Halaqa: Saturday, September 27, 2014

Topic: Cryings of the Heart

 ***Recap:*** Continuation of [The table indicating the reality of the world of the people of guidance, those with easy heart].
 -When we have the right attitude, the world will have a different meaning. The author is elaborating on the world view where one is not heedless, is guided and thus has a peaceful heart. What does it mean to have a peaceful heart?
 -It means not contradicting yourself and your reality.
Example: If you feel something is wrong and you are supporting it, you will obviously not feel comfortable, it will be bothersome. By supporting it you will be contradicting yourself.

**Line 4: *The mind became the key to treasuries. See, transience is the door to permanence.***

*Human mind*= human intellect.
 -This text says your mind is given to you as a key to treasuries. Human mind is a tool, it is the key and has to be used. A Key by itself means nothing but when you use it to open something, it is meaningful. For example: If you have the key to the door, you can get into the room.
 -When you find the treasure, you will receive peace of mind.

*Treasure*=what the creation is revealing to you.
The mind is given to you in order to discover treasuries in the creation. Where are the treasures to be found?
 -In existence
 -In revelation.

*What is revelation?*
 -We have to look at this world as a place through which its maker is revealing His qualities. As conscious human beings with intellect, we should be able to find meaning in the manifestations that point to the creator. When we receive the meaning, it sparkles something inside us and we need to develop this understanding. We have to keep questioning what the source of these meanings can be, what kind of qualities it must have, how they relate to my feelings etc.
 -The Creator, by acting (creating the universe) reveals Himself to conscious beings. This also means that the One who gave you the ability to understand speech, must also reveal Himself to you by speaking to you. When He speaks to you, through observing His action in the universe, He is revealing what you cannot know.
 -If you discover something from the creation, it will be a **revelation** for you. This revelation will be the base of your conclusion about the One Who reveals Himself to you. This conclusion is called “**belief**.” Belief is not a one-time thing. It is not to be confused with obtaining knowledge only. This knowledge needs to be internalized, and introduced to human senses. It is an ongoing process; it is a life-experience. Human senses fluctuate. They need a constant reminder to stabilize their confidence in the reality of this knowledge. As life goes on, belief needs to be reinforced through experiencing both kinds of revelation, in creation and in Speech.
 -Existence of the Scriptures is the revelation of the Maker of universe or the manifestation of the qualities of the Creator in a speech form in order to help conscious beings relate themselves to Him.

Unfortunately, we don’t think creation is revelation because we love to sanctify only scriptures as sacred books.
 -When you discover through the creation what is not known to you i.e. who is the maker of the universe and His qualities. That is the **treasure**.

* Universe in its nature is like a mirror reflecting qualities of its maker but in and of itself, it has no qualities.
* We ought to use our mind/human intellect to find the qualities of the Creator manifested in the universe.

If someone says you’ve got to have faith in order to find the treasures. But faith without reasoning will not enable you to do so. When you are reasoning, you are utilizing your human qualities i.e. mind, senses, heart, power of sight…
 -Religion first starts with being aware of your human qualities and then utilizing them.

* Without utilizing our human qualities, belief is useless because it has no meaning in your existence.
* We have to think and reflect to find the truth in the creation which reveals the qualities of its maker.

The treasures are to be found everywhere. We do not have to go to a special place to find them because the qualities of the Creator are manifested everywhere in the universe. When I found the Creator, it means I also found “my Creator”. For example when I found the Creator of the tree, it means I found my Creator and thus, I attach myself to the Creator, not to the tree. I also found my Source of Existence and I need to attribute myself to Him.

A second type of revelation may be the Speech of the Creator, which can be found the form of written texts in Torah, Bible, Qur’an, rather than the act of the Creator including the events that happen to us where Creator is manifesting Himself. So you have to listen to it and if it helps you discover what is hidden in creation more easily, then you will see the compatibility between “what is said” (speech) and “what is done”(action). After confirming it with peace of mind and heart, you will say: “yes, I understand who my owner in this world is”.

***How are we going to reach permanence?***

What most of us have been taught is that when you do good actions in this world, you will be rewarded permanently in the hereafter. As a result of your suffering here, you get rewarded. Don’t you wonder that if He is your Lord, why does He make you suffer? Does He want you to suffer? You must be saying that you did not want to be created and He created you to make you suffer.
**“As a human being, I want a Lord who takes care of me, who provides me with that which I need. That’s what I am”.** Whoever created you, made you with this heart that wants to be comfortable with your Creator. We have to get rid of the suffering misconception as the human heart is not created to suffer.

**Question:** How do you get rid of the “state of suffering” concept in your mind?
 -Is there any way for me to know the Creator if I do not realize that I am created? If you are not created, who is the Creator? If you think you are powerful by yourself i.e. your mind belongs to you, your eyes and everything belongs to you, then there should not be any concept of having a Creator. The reality is that all these tools and qualities are given to you. For example, “Eyes are given to me, someone gave me eyes”, you have to investigate and confirm.

* Nature of this creation is designed in a way that through its being transient, we reach permanence.

Whoever sees that this transience is the source of suffering is himself causing mischief to his understanding of himself. Transience cannot be regarded as the way of suffering. For example death is the worst scenario as opposed to an illness; it is the end of everything. Can you see death as suffering or the means through which human beings realize their permanent Source of their existence i.e. Creator. If my perception of death is that it is bad, I am suffering from death, then my perception is wrong. **Only through the transience I realize the permanence**. That’s how I am, that’s how my Creator is making me realize that I have to find the permanence in everything.

* Human Beings are made with the ability to realize permanence through transience. The transience becomes the means to finding the permanent source of existence.

If you make this life your ultimate goal i.e. your ultimate goal is to obtain the things in the universe and turn this world into an object of worship, then as the things (health, job…) leave you, they turn into suffering.
 -Suffering comes from our perception and misconception of existence. The purpose of the existence of Human beings in this universe is:

* To discover the treasuries behind the existence of this universe which are the qualities of God
* To get to know all the qualities of God.

Example: If you think that tea will satisfy you and your ultimate goal becomes to get that cup of tea, then you are bound to suffer because tea will disappear soon. Tea is just a means to get to know that the owner of the tea is a generous One.
 -You suffer because of your misperception of the tea. You do not suffer because tea is gone.

* Nature of existence in this universe is such that nothing in this universe is permanent.
* Everything which has a beginning has an end, although they may last longer than “you”. Even if you may not be experiencing it, you are aware of it and you live with this awareness right now.

Either with our perception, we can see everything in the universe as a source of suffering. That contradicts our human nature, which seeks contentment. Can you imagine living in a world of suffering where nothing brings good news?
 -Transient nature of existence is a message, so we ought to question it; otherwise it goes against our human nature.

If we define the ultimate purpose of this life as a place to entertain ourselves without realizing the source of creation, then as soon as the things start leaving us because of their ephemerality, we feel no different than a child who does not want to give up his toys. For example: As soon as the child gets a toy, he is happy. Can you take the toy back from him? No. If you take the toy away from him, what happens? The child loses himself in the toy. But we are not a child anymore, WE HAVE TO GROW UP!

My mind is given to me; my senses are also given to me. The one who gave me these senses is educating me that I am not the owner of anything. Therefore, I ought to know myself and know who my owner is. In other words, the Creator is saying: “You get to know who I am by identifying your existence with my Creatorship”. It means I am created by the one who creates the universe. Therefore, rather than criticizing an event, we have to use it as a means and make it an opportunity to know our reality.

I cannot own my own health, I want to be healthy but I cannot really guarantee my health. I am not my own Lord. You cannot be your own boss. If transgression is going on somewhere, I have to stand against it and I have to be aware that it is against the will of the Creator of my sense. Don’t say “I do not like war”; instead say “my Creator does not like war”. How do you know, did you get a message from your Creator? He created me with this sense.
 -We are created to get to know the source of our existence.
 -We have to be careful not to appropriate these qualities to ourselves and say “I am a good person, always on the side of innocent people”. This is the wrong attitude.
 -We have to use these feelings in order to acknowledge who the real owner of these feelings is. That’s why you have to say “in the name of the Creator, I stand against transgression” . Here, you are acknowledging that these feelings do not belong to you. It should also not be your egoistic attitude, it should solely be in the name of God, and so you become a God conscious person.
 -We have to understand that there is no suffering and thus we have to revisit our perception.
 -In the creation, in reality, there is no transgression and there is no suffering. But it is people misusing their freewill who cause transgression and become transgressors. If I use my freewill in order to harm someone, I am misusing my freewill.
 -By realizing yourself, you realize who the owner is.
 - I am here in this universe as a student to learn who my Lord is, He introduces himself through events and so I get to know myself and ultimately my Creator.
 **Line 5: *“The spark of perfection died, -- But behold the Sun of Beauty”*.**

*How can we be perfect?*
 -We cannot be perfect by ourselves. We can only be perfect if we realize that the source of our existence is perfect and so we define our existence according to our owner. How?
 -If you realize that your Creator is the owner of this universe and whatever qualities you see in this universe are all from Him, so He is the perfect one.
 -On the contrary, if you try to be perfect by yourself within yourself, it is impossible because we do not own, neither can we hold the control over, the qualities given to us. (Thank God that we are created with this impossibility. Otherwise, we would be claiming as to be gods.)

When you get ill or become old and you don’t want to or when you are on the verge of death, we have to say “we belong to God and we are going back to Him” (*inna lilahi wa inna ilayhi rajioun*). It means I realize that my Creator is giving me existence and transferring my existence from this world to another.

* I am given existence by Him in this world and it is He again Who is taking me away from this kind of existence into another kind. I come from the same source and going back to the same source.
* I can reach perfection only in my understanding that I belong to the one who gave me existence.

Historically, people used to feel security in their affiliations to their tribes. That’s the problem Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) struggled with. You cannot really attribute yourself to your tribe and find eternal peace in your tribe because you will die and all the members of the tribe will die as well. This is not the solution. Additionally, some people think the struggle of the Prophet was polytheism, which replaces God with idols. It was the problem of tribalism, which was the iceberg of the problem of existence. They were proud of their tribes and tried to gain virtues by belonging to a certain tribe. All culture was based on tribalism, war was based on tribal competition, and it was silly and fake. Prophet Muhammad said (PBUH) that you can find your value by attributing yourself to the Creator and not the tribe. Tribalism seems like a simple event but if we look at its background, it is the main problem.

We usually tend to identify our being by associating ourselves to a group or organization. For example: I work for this company or I work for this state.

How do you really secure your existence to the source of existence i.e. you creator, so that you can belong to Him?

* You can only perfect yourself by attributing yourself to the perfect one i.e. I myself belong to Him.

My existence belongs to Him. Can you imagine the owner of the universe will waste your existence? My body perishes or rots, how about my ideas, my feelings, and my soul? For example there is a frozen piece of ice and there is the law of freezing. When the frozen piece of ice melts, does the law of freezing disappear? No, it is an independent thing. Frozen piece of ice represents my body. And the law of freezing represents my soul. Body disappears but my soul never disappears. It means He has put my soul into this body, and subjected my body to transience and He is training my spirit that I cannot own my existence. He has endowed our soul with millions of different qualities, senses, emotions… They all need to be trained. They all need to get to know who their owner is. We have to start from here.

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was the perfect man because whatever He did was right. What is right? For example if you do a good action such as help a needy person but if you do it as yourself in your name, feeling: “I am a good person”. Is it the right action? It is not the action itself that the Prophet did and made him “perfect,” but the attitude that the Prophet had while performing the action made him “perfect.” He did it in the Name of God. That is why we have to pay attention to the consciousness of the Prophet, not to only the action as such.

That opportunity is given to you in order for you to know that this sense of doing right is given to you by the One who is doing right. So Prophet Muhammad’s perfection is not based on him doing something which is right, instead he did what we knew to be right, in the right way. Prophet Muhammad used opportunities as a means or source of recognizing the right attitude given to him by his Creator. If Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not do all things in order to realize who his Lord is, he would not be the messenger of God then.

 -Therefore, when we do something good, we have to do it in order to acknowledge the Creator. Don’t attribute it to yourself and be proud of it. Ego wants to own goodness to himself/herself. When something bad happens, we may attribute it to a “bad” God and think that it is me who is doing everything good. When it comes to religion, we are part-timers.

We never verify things and question them. When it comes to worldly affairs we are the smartest people. This contradiction must come to an end otherwise religion is a false claim.

The Quran says: “Believe and act accordingly” (*Aminoo wa amiloo al-salihat*). Why do you separate the two? Action must be driven from belief. If action is not from belief then it is not *amal salih*. It is an *amal*, an action, it is not *salih*. Belief makes it *salih*. What makes an action good is the belief connection of it. We have no right to claim ownership over the actions we are doing.

For example if I offer food to someone. Through this action I should experience the sense of giving/helping which is given to me. The One who gave me this sense wants me to acknowledge that He is the One who is helping. I belong to the one who is helping. Thus, there is no perfection in and of itself. Instead, try to perfect yourself by finding your Creator and attributing your qualities to Him and using them in His name. This is **perfection** because He is the perfect one.

When we really understand that there is no perfection in this world, we find the sun of beauty i.e. permanent source. I have seen some perfection here in the mirror.
 ***-Metaphor*:** Universe is like a mirror.
You see some lights reflecting in the mirror. But the mirror has no lights from itself it is just reflecting it. Everything in this universe reflects what the source is sending to it. We understand that we and none of the creation can be perfect at all, since we are all subject to death. In the mirror you see some good qualities but they disappear and so you understand that the source is reflecting, manifesting, making itself known to the conscious beings.

“Behold the Sun of beauty”-- Good things are coming out from this mirror. Some wonderful things are going on, and you understand that the mirror cannot be the source of these qualities and it’s not perfect because it is just reflecting them. When you understand that the object is not the source of what is being reflected in the mirror, you understand the reflection is pointing to a source.
 -Then you realize that the object is powerless and that the sun is the light i.e. source of existence.
 -Quran says “God is the light of the heavens and earth” (*allahu nur us samawate wal ard*). Our duty is easy; we just have to acknowledge our reality.

All human qualities and actions are created by Him. All the beauty I see in Muhammad (PBUH) belongs to His maker. Muhammad’s actions are also bringing message from God. That’s what makes him *Rasool Allah* (Messanger of God.) His actions are also bringing message from God. We have to use the same reasoning with the other Prophets (Jesus, Noah, Moses…) i.e. whatever beauty you see in them brings message from its Creator. They are the mirrors and not the source of their qualities. The source of their qualities is their Creator. We have to acknowledge that these Prophets are equal as far as being Messengers of God is concerned.

Through the teachings of the Prophets, we are seeing the message in the mirror of the universe. It means that the message must be present for you. If it is not present for you, the Prophet then becomes a historical hero for you. Prophet is the one who brings the message to you. As long as this message exists, you can apply this message in your life. **Prophets must be alive in your life.** **What makes a person a Prophet is the message He brings, the message He represents.** So you have to get the message. When you read a narration from the Prophet you need to understand this narration within the light of your understanding of the Messengership.

Universe brings the message to you in the form of action. Prophets are people who are employed to bring you the message in the form of word and their personal actions. You have to adopt it and make it practical for yourself. You say “Peace be on you O Prophet!” (*assalamu aleyka ayyuhan nabee*). But he as a person is dead. I am actually declaring that there is peace between me and the message I received through the Messenger because I am happy with it.

Let’s say there is a Prophet somewhere in South America and you receive a text message from him. Although you are not with him physically, you are with him via the message. You are still getting the message regardless of location. What are you going to do by looking at his eyes, nose?… If you practice the message of the Prophet as much as you can, you are with the Prophet.

If you follow the message you received from the prophet as much as you are aware of it, you are following him.

* **Belief in prophet must be a living entity for us**

If belief in the Prophet is a living entity for us, we will be saying (*ashadu anna muhammadan abduhu wa rasuluhu*), the *shahada* (giving testimony to your belief) then becomes a living confirmation.

Generally in cultures, it is not taught how to believe in Prophethood. We are taught that “Muhammad **was** Allah’s Rasool…” the Quran says “Muhammad **is** Allah’s Rasool”. The latter is present tense; it means we must live with his Message.
 -Quran makes sense, just read it. Don’t say Muhammad was the prophet. Say Muhammad is a prophet right now for me.
 -Get the message from Muhammad, if you do not have the message, you historicize the personality of Muhammad and distance yourself from him.

* We need to renew our belief. You can never inherit belief from anyone; belief must be your own property.