

Getting Closer to Allah (swt) – Reflecting on the Act of Creation

In the earliest years of the revelation of the noble Qur'an, many ayaat were sent down by Allah (swt) encouraging human beings to look around and within themselves, and to reflect and wonder on the act of creation by Allah. It was through these noble ayaat that the Messenger (saw) cultured his Sahabah (raa) and they strengthened their Iman; it led to them becoming the greatest of all generations. Later generations, especially those during the time of the Khilafah (Caliphate) used the detailed knowledge of these ayaat, which were at that time part of their education system, to further spread the Dawah of Islam to other non-Muslim lands through interactions with them such as trade.

In an age like today, when misguidance and doubt is widespread and atheism is becoming more common, it is necessary that we reflect on these ayaat, diving deep into their meanings and wisdom. As an Ummah we can reflect on them to strengthen our Iman, and also utilise them in our Dawah with the disbelievers.

In the Noble Quran, Allah (swt) said, **﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفَلَاقِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ تَصْرِيفِ الرِّيحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾** **Behold! In the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, in the alteration of the Night And the Day, the ship which sails upon the sea with that which is of use to man, the water which Allah sends down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and dispersing all kinds of beasts therein, and (in) the ordinance of the winds, and the clouds obedient between Heaven and Earth: are signs for people who have sense.** [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah: 164].

Aisha (ra), said that the Messenger of Allah (saw) when he read this verse, said, **«وَيْلٌ لِمَنْ قَرَأَهَا وَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرْ فِيهَا»** **“Woe to those who read it and did not think about it.”** [Ad-Dar al-Manthur].

We can see that Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) have ordered human beings to reflect upon the creation of Allah that surrounds them. If we were to reflect deeply, we would see that everything is working according to a system (nizaam) which has laws that every single entity is bound to, and everything has its own limits (hudood) that it is unable to cross and is thus limited (mehdood) in nature. This is true for everything around us.

Stars and planets move in their precise orbits, never deviating nor colliding with each other. The Earth rotates perfectly on its axis and around the sun the same way each day and for every day of the year, so that the night and day come and go at their respective times, and the seasons change one after the other.

Is this not by a perfect and measured system that allows this to happen?

The night and day themselves have their own qualities and conditions that impact the living creatures and their activities. Consider the sea and how it carries ships that sail over it. Another object with the same mass but less surface area would sink. Consider the water cycle. How water from land evaporates and forms clouds which collect water then condense, allowing water to fall towards land again, reviving barren lands and encouraging the growth of all sorts of greens off of which other living beings feed and multiply.

Could such a precise design ever be random?

This is the flawless, consistent and calculated system (nizaam) created by Allah, without any chaos, deficiency or disruption.

Allah (swt) said, ﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ۚ مَا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَوتٍ ۚ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُتُورٍ﴾ **“He is the One Who created seven heavens, one above the other. You will never see any imperfection in the creation of the Most Compassionate. So look again: do you see any flaws?”** [Surah Al-Mulk 67:3].

Looking even deeper into this precise system, we see that each entity is also subject to a specific organization in its formation (takayyuf) and proportioning (taqdeer). Formation (takayyuf) means that each entity is dependent (mohtaaaj) on other entities for its existence, e.g. a plant is dependent on sunlight and water to survive. But even these two things are needed in specific quantities (which is the taqdeer). For example, the plant needs a certain amount of sunlight and water to thrive; too much or too little could be detrimental to its survival. And this varies from plant to plant and even from season to season for the same plant.

These limited entities themselves are not in control of the rules which govern them nor did they create the system under which they function because otherwise they wouldn't be limited (mohtaj) as we can see that they are. It is clear that this system was created by a Creator beyond these rules and regulations, and without any flaws and limitations.

Allah (swt) said, ﴿وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ ۚ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَخْتَلَفَ الْأَلْسِنَتَكُمْ وَالْوُجُوهَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ﴾ **“And of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Behold! Herein indeed are signs for men of knowledge.”** [TMQ Surah Ar-Rum: 22].

At-Qurtubi in his Tafseer said, فهذا من أدل دليل على المدبر الباري “These are evidences establishing Al-Mudabbir, Al-Baaree’.” In the language, Al-Mudabbir (the Organizer) is one of the names of Allah (swt) and it means, الذي يُجري الأمور بحكمته ويصرفها على وفق مشيئته وعلى “the Who conducts matters with His Wisdom and disposes of them according to His Will and according to what necessitates their good consequences.” In the language, Al-Baaree’ (the Initiator) is also one of the names of Allah (swt) and it means, “The One Who gives life to the living and the Flawless (As-Saalim) free from any flaw.”

Thus Imam Abu Hanifa (rh) remarked about the Tadbeer (Organization) of the world. Ibn Abi al-'Izz reported: وَحَكِيَ عَنْ أَبِي حَنِيفَةَ رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ أَنَّ قَوْمًا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكَلَامِ أَرَادُوا الْبَحْثَ مَعَهُ فِي تَقْرِيرِ تَوْجِيدِ الرَّبُّوبِيَّةِ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ أَخْبِرُونِي قَبْلَ أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ فِي هَذِهِ الْمَسْأَلَةِ عَنْ سَفِينَةٍ فِي دَجَلَةٍ تَذْهَبُ فَنَمْتَلِي مِنَ الطَّعَامِ وَالْمَتَاعِ وَغَيْرِهِ بِنَفْسِهَا وَتَعُودُ بِنَفْسِهَا فَتُرْسِي بِنَفْسِهَا وَتَنْفَرُ وَتَرْجِعُ كُلَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يُدَبِّرَهَا أَحَدٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا مُحَالٌ لَا يُمَكِّنُ أَبَدًا فَقَالَ لَهُمْ إِذَا كَانَ هَذَا مُحَالًا فِي سَفِينَةٍ فَكَيْفَ فِي هَذَا الْعَالَمِ كُلِّهِ غُلُوهُ وَسُفْلِهِ (شرح العقيدة الطحاوية) 'It is said that Abu Hanifa, may Allah have mercy on him, was approached by some philosophers who intended to discuss with him the oneness of Allah's Lordship. Abu Hanifa said, “Before we discuss this question, tell me what you think about a boat in the Euphrates, which goes to shore, loads itself with food and other things, then returns, anchors and unloads all by itself, without anyone organizing it?” They said, “This is absurd and never possible.” Abu Hanifa said, “If it is absurd regarding a boat, then how is it for the world, in all its vastness and depth?” [Source: Sharḥ al-'Aqīdah al-Ṭahāwīyah 1/35]

Thus Imam Shafi'ee (rh) said of the Existence of the Designer (swt), as narrated by Ibn Kathir, هَذَا وَرَقَ الثَّوْتِ طَعْمُهُ وَاجِدٌ تَأْكُلُهُ الدُّودُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْإِبْرَيْسَمُ وَتَأْكُلُهُ النَّحْلُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْعَسَلُ وَتَأْكُلُهُ الشَّاةُ وَالْبَقَرُ **“Here is the leaf of the mulberry**

tree which is one food. When eaten by the silk worm, silk comes from it. When eaten by the bee, honey comes from it. When eaten by the sheep, cows and cattle, dung and manure issues from it. When eaten by the musk deer, musk comes from it. Yet it's one thing.” [Source: Tafseer of Ibn Kathir]

As for those who attributed the design and organization to nature itself, Ibn al-Qayyim asserted, أخبرني عن هذه الطبيعة اهي ذات قائمة بنفسها لها علم وقدر على هذه الافعال العجيبة ام ليست كذلك بل عرض وصفة قائمة بالمطبوع تابعة له محمولة فيه فإن قالت لك بل هي ذات قائمة بنفسها لها العلم التام والقدرة والارادة والحكمة فقل “Tell me about this nature: Does it sustain itself? Does it have knowledge and power over these wondrous actions? Or is it not like that but rather it only appears to inherently sustain itself? If they say it surely sustains itself and has complete knowledge, power, will, and wisdom, then say to them that this is the Creator, the Designer, the Fashioner, so why do you refer to Him as nature?” [Source: Miftāḥ Dār al-Sa’ādah 1/261]

It is clear that the universe and everything within was created and is maintained by the Creator who is beyond our senses and beyond the rules and laws that all creation is bound to.

Allah (swt) also said, ﴿أَمْ خُلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمْ الْخَالِقُونَ﴾ **“Were they created from nothing, or are they themselves the Creators?”** [TMQ At-Tur 52: 35].

Ibn Kathir commentated, أي: أوجدوا من غير موجد؟ أم هم أوجدوا أنفسهم؟ أي: لا هذا ولا هذا، بل الله هو “that is, did they come into being from a state of being non-existent (ghayr mawjood)? Or did they bring themselves into existence? Neither is true. Indeed, Allah is the One Who created them and brought them into existence after they were nothing.” So in the language, it is said, خَلَقَ اللَّهُ الْإِنْسَانَ: أَوْجَدَهُ مِنَ الْعَدَمِ، أَنْشَأَهُ، صَوَّرَهُ “Allah (swt) created the human-beings: He (swt) brought them into being from nothing, made them existent and fashioned them.”

Allah (swt) is undoubtedly the Creator of all Creation and is unique and different from His Creation as He is Azzalee (Uncreated) and is not dependent on anything for His existence. He alone is the Organizer and the Initiator and He was not organized or initiated by anything else. He has always been in existence and will always remain and He has not any beginning or end unlike his Creation. The act of Creation (khalq) is unique to Him alone and no other being is capable of creating something from nothing nor can they come into existence from nothing. Thus those who claim that the universe came into existence by mere chance and that it is eternal are proven wrong.

Every entity in existence is evidence that points toward the Creator, Allah (swt) who is alone flawless and not dependent on anyone else, and His Creation cannot be anything like Him.

Allah (swt) said, ﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝ ١ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝ ٢ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝ ٣ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝ ٤﴾ **“Say, “He is Allah—One” Allah—the Sustainer (as Samad) (needed by all) He has never had offspring, nor was He born. And there is none comparable to Him. (4)”** [Surah Al-Ikhlaas 112:1-4].

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