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| **Date** | Saturday, June 18, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Creation is Love |
| **Part** | 4 |

**The 24th Word (continuation)-**

**“Yes, to fear the Glorious Creator means finding a way to His compassionate mercy, and taking refuge in it. Fear is a whip; it drives you into the embrace of His mercy. It is well-known that a mother gently scares her infant, for example, and draws it to her breast. The fear is most pleasurable for the child, because it drives him to her tender embrace. Whereas the tenderness of all mothers is but a flash of Divine mercy. That means there is a supreme pleasure in fear of God. If there is such pleasure in fear of God, it is clear what infinite pleasure there is to be found in love of God. Moreover, one who fears God is saved from the calamitous and distressing fear of others. Also, because it is for God’s sake, the love he has for creatures is not tinged with sorrow and separation.”**

How to turn fear of God into Mercy/Love?

* Fear of God (*taqwa*) is referred to as God consciousness.
* It prevents a person from not falling into a mistaken position.

What can be a mistaken position for me?

* Any choice which takes me away from God; a misuse of my human freewill.
* If I experience and interpret any event which takes me away from *taqwa* (God consciousness), then I am not really aware of what I am doing. I have to be careful not to fall into this situation.
* What happens if I lose my connection to God i.e. if I do not identify my being with the Creator of the universe, what is the alternative to that?
* I try to find support with something that I can seek refuge with to secure my life. What is it? Can I find it within the universe? Everything in the universe itself is in need of security in their existence. How can I even entertain such an idea?

If I define my own existence with anything other than the Creator of the universe, what happens? Will this have any reality at all? If I say this galaxy is going to protect me, what is wrong with this? Galaxy cannot be the One that provides me with security as it itself is in need to be created Let’s take this to a more practical level. People are mostly mistaken that objects such as a job will satisfy them. Most parents from Eastern cultures rely on their children as their “retirement plan”. These people have not developed their consciousness of taking care of the children only because they are trusted with them by their Creator i.e. the children are given as a trust by their Creator.

Ultimately, we trust in God. Why then do I have to take care of my child? It is your responsibility towards creatures. This does not mean that you should look at them as a source that saves you or provides you with security.

I need security in my humanity. My humanity seeks Eternal security in my existence. We reduce gaining security to achieving it from objects. At the moment, I may be living with my parents and feel secure that I have shelter. Note that parents, shelter or spouse cannot provide security for your human needs. This is a temporary security. Similarly, I may be out of my parents’ house and feel secure in my apartment. I should realize that this temporary happiness is not my main aim. My main aim is to seek Eternal Security. **Nothing can secure me in my existence, only the One who gives existence to the whole universe can secure me.** Without the awareness of this concept, my human expectations can never be satisfied and I can never find Eternal Pleasure in anything. Although, it seems that my problems are solved. For instance I am getting an income from my job, I am temporarily made to be happy but it will be short-lived i.e. eventually I will retire and then die. Where is eternal security in that, while my human senses yearn for eternal security in my existence?

*Taqwa* means being afraid of falling apart from my Creator and seeing It as the source of security in my existence. Any source other than It to be understood as the point of security for me is a mistaken attitude. I should make sure that I do not fall into this mistake. God is not a fearful God, God does not harm you. We harm ourselves. Even when I get old and being subject to death, it is part of the Creator’s order but it is not for my detriment. God does not punish anyone by giving death. Is the Creator aging you to harm you? No, it is for my own benefit, to teach me that I belong to It only. It is true that no one wants to be given death, no one wants to age but it is only by experiencing this do we learn about the Existence Giver, Health Giver, Life Giver, Youth Giver, etc. and thus appreciate the true Giver of bounties.

***What are we going to do with the idea of fear of God then?*** God is the agent to create as far as what I have chosen and what I asked to be created which is by following the established order. God is the Creator and I am the chooser. So where does God punish me? I am a student in this universe trying to learn my reality. I should thus interact with the universe with consciousness. Analogy: If a student does not learn anything from attending the class, does the teacher punish the student to harm him? No, the teacher always teaches him and gives the student the opportunity to learn better. Fear of the teacher means that if the student does not benefit from the teacher, he harms himself. When the student gets an F (fail) at the end of the school year, it means that the student never chose to learn from the teachings. THE STUDENT DESERVES THE F GRADE. We mostly are quick to say that teacher gave me an F because we do not want to put the responsibility on us. Similarly, we are all students in this school of the universe. After we graduate or die, as much as we have educated our soul and became aware of our reality in this universe, we will be given whatever we deserve. It is very straightforward to understand, we get what we experience in this universe. HELL=F

**Fear of God has nothing to do with God being a fearsome Being**. If I do not listen to the teacher, I remain ignorant. If I do not develop my consciousness of the Creator and start relying on other things to sustain me, then I am not securing my existence eternally. Where is the Prophet Solomon (the richest king)? Did his army save him? Where are the Persian kings? Did their wealth save them? Nothing in this world can guarantee and save your existence. If you deviate from trusting in God, *taqwa* is reminded: “Be careful you are doing something wrong and you may fall”.

God never puts anyone in HELL. God only treats as you deserve to be treated. **Criticism of God, seeing God as the agent of evil is me not realizing that evil is in my perception.** For example, I may perceive death or illness to be evil and attribute the existence of “evil” to God. It means that I am implying God to be the Creator of evil. We usually do that because we do not want to admit our own wrongdoings with our choices. Does a teacher arbitrarily give F to a student? Would the Creator arbitrarily put you in Hell? In reality, I find myself where I deserve to be. God creates the result that I chose. That is the concept God gives us which we need to practice. Would a boss punish an employee who is doing his job properly? No, unless the boss is psychologically disturbed. The boss appreciates the person who does the job properly. That is what human ability demonstrates. My Creator is teaching me through this sense of being appreciated that that He appreciates me like that. So why should I have fear of God as It being the agent of fear?

* It does not punish you if you do not deserve it, you punish yourself.

We have fears of created beings because we are short-sighted and forget about human qualities and regard this universe at a two dimensional level only. Example: me and my food today, me and my job. That is, job is satisfying me and I am being satisfied with the job. Where is the Creator of the whole universe in this reasoning? Is it human? IF WE DO NOT USE OUR HUMAN QUALITIES, WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF THIS UNIVERSE. If I define myself as a living being, happened to be here magically and now I have to survive with other beings around me, then I have distanced myself from the Creator of the whole universe.

* ***Does it even occur to me to question who prepared all this for me?***
* ***Do I ever listen to my feelings?***
* ***Where did I get my senses and feelings?***
* ***How come I am here?***

When I listen to my humanity, my conclusion automatically goes out of the universe and says: “nothing can satisfy my humanity here in the universe”.

***What can satisfy my humanity here?*** Only the One that gives me existence can satisfy it. If someone does not pay attention to his human side, his worldview is short-sighted. First, we all need to concentrate on our humanity. **Ask:** *Who am I? Who are we?* Let us talk about ourselves.

* Anyone who does not take humanity (five senses + feelings) into consideration cannot be helped.

We are made to want Eternal Satisfaction for our humanity (human senses). We have endless human senses. Every human sense needs to be satisfied eternally. We need to recognize that!!! If I find any source of satisfaction other than the Creator of the universe, then I am in danger because everything is transient here. The way out of this danger is to have *taqwa*, the fear of being away from the Real Source, which is my own mistake.

We need to apply this understanding to understand seemingly threatening verses in the Quran such as: “I am going to punish you in a severe way” or “leave these people to me I am going to punish them according to My will”. The language used in the Quran needs to be understood within the whole context of the Quran. Without understanding the presentation of the attributes or the qualities of God, I cannot really understand the message of the Quran. For instance, “according to My will” means that as much as the person deserves, he will be treated accordingly. This is the order of creation and establish by the Will of its Creator. That is, if he learns, he develops his human ability. If he does not learn, he will remain ignorant. **That is to say, if I am ignorant of the reality in this world, in the next creation, my soul is not prepared to face or encounter God’s blessings as I have not developed myself here. If I have not developed myself to get my soul acquainted with its Creator in this universe, then I get nothing from this universe. In other words, if I do not use my freewill to develop my humanity in this universe, the consequence will be ignorance i.e. Hell.**

***How can I believe in an unknown thing if I never acquaint myself with it?*** I may be living in this world claiming to be a believer in an unknown Being. Therefore, we have to use our human qualities to try to get acquainted with this “unknown” Being. It is true that the Source may appear to be unknown to us at first but after utilizing our human qualities, we set ourselves not to be distant from this unknown Being. ***Is that belief?*** No. Belief has to be my personal conviction in the **existence** of this unknown Being: “I am sure that there must be an unknown Being (because the Creator of the universe cannot be known as if it is a part of the universe) giving existence to me.” We have to stop living pretending to know the unknown. This ignorance becomes a flaky faith. We often hear: “you got to have faith”. How can one have faith without understanding what belief is? **I have to admit that I am not convinced, I do not understand.** Instead ask: *“Tell me how God punishes me?”* My personal problems have been ignored through ignorance, left unsolved and covered up with claims. WAKE UP! WAKE UP! O CONSCIOUS BEING!

The sense of fear must be used as a reminder to staying alert of not making a mistake. For example: I am vigilant while driving because I have a constant fear of dying if I get into an accident. When I am careful not to make a mistake, I find myself in safety. That is how I need to live my life making sure of not making a mistake where I am attributing qualities to objects. When I make a mistake, I harm myself. Everything is the Mercy of the Creator which is part of its created order.

My human senses require me to feel secure in my being. When I realize that all my senses are given to me by my Creator and only He can satisfy them, I find Mercy in creation. My Creator treats me according to how I act. If I put a nail into my hand, it hurts. The pain is a reminder letting me know that what I am doing is harming myself. Creation of pain is Mercy. Creation of death is Mercy.

***How can creation of death be Mercy?***

Death is not the end of your existence. If you perceive your existence to consist of matter only (physical body), then you may view death as the end of your existence. My existence consists mainly of my humanity (spirit). At death, my humanity is separated from my body. Just as at birth, I was separated from my mother’s womb. Universe consists of matter. Matter has endless qualities. Matter is transformed from one stage of existence into another. Qualities are constant and these constant qualities are qualities of the Creator manifested in matter. The Creator’s qualities are reflected in human beings as well, that is called soul and the soul never dies. Let us understand this with an analogy: A painting reflects the artist's qualities in it. When the canvas burns, what remains? The qualities of the artist still remain. If a human being has experienced these qualities manifested in the painting, the painting burns but the art qualities still remain in the consciousness of the human being. Thus, creation of death prompts you to question your existence, which leads you to question the source of your existence.

**FEAR DRIVES ME INTO THE HAND OF MERCY. (read and internalize)**

All the threatening languages in the Quran is out of Mercy. There is nothing wrong with the Source that gives me existence. It is I who is wronged. I need to check myself. Also, if someone does not understand Mercy in the existence of Hell, this person does not understand who God is. Going to Hell is my choice. When you understand that creation of pain/illness/Hell is Mercy, then you say, “I love God who created Hell, and He is warning me not to choose to go to Hell by contradicting my reality.”

**THERE IS A SUPREME PLEASURE IN THE FEAR OF GOD. (read and internalize)**

* Ask: *Have I experienced pleasure in the fear of God and assimilated that feeling into my being?*
* Ask: *Have I experienced fear as a Source of pleasure?*

If you have a two-dimensional approach to the universe, the Quran would seem contradictory. If you never use your human qualities to question what you are feeling, your existence is bound to this universe only and there is no point in fear. Then, fear would seem something harmful for you.

***What was the Prophet trying to do in society?***

* Eradicate tribalism (nationalism)
* *Why?*
* So people get in tune with what their reality is.
* *How was he establishing that?*
* Instilling God consciousness. That is, you do not belong to the nation but the nation and you belong to the Creator.
* Ask: *Where is my relationship with God in my every action?*
* Ask: *Where is fear of God (taqwa) so I do not make a mistake.*
* Creator is the Owner.
* I cannot own anything.
* I ought to use everything in Its name.
* The apple can only be mine to be taken as a gift by acknowledging who its owner is.

I cannot feel secure if I ascribe my being to a nation, job, youth, parents…etc. We have many idols in our lives replacing God’s reality. The Prophet was reminding people that the One who gave all this, is the One that you need to trust. **Remember:** The universe is transient. He practiced this in his life and suggested people to practice this in their life as well. The Prophet was fearless from anything (including his enemies) because he was not attaching importance to created beings nor was he bothered by their hatred towards him. **His being was directly related to the Creator of the universe.** When he followed the order of the universe, he did so in obedience of the Creator of the universe. Also, he was not after authority or power. It is said that he even refused to wear a rich garment for a day as a present from someone. His aim was to get people out of idolatry. *What is our condition now?* ***We may attempt to come out of idolatry and tribalism (nationalism) but we have turned religion into idolatry.*** That is, we are shifting our point of focus to performing rituals only. Example: we do not need to feed people if they are not needy. INSTEAD, we need to remind them that:

1. They belong to the Eternal Source.
2. This world is transient.
3. Their property is not theirs; give it to the needy ones.

In principle, we need to find people who are **really needy** and we need to share with them whatever God has given us. That is exactly what the Prophet was doing. In this day and age, anyone with an empty soul classifies as “needy” and deserves to be helped, with the condition that they are open to listening. Learning only happens when I apply that which I learn into my practical life. Thus, saying ***lailaha*** (nothing has the power to give existence) ***illallah*** (everything is in need to be given existence) once in your life does not train your human senses. As a child it is a good start but as an adult, it must become the state of mind that you live by. Knowledge is not enough; sheer knowledge is not belief. We all need training**. Human beings learn everything in training.** Just as putting your leg in a house (being convinced that the universe must have a Creator) does not mean that you have investigated the whole house and become acquainted with all its rooms.

**If I understand that there is pleasure in fear of God, then I would understand how much pleasure there is in love of God.** The author is suggesting to deeply reflect on this matter to introduce its understanding to our senses. Training is what this universe is all about. This universe is a training place for our soul. If I understand fear of God rightly, it saves me from fear of others (job, death, enemies…) **Remember:** Everything is an act of the Creator. As long as you establish a secure connection with the Creator, you save yourself from fearing created beings.

* Stop fearing things (losing job, getting ill…) If I rightly understand fear of God, it saves me from fear of other created things. As a result, I do not fear that I will be harmed by anything, including death because everything is an act of the Creator.

As long as I establish a secure relation with the Creator, I understand that everything is under Its control and It creates everything for my benefit. **Since the human soul is the representative of God’s qualities reflected in us, it seems that the Creator wants to befriend its creation**. We need to use our human qualities to get to know its Creator and get closer to It. **“Be a friend of God”. That is, I need to discover what is in my being. This saves me from the fear of other created beings because everything is Its act, It’s the Boss of everything and It wants me to be Its friend.**  **When I become friends with the Boss, I know that whatever It does is for my benefit, then I trust him.** Everything is created for me to get closer to It and not to distance myself from It. Death is created to teach me that:

1. I should not lose myself in this universe.
2. My life will be taken away for sure.
3. My existence does not consist of life that I experience in this universe only.
4. I should not trust the universe itself but the Eternal Creator of the universe.
5. I need to keep training to get to know God better.

We need to concentrate on getting to know God better. Even secular life cannot threaten me. If I love the Creator only, then my attachment to the created beings become meaningful because everything is a present from my Creator. Not because this is useful for me or helps me or satisfies me but it is a present from my Creator to be used by me**. Our love of created things become meaningful and satisfactory if we become aware that they are all created and presented to me given by my Creator.** Everything becomes a gift from my Creator. Example: I love my pencil as a present from It. If I cut my relationship with the Creator, I fear the pencil itself because I know that it will be either broken or lost and I myself will die and be separated from it. I need to guarantee my relationship with the pencil, that is why I get it insured as I do not want to lose it. Insurance companies exploit human weaknesses and make money out of it.

In summary, **fear of God** is a state of mind for me that I need to apply for my belief training in this universe. I do not fear the Absolute per se, as that would contradict the purpose of my existence. On the contrary, with fear of God, I live with the awareness of not falling into a mistaken position where I alienate my being with the Absolute Source of my existence. This feeling of not falling into a mistaken position is referred to as “**fear of God**” or ***taqwa***. I fear myself to forget God and this awareness keeps me alert!

Analogy: A hen incubates on the egg for 21 days. As a result, a chick hatches out. Similarly, we need to internalize everything that is discussed here and put the feelings into work. As a result of our incubation, ***belief*** (imaan) will hatch. Since belief (faith) has endless degrees, it is free from a set time frame.