Wednesday, April 29, 2015
Topic: ***How not to be jealous?***--*Are you judgmental? (part 3)*

The Prophet (pbuh) is employed to help us understand the speech of God. We always have to encapsulate the hadith within the fundamental teachings of the Quran. In the hadith, a particular event must be understood within the whole context of the Quran i.e. we need to take our human self into the Quranic context. This means that while interpreting hadith, we have to bear in mind the purpose of the Quran otherwise our understanding of the world will end up being cultural, secular and will have nothing to do with the Prophetic teachings. As a result, we would not be reading the teachings of the Messenger of God but instead, we would be reading the teachings of an ordinary wise man. By definition, an ordinary wise man is someone who does good work for humanity, gives to charity… What makes someone the messenger of God is the message that he conveys which is in accordance with the teachings of the Creator that mainly aims at explaining the purpose of our existence.

Messenger of God= ordinary wise man + ***Divine dimension* to his mission**.

***What is expected from our existence in this world?*** In order to interpret any event, we have to refer it to the purpose of our existence i.e. we need to give ***Divine dimension*** to everything. That is the only way we can free ourselves from secular teachings. Example: I seek refuge in God from the whisperings of Satan, *what does it mean*? It means that I have to seek refuge in God from the secular teachings prevalent in the society. Verbal saying is necessary but “our consciousness” of this ***Divine dimension*** is important.

* “I seek refuge” means that I need to get out of this secular mindset; it is as if I am reformatting myself, my worldview.

***How can we relate the teachings of the hadiths to the teachings of the Quran?***

Sahih al-Bukhari 6064: Book 78, Hadith 94 | Muhsin Khan Translation: vol. 8, Book 73, hadith 90
Narrated Abu Huraira: ***The Prophet said, “Beware of suspicion, for suspicion is the worst of false tales; and do not look for the others' faults and do not spy, and do not be jealous of one another, and do not desert (cut your relation with) one another and do not hate one another; and O God’s worshippers! Be brothers.”***

Understanding and applying this specific hadith into our lives is a beautiful therapy for human spirit. Hadith is anything narrated through human beings. **“False tales”** is the interpretation of the translator. This implies that anything that comes out of suspicion is a false tale because it has no reality. However, suspicion that carries evidence is not a false tale. Suspicion without evidence may prompt us to develop a wrong judgment about creation.

In general, we need to stay away from suspicion. *(Please refer to the class notes from 04/15/15 and 04/22/15 for avoiding suspicion)*. Furthermore, having evidence does not mean that we should not take precautions. Example: When we leave our apartment, we lock our door. *Why did we lock the door?*
There are two aspects to our responsibility:

1. **From my perspective**: It is my responsibility to make sure that I take the proper precautions of not being a victim of theft. I will lock the door not because I do not trust creation or I have any suspicion for anyone. It is my duty to preserve the property trusted to me.
2. **From other’s perspective**: It is my responsibility to make sure that by not locking the door, I do not encourage possible theft i.e. encouraging human weakness to be exploited.
* Precautions should not be taken as a result of having negative feelings/suspicions towards others.
* Take care of your responsibilities.

Be careful not to generalize an event based on its interpretation at that moment. If a person is guilty of theft, it does not mean that we should label him as a thief forever. (On a side note, we human beings are fallible creatures and so when the scripture mentions Christianity or Judaism at certain instances in the Quran; it is to remind us that how sometimes we may fall into these ideologies.)

* What we decide about creation based on evidence is unique to that event and moment only.

In the example above, locking the door is our prayer. Prayer is **responding back** to the Creator. Example: while performing the sunset prayers, **we express our feelings** to the Creator of the universe about our experiences with creation since the afternoon prayers.

* A new world is given to us at the time of each prayer and so we need to respond back with what it is that we appreciated in creation.

Whatever is created is good; our default understanding/attitude towards creation is always good. Whatever exists is created for a purpose, **the purpose of existence is a means of acknowledging the Creator**.

* Everything is a sign for us to reflect on the purpose of our existence.

If I am having a negative attitude towards something, then I am accusing “that creation” as being created for a bad purpose. Example: How about the creation of earthquake? The purpose of the creation of earthquake is to reveal something to me. Similarly, *is the existence of death bad or good?* *Is the temporary nature of this world good or bad?* It is all good, because then I get to understand that in this universe, nothing can sustain its own existence. Everything is dependent on the Source. I am here in this universe to not rely on anything transient. I want security and there is no security in this universe. When someone looks for it, he finds the Source who has a permanent existence.

* Human spirit is created with a need for Permanence, Eternity, and Perfectness.

***How can I relate myself to the Source?*** It is the Creator’s Mercy to have created the universe with a transient nature. When we dislike transience, we look for Absolute permanent existence. This universe is a call for “conscious beings” to realize who the Source of their existence is. Therefore, the creation of death, transience, illness or getting old is beautiful. We are given the sense not to like them but the creation of these events is beautiful because that is how we search for permanence.

* Anything related to this universe is to acknowledge what the Source of my existence is.

***Can I trust this Source?*** That is belief, relying on God. We need to understand the essence of the Creator. If we develop a negative feeling towards creation, we develop a negative feeling towards the Creator of the universe. The Prophet (pbuh) encouraged us to always look at positive things and to overlook any negative scene. The universe is presented in such a way so that we develop a positive attitude towards creation and thus the Creator.

* Looking at the negative side of creation ultimately contradicts the purpose of our existence.

***How can we avoid jealousy?***

We have to try to see perfection in the creation of everything. However, the perfection cannot belong to the thing itself. Anything in the world cannot make itself perfect, they are all made perfect. Nothing belongs to itself (***lailaha***); they are all given existence by the Creator (***illallah***).

* Our duty is to search for the Source of that perfection.

Jealousy is derived from unbelief. Example: A neighbor has something better than we have. We attribute the ownership of that perfect thing to the neighbor. In this way, the source of jealousy is based on attributing the source of perfection to the neighbor itself.

* The source of perfection is not the object itself but it belongs to the Owner of that object.

Let’s take another example. If my power of sight is given to me, you cannot be jealous of it because it is given. It is a sign of the quality of the Giver; it has nothing to do with me. I belong to Him, *why are you envying me?* Use me as a means of acknowledging my Creator, who is your Creator as well.

* Be proud of your Lord rather than be jealous of creation!

A person that we are jealous of is an evidence for us, a sign for us, and a call to acknowledge the Creator: **“O Lord! How perfect you have created this man!”** Just as we brag about working for a company that produces the best stuff, similarly, we should be proud of belonging to the Creator of this universe. Example: There is a tree in my garden. I should proudly say: **“the Creator of beauty or perfection in this tree is my Lord! I belong to Him!**

* Whoever is aware of this reality of creation cannot be jealous of anything because he sees His Lord’s presence everywhere.

Now, after being proud of the Creator, we may desire that which He has given to the neighbor (as in the example above). That desire can only be met if we genuinely acknowledge that He is the Provider of everything. And so, we attach our being to Him only and follow the order in creation to achieve the Perfect One.

Jealousy is lack of awareness, lack of consciousness, and not knowing who the Lord of the universe is. We need to address the root cause of any problem with Divine dimension. Unfortunately, secularist approach to any subject becomes ineffective for satisfying human spirit because they do not attribute creation to its appropriate Creator. We are not trained in looking at matters from belief perspective and so without confirming ***lailaha***, we cannot conclude ***illallah.***