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| **Date** | Saturday, March 26, 2016 |
| **Topic** | Prophet Job’s supplication |
| **Part** | 4 |

*Recap:* Prophet Job acknowledged that “verily harm has afflicted me”. How do I relate this to my life? What harm afflicts me in my life right now?

**Excerpt from the 2nd Flash, First point:**

*…Within each sin is a path leading to unbelief. Unless that sin is swiftly obliterated by seeking God’s pardon, it will grow from a worm into a snake that gnaws on the heart.*

*For example, a man who secretly commits a shameful sin will fear the disgrace that results if others become aware of it. Thus the existence of angels and spirit beings will be hard for him to endure, and he will long to deny it, even on the strength of the slightest indication.*

*Similarly, one who commits a major sin deserving of the torment of Hell, will desire the non-existence of Hell wholeheartedly, and whenever he hears of the threat of Hell-fire, he will dare to deny it on the strength of a slight indication and doubt, unless he takes up in protection the shield of repentance and seeking forgiveness.*

*Similarly, one who does not perform the obligatory prayer and fulfil his duty of worship will be affected by distress, just as he would be in case of the neglect of a minor duty toward some petty ruler. Thus, his laziness in fulfilling his obligation, despite the repeated commands of the Sovereign of Pre-Eternity, will distress him greatly, and on account of that distress will desire and say to himself: “Would that there were no such duty of worship!” In turn, there will arise from this desire a desire to deny God, and bear enmity toward Him. If some doubt concerning the existence of the Divine Being comes to his heart, he will be inclined to embrace it like a conclusive proof. A wide gate to destruction will be opened in front of him. The wretch does not know that although he is delivered by denial from the slight trouble of duty of worship, he has made himself, by that same denial, the target for millions of troubles that are far more awesome. Fleeing from the bite of a gnat, he welcomes the bite of the snake.*

*There are many other examples, which may be understood with reference to these three, so that the sense of,*

*No indeed! Their hearts are stained with what they have done. (83:14)*

*will be apparent.*

The author mentions that no one is really innocent of sinning by saying that “within each sin is a path leading to unbelief”. We should understand that sinning itself is not the essential matter of concern but **the consequence of sinning**, what it brings into our life, is essential.

For example, when I miss my prayer, I regret it as I want to be persistent in my prayers. Then how is this missing of a prayer leading to unbelief? **We should be aware that sinning slowly creeps into unbelief.** If I repent immediately after a sin then I should feel relaxed and guilty free. However, at times, especially when I do not repent from my sins I may not be completely satisfied because I may still have a guilty feeling.

***How do I establish a guilt free feeling?***

Another example: In our daily practical life, if one commits a crime and feels really bad about it. Is this person forgiven? If the case is presented to a judge, would the judge forgive him since the person admits the crime and repents? Most likely, the judge will lessen some of this person’s punishment with consideration to admitting and repenting. This is **not** how our relationship with our Creator is. **In my realization and repentance lies forgiveness.** This is what the Lord of the universe promises. I need to take care of my responsibility and seek forgiveness. **I should realize that I can be at ease knowing that my Lord has forgiven me since I have realized my mistake and I am sincere in not repeating the same mistake.** Therefore, in order for repentance to have an effect in my life, I need to make sure that my repentance is accepted.

* **I need to make sure within myself that I am forgiven.**
* If I am repentant 10%, then I will be forgiven 10%.  God treats me accordingly.

Let’s say I still hold the guilt and think that perhaps God will punish me, that He has not forgiven me. This would lead me to desire that if only there was no judgment. From there, it would lead to if there was no Hell. Slowly, it leads to there is no resurrection. This goes on and slowly drags me into denial of the fundamentals of belief. That is why it is important to understand that I cannot think from God’s perspective whether He is going to forgive me or not. I have to think of how sincere I am in my repentance.

This explains why many are fearful and avoid discussing about hell. There is certain guilt that one holds in their heart about their sins and that remains bothersome. **There is no trust in God’s Mercy and this leads slowly to denial of fundamentals. Hell is for those who do not believe in God’s mercy.** When I deny the mercy of God then I am already in Hell, it is inevitable and that is the purpose for the existence of Hell. Although in the scripture God assures that we should trust in His mercy. **Not trusting in Its Mercy is a sign of unbelief.** Why? It means that one is frightened that God may act without mercy and no one likes a ruler who has no mercy. This leads one to dislike the ruler, the heart desires to rid oneself of this ruler. **Again, this gradually shakes the fundamentals of belief all the way to belief in Eternal life. Unless I believe in the Absolute Mercy of my Creator, I can never be at ease.**

I have been given the sense to be forgiven. The One who gave me that sense is guaranteeing that I am forgiven by giving me such a desire.

* I am created with this sense that the Creator wants me to feel forgiven.
1. My Creator created me with this sense.
2. This sense is a guarantee that my Creator wants me to connect with It through this sense.
3. It assures in Its Speech that It is Absolutely Merciful.

**When I do not repent then it means I am not looking for God’s Mercy and forgiveness since I am not using my inner sense of being forgiven.** I lose the opportunity to connect with my Lord through this feeling of being forgiven. We are in a much serious position of illness than Prophet Job as our illness deals with our eternal life. I have to be cognizant of what I perceive about the sin, what the consequence of my perception is.

* **Sin:** any feeling that makes me feel that I have done something wrong. If I carry such feeling, then I am in a more serious position than Prophet Job.
* If I do not realize my sin, then I do not feel any effect.
* If I realize my sin and I do not repent, it is my mistake.
* If I feel that I am not forgiven, that is where the psychology of overcoming the effect takes its toll on me.

Again, with the wrong perception, the one sinning may desire if only there was no one, no angels watching or recording the event (**stage 1**). It goes to the next stage of if there was no punishment and thus no hell (**stage 2**). This leads to further denial of judgment day and to the displeasure with God (**stage 3**). Despite my Creator being always with me, this 3rd stage makes me lose all hope and I need to be really careful not to fall into this trap. When I start feeling the disconnection with my Creator, I will put myself in a deeply grave situation.

**Question/Concern:** *What if I did something wrong and later on something unpleasant happens. I start attributing this recent misfortune to the past event of not repenting completely.*

Associating this current event to not repenting for some prior event is pure imagination. We usually think that we are being punished for our mistakes. Instead of focusing on the current event and taking up the responsibility for what went wrong and correcting it, we may wrongfully put the blame on the assumption that it is a consequence of not being forgiven for a prior mistake. We need to learn from the current mistake and repent for it. **I need to sincerely seek forgiveness.**

Only when I realize that an event is a means for me to acknowledge my reality, can my action in an event turn to my benefit i.e. it may help me realize what my reality is. My attitude in this action becomes a means of purification for all my previous sins. It is a reward because it serves to my advantage. That is, I deserve to realize God better so He gave me to experience a distress so that through it, I reaffirm my neediness. Thus, death is the best reward. Should we ask for death then? No, because I am given the sense to escape from death. But the Creator of death, the One who creates birth and death is helping us see what our reality is and what my relationship with the Creator is.

* Nothing is a punishment but a friendly reminder from the One that sets the order. Just as a teacher gives you an “F” when you do not perform well on the exam, similarly, your Owner is letting you know that you need to be mindful of your reality.
* Everything that is created in this universe (any event that I am given) is for me to get to experience and realize who my Lord is.
* The purpose of this universe is for me to get acquainted with my Lord (whether I am aware of it or not is my choice)

A common misconception we have is when we fall sick thinking that we are paying back for some sins. Let us think about this. The Prophet of God also fell sick; do I really think that the messenger of God was being punished? He was sick towards the end of his life and death was given. Does it make sense to say that he had sinned and so he was given death? Not at all, we should never ever think of any event as punishment.

Everything is an opportunity to connect with the Creator. **Sickness is given to get to know the Creator of health, the Sustainer, the life Giver, etc.** **The Creator of health is also the Creator of sickness just like the Creator of life is also the Creator of death.**

Everything is good for us, a means of realizing our reality and to get to know who our Owner, Creator is. Can you imagine an architect who purposefully designs a building so that it suffers damage and falls apart or an engineer that builds a machine and is happy to see it malfunctioning? We need to understand that it is not within us, I am not created with this sense of damaging the work I do. Similarly, I cannot expect my Creator to create me and then punish me for the sake of punishment without aiming at helping me. I cannot think of such a God. **These ideas of punishment are human made speculations to frighten a person, and it ultimately turns them away from God.**

* If one is frightened of God, he does not like It.
* If one does not like God, he runs away from It.

**Thinking I am not forgiven🡪perceiving a punishing God🡪denial of God**

* I am created in order to get closer to the Creator.
* An event created for me, which I do not like is created for me to get closer to God.
* If I go against my nature and deny my reality, then I am looking to facing the consequences, and yes I need the event to be created to fulfil my purpose in existence.

People who stand up against belief, they deliberately omit the most essential part i.e. the existence of the thing or any of its quality because they have no reasonable rational explanation for their denial of the Source of existence. They have no answer to explain existence and thus claim that the universe exists eternally. Ask: what is your evidence? They are aware deep down that they are denying the reality. Thus, I should make use of this matter and argue within my own being to come up with my personal evidences and confirm my conclusions. Get the truth as follows:

1. Through your own existence
2. Observation of the universe
3. Speech of the Creator

If I cannot confirm any phenomenon within myself, I can never affirm the Speech of the Creator. Only when I find the Speech of the Creator consistent within my being and the universe, do I confirm the Speech of the Creator. I need to be honest within myself. Am I denying God or challenging Its authority? Even Pharaoh knew that he will die one day. Anything that is subject to death cannot sustain its own existence. Check within yourself: *Am I acting like Pharaoh?*

I see that everything in this universe has opposites. Example: Night/Day; Truth/False. If belief is true, then denial is false. Thus, belief is a state of being where I choose to be consistent within myself. Furthermore, I need to be constantly working on renewal of belief.

Everything created has a purpose to guide me. There must be wisdom in the creation of an event which I dislike. Even the creation of death is not without purpose. I need to be thankful for being given distress or for making a mistake. Let me see the benefit in it i.e.:

* **lailaha**= it did not happen by chance
* **illallah**= definitely to teach me my reality

My consciousness should always be oscillating between **lailaha** (nothing has the power to give existence); **illallah** (everything is in need to be given existence). Every statement related to belief starts with negation that there is nothing in the universe that can sustain its existence by itself. **Only through negation do I come to affirmation.** I can confirm as much as I have used my capacity. I SHOULD NEVER refer to myself as being LIMITED as that would insinuate that there is a fault in my creation and thus, I would be insulting my MAKER. Rather, I should refer to myself as being created.

I thus should no longer be taking any event as a punishment but a guidance teaching me my reality and connecting me with my Lord. I am in need to be realizing my impotence at the utmost level. Illness/calamity is nothing. I need to prepare myself for the moment of death i.e. to be in 100 % submission of my reality. Yes, runaway from death but when it is given, be happy with it.

Once again, we need to pay attention to the consequence of sinning rather than focusing on the sinning. The consequence of sinning should help us deter from sinning because if I realize by now, it is severe and has the potential to ruin my eternal life.