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| **Date** | Wednesday, August 3 2016 |
| **Topic** | Chapter Read  |
| **Part** | 6 |



***“Have you ever considered whether he is on the right way or is concerned with God consciousness?” Iqra (96): 11-12***

People mostly mistake Scriptures as being the means to provide criteria for one to make decisions. Yes, the Scripture says that it is the criteria, this is an offer. But ultimately it is the reader who will confirm this claim of the Scripture. As a conscious human being, you have to check whether what the scripture or any other person offers you resonate with your being. If it does, use the proposition but ultimately come up with your own conclusion i.e. your own decision.

I have to check for myself whether something is right or wrong for me. There are no external factors which forces me to follow a certain way. I am given freedom to choose whichever way I want to do things. Freedom is beautiful. That freedom is given to me in the form of freewill. I just need to be aware of my freedom i.e. how I am utilizing it. Am I utilizing it in my own name? For example: I like to draw pictures. Am I using this talent in the name of the One that has created me and given me the talent or am I using this talent in my own name? I need to use my consciousness to become aware of the Source of my existence. In other words, I am my own criteria to make decision between right and wrong. It is our capacity that we learn from teachers but ultimately it is us to confirm whether what we learn is acceptable by us or not.

If I am on the right way, then I feel it within myself. If I am not then I feel it within myself as well. Since I am my own criteria, I use my power to choose freely. That is how I will make progress. **Only through using freewill and making decisions, we make progress.** If I am not given options, there would be no opportunity to practice God consciousness or ***taqwa***. Taqwa necessitates ever alive consciousness. Taqwa means trying my best to take refuge in the right position or getting the protection of Something. It also refers to one’s state of being i.e. being alarmed not to make the wrong decision. However, it does not mean that one has to be hesitant with each decision. One has to be always open to questioning and choosing what deems fit to their human nature. **Wrong decision has to do with living without consciousness or awareness of reality.**

Since the universe continuously changes, I reevaluate my conditions. That is, I renew my belief with ***lailaha*** (nothing has the power to give existence to anything) ***illallah*** (everything is in need to be given existence). I need to be open to questioning or reconsidering situations. Example: My decision is not right, let me reconsider it. Even when you repent, it is a way of reconsidering a decision.

In general, the more religious one becomes in the mainstream culture, the more robotic one becomes because they think that they are done with ***lailaha illallah***. Repeating wordings without God consciousness is not human. An opposite extreme to that is thinking that I do not need any guidance and I am self-sufficient on my own. Both of these opposite attitudes have stopped questioning, very dangerous indeed!

***Why does one utter “God is great!” at the beginning of each ritualistic prayer?***

It means that at the beginning of each action, I am supposed to conclude: “God is beyond what I perceive in this universe.” I come to express that reality that I have accepted that conclusion based on my experiences.

As we studied in earlier verses of this chapter (please refer to the previous notes from this series), reading anything is a means of reflecting on creation.

* Think🡪come to a conclusion🡪express it verbally + physically
* Practice of belief needs utmost consciousness.



***“Nay, if he desist not we should surely drag him down upon his forehead.”***

***“The lying rebellion forehead.”***

***“Then let him call his associate.”***

***“We will call the angels of Hell.” (96): 15-18***

The idea which prevents me from developing my human qualities deserves to be put down. For example the idea that let me entertain my life for a while has to be crushed down. It has no reality because every moment we are subject to death. No moment comes into existence without the Source that gives it existence, the Creator. I cannot find any evidence in the Quran supporting the idea of neglecting Creator in a moment. Quran is the dynamic speech of its Creator revealed to a person to be shared with all of mankind so it becomes a live speech to all its readers.

**Hell**= place of idleness, ignorance where an individual has stopped questioning. It is also the awareness of a false idea or a guilt feeling. Some scholars also define it as the place where human mistakes are cleansed.

**Angels**= bearers of meaning. That is, when one feels guilty in a state of hell and questions this feeling, then the angels come to the rescue. In other words, the angels help you get aware of the false idea.



***“No! Do not obey Him. But prostrate yourself and draw near [to God]” (96): 19***

**Do not obey him**= Do not choose any options which prevent you from realizing the truth. Be honest to yourself.

**Prostrate yourself to God**= Get closer to the truth. When you think about it, you will definitely feel it. I have nothing from myself, everything is given to me.

In conclusion, freedom comes before anything (religion, worship, making decision…). In order to be a believer, one has to be free. Use your freedom without which you cannot make progress. Body is under my freewill. Sprit is given freedom to control body, not the other way around. When you are emotionally happy, this feeling is supported by the body in the form of expression. I need to feel God in my own creation. I need to realize and see the truth for myself: “nothing belongs to me, everything is given to me”. When you see the truth, submit to it. Do not be lazy! Do work on achieving your goals such as getting a promotion or buying that vacation home but do not forget that it is not the purpose of your life. Always be alert and in acknowledgment: **“Thank you, you are giving me the opportunity, I am entertaining my life here because of Your grace”.** If I do something wrong that deviates from the purpose of my existence, then angels of hell come to remind me to shift my focus back to the right way or utilize my freewill in the right way. There is no way to escape from it!