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| **Date** | Wednesday, July 29, 2015 |
| **Topic** | In the footsteps of the Prophet Abraham: The Patriarch of Monotheist Religion |
| **Part** | 2 |



***“…Tell [them], then , this story, so that they may reflect.”* A’raf (7): 176**

*Why are stories mentioned in the Quran?*

* To reflect on them seriously rather than historicizing them.

*Why is God telling me to reflect?*

* So that I may shift my worldview in the right direction.

*What is the right direction?*

* That which does not contradict my humanity.

**“*There can be no mythical stories in the Revelation to guide human kind*.”**

Stories in the Quran are mentioned for a reason otherwise they would be irrelevant to my existence. This applies to other parts of the Quran as well. For example: the leave cannot fall without the Creator’s will. My attitude should be to reflect on a falling leave and see if I can explain the phenomenon. If God is saying something, it must have something to do with me right now.

I should be careful not to disconnect myself from the events in the stories because I may perhaps see the Prophets possessing some extraordinary qualities but I do not. Some details mentioned in the stories should be avoided as they are mostly interpreted/invented by people, one should not let that distract us. The important thing is to apply it to one’s own self. For example: Moses used his staff for various purposes.

***Where is my staff?***

* For me, the staff may signify objects/events that I rely on for my livelihood (such as job, family…).

***What does it mean to leave my staff?***

* It means becoming aware of my reality. As a result of which, I will not get challenged by the societal influences (magicians). If I **rely** on my staff, I will be challenged by the magicians. If I stop **relying** on my staff, I will beat up the magicians of the society.
* Any idea that leads me to rely on an object/event to achieve something is false. I will realize this point once I start trusting the Creator only because the object/event itself cannot sustain my life.
* By relying on the Creator, my attitude beats all the “snakes” (magicians’ artificial influences) and I will declare my independence from the objects that I rely on.
* Everything needs to be pointed to the Creator.

***Can the staff be referring to our logical reasoning?***

It may because Moses left the staff and got it back again. However, the point is not to rely on the staff but on the Creator of the staff. We use our logic to find the Creator. Our logic is either used to:

1. support our egoistic caprices (materialistic desires). Or,
2. overcome the materialistic desires that are an obstacle to connect to the Creator and trust Him.

We should use the staff but remember that the staff itself is not the Source of what we are getting (results). **The result is created by God not by the staff. Staff is just a tool to help me acknowledge the Owner of the staff.** Just as water doesn’t quench us, it is the Creator’s Mercy that satiates us by creating the water for me.

Thus, we need to apply the morale of the stories that befits our own life conditions. **Everything in the revelation is speaking to me about my practical life.**

Super heroes carry powers and by no means should the Prophets be compared to having extraordinary powers. Characters that we see in animated movies are projections to a certain philosophy which challenges God because of our egoistic stance where we do not want to submit to the reality. There is an influential scholar that said something along the lines of: I am going to kill God by killing his creation because I want Eternity, I did not get it and so I will revenge. The super hero productions of human imaginations seem to be based on these ideologies.

Similarly, most of us have become victim of a fantasy world. The advertisements around us have magical effect on us where we feel like getting more and more things. ***Do the real human essentials need advertisements (snakes of the magicians)?*** The snakes of the magicians make us think that if we do not have something in society we are nothing. ***Are the products imposed by the society going to satisfy our humanity?***

If we are brave enough to question what is essential, all (superficial) ambitions that infiltrates into our expectations as the source of satisfaction will diminish and disappear. We can even say that the Nimrod’s fire will not consume us. It is as if **we are in the fire but we are saved and thus happy with the Creator.** It is our Creator who has brought us here and He will take us away from here. **We ought to realize the eminence of the Creator within our own life**. Therefore we should not be carried away by the influences of external factors. **We need to change our perception of the universe and that requires training.** Example: It is not food that provides me nourishment; it is God that provides me nourishment. We need to know what is created by God or what is imagined (which is also created by God in the form of imagination, not real which has an external existence in the real world). This process of reasoning teaches us what is essential to us:

* My Creator is essential to me.

We need to respect ourselves i.e. don’t be carried away by whisperings from human beings. That is what *sura naas* refers to: I seek refuge in God as the false images are whispering from people around me, my atmosphere. At times, we may even feel alienated or belittled in such an atmosphere where people put high emphasis on socioeconomic status. Ask yourself: *Are they real or invented in order to influence my vision of the world?* Pay attention to yourself, **be yourself: when you are yourself you hear the voice of the Creator.** Don’t pick up the personality of characters that you see on the screen. Magicians are making up these artificial needs that you can definitely overcome.

Story: Toddler A is always given the healthiest food by his mother. She keeps feeding him but he is never hungry. Toddler B does not have any food; he is hungry, keeps searching for food and dies.

*In the story above, which toddler sounds more human?*

* Toddler B’s attitude seems the right thing to do. However, if we were to compare the toddlers attitude to ourselves, most of us carry toddler A’s attitude. We do not feel the need to question and search for the truth because we take it for granted that we are born in a monotheistic religion.
* **What makes me human is not what I find in my family or community.**  **The Source of my values lies in that which I am searching for.**

In the story above, let’s say that toddler B dies of hunger. Obviously, that is not a pleasant result but at least he was a “sincere” searcher. Even children of the Prophets had to search for the truth. Being born in a certain family is totally accidental as far as we are concerned, and it did not happen by our choice. Our choice lies in our questioning and our searching for the truth. It does not matter if we do not find the truth, as long as we are searching is what really matters. **We are as *muttaqee* (God conscious) as what our questions are, not as what we do.**  If we are not searching, we cannot be God conscious.

 

***“…We never punish until We have sent a messenger*.” Isra (17): 15**

Remember that we cannot get “ready-made” answers from our ancestors and take it as our belief. Everyone is responsible for his own belief within the opportunities given by God. We need to take care of our own selves. Our feelings are created by God, through them we get to know who our Creator is.


***“Indeed, you have had a good example in Abraham and those who followed him…”*Mumtahanah (60):4**

Abraham’s way of life is exemplary for human beings looking to get the meaning out of their existence. Anyone who followed the Abrahamic understanding of life is also exemplary for us. We need to be one of the people who follow Abraham.

***Can we be with Abraham by following him?*** Yes. Just as we are with the artist while trying to understand his art, similarly, we are with Abraham when we follow his understandings. Values of Abraham are summarized in his own belief which we will study next time. *(To be continued…)*