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| **Date** | Wednesday, August 10 2016 |
| **Topic** | The Pen |
| **Part** | 1 |

The earlier revealed verses are supposed to be building a new worldview, one that is completely different from the prevalent society. This was also the case at the time of the initial years of Prophethood for Muhammad (pbuh).  The individual reading these Quranic verses needs to make a choice within his own being. In other words, looking to bring in a revolution into your life is the option presented in the Quran. The other option is to continue to follow the societal norms that place values on insignificant things (superficial material view) contrary to one’s human reality.

If you read these verses carefully you will find out how your Lord is introducing his message to you and letting you know what really matters. It would be wise to educate oneself under this Quranic worldview. As a result, you will find out that all religious information available out there in the media is irrelevant to your reality. Be wary of ideas promoting: “You have to believe in all that the Quran requires”. Since Belief is a personal conclusion, the ideas being promoted are simply wrong. Every single individual has to work on her own personal conviction about what she really believes, i.e. she is convinced about the truthfulness of the message. Only 1/3rd of the Quran provides some sort of requirements for one to adhere to, the rest 2/3rd is nothing but a proposition to confirm your true innate human nature. Some people think that as long as they follow certain requirements in the form of a prescription, they have accomplished their duty. True, the 1/3rd of the Quran needs to be studied and analyzed carefully in order to fit to our present day and age i.e. current conditions, an often arguable debate among scholars looking to fit in the judicial matters into a secular context. Again, be wary of judicial interpreters because one has to have expertise with the Quranic worldview to make such interpretations.

But when it is related to belief matters, every individual person has to work on them and make their minds up about their truthfulness. Belief is a personal matter. Whereas, juridical interpretations may refer to the practical life of the society, and the laymen who are not expert on them may accept them as they are presented to them.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was teaching nothing but freedom, equality and brotherhood, values that became eminent in the 19th century.  Also, the concept of tawheed or oneness of God has huge implications under the Prophetic teachings. That is, **every single event needs to be analyzed and evaluated in terms of its Creator.** Example: I look at you and I want to see qualities of your Creator manifested in your being. **There is nothing in the universe which does not proclaim God's glory.** So, is anyone really entitled to say that he is superior over another being?  No, because we all come from the same source. Additionally, tawheed is mostly reduced to an understanding related to polytheism or destruction of physical statues/idols. This understanding is a very simplistic understanding of the Prophetic message.

All that the Prophet was doing was helping people get emotionally detached from false idols (mostly social norms of the age,) an endeavor that took approximately 21 years. This teaches us that one has to be patient with grasping or teaching the Quranic message. Also, you cannot just destroy people’s idols overnight; there is always a teaching and learning process that needs to take place. The people at the time of the Prophet (pbuh) listened to his message carefully because Muhammad, as a person was known to be sincere. After 20 years or so, the people then started embracing the message.



***“Noon. Consider the pen, and all that they write.” Pen (68):1***

In the above verse, the Speaker is speaking to me so I may develop a new personality with a changed worldview. The purpose of the Quran is to teach me how to get to know the Source of my existence (Creator). If you want to know who the Creator is, you have to think about the pen and what it writes.

***What is pen?***

Pen represents the transferring of the Creator’s qualities to created world so that human beings can deduct from the created world the Qualities of their Creator. Let’s say there is something in my mind, how can I express it to you? Well, I need to jot it down on a piece of paper (physical form) so you may understand me. In other words, something is revealed to you in front of your eyes so it becomes apparent to you. It is a way to display that which is unknown in a known form.

Through the pen, my Creator is telling me what is coming out of the pen of the universe. As a result, I can see ghaib (Absolute) which is beyond the limits of this universe. As discussed in the chapter read, when something is written, what is unknown becomes known. He taught human being with pen means that he discloses his qualities through physical form.

Pay attention to the pen and what it discloses. It discloses all qualities in creation. Pay attention to creation and the universe and you will see that it is transferring what is unknown to you. The act of creation is the manifestation of its Creator. This universe is what the pen writes. Hence, consider it and read it.

In most of our secular education, science never studies the Source of existence of the different qualities or phenomenon of objects/events. They fail to question where do the qualities come from. The Quranic worldview teaches one to question the Source of existence of everything that exists because everything in existence is a sign pointing to its Maker’s qualities. I can know my Maker by studying act of creation manifested in front of my eyes. This is the universal message with which we can transform secular education into a means to get to know qualities of its Maker

I have to look at creation in order to understand qualities of its Maker and to get to know who the Maker of the universe is so I get to know who my Maker is. Who is making everything that I observe in this universe? In other words, what is the Source of existence of everything? Can nature be the Source of its own existence? It would be illogical to say that something can be the Creator of its own self. How can I make myself? Things cannot be the Creator of themselves.

WRONG: Nature cannot create so the idea of God creates must be preferred.
RIGHT: When I look at myself, I see that everything is so perfectly made and I cannot be the Source of existence of my own being. The One who gave existence to me must be the One who gave existence to all qualities that I see.

WRONG: God created the universe.
RIGHT: Universe must have been created by someone who has absolute qualities, this someone I call God.

In conclusion, here are some takeaway points from today’s class.

* Quranic worldview abolishes all kind of discrimination. No one is superior to another person regardless of age, status…
* Islam is religion of freedom and equality.
* Quranic worldview probes us to question culture of the society. Materialism cannot be the object of my life.
* God consciousness is important: *Why am I here?* *What am I supposed to do here?*
* Human existential subject matter is not taught anywhere other than the God revealed scriptures.
* Never imitate any culture.



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

I am opening up to the teachings of the Quran which invites me to look at creation in order to know who my Lord is. Example: I eat in order to be grateful with the One that nourishes me so I can be thankful. If my values are starting to be different than the societal values, then I am not going crazy. I am just getting to know my reality and since I am convinced with the Quranic message of reading creation to get to know its Creator, then that is my worldview. Realizing that I am a needy person puts me on the right track with getting to know the Source of my existence. To establish this worldview, if I have to cut family ties, then let it be. The Prophet encouraged people to question their ancestral values and if it did not make sense, then unfollow it.

(…to be continued)