Halaqa: December 11, 2013

Topic: The Creator God or The Educator God?

He Creates in order to educate

* But why do we need to be educated?
  + Don’t ask: Why does God want to educate me (God’s perspective)

Without any interference on our part, we see that our bodies grow

In contrast, we are introduced to the concept of education from a very young age

* We notice the potential to learn if we reflect on our own existence
* We also realise that the more we learn, the more we enjoy it

Analogy: As kids grow and realise their potential to eat on their own, they seek to feed themselves

* We are created with this ability to display and improve on that which we have learnt

Why don’t we improve and tap on our potentiality to learn about the reason of our existence?

Analogy: I have the potential to learn multiple languages

* + I know I am able to BUT I don’t develop the opportunities to learn them unless I find a purpose for them
  + The language learning potential is kept latent

We are filled with existential questions:

* What is the reason for my existence?
* What is the purpose of this universe?
* Why do I have certain likes and dislikes?
* Why do I support some claims and reject the other?

These are all questions that exist within us BUT we choose to ponder on them or to let them lie latent

Different animals display different talents.

* Similarly, as humans we choose certain talents/skills to hone
* Animals are restricted in their abilities BUT as humans, we have a variety of options to chose from
  + Humans are innately equipped with multiple qualities
  + We accordingly chose certain qualities over others and spend time to develop them

If I don’t develop any human qualities, I remain as an animal.

* The more of my human qualities I develop, the more ‘elevated’ I become
* Reference: Quran draws comparison on how the educated and uneducated are different (Can the one who is learned be the same as the one who is unlearned?)

From my own observation, I notice that creation is taking place in a way that trains me to educate my human qualities

* When I pay attention to my human qualities, I notice that my existence is elevated

What am I expected to learn from the creation (what is the purpose of creation as it is)?

* Things are renewed periodically
* Everything is coming into existence in a perfect, rational, wise order
* I can comprehend this perfection
* My consciousness allows me to see meaning in order, balance and purpose
  + What does this teach me?
  + What am I learning from creation, as far as my humanity is concerned?

If the ultimate aim of creation for me to earn a livelihood?

* What is the purpose of learning ‘life-skills’?
  + To learn how to medicate and then to die?
  + This perfect universe exists for me to become a doctor

OR

* + To become a better HUMAN BEING

I ought to learn about the purpose of existence from all of creation

Ask yourself: What is the aim of my existence and in the existence of this whole universe?

* Why are all these changes happening in the universe?
  + To know my creator (BIASED LANGUAGE)
    - If someone has not even established the presence of God, how can we know the Creator?
    - We have to refine our language so that the statements make explicit sense
  + The changes point me to the change-maker

I need the universe to understand who I am within this universe

* Why does the universe exist?
* To experience

We have to ask:

* Why are we being created?
* Why does the creation exist?
  + Not why did God create the universe?
    - We should not ask questions from Allah’s perspective

In each moment, there is an experience

* By eating, I feel satisfied
* In the (sensory) experience that we have been given, there is a message
* We can either ignore the message or ponder upon them

We have the sense of loving beauty

* In creation, things are coming into existence in a beautiful way
* The ONE who is bringing the world into existence is revealing a message to my consciousness
  + There is a correlation between what is happening in the world AND what is happening within me

Example: When you are hungry, you enjoy being fed

* You realise that the One who is feeding you, wants you to be happy
  + He is taking care of you
  + He wants to give you a message
  + When you are aware of this message, the relationship between the provider and you is enhanced

If the world is static, then there would be no message.

* There is beauty out there. I love beauty (correlation)

The universe is the source of information

* It provides me the news of its maker which corresponds to my ability to perceive them
* Through creation, the maker is revealing His characteristics
  + The way the creation is coming into existence (purposeful, wise, perfect), educates me about the One who is creating everything
    - If everything was chaotic, there is no lesson to be learnt
    - But we see that everything is perfect and wise
    - There has to be a lesson
    - The One who gave existence to this universe and the One who gave existence to me is perfectly compatible

Creation out there is a direct match to my qualities

* The universe is a classroom
* It is revealing all sorts of disciplines and I have the capacity to learn all of them
* The purpose of creation is to teach me

Change 🡪 **message** 🡪 creator

**Message**: There is a correspondence between me and all of creation

* I enjoy eating; I am made hungry
* I enjoy beauty; I am shown beautiful things

Everything is revealing a quality and exists in a perfect system

* Since I can perceive the qualities in all of creation, I must ask myself what is the purpose of it?
* There is a message within the creation
  + The Creator is an educator
  + I can either see the message OR choose not to

I observe within myself that I appreciate learning new things.

* While some people may not learn, are they proud of the fact that they dislike learning?
  + On the other hand, we are happy when we learn
  + We are discouraged to remain ignorant

In the way things are coming into existence, we are being taught about the Creator

The Creator Himself speaks through books of guidance to teach us about our existence.

* Quran: Speech of God
* Let’s verify

**“We have not sent down the Quran to you to make you unhappy.”**

Taha (20):2

http://allahsquran.com/read/images/chapters/20/20_2.gif

If we observe creation, we see how it provides such clarity about the reason of its existence.

* Similarly, the Quran’s message is revealed to us, to make our understanding easier
* We don’t have to over-think things
* We are already wired in a way that is able to understand creation
* The instruction manual (Quran) is just making things clearer for you
  + It is not adding any alternative theory for you to contemplate

I made the world round (Allah says): You can either accept it or reject it. Allah presents to you His conscious choice behind the quality we observe.

The world is round (Scientist): Attributes the characteristic of the world to itself. It makes no sense rationally.

* Is the world round by itself?
* The statement is meaningless

Quran comes to save me from being perplexed

* I ask: How is it that all my limbs are so perfect?
  + Quran says: I designed and created you the way you are, in order to reveal Who I am
  + It makes you comforted with your existence

The verse is teaching us that we ought not to see religion as something to be distressed about.

* Religion is so as to make our lives easy.

However, if we reduce religion to rules and rituals, then the Quran will be a burden for us.

If religion is presented as anything BUT a source of guidance on how to be a content human being, that interpretation of religion is WRONG.

* Don’t present religion as a source of restrictions
  + While the restrictions exist, we have to first establish the base (as the Quran does)
  + Then, when we say don’t drink alcohol BECAUSE it is against your nature, you will say thanks
    - BUT we first need to educate ourselves and others about the NATURE of our existence
    - If we don’t know the nature of our existence, the restrictions become loads
      * However, if we are aware of the nature of our existence, the rules are guidance to help us to fulfil our purpose.

The Quran is the guiding speech of the creator of this universe AND The purpose of creation is to teach me about my existential questions

* Neither are obstacles to your existence

The Creator’s speech must make me comfortable about my existence

* God cannot speak to me to make me unhappy
* If you feel unhappy because of religion, know that your understanding of religion is fundamentally wrong

Next week: How my creator guides me towards understanding my nature through the Quran?

We often hear in popular culture: Be a good human being. It will make you feel happy.

* But why should I be a good human being?
* Although we know that being a good person is appropriate to my human nature, the reasoning (that being a good human being will make you happy) does not fit in with my expectation for eternal, never-ending happiness.

The Quran, however, presents your reality in a way that is appropriate to my expectation for eternal happiness.

I want eternal happiness.

I don’t want temporary happiness – This is the way I have been created.

The Quran presents the matter in a way that

Change your language and see the effect it will have.

* Ask people to realise their own reality
* Don’t call people to your culture and your ideological baggage
* Don’t present God’s religion from cultural perspective
* Start from our own innate qualities

Other religions cannot present their religion in such a way because their foundations are corrupted.

* Only the Quran can
* We have to share this happy, comfortable, consistent understanding of creation
  + Present it as the religion of fitra
  + Don’t present it as rules and regulations

Islam frees you from pressure and shackles. It is completely liberating.

* In contrast, social science, physical sciences, etc, all come to you with a cul de sac
  + You only enjoy it temporarily
  + Nothing provides you eternal happiness
    - In secular teaching, there is no eternity
    - Life begins at birth and ends at death
    - But this provides you no comfort

Just be a good human being.

* Why?
* Because I don’t like when others are mean
* Because being good benefits society
* Why?
  + What is the point of being good (FOR YOU) if you are eventually going to die?
    - Think about Who created you with these feelings?
  + You Creator
  + What is His

Quran teaches me what I do not know BUT what I have the ability to know

* It is a book of GUIDANCE

We have to challenge our understand of God the Creator

* We have to see that God is the Educator
* If He is the Educator, He must guide me in a way that I understand
* I realise that I understand from action and speech
  + So He must have given me modes of understanding in both speech and action
    - I naturally expect my Creator to speak to me
    - I look for His speech
    - Seek it out

In the Quran, God says: There is no one who has not received guidance from me.

* Humans are created with the ability to understand and to learn
* If there is no guidance, then there is a contradiction
* I must look for the guidance
* The Quran says that it is a book of guidance, so read it and see for yourself
  + If you don’t find it satisfying, look elsewhere.

Learn in this order (as seen through stories of the Prophets): Creation, Life, Qualities and the rules (as seen in the story of Adam in Surah Baqarah)