Saturday, December 27, 2014
Topic: What is wisdom (*continuation of the Twelfth word, page 145*)

* **Second Principle:** *What is the wisdom of the Quran?*
* A person who does not take the revelation into consideration while communicating with the universe most likely sees this universe as confined to its physical existence only. For such a person, the universe is pretty much a closed circle.
* Revelation=God’s teachings revealed through the Prophet (pbuh)
* Not every religion is based on revelation. When we compare the wisdom of the Quran to the wisdom of philosophy, we have to bear in mind that we are not referring to any specific philosophical school.
* As per author of the book, *The Words*, “philosophy” means this: Trying to understand the meaning of any matter without pointing it to anything but the matter itself.
* With this state of mind, **you are not searching for the meaning of existence.**
* Example: If I were to describe a table as having four legs and a flat top, then I may talk about the table as a philosopher.
* As per author, the “Muslim scholar” means: Anyone who knew that the book is meaningful and that the matter itself cannot produce the meaning.
* Matter by itself is lifeless and unconscious.
* To become a Muslim or to follow a religious tradition, you first have to use your human qualities and become a human being.
* Religion is your personal conclusion. *How?*
* Observe the universe and ponder:
1. *Does the universe have a meaning?*
2. *Can the universe happen by itself?*
3. The objects are carrying meaning but the object itself cannot be the Source of the meaning. Example: The particles do not have the capacity to produce and convey the meaning.
4. This universe is meaningful, let me study the meaning.
* The above is a listing of a “pure” human attitude.
* My religion must be based on a certain process that I must have gone through. Only then can I conclude that this universe has a conscious Creator.
* We ought to understand why the universe is created.
* By deciphering the wisdom in the creation I understand that the Creator is revealing Himself through the act of creation.
* My ability to communicate with the Creator must have a purpose as well.
* When you observe the universe consciously, you realize that everything is communicating with you. Then you can question your own ability to communicate with the universe.
* *Where did I get the ability to understand these meanings?*
* Analogy: If you put some cheese in a trap to catch a mouse, the mouse comes and gets the cheese without questioning why it is there. The mouse has no abilities to question or reason: *Who put it there? Why is it there?*
* Although we can not guarantee that the meaning we are deducing from the universe is correct or not but we understand that: “the plants, animals cannot deduce meaning from the universe but I, as a conscious human being can”.
* You can question the existence of “the power to question”: *Where did I get it?* Then you start reading yourself as a book as well.
* **When we realize that we have been endowed with the ability to understand this universe, then we start searching for the purpose of existence of this universe**.

* God’s speech (scripture) cannot contradict God’s act of creation (universe).
* Some people may claim that the Creator of the universe spoke to them.
* You can verify the authenticity of the claim by using yourself and the universe:
1. *Is this person really employed by the Creator of the universe?*
2. *Is there compatibility between the words that he/she transfers to me and the act of Creation that I experience in the universe?*
* Only then religion starts to be implemented in our lives.
* Revelation must teach me the purpose of my existence.
* Wisdom in the Quran actually refers to this i.e. *have we used our human qualities and the universe to start religion within ourselves?*
* Without starting from ourselves, we cannot teach religion to anyone else, let alone children.
* We have to question everything from scratch.
* Religion is a “live” state of being; we cannot codify religion all together.
* Unfortunately, the meaning of religion is not present in our lives, only the rituals are present in our lives.
* Religion should not be taken for granted but on the contrary, religion can be confirmed only as a result of a human conclusion.
* The Maker of the universe has arranged the universe in such a way that it always broadcasts meaning.
* Analogy: Television broadcast messages that we can get meaning from.
* Similarly, the universe is always broadcasting messages and you may understand the meaning according to your own given capacity.
* Unfortunately, we tend to just use the machine as “a matter” without referring to the meaning this matter is pointing at and broadcasting it.
* Similarly, we may just use the universe to benefit from its objects without questioning its meaning.
* “The sincere student of philosophy is a **pharaoh**”.
* The author insinuates that if we do not pay attention to the meaning of the universe, then we may be reasoning similar to the “sincere student of philosophy”.
* God’s speech teaches me what the opposite of religion is. The opposite of religion is not scientific investigation of the universe per se, but it may be an atheistic attitude or an attitude where the universe is seen as being meaningless.
* In reality, no one can be a “pure atheist” or a “pure follower” of a religion.
* **Pharaoh = I am my own Lord, I am taking care of myself. I own myself.**
1. He sees the universe as a closed box with objects inside it.
2. He sees the relationship in between the objects; he thinks the object itself will satisfy him.
3. He does not see a conscious meaning behind the objects and so he is fixated on taking worldly benefit from these objects in order to satisfy his egoistic expectations.
4. He self-proclaims that he owns everything and that he is providing others from his possession.
5. If anything challenges this person’s authority or position in the universe, this person is ready to cut/kill that concept.
* Example: The orchid looks appealing to human beings. They feel satisfied from this orchid.
* Similarly, the pharaohic attitude assumes that the orchid is satiating him. He thinks that the beautiful orchid is giving him pleasure. This is a type of worship where a person worships the object.
* In and of itself, a flower/an object cannot provide pleasure.
* An object is “made” beautiful and there is a message conveyed in its beauty i.e. it is not the source of beauty and therefore it cannot be the object of worship.
* We are communicating with the Creator of the universe through the object.
* Our worldview->Worship.
* It may seem that pharaoh is innocent because he does not know the reality. But he is not innocent because he is consciously eradicating any ideas that reflects his reality.
* In the example above, the orchid says: I am made in a way that you will love me. You ask: who made you?
* When you realize that the orchid has a Maker, it means that you have a Maker as well. Similarly, pharaoh knows that he has to submit to His Maker. Therefore, he cuts off this way of thinking because he does not want to submit to anyone, he is the center of his own self. If anything goes against your benefit, you just want to kill it.
* The aim of the author is twofold:
1. To teach us the kind of worldview to establish.
2. To help us understand the symbolic teachings of the Quran.
* The First principle gives an assessment of two different worldviews.
* The Second principle touches upon the consequences of developing a worldview on an individual level while studying the symbolic meanings of the stories told in the scriptures.
* Although the pharaohic attitude may claim to own everything but at the same time this attitude is in need of the orchid, he is also in need of the others’ admiration of him.
* If he does something nice, he does not necessarily want people to bow to him but he wants to be appreciated by them.
* These expectations, in the language of the scripture are a “**pharaohic attitude**”. Nature of attitude is the same. The person is a small pharaoh.
* The author is talking about which direction we ought to take:

Direction A: The universe has an owner.

Direction B: The universe does not have an owner.

* How do we understand the scripture when it says: “you will not enter paradise if you have an atom’s weight of pride.”
* We first have to understand the concepts and then put that learning into practice.
* Analogy: A blank sheet of white paper has a black dot in it. Our aim should be to clean that black dot because it can be cleaned.
* Paradise in this context means that your action is a pure perfect action.
* If there is pride in an action, it cannot be pure. This means that black dot on the white paper needs to be cleaned. That black dot cannot enter paradise. The rest of the sheet of white paper can.
* Similarly, if there is an atom’s weight of belief, the person can come out of Hell.
* By these narrations we are encouraged to come out of unbelief and make our actions “pure”. If the sheet of white paper is polluted with black dots, but has a white spot on it, this white spot does not deserve Hell; it should be taken away.
* Why is this student of philosophy “obstinate”?
* Although, he looks for the meanings of every action he does but he does not question where he is getting the meanings of these actions from.
* Analogy: The mouse gets cheese from the trap. Mouse does not question his own existence or the existence of cheese.
* Similarly, if I take away something from the universe and claim that I own it, and then if I do not ask who owns the universe, then I am not utilizing my human qualities to question.
* Example: I get an orange from an orange tree and I never question the existence of the tree or the orange itself.
* At the same token, if someone takes something from my property, I get defensive because I think I own it.
* **Obstinate**= If I do not make an effort to use my human qualities to question the existence of anything out there including myself, this attitude will never bring me any meaning.
* Acknowledge the real owner of things including the provider of your consciousness.
* The core of any matter is to be aware of your “**reality**”.
* **Reality= who you are, who is your Owner, who is the Owner of your properties.**
* Do any action solely in His name, i.e. acknowledging the true owner.
* In and of itself, any action/object is not important but the freewill behind that action is important: *why do I choose that?*
* There is a narration about the Prophet (pbuh) reciting Bismillah (In the name of God) several times in his prayers.
* He was contemplating on “in the name of God”.
* Similarly, we have to live in the name of God. Our existence needs confirmation in the name of the Owner again and again.
* **The obstinate, (**as described by the author) **never submits, everything is for the sake of his own pleasure**.
* What does it mean to “like something” or “not to like something”?
* I have to be aware that these senses are given to me.
* At the existential level: I realize that this sense is given to me, I have an owner and I use this sense in His name or I may deny the Owner.
* Quran repeatedly says to pay attention at the belief level.
* I may make a mistake in my actions that is subject to asking for forgiveness/repentance.
* If I make a mistake at the level of confirming the truth, it means that I have cut off my relationship with the Creator and I am lost.
* It is easy to solve problems within *amal* (action level) because you are aware that you have done something against the will of the Creator. As for the problems at the belief level (*imaan*), then you need to seek guidance. You have to question your belief whether it is right or wrong. Do not take it for granted that you are absolutely right; always be on guard of your world-view, your conclusion about existence. That is why no one can be sure about her/his belief Being Absolutely perfect.
* Therefore, we should keep inquiring about the soundness of our belief and we need to be aware that everything we do gain value according to our belief level.
* The student of philosophy shows his abasement by kissing the feet of satanic individuals.
* It means that he is in need of people to worship him because he is not the self-sustainer.
* Example: If someone is looking to rule over a state, he is in need of everyone’s approval of him.
* If a person does not accept that the order of the universe is set in a way that he/she can communicate with the Creator of the objects, then this person may never worship the Creator of the universe.

Example: I need the pencil and I do not see the Creator.

* **Correct attitude**: I am created with a need of using the pencil and the pencil has been created by the Maker of me and the universe. With the permission of the Creator, I am getting the pencil.
* **With this reasoning**, I am acknowledging the Creator of the whole universe.
* *Which attitude fits my human nature: being the worshipper of every object or being the worshipper of the Creator of the whole universe with all objects in it?*
* I will be an honorable worshipper in the universe if I use everything in this universe in the name of the Creator of the universe.
* Acknowledge that you are a guest of the Creator in this universe; He is entertaining you otherwise you become like a thief.
* If I do not become secure in my own existence, I become a slave to the object because I see the object as the source of benefit. This is not human freedom!
* The first few chapters of the Quran emphasize on taking care of the “**orphans**”: *Do you treat the object as yours or appropriate it to its real Owner?*
* This is a preparation of the human psychology:
* Everything (including myself) is transient->Everything is bound to be destroyed->Nothing is permanent->There must be an existence of an **Eternal life**->**TAWHEED** (you have to think of the sole owner of the universe)
* **Orphan means unprotected**.
* If you think something does not have a protector, it is an orphan.
* Example: I like a tree in the forest; I can cut it to make furniture out of it or just to exploit it to satisfy my caprices. The tree is an orphan to me if I do not see that it belongs to the Absolute Creator.
* In the eye of the people who do not think that the universe has an Owner, everything is an orphan to them.
* We need not to read the scripture literally but within the objective of the Creator’s Speech.
* Example: Historical events happened in time-space. They need to be universalized to get meaning out of.
* At any time, a pharaoh is everywhere.
* At any time, an orphan is everywhere. I may abuse the orphan creatures; I need to watch out myself.
* The student of philosophy cannot find any point of support to secure his own existence.
* He becomes arrogant or a tyrant because he cannot secure anything for himself.
* If someone does not submit himself to His Lord (the Creator), he has to be a tyrant i.e. try to get as much as possible from the objects to satisfy his greed.
* Greed is the sign that someone has no security in his life.
* “Philosophy” may never give me security of my own existence.
* We cannot make up the lack of security in our existence with baseless claims.
* Personal interests in our actions should not be based on the lack of confidence in our own existence.
* Example: I am doing xyz to help humanity. But deep down I am aware that I have no answer to my own existential questions.
* Without having security in our personal existence, we cannot establish our trust in the Creator.
* I have to utilize the existence of every act of creation in His name in a way that makes my existence meaningful. Not to satisfy my egoistic desires.
* *Why should one disperse his interest from personal being to a national interest or humanitarian cause?*
* In most secular states, we hear the slogan: “Do this for the honor of *your country*…” We never hear “*for yourself*.”
* Any secular state would want their inhabitant to work forever without giving any sense of establishing a personal security within them.
* Similarly, before establishing any charity funds (*waqf*) or volunteering for a cause, define yourself first:
* “I am a created being. I am a guest here and the host has given me abundant gifts.”
* Do not get into the action first. Example: If you have inherited money and you want to donate it. Ask yourself: *Am I doing it because I am not comfortable in my existence or do I see it as a bounty from my Creator?*
* Acknowledge your reality.
* Belief comes first and action follows accordingly.