Saturday, December 13, 2014
**Topic:** What is wisdom? (*Continuation of the Twelfth word page 144*)

Recap: The Philosopher and the Muslim Scholar share a different worldview. The Philosopher did not touch on the meaning of the book because he did not know how to read the book. The decorated book of the universe is a meaningful book. Although, he did not get the actual meaning from the universe, he was skillful in his profession.

* *Are we going to value scientists or reject them?*
* They are studying the work of the Creator. *Are they wasting their human qualities?*
* If they study the meaning of the Book of Creation, the answer is, no. If they study only the physical qualities of the universe without paying attention to the meaning, the answer is yes.
* *What about people who busy themselves with uloom-ul-deen (religious sciences)?*
* If they study the Speech of the Creator (revelation) without referencing it to the act of the Creator, they are neglecting the message sent to human beings through the act of creation; they are separating the “Act” from the “Speech.”
* Author is saying that the two people should be studying the same book in order to understand the meaning in the creation.
* There is no difference in the history of the three monotheistic religions.
* First, the Prophets came and offered a new worldview to the people i.e. **establishing *Tawheed*/Belief in God.**
* During the Prophet’s times, religious sciences did not exist: no fiqh rules, no hadith…
* In his 13 years during the Meccan period, the Prophet (pbuh) did not get involved with the political structure of the society but instead, he was keen on spreading the message of:
1. Worshipping One God only.
2. This world is transient, it is not a permanent place and there will be an eternal life after this world.
3. Not blindly following the religion of the forefathers.
4. Superiority belongs to God only and so all of us are equal. Tribal competitions are meaningless.
5. Every human being should take care of the needs of their fellow human beings.
* After receiving the Quranic revelation, he shared the Quranic worldview:
* The purpose of the existence of human beings is to know God and get ready for eternal life.
* Meccan period: Belief system was established; Medinian period: Application of this system into personal/social life took place.
* Example: Did Islam abolish slavery? Yes because in the Meccan period, Islam defined worshipper (*abd*) i.e. you can only be a worshipper of God. You cannot claim any superior position over any other creature, let alone human being. Within the Muslim community the slavery was abolished by redefining the human reality.
* Slavery was abolished also as a social institution in practical terms: As narrated in a Hadith where the Prophet (pbuh) emphasized the rights of the slave or the person who works for you: “Your servants are your brothers. You should give them from what you eat and wear.”
* Islam deconstructs the concept of slavery: No one can claim mastership over another person. There is no master and slave. The only master is our Creator. This is ***tawheed*.**
* As soon as tawheed is established, the notion of slavery is abolished.
* No one can take the freedom of another person and make that person subjugated to them. It is impossible.
* During the Medinian period, the Prophet (pbuh) and his companions established a treaty or a constitution. According to the constitution, everyone was treated equally regardless of religious/tribal affiliations.
* The treaty was an implementation of ***tawheed*** in social life.
* Registering of hadith was prohibited. Only the Quran could be registered.
* After the Prophet died (pbuh), the hadith log was used as the development criteria of the Muslim community.
* Hadith cannot be separated from the Quran. It needs to be understood with the lens of the Quran.
* Aim of the Prophet was to implement what he learned from the Quran and put it into a practical form i.e. ***Sunnah* (The practice of the Prophet.)**
* Author combines the universe and the Quran together i.e. we cannot study the Quran without referring it to the universe and we cannot study the universe without referring it to the Quran.
* Teaching of the Quran is what we understand from the way of creation of the universe.
* Later generation introduced religious sciences because they felt that the material scientists were losing their attachment to religious matters. As a result of the fear of heresy, they expelled the subjects of material sciences from the religious education institutions. The gap between the religious scientists and material scientists became wider and wider.
* Historical disaster: Our interaction with the universe is separate from belief.
* Per the text, the philosopher did not pay attention to the meaning of the universe and he turned the universe into dead corpse.
* Sciences of religion developed in a way that in the eye of the religious scholars, the universe became meaningless and thus redundant.
* Those people who memorized Hadith and Fiqh rules were “philosophers of religious sciences” because they studied the text for their corpse values and without paying much attention to their meanings referring to the knowledge of the Creator.
* As a result, religious scholarship became equal to philosophy. Philosophers treated the universe without its reference to its Creator; religious scholars treated the scripture as a source of “What to do,” rather than “How they teach us the Creator.” Both of them missed the meanings that teach human beings who their Lord is.
* That is how the hadith and the Quran studies were separated from the universe.
* *What marked the actual separation of the Quran and the universe?*
* Although, historical dates are irrelevant, somewhere around the 12th century, Imam Ghazali introduced his writings. He was not opposing the study of the universe but on the contrary, he was opposing the materialistic approach of the universe by the philosophers.
* In order to save the general body of the community, his effort was to stay focus on the Quran and the universe without much emphasis on studying the universe itself.
* As a result, in the hands of some scholars, hadiths were used to produce rulings. That is how the belief matters have been lost and got reduced to the study of the rulings concerning the personal and social activities only.
* When you read the Hadith, you have to pay attention to the mission of the Prophet.
* Quran’s mission is to speak to mankind in real time.
* Prophetic mission is to apply this universal rule within the society so that the later generations will take it as an example.
* It is difficult to read the Hadith:
* Without understanding the Quran, you cannot understand the Hadith.
* Without understanding the real message of the Hadith, we cannot implement the Quran into our existence right now.
* The Quran is a universal message; the Prophet’s mission is to be a representative of this message.
* We need to transform hadith into belief.
* **The Quran, the Prophetic teachings and examples of the universe all need to be tied in together.**
* In order to feel confident in our existence, the first step is to learn to read the Quran together with the universe.
* Afterwards, contextualize the meaning of that message together with the hadith.
* Example: If you are studying chemistry, try to understand the subject by extracting the meaning that points to the Creator.
* If you want to fulfil your purpose of the existence of the universe, you have to interpret the meaning of the universe in your field of study.
* The meaning of the secular sciences must be enlightened with the meaning of the Quran.
* If you stop studying the universe, you cannot get the meaning that connects you to an Absolute Eternal Source. If you cannot get meaning from the universe, you cannot apply the teachings of the Quran to your existence.
* By its nature, the Quran needs to be applied to every generation.
* The universe may seem to be repeating every morning: the Creator is continuing His speech, repeating each day continuously.
* *So why have we abandoned the universe?*
* In spite of the heavy references of the universe in the Quran, some still choose to ignore it and others alienate themselves because of the misunderstanding of *uloom ul deen*.
* Nevertheless, the more we study the universe, the more we see the qualities of the Creator manifested in the universe. As a result, we can be sure that we belong to the Lord of the universe.
* The meaning extracted from hadith should not be taken literally.
* Example: In the Prophetic tradition, it is prohibited to close your eyes while you pray. Your eyes have to be open. There are some hadiths which narrates that the Prophet (pbuh) cut his prayers short on some instances such as the crying of a child.
* This means that the Prophet (pbuh) was not disassociated from the universe.
* “Closing your eyes” means that: Prayers should not be performed by isolating yourself from this world.
* You are always in the presence of God while you are seeing and hearing. This is the gist of belief.
* **Lesson: We should be aware of the existence of the universe even while we pray i.e. I am a created being. The Creator is manifesting His qualities to us in this universe. We should pay attention to it so we may respond back.**
* Example: Someone gives you a present, without looking at it you say thank you. Similarly, the Creator is always giving us presents in this universe: our breathing, powers of sight…are all gifts manifesting His Divine qualities. Only after seeing the meaning in the presents can we respond back to our Creator.
* The author introduces the Fundamentals of Islamic Theology.
* If someone studies the universe without paying attention to the meaning, he insults the Maker of the universe.

Source:God

Human Beings

Universe

* In the figure above, the universe and human beings have the same Source. Human Beings can only reach the Source through the universe. When I reach the Creator of the universe, I become aware of my Lord.
* Example: I am drinking water. Through the water, I acknowledge my Creator as follows: **“As the Creator of the water, I experience that you are the Generous One because I experience it and I thank You.”**
* In our existence, we have the ability to acknowledge generosity and all His other Divine names.
* By ignoring the creation of the universe, we cannot communicate with God.
* Example: The mentioning of Monks’ monasticism (*rahbaniya*) in the Quran **(Chapter Hadid 57: 27)** is to let us know that we cannot isolate ourselves from the universe. We cannot force ourselves to worship God by drawing ourselves into an imaginary world.
* Piety has to do with how we communicate with the Creator of the universe by using our human qualities.



**Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth (Chapter Nur 24):35**

* You cannot communicate with the universe by itself but only through the light coming out of it. This light is God’s qualities manifesting itself in the universe.
* We cannot reduce our reflection of the Quran and the hadith to special occasions only.
* Without establishing the proper base of belief, we cannot benefit from the prescribed rituals in a short timeframe.
* Example: If we have not filled ourselves with awe by experiencing the universe throughout the year, then we may struggle presenting our genuine excitement to the Creator of the universe during the last ten days of Ramadan.
* Similarly, we may read a hadith where a companion of the Prophet (pbuh) did some act once in their lives. Without extracting the proper meaning out of it, applying that act to all our events would be an imitation.
* To establish the base of belief, we need to fill ourselves with excitement to respond back to the Creator.
* What does “mystery beneath the veil of creation” refer to?
* Every act of creation in the universe carries a message. Example: Winter is approaching and the snow will come. We need to get the message that: there is beauty in this type of creation; our Creator is preparing the arrival of a new season
* If we look at the universe from the matter side only, our existence and the universe becomes meaningless. As a result, we may struggle in our awareness of the Creator.
* On the other hand, if we pay attention to the universe and connect it to an Absolute Source, we increase our awareness of the Creator.

* The authenticity of a hadith should not be our main concern.
* **It does not matter if the chain of narration cannot be traced, what matters is my interpretation of it: *How is it helping me acknowledge my Creator?***
* Example: If someone narrates some excerpts from hadith, it being authentic is not that important. The important aspect is my attitude towards it: *how can I develop the confidence in my existence with the truthfulness of the hadith?*
* Our main concern should be: *Does the narrated saying or action go against the teaching of the Quran, or not?*