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| **Date** | Wednesday, January 6, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Story of Abraham |
| **Part** | 17 |

*Recap:* Thus far Abraham has been presenting to us an attitude that we should adapt to in our daily lives. When speaking to anyone, we need to work on presenting our case “kindly” in a soft manner.

* If I speak to someone, I should speak out of compassion.
* Like Abraham, my duty is to only remind people to check on how they are considering their position.



***“O my father! I fear lest a chastisement afflicts you from the Most Gracious, so that you become to Satan a friend.” Maryam (19):45***

* In general, when form of the verb changes, meaning changes as well. Therefore, we may define *adhab* as impede, obstruct, hinder from (doing wrong) a cause preventing something to happen.
* *(Adhdhaba*: to inflict torment, punishment, chastisement.) In the above verse *adhaba is used.*
* Analogy: A parent may yank his/her child from something that may harm the child. Similarly, out of compassion, the Most Gracious One, *ar-Rahman* Causes hindrance, which helps me from not falling into something bad.
* Another analogy: When I start cutting my finger it hurts. The pain impedes me doing the action more, tells me to stop from harming myself. This pain is *adhab.*
* *Adhab* is an obstruction coming from the Most Gracious One.
* *When we make a mistake which goes against our primordial nature, do we feel happy or sad?*
* Sad. That’s why out of Compassion, the Most Gracious One gives us a warning which may hurt us at first but it is for our benefit. The painful action happens because the Merciful One does not want me to go astray.
* **Feeling sad is *“adhabun minarrahman”* i.e. the Merciful One is saying: “what you are doing is wrong, come back to me”.**
* When you do anything harmful (contradict yourself), you get a warning.
* Pain is a warning from the Merciful One that if He did not come to your help, you will fall into a worst situation.
* Satan: Anything that goes against human nature. I cannot be happy with it in the long run.
* There is no apparent happiness in denying the truth and seeing the world as meaningless.
* **The more you befriend Satan, the more warning will come to you. If you do not take notice of it, the deeper you sink.**
* If I do not live in the presence of God, I am not happy with my life and I look for excuses to overcome this sadness and start doing things against my primordial nature. As a result of running away from situations, people fall into addictions (alcoholic, workaholic etc.) to the point that they destroy their being completely.
* Everyone goes through different stages according to their capacity. **The Merciful One treats people according to their capacity.**

Thus, when I wrong myself, God’s part is just to save me, warning me so that I do not fall into a bigger situation. All the warning verses in the Quran are out of mercy i.e. a call to attach our being to the Source of our being. The existence of Hell is Mercy.

This verse is also teaching us that if I am not fully satisfied within myself or what I believe in, I fall into a reactionary attitude. Example: If anyone raises their voice against what “we believe”, most people attack. In other words, if we are not comfortable within ourselves, we react. **Solution= strengthen your own belief so you can remain calm and peaceful in your own being.**

* If I am sure of the position I take, I feel confident in myself.
* Additionally, if I smile at my enemy’s face, his anger diminishes.

***“[His father] replied: “Do you hate my gods, O Abraham? If you do not stop, I will indeed stone you: Now get away from me for a good long while”. Maryam (19):46***

* Father is angry. He is reactionary.
* This teaches me that instead of stoning or giving away irrelevant replies/arguments, one needs to present his/her case and bring evidence about that which they are personally convinced.
* When you cannot defend yourself, you act with anger.
* Father’s position is taken up by most people in their attitude.
* Anger, reaction is the way of Abraham’s father.
* We need to take Abraham’s position/attitude: Cool, calm, putting forth the evidence to demonstrate the consistency in our belief system.
* ***How much confidence do I have in my belief so that I will be self-confident?***
* If I am not satisfied with what I believe in, I am bound to be reactionary.
* Feeling confident in belief is the most essential thing we need to have.

***“Abraham said: “Peace be upon you: I will pray to my Lord for your forgiveness: for He is to me Most Gracious”.
“And I will turn away from you and from those whom you invoke besides God. I will call on my Lord: perhaps by my prayer to my Lord, I shall be blessed.”
“So when he had left them and those they worshipped other than God, We gave him Isaac and Jacob, and each of [them] We made a prophet.” Maryam (19):47-49***

* *What is unbelief?*
* Mistaken ideas or denying reality.
* Abraham is confident enough to withdraw himself from his father’s mistaken ideas.
* Be confident in your own belief system.
* In general, the weaker the belief system, the more religious appearance we see. It does not mean that one needs to loosen up their appearance. The message here is to feel confident from the inside out, not the other way around.
* Remember that any authentic change comes from within.

***“When he said unto his father and his people: “what are these images which you are so intensely devoted?” They answered: “we found our forefathers worshipping them.””Anbiya (21):52-53***

* Abraham is addressing his father’s reasoning by asking him to think about the images i.e. *what is nature?* He is teaching me to also think about it.
* Nature is everything that is created with certain qualities. They are nothing but a manifestation of the Qualities of the Creator in the created world.
* Similarly, laws of nature are also a manifestation of the Creator.
* Any idea that attributes the power of creating to anything within the created world is self-contradictory.
* **Order is a created thing; images are created and therefore not real.**
* Example: light bulbs are created to transfer light but in and of itself, light bulbs are not the Source of light.
* Therefore, I cannot turn created things (images) into a Creator.
* When it comes to religion, I cannot follow my forefathers. Yes, I may take lessons from their teachings but I need to study/work seriously for myself to make belief (religion) my own personal conclusion.