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| **Date** | Wednesday, August 12, 2015 |
| **Topic** | In the footsteps of the Prophet: The Patriarch of monotheist religion |
| **Part** | 4 |

 *If we look through a window, what do we see?*

* We may see the sky, trees, other houses, and buildings… (Anything that is behind the window).

*If we look at the glass, what do we see?*

* We see the stains on the glass of the window…. (Anything that is on the window).

What we see really depends on what we are focusing on: If I look at the things behind the window, then I do not focus on the glass itself. On the other hand, if I look at the stains on the glass, then I do not focus on what is behind it. In this regard, **the glass may or may not be a veil depending on our perception.** Depending on our perception,we put a veil on objects: **In reality, the veil is within me** i.e. it is me who is deciding how I want to see objects. The glass, itself cannot have an effect on my sight.

* I need to work on myself rather than the object.



 ***“It is not fitting for a man that God should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with God’s permission, what God wills: for He is Most High, Most Wise.”* Shura (42):51**

This universe is a place where God teaches us who He is. Some of us lose ourselves in matter only. Example: I like trees; I can enjoy my life as long as I have this tree in my backyard. Here, I am losing myself with one perspective i.e. benefitting from the tree as much as I can. I need to question the meaning behind the matter: *How come the tree is there? What is the significance of the tree?* *Why do I like trees? How is the cause of existence of this feeling within me?*

This universe is definitely here for us to benefit from **but** where do we employ it? If I decide within myself to listen to the message coming to me from behind my veil, I will hear voice of the “Existence Giver” of the objects in the universe (including myself) speaking to me. In this regard, we cannot blame external factors (such as societal influences) for being the cause of the veil.

There are two aspects to the veil:
1/ fulfilling my egoistic desires

2/ fulfilling my humanity

The choice is ours i.e. we need to develop ourselves to use “this veil of ours” as a means to get the message from the Creator. Just as the Prophets use the unbelieving society to fulfill their mission, similarly, I need to use my veil to fulfill my purpose of existence.

Analogy: A projector emits “light” which displays text/image from the laptop on a “screen”. The light coming from the projector travels and finds an obstacle on its way. Only because of this “obstacle” that the light displays what “message’ it has in it. This “obstacle” is the screen. If we want to see what is in the light we have to look at this “obstacle.” If we want to see the light itself, rather than what it carries then this obstacle is a hindrance for us. This “screen” seems to be a “veil” now, preventing the light to travel further distances. The same material is either a “screen” which helps us to see what message the light is carrying, or, an “obstacle” (veil) for the light to travel. But it is the same material. **What changes it to be a “veil” or to be a “screen” is our purpose in life.** *Do we want to see the light itself or what it contains?* We now realize that outside world changes its meaning according to our attitudes.

* Similarly, the universe and its objects are out there to reflect the qualities of their Maker. Our attitude in life turns the universe either into a “veil” for us (if we do not use our human qualities,) or a means to see the qualities of its Absolute Maker, thus turns it into a “screen.” **Only by using our human qualities, senses, feelings and emotions with the right attitude we get to realize the existence of the Absolute qualities of the Source of existence of the universe.**

The universe is a manifestation of its Creator’s qualities. When we read the scriptures, we should not take the literal meaning from the text. Example: “Mountain crumbles” means that mountain is not a veil anymore. Example: “Moses faints after seeing the Creator’s light” means that Moses realized that he cannot see the Creator’s qualities manifested in the “screen” of the universe without utilizing his “human qualities”. When the book (***mushaf****)* is read literally, it may become a veil for us. When it is read by extracting the meaning behind the stories, parables in the text, it becomes a “screen” for us to witness the demonstrations of the Creator’s qualities all around us.

* The book itself has no value as a compilations of paper; everything is within us (use our human qualities) i.e. we have to have an attitude towards the text of the book in order to get the message as the Creator is directly speaking to us in it. In this case the book becomes a “screen” for us. If we do not have this attitude the same book becomes a “veil” for us.

All negative human emotions such as jealousy, anger… are created by our Maker and given to us to turn them into a positive experience i.e. **get to know Him as our Lord.** We need to use these emotions as a means of getting the message from the Source. Let us look into the following examples and see how we can use ourselves for only one purpose i.e. acknowledging and thus worshipping the Creator solely:

* Example A: Jane has a toothache. The pain can be a veil for her if she uses it to curse the pain. If she removes the veil within herself, she sees the pain as a Mercy from the Creator introducing Himself to her. **The more pain she experiences, the stronger the Creator manifests His Mercy.** Due to this Mercy she understands that her tooth needs an urgent attention by a dental surgeon.
* Example B: Jack likes object M. He realizes this sense of liking is given to him and he uses it to recognize the manifestation of its Creator’s qualities. He is not using it aimlessly. If object M belongs to Jane, instead of getting jealous of Jane, he can benefit from it more than Jane. **The existence of object M is a present from his Lord and Jack is happy that His Creator keeps demonstrating Himself to him like that.**
* Example C: Jack and Jane are roommates. Jane keeps leaving dirty dishes overnight. The dirty dishes may become a “veil” for Jack where he starts criticizing Jane. Instead, Jack feels sorry for Jane and instead of getting angry at her, he uses the dirty dishes as a means of getting the message i.e. **he should never get into the habit of leaving dirty dishes overnight. Hence the event now turns into a “screen.”**

From the examples (above), anger is a sense given to us that alarms us that something is going wrong. Pain is a message from the Merciful Creator; we just need to use it to benefit our humanity. **The Creator will not create something which is harmful for us as that would contradict the purpose of our existence.**

* We need to knock down the “veil” within ourselves.

We have to see the good “message” in everything. After all, everything that exists is from Him and so it must be a good reason for them to be created. Even Satan needs to be used as a “means” to know the reality. *How do we know if something is from Satan?* We need to use our human qualities and **read** the “universe” and filter the message that is coming from the Source. If we do not learn the language of the universe, we do not get any message. We ought to educate ourselves to get the right message. **Our responsibility as people who have freewill is to turn everything into a “means (screen) of recognizing the Absolute Source”**.

We have the right to be overprotective and selfish when it comes to establishing our relationship with the Creator i.e. I do not want anything else to interfere in my worship of Him because I want to worship Him only. That is the only way we can avoid the risk of losing ourselves in the matter itself (outside world). It’s not easy because we are accustomed with finding solutions outside our own being. We need to develop ourselves as follows:

* Step 1: Question the existence of everything.
* Step 2: Know that the Creator introduces/demonstrates Himself through our emotions/feelings.
* Step 3: Turn inwardly to realize our own being since it is **our attitude that turns every thing either into a “veil” or a “screen.”**

***Should we get angry at someone by criticizing them?***

No. Even the Prophets never got angry at the unbelievers. They were sent to a corrupt society as an aid to help them get out of unbelief. The Prophets would not be called Prophets if they criticize creation. Every creation is a ***caliph*** (acting on behalf of someone) ***or vicegerent*** to represent the Creator’s will.



**“To God belong the east and the west: Wherever you turn, there is the presence of God. For God is all-Pervading, all-Knowing.”Baqara (2):115 “**

God is everywhere: There is no veil/curtain drawn anywhere in the universe which is an obstacle from reaching or being in the presence of God. Everything is deliberately created by Him for us to get to know Him and confirm Him. Blaming creation (such as Satan, Devil, society, or a particular person or event..) as an excuse of not reaching Him makes no sense anymore. Everything created (including our senses) is created to help us get to know the Lord of the universe. So, **this universe is, in fact, nothing but the “screen” if only we did not turn it into a “veil.”**

* We should always look behind the veil.

After all, i*s there anything which prevents us from knowing who the Creator is?* Even things which are forbidden in Islamic law (swine, alcohol…) are created to manifest their Creator’s qualities. There is nothing in creation which does not glorify God. Everything glorifies God by praising Him: In the creation of anything, we find Absolute Power, Knowledge, and Wisdom of its Creator.

**There is Mercy in the creation of the smallest particle or dirt.** Example: bad smell of a rotten banana teaches us not to eat it and so we should not criticize “the bad smell”. In reality, the existence of the “bad smell” is relevant to our existence. There is nothing irrelevant in the creation of the universe: everything is a missive bringing news from its Creator. If we don’t see it, then we have misused our free will and chose to make the option into a “veil” as an obstacle. Therfore, if I feel that the object is not speaking to me, then I have turned it into a veil.