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| **Date** | Saturday, February 27, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Prophet Jonah’s supplication |
| **Part** | 5 |

Jonah’s supplication is an example presented to us by the author to teach us how to read these types of narrations presented in the Quran. This is directly related to me right now presenting my current situation. I do not have to know who Jonah was, where he came from and what he did. What I know is that the Absolute Speech must be applicable and meaningful to me in my practical life.

***Drop by drop we are going to study the foundations of belief that there is no deity except It. If we neglect the drop, we can never get the lake.***

Recap: All hopes were exhausted for Jonah because causes do not act on their own, they are dependent on a Conscious Will. The universe has been renewed in a certain order which is not arbitrary because it is under the Will (control) of its Creator. This order teaches us what to do in any helpless situation. Just as Jonah realizes that the reigns of the causes are under the control of the One who controls the causes, **I too should realize that reality and help myself as follows:**

1. What I perceive to be causes are in reality under the Will (control) of the Creator, I have to acknowledge that.
2. When causes are exhausted for me, i.e. if I cannot do anything as far as my human will is concerned (which is very limited), then ultimately what is left for me is to surrender and acknowledge that **I am asking the Causer of the causes to help me get out of my situation.**

Any result comes from the will of its Creator. If I am put in a desperate situation, then that is the choice of my Creator. I am expected to use my freewill to come to this acknowledgment. **My main duty is to acknowledge that my needs, conditions, desire to get out of the condition and the results are created by the One who controls the universe.**

My duty is not to prepare to live in this world eternally. No one can. Don’t you see that the order demonstrates that I cannot live here eternally? But I desire Eternity. ***How am I going to gain Eternity?***

* I can gain it by attributing my needs to the One who gave me the need for Eternal happiness.
* Only after acknowledging the Source, the One who can give me Eternal happiness, will I develop my feelings and consciousness to attach my human side to It rather than to the causes themselves which are transient and act according to the Will of their Creator.
* We are altogether (events/objects/causes) created by the same Creator including my need to get out of the desperate situation.

There is wisdom in the creation of everything i.e. rain, snow, sunny day… because it is demonstrating manifestation of the Creator to conscious beings. **That is how we get to know we are created, we are needy and belong to our Lord, the Lord of the whole universe.** As far as I am concerned, I am interested in seeing the universe from my perspective. **Even if I care for other creatures it is to acknowledge the One that gave me the sense to help.**

* Example: when I help someone, it is my opportunity to experience that my Creator has given me the desire to help and not be selfish by attributing the sense of helping to myself. By helping other people I acknowledge the sense manifested in me (quality) is by God’s choice. This will be a means of acknowledging my Lord while helping others.
* **Lesson:** Not attributing the action to myself. My acknowledgment ensures my reality which is I am created and the needy one.

We usually obey what is presented by the Prophet (pbuh). That obedience must be done to acknowledge who my Lord is. I need to educate myself in a way where **I will be conscious of what I am doing while following the practices presented to me through the Prophetic teachings.**

* One should ask: who is the Prophet, why am I obeying him and what do I get out of it?
* Common misconceptions: I will be rewarded in the hereafter.
* The attitude should be: I shall be rewarded while I am living in this universe.
* When I obey, the desire to do that action is already in me. These are means of acknowledging who my Lord is.
* Quran teaches me how to be conscious of my existence. Even while sitting I need to be cognizant with what I am doing.

Let us finish up the text. Remember that whatever way you interpret the story, it must relate to your reality.

**Third Flash (continuation): “Now we are in a situation one hundred times more awesome than that in which Jonah (peace be upon him) first found himself. Our night is the future. When we look upon our future with the eye of neglect, it is a hundred times darker and more fearful than his night. Our sea is this spinning globe. Each wave of this sea bears on it thousands of corpses and is thus a thousand times more frightening than his sea. Our fish is the caprice of our soul which strives to shake and destroy our foundation of our eternal life. This fish is a thousand times more maleficent than his. For his fish could destroy a hundred-year lifespan, whereas ours seeks to destroy a life lasting hundreds of millions of years. This being our true state, we should in imitation of Jonah (Peace be upon him) avert ourselves from all causes and take refuge directly in the Causer of Causes, that is, our Lord and Sustainer. We should say: “There is no god but You, Glory be unto You! Indeed I was among the wrongdoers,” and understand with full certainty that it is only He who can repel from us the harm of the future, this world, and caprice of our souls, united against us because of our neglect and misguidance. For the future is subject to His command, there is nothing that can in any way give aid and effect salvation except by His Consent and Command.”**

If I cannot make sure about my future, then I am in darkness. ***How can I get out of darkness?*** Jonah’s getting out of darkness is guidance for me to work on how to secure my existence. ***How can I secure my worries about the future?*** There is nothing in this universe that can provide you with permanent comfort. Additionally, if you do not know how to secure your own existence, then how can you secure the existence of anyone? ***Again, how can I be saved from my darkness?***

* Since Jonah experienced a miracle in his realization, I can experience a miracle too.
* **My miracle is to find the real Source which acts beyond the limitations of the order of the universe, the One that creates the universe will save me.**
* What am I expected to do? Acknowledge It. How? By attaching your whole being to It.

Common misconception: Uttering there is no deity except It will bring about a miracle.

* *What do you mean by there is no deity? How can I conclude that there is no deity? Am I aware of who God is?*
* **When I say “there is no deity except You”, I know who I am speaking to.**  That is, everything is directly under Its control. It comes as a result of introspection, awareness and realization. I am sure of Its existence in my being. The deity is no longer imaginary but certain as I have learned and understand Its definite existence in my life.
* Now, I am sure that the future is under the control of the Creator of my needs who has created this universe in a way that I do not know what will happen tomorrow or even the next moment.
* I am training here to make sure I get to know the real Owner of the future.

***I- Am I experiencing this in my practical life that I have an Owner who is the Lord of everything or am I referring my being to an external entity?***

Just as to having evidence for being insured by a company, you need to have the insurance policy in your hands, in order to gain Eternal satisfaction I need to attach my being to Its Being. This attachment to the Eternal Being is like having the “insurance policy” in my hands.

* Quran is the book of instruction but it is I who will practice it and internalize it and make it my own conclusion. **Personal internal training is what belief is (imaan).**
* Analogy: I can learn about swimming by reading an instruction book but I cannot learn how to swim without actually practicing. Similarly, the Quran gives guidance but I need to internalize it, practice it in the universe and get the meaning of why I am doing what I am doing.
* Do external activities with the awareness of internal consciousness.
* We have to train in interacting with the universe for our own benefits i.e. to gain Eternal satisfaction.
* I have to practice belief by experiencing my own reality.

Our sea is this spinning globe, the earth we live on. As time goes, each wave takes my moments of life. My yesterday is gone. The previous moments are all dead. In our own lives, the waves are taking us into somewhere we do not know. That is our sea of life on Earth.

* **Last moment of repentance does not help you:** Every moment we are dying. I have to realize this before it’s too late. If I have not thought about the reality of my existence, then I am not securing Eternal life. Before today is gone as well, I should benefit from this given opportunity to acknowledge my reality instead of losing it in negligence. I need to make everything practical for me right now.
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***“Indeed we have given you a clear victory”. (48):1***

* Relate the above verse to your case. That is, my future will open up through my realization that the Causer of the causes is the One taking care of my needs. It has not left me alone here and forgotten about me. How can I be alone if I am aware of my existence? It promises me a big victory, the opening up of a clear future after the process of realizing Its Oneness and Lordship. (*uboodiya*= practicing worship where I attribute my feelings and qualities to It). I am not left or forgotten here if I realize that I am with my Lord.
* The universe and my being are so precious for me. If I do not want to lose one strand of hair, how can I dare to want to lose my whole existence eternally? This is the most important need I ought to be fearful about!

Common misconception: Jonah neglected his duty towards the tribe, so he got punished.
This approach makes the story external to me and the purpose of guidance is lost. In my conditions I am not in a tribe and have not left it so the only lesson I may get is that I should not run away from my duty otherwise I will be punished.

* I was among the wrongdoers is related to me, not only Jonah.
* What did I do wrong?
* I am swallowed by my caprices that keep me away from my Lord.
* Our fish is the caprice of our soul.

***II- What are caprices?***

1. Reducing existence to a self-centric understanding.
2. Seeing the world with everything centered for my interests (egoistic desires).
3. Attributing everything to myself and keeping control of everything within my own power= ego.

#1, #2 and #3 cuts off my relationship with my Creator at that moment. I am under the illusion that I keep my existence by myself without realizing that I am the one that asks, expresses my need to the One who controls the order of the universe.

* *What is the alternative?*
* The awareness that I am needy, I cannot guarantee the existence of anything because nothing is under my control. Example: I need my child to be healthy, promotion in my profession to be guaranteed but the whole universe is renewed every moment and I have no contribution in it. *Can I change the order?* No, but I can ask for my needs to be met by following the order.
* Through my needs, the Creator gives me the opportunity to understand who controls the universe. Example: I get hungry, sleepy…
* When I eat, I am just obeying the order in creation. I did not sustain my nourishment; I am following the established rules. I cannot guarantee existence. I may eat something and it may be poisonous. *Can I guarantee my health?* We have to be aware that we are just following the rules. We are not guaranteeing anything by ourselves. **That is at the core of being aware of one’s reality (i.e. I am created).**
* All the needs and means to satisfy our needs are created for me by It. I am not the creator of anything; nothing in the universe can create anything ***(lailaha)***. Everything is created by the One who creates the universe ***(illallah)***.
* Every moment we are asking something for our next moment. Being aware of the moment of existence is what I need to seek. It shows me that I am created within the confines of this universe where I can follow established order to some capacity i.e. if I am hungry, I have to eat. The Causer of this cause gives me satisfaction not the causes (food). That is what I am learning from the way the universe is set up. **The Creator is teaching me this reality that if I do not come to this realization, then I will remain swallowed by my own caprices.** Getting to that realization guarantees my existence!

I cannot give existence to anything. We cannot create anything, we just ask and we have to ask. I have to understand that I am asking. Every moment my asking, begging is created for me. Nothing is giving existence to anything. **I am required to investigate the apparent causes to check if they are real causes.** I am given the ability to investigate what may seem as apparent causes and come to the conviction that they are not the Creators. Quran encourages us to question everything so we can grow in our cognitive understanding which leads to worship. Example: I may think that I am feeding my child BUT where is God? Ego (satan) deludes us that we are doing it or causes (nature) are doing it.

* *Can I create the action?*
* We have to relate ourselves to the reality.
* Quran is a spoken instruction (verbal explanation) of what is displayed in creation.
* My ability forces me to question my reality.
* **Ego is beautiful, without ego we cannot question anything.** ***How can I say there is no deity if I do not have ego?***
* No doubt/questioning then no belief, no question then no answer.
* ***Am I aware that every action I am doing is Its favor to me?***
* Only then can I feel safety in my existence.

We are created for Eternity. The number of years I live here is not important. Furthermore, after reaching a certain age or being given an illness one may desire to be given death thinking that there is no pleasure in living. Just because you do not want a specific situation does not mean that you should desire to perish away. **As human beings, we are created for wanting Eternity, desiring to have tomorrow.**  **I want to exist eternally at the highest standards, fully experiencing my pleasures!** The Quran says that I guarantee it to you and I am going to be the One to give it to you. **That is Paradise, Jannah,** guaranteed in the instruction book. That is what I desire!!! The instruction book (Quran) tells me how can I secure this before I die i.e. guidance is in the instruction book, I have to study it just as we studied this text without running away from our reality (externalizing religion). **Get the instruction and apply it to your lives. Whatever you understand relate it to your reality so it may help you!!**