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| **Date** | Wednesday March 30, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Me and the Other – Overcoming Loneliness |
| **Part** | 3 |

The universe is created and I am created as well. Living with the awareness that I am being created right now is practicing belief (***imaan***). Belief is feeling confidence in what I conclude. Belief needs to be questioned and investigated in order for me to attain felicity in my existence right now. The area of study to focus on is my existence alongside the existence of everything I come across with.

Where do I get the need to indulge in chocolate cake for example? This need exists in me and I need to investigate the existence of this need. Similarly, I need to question what I believe in, an investigative approach uncommon in the mainstream culture. For example, what do the verses that talk about resurrection refer to? What does it mean to be accountable for my every act on the Day of Judgment? Is that even true? These are the questions that we need to tackle in order to start establishing belief foundations within ourselves.

By definition, Quran must be read as the word of God as it claims to be regardless of whether I believe in God or not. **It is my duty to investigate the validity of this claim.** Afterwards, if I am convinced with it, then I confirm it to be the Speech of my Creator or if I am not convinced with it then I am free to reject it.

If I have questions then God must speak. He speaks in order to give me what I need. If I have no need or no questions, I do not need an answer. If I do not need answers then I have no reason to listen to the Speech of God. However human beings are full of existential questions, it is within us to expose them or shun away.

My questions must be in the form of existential questions:

1. Why am I here in this universe?
2. What is expected of me?
3. Who gave me this existence, this consciousness or awareness?

I have to direct these questions to the One who gives me existence: “Hey you who gave me existence, you must tell me why you created me!!!”

* This dialogue necessitates that I ask the questions and my Creator gives me answers. Therefore It must speak because I have questions for which there are no answers in the universe.

Any matter needs to be analyzed from existential perspective:

1. Existence of Prophethood.
2. Existence of Speech of God.
3. Existence of Eternal life.
4. Existence of resurrection.

**My inquiry develops as my capacity develops.** That is, my questions develop as my capacity to comprehend the answers develop. **There is no end to seeking answers but every question must have an answer.**  Otherwise there is a flaw in my creation where I am created for nothing. That is, I am created with the capacity to ask questions but there are no answers to my questions. That is why we say “there must be an answer”. **My comprehension progresses as my capacity of comprehending the answers progresses.**  That is, the Speech of God must be in such a way that the more I study, the more I get satisfactory answers to my questions, the more I am convinced. It must be a quality of the Speech of God.

The answers to existential questions are not static. Example: A building has 20 stories. This is a fixed answer no matter how much I develop in my understanding. Furthermore, such information has no purpose for my existential reality. That is why there is no static information in the Quran. I cannot learn once and be done with it, which is how the cultural religion treats religion, in the form of information. **The Speech of God must be an ever evolving answers to my questions** according to my capacity. Speech of God must present things around me in a way that **the more I develop in my capacity, the deeper meaning I get from creation.** If a text does not have this quality, then it cannot be the Speech of God.

**The quality of the speech of the Creator is such that the answer we receive from Its book of guidance progresses as the capacity of our understanding increases.** If your Creator is speaking to you, the answer must fit your capacity of questioning. And since your questions know no end, the answer too must have an infinite capacity. Therefore, **the word of God cannot be reduced to physical entities because it is not a limited reference.**

I find myself with an endless need for forgiveness. I am also given the quality to forgive when someone sincerely apologizes. This is evidence that my Creator must be infinite in His forgiveness.

* All questions, emotions, understandings must begin with ME. Unless we personally experience an emotion or a question, we cannot truly appreciate the answer.
* We cannot benefit from the Speech of God more than our capacity. Our capacities are limited by the scope of our questions, i.e. how much we have developed our human potentialities. The deeper the questions, the more we increase in truly understanding the meaning of existence.

**In the heavens and the earth vs. in the CREATION of the heavens and the earth.** The verses in the Quran always include the creation (***khalq***) aspect because what matters is not the physical entity itself but rather the act of creation. I don’t care about the number of galaxies there are out there. The various galaxies out there should make us marvel at their existence. If I question why there are so many galaxies out there, why do they have different shapes and differ from each other in order, then I will understand that there is a message for me, letting me get the answer to my questions: ***who my Owner is? Can I trust my existence to It?***

If we question the existence of everything, only then can we benefit from the Speech of God.

***"Verily, God and His angels bless the Prophet. O you who believe, bless him and give yourselves up [to his guidance] in utter self- surrender!"  Ahzab (33):56***

**God's blessing on the Prophet:** The Creator of the universe fully supports the message brought by the Prophet (pbuh) as his message is in perfect synchrony with the Creator's guidance which manifests in creation.

The Prophet is the perfect example for humanity because he perfectly exemplifies the guidance from the Creator. That is, all his actions are directly in tune with the “purpose of existence”.

When we seek out the examples of the Prophet (*sunnah*), reflect on the existential aspect of the action - because that is what his actions are meant to convey.

By uttering the words of *salawat* on the Prophet I remind myself to see the synchrony between what I see in my experience of the world and what I heard from the Prophet, to confirm his messengership): I understand from my comprehension of creation that the Speech of God matches exactly as per what the Prophet teaches.

Do not blindly follow the teachings of the Prophet as you would follow a worldly role model. The teachings have to conform to my being which is what the purpose of the Prophet is. Once you have established that this world has meaning and has a conscious Creator (believer’s attitude), find ways of confirming the Prophetic message. “I confirm the message you brought to me based on my observations of this universe and I am at peace with his message and acknowledge his guidance (*salawat*)”.

* Analyze (and confirm) the Prophet's actions with respect to the guidance communicated in the Quran.
* Ponder about the REALITY of what you claim to believe in.
* First step towards establishing a belief in the Prophet requires an understanding that God must appoint a human being to teach His message to me.
* Just like how a child needs his parents to teach him manners, language, etc // how a student in school requires a teacher // I find myself in need of a guide who will teach me about the purpose of my life.
* The Prophet is my guide and offers me an example on how to live my life with belief and offers me a way to understand my intellectual questions.

**Angels blessing on the Prophet:** The message conveyed by the message bearers (Angels) is in perfect synchrony with what the Prophetic mission is.

* First step towards establishing belief in angels requires that our worldview sees beyond the material world. Seeing that the world necessitates the existence of created beings that glorify the Creator at all times.
* Angels are message bearers in all of existence, pointing towards the existence of the Creator.

**First step towards establishing belief in the Quran** requires that we find ourselves in need of speech/guidance from our Creator.

* The need for an 'answer' begins with a question. Therefore, we have to probe deeper into ourselves so that existential questions may surface.
* Question the existence of EVERYTHING.

Everything is a sign for us so that we may know their Creator.

* In each moment of sickness, health, joy, sadness, etc, look for the Creator.
* Do not separate belief from your day-to-day experiences.
* Belief is not a last resort emergency hotline.

To increase the meaningfulness of our actions, we have to reflect on the existential aspect of our actions. Be in constant conversation with yourself about the state of your existence and ask in every conscious moment:

* What is the purpose of this?
* How will this moment matter?