Saturday, April 13 2013

YouTube Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XrJ9sQCX20I

Recap: Last week we tried to understand the first aim in the existence of our faculties

* Why they are created in us?

1. They are there to make known to us the bounties available in this universe so that we may offer thanks and express our awareness of our reality
2. This awareness is worshipping God

As a result of becoming of aware of the qualities of the creator, and seeing the manifestations of the creator in the very basic things we are experiencing in this world, we worship God.

- Worshipping God should not be made into a mysterious action

That is why in Islam there is no monastic life because if someone secludes himself from regular life, he is shutting himself off from living in a state of awareness.

* What he will experience when in a monastery, is all imaginary and metaphysical
* You might say that you believe in a transcendental creator but your belief in the eternal absolute being will have no foundation because you are not able to experience the truth of the statement.

However, it does not mean that when I extend my relationship

When I say I believe in God, I am expecting that I should experience something different – something out of the regular

* Of course, in our connection with the created world, we are expected to know that this created world is a place of manifestation.

Stage 1: The universe is like a book

When you look at the book, you do not get anything.

Only when you start reading, you will get meaning.

If you concentrate on creation in the form of a book, we are expected to experience the meaning manifested in them

* We will see that some qualities are manifested in creation
* Our conclusion: The qualities do not belong to the objects themselves
  + Rather, they are the result of the qualities of the creator

When we read sentence in a book, we derive a meaning

* But we cannot say that the meaning is from the book itself
* Rather, the meaning is from the author and we are engaging in communication with the author.

But if you close the book and say that you are deriving meaning from the book then what you are really doing is you are imagining the author and you are imagining what the author is saying.

* As long as we are not dead, we are always in contact with the physical world so therefore we should not ‘leave’ the world

I have to constantly read and communicate with the author of the book/earth as long as I am in the earth.

Stage 2: The universe is not only like a book.

* It is like a mirror, reflecting the qualities of its maker
* When you interact and connect with things, we should not forget that they are created in this physical world
* We cannot escape this physical world
* The faculties given to us are so that they may be used to extract meaning from what is manifested in the mirror.

If you are a cleaner, you will look at the mirror as a glass

You have to go beyond the mirror as just a piece of glass.

* You have to see what is reflected in the mirror
* The whole universe is a mirror

Is there anything in the universe which is not endowed with endless qualities of its creator?

Despite however much scientists study, they still only know very very little.

We should not fall into illusions and say that we are experiencing something spiritual (with no connection to the physical world)

* We will be cheating ourselves
* It is not realistic

As human beings, we do not just consist of physical attributes.

* We have communicative and questioning faculties
* Countless qualities interact with us and we should not stop this interaction.
* We should not stop looking at what is reflected in the mirror

The universe is like a mirror and we cannot ignore it

* Our duty is to look at the mirror as keep uncovering what it displays

Stage 3:

\*Many people may have not heard of this stage at all

* Not seeing the universe or communicating with it just like a book or a mirror but rather see the universe as a speech
* The universe is speaking to you, revealing Himself in a continuous speech
  + I have prepared this for you

Shortcomings of stage 1:

* A book is static

If you try and imagine that a book is continuously renewing itself, it means that the author is speaking to you.

* **When you start communicating with the universe as though the owner of the universe is speaking to you, that is the point when you start seeing the parallel between what is revealed to us in creation and what is revealed to us in revelation**

Otherwise, you will always separate revelation from creation

When people say, we have to obey the Quran and follow the speech of God it is pointless

* If they don’t see the parallel between what is created out there and what is revealed in the speech of God
* If you divorce creation and the speech of God (revelation or Quran) then what are you understanding from the book?
  + Whatever your understanding is, it is no realistic
  + You end up isolating revelation from your reality and make it something completely irrelevant to your reality
  + This ultimately leads you to imitating revelation

This is why most people imitate the Quran rather than confirm it.

Q: A person should revere the words of God in creation as much as they revere the Quran

A: Yes, theoretically

You are free to interpret everything incorrectly but you have to **use reality** to confirm **what you read**

* Priority is given to communication with the creation
* If we do not see that the universe is the speech of its creator with me, I do not know where will we locate revelation
  + Revelation becomes an ‘extra’ to my life and I have to imitate it
  + I am not exactly confident about what it says because I am not confirming it in my reality

It is essential but not very commonly practiced!

If someone says: We have to obey God and we have to do what God says

* That is correct
* But how do we really communicate with God?
* You cannot be sure of what God says if you only listen to revelation and you do not listen to God’s speech in this universe
* Obeying the revelation becomes a superficial experience
  + The rigidity (called fundamentalism nowadays) of claims such as Our Book, Our Way of Life becomes extremely rigid because they cannot bring what they read in revelation into their practical life and confirm
  + They do not see the parallel between their lives, the universe and the revelation

Eating something as a means of communication of my creator to me

* I experience Him talking to me

We commonly hear people saying:

* You should eat this because it is permissible
* You should refrain from that because it is impermissible
* BUT, what is the basis of that?

It becomes blind imitation and in turns into unconfirmed claims

* These claims then turn into rigidity
* People start defending claims violently because of the rigidity within the claim

We should try and see everything as a book first, then as a mirror (something is being reflected) and then as the speech of the owner

* Imagine living in this world and your owner is constantly speaking to you
* Your creator is revealing Himself
* When you have a nasty experience, you learn that you should not repeat such choices, etc
* Accordingly you develop attitudes but you do not get angry with the person who left a nasty experience for you.
  + You are thankful for the lessons learnt

If someone teaches you about things that are harmful for you, you still have to be thankful because you are learning what you should stay away from.

* The person is essentially warning you

But how are you going to use your ability to distinguish between what is good and bad?

You cannot utilize your ability yourself

* You need to educate yourself

You have the ability to learn physics

* But you have to educate yourself in the subject in order to learn it

If you say that you trust your ability, ask yourself

* Who are you?
* What are you?
* How do you define yourself?

Example: If someone says – I am as I am and I own my abilities. This person does not recognize that the abilities are trusts given to him

* He will use his abilities without connecting his abilities to his owner and he will arbitrarily interpret his actions

You have to really identify what you abilities are

Unless you say that you abilities have been given to you by your creator who is also the creator of the rest of the world,

* We cannot communicate with creation

You cannot be arbitrarily deciding how to use your abilities.

* Only rightly connecting the source of your abilities to your creator, you can use the abilities which have been given

You are learning that this is misbehavior and the creator of the event is telling you that you should not do this and you should take precautions

* Try and stay away from acting in your name.

**In the creation of human faculties is to make known to you by means of your faculties all the sorts of the manifestations of the sacred divine names manifested in the world.**

* All the faculties are given to us in order to realize what is being manifested in this world
* When we realize what is being manifested is a reflection/revelation of the attributes of the creator
* Your Lord is communicating with you
* Everything else is temporary

If you do not see the world as a means of communication with your creator, what is the purpose of the world then?

To entertain yourself?

* So you enjoy today, tomorrow, day after and then you die
* It does not make sense, does it

If anyone does not use his qualities to communicate with his owner, his lord (meaning that the person does not associate the qualities manifested with the creator), whatever they learn in this world will come to a halt.

* I know how a living cell functions
* You may learn it
* You may then become an influential or famous professor in biology
* You may end up being rewarded with the Nobel Prize
* But then you eventually die

The process of life itself, is revealing to us, that what we see/do in this life cannot be for the things themselves

* There must be another, higher purpose in our actions and we must look for it.
* When you look for it, you will realize that everything we encounter is the revelation of its maker

Do you know Asma-ul-Husna?

* You should not just go on reciting the names
  + There is no benefit in memorizing the names
* You should know the names based on your experience

Everything you see/feel/experience must be attributed to the owner

* You may not know the name of it but you must know that there is an owner of that experience
* Everything we learn and see is the manifestation of the names of the creator

You may not know the name Al Qahhar (The Subduer) but when you see cells reacting to one another, you know that they are reacting because they have been made subdued and hence you know that there is a Subduer.

Nothing is created other than for the purpose of reminding you of Allah SWT

The punishment of not remembering Allah SWT is heedlessness

* Within heedlessness, is the punished
* The fact that one is heedless, it shows that one has no connection, no communication with the creator
* Without a purpose, you will find yourself in a vacuum, in a meaningless existence

Is then, any worth to live in this world if eventually you will die and turn into dust?

In this life, you want to have your future secure

* A full time job
* A secure social blanket
* A complete family
* We want to have a secure future
* But, how about having a secure future ETERNALLY
  + We do not want to have limited pleasure (and we know from our experience that everything in this life is limited)

Imagine a scenario where you are very good friends with a person but you know that at some point in time your friend will kill you

* Won’t you be living in constant state of torture and anxiety?
* Similarly, if you live a life without any connection to the Almighty, you might enjoy your day to day experiences on a physical level but you know that the enjoyment is transient and eventually it will end.
  + The lack of security in the enjoyment can be very traumatizing
    - However, if you live each moment in the presence of Allah SWT, you are connecting yourself to the eternal source all the time and your temporal pleasures become eternal

We cannot turn blind to this reality

* Punishment lies within our own relationship with the creation

Those people who are not afraid of God’s punishment, they do not take this universe as a meaningful force for them

* They don’t really want to see or acknowledge this punishment in their relationship with their creator

It seems to be a simple way of thought but it is essential

* We need to live religion in a very ordinary, matter of fact way
* It should not be something external

If you do not have the foundation in God, when you pray you will say things like this:

‘I prayed but he did not respond’

‘He does not hear me’

* Such words are a result of imaginative relationships

You must be aware that at the moment you are praying to God you are in communication with him.

In being communication with God, you are experiencing a state of pleasure because you are acknowledging who you are in this world and who your owner is.

* It is not difficult
* It is very real
* It is not imaginary and you don’t have to forge an illusory connection
* There is no such thing as you ‘have to be spiritual’
  + Being spiritual does not come from imagination

We have to have a substantial foundation for our source of satisfaction

* Whom am I interacting with?
* Who am I?
* What am I?
* Use your qualities to communication with the creation
  + That way, the creator will speak to you
  + When you see that the creator is speaking to you, you can comfortably communicate with the creator when He speaks to you in human language
  + It means ‘the word of God/Quran’

We, unfortunately, love turning religion into something mysterious

* We think that God must only speak to us in dreams so that we can have an out of the ordinary experience
* Of course, dreams are created and that is also a means of communication
* But it is not to have an extra ordinary experience in your creation
* We should accept that we are as we are created in the world
* Everything in this universe is ordinary
  + What is extra ordinary is your awareness of your source of existence and yoru creator
  + Your belief goes beyond the universe
  + Your believe connects you to the source of creation

When you look at the book

* Your ability to read, the book, the paper; all of this is ordinary
* When you start raeding the sentences and extracting meaning from the sentences, you go beyond the book and connect yourself with the author of the book; that is extra ordinary

You are part of the book of the universe

* As a conscious part, you ought to be aware of your position in this universe
* We are an amazing creation; despite being a part of the universe, we can communicate with the whole universe and we are able to realize the qualities of the author of the book of the universe
* The author is revealing Himself to you that He is Absolutely Merciful, Just, Loving, etc
* You find yourself communicating with an absolute source
  + What else can then bother you
  + If you are always with the Absolute Source, nothing can bother you

‘If I trust my own sense and use them as they are

* When you really understand that your being is from an Absolute Soruce and that He is constantly attracting you to be in touch with, you will realize that you ought to be consciously aware of your creator
* Conclusion: I am the product of an act of the Absolute Source
* He is operating openly in order to educate and train me
* He is teaching me about Himself

Whatever happens to you, is the result of God speaking to you constantly

* He is revealing Himself to you through whatever He creates
* Your conscious of existence is important
  + The consciousness of existence draws me into the realization of my source of existence/owner
  + You start using your abilities as a tool/a means of knowing who you are in this world (awareness)

Who creates the miracles?

* After realizing that each thing is created by God, why don’t you put miracles within the creation
* It is extra ordinary according to our experience
  + This is because we fail to see God’s constant role of action in our daily lives
  + But when something unexpected occurs, we consider that to be a miracle (something extra ordinary)
* If you see the world as functioning by itself, and momentarily God steps in to do something (which we have commonly termed as miracles), then that is ridiculous.

The universe does not function by itself

* We should not confuse ourselves
* Both what we are accustomed to, and what we are not accustomed to, are the products of the creator

A bird flying, is a miracle.

Miracle = as long as no one can ‘make’ it

In Arabic, mojizah, comes from the word ‘ajiz’, which refers to the impotency of others to make.

The existence of everything declares that nothing else besides Allah can make it.

People have often mistaken the idea of miracles as an occurrence when God interferes BUT we have to remember that everything in this universe which we are experience is happening by the will of God

* Nothing can cause the movement of my finger to exist within this universe except Allah
* When I move my finger, there is an external interference
* This is a miracle

How about miracles of the Prophet SAW?

* His miracles were a way to gain confidence from the lay man that the Prophet was truly a man of God

To declare that I have been given the speech of God, and have been tasked with the responsibility to transfer it to mankind is a huge responsibility

* Isn’t it natural that people will be wondering how is it possible to trust this man’s claim?
* God then comes with help to me, so that I may see that the man’s claim is correct
* By creating miracles which I am not accustomed with, He is helping me to gain certainty in the man’s claims
* For God, it is the same whether He creates an accustomed miracle or an unaccustomed miracle
  + Everything happens only by the will of God
  + It is we who have forgotten or failed to see this association and hence find ourselves in a state of confusion.

Make it very simple for yourself

* We cannot deny miracles because everything is a miracle
* The prophetic action in order to demonstrate that he has been employed byu the creator of the universe
* In the creation of the universe, I see something created by God that I am not accustomed to

Miracle: It is a sign from the creator that whoever created this universe is demonstrating, by creating an action which I am not accustomed to, that it can only be created by the creator of the universe – because He is creating something not within my experience

The man (Prophet) claims that he has been employed by the creator of the universe

I say: If you are employed by the creator of the universe, the creator of the universe should reveal a sign for me

* Not because I do not trust the Creator
* But because I do not trust you (the Prophet), since you are coming with a big claim

If the person does not come with an unaccustomed miracle, then it is like He does not have approval from the creator of the universe.

* Look, I am creating something that no one can create and that is not within your experience
* The creator of the universe, is really giving a sign that the declaration is correct

Do not deny miracles but do not say that miracles are special interferences of God because it gives the impression that the universe is set and God from time to time interferes

The world is constantly being renewed and He is constantly interfering.

* Can you explain the existence of anything without God’s purposeful action?

Everything is a miracle – The Quran, the Sun, the movement of my lips, etc.

If you see a bird flying and say:

* The bird is flying
  + You will not see a miracle
  + The bird is flying by itself
  + Your consciousness does not go beyond the action and see the manifestation of the qualities of creator in the act of creation

If you read the Quran as you see the bird, then the Quran is not a miracle

* It is a statement said by the man
* You do not see that it is teaching you who the owner of the universe is
* You just see it as a statement

The Quran and the creation – both are the speech of God

* But, as we said earlier, the universe has a priority for me
* If we do not experience the flying bird in creation as a miracle, we cannot see the speech as miraculous.

Kul huwal Allahu ahad – God is One, Absolute

* Miracle: The verse is connecting me to the external source and is it teaching me who my Lord is
* The verse is a guiding sentence

If someone on the street says: Do not go in this direction because it is one-way

* Will you take the statement more seriously if it is told to you by a tour guide or if a layperson told you that
* You will take the guide more seriously because you know that he knows what he is talking about

If a person reads the Quran not as the word of God, the verses will just be stories

* But if you read the Quran as the word of God, and as a guiding speech for me to see what is the meaning of the creation, the verses will be guidance and will teach you how to interact with the universe

‘God is more powerful’

* Meaning: I have some power but God has more
* But, if we look at the universe, everything (with no exception) has been created by God
* This means, I have NO power

We may think that we are challenging than God in reality, no one can create ANYTHING.

Prophetic miracles were given NOT as a way to challenge one another’s power BUT rather as a way to guide the public

* The miracles have been created by the Creator
* So that the ordinary people will say: Oh, through him something has been created that no one else can do
  + That is why the staff of Moses becomes a snake and eats the others
    - It happens in an unaccustomed way
    - A creation is taking place by the Creator to show you that the man’s claims are true

We have the qualities to question this:

* Ask yourself: Who is making the bird fly?
  + If you do not ask yourself, there is no answer
* If I look at the bird and do not see it as an act of the creator but have taken its creation for granted
* All the faculties have been given to you to question this
  + If I do not question, I will not notice it
  + If you do not wonder by using your human qualities then you will not gain

2+2 makes four; you will confirm it only if you have wondered about the mathematical statement

* But if you never wondered what 2+2 makes, then the answer has no significance to you

Human beings have been given all their faculties to wonder what is going on in their own existence and in the existence of the rest of the universe

* If someone is not using his sense of wonder and is not questioning, no one cannot help them
* The Prophet’s come with the message but unless you question you will not receive the message.

**In the creation of human faculties is to make known to you by means of your faculties all the sorts of the manifestations of the sacred divine names manifested in the world and to cause you to experience them.**

* If we do not use our faculties then we are wasting them
* You are given the ability but you are not

**And you, by recognizing them through experiencing them (**the divine names) **should come to believe in them.**

* Belief is proven (Secure)
* I belong to the Source who manifests Himself in this world

The other ways of belief are not experiential, you cannot make it sure for yourself and you cannot be certain about it

* People just make claims and general assumptions
* Belief takes root only when experienced