**What is Worship?**

**Part 5
6/18/14**

*“Allahumma efta7 alayna hikmatek”
Oh Lord, Open upon us your Wisdom*

* **12:40 “All that you worship instead of God is nothing but names which you have invented – you and your forefathers, for which God has sent down no authority. Judgment rests with God alone. He has ordained that you should worship none but Him. That is the right religion, but most people do not know.”**
* *Asmaa’*: **Names**: *Qualities manifesting to us in all acts of creation*. Our responsibility lies in reflecting on, “Who do they belong to?”
	+ Ex/ the bird is flying. Does flying belong to the bird or The Creator of the bird? The creator of the flying?
	+ Every thing is an act of creation that belongs SOLELY to Its Maker.
		- Ex/ I eat and I feel satisfied. Eating is an act of creation, food is an act of creation, and feeling satisfied is another, separate act of creation; all of which belong to The Creator.
* **“Judgment rests with God alone”**: Judgment is an inadequate translation. We have to understand the concept. Rather, *“The Decision/Authority of deciding the True Owner of what we are observing and experiencing.”*
	+ No power/authority has been given to anything in this world that it may claim the ownership of itself or anything else. All authority/decisions/”judgment” of truth belong to The One who owns the whole universe, who must be Absolute if Owns the whole universe.
	+ The qualities of the beings which point to the Qualities of their Maker. Through these qualities I can confirm the **existence** of the *characteristics* of The Creator. These qualities are called in the language of the Scriptures, “Names.”
		- Existence is the key word: **Wujood** in Arabic
		- If someone *describes/relates* the Creator within the concepts of the universe, it cannot be the Creator. We cannot speak on *describing* His Qualities, because we would subsequently relate the qualities we are familiar with in this world.
			* *SubhanAllah*: means God is *beyond any description*
		- The quality of *flying* is observed (for example), within an order. I *have to* explain the **cause of existence** of this quality! As human beings, this is how we use our faculty of *reason*. The “name” or quality is a sign to the **existence** of the quality of The Originator/Maker/Orderer (giver of order)/Giver of existence.
			* Important to realize that flying cannot *belong* to the bird, cannot be *created by* the bird. But the bird has it! The human question is, “Who gave it to the bird?” That is the *Giver of Existence* of flying, in this example.
		- Another example: The quality of compassion in a mother is observed. Can I say the mother is the **cause of existence** of this quality? Compassion was GIVEN to her by her Maker. So where is the **source of existence** of compassion? It belongs to the One that caused her to exist with this quality.
		- Whoever made this universe, made it with qualities. As a human being with consciousness, intellect, reason, I must be able to explain my observations. **Qualities can only be explained by attributing each one to the source of these qualities.**

Conclusion of discussion of “**Names**” above:

* + 1st: notice the qualities of perfection in the universe (i.e. “Names” in the language of the Qur’an) (for example: I have a perfect shape, a perfect mind, perfectly engineered hands that are very practical). Question them. They must have been *given* to the thing because they cannot be the originator of the qualities observed on them.
	+ 2nd: They were *given existence* by **The Giver of existence of the whole universe**.
	+ 3rd: He is exalted! Beyond the universe, beyond the qualities that I see.
	+ The names help to cue us that all of these qualities do NOT belong to the things themselves, which is frequently our primary mistake. Rather, all of these qualities belong to The Source of Existence of the *whole universe*. This guides us to a conclusion of “SubhanAllah” – the Creator is far transcendent above the capacity of the thing, which bears the quality on itself. Thus, the Creator cannot be described with the qualities manifested on things; He is the Transcendent Being.
		- The point is to see that the things are coming into existence perfectly. And The Source of this perfection is the Source of the whole universe’s perfection. We are guided to see this through constantly bringing our attention to many perfect qualities, all around us, to help us negate the idea of them belonging to the things themselves (i.e. “la ilaha”), or to anything else within the “cause and effect chain” in the order that was created.
	+ We have to have a comfortable, relaxed mind when we say, “I believe in God.”
		- Belief comes from 🡪 attributing the qualities of perfection to the Being that deserves to have it 🡪This Being is not of nature of this universe 🡪 must be out of nature of this universe.
	+ We have 4 venues to help us reach out to The Creator: Universe, human beings (our nature), revelation (speech of God), & messengers of God. None of them should contradict the other; all point to the same Cause of Existence.
		- Therefore, our human nature MUST be able to comprehend the sayings of the messengers of God.
		- Ex/ if someone says, “be patient and study for 4 years and you will understand.” Okay, this is reasonable, I am used to it. I study 6 years to be lawyer/doctor etc. But DON’T tell me, “it is not within your capacity in this world to understand. Wait for the next world to understand.” This is a wrong, but often used methodology to understand matters of Belief.
	+ To say names/qualities observed on things is a “mirror/reflection of God’s qualities” may cause a misunderstanding. It is not a static event. Rather, we have to experience the dynamic process.
		- In the mirror is a manifestation – a manifestation of a *deliberate* *action*, a *deliberate* *choice*. This shows me the **existence** of the qualities of the Maker 🡪 arrive at the conclusion that The Maker must have Conscious Choice.
	+ Look at the process in this verse that teaches us how to arrive at the “right religion”.
	+ **Names🡪 Worship 🡪 Religion.**
		- When you acknowledged the *perfection* (**names**) of how everything is being subjugated and made for you, and you feel so *appreciative/grateful* (**Worship**), and you are filled with emotional satisfaction/want to direct all of your emotions in a particular way, then **religion** advises us, for ex/ you human beings should come to the conclusion of “God is beyond description” (subhanAllah.) Or, “all the qualities in this world which deserve to be praised belong to God alone” “ (elhamdulilah.) Or, “You need to perform your prayer in this way or that way” etc.
			* **Religion**, instruction from The Creator, guides us how to communicate and respond back, and should not contradict our human nature.
	+ VERSUS: oft repeated phrases such as, “In our religion, we worship God. He has the name All Powerful! He has 99 names”–METHDOLOGICALLY WRONG! LOOK AT THE SEQUENCE OF THE VERSE (aya).
	+ We cannot imitate, or just copy what people say, and expect to have belief.
	+ Ex/ People often say “peace and blessings be upon prophet Muhammad”, but why? “because the Qur’an says so”?
		- Qur’an says, “Verily God and His angels send blessings on the Prophet, Oh you who believe, send you also blessings on him and salute him” (33:56).”
		- It means that God is telling us that He is really appreciating his teachings. The angels\* (universe-\*see below in part 6 for deeper explanation of angels) is happy with these teachings. This verse is prompting me, “You should see the harmony in your emotions, and should arrive at harmony and appreciation with his teachings too. As a human being, we direct our emotions, our thoughts, but also our tongues/bodies/our whole humanity to communicating/expressing the truth within. So we say, “Peace and blessings be on him” or *Allahumma sulli wa sallim alla Muhammad, or Alayhi el salat welsalaam*, because I, TOO, am very happy with his teachings.

- Question: When I see compassion, how can I arrive at the conclusion that The Creator is compassionate? Answer: No, not that He “is” and subsequently describe/relay my understandings of compassion to Him. Rather, He **must be** compassionate, i.e. must be the **cause of existence of compassion.**

- Answer continued: When I say *Bismillah ElRahman El Raheem*, or *Allahu ElRahman*, (from the scripture) for example, it is referring me to witness “Most Compassionate, The cause of existence of all observable compassion.” 1st I must see that all the qualities that I observe must belong to someone **(names)**. ***Whoever created this universe’s qualities that I am observing, must be the cause of compassion.*** The Qur’an is instructive speech, teaching me to confirm belief through my present day experiences, to have conviction. Now, when I read the speech of God, I say, “this statement is true!” Quran says now, “*El Rahman El Raheem*”, it means “Oh reader, you have to find out that I am compassionate, look for it and confirm it! Don’t imitate/simply copy what others are saying!” But we are always taught to imitate, to just take what we have heard from parents and/or Sunday schools and repeat! We have to be *convinced* that this statement is correct!

- Question: “what about Bad qualities? Like in war, evil killings for example… what about a bad, evil mother?”

- Answer: “Is there any evil in the act of EXISTENCE???? We have to be careful and we have to study this topic! It is borrowed language! In existence, i.e. the acts of creation coming into existence, there is NO EVIL! Someone’s choices may be wrong, but the creation-side is not wrong. For example, a person stepped on my glasses, he is evil! No, it is within the perfect order of creation, it is breakable, it is within the perfect principles of creation. Creator says if you want to break the glasses, step on it. Our relation with the thing may be evil, but the act of creation in and of itself is still pure good. Another Qur’anic verse refers to this, which is summarized as: “Whenever good happens, from God. Your misuse of creation, is YOUR mistake *fa min nefsik*.”

-Question: but when person is compassionate, shouldn’t we say person is compassionate, instead of The Cause?

-Answer: We have to study this. Study the universe and follow the order of the universe. When I water the flower, I see that it grows. If I push it this way, it breaks. This is how we communicate with God. We will study Divine Determining (Qadr) right after this series (insha Allah!). There is nothing in CREATION that is evil, but perhaps in my interpretation, in my choice. Someone may say death is evil! Can you imagine if there was no death, we would all think we were gods. Death is beautiful! If I put the knife here, God keeps his promise embedded within his order/system of creation, as The Creator of death. “*Qatil*” killer is different than “*Mumeet*” – giver of death. This is the language of the Qur’an. God never says He is The Killer. To kill is a choice. If I smash the laptop down, it will break. It is evil for me, in my interpretation, and it will cost me $1,000. But it is great for the manufacturer, and they will make more money when I buy another one.

-Question: what about greed? I am frugal for example. Would I direct this quality and trace back to the Source? Answer: we are always given 2 options to choose from when exercising free will. There must be a more preferable one. When I choose the bad one, it becomes a bad one for me, but not for The Creator.

**Part 6**

**6/25/14**

* **Fussilat (41):30 “Those who say: Our Lord is God then continue in the right way, the angels keep coming upon them, [saying] “Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the Paradise which you were promised.”**
	+ 1st: **“Those who say: Our Lord is God**:First investigate your needs and CONCLUDE that The Lord/Sustainer/Care-provider of your needs must be The Owner of the whole universe, “Our Lord is God”
		- *Qalu/Qul/Quloo* (Say in English): Doesn’t mean that the tongue simply says something. It means, it is your CONCLUSION. It means, **after** concluding, CONVEY this message to the people. Qur’an speaks to your intellect, to your consciousness, to all of the faculties given to your humanity. Not simply to your tongue.
		- Religion must have something to do with my feelings, my thoughts, my understanding, my practical life. It must be *within* me and have real meaning and implications. It **starts** with the REALIZATION of WHO IS MY LORD?
		- Ex/ I go to NYU, use the bathroom, rooms and spaces but the owner of the building has nothing to do with my practical use. However, if I need a projector, and ask for it, and someone sets it up for me, I say, “Thank you so much! You are taking care of me and responding to my needs.” **Lordship is this; realizing this relationship.**
		- **Establish your connection with God by realizing Lordship on YOU.** Otherwise, you will be completely alienated from your Owner, and will not feel any effects on your life.
		- **How can you realize your Lord in your life?**
			* Ex/ do you have a father? When do you realize that your father is really YOUR FATHER? “Um, dad, I need $500 for school…” He provides.
			* **I have to feel the CONNECTION between MY NEED, and HIS PROVISION that SATISFIES MY NEED.**
				+ **LORDSHIP COMES THERE.**
				+ **FUNDAMENTAL STEP IS TO REALIZE OUR OWN NEEDS!**
			* Ex/I want to speak right now. Do you need to speak? Yes. Speaking is occurring. Who enabled you to speak? Who enables you to see? Feel? Think? Enjoy pleasure? Experience fear? Where are they coming from? In order to see the effect of lordship on me, I first have to realize MY OWN position, no one else. (not “but he can’t see, but she can’t hear”)
			* Question: What if I want to hear but can’t? Ex/hearing loss with age. Then the question is, Who can make me hear? Who is responsible for hearing? We still need the Lordship/Favor from the one who established the universe as it is.
			* Ex/we say “we breathe”. I don’t feel like I need breathing, unless there’s a restriction and I feel like I need it. It is THEN that I realize my need for air and breathing. So I have to think, I am in need of air, breathing & the existence of these things, so I have to search for the Source of Answering of my needs. That is my Lord.
			* No one else can answer your need but the One who established this universe. That is Your Lord. But we are not conscious of it, *in our practical lives*.
			* We cannot separate “claimed belief” from practical life. That is why we are not FEELING our belief in God.
		- When I feel aware of MY LORD, i.e. who is taking care of all of *my* *needs* right now, is GOD, (*Rabbuna Allah, My Lord is God)* now God is not ALIENATED from me. Alien means, IDK, someone created the universe and I have nothing to do with Him now that I am here. When we say “God” we don’t mean much. Realization of your LORD is key FIRST.
		- You realize your LORD when you realize your NEEDINESS.
		- Who can guarantee for me? My needs are in need of guarantees. Who can be the PROVIDER of compassion for me? The food we eat? The air we breathe? It is the act of the One who established this universe, and **He is my LORD. It means, I AM TAKING CARE OF YOU. That’s why we must ALWAYS PAY ATTENTION TO THIS:** **WHO IS TAKING CARE OF MY, MY NEEDS?**
			* If someone does not acknowledge their needs, cannot realize their Lord.
	+ **2nd: “*Thumma* *Istaqamu* (then continue in the right way)”:** it means, be consistent in what you say. Keep this awareness of Lordship right, consistent in your life!
		- Ex/if you are a student, *istaqamu*. It means, BEHAVE AS A STUDENT. Study, go to class, and acknowledge your position as a student.
		- We have to acknowledge our positions as NEEDY BEINGS, ALWAYS, AND BEHAVE AS SUCH.
	+ **3rd: “Angels keep coming upon them, [saying] Fear not, nor be grieved…”**
		- When will you see angels? When you say “*rubbuna Allah*” “Our Lord is God”? Well, I said it and I did not see angels…
		- We are speaking of having this awareness, of your neediness, and awareness that *the one who owns this universe is* *taking care of you*, whose knowledge must be Absolute, whose qualities are Absolute, and you belong to the One with absolute qualities, you are His production, everything happening as a result of His will and His choice, everything in this world ACTS IN HIS NAME, REPRESENTS HIM, IF\* you are AWARE of it.
		- **Whatever REPRESENTS HIM from my perspective, IS AN ANGEL\*!**
		- Ex/ when he speaks to his father for money, and realizes that his father can easily afford $500, and loves him, and is ready/willing to give him $500, as SOON AS HE REALIZES THIS, all his worries DISAPPEAR! Did he get the money yet in this example? NO! But this realization removes all fear/grief!
		- With the realization of this secure connection, serenity comes down, happiness comes down, no more worries, and no fear.
		- **Angels: news-bearers: that which carries the message of His Presence/Qualities and delivers to our consciousness.**
		- Since the Quran speaks to our humanness, teaching us what we can’t know of unseen “*ghaib*” world, it speaks to our feelings and tells us how we can confirm the presence of existence beyond the conditions of this universe.
		- In the language of the Qur’an, *MULK*: property (the things in my hand, i.e. land-based, physical world). Every *MULK*/property/that which I can physically interact with, has within it an aspect which is described as *MALAKOOT.* M*aleek*: the one who holds the Authority over it, the king, for instance.
			* *Malakoot* is taking place on *Mulk*.
			* This is a simple way of understanding angels. Ex/ if someone hurt another being, handcuffed and taken to court. We are witnessing the effects of authority of the *Maleek* on him – i.e, court system. The effects we observe in the event is its “*malakoot*” aspect.
			* When we read the book (*mulk*), meaning is coming to us (*malakoot*). Is meaning coming to us through paper itself? Ink? Information? Through the organization of pages, shapes of ink, there is a *transferal* of the message of the Author to me. The MEANING is delivered to me. The *transformer* is the **angel**.
			* **That is how we communicate with the Owner of this universe. Through the *malakootiyah* – Angelic aspect of the universe**
			* When you discover meaning, this is the angelic aspect of this world descending on you. We cannot use faith to IMAGINE the existence of angels. We have to feel the penetration of meaning, emotions descending on us in order to confirm their existence.
			* Can’t read Quran like a storybook, or Arabic literature. It is a book to human beings, which include endless layers of human consciousness/intellect/ feelings/etc, to teach how we can practically confirm **Belief** *(****Iman*** in Arabic). That’s why Qur’an is constantly saying it is a book of *guidance*, for those who *think* and *reflect*.
			* It must be read as the WORD OF GOD, not a piece of literature.
				+ In Qur’an, when we read such verses stating, “God and angels COME DOWN to you,” or “I am coming,” or “I am nearer to you,” etc
				+ “Coming” of God or angels does not take time, space or effort like in our realm of existence, because this Speech is coming from an Absolute Source, who is beyond space and time. Can’t understand it and relate the text from your perspective, as if YOU are coming, within your own context. We have to remember, it is the Speech of God, and it must be understood within the context of the Absolute Being.
				+ Another ex/ when Qur’an speaks of Gabriel: “Spirit.” Do we think of an archangel in our imagination? “Gabriel” is the act of creation of INSPIRATION. When we experience inspiration, we are experiencing the manifestation of Gabriel.
			* You cannot make a separation between your eyes (*mulk)* and your power of sight (*malakoot)*. They are created together. As the book is written (*mulk)*, meaning is engrained into it (*malakoot)*, can’t separate them. Can’t separate the MULK and MALAKOOT aspects of this universe. Both are created beings.
				+ So when you read the Qur’an, can’t separate LITERAL meaning and MESSAGE within it. Must read them together. There are LAYERS of understanding – this is different.
				+ Question: can I believe angels as things flying around as one layer of meaning? Answer: NO. No such things as ONE LAYER (this is SEPARATING!). Meaning is embedded in endless layers. We have to start receiving MEANING. And the layers of meaning can be found only within the context of the Speech of the Absolute Being. We cannot imagine something and then claim that this imagination is one of the layers of meaning.
				+ Question: “we have to reconcile this understanding of the literal versus the meaning” Answer: There is no such thing as “reconciling” the 2 from one another.
			* Unlearning is very difficult! Child’s imaginative thinking is hard to unlearn.
			* You need to learn the METHODOLOGY of how to read the text. Bear in mind the fundamental principles.
			* Question: I thought you said we did not need teachers. I would have never knew to read the verse in this way. Answer: **We need teachers because we are made with a capacity for learning. But we cannot IMITATE teachers, and repeat. We have to learn the right methodology, go back, practice, study, and confirm. We discover more and more layers every day if we are learning. By imitation, we do not learn. We do not learn when we COPY what teacher says!**
			* That’s why, before reading the Qur’an, we should take a course on how to read the Qur’an, the METHODOLOGY.
			* 1st interact with the *mulk*: like a mountain/a tree, then contemplate reflect on the *malakootiyah* (the meaning imbedded in the beings) aspect of it that connects me to The Creator (*Maleek*).
	+ It is BEAUTIFUL! **Everything is a vehicle to take you to the presence of your lord!** Your eye/ your power of sight. Your *mulk* is an act of creation. Your *malakoot* is an act of creation. Book is creation. Meaning of the book is another act of creation as well! My brain is an act of creation, and my thinking is ANOTHER act of creation. We have to start communicating with The Creator through these acts of creation. Only then you will feel in the presence of YOUR Lord through this acknowledgment.
	+ **4th “and receive good news of the Paradise which you were promised.”**
		- What is paradise for you? Eternal happiness, limitless happiness - forever.
		- How can I obtain it? Most scholars and people say, “After you die” – But that doesn’t satisfy me right now. That is beyond my human capacity to imagine.
		- I must be able to obtain it right now. My humanity needs it. I CAN! Through the realization of my being! I am OWNED by The One who provides everything for me. NOTHING else can provide ANYTHING FOR YOU. Whoever is providing for me now, will provide for me eternally because I realize from the way the things are coming into existence, their cause of existence must be Eternal, Absolute! So by connecting to Him in my consciousness NOW, my guarantee of eternity is THERE, in my realization of His Lordship with me here and now.
		- You want to be Eternally happy. Who can provide it? Whoever is making you happy here and now, whoever created this desire within you. IMMEDIATELY, WITHIN my acknowledgment/realization of this Lordship, is my Paradise. It lies in the certainty of my confirmation of Lordship now, allowing me to attach my feelings, my thoughts, my hopes, in this secure relationship that is continuously manifesting itself to me now. Whoever is the cause of existence of now, is the ETERNAL Source. There is no separation of the Source in the way of time or space.
			* I shouldn’t have to “wait” to access Eternity, because The Eternal One, i.e. The Source of Eternity, is guiding me to connect with Him right now. In fact, Eternity includes the time right now. It is within my capacity, here and now, to connect to The Eternal One. I do not have to wait until Eternity to feel this connection. The Creator is ever present in this understanding.
			* Too often, scholars are separating time, and consequently, separating The Source of “time” (i.e existence), from us while we are in this transient world. Again, there is no separation of the Source in the way of time or space. We have to see the logical inconsistencies.

”*To Allah belong the east and the West: Whithersoever ye turn, there is the presence of Allah. For Allah is all-Pervading, all-Knowing*.” Baqara (2): 115

* + - Otherwise, it is a FALSE CLAIM to say you believe in paradise, and you will feel worried, insecure, with ongoing moments in this world.
		- Who do your FEELINGS/EXPECTATIONS belong to? Who do YOU belong to? You are constantly sending out order forms of your needs that are constantly being fulfilled.
* **Fussilat 41: 37 “Among His signs are the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Adore not the sun or the moon, but prostrate yourselves in adoration before God, who has created them – if it is Him whom you worship.”**

Ramadan: Renew our minds and belief in Ramadan! *Tejdeed,* i.e. renewal, is necessary.