**Connecting with God**

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| THERE is always a sense of uncertainty, unease and a disturbance within the human soul. Even the most diehard atheists those who believe that this life is all that there is would admit to themselves, when alone, a sense of doubt and questions over the `whence` of the universe.  Believers, on the other hand, often develop a concept of God in their minds, perhaps a higher being who is the Creator of all things, human and otherwise.  Depending upon their understanding and practices which with they grow up within their religious lives, they find ways to `connect` with God.  Many believers, however, still try to find proofs of God`s existence and use these proofs to convince nonbelievers. Many, particularly in the West, have misconceptions about how Muslims view God.  According to Dr Fazlur Rahman, God in the Quran is both majestic and merciful.  The two attributes are two sides of the same Creator, upon who is dependant the entire universe. There is no need to identify (and the Quran does not produce) proofs of God`s existence for humans.  The latter should `find` God in the signs that are abundant in the universe and within humans. It is fruitless to enter into discourse about proofs related to God, because the Quran reminds humans to reflect, think, ponder over the signs.  It is this reflection over the signs of the world, or nature and their internal selves that humans must find the link to: `Verily in this is a Message for any that has a heart and understanding or who gives ear and earnestly witnesses (the truth)` (50:37).  The main connection with God, therefore, is developed through understanding, realising and appreciating nature and its source. The reminder to this is the Quran which came to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).  This reminder needs to be studied critically, along with the context and conditions that existed while the revelation was ongoing. This can be found in any authentic biography of the Prophet (PBUH).  Connecting with God depends considerably on what a person conceives Him to be.  With His infiniteness, omnipresence and omnipotence, it is absolutely impossible for any human to comprehend God or even a very small element of His Spirit. Even prophets were not able to do so, even though they were the purest and most spiritual of humans. They were constantly engaged in prayer and worship to seek His guidance andforgiveness.  Many of us see God as a `father figure`, punishing us when we commit evil and rewarding us when we do good. The realityof God is unknown, because He alone knows Himself. Yet, each of us makes efforts to connect with Him in our own individual way and He has promised to listen to us: `...For We are nearer to him than (his) jugular vein` (50:16).  Our doubts about who He is and why He allows injustice to be committed in the world might be reduced if we think that we cannot ever understand His wisdom and limitlessness and that we must only do what we can and should. This is to serve Him, serve His creations, spread goodness and avoid/suppress chaos.  In a simplistic mode, connecting with God would mean praying, fasting, paying zal(at, performing Haj, being kind to others and avoiding the major sins. Since humans are considered to be the best of God`s creations (the only ones with choice), we should try to go a few steps further.  Fazlur Rahman sums it up beautifully.  Serving God means developing our higher potentialsandpurifyingoursoul,accordingto the `command` (amr) of God, by exercising our right to choose, and to use nature in this process.  `God, Who in His outgoing mercy brought nature and man into being, in His unbroken sustained mercy, hasendowed man with the necessary cognition and volition to create knowledge and use it torealisehisjustandfairends.  This is the most critical test for humans: whether they use this knowledge and power for good or for evil, for success or loss, or for reforming the earth or corrupting it (as the Quran constantly puts it)?` (Fazlur Rahman, Major Themes of the Quran).  If we try to develop such a connection, we would come to consider God as our total and only support, which no one and nothing can take away from us. The name As Samad as an attribute of God means a rock against which no force can have any power. Our attachment to this rock can be developed through consistent efforts in reaching out to Him, even as we fall and stumble, make mistakes and commit sins.  We must hang on to this connection `the rope to God` without ever losing hope. We must search for the ultimate truth, trying to find it through purifying ourselves, instead of looking to prove it. The writer is a freelance researcher in peace and security issues. |