Wednesday, December 24, 2014
Topic: Divine Determining (Conclusion part 2)

**“The conditions we suppose to be life are only the minute in which we are. All the time previous to the present minute and the things of the world within that time are dead in the present minute. And all the time subsequent to the present minute and all it contains are non-existent in it. That means the physical life on which we rely is not even a minute, but rather a passing instant.”**

* The moment which has passed is dead. Tomorrow is non-existent in my present time.
* “Right now” we are experiencing the passing instance.
* The rest is in our memory, our expectations.
* We are really clinging our lives to the passing moment.
* We are living in the passing instance, i.e. the moment.

**“Since it is thus, we should give up the physical life of ego. We should rise to the level of the heart, spirit and inner faculties; we should see what a broad sphere of life they have. For them, the past and the future are living; they are existent and full of life. But for the physical life, they are dead.”**

* We do not have any substantial physical attachment to the universe.
* Our relationship with the physical world remains with us on an emotional basis only.
* For example: Yesterday, I touched the neighbor’s furry cat. Today that palpable existence is gone.
* Our heart, inner senses and emotions are attached to its memory.
* Similarly, we can only imagine and expect for the future.
* Our reality is such that we have no physical connection with the past and the future.
* Our egoistic tendency wants to appropriate the physical aspects of the universe to itself.
* But if we pay close attention, we will notice that the physical world is continuously passing and we cannot hold on to any objects.
* We have to use our human faculties to discern what “reality” is.
* *Is our attachment to the physical objects in the universe really worth it?*
* No, because our connection with the objects in the universe is temporary and so it has no permanent reality.
* Question: *Does the heart and spirit need each other to discern reality?*
* Heart and spirit together takes meaning of the physical objects whereas ego wants to own the physical objects.
* Extract the meaning from the universe and attach your human qualities to the meaning of the creation in this universe. Do not lay your hopes within the universe or its objects. It is meaningless.
* Our relationship with the physical world is nothing but a passing instance.
* We can live with the meaning extracted from the physical world forever within ourselves.

* We can extract meaning from past experiences and we can refer it to the future.
* This in not imaginary because as far as our relationship with the nature of the universe is concerned, we have the ability to understand what our reality is.
* Our memory of the past is with us but physically it cannot be retrieved.
* Our presence to this universe is connected within a wide spectrum whereas our physical connection is just a passing instance.

**“The present world is like a speech. As soon as you hear a word, you cannot keep it, its gone. The following word has not been uttered yet. But the meaning you deduce from the word you heard remains within your mind, heart and spirit. Keep the meaning you inferred from it. Do not try to get hold of the word itself, you cannot.”**

* Getting the “meaning” from objects/events is what we ought to look for.
* Example: You get a phone call from a friend, as soon as it ends, it is gone. *Has it gone into non-existence?*
* The call has ended but the meaning remains with me.
* Although, we would desire to hold the speech but we cannot hold the speech.
* Do not attach your heart to the physical object.
* Similarly, our relationship with the universe should be practiced in the same way.
* The purpose of the existence of the universe is to reveal who my Lord is.
* The objects in the universe are there for me to interact with and connect my being to an Absolute Divine Source.
* Example: Your mom is compassionate.
* You have an emotional connection with the existence of mom. You are experiencing compassion in motherhood. This experience is meaningful for you.
* The message of compassion she projects is given to her by her Creator.
* We have to be in touch with the object through the meaning we get from it.
* The Creator of the universe is the source of Compassion; this realization is to be used as a means of supplication: “I need Your compassion forever, o my Creator.”
* *How is all this connected to Divine Determining?*
* Example: Your friend gives you a rose and you put it into water.
* While the flower is growing, there is a message in it from the Creator.
* When the flower dies, it is a “living” message again from the Creator.
* My responsibility: Get the meaning from the message and act accordingly i.e. Live with the meaning.
* In the above example, my human nature desires for the flower to remain ever fresh.
* When we are heedless, we want things to be as we want them to be.
* The reality of things we observe goes against our false egoistic human expectations.
* My expectations turn into meaninglessness if I do not attach my existence to an eternal Source.
* The nature of the universe prompts us to communicate with the Creator.
* Acknowledge that all objects in the universe are employed by the Creator.
* Physical attachment to the object is real but we cannot lay our hope in it, we can only receive some messages from it; and these messages are permanent and take me to their Eternal Source.
* Everything is serving us in this universe.
* We are here on training.
* Every level of ignorance is a step to get to our reality if we use our freewill in the right way.
* I ought to ask: should I develop my relationship with the physical objects or should I develop my relationship with the meaning I extract from the objects in the universe?
* As I use the meaning which is conveyed to me through the universe, I develop my human qualities as far as my acknowledgment of the Creator is concerned.
* This means that my Lord is always with me and always communicating with me.
* I have to be conscious of this reality when I use my freewill and act accordingly. The ever-presence of my Lord in my life never means that I have to choose only one option appointed by Him. This is the way that Divine Determining needs to be understood.
* When we supplicate, we acknowledge His presence within us.
* Hadith: Prophet (pbuh) and his companions were climbing up a hill. Some people were shouting loudly: God is Great! Prophet (pbuh) said: why are you shouting? Do you think that God is far away or deaf?
* Lesson: We are always in the presence of God. There is no such expression in the Quran that teaches us to shout because the Creator is far away from you. On the contrary, the Creator is nearer to you than your thoughts.
* *Allahumma* and *Rabbee* have similar connotations.
* God is near to you; He is the Creator of our deepest feelings.

Here are some verses of the Quran to question because it may contradict with our understanding of what we have been studying. Divine Determining is the order of this existing universe. My freewill is given to me and my connection with the universe is such that I need to extract the meaning out of it and get to know the order.

* **Verse#1: “Say: Nothing will happen to us, except what God has decreed for us: He is our protector”: and on God let the believers put their trust.” Tauba (9):51**
* *Everything is under His decree, so what is the point in having my freewill?*
* He sets me free to choose but I cannot create.
* It is His decree: I will choose and He creates within His order.
* My freewill is given to me to be operated within the order of the universe and I have been given the consciousness to follow the order.
* When I follow the order while using my freewill, I then experience the created result.
* Everything happens within the order established by the Creator.
* He is our Protector means that He is our (*maulana/wali*) guardian.
* Similar to a child, who has a guardian to protect them, I cannot protect my existence. Only the One who creates the universe and me can protect me.
* I am not given the power to create anything but I am given the power to exercise my freewill.
* Everything in the order of the universe tells us that nothing happens arbitrarily.
* We should not act on accidents. The order of the universe tells me which kind of precautions I should take.
* I am responsible for my freewill and God creates the result.
* The tenses in the scripture (depending on the context) are to be understood within the objectives of the teachings of the scripture; they do not necessarily mean to delineate the time dimension of the narrative.
* I should only be concerned with my present moment.
* Everything happens in the universe according to His established order.
* Nothing happens by luck.
* Our being here in this world is as my Creator decreed.
* I should develop a worldview based on this.
* **Verse #2: “…and they will say: All praise is due to God, who has guided us unto this; for we would certainly not have found the path unless God had guided us!...” Araf (7):43**
* REMEMBER: We ask, He creates.
* We cannot isolate our freewill as far as His act of creation is concerned.
* Creation is in the hands of God. He decides to create.
* Example: I sow the seed. *Am I creating the plant?*
* No, I am not.
* I look at the creation; I get the message from the Owner telling me that if I want a plant, I need to sow the seed.
* As far as human freewill is concerned, I follow the order.
* The order of creation belongs to its Creator.
* I learn the order from the One who teaches me how to grow the plant.
* If we were not given the ability to learn how to grow the plant, then we could not exercise our freewill.
* If the ability to distinguish the right from the wrong was not given to me by my Creator, I would never be able to guide myself to the right. This is what the verse is referring to as far as our subject of Divine Determining is concerned.
* **Verse #3: “Or [lest] a person say: if God had but guided me I should have been among those who are conscious of Him.” Zumar (39):57**
* There is a constant relationship between my freewill and Divine Determining.
* *If God disables me to exercise my freewill, am I responsible for using it?*
* No.
* Example: if you are fasting, and forget that you are fasting, so you start drinking water.
* The point in fasting is to acknowledge the owner of the water.
* *Why cannot I drink while I am fasting?*
* To acknowledge in my practical life that this water does not belong to me. Only with its Owner’s permission can I drink it.
* He has set us free to fast or to acknowledge Him. We are free to exercise our freewill to acknowledge the true Owner of all our given properties.
* *If I forget that I am fasting and start drinking water, then am I misusing my freewill?* No
* If I do not choose to believe that water is created by God, then, my not fasting is not a disobedience. I am not acknowledging God’s ownership of water, how can I disobey Him? In this case, I have already committed the gravest mistake by choosing the option that water is not created and there is no God at all.
* This is the reason why the deniers of God do not feel any wrong when they do not follow the will of God. They wrong themselves with such gravest mistake which brings them meaninglessness, purposelessness, waiting to become compost.
* God-consciousness is a human choice. All my actions may or may not have value only according to my God-consciousness.
* No one can confirm the external Absolute truth. My internal truth which confirms the external truth is subjective to me.
* Everything is so logically consistent that I conclude that there must be a Creator. My perception is subjective to me only, based on my observation of the universe.
* We should be honest and consistent within ourselves.
* I have to always acknowledge that I am guided by my Creator.
* There is no magic wand to connect us to the Absolute truth. Our magic wand is within us. We have to choose to use our freewill to search for it. Everything in creation is pointing to the existence of the Absolute truth. There must be an Absolute truth, but I have to choose the option that I have to look for its signs and relate myself to it.
* The Quran informs us that it is a yardstick (*Furqan.*) That means that I can check my conclusions with it. The Qur’an is there to guide me how to use my human qualities to get to know the Absolute Truth, but it never forces me, I am free to listen to it or not. It is me who is responsible for my choices.
* Having uncertainty about getting the Absolute truth is “good”; this keeps us in a constant searching mode of our reality.
* This, in itself tells us that we are created beings. So that through our existence, we get to know our Creator.
* My acknowledging the existence of the Creator is different from my perception of the Creator.
* I cannot be sure of my perception of the Creator, it being perfect or not.
* We need not to assign any divinity to anything but the Creator. That is the main teaching of the Qur’an: “la ilaha” (There is nothing in this universe that has the ability to create, they all are in need of being created.) Therefore, there must be a Creator Who is Conscious of what He is doing with an Absolute Freewill: “Illallah.”