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| **Date** | Wednesday, July 13, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Chapter Iqra (read) |
| **Part** | 3 |



***“Indeed the human transgresses” Iqra (96):6***

  
***“Whenever he believes himself to be self-sufficient” Iqra (96):7***

*What does being self-sufficient mean?*

* Anything that does not need assistance; relying on oneself.

*What does reliance on God mean?*

* Securing my future.

*How can I secure the future of my existence (Eternal life)?*

* Let’s find out.

Firstly, humanity needs security with no end. Money, property and my physical body stay here when I go to the grave.

* I desire Eternal Security but I cannot fulfill it, I die here and I cannot take anything of this world with me. ***How can I solve this?***

***More so, how can I establish a secure life without transgressing my reality?***

In light of the previous verses of chapter “*Iqra*” studied, you are supposed to read the universe and see the signs of the Generous Creator. This Generous Creator is the Source of all the things I want to have including my feelings that want Absolute Security. While reading the universe, I become aware that these feelings cannot come from the universe and I did not create these feelings. It is important to understand that I did not make these feelings and nothing in the universe can be the cause of these feelings. However, objects/events are the means to trigger feelings in me. The objects themselves cannot be the source of existence of any feelings. I can comfortably conclude that these feelings must be coming from the Generous Creator who has created the universe. These feelings are signs of a promise to me that the Generous One will satisfy my need of wanting Eternal Security. When I realize that through the life I am living right now, I can feel secure in my existence by attributing my existence to an All-Generous One. It is only then I will get out of transgressing my reality. When I understand the reality, it corroborates the fact that I cannot be sufficient on my own.

Here are some more questions to ponder on:

* *How can I refer my consciousness to an Eternal Source?*
* *How do I know that life is Eternal or that there is continuation after life?*

We need to speak freely without referring to religious sources. External information does not add any value to my practical life right now. While we are establishing our worldview, we should refrain from using previous heard information into our practical life. Instead, we need to develop our worldview where we take all information from religious sources as a call for us to think, investigate and reason to confirm for ourselves whatever conclusions the scriptures offer us.

The purpose of these discussions is to make belief practical in our lives right now so that we can apply it to our being without falling into imitation. Imitation is the result of running away from your reality as it does not require questioning to conclude something for yourself.

**Here is the first essential step to establish belief system into your life:**

1. QUESTION for yourself: What is the **Source of existence** of the feelings or the qualities that you observe around you?

Human mind questions and has the qualities/abilities to do that in order to confirm a conclusion. Before I confirm the Creator, I first need to make sure that nothing in this universe has the power to give existence to anything (***lailaha***). There is no Divine quality which gives existence to anything as far as what I observe in this universe. Everything is brought into existence within a perfect order in an excellent way. **Order is always there but what is given existence within the order continuously changes.** It means that things cannot sustain themselves but their existence has changed since the last moment. I changed from a moment ago to now. Change is a new creation. **Everything is subject to change but nothing can control its existence.** I cannot control the existence of my feelings. **I need to confirm *lailaha* within my own feelings at every moment.**  Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) emphasized that the best words/message that all Messengers brought to you is ***lailaha illallah***. That is, when you conclude the Creator, Divine Source (***illallah),*** you confirm that you cannot find a Divine Source here in this universe.

***What is Divine?*** A conscious Source that brings things into existence and nothing else brings things into existence besides It. Things are apparently brought into existence but the Source of existence cannot be found in this universe.

Example: The tree is not giving existence to the fruits and money is not giving existence to the possessions you buy. So I question, who is giving existence to the fruits? The fruits rely on some conscious Source to be given existence. Yesterday’s atom is gone and a new atom is given existence.

Again, everything in its existence must be dependent on Something which cannot be found within the universe because everything within the universe is dependent. Fundamentals of the belief matters that one needs to establish:

1. ***Lailaha (nothing has the power to give existence to anything)***
2. ***Illallah (there must be a Source giving existence to everything)***

There is no Source of existence in this universe but the things exist. ***How can I explain the existence of the things?*** The universe in its entirety with all its constituent parts exist, therefore, there must be a Source of existence to the entire universe (including my being).

What is the difference between the following:

1. **There is a** Source of existence: Objectifying what I am talking about. Example: here is a pair of glasses.
2. **There must be** a Source of existence: If I cannot objectify something, it must be my logical intellectual human conclusion. It means that I have concluded as a result of my investigation and I am satisfied with the conclusion.

From my observation of the entire universe, I come to myself i.e. **how can I be given existence?** *Why don’t we question this?*  We are not trained to question this. **We are not taught to come up to our own conclusions about the interpretations of our own being, existence.** **We have become lazy and we just take belief for granted by doing certain rituals.**

*How can I make belief matters practical for me right now?* I need to make sure within myself that my conclusions are satisfactory. I must be confident in my conclusions and findings. The biggest question is: ***How can I strengthen my belief?***

When human beings try to make sense of the universe that is when the Messengers come letting you know that you have to investigate within yourself. By looking at the universe and the words brought by the Messengers through the scriptures, I can conclude ***lailaha illahu***. Then you can name the Source according to the language you use. **hu**= He or It. But because it is not of the nature of this universe, we capitalize it as **H**e or **I**t.

* While praying I say: there is God.
* While interacting with the universe, I practice my conclusion: there must be God.

After going through ***lailaha illallah***, can you be self-sufficient? Better yet, *who can sustain our existence?*

Analogy: Sam tells you that there is a golden lake in Michigan. Since you trust Sam, you believe that there is a golden lake. Is this your own conclusion? No.

* I can make belief my personal conclusion only through my own journeying or experience. I need to be satisfied intellectually and then emotionally.
* I am not self-sufficient in the existence of any of my feelings. I question the Source of existence of my feelings. That is, I want Eternal security. *Who/What can secure this feeling?*
* I am dependent in my existence.
* My feelings are dependent in their existence.
* How?
* Because there is nothing in the universe that can sustain my existence.
* There must be a Source that can sustain my existence, in which I can take refuge with. If I am sure that the Source of my existence is the One who created the whole universe, *how would I feel?*
* Secure in my existence.

***Who is the Lord of my existence?***

* The One that gives existence to the whole universe i.e. He or It.

***Huwallahu llazee lailaha illahu*:** He is the One called Allah (God), He is the One, apart from It there is no deity you can find. “**Show me one thing that gives existence to anything” is what the Speaker in the Quran challenges its reader with.** That is the only way I can conclude the Creator. Even when I pray: Praise be to God who is the Creator, Owner, Sustainer of everything, I pray with this process of reasoning: “**I now express/accept my conclusion that I cannot assume anything in this universe as the source of my existence but the One who gives existence to everything. That is why I am here to present my conclusion”.** That is belief. (If I bargain with God, that is not prayer.)

Prayer is the acknowledgment that what I need is only provided by the One who gives existence to the whole universe. “The One who gives existence to everything” is the structure used in most verses in the Quran: Nothing else knows but Me ***(Hu ‘ala kulli shay’in kadeer)***. It is telling the reader: You understood there is a Creator, it is Me.

*Can I objectify It?* No, because It is not part of the universe. *How can I make sure It is not part of the universe?* By negating i.e. going through ***lailaha.*** One has to go through this process while praying otherwise we cannot explain the meaning behind rituals. One can never achieve satisfaction by following religion without making conclusions personal to oneself. **Personal conclusions are so important that even if I may deny religion as it is practiced in the society by people, but I cannot deny my belief conclusions.** Belief conclusion is like an internal identity which seems to have been lost, hence it needs to be revived at every moment.

To sum up, we cannot be self-sufficient at all. Example: *Can the pigeon be self-sufficient in its existence? Can it sustain its qualities?* Think about it! If someone believes to be self-sufficient, he transgresses his own reality.

***What is transgressing?***

* Fundamentally, I am saying that I am God when I say that I am self-sufficient because in my perceptions, my existence and my qualities belong to me or because of my qualities I exist.
* Example: I am the Source of existence of myself.
* Example: DNA structure is the Source of its own existence.

Going back to the analogy studied in the last class (please refer to notes form 07/06/16), there is a book in front of us. *Is the knowledge in the book the source of its own existence?* No, it must have an author external to the book. Book is the means to provide knowledge but in and of itself, book cannot be the source of knowledge, power and wisdom. Thus, it has an external author. This author that has given knowledge written in the book.

* Similarly, the universe is a zillion times bigger and more meaningful than the book, thus the universe cannot be its own author. I am absolutely sure that there must be an Author (Creator) possessing knowledge, power, wisdom in order to give existence to the universe. Otherwise, I cannot explain my existence and the existence of the universe. **That is belief.**

When I am transgressing, I am denying my own reality myself because I am not self-sufficient i.e. my existence does not depend on me. Hence, while I am doing anything, I have to make sure that I am not attributing the existence of anything to myself. As stated above, **only when I am sure that the feelings of wanting Eternal Security are given to me can I conclude that they do not belong to me and that they are given to me and the One who gave it to me set me free to use them in order to get to know It.** Most likely, we use our feelings in order to satisfy ourselves and think that we are done because our expectations are fulfilled. **Know that every worldly fulfillment will come to an end but the real human desires remain to be fulfilled (seeking Eternal Satisfaction) and that is the promise I see from this existence.**

**In light of this methodology, we need to make sure that all wishes must be completed within an Eternal setting.** Therefore, getting satisfaction from a temporary fulfillment such as marriage or employment does not solve your human expectations. The senses (feelings, emotions) are not given to us to satisfy our desires here in this universe only but they are given to us to acknowledge the Source of the senses i.e. who gave me existence. While I am using my senses to get satisfaction, I have to utilize them in the name of its Creator and get to know It i.e. my Creator wants me to satisfy this feeling. It is my Creator who wants me to get employment or married for example. **That is the only way to secure an Eternal life, by connecting our feelings to the Source of its existence.**

Let us take another practical example. When I feel hungry, hunger reminds me that I am needy. That is, the Creator gave me the sense to experience that I am needy. When I am eating food, it is as if the Creator is saying that “I am giving you the opportunity to make you realize that a Conscious Source is satisfying your needs”. While experiencing satiation from the food, I am using senses in the name of the Creator. This consciousness is important: *“Why am I made with the sense that I have to eat? Who made me like this?”*

* While I am eating, I am expressing my reality that I am needy.
* Source of my existence is introducing Itself to me.

We are training in this created world in order to understand and conclude that everything is prepared for me. I am given freewill to choose between options. Feelings, emotions and intellectual conclusions are all given. At a given moment, I choose to be happy or I choose not to be happy, it is my choice. Furthermore, at a given moment, I choose to acknowledge the Source of the happiness or I do not choose to acknowledge. My responsibility is to always question: **“what is the Source of existence of all these things I am choosing from”?** I cannot objectify the Source. Believing in my reality is extremely simple. But what makes it difficult is that I am inclined to use already prepared information by trusting various sources without actually confirming anything for myself.

Quran teaches me what I do not know but the capacity to know is within me. After I am satisfied with what the Speaker in the Quran suggests, I need to confirm it. Unfortunately, we are quick to submit to authority and use borrowed information to express conclusions. In every culture and society, when laws are established, religious authority is next to it. **In Islam, there is no religious authority.**  Whatever scripture speaks is an offer to guide me to develop my potentiality and to be satisfied within myself. *While going through this process, do you need a teacher?* Yes, I need someone to teach me how to reason but ultimately, I am the agent to conclude. A good teacher never imposes an idea on you, s/he just teaches you how to reason and confirm conclusion for yourself.