Saturday, November 15, 2014
Subject: Listen to the Melody of the Stars.

 ***Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 8, Hadith #324***
Ibn Abbas narrates: “Once I stayed overnight at the house of Maimoona (my Aunt), the Prophet (pbuh) was with her. When it was the last part of the night, (the last 1/3rd part), the Prophet (pbuh) got up, looked towards the sky and recited: 

“*Verily in the creation of heavens & earth, and in the successions of night and day, there are indeed messages for all who are endowed with insight*.” ***(3):190***

* We can extract many lessons from this hadith, one of which is that getting up at night and looking towards the sky is Sunnah. (*more to follow on page 2*)

***Sahih Al-Bukhari Volume 5, Book 59, Hadith #445***
Ibn Umar narrates: The Prophet (pbuh) came back from an expedition and asked his companions to join him in Banu Quraiza (a suburb in Medina) before praying and settling down in their houses. Some companions hurried to that area so they could perform *Salat-ul-Asr* (the afternoon prescribed prayers before sunset) as requested by the Prophet (pbuh). Others were debating whether to perform the prayers on their way. There was a disagreement among the companions. When the Prophet (phuh) arrived, they shared their interpretations with the Prophet (pbuh). When Prophet (pbuh) was asked which one was right? The Prophet (pbuh) said nothing.

***General Lesson:*** People may have disagreements. People may interpret verses and sayings of the Prophet differently. There is no definite rule.

***Main Lesson:*** If there is a dispute, keep quiet. That is the ***Sunnah*** (the Prophetic way).

* We lack the awareness of the Prophetic way in our daily lives because we have reduced our training to performing rituals only. We do not take notice of the creation in general.

Example: we know that getting up at night and praying *tahajjud* is Sunnah but the majority of us did not know that looking at the sky at night is Sunnah.

If we study the Quran carefully, we will notice that most of the verses in the scriptures encourage us to do the following:
a/ communicate with the universe
b/ interact with creation
c/ extract lessons from a and b

For example: In the scripture, when we come across the description of “Paradise” and “Hell”, we have to relate it to our present lives and our eternal existence. Similarly, the mentioning of gardens and rivers in Paradise needs to be related to our lives here as well.

*Based on our understanding of the Quran and Hadith, we take an attitude towards creation.* When we read the Quran, our understanding of the message is only reduced to doing certain rituals. Religion then becomes mixed with culture. For example: we may pay attention to Paradise, which is likened to the gardens here on earth but if I am not contemplating on the existence of the gardens here on earth, then I am not seeing the signs of Paradise in them. Seeing the signs of Paradise here on Earth is the *Sunnah* of the Prophet*.*

* We need to follow the *Sunnah*, not the culture.

*How can we ensure that the Prophet was not actually checking the time of prayer while looking at the sky?* Because when he looked at the sky, he recited the verse: “*Definitely in the creation of the heavens and earth, … there are signs for those who reflect”*.

* Prayer by definition is a response. It is our response to the Creator. We are thanking/praising our Lord by expressing: **A*llahuakbar, SubhanAllah*, *Alhamdolillah***.
* Prayer is the way to express yourself. If you do not have any excitement in your response to the Creator, then it means that you have nothing to respond. Hence, your prayers become meaningless.
* I have to prepare myself to interact with God. This preparation should be in line with my perception of how God treats me in my real life.
* When we get recharged from interacting emotionally and intellectually with the Creator, only then we are inclined to excitement: “***SubhanAllah***”.

There is a missing dimension in the teaching of religion. Without establishing a proper base for belief, rituals become an act of “imitation”.

**5% of the Quran mentions about our ritualistic obligations.
95% of the Quran mentions about establishment of foundation.**

When we do certain actions, it must be the result of our previous preparation. These previous preparations are mostly missing among the Quranic readers.

* We found some references in the other scriptures to the creation but the Quran is the only scripture that gives full reference about creation.

We need to establish our foundations of religion which strengthens our spiritual side as well. Our spiritual side must be nourished according to our connection/interaction with the external physical world. Spirituality, which is not based on the real physical world, is imaginary.

**Quran (*book*) = word of God
Physical world (*act of creation*) =speech of God by action**

* In principle, we tend to sanctify the book (*mushaf*) but we never sanctify creation. We read the book but we do not listen to God. We have to reanalyze this case.
* If I am not conscious about creation, **I cannot turn the *mushaf* into Quran.**
* Only by taking the “*word of God*” and the “act of creation”, I turn my reading of the *mushaf* into listening to the Creator speaking to me.”
Example: When I look at the clouds, the Creator is making Himself known to me. I proceed with reading the book. Only then does the book become the “*word of God*” for me.
* God speaks to you through His act of Creation.
* Only by observing the clouds you hear what God is saying to you.
* **Quran is a dynamic book.** We cannot reduce it to recitation of the *mushaf* only!
* **If you turn your relationship with the *mushaf* into a conversation**, then you will receive the message from Him and you will respond back to Him.
* CONVERSATION= *[He speaks to you] + [you listen to Him]+[you understand something] + [you observe the universe] + [you internalize something]+[you respond back to Him]*
* If we deny His creation by not partaking in observing the universe, then, we will end up with claiming that gathering evidences belongs to the naturalists or material scientists.
* **Quran is active, eternal, non-created speech of God.**
* *Mushaf* is paper and ink where God’s Word is written. Therefore, *Mushaf* must be read in order to communicate with God.

We have to do rituals with establishing foundations, which is generally the missing dimension of rituals. For example: Prayers are not alternatives to looking at the sky or vice versa. They must be united.
*Here is the formula to practice religion without reducing it to certain rituals only:*
**A= God is the teacher.
B= Universe is God’s teaching tool.
C= the Quran is also God’s teaching tool.**
***To get to know A, combine B and C. Both tools need to be reunited together.***

For example: Without establishing a proper base of belief, “charity” may appear superficial. People may even get emotionally inclined or guilty to give charity at that moment which may soon fade away.

*The Words, page 237, first paragraph:*
“**One time at night in a high spot on a Mountain on Earth, I was looking at the face of the heavens when the following lines suddenly occurred to me. With the imagination, I heard the speaking of the stars through the tongue of disposition, and that is how the lines were written. Since I do not know the rules of versification, they were not written accordingly, but as they occurred to me.**”

* The Author is identifying the Prophetic way, *Sunnah*. This is an extension to the meaning of the previous Hadith i.e. becoming aware of the “Oneness of God” is not jurisprudence (*fiqh*) but it is the way the Prophet lived (*Sunnah*.)
* The Author makes something out of his experience at “looking at the stars”. He feels recharged, which is his confirmation on the “Oneness of God”.
Example: When I eat a cronut, I believe that this taste has been created for me specially. The Creator of this taste is treating me personally, He is my Lord.
* We ought to establish this relationship with Him. Otherwise saying *Rabbana* (my Sustainer) would not mean anything to me.
* Tongue of disposition= as the creation is created.
* We ought to be hearing the stars speaking to us.
* *See also* *verse* **(3):190** *as referred to on first page and* *verse* **(50):6** *as below*:


***“Do they not look at the sky above them, how We have built it and made it beautiful and free of all faults?”***

* Analogy: Some people feel comfortable in the land where they are born and don’t want to move out. This is the lack of realization that: “Wherever you go, God is with you, wherever you are God is with you.”
* HE is with you. *Why do you feel alien then?* The land belongs to Him and you belong to Him. With this analogy, you identify yourself with Him.
* HE must be present in your life right now. Example: the same sun shines in different parts of the world.
* The less we are connected with God, the more we feel attached to our motherland.
* The more we become conscious of God (the Owner of the Universe), the less we feel the attachment to our motherland.
* We ought to establish the consciousness that: “Wherever we go, we are the guests of the same Lord and we have the same “sky” above us. *(****Note****: the Quran speaks in the past tense to assure that an event definitely happens and so it is always valid for the present. Quran always says “how” and not “why”.)*
* *How is the “sky” been given existence up there?* *How it is precisely decorated?* That is a *fard* (mandatory) reflection given in the Quran.
* When you look at it, you understand that there is a conscious choice behind it. There is no flaw, even precision is Absolute. Just realizing this is worthy of saying: “*AllahuAkbar”.*
* *See verse below* **(15):16**

“***And indeed, We have set up in the heavens great constellations and endowed them with beauty for all to behold***.”
* It is made beautiful because it has a purpose of existence. We have to express our excitement as a response to the Creator who has prepared this beautiful scenery for us.
* If you see the correspondence between what you hear from the stars and the speech of God, then the Quran becomes “alive” for you.
* It has been debated by past theologians whether the Quran is created or not. The significant point some inferred was: No one can treat the speech of God as a static book.

*The Utterance of the Stars*
**“Then listen to the stars, listen to their harmonious address!
See what wisdom has emblazed on the decree of its light!”**
**“Altogether they speak with the tongue of truth,
They address the majesty of the All-Powerful One of Glory’s sovereignty:”
“We are each of us light-scattering proofs of the existence of our Maker;
We are witnesses both to His Unity and His Power;”**

* The Quran is “omnipresent”. The message of the Quran is not limited to space-time dimension.
* In the creation of everything, there is a truth. The Quran points to the Absolute quality of its Creator, which is the truth.
* TRUTH= the meaning you get from the objects that they point to.
* The truth points to the conscious will that is behind it. It is a deliberate act of creation, it cannot happen haphazardly.
* The truth is so finely tuned that no human mind can attribute it to an accident.
For example: The historical events that occurred throughout time are in perfect order. Even by looking at the events happening right now, I need to see what is it referring to? It must be a sign pointing to something.
* We ought to educate ourselves to see truth in the existence of the matters.
* The essence of education is the same whether you get “religious education” or “secular education”: we have to seek the truth. Dividing education into two categories is artificial. We study anything, be it a religious text or a created matter, to purpose of the study must be to learn the truth that object conveys to us.
* You may see the truth in the manifestations of the qualities of the Creator, referred to in the language of the Qur’an as “*Asma al Husna*.” Truth always lies in the qualities of the conscious Maker. Truth in the creation is nothing but the qualities of the Creator in the matter. For Example: When you look at a pair of sunglasses, you see:
* Manifested form of order.
* Manifested form of act of creation.
* Manifested form of measurement.
* Manifested laws of wisdom.

*These are not laws of nature, these are misnomers. Thus, these are* ***laws of creation.***

* Example: Truth does not lie in the molecular structure of the tea but the truth lies in the meaning of the message you get from the Creator of the tea. HE is telling you that He knows you, He is entertaining you, He is communicating with you by giving you this gift, you are His host…
* Don’t lose yourself in the numbers of stars in the galaxy. I need to focus on what it represents for me.
* If all the galaxies are the product of the same source, then we are the product of the same source.
* Example: human beings come from the same source, the stars come from the same source, and laptops come from the same source…
* We should not make any distinction between animate beings and inanimate beings.
* Example: I have to be respectful to a laptop as much as I am respectful to an ant.
* We need to establish the unity of the Creator through seeing the unity of Creation.
* Example: I am respectful to the Prophet (pbuh) as the messenger of God with the same lens as I am respectful to the stars as the messenger of God. Although one of them may speak to me with the language I understand but they both are messengers.
* You cannot separate one part of creation from another.
* Example: The power outlet has been set up by an electrician and the table has been put together by a carpenter.
* As far as human relation is concerned, I can attribute the existence of these objects to two different sources.
* As far as the existence of the whole universe is concerned, it is pointing to the unity of the Creator.
* None of the creature of this creation is more sacred than the other.
* Example: Some nations are not more sacred than the others. Some places are not more sacred than others.
* The fact of the matter is that these objects are all truth conveying messages.
* Is Evil part of this unity?
* Evil is not in creation but evil lies in the eye of the beholder.
* There is truth in the existence of that which I perceive to be evil/good.
* For example: There is truth in the existence of the Creation of the cancer cells.
* The truth is: My Creator is the Absolute One. This world is transient. Do not lose yourself in this world and its objects.
* “Death” is the obvious sign indicating that we are transient beings.
* The purpose of the existence of everything points to the truth.
* Example: Observing a tsunami or an earthquake makes me realize “my reality”: I am a transient being and I have no power to stop the tsunami.
* I cannot declare independence in my own existence. I have to acknowledge the One who is the Sovereign of the universe. By acknowledging Him I will fulfill my purpose of existence.
* We run away from death. This means that we have been given the sense of protecting our lives. Otherwise we would not know that our lives are precious.
* There is no such thing as “Angry God”.
* We have to see “Mercy” in the Creator’s *ghadab* (anger)
* Analogy: When the student does not do well on the exam, the teacher gives him/her an “F” grade. By doing so, the teacher just made the student realize that: you better study!
* The teacher gives F out of mercy, not anger. Similarly, the Creator never fails you, you failed yourself. HE is just teaching you.
* His Mercy encompasses everything including tsunami, illnesses and failing an exam..
* There is “truth” in hardship.
* If there is no hardship, I would not learn.
* As a result, my understanding, realization and consciousness becomes weak, I would not understand anything in this universe.
* In every act of creation (*tongue of truth*), the truth is always speaking.