

June
24
2007

Creed- Creed and Quran Inimitability- lesson (05-36): Constituents of the Assignment: The Universe

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of Creations, and Peace and blessings be upon our prophet Muhammad, the faithful and the honest.

Oh, Allah, we know nothing but what You teach us. You are the All- Knower, the Wise. Oh Allah, teach us what is good for us, and benefit us from what You taught us, and increase our knowledge. Show us the righteous things as righteous and help us to do them, and show us the bad things as bad and help us to keep away from them.

O Allah our Lord, lead us out from the depths of darkness and illusion, unto the lights of erudition and knowledge, and from the muddy shallows of lusts unto the heavens of Your Vicinity.

Dear brothers, this is going to be our fifth lesson on aqidah and miracles.

A review of previous talks:

Dear brothers, in the past lectures I explained to you that man is the headmost creature, and because he agreed to undertake the Trust, Allah subjected to him all that is in heavens and earth.

Man was assigned to worship Allah after having been given constituents of this task, and we talked briefly about them.

We talked about the Universe, the reason, the instinct, the lust, the freedom to choose, and time which constitutes a frame for action.

We are going now to talk about these constituents in detail, and the Universe is at the top of the list.

People don't differ about the Universe:



Dear brothers, hopefully I can help you build up an accurate picture with respect to this idea. The Universe is something absolutely fundamental as no one, whether Muslim, hypocrite, righteous, unrighteous, secular, or atheist, denies the sun, because its existence is evident, and man must necessarily comply with its reality. It has been ablaze for 5 thousand million years. It is 1 million and 300 thousand times bigger than the earth. Its flames reach the distance of more than 1 million km; the heat on its surface is 6000 degrees and 20 million degrees at the core. If the earth were to be thrown into the sun, it would evaporate in one second.

These facts are accepted by Muslims, non-Muslims, disbelievers, atheists, and laymen, and if you looked for the most fundamental element in the religion, it would be the Universe, which is the manifestation of Allah's greatness and His Most Beautiful Names. Through the Universe you can clearly appreciate Allah's might, mercy, and kindness. Hence, if man gets lost in controversial issues, the Universe is the answer.

"Everybody claims Layla's love."

Everybody claims they are on the right path.

Thus, the Universe, subjected by Allah to man as a means of reflection and honor, is the first fundamental. Who can deny the sun? Who can deny the moon, the night and the day, the earth, mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, seas, birds, fish, and plants?

Furthermore, who can deny man's creation? So, if you want to get around, you will come back with the heart filled with faith, and if you want to get away from all the controversial issues on earth, it is the Universe, whose every detail points clearly to Allah, that provides the miraculous answer:

**And in everything there is a Sign of His,
which indicates that He is One.**

Dear brothers, the topic of this fifth lecture is the Universe, and it will require a number of lectures in the future.

You get to know Allah through the Universe:

Dear brothers, you get to know Allah through the Universe, so open the Qur'an and read the Mekkan suwar. Allah says:

“By the Break of Day; By the Nights twice five;”

(al-Fajr, 89:1-2)

“By the Sun and its (glorious) splendour;”

(al-Shams, 9:1)

“By the Night as it conceals it;”

(al-Shams, 91:4)

“Say: Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth.”

(Yunus, 10:101)

“Then let man look at his Food, (and how We provide it).”

(Abasa, 80:24)

“Now let man but think from what he is created!”

(al-Tariq, 86:5)

The suwar revealed at Mekka are brimful of ayaat about the Universe. Why is that? Because reflection on the creation of heavens and earth takes one along the path leading to the knowledge of Allah. He says:

“In what Message after this will they then believe?”

(al-Araf, 7:185)

There is no other way leading to faith than reflecting on the creation of heavens and earth, and the proof is in the following ayah:

“We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof: but man undertook it; - he was indeed unjust and foolish;“

(al-Ahzab, 33:72)

Was man unjust and foolish in undertaking the Trust? Given he undertook and honored it, he can be neither unjust nor foolish.

The Universe has been subjected to man twice:



The Universe has been subjected to man twice – once as a means of reflection and once as a means of honoring us, and what we are saying is very precise.

Anything in front of you, like a glass of water, your son, wife, food, mountain, rose, or anything in this Universe, has been subjected to you twice, once as a means of reflection and once as a means of honoring you, for you get to know Allah through reflecting on the sun, the moon, the night and the day, stars, quasars (distant stars, like celestial objects that emit massive amount of radiation), galaxies, constellations, and comets; and you get to know Allah through reflecting on mountains, rivers, seas, birds, food, and your son sitting in front of you who, you know for sure, was nothing but a single cell fertilized by another cell, and turned a full-fledged human being who walks and thinks, and has eyes, ears, nose, skeleton, muscles, skin, heart, kidneys, hair, digestive system, circulatory system, nervous system, secretion system –as Signs of Allah. When people get lost in endless controversial issues, the only fundamental that points to Allah's greatness, existence, oneness, and perfection is the Universe. That is why Allah says:

“Say: Behold all that is in the heavens and on earth.”

(Yunus, 10:101)

Attitude towards Allah's orders and prohibitions?

Dear brothers, I hope these precise words will be clear to you. When you recite the Qur'an, the words of the Wahid (the One) and the Dayyan (the Judge), and you come to an ayah containing an order, what should you do? You should carry it out, because this Qur'an contains the Words of the Creator of the Worlds, so it is impossible that one should read them without taking heed, or taking a stance towards such an ayah. Allah says:

“Say to the believing men that they should lower their gaze”

(al-Nur, 24:30)

What should you do when you read an ayah containing an order? Surely, the answer will be "carry out this order". Allah says:

“nor speak ill of each other behind their backs.”

(al-Hujurat, 49:12)

What is your attitude towards an ayah with a prohibition? You should restrain yourself.

What is your attitude if you read an ayah with a description of Heaven and its comfort, or Hellfire and its torture? It will be to seek Paradise and avoid Hellfire, even if it is with half of a date. Allah says:

“Then he that will be given his Record in his right hand will say: 'Ah here! Read my Record! I did really understand that my Account would (one Day) reach me!' And he will be in a life of Bliss; In a Garden on high; The Fruits whereof (will hang in bunches) low and near. Eat and drink, with full satisfaction; because of the (good) that you sent before you, in the days that are gone! And he that will be given his Record in his left hand, will say: 'Ah! Would that my record had not been given to me! And that I had never realised how my account (stood)! Ah! Would that (Death) had made an end of me! Of no profit to me has been my wealth! My power has perished from me!' (The stern command will say): 'Seize him, and bind him.'”

(al-Haqqa, 69:19-31)

What should your attitude be here?

It should be to seek Heaven and avoid Hellfire, and you should take warning when you read the ayaat mentioning the doom suffered by nations which have already passed:

“Say: He has power to send calamities on you, from above and below, or to cover you with confusion in party strife, giving you a taste of mutual vengeance, each from the other.”

(al-An'am, 6:65)

Attitude towards the signs of the Universe?

In summary, no ayah should be read without taking a stance with respect to it, so if you read the many ayaat which refer to the Universe, what should your attitude be? You should reflect on those ayaat deeply. Therefore, when you read the Qur'an and come across an ayah talking about the Universe, it should become part

of your meditative way of getting to know Allah the Almighty, Whom no vision can grasp. Allah says:

“He said: 'O my Lord! show (Yourself) to me, that I may look upon You.' Allah said: 'By no means canst thou see Me (direct); but look upon the mount; if it abide in its place, then shall you see Me.' When his Lord manifested His Glory on the mount, He made it as dust, and Musa fell down in a swoon.”

(al-Araf, 7:143)

Thus, it is impossible for us to see Allah in this earthly life. However, our reason can be guided towards Him. So the Universe has been subjected to man twice – once as a means of reflection and once as a means of honoring him.

Man's attitude towards the Universe:

Imagine someone giving you as a present a very advanced mobile phone, equipped with potent memory and answer-machine –as if you had a secretary telling you who has called you and when, storing messages and reminding you of them; and if you knew that the inventor of this phone was the man who has given it to you, how would you feel? Surely, you would have two feelings: the first would be admiration of this electronic wonder, and the second would be gratitude to him who has given it to you.

Because Allah has subjected what is in heavens and earth to us as a means of reflection and as a means of honoring us, our reaction after having reflected should be belief; and our reaction to the honor received should be gratitude. So pay attention here, if you believe and thank, you fulfill the aim of your existence. Now listen to this ayah:

“What can Allah gain by your punishment, if you are grateful and believe?”

(al-Nisa, 4:147)



By believing and thanking you fulfill the aim of your existence and there is no more need for any treatment. Why so?

A doctor diagnosed, after having X-rayed the patient, a kidney failure and decided it should be removed, scheduling the operation in two weeks' time. However, in order to be on the safe side he had an X-ray repeated prior to the operation and to his great surprise found out that the kidney was working perfectly. Should he operate on the patient anyway?

It is the same when you have the belief that has led you to obedience to Allah, and you are thankful to Him. You have fulfilled the aim of your existence and then all treatments are brought to a halt.

Pay attention:

“What can Allah gain by your punishment, if you are grateful and believe?”

(al-Nisa, 4:147)

Do you think Allah likes to torture us? To impoverish us? To make us sick? Impossible, He is in no need of torturing us.

Abu Dharr narrated that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, transmitted that Allah said:

“O My servants! I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not oppress one another.

O My servants! All of you are astray except for those I have guided, so seek guidance from Me and I shall guide you.

O My servants! All of you are hungry except for those I have fed, so seek food from Me and I shall feed you.

O My servants! All of you are naked except for those I have clothed, so seek clothing from Me and I shall clothe you.

O My servants! You sin by night and by day, and I forgive all sins, so seek forgiveness from Me and I shall forgive you.

O My servants! You will not harm Me nor will you benefit Me.

O My servants! Were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as pious as the most pious heart of any one man among you, that would not increase My kingdom in anything.

O My servants! Were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to be as wicked as the most wicked heart of any one man among you, that would not decrease My kingdom in anything.

O My servants! Were the first of you and the last of you, the human of you and the jinn of you to gather in one place and make a request of Me, and were I to give everyone what he has requested, that would not decrease what I have any more than a needle decreases the amount of sea water if thrust into it (and then taken out).

O My servants! It is but your deeds that I will hold you accountable for and

then recompense you for, so let him who finds good, praise Allah; and let him who finds other than that, blame no one but himself.' "

[Sahih Muslim, Ibn Majah and At-Tirmidhi]

I will say to you:

The Universe with its heavens and earth and everything they contain is the manifestation of Allah's existence, oneness, perfection, and his Beautiful Names and Best Attributes. This Universe is the first fundamental in aqidah, and when people get lost, go astray, are in conflict, and are engaged in rows, throwing accusations of disbelief at each other, one fundamental thing is that this Universe points to Allah. Hence, Allah the Almighty says:

"Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding. Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): 'Our Lord! Not for naught have You created (all) this! Glory to You! Give us salvation from the Penalty of the Fire.' "

(Al-i Imran, 3:190-191)

The Universe is the first fundamental and it has been subjected to us because we agreed to undertake the Trust. Allah says:

"We did indeed offer the Trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the Mountains; but they refused to undertake it, being afraid thereof."

(al-Ahzab, 33:72)

Because we agreed to undertake the Trust we were rewarded by having heavens and earth subjected to us as a means of reflection and as a means of honoring us, and the reaction to the former is to believe, while the reaction to the latter is to be thankful.

When you believe, you obey Allah, and when you thank Allah for his blessings, you fulfill the aim of your existence.

Subjection as a means of reflection:

Now let us go into details –reflection and honor means that you know the moon and you utilize this knowledge by using the positions of the moon to set up a calendar. So the moon was a calendar in the sky before we knew watches or modern calendars, day by day, till the day we have the full moon. Allah says:

“That ye might know the number of years and the count (of time). Nowise did Allah create this but in truth and righteousness. (Thus) does He explain His Signs in detail for those who understand.”

(Yunus, 10:5)

Both the calendar we make use of and the Sign point to Allah. The question arises: Which function is greater?

The function of reflecting is more important because the obligation to get to know Allah through this Sign is greater than making use of it in the earthly life.

Western use of the Universe’s functional side:



Admittedly, the western world has amazingly fulfilled the second function for the sake of enjoying dunya. They have a shortcoming because there is knowledge in His creation that is the base of righteousness in the earthly life, and there is knowledge in His orders that is the base of obeying Allah and knowing Him.

Believers, on the other hand, should make use of the first function, that is getting to know Allah, and there will be no harm in adding application to their knowledge of Allah acquired through the Universe. Hence, believers should make use of the great function of this Universe, and should apply it in their earthly life, and those who go astray take advantage of the second function only.

To elaborate on it let me say: Suppose there is a very poor man with an income that doesn’t allow him to buy a lick of honey, and thus he has never tasted honey in his life. However, he used to read books and found one about honey. When he read it, he shed tears. Was it all true? He read that honey is a cure for people, and a whole pharmacy in itself, and he read, amazed, a detailed research about honey and its benefits. So he bowed down thanking Allah for the knowledge He had bestowed on him. Pay attention, this poor man who had never tasted honey fulfilled the greatest objective in the creation of honey. On the other hand, a man who, using modern expressions, feeds on honey, but never reflects on this huge blessing, annuls the ultimate purpose of his creation.

Someone might not be able to afford to buy roses. Yet, if such a person comes across a rose seller and admires the flowers and smells them, and appreciates the greatness of Allah and submits to it, he has fulfilled the purpose of his existence though he might never have bought a rose. On the other hand, the wealthy live surrounded by roses, constantly buying bouquets, never appreciating them or thanking for them.

We should reach out to Allah through His blessings:

I hope that man won't act like animals do, just eating and drinking, ignoring Allah. The right thing to do is to reach out to the Benefactor through His blessings and as a result your heart will be submissive. I swear to Allah, dear brothers, they say 'Closeness is a veil'; when you wake up and relieve yourself, this is a great blessing. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to say:

"Praise be to Allah Who has removed from me what is harmful."

Thank you Allah! You let me enjoy food –not serum, and You put power in it so I feel energy; and you take away its harm, and all my body systems are clean.

You won't be a believer the way Allah wants you to be unless you know His blessings.

Sleeping is one of the greatest blessings. You sleep deeply, your nerves relax, nervous current is cut off, and you get detached from the world. All fatigue disappears and you wake up fit as a fiddle. Never forget to say:

"Praise be to Allah Who gave us life after death, and unto Him we will return."

The right thing for a believer to do is to reach out to the Benefactor through His blessings, while people devoted to dunya enjoy them but never get to know the Benefactor.

Imagine you were invited to a house, and you were served delicious food, so you ate like a horse and left. Instead, you should have thanked the host for having invited you; you should have said: "Thank you so much, may Allah reward you. The food was delicious and your hospitality was great."

Can you imagine a human being enjoying earthly life as beasts do, or as the expression has it "enjoying and dominating"? Enjoying and insulting the religion, enjoying and looking down on people, enjoying and using people to satisfy their desires. Surely, we can call such people "beasts". Their shame in the Hereafter will be intolerable, so much so that they will say: "O Allah, sending me to the Fire is better than enduring the plight I am in."

When man discovers how mean he was when he enjoyed this world, his wife and offspring, delicious food, and he didn't pray to get to know Allah, and he used to hurt Allah's servants, Allah will wonder how eager such people have been for punishment. He says:

“Ah! what boldness (they show) for the Fire!”

(al-Baqara, 2:175)

So you should reach out for the Benefactor through His blessings by thanking Him. When a man ate and is full, he should say: "Praise be to Allah."

Sayyidina Umar once had a visitor from Azerbaijan. He asked: Umm Abdullah, what food do you have? She answered: By Allah, what we have is bread and salt only. So he asked for it to be brought to him. He ate and drank, and said: Praise be to Allah who fed us till we are full and gave us water till our thirst is quenched.

Nowadays, we have fruit juice before we start eating, then starters –salads, fattat (bread and chickpeas soaked in yogurt), and soups. Then we eat the first dish, and then another one; then, main course –rice, vegetables, fries, fruits and sweets. And then, as the saying goes: "He eats and kicks" (bites the hand that fed him).

Dear brothers, knowing the Benefactor is a very important issue. You have a house; it is a dwelling. The Noble Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, used to say:

"Praise be to Allah who gave me a house to dwell in, and many people don't have one."

When you have a key to your house in your pocket, you enter it, sleep, take a shower, eat; your wife and children at your side. Well, it doesn't matter if the house is big or small, it is always temporary, and then you read in the death notice "he will be escorted to his final resting place"... Even if one's house is worth 180 million, one will end up at the cemetery, in a patch of land one and a half meter long and half a meter wide.

I swear by Allah, a while ago a man died and I was among the mourners, and I noticed that the tomb stone was smaller than the grave hole by some 10 centimeters, so the undertaker filled the gap with stones he had at hand and put some earth over them. Well, I think more than two kilos of rubble came down on the dead man who used to be very clean and neat. That's life.

The question is whether he got to know Allah before leaving this life? Did he thank Him? Any blessing used to be mentioned by the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, no matter how little it was.

It is the case of the glass, dear brothers, a very precise issue. Once a minister asked Harun al-Rashid: "O Amir of the Believers, how much would you pay for this glass of water if it were kept away from you?" He answered: "Half of what I own." He then asked: "And if you were prevented from evacuating it?" He answered: "The other half of what I own."

If a king were to die on account of a fatal disease, and if he were offered to work as a typist in his palace in order to be cured, which would mean giving up his kingdom, of course; we are talking about a man who used to be a king and then a typist, I swear by Allah that he would never hesitate to do it in order to be cured, and he would accept to be a minor employee in his own palace.

The person who is healthy, with all his senses in perfect order, all systems functioning well, no difficulty in moving around, and no fatal disease, is blessed. I always say dear brothers:

"Whoever wakes up in the morning healthy in body, safe in his neighborhood and in possession of his daily bread, is as if he has won the whole world."

[Tirmidhi, from Abdullah bin Muhsin]

To the letter.

A king asked his minister: "Who is the king?" He answered: "You, your Majesty! There is no king but you." The king said: "The real king is someone we don't know and he doesn't know us, but he owns a house he dwells in, has an obedient wife, and a satisfactory income, and if he knew us, he would make every effort to please us, and if we knew him, we would make every effort to harass him."

Therefore, dear brothers, the most important point in this lecture is that Allah subjected the Universe to us as a means of reflection and as a means of honor. Your position resulting from reflection is that of belief, and from honor is that of gratitude, and when you believe and thank you fulfill the aim of your existence, and only then all treatments come to a halt. Allah says:

"Whatever misfortune happens to you is because of the things your hands have wrought, and for many (of them) He grants forgiveness."

(ash-Shura, 26:30)

"No man is scratched by a thorn, or stumbles, or has a twitching in a vein, except for a sin, and what Allah forgives is greater."

[Ibn-Asakir, from al-Bara'a]

"O My servants! It is but your deeds that I will hold you accountable for and then recompense you for, so let him who finds good, praise Allah; and let him who finds other than that, blame no one but himself.' "

[Sahih Muslim, Ibn Majah and At-Tirmidhi]

Using the signs of the Universe in the call to Allah:

The Universe is the first fundamental. No matter how much people differ, or argue, or throw accusations at each other –everybody claims Laila's love-everybody claims to have the truth. So this Universe is the first fundamental with which every Muslim or non- Muslim, genius or not genius, atheist or layman comply with.

Hence the call won't succeed unless it depends on the knowledge to which all heads incline.

Bring up any issue in a society unknown to you, the whole world will come down hard on you. If you brought up a religious issue, and if you said for example: riba (interest) is haram (forbidden), they would say: "Who told you that? Money shouldn't be stagnant." And if you said it was indeed haram, they would say: "This is a free country." But if you said: "The sun is 1 million and 300 thousand times bigger than the earth, and that there is 156 million kilometers between the two, and that there is a star in the Scorpio constellation called the Scorpion Heart as big as the sun, the earth and the distance between them," they would maintain deep silence as if saying: "There is no god but Allah."

My point of view is that our call to Islam is more powerful when you mention the Signs of the Universe that necks bow down to. For this reason, the Universe is the greatest fundamental as regards faith, and if you reflect on it as you have been ordered by Him, your heart will fill with belief in and glorification of Allah.

The order to reflect on the Signs of the Qur'an and universe:



Dear brothers, Allah the Almighty has put Signs in the Universe and has put Signs in the phenomena which occur on the earth, such as volcanoes, earthquakes, thunderbolts, floods, tornadoes, mild climates and rains; while the Quranic signs are His Words. So if you want to know Him you should reflect on His Universe and observe the phenomena around you. Allah says:

“Say: "Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth."

(al-An'am, 6:11)

You should cogitate on His ayaat in order to get to know Him, and you should reflect on the Signs of the Universe and observe the phenomena that occur on the earth. These are the ways to get to know Allah the Almighty. Yet we should mention one precise thing: You should start with the Signs of the Universe, and then with the Signs of the Qur'an as the Qur'an illuminates the way; then the

phenomena that occur on earth come in the third place, because if you started with them then you would be walking on a minefield. You would see wealthy nations transgressing constantly and yet enjoying stability; and other nations, although Muslim, suffering. So you won't have the capacity to understand Allah's wisdom in this respect unless you have His knowledge, which is impossible. Allah says:

“Truly Fir'aun elated himself in the land and broke up its people into sections, depressing a small group among them: their sons he slew, but he kept alive their females: for he was indeed a maker of mischief. And We wished to be gracious to those who were being depressed on the land, to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs, To establish a firm place for them in the land, and to show Fir'aun, Haman, and their hosts, at their hands, the very things against which they were taking precautions.”

(al-Qasas, 28:3-6)

You can't interpret Allah's wisdom unless you have His knowledge, which is impossible, so I prefer that you should relegate looking into the phenomena and events taking place on earth to the third position. However, reflecting on His creatures is obvious. The more you ponder, the bigger your certainty about His Beautiful Names and his Best Attributes, but the phenomena and events need to be postponed.

For example: Imagine you are listening to an outstanding teacher who, unexpectedly, hits a student. Now, if you were a child, you would say that the teacher was a tyrant. But if you were his colleague, and the student who had been hit were that teacher's son, and if he had been hit on account of his slackness, and also because you were intimate with the teacher and knew how wise he was, you would definitely excuse him.

So I hope that you start with reflecting on the creation of heavens and earth, ponder Quran's ayaat in the second place, and finally look at the phenomena and events Allah creates on earth.

Another example: If there were a big problem in the society, like a civil war, you might misunderstand it.

I remember walking once in one of the markets in Damascus and being stopped by a man who said: "A man was on his way to his store and when he got there and was opening it, he heard shots, so he stuck out his head and was hit on his spinal cord by a bullet, and he got paralyzed. You are a teacher, isn't work an act of worship?" I said that it was. "So what did he do to deserve it? What was his fault?" I said that I didn't know.

I swear by Allah, dear brothers, 20 days later a brother of ours was walking with me and telling me that a neighbor of his, living above his apartment had appropriated his orphaned nieces' house, and for years refused to give it back and they needed it badly. They complained about him to one of Damascus scholars from Midan. This scholar asked that man to come and see him but he refused point-blank. This scholar – a senior Qur'an reciter, now deceased, may Allah admit

him to His mercy – told those children: "He is your uncle and it is inappropriate to sue him, but complain to Allah." Those words were spoken at 9 p.m. At 9 a.m. the man in question was paralyzed due to a bullet impact while opening his shop.

If you read the end of the story, it does look obscure. An innocent man, opening his store, working to feed his children, heard shots, stuck out his head, received a bullet in his spinal cord and got paralyzed. I would never have got to know it if this person hadn't told me the whole of his story, so when I got to know the first part of the story, it became clear.

Hence, the phenomena that occur around us are not easy to be understood. "What He willed, was; and what He doesn't will, never will be," and there is deep wisdom there.

Therefore, dear brothers, we have Signs in the Universe, Signs in the phenomena on earth, and in the Quranic ayaat. We should reflect on the Signs of the Universe, the proof of which is as follows:

“Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding. Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): "Our Lord! not for naught hast thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the Penalty of the Fire.”

(Al-i Imran, 3:190-191)

While the Signs in the phenomena on earth are mentioned by Allah in the following ayah:

“Say: "Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth.”

(al-Ana'm, 6:11)

A brother told me the following: "I am a lawyer, and I once had a suit in which I called for a witness who turned out to be a liar. The suit was about a 50-million villa which could easily be recovered because of that witness. He was asked to swear putting his hand on the Qur'an, which he did, and he swore by Allah to tell the truth, but he didn't, he said the opposite." He said: "I swear by Allah" and he raised his hand in front of me and then held on to the edge of the table. He left his hand there and stood still, so the judge was bothered by this act and asked him to remove his hand, but in fact he was dead, and when his hand weakened its hold, he fell to the ground."

He said: "I swear by Allah that this happened before my very eyes." Allah says:

"Say: Travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected Truth."

(al-Ana'm, 6:11)

Indeed, I wish from the bottom of my heart that you pay attention to the following idea: You might hear only the last chapters of thousands of stories, all of them obscure and confusing. On the other hand you might hear no more than 5 complete stories. By Allah, you should bow down to Him because of His justice, the absolute justice, but our problem is that normally we listen to obscure "last chapter" stories. So give in to Allah, to His justice and to His mercy:

"And not one will thy Lord treat with injustice"

(al-Kahf, 18:49)

Dear brothers, one more word. "It wasn't Allah who oppressed them" –this linguistic structure is called matter denial and we have what is called incident denial. If someone who was asked whether he was hungry answered that he wasn't, he would be denying the incident of hunger. If he were asked whether he was a thief by somebody who knew he was a perfectly respectable person, would he say "no"? It is quite impossible. Rather, he would say: "I would never steal a thing," which means, this is against my nature, my principles, my values, and I don't agree with such an act, or admit it, and I would treat harshly anyone who steals, reject him and despise him. So we call this "matter denial". So in this context the ayah "It wasn't Allah who oppressed them" declares it impossible and thousands more times impossible that Allah would oppress any human being. Allah says:

"No injustice will there be that Day"

(Ghafir, 40:17)

"Then shall anyone who has done an atom's weight of good, see it! And anyone who has done an atom's weight of evil, shall see it."

(al-Zalzala, 99:7-8)

"It was not Allah who wronged them"

(al-Rum, 30:9)

"The weight of a mustard seed"

(al-Anbya, 21:47)

In the 80s a brother of ours moved to Damascus from Lebanon because of the civil war, and settled down here.

He had a car accident, the fault was his, the other car was damaged. He said: "I expected the other driver to get out of his car, angry, shouting at the top of his voice, but amazingly he looked at me and when he saw it was a Lebanese car, he said: "Don't worry. I give up the demand." I knew that although the Lebanese man was wealthy, he wouldn't mind saving a couple of thousand. Yet, he was crying. I asked him: "Why are you crying?" He said: "Two years ago, a Syrian man, traveling with his wife, and she was veiled, and children, hit my car, and because I didn't want to spoil his picnic, I said: "Don't worry. It's on me."

If you look closely here, you will find something that gives you the creeps. Our problem is that each of us knows thousands of "last chapter" stories, which are obscure. A fatal disease or an accident, you never know, but Allah knows, so give in to Him.

Therefore, we start with the Signs of the Universe; the ayaat of the Qur'an come in the second place, and then the phenomena and events that Allah has created on earth.

This lawyer mentioned another story. He said: "I acted once as an attorney for a client accused of murder. He pleaded "not guilty" all throughout the case. Nevertheless, he was sentenced to death and I was there to witness his execution. Just a few moments before the rope was put round his neck he said: 'Well, now that everything is over I declare once again that I didn't kill him. However, 30 years ago, when I was the head of a police department, a French officer put a convict in my custody who was going to be executed in a few day's time. This man managed to escape so I got a Bedouin to be put in his place, and he was executed instead of the other man. It took place 30 years ago.' "

If you look closely, you will find something that gives you the creeps.

And if you look closely, you will realize that Muslim nations are tyrannized, their citizens killed and their lands occupied, so as you see we can't understand all these phenomena unless we have Allah's knowledge. Allah says:

“It was not Allah who wronged them”

(al-Rum, 30:9)

Divine wisdom, and in it there is progress for the human being. Allah says:

“And We wished to be gracious to those who were being depressed on the land, to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs.”

(al-Qasas, 28:5)

This is none of your business; it is Allah's business, so leave it all to Him.

Therefore we have the Signs of the Universe to reflect on, and in the third place we have the phenomena and events that occur on earth, and also the Quranic ayaat. Allah says:

“Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked up by them?”

(Muhammad, 47:24)

Conclusion:

Dear brothers, the paths to know Allah are: His Signs in the Universe, phenomena and events, and His Quranic ayaat, and what is in these Signs is enough for us to know and to love Him, hence it was narrated in a hadith qudsi:

"- O Allah! Whom of Your servants do You love most so that I can love him for Your sake?

- The one I love most among My servants is the one with a pious heart, clean hands (lawful income), who never wishes evil to others, who loves Me, loves those who love Me, and makes my creatures love Me.

- O Allah! You know I love You, and love those who love You, but how can I make your creatures love you?

- Remind them of My gifts, blessings and trials. My gifts –so that they gracefully reflect; My blessings –so that they love Me, and My trials –so they fear me."

In the believer's heart there must be glorification of and love for Allah; as well as fear of Him. Glorification is through His Signs, love through His blessings, and fear through His trials.

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