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| **Date** | Wednesday, July 7, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Chapter “Iqra” (Read) |
| **Part** | 2 |

Recap: As far as I am concerned, I need to read the Quran as a LIVE SPEECH. My Creator is speaking to me right now. Its speech is a universal message. I observe that at every moment, creation is being renewed. My Creator speaks to me through His act of creation and my emotional journey where my emotions and feelings are continuously renewed. I am made in a way that I am in need of guidance RIGHT NOW.

There are two ways of reading the Quran:

1. Reading it within its historical context and extract lessons. (general practice)
2. Reading it as a guiding speech to answer my human questions RIGHT NOW.

#1 contradicts the purpose of the Quran, which is an “Eternal” speech of my Creator to me right now. My Creator is Absolute in its qualities. That is, I cannot put Its Speech in time-space as written by a man. One of the qualities of the Absolute Creator is the One who continuously speaks (***mutakaalim***). Similar to the One who creates (***khaliq***), there is the One who continuously creates (***khallaq***). Thus, as the One that continuously creates and continuously speaks, It has created human beings to understand its Speech.

The One who continuously creates, the ***khallaq***, Its speech is of the One who has infinite knowledge i.e. as It creates me right now, It creates me with Its knowledge therefore Its Speech must include the conditions of my life right now.

***Why is the Quran a universal message?***  The Infinite Speech cannot be tied to a particular time and space which would be a contradiction to the quality of Infinite. Another wisdom that supports this is the fact that there are differences in the narrations of the historical events, i.e. no one can be sure of exact details of the occasions of revelation. I must learn to interpret the Quran’s teachings according to my conditions.

In a way it’s good that there are different interpretations to its Speech out there as it forces me to keep researching until I get satisfied with my subjective conclusion.



***“Read for your Lord is most Generous” Iqra (96):3***

* This is an extension to the first verse in terms of what I “read” in creation.
* Do I see “generosity” of my Creator, Lord, the One who sustains my existence when I experience creation RIGHT NOW?
* I am the One who is going to read what is going on in my life i.e. who I am and who do I belong to?
* No questions, no answers!
* **If someone does not wonder about their own existence, they cannot notice generosity in creation.**
* How the act of my breathing is taking place within the order of this universe?
* Every second, we are tied up to the need to breathe, what does it mean?
* Who has put me in these conditions, sustains my life and I find no difficulties in breathing?

Usually, I see generosity after being cured from an illness. I do not notice that a second ago, I was made to breathe and hence, sustained. **I miss in recognizing the generosity that takes place every second!** I need to enhance my reading beyond the material and ponder more on my existence so I may conclude the following:

* In Its creation, the One that creates is Generous.
* In organizing the order in the universe, the One that creates is Generous.
* In providing you your needs, the One that creates is Generous.

Atheistic argument: “I am in need of air which exists. If air did not exist, I would not be there.” **This argument may come to our minds as well.** That is why I have to use my human qualities to always ask for this alternative: ***Can air and my being happen by themselves without being consciously organized by a Conscious Being giving existence to the universe?***

We need to work on seeing generosity in creation because that is how we are made. **Generosity is important to me because it teaches me that I am created by someone who is Generous to me.** Every event that I experience is an invitation from the All-Generous One telling me not to be afraid of It: “I am not your enemy, I will not give you harm, you should trust Me!”

We usually misinterpret threatening verses. **Quran is a warner that if I do not follow the right way of thinking, the right attitude with creation and thus the Creator, then I will deprive myself of Its Generosity.** As a result, I will experience nothing but torture in my life. I get what I deserve. I harm myself!

Analogy: If a 5 year old thinks that he is not being taken care of by his parents, then how does he explain his needs as being met (such as food, shelter…)? A*ccidents? Chance?* He may think: “no one took care of me, I accidentally grew and happened to be here and I do not know what will happen to me tomorrow. *Will I have dinner tonight? What if the house collapses?*  **He feels this way when there is no awareness of a Conscious deliberate Protector taking care of him right now.** Anyone who thinks that they are there by accident is bound to be psychologically disturbed i.e., he will have no security in life and he will always be torturing himself since there is no assurance in accidents. When the boy’s parents console him: “Don’t worry, it is us who have been taking care of your needs and we will continue to take care of your life. Don’t lose hope!” How would the boy feel now knowing that there is a conscious protector? Similarly, if I think that the universe happened to be in existence accidentally, then my senses happened to be in existence accidentally as well. As a human being, I will feel insecure. That is, no Owner, no Protector, no one is taking care of me. ***How can I live in this world with no sense of security?***  I want real happiness and security i.e. my senses definitely require that. That is how I am created. **I want a guaranteed Eternal life. Even death should not frighten me because my Creator knows what It is doing.**

After careful understanding of the above analogy, we can clearly come to the understanding that the threatening verses in the Quran warn us that we will torture ourselves according to our misinterpretation of our existence. We may think that the Maker is torturing me but that is part of Its created order to teach me. It does not change its Order. I need to watch out for myself in how I interpret the event otherwise I torture myself!

* I should definitely look for generosity in creation.

We have to read creation alongside manifestation of generosity in it. ***Read in order to read Generosity of your Creator.*** I need to see that I have a Generous Lord who takes care of me. **If I do not see generosity of my Lord, I will torture myself.**

We may conclude that the universe exists and things are created but if this reading lacks acknowledgment of generosity then I can never feel secure in my existence. **In the qualities that I observe in creation, I have to see generosity in “each” quality. That is the only way I can feel secure in my existence.**

* See generosity alongside with creation. That is, in every quality that you experience in creation, you have to see generosity manifested in that quality as well.
* Example: bird is a wonderful sign of its Creator. *Do I see the generous signs of the Creator in all the qualities manifested in the bird?* The Creator creates the generous qualities manifested in the bird.



***“The One who teaches by the pen.” Iqra (96):4***

Question 1: *What is the function of the pen?*

* Pen is a tool of communication. It helps me express my abstract idea in a way which can be seen by others.
* Scripts are means to decipher what is abstract and inaccessible to me otherwise. When I write, the pen helps transform something inaccessible to something accessible for me.
* Without the use of pen, you can never know my sensual side. Example: You heard that I am a surgeon. But looking at me physically, it cannot be known that I am a surgeon. Only when I perform some operation, in my actions you get to know what kind of qualities I have**. Similarly, the best way of transferring qualities is to write down with a pen i.e. what is revealed to someone by the pen is what the author has in mind.**

Question 2: *What does “pen” represent?*

* The revealed qualities of the author (All-Generous One) as the pen writes. **This Generous Lord teaches me by the pen with the pen.**
* The means through which the Conscious Being reveals Its qualities to me by transferring it into a material form through the pen. That is, whatever I see coming into existence, it comes through the pen (act of creation as we observe it.)
* Example: I observe this material world with its qualities where the qualities are coming through the pen of Absolute Power, Absolute Knowledge, Absolute Wisdom, Absolute Will and Absolute Generosity…etc.

While something comes into existence into material form with its qualities, it comes into existence by the pen i.e. Absolute Knowledge which refers to the Absolute Generous One.

Pen means that somebody is writing the universe for me. **I cannot see the Writer but I can see what is coming out of the Pen (act of creation.)** In other words, the pen displays the manifestation of the qualities of the source of existence of this universe. **I don’t see the source or the pen; I just see what is coming out of the pen (act of creation.)** Here is the universe, a witness to what comes out of the pen.

NOTE: We are coming out of the pen of the universe is just a metaphor. Early revelations mostly have tons of metaphor that are loaded with description of ideas. It is an invitation to me the listener to use my human qualities to understand creation.

It seems that this verse is letting me know that the Absolute Generous One cannot be of the nature of this universe. I can only conclude such from my previous contemplations which lead me to be convinced that the universe can only be explained by attributing it to an Absolute Source. I need to go further than this general understanding of the universe being created by an Absolute Source. *How do you go further?* Work on developing an awareness that the **Creator is revealing Itself to me by writing the book of the universe to let my human senses know how to read this book as written by a Conscious Being and see the meanings manifested there.** **These meanings are disclosing the qualities of its Maker.** It is a call for people to think about creation because we mostly do not. Usually, when an unexpected event happens, that is when we are disturbed: Who is bothering me? Where did the illness come from? We usually get shaken when death is given to a closed loved one. When everything is alright, I do not think who is making things alright for me. Any event that shakes me is nothing but a wakeup call to make me realize whether I have ever thought about all that I observe in this universe. Whether I have questioned where is it coming from?

* **Regardless if I am shaken or not, my Lord is always teaching me something through writing the book of the universe and I have to read it as a book.** *Why?* The next verse lets me know.



***“He teaches the human being what he does not know.” Iqra (96):5***

*What don’t I know?*

* I do not know the meaning of creation.
* I do not how I have an interesting biological structure, with faculties that perform different functions.
* I do not know why I exist.

*What will I need to learn through the function of the pen?*

* That which the objects point to and is not obvious to me. Example: I can distinguish between different animal species. This observation requires no investigation. The function of the “pen” is enough for that. I do not need extra explanation to transfer this knowledge to me. I need extra information to explain what these meaningful acts of creation are referring to.

**The function of the pen is to teach me that the creation is referring to something else than themselves. I need an explanatory Speech to let me know what they refer to.** The Speaker in the scripture says that when I look at the universe and Its Speech, it will teach me what creation refers to. Example: I have a physical body but I do not know who is organizing it in such a wonderful and perfect fashion. Example: Different animal species exist but I do not know what they mean, or better yet why are they here. The Pen will reveal to me in creation that they have meanings for human beings to decipher. Through creating the universe, this revelation by the Pen, the Generous One is letting me know that these meanings are referring to something beyond. Look and try to read the universe in order to learn what you do not know. *Can we know everything by studying the universe?* No. That is why we need another kind of revelation i.e. speech. When a message is conveyed through someone/something that speaks, that is the only way I understand what is in the mind of the Speaker.

* Universe is an expression in writing.
* Quran is expression in verbal form.

From READING each of them (Universe + Quran), I am expected to know which kind of qualities the Author of the universe possesses otherwise I can never go further in my life journey i.e. what does my existence mean to me? Additionally, I will always feel lonely or depressed because I haven’t been trained to be with my Creator and lay my trust in Him. I need to question these feelings and see what can satisfy them.

Real human qualities are looking for Eternal Happiness in every sense. I want to exist Eternally. I want to be healthy Eternally. I want to love my mother Eternally otherwise I will be disturbed/disappointed when she dies or when I get to know that she will die. Everyone is bound to DIE! No one can survive DEATH. It is true that I do not want to lose my affection towards my mom. How can I secure this love for my mother or child when I know that they are going to die and become compost? Can I really love them? I love my mother or child and this love never recognizes an end in this universe. That is the reality of this universe. ***How can I reconcile that?***

The Speaker in the text (the record of the Eternal Speech) says that my guidance will let you know how to reconcile that.

* This universe is in existence only to teach me to investigate what I do not know i.e. who my Source of existence is, my Creator.
* I have to study the universe in order to find out the Source of existence of all the qualities of this universe. Otherwise by only studying how things come into existence in terms of the process involved does not help my humanity. **Investigating creation without paying attention to what they refer to, helps but the ultimate purpose is to learn what I do not know i.e. where I come from, what is the source of my being.** That is the only way my human qualities can get satisfaction which is the heart of religion. Otherwise, I am cheating myself by trying to get satisfaction from matter, people and events only.

By only looking at the physical aspect of matter that looks to my life here, I cheat myself with the transient nature of this life. I am physically here but my spirit is not from here. Spirit cannot limit itself to the existence of this universe. Even if I get everything in the universe, will I be satisfied as a human being? No. *What do I want then?* Inner-Peace. *Why am I not satisfied with life here on earth only?* Because I know that I will die + everything will die as well. I cannot be satisfied with anything that dies. This sense says that I need to have an Absolute Eternal Source, one I can take refuge in and be safe with. This feeling of non-satisfaction with everything transient is so beautiful.

Humanity does not get satisfaction with anything transient in nature. Therefore, my real human concern is what will happen to my existence which leads me to ponder on where did I come from? What is the meaning of this world? What do these feelings refer to? We do not know the answer to these human questions.

In order to be guided and seek answers to human questions, I need to first start questioning and use my human qualities to further investigate. The explanation made by the Owner of the Pen and recorded in the text (Scriptures) recommends reading the universe carefully as its Creator will guide me with in learning what I do not know. It interferes into my life with its Speech so I get ready to be trained and graduate from this universe. That is, humanity can only be satisfied with Eternal Speech i.e. revelation which comes through the Pen and through the Speech of the Owner of the Pen.