Halaqa: Saturday, Feb 1 2014

Topic: 17th Word

Everyone should reflect:

1. What does belief bring to my life?
2. What does unbelief take from my life?

Belief is a journey and we are all vacillating between belief and unbelief at every moment.

In order to establish our relationship with God, we have to pay attention to our own gut feelings and emotions.

* We have to analyze our reality internally instead of pre-occupying ourselves with external knowledge

\*Ego distorts reality but our consciousness reminds us of the truth.

- A thief knows what he is doing is wrong but he does it anyway as a result of his egotistical desires

**075.014**





**Sahih International:**Rather, man, against himself, will be a witness,



**075.015**





**Sahih International:**Even if he presents his excuses.

Belief = Being in a state that does not contradict with your consciousness

If you are not convinced that there is a Creator, just by saying that you believe will not make you a believer.

* It is a kind of hypocrisy to claim belief when you don’t really have a belief

We have to pay close attention and listen to ourselves.

Although we may corrupt our nature, we are conscious of the fact that we are corrupting ourselves.

* Human beings are *mukarram* (honorable creatures)
* All humans have been created with qualities to represent God on earth (*khalifa)*

We are immersed in cultural influences that have been imbued with religious color BUT we have to free religion from culture.

* Religion is innate; it is within one’s own nature
* Religion is not something cultural

While religion is entirely a personal experience, there is a still a need and place for messengers and books of guidance

* But what we should not do is follow these books and messengers blindly
* I have to practically experience what the messengers say and that which is mentioned in the Quran

Receiving guidance from the scriptures does not mean imitating them

* + Unfortunately, people love imitating and creating insular communities where traditions are practiced
	+ Since they don’t have a source to defend imitative behaviors, insular communities are the easiest way to keep questions out

But don’t cheat yourself

* We cannot escape from our reality
* Belief has to be experienced so that a conclusive claim can be made

Don’t borrow cultural information

* In my religion I believe XYZ
	+ Do you really believe it?
	+ Can you confirm your believe for yourself?

*Iman* (belief) is not a social event. It is a personal conviction.

Believing in the hereafter is not just a claim of words.

* We have to be convinced of it with a rock solid foundation

My belief should be so firmly founded that EVEN IF the Quran were to say that there is no hereafter, I remain convinced (with supporting evidence) that there is a hereafter.

 In contrast, what we tend to do is:

Although I don’t really understand what hereafter really means, I believe in it because the Quran says I have to believe it.

- What we should do: If you use your human qualities, you can be sure of the existence of eternal life as sure as you are about the fact that you are alive.

Faith is commonly perceived to be a baseless understanding. However, this is where society’s definitions fail.

Faith may seem baseless on a physical, tangible level BUT it is firmly founded on an emotional level; an aspect of our humanity that we do not pay close attention to.

As humans, we are more than just physical forms. We have emotions, senses and feelings (human qualities).

* Use these qualities and listen to yourself
* You will realize that this world requisites the acknowledgment of a Creator and a Hereafter
	+ Why? Because you see that your human qualities go beyond this universe and desire much more than what is within this universe
		- This universe is an ocean of signs which point to something else

As readers of the Quran, we have to be so convicted in our belief that we are open to listening to all the challenging claims presented, knowing that our foundation is strong as strong can be.

My own witness, within me, guides me. Listen to it.

When we read the Book, keep asking yourself:

* Can I confirm the message with all my human qualities?
	+ All our faculties are either in support of the message or not

Scientific claims, based on isolated conditions, are in reality baseless because they are studied in isolation (contradiction to how we exist; not in isolation but in complete harmony with everything within and around me)

Why the Quran?

* Whoever created me, must guide me and tell me why he made me
* Look for the guidance
	+ The fact that He has imbibed within me the faculty to question about my existence requires that He provide me with the answer
		- Otherwise, what’s the point of being given the ability to question?

You may claim that you are the result of evolution/nature/science/accidents BUT as you investigate, you will realize that none of them provides satisfying answers to your reality.

* You will be unable to accept any source of creation OTHER than God.

I have been given the ability to inquire but I don’t have the ability to answer a lot of my questions.

* Whoever made me, must tell me why He made me
* When you go through this process, you will only find comfort in knowing that the One who Created you must speak to you through speech that guides you.

You read the book, and check the guidance given with your own qualities

* Is the guidance supported or rejected by your human qualities?
* You have to confirm or reject it
	+ You are at the center of belief

Only when you have established belief, can you perform actions.

* If you are convicted in your belief that you have a Creator, you will automatically do as He commands you
* But first, belief has to be established.

Emotions we experience:

I don’t want to grow old

I don’t want to die

I don’t want to lose my happiness

- The desire for youth, life and happiness is a promise from your Lord that He will give it to you.

Nothing exists independently

* To the extent that every part of our living body is in communication with one another (even after a part of the body is separated from the body)

We should not just look at the universe in a superficial manner

* Study the details and see how every single thing is an absolute sign of the Creator

We have to use our abilities, as much as we can, to know the Creator

* The abilities within me are the ‘trusts’ (*amanah)* that He has endowed me with

What/who are angels: Conscious representative of the matter

* They tie you up/connect you to the Creator
* Every creature in this world carries a message
	+ This message represents the qualities of the object itself and is carried by the angels

When you see a melon you are able to imagine the taste of it

* Where did this taste come from?
* What is the source of existence of the taste?
* This taste takes you to the Source of its existence
	+ You realize that the melon’s Creator is communicating with you
	+ The communication is taking place not on a ‘physical’ level because you are not actually eating it
	+ The message of the quality is brought to you by the angels

*We are living in the presence of angels*

* *Our human consciousness communicate with them without the limitations of time and space*

Don’t waste your human qualities!

**So I raised my head and looked at the top of the tree of my life but I saw that its single fruit was my corpse. It was looking down at me from the treetop.**

Without belief: I live my life and eventually die

* The last fruit on my tree of life will be my dead body
* That is the vision if we don’t reflect on the purpose of our creation and see that it is more than just this physical world with physical attributes.
* Even a dead body has physical attributes. How is a living being difference?
* A human being has HUMAN QUALITIES

Unbelief: Not believing that your are deliberately made

* If you have this attitude, your life will end up like a corpse

NB: The case with belief/unbelief is never black or white. Rather, we should appreciate that belief/unbelief if a spectrum and at anytime we exist a point on the spectrum. However, the discussion is presenting the matter in absolute terms to ensure clarity.

At every instant of our life, we are deciding towards which end (belief OR unbelief) we are moving.

Ask yourself: Are you happy to be living in this world to eventually end up as a corpse?

**\*Belief shows the tree’s fruits to be not the corpse, but the worn out home of my spirit, which will manifest eternal life and is destined for everlasting happiness, from which it has departed in order to travel among the stars.**

If there is a purpose in my existence, the end of my life should not be a corpse.

* Rather, my ‘dead body’ is merely the home of my worn out spirit
* As a human, I am not just made up of flesh, blood and bones
	+ I am a soul

Analogy: We wouldn’t say that a book is just words and paper. It carries a message within it.

I am not the sumo of my physical body parts.

* Even if my feet are cut, I am still a human being
* A blind person, is still considered a human being

It is intrinsic to realize that the body is merely a home – the human being (spirit) is living within this body.

* Do we really experience that we are living in the home of our body?
* As we get older, our spirit doesn’t degenerate
	+ From our own experience, we can see that our spirit is the same

If I don’t believe in the Creator, my existence is reduced to being just a corpse and this contradicts my human qualities

* I have much more perfect qualities than my physical body displays

**Despairing of that aspect too, I lowered my head. I looked and saw that the dust of my bones underfoot had mixed with the dust of my first creation. It afforded no cure, but added further pain to my ills.**

‘We are from dust and we will return to dust’

Everything we consume and interact with comes from dust. Similarly, my body is also made up of dust (physically).

* BUT if we are able to realize that I more than my body, the dust is a way to connect ourselves to the Eternal

Ask yourself: How do you feel if you were valued based on your ‘weight’ and hence your worth, like cows and sheep?

Our reality is different and we have to acknowledge it!

* We need to come to a conscious realization of our human qualities
* Don’t reduce our humanity to just physical and biological substances. It is an insult.

Not acknowledging that humans have a purposeful reality (unbelief) is an insult to the whole creation.

Analogy: We dislike people judging us (and becoming our friends) merely because of the way we look or the wealth that we posses.

**\*Belief shows the dust to be the door leading to mercy and a curtain before the halls of Paradise.**

How is dust the door leading to mercy?

When you visit the orchards and see the beautiful fruits hanging, you are conscious that something is speaking to you through the material objects because the fruits cannot exist by themselves.

Everything is just a collection of atoms

* We have to look beyond the physical forms

When I die, it is as if my body (a manifestation of mercy) is returning to the door of mercy

* I should be happy to go back to the doors of mercy, even before I die
* When I die, I am simply just going beyond the limitations of this world
* My body will go to dust and my spirit will go back to mercy

Analogy: When you look at a book, you are not just holding a mass of papers but a message.

Through the curtain of ink, the author is speaking to you

Similarly, everything in this universe is corresponding who it really is through the matter.

* We have to pay attention to the conscious act of creation because only through it can we see the mercy

When we say that there is a Creator and a Conscious way of acting in this universe, we have to be comfortable in our claims because our human qualities really detect it.

How do you know exactly what I want?

* Because air waves transfer the sound molecules to you
* Everything around you is matter and they are all veils through which the conscious creator is revealing Himself.

Belief show dust to be the door leading to mercy

* We are not talking about what will happen to us after we die
* We have to understand the reality of our existence now
	+ Do you think (right now) that after you die you will just be dust

 OR

* + Do you (in your current human qualities) want that death is not just the end of who you are?
		- I have to be convinced of the fact (now) that when I die I will not be annihilated.