

God's response to questions about Him to Muhammad

¹⁸⁶[Prophet], if My servants ask you about Me, I am near. I respond to those who call Me, so let them respond to Me, and believe in Me, so that they may be guided. (2:187) (*Another meaning of the verb denoting 'ask you' is 'question you'*)

Abraham's assurance through questioning God

²⁶⁰And when Abraham said, 'My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead,' He said, 'Do you not believe, then?' 'Yes,' said Abraham, 'but just to put my heart at rest.' So God said, 'Take four birds and train them to come back to you. Then place them on separate hilltops, call them back, and they will come flying to you: know that God is all powerful and wise.' (2: 260)

Abraham's journey to discovering God through questioning various notions of God

⁷⁴Remember when Abraham said to his father, Azar, 'How can you take idols as gods? I see that you and your people have clearly gone astray.' ⁷⁵In this way We showed Abraham [God's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth, so that he might be a firm believer. ⁷⁶When the night grew dark over him he saw a star and said, 'This is my Lord,' but when it set, he said, 'I do not like things that set.' ⁷⁷And when he saw the moon rising he said, 'This is my Lord,' but when it too set, he said, 'If my Lord does not guide me, I shall be one of those who go astray.' ⁷⁸Then he saw the sun rising and cried, 'This is my Lord! This is greater.' But when the sun set, he said, 'My people, I disown all that you worship beside God. ⁷⁹I have turned my face as a true believer towards Him who created the heavens and the earth. I am not one of the polytheists.' (6:74-9)

The stress to reflect upon signs of God which inevitably involves questioning Him in the Abrahamic line of enquiry

¹⁰⁹All the messengers We sent before you [Muhammad] were men to whom We made revelations, men chosen from the people of their towns. Have the [disbelievers] not travelled through the land and seen the end of those who went before them? For those who are mindful of God, the Home in the Hereafter is better. Do you [people] not use your reason? (12: 109)

⁶⁵It is God who sends water down from the sky and with it revives the earth when it is dead. There truly is a sign in this for people who listen. ⁶⁶In livestock, too, you have a lesson—We give you a drink from the contents of their

bellies, between waste matter and blood, pure milk, sweet to the drinker. ⁶⁷From the fruits of date palms and grapes you take sweet juice and wholesome provisions. There truly is a sign in this for people who use their reason. (16: 65- 7)

²⁰Believers, obey God and His Messenger: do not turn away when you are listening to him; ²¹do not be like those who say, 'We heard,' though in fact they were not listening—²²the worst creatures in God's eyes are those who are [wilfully] deaf and dumb, who do not reason. (8: 20-22)

Noah's questioning God's decision

⁴⁵Noah called out to his Lord, saying, 'My Lord, my son was one of my family, though Your promise is true, and You are the most just of all judges.' ⁴⁶God said, 'Noah, he was not one of your family. What he did was not right. Do not ask Me for things you know nothing about. I am warning you not to be foolish.' ⁴⁷He said, 'My Lord, I take refuge with You from asking for things I know nothing about. If You do not forgive me, and have mercy on me, I shall be one of the losers.' ⁴⁸And it was said, 'Noah, descend in peace from Us, with blessings on you and on some of the communities that will spring from those who are with you. There will be others We will allow to enjoy life for a time, but then a painful punishment from Us will afflict them.' (11:45-8)

God's answer to Muhammad's doubt

¹By the morning brightness ²and by the night when it grows still, ³your Lord has not forsaken you [Prophet], nor does He hate you, ⁴and the future will be better for you than the past; ⁵your Lord is sure to give you so much that you will be well satisfied. ⁶Did He not find you an orphan and shelter you? ⁷Did He not find you lost and guide you? ⁸Did He not find you in need and make you self-sufficient? (93:1–11)