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| **Date** | Wednesday, July 8, 2015 |
| **Topic** | Reading Scriptures |
| **Part** | 4 |

There are two main problems that hinder our belief:

1/ Scientists take existence for granted.

2/ Some Philosophers say that the universe has no meaning.

Once a person thinks that the universe has no meaning, he is ultimately denying the Creator. Some Philosophers even claim that the Creator is a man-made phenomenon and so they argue that the Creator has been created. They see no purpose in the existence of creation, and consequently no purpose in the meaning of the universe. As a result of which, belief or religion has no purpose.

No one can believe in God without applying rational wisdom. This prompts us not to reject the meaning of the existence of the universe. The Source of the problem lies in having a notion about meaninglessness of existence of any matter.

* Those who believe in God base their argument on the meaning of the universe. Whereas those who do not believe in God base their argument on the meaninglessness of the universe.

Religion means believing in the meaning of the existence of the universe. This universe has meaning; if something is meaningful then it must be purposefully created. We need to establish the concept of God first. In order to do that, we need to observe the universe. We need to pay attention to the meaning that we get from observing the universe. The clouds, stars, trees, breath… everything is meaningful because there is no accidental happening. If something appears as accidental to us, it must have a purpose and so must be meaningful i.e. the result of Conscious Choice. We must investigate to find out the meaning. It might appear to be meaningless just because of our ignorance. After investigating that thing we definitely discover the meaning; it is only a matter of time and investigation. That is why **we conclude that there must be a Creator, a Conscious Will behind the existence of the universe.**

(*Continuation*) Principles (***usool***) of reading the Scriptures

**8/ Thou shalt never attempt to understand the true nature of the Creator.**

* *It is always about being sure of His existence through signs.*

**Question:** *Why shouldn’t I attempt to understand the true nature of the Creator?*

As a created being, it is not within my capacity to understand the Creator because He is not of the nature of this universe. The nature of the universe itself is hard to understand but we know that there is something meaningful going on here. Therefore, there must be a Conscious Will behind the existence of the universe. We cannot speculate about Him saying that the Creator is powerful. Instead, we need to say that I see the universe, it is wonderful and so the Creator must be powerful.

* Belief in the Creator is the result of our observation of the universe.
* Belief cannot be based on assumptions.

The model of reaching the conclusion is not important as long as you have real evidence to come to your conclusion.

**Question:** *How do I know that God has certain qualities?*

You can know His qualities by using your capacity to investigate the work present in front of you, the universe and yourself. Example: I can “see” so my Creator must have the qualities to “see”. If He did not have the quality to see, how can He make me as a person with seeing qualities? Furthermore, I know that I am a rational being. The One who gave me the consciousness to realize this must Himself be the Source of wisdom; **that is belief.**

We should be careful not to confuse the field of our free will and the consequence of this free will. For example, when I choose to do unwise actions, this does not mean that the Creator also chooses to do unwise actions. But my capacity to choose demonstrates that my Creator is the Creator of this capacity. Using my freedom and choosing the unwise action is my choice, whereas, I can see in the universe the Creator has never chosen the unwise action. I see no unwise action manifested in the universe.

Observe the things around you. The tree grows in a perfect manner for purposeful existence. The One who creates the tree must do everything with a purpose.

* My evidence is what I see which is my experience.
* If we neglect the universe, we cannot believe in the Creator of the universe.
* Speak always with the signs that you observe from the universe.
* Belief is not based on blind faith.
* Belief is based on real observation.
* We need to establish our beliefs based on our observations, evidence and human conclusions.

**Warning:** Please avoid these baseless languages: I am a Muslim that is why I believe in God. We believers believe in a Creator. In my religion, we have to do these rituals…

The above languages undermine the legitimacy and logical consistency of belief. My belief in God must be based on my observation of the Creator. Therefore, I need to see signs and refer them to their Source. Without the signs, we can never speak about God. The Source of existence of any particle or event is God. And so, I cannot attribute my emotions, shape, and growth… to particles themselves. Meanings are not from the particles themselves but what is created with/from the particles are all meaningful. These meanings refer to their Creator as existence cannot happen by itself. Therefore, this universe must have a Source of existence which exists. God is the One who gives existence to this universe because otherwise I cannot explain the existence of this universe.

* We ought to question the Source of existence of any quality that we see in this universe (including existence which is a quality).
* *Can anything really exist by itself?*

**9/ Thou shalt never claim to have exhausted the interpretations of an absolute Book.**

* *There is always room for improvements and everyone trained in this can chip in.*

**Question:** *What is the Quran?*

It is the verbal expression of the meaning of the universe, that is, existence. From verbal expression we understand the meaning, which is what the Speech of the Creator is all about. Nothing more nothing less. If there was anything extra in the Speech of the Creator, it would leave me without any evidence and I would not be able to confirm it. Some may argue how can we confirm the information about the unseen *(ghaib)*?

Since everything in creation can be confirmed, even for the unseen *(ghaib)* there are signs that enable me to confirm the existence of the Creator through these signs that I see in the universe. The way the universe comes into existence demonstrates to me that the One who brought this universe must have infinite knowledge. The One, who created me, creates me in such a way that I need Eternal existence and happiness. *What is the Source of existence of these human feelings?*  We need to question: *how do my feelings exist?* We are given two legs, two arms… and an expectation of Eternal happiness. Through these feeling, I understand that there must be an Eternal happiness.

If my Creator speaks to me, He speaks to me under the witnessing of my own life experiences. From the universe, one can understand that the Creator’s knowledge must be Absolute. When He speaks to me, it is in a way that I will understand. That’s why, as I cannot get to the end of the Creator’s knowledge, neither can I get to the end of the meaning of His Speech speaking to me. And so, no one can claim to hold the Absolute meaning of the Speech because everyone gets the speech according to their capacity.

* As we cannot get to the end of the existence in the wisdom of the physical world, we cannot get to the end of the content of the meaning in the Speech of the Creator.
* Nothing is arbitrary and everything is understandable.

We can never exhaust the Speech of the Creator as He is infinite. The Speech of God never finishes as the act of God never ends. As the universe continues to be renewed, the explanation of the meaning of the universe continues to be revealed. Therefore, we cannot reduce the Quran to an ultimate meaning. It is very human to keep studying and developing ourselves.

* Analogy: Knowing English language is not enough to understand a medical textbook that is written in English language; one has to go through several years of rigorous medical studies in order to understand the advanced medical books. Similarly knowing the Arabic language is not enough to understand the Quran, i.e. one has to go through the education of Quranic discipline.

As long as the universe is continuously created, new meanings are transferred to me and I will experience the Speech of God alongside with the act of God.

**10/ Thou shalt never inherit your faith from your ancestors.**

* *You need to acquire it individually by using all your faculties including your reasoning and heart.*

Everyone has to have their own conclusions. We cannot inherit belief. Human beings do not imitate, we confirm. Take the Quran as a Speech of a teacher who teaches the meaning of creation. *Can you imitate the teacher?*  No, you listen to the teacher in order to understand him; if what he says makes sense to you, only then, can you confirm him.

I need to listen to the teacher carefully and try to make sense of it within my own being. If I can confirm it, I will confirm it. If I do not understand the teacher, I need to ask the questions: *Can you please explain? What do you mean?*

When the Quran is recited, we have to listen to it carefully and try to understand it. It does not mean to imitate it. We need to investigate the speech of the One who is instructing us within the universe. If we did not have the capacity to understand our Creator, He would not speak to us. Everyone has the potential to understand. We are here to get to know who our Lord is? We need to question our abilities and know ourselves. We need to spend time in our own being to get to know who we are: *What am I doing here? What is the meaning of my existence here?*

We need to question the Source of everything. If someone instructs us with answers, we just repeat it without ever questioning. Human capacity and development is not limited. Therefore keep asking questions to get satisfactory answers. If I am satisfied with the answer, I will confirm it. Even the confirmation is limitless. No one (sciences, research…) can claim they have reached the end of the existence of things. The universe is full of signs of the Absoluteness of the Creator. The manifestation of the Creator’s qualities in the universe is endless. Nothing can be exhausted and so we have to keep questioning until we get answers. The questioning never ends.

* Human capacity to confirm the Creator is infinite.
* No one can say that my belief is close to completion because human spirit has no end.

Every question is human and it must be answered. We need to be sincere in searching for the answer to the questions. We need to use our human qualities altogether. In practical life, we may not be using all of it but (in principle), we should know that all questions are answerable. The Speech of God must be understandable by everyone.

In conclusion, religion is not to be imitated; imitation is not confirmation.