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| **Date** | Wednesday, January 21, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Chapter Fatiha |
| **Part** | 2 |

*Recap:* I, the human being am connected with the universe and the Word of God (Quran) in a harmonious way that I search for the Source of this harmonious quality. The Word of God itself claims to be the verbal speech of the Creator of the universe. In order to confirm this claim, I need evidence which I gather from my experience of interacting with the universe.

I am a part of the universe but unlike any part of the universe. That is, I as a conscious human being, have the potentiality to acknowledge all the qualities of the Source within my being. At any moment, I may choose or not choose to make use of these potentialities to gather evidence for my confirmation of the Source.

Stories in the Quran are my story; they must have something to do with me. I am Adam, Joseph, and Muhammad in the stories of the Qur’an…

*What is Mi’raj (Ascension)?*

* Ascending in acknowledging the qualities of the Creator.
* It is said that Gabriel accompanied the Prophet in his journey/ascension of the heavens and Gabriel stopped after reaching a certain point saying that he cannot go beyond and had reached his limit.
* What does this signify?
* Gabriel= message bearer
* Muhammad is a human being that needs a message bearer.

Quran speaks to me to educate me, to guide me. I need to relate this story to myself. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) represents the highest capacity a human being can achieve. My full potentiality is emphasized in the story of the ascension. Prophet Adam was taught all the Names (qualities) of God which represented the human capacity as it is told in the narration of the Qur’an. This signifies that potentiality is engrained in human nature and I have that potentiality in me. From scriptures and narrations we read that each Prophet specializes in the manifestation of one Name. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) did not specialize in one quality but in contrast acquainted himself with all the qualities and presented it in a package (miracle) called “the Quran”. In it human beings are taught how to develop their potentialities at the highest level so it exceeds what is beyond the qualities manifested in the universe.

* Knowing the Creator through all Its names is possible. **That is within the potentiality of a human being.**
* If I do not trust myself i.e. what I am capable of, I cannot work with the Quran.
* Quran addresses me from all aspects of my given human qualities (potentialities) touching each and every one of them.
* When I apply the teachings of the Quran, I will find that the qualities of the Creator manifested in my being and the universe are endless.
* My capacity extends to beyond this universe.
* My capacity is larger than Gabriel.
* I should not waste my life, I have a lot to learn, develop and specialize experiencing Its qualities!
* I cannot count the blessings of God.
* Blessings of the Creator are to get to know It through manifestations of Its Names.
* **Him disclosing Itself to me is the real blessing: getting to know my Eternal Source with Eternal qualities.**
* **Carrot, for instance, is a blessing but it is transient; the message that the carrot carries is real *blessing as it discloses the qualities of the Creator of the carrot***

What is “*hamd”* (praise)?

* Praise and thanks.

How are we going to praise God?

* By doing parallel reading.

I am hungry, I find a carrot and I eat it.

* Am I supposed to be thankful?
* Yes. Why?
* Because it satisfied my appetite.
* With this acknowledgment, I am similar to a rabbit.
* However, I am a human being and I need to extend the acknowledgment by using the potentialities given to me in my human qualities.
* **I have to read the qualities manifested in the existence of the carrot. Only then can I be thankful and be fit to express *alhamd* (praise).**
* I am thankful for the qualities I found in the carrot. Through my awareness, I experience and appreciate the qualities of its Maker. In its design, structure…, there are a lot of qualities that are appreciated.

I can fully internalize *hamd* via two channels:

1. **Praise**
2. **Thanks**
* Without praise, I cannot be thankful because I have not worked on receiving news of an Absolute Eternal Source. Thus, I cannot express my human gratitude, apart from a kind of happiness a rabbit expresses.
* Without praising the qualities manifested in the existence of the carrot, I cannot thank the Owner of the qualities manifested in the carrot.
* To be thankful to the Owner, I need to first appreciate those qualities I experience using my given human senses and qualities. I question those qualities and confirm that they do not belong to the carrot but there must be a Creator of those qualities, One that gives them existence. These qualities point to this Creator and are His manifestations which introduce me to Him and I get to know Him better.
* The object is not nourishing me but my comprehension of its Source is what is providing nourishment to my human intelligence.



***“Allah is the light of the heavens and earth” (24):35***

* The fuel of this light cannot come from the east or west. What does it mean?
* I cannot find the Source of the light (i.e. meaning) that comes to me from the act of creation and I cannot ascribe the Source of meaning to anything in the whole universe.
* Similarly, *allahumma anta’s-salaam* (Allah is the Peace) = the Source of peace is You, not me= You provide me with peace.
* My duty is to acknowledge that the Creator is the Source of *Salaam*.

In reality, we communicate with the angels through creation in the universe because in light of the above verse (24):35, the essence of the Source cannot be found anywhere in the universe. But Its existence can be traced by communicating with the angels (i.e. the meaning I extract from objects).

* Every meaning which makes my human qualities alive (or make things meaningful for me is carried through an angel) = If I confirm the message I receive from the angels), that is my acknowledgment of the Source of that quality.



***”All praise is due to God, the Lord of the Worlds”. (1):2***

* When I say *alhamdulillah*, I have to know what I am praising.
* Al (the) = list of Its qualities.
* Similar to the proper name (as studied on 01/14/16), it represents the qualities of the Creator that I am aware of. If I am not aware of the qualities, Allah means nothing to me. After knowing the qualities, the proper noun of “Allah” starts gaining meaning or becoming known to me.
* *Alhamdulillah*= my acknowledgment that Allah is the Wise, Merciful…
* I must attribute all praise to the Absolute Being that I call “Allah”, the One that creates everything.
* Rabb= Lord of the worlds= whoever administers or sustains the qualities I experience.
* Rabb= the One that trains, educates, raises up, creates…
* Aalameen= the qualities which are manifested in the universe and known to me.
* Ruboobiya= the continuous qualities demonstrating the manifestations of the Raab.

All the qualities that I observe and experience in the universe cannot belong to the universe but belong to its Creator, God. **When I am aware of the manifestation taking place within the universe (ruboobiya), I am inclined to qualifying God with all the qualities I see. I cannot personify God. While praising (seeing the manifestations), I am thanking God. That is “shukr”.**

I cannot isolate anything from any part of the universe. The qualities in the universe and my qualities altogether belong to the Creator of the universe. My awareness of the Lord cannot be confined to this universe only. Example: I desire Eternal Happiness. I do not want to go into non-existence.

* Ask: *How come my desire for Eternal Happiness exists? Where did it come from? Which part of my cells made this desire to exist?*
* I want Eternal happiness and it must exist i.e. this desire exists. This desire has a Source who gave it existence. I need this Source to satisfy my desire which I am sure He can otherwise I would not have such desires. That is how I can cultivate my capacity to go beyond the universe within myself.

Human capacity is larger than the universe. All the qualities belong to the Originator and I call this One, God. All things are worthy to be appreciated. That praise worthy quality is given by the Sustainer. **Alhamdulillah= thank the Source of the Provider.** Example: Have I seen the One that creates the carrot? Scripture says: thank God; the universe should witness it and human beings should experience it.

In conclusion, **when I praise, it includes thanking in it.** Think about the Source of existence of all beings that you interact with, only then can you find God and appreciate Him; thanking Him is this appreciation.