



Why does God ask to be worshiped & what's in it for me?

LESSON PLAN 1 PRESENTATION

YAQREEN™
INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC RESEARCH

Consider our sight

Human perception is limited. That is, the human eye itself can only see a small portion of all the wavelengths that exist—even compared to many animals.

① If we can't even see everything that exists, what does this suggest about how much we can know?



Sight - Imagine What Animals See (Bees, Chameleons, Owls and more!)



Making sense with our senses and brain

When we are not sure about something we perceive or experience, we use our *memories*, *past experiences* and *current feelings* to make “educated guesses”.

② What types of wrong “educated guesses” do people make about God’s nature? What feelings might be involved?



Limitations of the brain



Important points

Humans are limited in their capacity to perceive, know or understand the full essence of God's nature.

③ So when limited human faculties (e.g. senses, brain) attempt to grasp God's full reality, what tends to happen?

Hercules

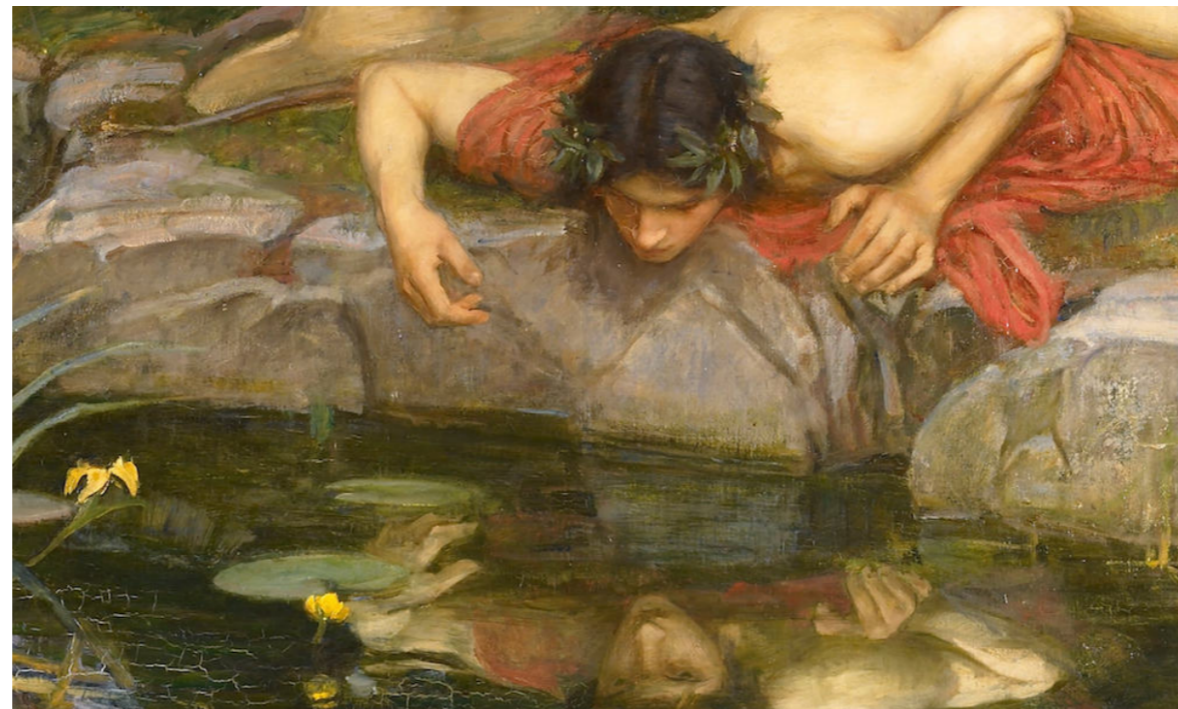
Greek/Roman god of war



Narcissus

son of Roman River God and a nymph

- The root of the word *narcissism*: excessive love and regard for oneself
- He was very good looking but was very haughty towards others
- He fell in love with his own reflection
- He kills himself when he realizes his love can never materialize



Byzantine Jesus

330 A.D.



Black Jesus



Female Jesus





God, anthropomorphism, and human narcissism

“The Abyssinians (Ethiopians) see their god as flat-nosed, while the Thracians give him red hair and blue eyes... What is even stranger is that these gods partake in the most heinous acts that are contrary to upright character, such as killing, stealing, and looting, just as their worshippers do... And if cows and horses and lions had hands, and were capable of drawing, the horses would draw gods in horse form, and the cows would in cow form.”

Xenophanes,

Ancient Greek philosopher (475 BC)

④ What is this quote saying? What is the problem with creating God in a human image (and your own particular image) according to this quote?



On the attributes humans share with God

“To illustrate, humans possess the praiseworthy trait of “life,” and God also possesses life, so the life of God must be understood as different and greater (e.g., His life has no beginning and no end). Likewise, humans possess the praiseworthy trait of “knowledge,” and God also possesses knowledge, though the knowledge of God is complete. So, whenever God and human share a trait, that does not necessitate identity, but only a similarity in the names used to describe that trait. Just as the leg of a race is not the leg of a dog and the eye of a storm is not the eye of a human, the traits of humans are only poor facsimiles of the greater and more perfect traits of God.”

⑤ What argument is the author making about the shared attributes between humans and God?



Recap

- A** As finite humans with limited knowledge, capabilities, and capacities, humans cannot comprehend the full essence of God's nature.
- B** When the limited human mind attempts to grasp God's full reality, it tends to do so through a prism that attributes human-like qualities to God (anthropomorphism) and therefore thinks of God as asking to be glorified and obeyed based on human motives such as neediness and/or narcissism.
- C** The idea of perceiving the Divine as needy or narcissistic through His request to be worshipped is rooted in ancient mythologies that depict gods with mortal yearnings for self-fulfillment.
- D** If human beings possess a praiseworthy trait that God also possesses (e.g., sight, hearing, mercy), then a greater form of it is understood about God, one more befitting of His Uniqueness and Perfection.