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| **Date** | Wednesday, February 24 2016 |
| **Topic** | The Quran defines God: A commentary on the “Throne Verse” (*Ayatu’l-Kursi*) |
| **Part** | 2 |

Recap: The Creator of all creation and the universe speaks to me, the human being according to my capacity. The One that gives me existence is the One that has put me in this universe and knows my capacity and thus speaks to me accordingly. That is, I communicate with creation as much as I am aware of the qualities demonstrated by Its Creator. I cannot go beyond my capacity. However, I need to educate myself in order to utilize my capacity to its full potential. As a result, it grows and so I keep moving forward in my duty accordingly.

* My duty is to get to know and acknowledge who my Lord is.

It is not within my capacity to understand the Essence of the Creator. No one can because the Creator by definition is Absolute i.e. not part of the universe. I only understand the existence of the Creator through its manifestations (creation) in the universe. The Creator’s speech being absolute condescends to me at my level of understanding.

Only after using a laptop do I conclude that its Engineer has knowledge in Engineering. Similarly, creation in the universe is a means to derive conclusions about its Creator. The Quran encourages us to reflect on creation as emphasized by some of the chapter names such as ant, spider, cow, pen… signifies that Its speech is all around us but we neglect it. Its speech is full of evidence for us to derive our own conclusion from our own personal experiences. Example: God speaks to us through the cow. In the existence of the cow, I see the work of its Creator, I see the qualities of its Creator and I see the capacity of its Creator.

* I can only know my Lord within my capacity or as much as I have developed in my understanding.

**Knowing a few words/memorizing them does not mean understanding the concept. You have to use the knowledge to come to an understanding applicable to your conditions.** Example: While reading the Quran, you come across a commentary that will refer the text to some events. Perhaps a certain war may display the quality of bravery in the companions. In order to be brave one has to be educated as the companions were educated by the Prophet (pbuh). I have to be brave enough and come to my own conviction. Let’s say a person comes and tells you to evacuate the building because there is danger. You do not feel the sign of danger and you decide not to evacuate. On the other hand, if you see that the building is shaking and there are signs of danger, you would definitely evacuate. Standing firm in your conviction is sign of bravery!

* Understanding🡪conviction.
* Quran by definition speaks to me as: “I am your Lord stating that you need to confirm x, y, z.
* I say: “Where is the evidence?”
* The Speaker replies: Here it is all around you; don’t you see creation and the universe?

Thus, the universe is our evidence and we have to go through it to come to our own conclusion/conviction. That is, I can experience what God is not through ***lailaha*** (**nothing has the power to give existence to anything in the universe**). My aim is to confirm the message after receiving it within my own space-time or conditions.

Pharaoh, the most notorious man known to mankind claimed to be the Lord of his people. Challenge yourself: *Can I be my own Lord? Am I producing my ability to walk? Am I the Lord of my family or enterprise?*

***Can you give existence to a fly or a plant?*** What we are doing is just obeying the established order in the universe. Example: when you sow a seed, your duty is to just water the plant which is nothing but following the order in creation. Scientists discover the principles in creation and follow the order. They are not producing anything. The skill to discovery does not belong to the scientists. It is all “given”. If you can conclude ***lailaha*** from your experience, then what is left for you to conclude is ***illallah*** (there must be a Source producing the results). The ability to do such is within our capacity.

* Nothing in the universe can be a Cause of existence of something and at the same time be an Effect. We are led to believe by materialist understanding that the universe is the cause of something and in another scenario, it is said to be the effect
* The Quranic teaching clarifies that the universe is the effect and cannot be the cause. Whatever gives existence to the universe and everything is the Cause.
* The universe cannot exists by itself because Universe=> effect and Cause=> God
* Similarly, my existence cannot be the result of itself, this would be self-contradictory.

Let us consolidate our understanding that every single thing introduces us to the One that creates, God under the light of the second piece of ***Ayat-ul-kursi***, Quran **(2):255**

***“The Ever living, the Self-subsistent by whom all subsists”***

* The Eternal One is the Source of existence. I can easily come to this conclusion by questioning my own existence. My existence is given and I am given life by this source. Whoever gives me existence and life must be Ever-Living.
* It decides who gets life.
* It takes away life.
* The Eternal One says: “If you want me to give life or death, follow my created order”.
* Example: If person A pulls the trigger on herself, she is given death.
* In her quest to challenge the order, what Person A did was nothing but simply obey the order set by the Eternal One and thus was given death.
* The Eternal One says: “I am the One that sustains the existence of everything”. That is, the existence of everything, every quality I observe is from Him and nothing else. I need to pay attention to that and see if that is so. From my observation in the universe, I can say that He must be Self-Subsistent or Qayyoom.
* Nothing is self-subsistent but the Cause of existence of the universe is (***lailaha illahu***).
* Wrong= “God subsists everything”.
* In reality, nothing can subsist itself (***lailaha***). There must be a Cause that subsists everything (***illahu***) which I call God.

My duty is to acknowledge that only the Causer of the “causes” is to be worshipped. Everything is dependent on the Cause that gives existence. With this worldview, we are all equal. Therefore, there should not be any rivalry or competition among anyone. If I think that I am the best then I am not perceiving everything as coming from the same Cause and belonging to the same Cause. This superiority complex gave rise to a lot of conflicts/wars we hear about which contradicts the fundamental purpose of the Scripture. No one can achieve anything by force.

Historically parts of east from today’s Persia to a part of China were introduced to the message of “*La ilaha illallah”* and they were convinced. On the contrary, after the establishment of a Muslim state in parts of Asia, the Eastern parts of Europe remained numb to the principles of Islamic teaching because it was not presented in a convincing way. The motivations of the empires were to become more powerful, gain administrative control and subjugate people under their authority.

Convincing the heart overarches first and foremost the personal conviction of the self that nothing sustains itself (lailaha). Only then can one help others gain confidence in their belief. The concern for anyone should be to conquer the heart not the land.