Halaqa: Saturday, February 8, 2014

Topic: 17th Word (pg 226)

**I turned away from that too and looked behind me, where I saw a transient world without foundation revolving and departing in the valleys of nothingness and the darkness of non-existence. It was no salve for my ills, it rather added the poison of horror and fright.**

**If** there is no owner, what is left behind when I think about my past?

* My past is nothingness; it has gone into annihilation
* There is no use of my past

What are the **ills** that are being referred to?

* Mortality; Do we really experience that we are going to die?
  + The fact that everything is going to end?

The fact that we have a mortal existence is one of the main existential challenges we face as humans. We have to address the issue AND not cover it up.

A life that will come to an end (as it does, since we are mortals) makes me feel anxious, worried and dismayed.

* As a human, I want eternal happiness
* But if life is temporary, how am I going to overcome this seemingly contradictory reality?
* We have to look for a solution that will satisfy my desires and not contradict me
  + Only then will I appreciate religion
  + Otherwise, religion is just a cloak that we cover ourselves with superficially

I have to experience the blessing of finding the answer to my challenge within me

* Only then can I be at peace
* Only when we have temporary ‘crises’ do we crave guidance

Most of us perform religious duties on a superficial level with the thought that ‘if there is a hereafter’ these duties will save me.

* But we have to step away from doing things on such a level
* Rather, we have to rebel against our realities to find a solution that will address my human needs

Distinguish between human and physical needs

* Physical: Body falls ills, you take medicine
* Human: Anxiety about ‘mortality’. We remedy by:
  + Cover it up (religious rhetoric)
  + Seek out answers by witnessing the struggle within us

We have to experience the struggle of reaching *illAllah* through experiencing *la ilaha*

* When we deny the approach put forth by secularist, we do it not because we claim to be ‘religious’
* Rather, our denial should come from a state of being comfortable with the fact that it is not capable in any way of being a creator (*la ilaha)*
  + Our denial should be part of our faith
* Only then can we search for the One who is the Creator (*illAllah*)

There must be a reason for the conflict between human expectations and the reality of life here on earth

* We have to live this tension within us
* My maker must speak to me
  + This leads me to investigating the signs of the maker
  + As I investigate, I start speaking to the signs

Only through my anxiety and illness can I find the cure

* Don’t reject the sense of meaningless we may experience
* Use it to find out about your Creator

Can the Creator of an intelligent being (human being) be non-intelligent?

* The maker of this universe and my maker must be intelligent
* Accordingly I have to look for answers and ask for guidance from the maker
* Through your illnesses (anxiety, mortality, depression) you turn back to your maker
  + We have to appreciate these illnesses and conflict

A meaningless and purposeless past makes my future useless.

Scientists are looking for a solution to lengthen life expectancy currently and they may address the issue of human ills as something that will eventually be scientifically cured.

* But, the reality of the fact is that even if scientists find ways to add 100 years to our life, we will eventually die
* Everything, eventually dies
* Furthermore, there is no way for anything that is past to be recreated
* They may lengthen our lives, but there will always be an end; and end of the past moment and an impending end.

My yesterday is gone! No one can bring it back, except the One (if there is such a One) who owns the universe and every moment in it.

Even if I never age, I’d still be living here to produce something meaningless because the past disappears. My human body may enjoy the immortality but my humanity will not.

* What’s the point of my life then?

**\*Belief shows the world revolving in darkness to consist of missives of the Eternally Besought One and pages of Divine inscriptions, which, having completed their duties and expressed their meanings, have left their results in existence in their place.**

Our human qualities look to be used in such a way that we leave something behind because that makes my life worth living

* Practically (on a temporal scale), this manifests in property investment, education degrees, children, etc
  + Eventually all of these will still disappear
* *If we focus on belief matters, however, things/actions do not just disappear but rather, are returned back to the Creator (the One who owns every moment – past, present and future)*

Everything that is happening is a sign from its Maker and helps me to realize who the real Owner is

* Creation around me describes to me the qualities of the Creator/Owner
* Through my investigations, I see that the Creator is All-Absolute. He is the Source of Existence of everything and it all functions according to His order.

Things only become meaningful if you see your Creator in everything because then your past and future are with Him.

Analogy:

* Each day in our life is like a page in a book
* With each passing day, the pages may be turned BUT with belief, we are aware that the pages are with the author and it is preserved
* Our past constitutes a part of our future

If I am aware of the Creator, I will utilize everything and every moment to get to know Him

* I will put all my trust and expectations in Him

Example: While you are working to build a house, you are doing it with the awareness that it is presenting to you a message from your Creator

* My ability is a blessing from my Creator
* I am thus communicating with my Creator while I am working in this world
* Consciously refer everything back to Him

If you look for the remnants of your day as each day passes (with respect to physical qualities), you will not find it because the physical day has passed.

* But if we realize that while we are doing actions, we are communicating with our Creator and asking Him to give me what I desire, I am not in anxiety
  + He is the Absolute One and everything is with Him

The universe comes from an Eternal Source and is going back to the Eternal Source.

‘Fruits’ as we often read in the Quran indicate that our past in this world is going to be your future

* How you treated the fruit/blessings in this world, is the same way you will get it back in the future

Analogy:

* If you ate a fruit it without recognizing the Creator, it will be gone in the next moment and you won’t have any fruits in the next moment (*akhirah*) and you will find yourself in Hell
* If you remember Him, you will experience the Creator while you are eating it and you are returning the fruit (and your sense of enjoyment) back to Him. The fruit is secure with the Creator and you will not ‘lose’ it in the next moment. It remains with you and it is yours (Heaven)

*Heaven (Jannah), which also means garden, is where all your fruits collect.*

If you forget the author of this universe, Creation becomes meaningless BUT if you experience the Creator in every moment, you can communicate with Him and be with Him.

While you are studying OR working OR building a house, you are improving your human qualities to get to know your Creator.

Human feelings are in the form of seeds that need to grow into trees

* If you don’t grow it, you will never know what the seed is capable of

Ambitions are given to us so that we may interact with the world and discover the message within

* If we don’t struggle, we don’t see the message
* We can’t just sit in one corner and expect to learn
* We have to question so that we may see meaning

*Iman:* Seeing the Creator in everything

* In doing so, there is no tension in your existence.
* Your human desires are no longer in contradiction with the transient nature of creation
  + But we should not dislike the contradiction. We should be glad for them and use them as a way to know our Creator

We often hear people saying that there is a need to balance ambition and belief

* Ridiculous separation
* Rather, we should embrace ambition wholly BUT see that belief is part of every action

*Akhirah:* The end of every moment

* It should never be forgotten
* With every action, what am I getting for my human qualities in order to know my Creator?

Why do I desire a problem-free life, marriage, children, etc?

* These desires are given for a purpose
* You have it so that you may learn about your Creator

**Since I could see no good in that either, I switched my gaze to before me, I saw that the door of the grave stood open at the end of my road. The highway leading to eternity beyond it, struck my gaze from afar.**

**\*Since belief shows the door of the grave to open onto the world of light and the road to lead to eternal happiness, it was both a salve for my ills and a cure.**

How does belief turn the door of the grave into eternal happiness?

* By returning each moment to the Creator
* In each moment, you learn the qualities of the All-Absolute Creator
  + Whether in that moment you are successful or unsuccessful, we are learning that we are needy and that the Creator is responding to our need
* As far as my responsibilities are concerned, I am being taught about which directions I should take with respect to my free choice
  + But deep down, my being unsuccessful is not really of concern AS LONG AS I connect that moment and my emotions to the Creator

Example:

I build a three-storey tower and it collapses.

* Practically, I am being taught that if I want the building to stand tall I have to follow the order and use another method
* But the ultimate purpose of my life is not to build the tower. Rather, it is to learn the order, the owner of the order, communicate with Him and to submit to His order.
  + He is teaching me that I have to follow His order and not my order

I build a three-storey tower and it stands for 100 years.

* If I have not used the process of building to communicate with my Creator, my action is not successful EVEN though it seems that I’m successful in the world.

The way things are coming into existence is also called *sharia*

* I have to follow the *sharia* in order to communicate with the Creator

If we don’t really acknowledge that the Creator of this universe (and the Creator of my feelings) is Eternal, my life is meaningless and purposeless.

* These feelings are in fact a guide to investigate my reality

Failures in this world (practically) should not cause despair in me. It is just a sign that I haven’t discovered the *sharia* (order) of this world.

* I have to keep searching
  + My search is worship (*ubudiya)*
  + You are constantly looking for the rule established by the Creator until you find the right Order
  + All attempts are for the sake of worship

If you intend to find the Creator’s Order/Rule in your actions, your action is a way of worshipping God. We may fail in this world but if we are aware that if we are trying to find out the rule of the Creator, that is worship.

We should constantly be engaged in the quest of seeing, acknowledging and submitting to His order in our day-to-day interactions.