Halaqa: January 29, 2014

Topic: Challenges of living with belief (2)

**029.002**

http://allahsquran.com/read/images/chapters/29/29_2.gif

*Do human beings think that they will be left alone on saying, “We believe”, and that they will not be tested?”*

Where is the Test?

Are they?

* The adversities that we face in life
* The way we **RESPOND** back to the events in our life
* How we connect the events and our emotional responses to the Creator of the events

But more than that, the test as referred to in the above verse is about tests in our belief.

* Will we really be able to put into practice the belief we claim to have?

Tests are not just about calamities.

* In fact, I am being tested even when I am healthy/wealthy

Every event is a test. I can either:

* Accept that it is from the Creator and return the event to the Creator

OR

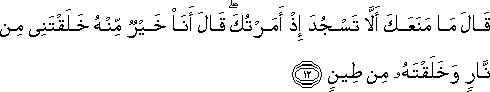
* Disassociate the Creator from the event and try and find causes to explain it

How is convicted belief in God different from blindly believing in nature?

Belief in God, is differentiated, because the explanation must make sense to me on a personal level and should not just be something superficial.

We have to always return to ourselves.

**007.012**



**“[And God] said: “What has kept you from prostrating yourself when I commanded you? “Answered [Iblis]: “I am better than he: You have created me out of fire, whereas him You have created out of clay.”**

Iblis acknowledged the fact He was created (Great) BUT remember, belief is not just about accepting claims.

* Belief is about putting those claims into practice
* In this case, Iblis’ claims and his words were contradictory
  + In practice, he did not have belief in God’s lordship because he appropriated his ability to judge to himself

Analogy:

Winter is created by God: I don’t like it

Spring is created by God: I like it

🡪 While the first part of both phrases are correct, the second part attributes the ownership of ‘liking’ and ‘disliking’ to myself

🡪 In reality, both my liking and disliking has been created by Him

He is the One who makes me like or dislike something

* But don’t get lost in the object/situation that you experience feelings towards
* What we ought to do is reflect on the origin of the feeling and see the role of the Creator in it

The test is going on within us

- How are we going to use the values that we experience?

The feelings have been given to us so that we may appreciate, acknowledge and submit to the One who has created them.

* I am not exercising my own feelings
* My feelings and emotions must be submitted back to the owner

Do not draw comparisons between the different forms of creation

* Neither is better than the other
* Just because you have been made to like spring and dislike winter, does not mean that spring is better than winter
  + They are both instances of creation
  + We have no authority to judge between them

We have to return the senses/emotions/values within us to God. You cannot claim to own your senses and at the same time say that He is Owner of everything

* If we own the values that we have been given, how can we hand them over to God?

The human senses that I am given are to be used according to my own desires

‘I like this chicken dish’

* It may seem like an innocent comment
* But we have to be careful about how we attribute our senses
* While we believe that the chicken is created by God, are we aware about the creation of our sense of like?
* We should attribute our sense of liking to Him and use it in His name
  + He has given me the ability to enjoy the chicken
  + Why would he give me this sense?
    - He wants me to taste pleasure
    - He is the Loving One
* Only then are you obeying His command and prostrating to Him

Prostrating: Not only in prayer; Returning everything to the Creator

Iblis: Fire is superior than clay

* What is the criteria that we use in judging that something is better than other?
* If you have your own criteria, you will not use it in His name

We have to analyze our human values and use them in the name of our Creator.

* We have been given all these values so that we may know who the owner is
* If I appropriate the values to myself, I will not be able to know my Creator.
* Our values and emotions are the ONLY way to know our Creator

Don’t separate your belief from the emotions that you experience.

When I treat my belief as something separate from action, I start assuming that the actions are my test.

* But if I see my belief as the center of everything, I will realize that the test will be in my belief and how I perceive belief in myself and my interactions.

How can we use our human values to practice our belief?

Practicing your belief (inclusive) VS putting your belief into action (separatist)

Crux of this verse: Challenge about putting belief into practice

* Iblis believes in the Creator
* In fact, Iblis even acknowledged that he was created by God
  + Where he slips is in attributing his values to Himself
    - He claimed ownership of his own values and judgments and accordingly concluded that his fire creation was better than creation made out of clay
    - The test is NOT in the action
    - The test is in acknowledging that our human qualities belong to the One who created me

Acknowledging your creator VS acknowledging the qualities your Creator created within you are two distinct things.

* Don’t stop with just acknowledging your Creator
* You have to return the qualities within yourself to Him

Analogy: Someone helps a needy individual. Will the person who helps be given paradise? It depends on the level of awareness in the individual.

* Are you doing the action for reasons of self-indulgence

OR

* Are you doing it with the consciousness that you are using the bounties you have been given
  + The action of helping in and of itself has no value.
    - My awareness of this sense of helping is what gives it value
    - Am I helping in my own name (self-indulgent)?

OR

* + - Am I helping in the name of the One who has given me the sense to help?
    - He is Helper
    - I cannot appropriate the sense of helping to myself

Human qualities are given to us so that we may know who the Creator is. Without our human qualities, there is no way for us to know our Creator.

The qualities of God are placed within you so that you may know the One who created them.

* **If someone says: By helping others, I get pleasure. The creator of my sense also enjoys helping others and that is why I use my sense of help to help.**

You have been given the sense to dislike war and transgression. It is not YOU who dislikes it. You have been given it.

We have to use our human qualities so that we may know the Owner of the qualities.

* This is the TEST
* And it is within us
  + How are we going to use our human qualities?
    - Are we going to return them to their Creator

OR

* + - Will we own them for ourselves stray away from His commands

Am I using my intention to know God OR just to be a ‘good’ human being?

* Not to harm people is a good intention BUT for what?
  + It is not enough
* While we are staying away from harming others, are we aware that it is God’s attribute of mercy at play?

I cleaned the space because I care about other people’s health and safety (FALSE)

I have been given the quality to care about people’s cleanliness because my Creator is the absolute cleanser (ya-mutahir).

* So, when I clean I do it with acknowledgment that my need for cleanliness has been given to me by the One who cleanses everything.

Reflect on your own abilities.

* God created me
* God created the universe
  + These are all correct, but insufficient

Think about your own qualities

* Why do you like cleanliness?
* Why do we like helping people?
* Why do you hate killing other people?
  + Question these senses!
  + Where did they come from?
  + What is the purpose in their existence within you?

My like for cleanliness cannot just be so that I will clean my house; eventually I will die so what’s the point of cleanliness?

- When I clean my house, I acknowledge that my Creator is the cleanser

When it comes to people who kill, even they don’t say that they enjoy killing.

- They justify it with political motivations.

Humans are like prisms

* Everything around us gets reflected into our consciousness
* How we respond to them, is the test?
  + Do we return our emotions to the Creator OR do we claim ownership on them?

1. Acknowledge the Creator
2. Get to know the Creator

* The only way to know who your Creator is, is by using our own senses
* If we are not ready to use our own qualities, no scripture can help us

Concentrate on the human qualities within us!

How can you perceive a name of God if you cannot experience it?

* Existentially, human beings are the center of existence
* Only through this centre, God fulfils the purpose of His creation
  + If the human beings do not use their human qualities to know the qualities of the Creator, the whole universe becomes useless

What is the point of stars?

* We are given the sense of admiration at this awesome Creation to know that He is Awesome, Magnificent

How do I know that God is great?

* When I reflect on creation, I see how amazing it is and it points me to the Greatness in the Creator
* I cannot attribute the greatness to myself
  + I am only a transient being

I have to use my human qualities to pass the test. Don’t just get lost in actions.

All our different tastes are a sign that He enjoys pleasing you

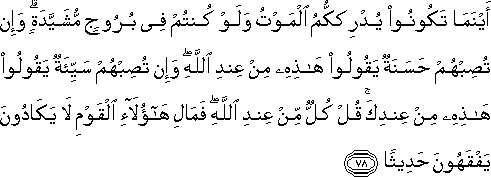
* He is the merciful
* Through the pleasure I experience from eating my favorite dish, I say: He is treating me in the best way
* It is God who is making me love it

OR

* It is God who is making me disliking it

*We make judgments/choices in His name according to our given desires.*

**004.078**



**“… And if some good reaches them, they say, “This is from God,” but if some evil befalls them, they say, “This is from you.” Say: All are from God…”**

**Nisa (4): 78**

YOU: Anything to push the blame toward; another person; an institution; a country

If we cannot understand that everything is from God, we cannot pass the test of belief.

When we are happy, we acknowledge that the blessing is from Allah.

When we feel unhappy (as the result of some calamity), we blame so and so for causing it.

I have to use the senses within me to connect with God

* I don’t like war
  + O God, you gave me the sense to dislike war
  + I hence can practically experience:
    - God does not harm
    - God does not transgress the rights of other people
    - God is the Absolute just
* So I am going to act in your name NOT according to my own sense

I dislike disasters because it kills people; I seek refuge with God from disasters since He creates it

* See the wisdom in the creation of disasters
* What is He trying to teach you in the creation of it?
  + You cannot guarantee anything in this world
  + The free will of God is always in practice

If there were no disasters, I would not realize that I am needy and a weak creature

* I wouldn’t realize that this world belongs to a Creator, and not to me

Everything happens by the will of God.