Wednesday, January 14, 2015
**Topic: Satisfying hearts with “How”? (part 2)**

*Recap:* The Quran teaches us how to reason if and only if we use our intellect and hearts altogether with the universe.

Our general assumption about the Prophets is that they were completely satisfied individuals with total tranquility in their hearts. However, if we were to read the Quran with proper reasoning, the assumption will prove us wrong.

Human beings yearn for a satisfied heart and are in pursuit of tranquility within them. While searching to gain satisfaction, one should never rely on dreams and imaginations because that is not our reality. Similarly, doing a good action does not provide a satisfied heart in the long run.

***How can we achieve a satisfied heart then?***

You have to study and observe the universe. You have to gain experience by gathering evidence from the qualities manifested in the universe and coming to a conclusion. That’s how you establish a worldview and stay confident with it. Conclusion will always take place here but for the realm of the unseen i.e. the Absolute, Eternal Being. My conclusion: “I am absolutely sure about the existence of an Absolute Being”.

* Satisfaction of the heart is the result of “the belief in the existence of an Absolute Eternal Being”.

Whoever places you in this universe has bound you within the conditions of this universe. You have to look for all the answers to your questions within this universe.

* Prophets and the scriptures guide us on how to deal with this universe. You have to train yourself according to the direction provided by the scripture without any imagination.

Seeking our reality starts with looking into our “how” questions. There are endless beings in this universe. Not all beings have a physical existence; some are animate, some inanimate such as energy and so on.. Therefore, we cannot reduce the universe to matter only, it is unrealistic. For example: Brain is “matter” and logical thinking is “non-matter”. Eye and the power of sight are matter and non-matter respectively.

* Both matter and non-matter are objects that are part of this universe.

That is the reason why every feeling needs to be questioned because it is given to us. Even the “power to question” needs to be questioned. Our thoughts come and go and we cannot sustain them. We cannot sustain anything. We just need to settle the following within ourselves: *where did it come from, what do I need to do with it and where is it going?* We are created within this universe and so our questions are what make us a “human being”. **Here is the most important question to be asking: *How is everything being created?***

Our Creator is not of the nature of this universe and His essence cannot be comprehended**.** He is the Creator of the universe; He cannot be comprehended within the qualities of the creatures.So, we cannot direct our question “How?” to God. **Here is a contradictory question to avoid asking: *How is God creating object A?*** The universe is the witness to the answer of this question. As if it will say to us**: “**Look at me and you will understand how I came into existence.” This will be the answer to this question.

We need to study how things are coming into existence in the universe. Example: How did object A come into existence? How is its existence being sustained? We should try to decipher the process of its being in this universe. You cannot ask the “why” questions yet until you are completely convinced that the existence of object A is dependent on an Absolute Eternal Source.

Similarly, we need to investigate “cause and effect” relationships. Example: Is event Y occurring as a result of event X? How is each event happening? Y is not happening because of X; their relationship is not causative. Both X and Y is happening on “occasion” as separate occurrences. That is the order of the universe: X and Y are adjacent to each other and so they happen concurrently.

Questions need to be asked in order to understand the Source of existence of the objects/events. Example: *What is the Source of existence of your brain? What is the Source of existence of the properties of your brain? What is the Source of existence of your thinking?* The order of the universe has been given existence by a conscious being.

When questioning, keep in mind the following:
1/ Ask “how” questions to the objects and the universe only. Example: *How is object A coming into existence?*

* Your conclusion: object A **is created** with certain properties.

2/ Ask “why” questions to yourself only in order to reflect on your answers to “how” questions; Example: “*Why has object A been given existence together with its properties?*”

After you establish answers to your “how” questions at the end of your investigation of the “how” questions, you can then go on looking for answers to the “why” questions. Similarly, after you establish by investigating how you have come into existence you can ask yourself “*Why am I created?”* Example: The universe must have a conscious Creator, “*Why did He put me here*?”

We need to always verify the news we get from the scriptures by investigating how the things around us including ourselves and the properties we all are endowed with comes into existence. This is an ongoing process: we have to get into the habit of thinking of the object first, how it is brought into existence and then the news we get from the scriptures telling us that the Creator of this object is “God”. We then derive a conclusion from this line of thinking. When we get used to this way of reflection it happens so swiftly that it may not take any time.

* We need to reflect from the creation to the Creator (from the art to the Artist), and only then, confirming the message of scriptures. Not the other way round where we fall into imitating scriptures, rather than confirming them with verification.

**Note:** **Never ask “why” questions to the objects, “Why does it exist?” or to the Creator, “Why did You create this?” because the Creator has given us the ability to investigate, analyze and come to a conclusion.**

* After gathering the answers to “how” questions, we will inevitably get the answers to” why” questions which occurs within us as follows: “I understood that this thing has been created and its creation is meaningful: Why is it that all these things are happening around me? Let me make sense of their existence to myself.” At this stage we can compare and check our conclusions with that of the scriptures. Remember, scriptures are to be used as “guides” not to imitate them. After our investigations we can confirm the scripture if we find them confirmable as a result of our investigation. This is called the verification of our “belief.” **This belief is heart comforting**.

As a result of 1 and 2, He speaks to you and guides you. In the scripture, He teaches us how to communicate with Him i.e. through the universe. In the scripture, He reveals His answers to “why” questions which we get as a result of analyzing/testing our “how” questions in the universe. We need to check our results with what the scripture tells us and then decide whether the scripture is not a true one, or, there is flaw in our reasoning. This process is inevitable because we have freewill to make our own conclusions.

Religion asks us to study the universe and it guides us how to get answers to our “why” questions while “in this universe”. What the religion answers is a guideline from which I can get satisfaction. What I read in the scripture can only be confirmed by experiencing how the things are coming into existence in the universe. Scripture encourages us to investigate.

Prophet Abraham said: “God please show me how you resurrect the dead, I will see it and I will experience it.” God said: “Don’t you believe?” Abraham said: “Yes I do but I want to get satisfaction in my heart”.

* Even Prophet needs satisfaction in their hearts to see how the Creator’s promise takes place in this universe.

We are always under the protection of our Lord if we choose to be conscious. Example: when you get excited seeing a bird, it makes you realize that you have a Lord who has not forgotten you.

In order to be religious, we have to be conscious of this universe. Religion is to be practiced everywhere. Be natural as you are created, do not be artificial. Universe is created for everyone; it does not discriminate in terms of race, age, gender, and ethnicity. Scripture says: If you want to be religious, you have to use the universe and **connect yourself to the Creator of the universe, not to the God of your culture.** You cannot be in the presence of the Creator without experiencing this universe. Praying is connecting with the Creator. For example: if I am in the park, I am in the presence of my Lord. When I pray and turn to the *Qiblah* as started by the Abrahamic tradition, I am fulfilling my ultimate purpose i.e. Oneness of God. Then I declare: “God is great!” To declare this you do not have to be in a particular building.

* Imagination is not belief. We observe and experience the objects in the universe which are real.
* We have to practice our connection with God in how we understand the creation and the universe. If you are convinced that this world has a Lord, then you have a Lord and you are comfortable in your existence.


**“Or as he who passed by a town deserted by its people, with its roofs crumbled said how could God bring it back to life after its death. Thereupon God caused them to be dead for a hundred years; where after they were brought back to life, they were asked: how long have you remained thus? They answered: “I have remained thus a day or part of a day”. God says: “No you have remained thus for a hundred years. Look at your food and drink, untouched it is by the passing of years and look at your ass, there are a signs for the people. And look at the bones of [animal and men] HOW we put them together and then clothe them with flesh!” And when all this became clear to him, he said: I know now how God has the power to will anything.”** ***Baqara (2):259***

We have the ability to go back in time using our memory. We can still experience the freshness of a previous feeling.

* For example: You may remember the joy while biking at the tender age of five. Now every time that you bike, it brings out the same feeling in you.
* Try to understand the nature of this source of existence i.e. where is the feeling coming from?

Everything that is mentioned in the verse needs to be thought about and applied to our existence “now”.

* Whoever has put flesh to our body, is giving us existence at every moment.
* From a child, he created you into an adult and from there he may give you old age, part of His created order.
* The One who made this order has given you the opportunity to experience and witness His Absoluteness.
* That is our evidence to confirm our belief which He is demonstrating to conscious beings.

In the verse above, “How can God bring something back to life after its death”? This is a rhetoric question. Everything is being created with a possibility of being resurrected. Example: The seed of a tree retains all the qualities of the tree regardless of it dying in the autumn and winter months. Similarly, our existence is subjective to different stages, babyhood🡪childhood🡪adulthood. At every stage we just need to pay attention to “HOW the bones are being clothed with the flesh.” This is just an example of wisdom in the way that we are created. We have to pay attention to every part of our existence right now; we will see who is operating in our existence.