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| **Date** | Wednesday, December 16, 2015 |
| **Topic** | Abraham |
| **Part** | 16 |

*Recap:* The Quran describes itself as a clear message (*mubeen*).

***“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***

* Father figure= anything you consider to be your authority.

The objects in the universe are not self-referential but on the contrary they are indicative, i.e. they point to something else. Example: A tree does not say: “Hey! Look at me”. On the contrary, the tree says: “Hey! When you look at me, I bring you news about Something else. Please read me, study me, I am taking your attention to Something else”.

* I realize that the tree is wise in its existence but it cannot be wise by itself.
* Through providing me with shade on a sunny day, or bearing delicious fruits, it draws my attention to its Maker’s qualities reflected on it.

Analogy: Book is made up of paper and ink (chemical) but the book has meaning. No one can say that book does not have meaning. Book🡪meaning🡪 indicative of the author. *Can the chemical be the source of the meaning I extract from the book?* No, because I know the book is written by a conscious being, author. The chemicals and shapes (letters) are not the source of the meaning I extract from it. Paper and ink are just vehicles used by the author to communicate with me.

* Similarly the universe is a book, consisting of matter (particles) and it is meaningful. Can I attribute the meaning I extract from the universe to the particles? No. Universe🡪meaning🡪other indicative.
* *What does it mean?* There must be a Conscious Will conveying its meaning through its act of creation.

Thus, any creature is like a book, it has qualities and these qualities are indicative i.e. point to something else other than itself. Just as the tree, the particles say: “I cannot be the source of the qualities you see in me”.

If I confine my existence to the universe only, I block the possibility that there is an Author to the universe. As a result, I fall into the trap of attributing the power to give existence to particles. And so, I am left with one option, apprehending creation along the lines of scientific explanation. For instance, particle A is causing particle B to move. Apparently true, BUT what is causing Particle A to come into existence? How do we explain the movement? Since everything is tightly interwoven within each other, we can easily conclude that nothing acts independent of itself for a moment. Everything is purposeful and works in harmony with the rest of the universe. HOWEVER, what is causing this harmony to stay intact? More so, what is the cause of existence of the entire phenomenon we observe in the universe?

* There must be a Conscious Will giving existence to every phenomenon.

The universe is indicative and points to an author. Otherwise our relationship with the universe will be at a horizontal level where I use the universe for my needs without seeing signs indicating its Maker. Hence, **we should always be wondering and questioning about our experiences with the universe. Only by questioning do we come to our reality. We need to work on making our existence real for ourselves.**

* My reality= my question🡪my answer🡪I get to realize where I stand.
* The universe seems meaningful to me and I need to know what it is indicating.

Therefore, we are in need of a clear and understandable explanation (verbal speech which comes in the form of a human, Prophets. This speech is compiled into a book known as the Quran, Torah or Bible. Since the Quran’s text has been preserved in its original form, it is the most direct Speech of the Creator.)

The universe is a book and its author constantly transfers knowledge and qualities to our human intellect. I am in the book of the universe. Although the author is not in the book (universe), its qualities are manifested here (in the universe). No human capacity can claim that the book (and so the universe) is the source of its qualities. But the qualities exist. **We are looking for the Source of the qualities manifested in the universe.** During this process, if I experience pain of meaninglessness, it is a good sign forcing me to come to terms with my reality.

My qualities force me to look for the Author of the universe. My qualities tell me that this Author is not of the nature of this universe but I am sure the author exists. I am given existence in this universe, and therefore I need to make sense of my existence within this universe. In other words, I need to make sure through this universe that God exists. In this undertaking, I question what am I doing here and where am I headed? Hence, by using all the qualities given to me, analyzing the qualities that I experience and observe in the universe and processing these combined qualities with the verbal speech (the Quran), I start to figure out the meaning of my existence i.e. my existence cannot be confined to this universe only (as stated earlier).

**Question:** *How come some people seem happy with material understanding of this universe?*

* They have limited their existence to this universe only. Baby🡪Child🡪Adulthood🡪Career🡪Money🡪Retirement🡪Death.
* Some may even have conditioned themselves with a certain way of life akin to taking a drug which is only a temporary fix to problems.
* Laziness is the factor for people not questioning reality!
* One does not have to be a believer to take care of life necessities (food, shelter…)
* We are not given a temporary taste of existence in this universe to secure a financial future, die and rot. There must be more to this temporary taste of existence in this universe. *What is it?* That is what we need to find out! Through my interaction with the universe, I realize that I need to connect my Being to an Eternal One also known as “seeking Eternity”.

Human beings are made with a need to acquire complete felicity in our existence. Even if that felicity is acquired through imagination, then let it be. **In and of itself, imagination is also created.** Question where you get the ability to dream, reflect and imagine. They are all given existence. Thus, the universe provides concrete evidence of the existence of the Source.

What makes me a human being is my human queries, the answers to which I ought to get from the verbal speech (scriptures). A human being is someone who takes care of his “existential future” and struggles to secure this future:

* What will happen to me after I die?
* I come here, grow and die.
* Why is this universe such that everything dies?
* Death/Transience does not make sense.
* **The whole universe is made with the reality to die which is related to me i.e. I am going to die as well**.
* Bottom line, NEVER IGNORE YOUR HUMAN RELALITY!!!

*Does “matter” have any quality to hear? Is the tree made to know my needs*? No. Nothing is being generated by the particles. Particles cannot be the Source of the meaningful actions they are doing (***lailaha***). Example: It may seem as if bricks are making the building. In reality, bricks are used to make the building.

Qualities we observe in the universe are just a call for us to look for the meaning in their existence. That is why we need a clear, understandable explanation from the Maker of the universe. In the scripture, the Author lets us know that everything we read in the universe points to Its existence. In other words, everything (including a small grain of rice) speaks to us to convey message about its Author. **My duty is to get in touch with the Author and Its Book and identify myself, my understanding capacity with the knowledge of the Author.**  That is the methodology to establish the relationship with God.

* Without reading the Book (The Author’s Speech) I cannot make my human expectations communicate with the Author of the Book.
* Presence of the Book is not enough. I need to question the Book: Do you contain any message that contradicts what I hear from the universe and my own being*?*
* Definitely, there is Something conveying its knowledge and speaking to my intelligence.
* Our human side (human qualities) is always in contact with the knowledge of the Author of the book of the universe.
* This relationship needs to stay alive i.e. “consciousness” and “awareness”.
* We have to struggle (Quran uses “jihad” i.e. I have to strive to get the meaning from the Book) to communicate with the Author of the Book. Only then does the Book become a tool/means to communicate with its Author. Otherwise, I am not in communication with the author of my own being i.e. I am not aware of myself or I am not using my tools to get the message from the Author. Just as a stream is broadcasting, it is as if I have closed my eyes and ears to the message. *When we do not use our human qualities, what is left of us?*

We cannot afford to live blindly or like animals. **It may be painful but we have to reflect on our reality:**

* What am I doing in this life?
* What am I doing to communicate with the Author of my being?
* Be brave: Question your reality! Accept your reality! Don’t be scared to confront your reality!
* Say: I want to live in this world as a human being!
* As soon as one acknowledges the above set forth points, their animal side starts shaking and crumbling down.

Look how the Quran speaks about the life of this world i.e. human animal life (*hayaat ud dunya*), it speaks about it clearly. That is, when you are following a certain life pattern lacking the human side, you will just be playing a dead-end game, and be confronted with torment after torment. **No reality at all. Watch out!**

Question: *How can I use my humanity to perceive continuous communication between me and my Creator through reading the book of the universe (****no imagination here****)?*

* Everything brings news from the Author.
* Just don’t lose yourself in matter/thing. Although most of us are not aware that we are communicating with the mind of the Author while reading a book, the book itself (ink and paper) is just doing its function of conveying the message.
* Try to establish empathy between yourself and the Author.
* {When you get the meaning and if you can relate it to your being, [you start being aware of the Author’s existence] **+** [loving Its knowledge (i.e. It is giving you guidance, teaching you something)] = a desire starts growing within yourself where you want to be with this Author}==**PARADISE**.
* If I do not experience Paradise, if I do not yearn to be with the Author of the universe (my Creator), then my life will be meaningless and impossible to live.
* Only after reading the book of the universe do I see meaning in my existence.
* As a result, I desire to be with the Author. Although, the essence of the Author is not known to me, establishing a loving relationship with the Author is my only concern🡪**PARADISE**.

We all desire the love of God. In Islamic heritage, the desire to be with God is referred to as *Mushahadatullah (witnessing the manifestations of the qualities of the Author*.) Additionally, living in the presence of God is referred to as *Huzur (being in Presence*.)

However, without reading the book, no one can get excited with the ideas/messages transferred by the Author. In conclusion, love is proportionate to apprehension. Love can only be felt through awareness of one’s own reality. That is, if I am aware of my reality for 10%, then I can enjoy 10% of Paradise. Similarly, if I only see 90% of Mercy in creation, that much I can enjoy. Once I get to a higher percentage of feeling convinced, I do not want to lose the Eternal Paradise.

Going back to the verse:

***“O my father! To me has come knowledge which has not reached you; so follow me: I will guide you to a way that is even and straight” Maryam (19):43***

Traditionally, we hear apostles claiming: “I have received the message”. In the story of Abraham, we have no news thus far him claiming such. What Abraham did is from his own initiation, he investigated; he questioned and realized that only the owner of the universe gives existence to the heavens and earth.

* Nothing can be the source of the qualities that I observe in the book of the universe (***lailaha***)

Abraham apprises me to investigate and become aware of the meaning of this life. We eat fruits without knowing what it means to us. We breathe air molecules and are not aware of its real Provider. *What is the difference between human and animals then?* Abraham declares confidently: “I know that the universe means something and I can communicate with the Originator of this universe and relate Its existence to my human qualities.”

One can only share with others what one has experienced in life. This experience must be yours only. In other words, you are entitled to sharing “your own lived conclusions”. That is exactly what Abraham is doing, letting people know that “he has come to a conclusion which has not reached them yet”.

* You have to get excited with your own existence first and then share how you view your existence with others.

*How am I expected to communicate with the Author?*

* Follow Abraham’s steps. First, become 100% convinced within yourself about your existence and only then share it whole heartedly with others.

***“O my father! Do not worship Satan: for Satan is a rebel against Most Gracious.” Maryam (19): 44***

We are always presented with two alternatives, truth and false. Falsehood is represented by Satan.

* In the Quran, Satan is defined as the one who comes with an offer to human beings but does not claim the authority of this offer.
* Satan= meaninglessness
* If we follow an idea without questioning, then we are responsible for the choice.
* Anything that any human being cannot approve of with his own human qualities is from Satan.
* “I seek refuge with God from Satan.”= “O my Creator (the Reality of my existence)! I do not want to follow anything which does not satisfy my humanity”.
* I am made in a way to always seek refuge with my reality i.e. I am really convinced with the fact that I have an Originator, this Creator is the one who gives me all my qualities and It is the One communicating with me through its work, the universe.
* Abraham let know his father (authority or culture) that he does not want to follow anything false. Hence, he was saved from the attacks by stoning Satan.
* Stoning Satan= rejecting falsehood🡪 ***lailaha*** (you cannot be the one who deserve to be worshiped; you cannot be the source of existence of any quality.)

Thus, Satan is a rebel that distracts us from communicating with the Creator. There is nothing enigmatic about figurative speech as long as we understand it within the purpose of the Quran i.e. why does it speak to me?