

Those who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting & lying down. They contemplate the wonders of creation in the heavens & the earth with the thought: Our Lord! You did not create this in vain. Glory to You! Give us salvation from the Fire. (3:190-1)

The phrase which reads: “Our Lord! You did not create this in vain!” is a type of illumination that comes after one has engaged in the activities of *Zikr & Tafakkur* (contemplating the Signs of Allah). It is a spontaneous reaction. It is a realization that wells up in you from deep inside you, & then comes out like *Subhanallah* (Glory be to Allah). It elicits a spontaneous prostration from us. It is a realization that has a power & energy of its own such that you can’t almost control it because it is just so strong.

It is in moments like these that one feels truly like a servant, and feels the need to lower & humble themselves by taking the highest & most important part of the body, the head & face, and bring it down to the level of the lowest part of the body, the feet, because all of a sudden they realise that they are nothing. That arrogance & disobedience really have no place & no basis. While they are in a state of prostration they acknowledge Allah’s Exalted Position & say: (Glory be to my Lord, the **MOST HIGH**).

Then there is the level of Love. One of Allah’s Most Beautiful Names is *al-Wadud* “the Most Loving.” There is the love of those who continuously yearn and long for the Beloved. There are those who would consistently get up at certain hours of the night when everybody is asleep to be with their Beloved. Even during the day they would engage in constant Remembrance of the Beloved. Does not the one who loves always remembers or brings to mind the object of his love? What if that love gets reciprocated, then there would be no bounds to the joy felt by the bearer of love.

As Muslims we set aside particular times everyday just to be with our Creator. We engage in a state where we become oblivious of everything around us. Our focus is only in our current activity and engagement. The Most Glorified & Exalted has said, “*Were every tree on earth made into pens and the sea to supply it with ink, with seven more seas to add thereto, the words of Allah would not have been exhausted; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise.*” (31:27)

The heart is the seat & main instrument in developing our relationship with Allah. We are reminded in the Quran that Allah is closer to us than our jugular vein: not in Essence though but rather in

Care & Protection. Striving in the remembrance of Allah, the Heart becomes tranquil. When this happens it is empty of all, other than the light of Allah. In this condition, Allah communicates to the soul & reflects in its purified mirror the Oneness of Allah.

The beauty of a tranquil & reflective heart is made known to us when Allah says: “The whole Universe cannot contain me, but the heart of the believer contains Me.” The nature of the heart is infinite. It is the portal through which Allah is known. The Soul will not be content with anything other than the containment of Allah’s Light within the heart.

“*He is Allah, besides Whom there is no other god; the King, the Holy, the One Who grants peace, the One Who gives security, the Guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of greatness; Glory to Allah from what they set up with Him. He is Allah the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful Attributes; whatever in the heavens and the earth declares His glory, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.*” (59:21-24)

Our ultimate & prime directive is to know the Creator. Everything in this created universe is stamped with the Divine Intention to be known. All other considerations are subservient to this prime intention. Every other ambition or stated desire will be inherently dissatisfying. “*Not a leaf falls but with His knowledge.*” (6:59) A Creator who knows & cares about each leaf would care about you, a unique creature of great complexity, a special soul that struggles, stumbles & carries that heavy burden of free will.

Allah is the Lord of all the worlds. When Allah decrees a thing all He says is “Be” and it is. Therefore, it would be very wise that we place our faith in Allah and demonstrate our allegiance to Allah in our public and private lives. He has said, “*O man! What has beguiled you from your Lord, the Gracious One Who created you then made you complete, then He made you symmetrical? Into whatever form He pleased did He shape you.*” (82:6-8)

Those who seek Allah & remember Him will find contentment & joy in their lives with the knowledge that they are under the protection of Allah. When we utter praise to the Almighty & thank Him for his countless unties, our hearts are filled with inner peace & reflection. How happy & blessed are those who seek refuge in their Lord, the Most Beneficent & Most Merciful Allah. “*Surely in Allah’s remembrance do hearts find peace.*” (13:28) Such amazing words is the anchorage that keeps us steady in this turbulent, difficult, nightmarish world.

And who other than God responds to the distressed one when he calls Him & He relieves him of the distress and Who has made you His viceregents on earth? Is there any other god besides God? Little do you reflect!

KNOWING ALLAH

Say: He is God, the One & Only!
God, the Eternal, the Absolute;
He begets **not** nor is He begotten.
And **there is none** like unto Him.

(The Quran, Chapter 112)

As the rising sun puts to rout the helpless shadows, so are all the **impotent forces of evil** put to flight by the searching rays of this chapter which shine forth from a heart made strong in purity and faith.

Surely

(The Quran 20.14)

I am Allah

There is no god but I,
therefore serve

Me

and keep up prayer
for My remembrance.

When we remember Allah, we realize that we are constantly in His presence, and thus we are liberated from the self-destructive habits that consume us. So often we are wronged by others, and the temptation to respond in a demeaning and un-Islamic manner is very strong.

Fortunately, we can avoid wrong responses in the case of mistreatment by relying on Allah & knowing that He is the All-Knowing. When we take part in wrong responses, we fall victim to disobediences that lead the soul away from righteousness, and into **the pits of retaliation & cruelty.**

Most in the so-called “civilized” world are experiencing loneliness from which the soul & spirit has been banished. Frighteningly lonely. A world deprived of the enlightening & vivifying luminosity of Allah. It’s time, O modern man, to return to tradition — to Allah. This a nostalgic call to that immemorial tranquility from which flows the fountain of eternal life guarded by the Prophets. A time & place still embedded in the peace & harmony of the traditional world before the shocking earthquakes of a world rebellious against Heaven. A return to a time of true supermen – like Adam, Moses, Jesus & Muhammad (Peace & Blessings of Allah be upon their sacred souls).

Allah: there is no god but He; His are the very Best Names. (20:8) Say: Call upon Allah or upon the Most Gracious; whichever you call upon, He has the Great Names...(17:110)

The Quran argues that the knowledge of God as the creator of everything rules out the possibility of lesser gods since these beings must be themselves created. For the Quran, God is an immanent and transcendent deity who actively creates, maintains and destroys the universe. The reality of God as the ultimate cause of things is however veiled from human understanding because of the secondary causes and contingent realities of things in the world. Thus the belief in the oneness of God is equated in the Quran with the “belief in the unseen” (2:3). The Quran summarizes its task in making this “unseen,” to a greater or lesser degree “seen” so that the belief in the existence of God becomes a Master-Truth rather than an unreasonable belief. The Quran states that God’s signals are so near and yet so far, demanding its students to listen to what it has to say with humility (50:33, 50:37). The Quran aims to draw attention to certain obvious facts, turning them into “reminders” of God instead of providing lengthy “theological” proofs for the existence and unity of God.

When the Quran & sayings of the Prophet (p) represent the divinity in anthropomorphic form it is all as metaphor. The hand is the metaphorical designation of power; the face signifies the essence; the fact that God is seated on the Throne is a metaphorical image of the divine reign.

Every human being would love to “see” God. This request was made by Moses (p) and remains as a lesson for all those who have “eyes to see.” Moses came at the time & place appointed by Us. Moses said: “O my Lord! Show me Yourself, that I may look upon You.” Allah said: “You cannot see Me, but look upon the mountain if it stands still in its place then you shall see Me.” So when his Lord manifested His Glory on the mountain, He made it collapse to dust. Moses fell down unconscious. Then when he recovered his senses he said: “Glory be to You, I turn to You in repentance & I am the first of the believers.” (7:143)

So how can we come to know a God we cannot “see?” Firstly, there is knowing Him through the way His Attributes manifest in our daily lives. To Allah belong the Most Beautiful Names & they all have a manifestation in our lives. These Names occur in the Quran in a variety of contexts. One of these is how the entire Universe including our own make-up mirror many of the Attributes of Allah. Everything around us is like one gigantic book that talks volumes of our Creator. We live in a world where everything literally communicates to us & tells us about its Maker. Like a painting talks about its painter or a work of art about the artist. The Universe & everything inside it is one Sign that points to the Absolute Uniqueness of Allah.

The Quran states that human beings have an instinctive distaste for polytheism: At times of crisis, for example, even the idolaters forget the false deities and call upon the one true God for help. As soon as they are relieved from the danger, they however start associating other beings with God (Sura 29:65)

Everything speaks one language which is the language of *Tawhid* (the concept of monotheism in Islam). It is a language that does not require words. The ways things exist is testimony enough of the One Who created them: *There is not a single thing that does not celebrate His Praise, though you do not understand their praise.*

Muslims engage on a daily basis in an activity called *Zikr Allah* (Remembrance of Allah which includes saying His Names or Celebrating His Praises & Glory). This way we constantly bring to mind these Attributes.

Another important aspect is that of making *Shukr* to Allah (thanking Him on a continuous basis for all the Bounties & Favours that He has bestowed upon us even though we don’t deserve them). This does not mean that Allah needs our gratitude & thanks. On the contrary, we are in need of making gratitude as He says in the Quran:

Whosoever shows gratitude does so for their own sake. Should we refrain from showing gratitude then Allah does not need our gratitude because He is free of all wants. Allah continuously reminds us of His Favours & Bounties. One such reminder is how He has provided us with parents. Our mothers who carried us in their wombs, pain upon pain, weakness upon weakness, and then looking after us while we couldn’t fend for ourselves. Then when we grow old we treat our parents with utter disdain. We are commanded to be grateful towards our parents because of what they have sacrificed for us. Isn’t Allah more deserving of our gratitude for not only giving us those very parents but everything else in our lives: the oxygen that we breathe, the water that we drink, the food that we eat, the material for the clothes that we wear & the houses that we build to keep us protected from the natural elements. He has given us hearing, sight & intellect but little thanks do we show. Some of us **commit the ultimate in abomination which is to deny His very Existence.** We associate others with Him so as to suggest that not all the praise & glory belong to Allah.

Two important ways of establishing an ongoing relationship with our Creator is through constant prayers & studying of the Quran. Allah addressed Moses (p) at the burning bush: *Establish prayer for the purpose of remembering Me.* While reading the Quran you feel that Allah is talking to you. You feel the depths of your soul stirring at what you are comprehending & realizing.

The Quran says about *Zikr*: *In the Remembrance of Allah do hearts find contentment & peace.* The Book is itself a form of *Zikr*. The Quran is the Eternal Word of Allah & the Universe the Work of Allah both of which contain signs that point us to Him Whose Word it is and to Him Whose Work it is. The following Quranic verse combines the activity of *Zikr* with the activity of Contemplating Allah’s Signs in the Universe, and tells us that the People of True Understanding aren’t those endowed with mere theoretical knowledge but rather those whose knowledge translates into *Zikr*:

Behold! In the creation of the heavens & the earth & the alternation of night & day, there are indeed Signs for people who possess intelligence.

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