

Word of God & the Universe the **Work** of God 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 God'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. Those who celebrate God's praises, standing, sitting & lying. 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 God). It is a spontaneous reaction. It is a realization that wells up from deep inside you, & then comes out like *Subhanallah* (Glory to God). 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 realize that they are nothing. That arrogance & disobedience really have no place & no basis. While they are in a state of prostration they acknowledge God's Exalted Position: Glory be to my Lord, the **MOSTHIGH**.

Muslims set aside particular times everyday just to be with the 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 & the sea to supply it with ink, with seven more seas to add thereto, the words of God would not have been exhausted; surely God is Mighty, Wise.**" (31:27)

The heart is the seat & main instrument in developing our relationship with God. We are reminded in the Quran that God is closer to us than our jugular vein: not in Essence though but rather in Care & Protection. Striving in the remembrance of God, the Heart becomes tranquil. When this happens it is empty of all, other than the Light of God. In this condition, God communicates to the soul & reflects in its purified mirror the Oneness of God.

The beauty of a tranquil & reflective heart is made known when God 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 God is known. The Soul will **not** be content with anything other than the containment of God's Light within the heart.

"**He is God, 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 God from what they set up with Him. He is the Creator, the Maker, the Fashioner; His are the most beautiful Attributes; whatever in the heavens & the earth declares His glory, and He is the Mighty, the Wise.**" (59:21-24)

The trinity of convictions – What I say I believe (could be bogus); what I think I believe (could be fickle); and what I reveal I really do believe by my actions (reflects my mental & spiritual map). To bring that trinity to a unity is our spiritual struggle...our ultimate & prime directive is coming to know the Creator. To live His Will.

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.

God is the Lord of all the worlds. When God decrees a thing all He says is "Be" and it is. Therefore, it would be very wise that we place our faith in God and demonstrate our allegiance to God in our public & 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 God & remember Him will find contentment & joy in their lives with the knowledge that they are under His protection. When we utter praise to the Almighty & thank Him for his countless bounties, our hearts are filled with inner peace & reflection. How happy & blessed are those who seek refuge in their Lord, the Most Beneficent & Merciful. "**Surely in God's remembrance do hearts find peace.**" (13:28) Such amazing words is the anchorage that keeps us steady in this turbulent, difficult, nightmarish world.

You may have intellectual doubts. The question of faith is never just an intellectual decision. It is a leap of faith. 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?

KNOWING GOD

**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)**

Warriors in the "clash of civilizations" have used "religions" — each with its own god & worn as a badge of identity — to divide & oppose, failing to recognize the **ONE God** whom Muslims & Christians understand in partly different ways.

The **process of secularization** seems to be reaching its logical conclusion in removing the presence of the sacred from all aspects of human life & thought. This is what the German philosopher Nietzsche meant when he spoke of the "**death of God**" over a century ago. It's a pity that man can quickly eliminate God based on his myopic understanding; or as in Nietzsche's case he dismissed his Christian religion totally because it condemned all non-Christians to hell. In his major work "Thus Spake Zarathustra" he presents his own ideal, the passionate man who uses his emotions in creative energy, a man he called "Uebermensch" or "superman." Today's man is far from such a creature; resembling more of a cringing man. He faces the terror of nihilism. He faces the death of that which is human as a result of the effacing of the imprint of the Divinity upon the human face. Contemporary man wears a horrible mask moulded by the philosophy of the "**death of god.**" Politicians have removed the mask to display something more grotesque. It's time our schools assemble a vast compendium of traditional knowledge in order to show the **remarkable perennity & universality of spiritual wisdom**. Only a virtuous people are capable of true freedom. It begins with One Universal God Who is All-Wise. Forever Alive. Creator of death. **The death of man.**

THE CREATOR: THERE IS NO GOD BUT HE; HIS ARE THE VERY BEST NAMES. (20:8) SAY: CALL UPON GOD OR UPON THE MOST GRACIOUS; WHICHEVER YOU CALL UPON, HE HAS THE GREAT NAMES...(17:110)

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 God. It’s time, O modern man, to return to tradition — to your Creator. 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 of God be upon their sacred souls).

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 & 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. 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 & 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.”** God 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) The need to declare our deeply held beliefs is an irrepressible aspect of being human. In the act of defining what we believe, we define ourselves. We can discern what is true, real, noble and bind ourselves to it. **To be is to believe.**

Those who believe they believe in God, but **without** passion in the heart, **without** anguish of the mind, **without** uncertainty, **without** doubt, and even at times **without** despair, believe **only in the idea of God**, and not in God Himself.

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 God 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 God. 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

“VERILY IN THE REMEMBRANCE OF ALLAH DO HEARTS FIND REST!”
HOLY QURAN - 13:28



with God (Sura 29:65) Everything speaks one language which *Tawhid* (the concept of monotheism). 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.*

Another important aspect is that of making *Shukr* to God (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 God 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 God does not need our gratitude because He is free of all wants.

God 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 there are some who when they grow old treat their parents with utter disdain. We are commanded to be grateful towards our parents because of what they have sacrificed for us. Isn’t God 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...let us give thanks. 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 Him.

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

Engage on a daily basis in the activity called *Zikr Allah* (Remembrance of God which includes saying His Names or Celebrating His Praises & Glory). Constantly bring to mind these Attributes. The Quran: **In the Remembrance of God do hearts find contentment & peace.** The Book is itself a form of *Zikr*. The Quran is the Eternal

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