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| **Date** | Wednesday, December 2nd, 2015 |
| **Topic** | In the footsteps of Prophet Abraham |
| **Part** | 15 |

***"Behold, he said to his father: "O my father! Why worship that which hears not and sees not, and can profit you nothing?" Maryam (19):42***

*Recap:* In the previous sessions, we defined “idols” as anything which has no conscious will of its own and yet we assign creatorship to. In other words, anything which does not have the quality to produce results. For example, if I think that water quenches my thirst, then water becomes my idol. Water does not have the power to create. It is employed to quench my thirst. It is appointed to deliver me sustenance.

Some people admire celebrities and follow them to a point where they keep track of their every move. They think that the celebrities are the source of their enjoyment and sustenance. Getting updated with someone’s every move and trying to imitate them is not a human behavior. It is an addiction where one is worshipping the celebrity.

* **Human beings worship that which they perceive as the source of sustaining their being.**

Scenario: Maria works to make money so she can take care of her family. If Maria perceives her job to be the Source of providing sustenance to herself and her family, then she is worshipping her job.

* Similarly, Maria’s husband regards Maria as the bread winner and perceives the money to be the Source of sustaining the whole family.
* Maria’s children think that they are being taken care of by the parents.
* What is expected of Maria’s whole family is to make the distinction between the job, money or the food and the creator of the food, Maria and the universe all together.
* In and of itself, material (money, profession…) has no conscious will or power etc. of its own so that they would give existence to anything.
* It sees not and hears not i.e. it has no power, no qualities, no choice of its own. Matter is created as it is.
* Material is not the source of sustaining one's being.
* *Can material be the originator of any qualities? Think about it!*

Most problems lie in thinking that matter itself is the source of existence of the qualities we feel or experience in the universe. Matter is given qualities or some matter is used as a means for me to experience the qualities. **When I experience certain qualities such as happiness, enjoyment… I need to refer it not to the matter itself but to the Creator of the matter.** I should also be cognizant of the fact that I am not the one producing the qualities either. The ability to feel and experience all qualities (which are endless and points to its Maker) is within me. I just need to take care of my responsibility which is to acknowledge it, the Producer of my endless qualities. That is how my Sustainer introduces itself to me.

* If I teach myself the fundamental elements of belief, then nothing will become my idol.
* External factors (society, parents…) cannot shape me.
* What shapes me is my human self.

I may say I do not worship money or fame. However, without establishing the fundamentals of belief, our actions are meaningless. Example: Giving money to charity.

* I may give all my money to a meaningful charity but without understanding my purpose of existence, I may not be doing a worthy act.
* The charity may contribute to consumerism.
* I may be giving money with the right start (consciousness that the money does not belong to me). However, without doing further investigation into how the money will be used, I am adding to wastefulness.
* Quran guides us to give charity for “necessity” (*infaaq*) only.

Therefore, one has to solve problems within the root i.e. understand the purpose of existence. Quran teaches us the truth in the form of parables so we can deduce all kinds of understanding. I have to reason for myself according to my capacity.

*What is "father" figure?*

* Anything which I deem to be the source of protection. In most societies, father figure is considered to be the provider or protector.
* If I think that climate gives me a pleasant life, “climate” is my father figure.
* If I think that state gives me a comfortable life, then “state” is my father figure.

Abraham’s advice to his father is not complicated at all. When I speak to people, I need to make things simple and clear. Abraham uses an “affectionate” tone towards his father: **“O daddy (*Ya abatee*)! *Why worship that which does not hear, sees and benefit?”***

* Worship: seeing an object as the source of existence of something else.
* Be respectful towards parents and at the same time do not compromise with them.
* Parents are like trucks carrying supplies. Do not worship the truck!
* *What is the real reason for worshipping something other than God?*
* Heedlessness and laziness.
* Objects/events have the qualities to give effect.
* The quality is creating the effect.

**The fundamental problem is our worship of “nature”, perceiving matter as coming into existence from cause🡪effect relationship. This is a wrong understanding (materialist understanding).**

* **WRONG:** substance produces enzymes.
* *Does substance has the capacity to see the future?*
* *Does the substance itself act in accordance with the rest of the cells?*
* Show me any qualities (like knowledge, power, will, mercy etc.) in this substance producing the enzymes!

**The belief methodology that the Quran teaches us is from effect**🡪**cause relationship.**

* I need to be careful with the direction of my language.
* While speaking, hearing and seeing, am I fully aware that none of these qualities are made by me?
* **CORRECT:** I am made with the qualities to see, hear…
* Our freewill gives us the ability to choose and as a result I may perceive myself as the one producing results.
* **WRONG in the way of reasoning:** God creates the substance.
* **CORRECT:** In order for this substance to come into existence, Absolute Power, Wisdom and Knowledge… are necessary for this substance to come into existence. I must conclude that an Absolute being must be the Cause of existence of the substance.
* OBSERVATION: Tree with fruits.
* **Cause**: tree
* **Effect**: fruit
* Naturalist conclusion: Tree is the cause of existence of the fruit (cause🡪effect)
* **I look at the effect and speak from effect🡪cause:**

1. The fruits on the branch of the tree.
2. *What is needed for the fruit to come into existence?*

* *Power, Wisdom, Mercy…which encompasses the whole universe.*

1. *Can the fruit be given existence by the cells of the tree?*

* **I conclude:**

1. The cells of this tree do not have the qualities to give existence to the fruits.
2. The cells of this tree have no qualities to organize the fruits that I see/experience.
3. The cells are employed in the body of the wood.
4. The cells cannot exist by themselves.
5. The cells cannot give existence to anything.
6. The cells function in a way that yields fruits.

* **Abrahamic language:** This fruit cannot be the product of the tree **(*lailaha*).** The fruit is the product of something which is not of the nature of this universe **(*illalah*).** This fruit must be given by the One who controls the universe; this One is called God. I conclude **there must be a Creator**. By attributing the existence of one atom to the Source of existence of the whole universe, I conclude ***illalah***. Belief is my conclusion.
* In the universe, there is no Absolute truth but the existence of the universe points to the Absolute truth. I conclude there must be an Absolute truth.
* Belief confirmation is conclusion, not a claim.
* ***lailaha:*** Anything of the nature of this universe cannot have the quality of being a deity. (I witness this).
* ***illallah:*** There must exist a Source of existence of this universe, who is called God. Therefore, God must exist. (I conclude this)

Finally, look at the effect of any object/event, conclude about its cause and confirm the truth.

Every generation needs to confirm and reject what is right/wrong. Without establishing the belief foundations within ourselves, inherited religion has no value. When I am thirsty and I beg water to come to me but water cannot come by itself, so how can I say that water is the source of life? The biggest question is: what is the source of existence of life? Quran guides me on how to question and use my human abilities to confirm the truth.