Halaqa: Saturday, December 7, 2013

Topic: The Words – The second station of the 17th word (Pg 222)

*Trust in God! Laugh in misfortune’s face; it too will laugh.*

*As it laughs, it will diminish; it will be changed and transformed.*

We have to first establish what trusting in God really means.

* From previous sessions, we know that trusting in God essentially means that this universe has a Creator and the Creator is Wise.
* All His actions are for a purpose
* Trust in God = Not blind trust BUT rather, seeing everything in the universe as part of God’s entire creation

If I understand events singularly, without placing it within the context of the whole universe (my existence, the purpose of my existence, the existence of the event itself, the purpose of the event, the existence of everything else)

Purpose of my existence

* To secure an eternal abode
* Therefore, I do not seek ‘reward’ from whatever I encounter in this world
  + My human desires can never be fulfilled within the limitations of this world
  + I desire eternity and perfection
    - But I cannot get it in this universe
    - Hence, this universe cannot be my permanent abode
* I have to turn back to the creator of the universe and the creator of myself
  + I say: “You gave me these desires, and I want them to be satisfied”
  + These desires are promises from my creator that they will be fulfilled
    - My desires are not created by me
    - They are given to me by my Creator
    - Since I have been given these desires, there must be a reason/purpose for it
      * It is a promise to me from my Creator

There is a reason why this universe is transience

* Yet my desires yearn from eternity
* Hence, I must look for the source that gives me the expectation for eternity so that He may satisfy them

“*Trust in God” –* Trust your maker, your owner

“*Laugh in misfortune’s face*”

* Why should my misfortunes NOT be perceived as misfortunes?
* Everything that exists in this universe is created by the Creator

Purpose of existence versus perceptions of misfortunes

* If you understand that your purpose of existence is to seek eternity, everything is a sign and message to bring your closer to Eternity

Misfortunes appear to be misfortunes at first look.

But search deeper.

Analogy: Exam questions are meant to teach you what you know and what you don’t know.

* When I realize I have missed learning about
* Positive aspect of misfortune lies in the trust in the teacher
* I was given these questions, not because the teacher dislikes me, but so that I can learn better.

Does God punish?

* When God introduces Himself to us, He does so based on our capacities
* “Whatever happens to me that is good, and that is bad, both are from Allah”
  + But does God create evil?
  + No.
    - If He created evil, He would not be God

If the process of learning is the purpose of life, then nothing is evil.

* Everything is just a lesson
* Both ‘good’ and ‘bad’

However if your purpose of life is the events of life in and of themselves, then you will start categorizing things that you like

The learning process may be challenging, but the ultimate purpose is to learn about the Eternal Owner

* Whatever I see in this world is a means of taking me to my Creator

While what I may be experiencing in this world may be something I dislike, the event itself is not evil.

* From my perspective, whatever happens in this world (whether I perceive it as evil OR good), is created by the One who creates everything for a good purpose
* When I fall ill (I **dislike** falling ill), I must realize that the event is **good** because it’s purpose is to make me know my Creator

God never creates evil versus Good and evil are all from God

* Both these statements are true
* He never creates evil; All that He creates is to teach me about my purpose of existence
* When we say that ‘evil’ is from God, it is not that the creation of the event is evil BUT rather, we dislike the event and hence term it as something ‘evil’
* The former is a view of how God creates
* The latter is from my perspective, of how I, as a human, ‘feel’ towards the event

We have been given these ‘feelings’ and so we have to acknowledge the fact that we like and dislike different things

* Don’t disregard your feelings of dislike for misfortunes
* It is ‘evil’ BUT it is good that you dislike it
  + Only through disliking it can you learn the lesson about the reality of your dependence on God

The universe, in its entirety, is created out of mercy and love.

We are here on Earth to learn, and so we have to go through the trials and tribulations.

When we laugh in misfortune’s face, we are merely placing the event within the perspective of my life’s purpose – to learn about God – and hence the misfortune is something good and is no longer a misfortune.

The Quran reminds us, time and again, that it is alright for you to make mistakes.

* What we have to do is to learn from the mistakes
* We will fail BUT we ought to learn from our failures
* I realized it was a mistake, and so I ask God for forgiveness

If we say: I’m not going to make mistakes

* We are adopting a false conception of reality
* God created me with the ability to make mistakes
* Ask forgiveness for our past mistakes
* Learn from the mistakes and try not to repeat them.

For the past, be thankful.

For the future, be hopeful.

Quran (12:87) - Indeed, no one despairs of relief from Allah, except the disbelieving people

* I cannot be a believer (aware of God’s Mercy and Lordship) and be in despair about God’s forgiveness
  + God is the One who teaches us

We are only responsible for that which we have been taught

Everything is a messenger – if I have not received the message, I have no responsibility.

Do not take anything other that the Source of existence of everything, as an object of worship.

* Example: I enjoy an apple
  + Where does the apple come from?
  + Where does my enjoyment come from?
  + Do not attribute the delicious taste to the apple itself AND in doing so, not fulfilling the purpose of my existence (to know my Lord)

I have to use my abilities to fulfill the purpose of my existence

* Unfortunately, we are being told repeatedly to use our abilities to fulfill my ‘human’ desires
* We have to pay attention and be careful so that we do not attribute existence to anything OTHER THAN God.

**Always pay attention to the PURPOSE of your existence.**

* **In day to day life, when we make choices, be aware of how and what you choose**
  + **Are you choosing for the qualities within the ‘act/thing’ itself OR are you choosing something to know your Lord.**
* **I choose A and took it as an object of worship INSTEAD of being aware of the Creator of that object**
* **When you realize the mistake, you repent.**
* ??

Quran: “We make no distinction between the messengers” AND “ Some messengers are better than others”

* In both instances, the mission of the messengers are the same (i.e. to teach)
* But, different messengers have to reach out to different audiences (some to teach a more difficult audience\_

*“Know, O arrogant (egotistic) one, happiness in this world is in abandoning it.*

*To know God is enough. Abandon the world; all things will be for you.*

Abandon the world – Not being attached to it.

* To regard the world as God’s property
* It does not mean that we should leave the world and become ascetic
* Rather, don’t make the things in this world, the ultimate goal of your life
* Use everything in this world as a gift from the eternal one

Are you appropriating the things to yourself OR are you using them as gifts from your creator

* The universe is for us to use it.

A boy is given a gift (a car) – and he is proud of it.

* Taking the car away from him will not remove the sense of ‘pride’
* He will find other things to become proud of
* Rather, the boy has to be taught how to appreciate the car as God’s property

Prophetic mission: Not to kill anyone BUT rather to teach them how to use their abilities in the best way.

I am proud of my house.

* Should I sell it and live in the village?
* No.
* The problem of pride lies within you, not in the house
* We have to teach ourselves to see everything as a gift from God that points us to God
  + Everything in the universe extols God and teaches us who the real owner is

Depriving yourself from the objects themselves, is not helpful.

* We have to train ourselves to understand the objects (or the lack of objects) as gifts from God.

When you know God, the world is yours BECAUSE everything is for you and will help you to fulfill your purpose in existence.

* Everything will introduce you to who your Lord is