Saturday, December 20, 2014
Topic: What is wisdom (*Continuation of the Twelfth word page 144*)

***Recap:*** The king asked a philosopher and a Muslim scholar to understand “the Quran”. This universe is “the Quran”. The author makes an assessment of the worldviews of a philosopher and a Muslim scholar. The philosopher studied the objects in the universe with utmost details whereas the Muslim scholar extracted the meaning out of these objects. The universe is a book and we need to extract meaning out of it.

* *What are the students of the Quran expected to read?*
* The book “Quran” says that if you want to read me, you first have to discern how I am demonstrating myself to you in a physical form i.e. “the universe”.
* Only then can you see the connection between the physical manifestation (universe) and the verbal manifestation (scripture) of the Creator’s qualities.
* Everything in this universe is meaningful and is a means to find our Creator.
* *What order should we start finding our Creator with, the universe or the scripture?*
* A toddler first interacts with the objects around him.
* As we grow and develop our relationship with the universe, we realize that we are interconnected with the rest of the universe.
* **Communicating with the universe->Questions->Search STARTS Now**
* The more I find about the reality of my existence, the more I search for the truth.
* Bottom line: Objects around me are meaningful. Abilities given to me are also meaningful. My relationship with this universe is meaningful and I am conscious of it.
* I am conscious of the reality that I can benefit from this relationship.
* My Consciousness of existence urges me to investigate further and further.
* The ability to learn to be conscious of the existence of the qualities around me is innate in me.
* Although, as we grow, we do not really establish an awareness of being connected to ourselves. For example: We may get excited while eating an orange. We may not get excited with the fact that we taste the orange with our tongue.
* As far as the creation of the tongue is concerned, my tongue is given to me in order to witness the “Qualities of its Creator”.
* We have some qualities which have no physical connection with the rest of the universe as far as “cause and effect” relationship of the order is concerned.
* Our thoughts have no physical existence.
* Example: I love beauty. *Where did I get this sense from?*
* This given sense is independent from our physical being. Although, it is still part of what makes us a human being, we cannot attribute our human qualities (rationality, emotions…) to our physical being.
* There is a relationship between my physical body and my given abilities.
* Example: When I get the meaning from reading a book, “the meaning” of that which is given existence is not from my brain. My brain cells are not producing the meaning; they are the employed tools to receive that meaning.
* This fact implies that my physical body is not causing anything to come into existence.
* We can never ignore the “totality” of our existence.
* Example: Let us look into our eyes and the power of sight.
* Although, there is a relationship between the eyes and the power of sight, the particles of the eyes do not really constitute the power of sight. They are just a means for us to see.
* Similarly, I am connected with the universe and the objects in the universe are just a vehicle for us to get to know who our Lord is.
* Furthermore, the objects themselves cannot be the source of the meaning that we extract from them.
* The author is pointing out that we may experience one of these two pitfalls while understanding our existence.

1/ A person may benefit from the book of the universe and does not take notice of the author.

2/ Another person may claim to acknowledge the author of the book of the universe but never reads it as a book.

* In order to legitimize his material views, #1 may take as evidence the claim from #2 and say, “I am benefitting from the universe even though I do not take notice of the author. I am better off than #2.
* That’s why the scholars of the Quran are expected to study the universe. Otherwise, #2 will be legitimizing #1’s neglect of the Maker of the universe while he is using it.
* The author emphasizes that you cannot separate the universe from its Maker. We have to read the universe alongside with its verbal explanation.
* Quran is the verbal explanation of the meaning of the universe.

The following verses relate to the connection between our soul and our physical being. These units are inseparable and that is what makes us a human being.

* **VERSE#1: “On the day when their tongues and their hands and their feet shall bear witness against them as to what they did.” (24): 24**
* I cannot ignore my physical side because it is related to my human side.
* Similarly, physical objects and their meanings are so much integrated, but it does not mean that the object itself is the source of the meaning.
* Example: The shapes of the letters in a book are not the source of the meaning I get from reading the book. The shapes of the letters are employed by the author of the book in order for me to be aware of the existence of the meaning within a certain order.
* Similarly, the objects in the universe are employed by the Creator in order to convey to me the meaning of my existence.
* Quran speaks to our existence right now.
* If I cannot experience the reality of the message in my existence now, then how can I confirm the message?
* The speaker in the Qur’an is speaking to me now and I have to evaluate this news while I am here.
* To get answers to our questions is not the point. The reality is that we are able to realize that we have questions that need answers. It means that I have the ability to evaluate the questions and realize that my existence is meaningful and I have to search for it.
* **VERSE #2: “Until when they come to it, their ears their eyes and their skins shall bear witness against them as to what they did” (41):20**
* The interpretation of this verse is similar to the previous one.
* Moreover, if someone cannot connect with the Creator through the objects around him, how can he find God?
* **If you cannot find God in the universe, you cannot find God in a mosque.**
* Similarly, if a tree cannot be your mosque, the universe is meaningless for you.
* Without establishing the proper foundation of belief, we cannot find God in social institutions.
* **VERSE #3: “And they shall say to their skins: Why have you borne witness against us? They shall say: God Who makes everything speak has made us speak, and He created you first, and to him you shall be brought back.” (44):29**
* My tools: hands, eyes and skin are all given to me. I am not their owner.
* The text says that the tools will witness against me if I misuse them. *How can I misuse them?*
* If I do not acknowledge that these tools are given to me by my Creator but instead I use them in my name as my property.
* “Misuse” does not mean that, for example, when I use my tongue I should refrain from telling a lie. Mostly everyone abstains from telling lies.
* The verse is a reminder for us to be conscious that these tools are given to us. If I use them in the name of anything other than the Creator, this opens the door to ***shirk*** (assigning divinity to that thing.)
* Our consciousness is not ours either. We do not own anything, they are just granted to us.
* Our ability to use our freewill is also given to us and we are set free to choose when we use it.
* The tools will make us realize that the One who gave them to us has given them the ability to convey the message to us, which is to let us know Him.
* Everything will witness for or against us. In this existence, I have to take notice of the objects around me because it carries a message. If I do not, then the objects testify against me.
* Quran is a dynamic book.
* **VERSE #4: “And the heavens and the earth wept not for them, nor were they given a respite” (44):29**
* Without studying the universe, you cannot study the Quran. The universe has a live connection with us. It carries the message from its Creator; human beings have been given the ability to receive this message. When we do not receive the message from the universe and pass that moment, it would not lose anything because we were not responding to them anyways.
* If a person responds to the message that the heavens and the earth are carrying and when this person passes away, then, we understand that the heavens and the earth will be losing one of their responders.
* The Qur’an illustrates that those people who appreciate the meaning of the heavens and the earth in the universe, when they die, the universe will be sorry.
* This means, as far as these people are concerned, the universe will not be communicating with its responders, so their existence will be redundant. In the expression of the Qur’an, the universe will ***not*** weep for losing their “friends.”
* Our yesterday is dead. This does not mean that it is gone into annihilation. I just cannot experience it now.
* If you have not benefited from the message that the universe carries, the universe will not shed tears for you.
* The universe conveys the message to people who are open to receiving the message.
* We should not reduce the existence of anything in the creation to meaninglessness. Instead, we should communicate with objects.
* At least say: *Lailaha illallah*: Acknowledge that you are receiving a message from objects in the universe so they do not witness against you.
* We need to use our human qualities to communicate with the physical objects to respond to their messages otherwise we are wasting our existence.