anything apart from the Source of existence.

Through the Quran, God teaches us how we can establish belief in this Source..

**“The Alive”**

* There is nothing in the world that can be taken as the Source of existence of life
* Yet, we are alive and have been given life
* You cannot find the source of existence within this world BUT you can experience life here
* There is no owner of ‘life’ here
* Since nothing can create, it means that this Source of life (He) is Alive
  + He is the Source of life
  + If He is the Source of life, He must be Alive
* There is no need to imagine how His life must be
  + There is no way for us even to imagine it

Belief, in its definition, rejects imagination

* You cannot ‘imagine’ in belief
* There is no such thing as ‘blind faith’ or faith without reasoning

Since we cannot imagine/comprehend God, people use that to justify having blind faith

* This false way of belief is then used to forge ‘belief’ in everything incomprehensible (angels/divine determining/trinity/pillars of Islam)
* As a result, everything related to religion becomes a myth since it cannot be conclusively and logically proven

The Quran, on the contrary says: “*Fa’lam”*

* To know with certainty and surety
* The Quran teaches us how to experience this certainty in faith by having concrete evidence

What is a human being?

* A being that thinks and uses his/her intellect to question about existence
* If we don’t question our existence, our life is nothing more than a state of eating/relieving

Deity: The One who sustains my existence

Whoever creates is the Sustainer. Whoever sustains is the Life Giver

* Look for this Source
* If you can find the Source within this world, then there is no need for you to read the Quran or to believe in God because you have already found god

The Source of all the qualities we observe, has to be coming from the Creator

* The Creator has to be the Sustainer because we see that the order in the universe is being sustained

If you end up trying to describe God in His essence, you will find yourself believing ‘blindly’ because you cannot.

* From this, all other elements of religion become an imaginary state of mind
* We have to nip the problem in the bud and cement our belief with a sense of conviction through investigation
* It is beyond myself to be able to imagine what infinite is like, apart from acknowledging that it is infinite.

**“Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him”**

* See the signs here in this world
* There is no need to see Him to know this. We have to be able to come to a state of confirmation through the elements we have been given.
* Through investigation of this universe, we can see how creation is being constantly created and sustained by the Creator
  + If everything in this universe is being constantly subject to change and yet the existence never ceases, how can the Creator be overcome by slumber of sleep?

**“Unto Him belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth.”**

* We will never be able to find anything in this universe that has an ownership over itself
* This Quran has to be pointing me to observe the universe because that is what I can observe
* It would be contradictory to ask me to observe something that is beyond my scope

**“Who is he that intercedes with Him save by His leave?**

* + Example 1: Power and Laptop
* Electricity itself cannot be the source of anything
* But you need electricity for your laptop to work
* Electricity is not the creator
* The Creator made the order such that the laptop will work with electricity
* Electricity is interceding
  + Example 2: Food and Hunger
* Food is not satisfying you because on its own food has no power to create anything
  + Can food have any knowledge of your body?
  + Does it have any quality of satisfying you?
* My Creator is feeding me but my relationship with food is such that God made it function as an intercessor for me
* While eating food, I should be aware that God has employed them in their role to satisfy me

Everything in this universe is an “intercessor” ONLY if you see how the ‘intercessor’ leads you back to the Creator

* Don’t restrict one’s understanding of intercession to prophets
* We’ll end up ‘blindly believing’ that the Prophet will save us
  + But that would only be a figment of my imagination
* I have to be able to prove it within my scope of understanding here in this universe

What we tend to say: Since I cannot sustain myself without food, food must be my sustainer

* This is because we try and explain everything within the conditions of this universe regardless of whether it makes sense or not.
* This is another facet of blind faith.
  + We may condition ourselves to never accept the possibility that the universe has been given existence, although we see within this universe no source of existence of anything.
* Such a methodology takes everything in existence for granted
* Within this way of thought is a logical discrepancy because existence is explained by referring to other objects/laws that are given existence

**“He knows that which is in front of them and that which is behind them”**

* Look at everything in this world and ask: Can any single particle that exists within this order be an accident?
* Everything is perfectly, knowingly located

**“While they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He will”**

* They have no knowledge of their own
* The Creator is putting everything where it needs to be

**“His throne extends over the heavens and the earth”**

* Nothing in this world can claim that a single item belongs to it. The existence of nothing can be explained by referring it to anything in this world but to the Creator of the whole universe.
* Every single quality that we have belongs to our Creator, who is the Creator of the whole universe
* Nothing else can claim ownership of anything else
* Do not imagine the ‘throne’
  + It means He is in control of everything
  + And we can confirm this through investigation

**112.001**

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**Sahih International:**Say, "He is the One God”

One = The Only, Absolute One

* Not a numeric definition

**112.002**

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**Sahih International:**Allah, the Eternal Refuge.

Look at the universe and see that everything exists within the context of the whole universe. And all together they need the One Who has given existence to them.

* The One Who has created the universe is not in need of anything, He is the Creator of everything. Everything is in need of Him.

**112.003**

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**Sahih International:**He begets not, and neither is he begotten.

He does not transfer His qualities to anything else

* He does not bequeath any of His qualities to anything
* Why?
  + If the Absolute One gives an ounce of Absolute to anything else, that thing becomes Absolute
  + That is the very nature of Absolute
* We see nothing in this world which has any quality of giving existence to anything.
* Idea of incarnation of God in anything (including having a child) is the result of a wrong conception of God from the beginning
  + If you start investigation by observing the universe, you will see that nothing here has inherited a quality of the Absolute
  + When we don’t start with our investigations but claim belief through imaginations, then our claims are false.

No mother can be the source of her child

* Both mother and child are given existence at every moment

**112.004**

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**Sahih International:** and there is nothing that could be compared with Him.

You can liken anything in this universe to Him because nothing in this world has any absolute or eternal qualities

You can easily describe God by confirming that nothing in this world can be Absolute

* Only through this confirmation can you believe that God is Absolute
* Otherwise your claim of Absolute is empty
* Nothing appears (*kufuw)* even to have infinite qualities
* I cannot attribute the quality of absolute to anything in this world.
* I can only attribute this existence to *huwa* (He)
  + He is the necessarily-existent One