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| **Date** | Wednesday, August 17, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Chapter Pen |
| **Part** | 2 |

Recap: We read the scripture for practical reasons for ourselves. We read in order to get to know what creation reveals to us through the pen of power, knowledge, mercy… We have to put an end on historicizing scripture. Always ask for yourself: “what is my Creator telling me here?” Last week, we studied the second verse that insinuates that if I read creation, I am not a madman. Just because I choose to question the source of my existence by looking at my toes does not make me a lunatic. People may even laugh saying that what are you going to find out about your being by looking at a fly. Similarly, I question the source of existence of the wings of a fly, a wonderful act of creation. Since I am not following the societal or ancestral values, then I may be labeled as “mad” but in reality I am on the right track under the Quranic worldview if I start questioning the source of existence of a fly.



***“By the Grace of your Lord, you are not a madman.” Pen (68): 2***

*What does “by the Grace of your Lord” means?*

I am created with the ability to understand the message and the message is out there. I have to decipher meaning of creation and try to understand what I am doing here. This ability is given to me; it is a grace of my Lord as I cannot have it by myself. Some say that they worked on their abilities but they do not realize that they only used what is already given to them. All you are doing is reading what is already out there otherwise how can you make yourself understand anything. I cannot give any quality to myself. Can you give quality to yourself? No. Everything is given to me out of grace. I do not deserve it. I am just given existence with this quality freely. I did not even ask or do anything to get it. Everyone is given the same potentiality. Hence, God does not favor anyone, It favors every one equally.

Now, after using my potentiality and becoming aware of my reality, I should not feel proud about feeling secure in my existence because I am given this right way of understanding by the One who prepared this universe for me. Thus, I need to be thankful to It.



***“Verily for you is a never ending reward.” Pen (68):3***

For whom is a never ending reward? For me who reads. Why never ending? Let us find out.

When you look at creation, what do you see? Do you see that the One who gives existence to those creatures is limitless, Absolute and infinite? After reading this, I become aware of my own existence and others that we belong to an Absolute Being. We are the product of Absolute Being, I belong to It. As soon as I start reading the meaning of the creation, the process puts me in a position of perfect hope for myself i.e. my existence will not go into annihilation or come to an end. Everything is a witness that its Creator is an Absolute One otherwise you or rather nothing can come into existence. Can I explain the existence of a particle by attributing its qualities to itself? Can six billion people come together and create one particle? No. Since everything in the universe is a continuous demonstration of the Creator who is not part of the universe, now you understand that the Source is endless or never ending. Thus, you and I belong to It because we come from the same source and we go to the same source. That is how we receive a feeling of security in our existence. It brought me here and It will take me out of here. How did It bring me here from a fetus to a baby to an adult? I do not know how, but I see them given existence continuously, that is why this source must be Absolute or never ending otherwise It cannot continuously keep bringing things into existence simultaneously.

When I am aware that the Source of my existence is Absolute, nothing should bother me then i.e. I should not have any worries or stress/anxiety. Why don’t we feel that? The problem is that we are under heavy societal cultural influences and we either see the things existing out there as existing by themselves or, if we follow a cultural religion, try to understand everything from God’s perspective.



***“And verily you are of the noble character.” Pen (68) : 4***

My Creator is speaking to me letting me know that I am created perfect i.e. there is no flaw in my creation. In fact, the creation of everything is perfect. Since I am created perfect, I need to benefit from it i.e. utilize my creation to get to know its Creator.

When things are not in existence, I cannot speak about it or make speculation. I may imagine something to exist. This imagination exists in the form of an existence but the content of the imagination does not exist. Example: I can imagine an elephant in the room.

*How do I know that everything is perfect in its existence?*

A fly is perfect in its existence and a dead fly is also perfect in its existence. We extract meaning from existence of everything. Anything non-palpable is also in existence.

Analogy: You see art in a piece of painting. When you take the painting away, what remains? You have taken away the painting only, where is the Art? Art has its independent existence but we can only observe it when it is presented with the painting. Painting exists, art too is in existence. Their existing qualities are different. Similarly, there are endless types of creation in the universe, not everything can be seen with the naked eye.

Analogy: You read a book and you get meaning. When you burn the book, what remains? Meaning still exists but I cannot physically feel it. It is recorded in my mind similar to the art in the analogy above. Hence, existence does not consist of physical existence only. Also, art and meaning cannot be sent into annihilation. Similarly, my existence cannot be subject to annihilation. When paper is burned, it is transformed into carbon. The paper did not go into annihilation; it still exists in the form of carbon. Meaning also did not go into annihilation.

Nothing can go into annihilation; everything is preserved by the Creator of the universe. When I die, I cannot escape from it, but death does not mean that I went into annihilation. Hence, I need to have the right position in existence, conscious of myself in my qualities.



***“So you will see and they will see.” Pen (68):5***



***“Which of you is afflicted with madness.” Pen (68):6***

Since this is a future tense, we think about hereafter. It is not wrong but we first need to pay attention to our existence now. Do I have the ability to think whether something is right or wrong? We are potentially able to know that we are doing something right or wrong. However, we try to justify ourselves, a very human nature where we still know deep down that we are conditioning ourselves. When one thinks about it deeply, one realizes that he has been doing something wrong/right. **I know it from my own self. If I was not able to know what is wrong or right, I would not be responsible for anything.** That is why we are fully responsible for our choices because we know what we are doing. When someone tells us about our choice, we consult ourselves to verify it because we are our own criteria.



***“Your Lord knows best who has strayed away from His path and He knows best who is rightly guided.” Pen (68): 7***

I can know it from my own self that the One who creates me knows what I am doing. Additionally, I know that my Creator knows what It is doing. Who knows that your Creator knows what It is doing? I myself know it. The subject of the knowledge is I, the individual. I know that my Creator knows what It is doing. My Creator is speaking to me letting me know that I can know that It knows**: “O Reader, I gave you the ability to know that I know**.”

Never alienate God from yourself saying that It knows but I do not. Everyone will face reality for sure, we all know that in the form of hereafter. My own reality is my existence. My Creator must know that I know my reality.

Quran is a guide to human beings to choose between right/wrong. That is why we are given freewill. The Speaker speaks to me because I can understand what is right/wrong. Otherwise there is no point in telling me something that I cannot perceive. The Creator speaks to me in order to tell me what is already in me. When I learn, I realize that the ability to learn (potentiality) is within me. I am just discovering myself, my potentiality. Can the One who creates me know what is going on with me? Yes. I realized that It is my Creator and It is the One that teaches me. I can conclude that It must know what is going on within me. What I am taught is not something extra added to my potential being. I am just helped out by Its guidance to discover my potentiality.