Halaqa, Saturday June 1 2013

YouTube Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GIENrf17Tyc&feature=c4-feed-u

11th Word – Aims of our lives (Pg 140)

Recap: There are 9 lives and they each build upon one another. They are not separate.

We have studied up to the 6th aim of our lives.

6th aim: To consciously observe the salutations of living beings to their Creator known as the manifestation of life and their glorification of their Maker, known as the signs of life, and their worship of the Bestower of Life, known as the aims of life, and by reflecting on them to see them, and through testifying to them to display them.

* New word: Salutations
* What is the author trying to say?
* We have never heard the phrase that creatures are saluting their creation.

**Consciously observe the salutations**

* In simplistic terms, our aim in life is to sit around and observe creatures all around saluting their creator
* We experience the so called difficult aspects of the religion by fasting long days in summer but why do we not experience these seemingly simple aspects?
  + We do not know that these things ought to be experienced
  + We understand religion according to our criteria: The higher the labor you invest, the higher the return
    - We reduce religion to physical labour (# of units of prayer, # of fasts, etc)
    - This is the result of our yardsticks assigned to our material lives – the harder you work, the greater your benefits (monetary, prestige, etc)
    - So we think that religion, too, cannot be easy and we impose these regulating guidelines

But why do we think that religion cannot be easy?

* Have we ever thought that it could be the result of whispering from satan because satan does not want us to see that religion is easy and is a source of pleasure, peace, happiness, etc
  + We end up glorifying martyrs, putting Jesus on the cross, etc
  + We think that these are great people because they suffered a lot
* But the Quran says: Religion is easy, just believe in God
* The ego, however, does not want that
  + Our ego wants to claim ownership and power over our existence instead of being grateful to the owner and creator of this earth who sense His blessings to us.
    - Similarity in a story in the Quran about the children of Bani Israel

By making religion ‘physical’ we are feeding our ego instead of subjugating our ego to Him.

* Belief in God, is the awareness of this reality, that I have to subjugate my ego to my Lord.

“Nay, be careful. Definitely, human beings, when they see themselves self-sufficient, they are the most aggressive people.”

**096.006**

http://allahsquran.com/read/images/chapters/96/96_6.gif

**Sahih International:**No! [But] indeed, man transgresses

http://allahsquran.com/read/images/spacer.gif**096.007**

http://allahsquran.com/read/images/chapters/96/96_7.gif

http://allahsquran.com/read/images/spacer.gif

**Sahih International:**Because he sees himself self-sufficient.

Seeing yourself as self-sufficient is the source of disease

* Rebelling against God (doing whatever you want – I am growing my vegetables, I am sustaining myself) means not obeying His commands and proclaiming that you do not need to recognizing His authority
* When you do that, it will obviously not even cross your mind that you need to sit and see how creatures are saluting Him.
* Because, when you see that everything salutes Him, you have to salute Him too.

People think that going for hajj, praying, paying zakah, etc is what matters the most…

* But sitting down and observing creation is the most difficult because it requires the ego to surrender.
* *Tughyan* means this : It is when we stop surrendering to Him and instead see ourselves as the source and controller of all that we have.

When you take time to observe that everything is saluting the creator and you start saluting the creator too, you will automatically follow the way of the Prophet

* There are narrations about how the Prophet would go to gardens and stare at the sky
* Do you think the Prophet, who is employed to teach us who our God is, would spend this so called ‘free’ time to entertain his ego OR would he use that time to connect with his ‘human’ side

Why do you follow the rules of society around us instead of other paradigms?

* Because religion is not presented to us in a way that is grounded in belief
  + Rather, it is all concentrated on teaching the rules.
* What we have come to realize is the importance of belief training and recognizing that rituals are the result of belief
* That is why, the aim of our life (at this 6th stage) is to sit and see how the creatures are saluting their creator
* Observe and be aware of what is happening
* Be conscious of everything around you and accordingly define yourself
  + You will not be able to define yourself independently from the rest of creation
  + As much as you are able to be aware of all of creation saluting the Creator, that much YOU will salute the Creator.

Taqwa: Consciousness of God

* If we use the term often heard, Fear of God, we have to be aware that we actually end up imposing our concepts of ‘fear’ which have more to do with negativity than awe and subjugation

How do you deconstruct past understandings?

* Establish a positive understanding
* Not to do things while taking them as your duty and burden
* Change your attitude and understanding
* Realise that your actions are a source of pleasure and not a burden

Our responsibilities comprise of 5 fundamental duties: Pray, Hajj, Zakah, etc

* There must be a way to make these actions into a source of pleasure
* How?
* Only by realizing that you are a being in this huge universe, existing for a temporary period, to know your source who is Eternal and Absolute
  + If you reflect and discover your reality (the fact that everything within you has been given to you to recognize the source that is Absolute so that you may attach yourself to it)

When God created the spirit and asked the spirit who was its owner, the spirit acknowledged that God was its owner

* If you really understand this you will start seeing the world and see that all creatures are saluting their Lord
* Once you can really perceive this, you yourself will start saluting to the Lord

If you realize that you are here to understand that reality, you will educate and train yourself to find your Absolute Source.

* We think that we are given limited sources but our needs are unlimited so we have to struggle, compete and share
  + If you source is infinite and you are connected to this, does it matter?
  + Just by recognizing that the source is infinity, you will realize that we are not here to share
  + You share that which is finite

We have properties given to us, so we have to share with the needy

* The foundation is false and corrupt
* Our foundation of giving is rotten because we don’t even understand why we are here
* We have to first figure out who we are

Go to the garden and see what is going on in this world

Islam does not need to be reconstructed. Our minds are the ones that needs to be reconstructed

* The Quran keeps saying *Alhamdolilahi Rabbil Alameen* (All praise belongs to God)
* It never changes
* What changes is our acknowledgement of this reality

If sources are limited, we have to share

* We end thinking that we have to give OUR property to the needy in a sacrificial way
  + This is nonsense
* You give because you need to PURIFY yourself
  + This is what the Quran says and has been saying forever
* What needs to change is my understanding of the concept of zakah

We have heard about the results of belief BUT we have not heard about belief

* As such, we are lost in the outward side of things.

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear the word religion?

* Organized
* Church
* Mosque
* Priestly people
* Rigid actions
* Rules
* Belief in God as the creator of the universe
* Very few people say that religion is seeing creation as saluting its creator

Plants, animals, all of creation are manifesting life and manifesting endless qualities through life

* We tend to say that the cat is moving, it is alive
* The cat is a living being and we take for granted that it should move
* But ask yourself, how?
* All these qualities are manifesting the qualities of their creator
* It is to be observed and understoof as salutations to their creator

*Salam Alaykum* – Peace be with you, is a recognition of the owner of all the qualities manifested in the person you are greeting

Glorifications of their maker

* They are glorifying their maker, known as the sign of life
* If there is somebody lying unconscious in an ICU room, we tend to be so pre-occupied with whether the person is dead or alive
* When the doctor pushes the patient’s hand and the patient responds, we commonly say that the movement is a sign of life
  + But in reality, the movement is a glorification of His creator

The concepts being established very different

* Seeing, moving, eating, responding, walking, and everything that we thought were signs of life are in essence glorification of Allah
* They are glorifying their maker

If we don’t change our worldview, rituals have to be a burden on me

- I will have to sacrifice a lot to gain paradise because my conceptions are corrupt

Observe these step by step:

1. Salutations
2. Manifestations
3. Glorifications
4. Worship

Simply put, be a conscious observer and see what is going on in the world (living creatures)

* What are they doing?
* Just observer and derive your share in what they are doing.