Halaqa, June 8 2013

Youtube Link: www.**youtube**.com/watch?v=M8XMIxRZSOQ‎

Topic: 11th Word, Aims of our life

7th aim: Through taking as units of measurements, the small samples of attributes like the partial knowledge, power, and will given to your life, it is to know through those measures the absolute attributes and sacred qualities of the All-Glorious Creator. For example, since, through your partial power, knowledge, and will, you have made your house in well-ordered fashion, you should know that the Maker of the palace of the world is its Disposer, and Powerful, Knowing, and Wise to the degree it is greater than your house.

We have some knowledge – we can learn, but we cannot learn anything

* Everything that we have, is only partial

The author says that they are units of measurements

* This means that they have been given to us in order that we may measure/gauge something else
* Through what we have been given, we are supposed to get to know the Absolute and Sacred qualities of the Creator

Issues that some people face:

* How do we know God?
* If God is Absolute, how can I even fathom what is Absolute?
* Some people might come to the conclusion about the matter by saying:
  + The creator is someone we cannot comprehend but we just have to believe
  + i.e. Blind belief

But the Quran, time and time again, emphasizes that we are expected to have certainty in our belief.

So how do we confirm that God is Absolute from a Quranic perspective?

* We keep hearing that you cannot know from your limited knowledge
  + The fact that our knowledge is limited, is true
  + BUT, the Quran says you have to be certain
* If I cannot know with my limited knowledge, how can I have certainty?
  + The people who use these expressions frequently, as a result of their lack of understanding about belief, say these things because they do not know how to use their means.
  + They say that we have blindly accept, but your human reality will not be satisfied
  + If I have been given this limited capacity by my Lord and I find myself desiring to know about my Absolute Lord, stating the above claim (you can never really know the Absolute but you just have to believe it) would seem as though I have been malfunctioned
  + The Quran says one thing (believe through confirmation) but I experience another thing (no confirmation) = contradiction

He is the One who gave me the desire to confirm the truth, so there must be a way that I can confirm it.

* Also, it is within me, that I feel dissatisfied if I believe something blindly

We have to understand that the author is emphasizing on something we have been given

* If we have full knowledge, it will encompass everything BUT we are told that we have only been given units of measurement
* We can only measure
* Our ability to measure is endless but we can only measure

Example: If you have a ruler, your ruler can keep measuring endless lengths.

A thermometer is the unit of measurement for temperature

* It measures temperature
* It is not of the nature of heat itself
* It is made of mercury
* The mercury shows me the degree of the temperature

What is expected to be measured, is endless, but everytime I measure, I realize that the source is endless.

We are created beings. We are not of the essence of what we are going to measure, but what we measure is Absolute.

When I place my pencil on the table, I am aware that I have placed it there.

* I choose a location for my pencil based on whatever factors I may have (to prevent it from being stepped on, etc)
* This is a unit of measurement
* I see that, everything has been given in a way that demonstrates wisdom, power, order, choice, will
* I am performing my actions as a conscious being and take the appropriate steps with caution
  + Just from my actions I see and witness that everything around me, is also placed carefully.

We are often told, Object A changed to object B.

* We have to realize that every moment the object is being created
* The object cannot create itself in its second instance.
* What gets failed to be mentioned is the source behind the object.

People say that they do not want to go into theological matters, but this is not theological. It is reality.

What is needed to explain each moment of existence/action:

* Knowledge
* Will
* Choice
* Power
* Wisdom
* Purpose
* I see through my own units of measurement, that everything that happens, happens according to the above ideas.

We don’t see any meaningless moment in the universe

* People say: The object was here and it evolved/adapted to fit with another surrounding
* Who decided that it needed to adapt?
  + Knowledge? Will? Choice?

Human beings are amazing creatures. We have been given these qualities to be used as units of measurements.

From my own interactions I see that in everyday actions, there is knowledge, will, power, etc in play.

* I have all these qualities, just like how the mercury in a thermometer has the quality to reflect changes in temperature
* But like the mercury, these qualities have been given to me so that I can measure qualities behind the existence of the universe
* This is how you can be certain of the conscious operator in the universe

The Quran keeps reminding us that we have been given the signs about what we are expected to believe and confirm.

* We are not expected to believe and confirm out of nowhere
* We don’t just believe what all people who are ‘tortured’ say
* We have been told specifically to believe the prophets (who were also tortured) because of their given natures and qualities

“He died for your sins, so you have to believe him”

“This person is a nice man, so follow him”

I have to be convinced of what I believe. I shouldn’t blindly follow.

* There is an expression in the Quran about how God created human spirit from His own soul
* ‘He breathed from Himself into human beings’
* What does this mean?
* I look at myself and know that I am a limited being
* I have certain limited free will, power, knowledge, etc AND I realize that I cannot create anything
* I cannot give existence to anything BUT I have some qualities
* Although these qualities cannot give existence to anything, these qualities can be used for something else
  + To understand where the real power and force of the universe lies

Example: I know that my spirit has some qualities but this spirit is not the one that creates

* At the same time, I can understand, by using these qualities, what is going on in my environment
* We have to always use ourselves as our own yardstick

When you serve people, do you enjoy it?

* Yes.

Do you like beautiful things?

* Yes.

Do you desire to make things perfect?

* Yes.

What are all these feelings and senses for?

* Why do you like beauty, perfection, and magnanimity?
* What are these qualities for?
* How are we expected to utilize them?

We constantly engage in the process of beautifying things (environments, buildings, homes, ourselves, etc)

* What is the purpose of it?
  + Can it simply be to eventually lead to its death?
  + Am I made with all these qualities just for use in this temporal world?
  + There must be a purpose for it that does not contradict or go against common sense

Why am I given existence in this world?

* The Prophetic teaching says: You are created to worship God alone
* You are expected to know who your Lord is
  + All the qualities given to you, are for you to know your creator and fulfill the reason for your existence in this world
  + We tidy our house not so that we can die in it but so as to get to know Him
  + We enjoy helping others, caring for animals, nurturing plants
  + When we hear forests are being burnt, we also hear how some people are trying to save them – for what?
    - For oxygen, so as to keep you alive?
    - What’s the point?
    - You are eventually going to die
    - Are they simply saving the forests to grant you an additional 10 years of life?

If the end is death, everything we do is pointless, isn’t it?

While I am trying to save the forest from being burnt down, I am expected to experience who my Lord is

* Who is really protecting the universe from collapsing?
* Who is really sustaining my life?
  + The One who has given existence to the universe, is the same One who has given me the qualities to know Him
  + My action/emotion is just a unit of measurement

No one can really graft belief in us. We have to believe from within. We have to experience it from within.

How? Use yourself

* Keep a lookout on the qualities you have and watch them
* It is so simple

But for socio-political reasons, we don’t really see the encouragement to use ourselves to encourage our own belief

* Because people want to establish power so they say ‘follow me’
* They don’t wan to teach us to establish religion for ourselves

We may not know it but we should ask to be taught religion that is sufficient for myself to build and establish my own belief

* When the matter comes to rituals, it is slightly different.
* But to establish my own belief, I have to start with my own self
* That is why every individual has been breathed his/her soul from God
  + We are all qualified to know God by this very fact

Quran: When I asked you, every soul, who is your Lord? They all say, you, Allah

* What does this mean?
* Don’t mystify it. It simply means that every soul recognizes the reality.
* Don’t turn religion into mythology
* We have to be realistic and consistent without our own life and within our own existence

The Prophet demonstrated how this belief reflection itself in social life BUT first and foremost, I have to establish my own belief within my own self

* Without this, if you learn many practical things, the practice of those actions will not really help you
* These practical things have no foundation and they are just ‘external’
* The Prophet’s practices were always based on belief
* That is why the Prophet often said that God does not look at your appearance but what is within yourself
  + Look who is residing within your heart
  + Symbolically speaking, your heart is the throne

How do I use my limited units of measurement to know who my God is?

* We are measuring the manifesting of qualities in this world
* When I help a cat I feel happy
  + There are billions of cats in the world yet just by helping this one cat I feel happy
* You always see animals protecting their young but in this instance you have proactively helped to save the animal from danger
  + You are experiencing what the animal always does with his/her young (i.e. protect)
    - Expand your mind: Don’t all cats in the world also share this form of ‘protection’
      * Not only cats, all animals care and protect for their young
      * In fact, universe wise, there is an operation going on to protect their young
      * Can’t you see then that the One who is operating within this universe, is having the same attitude and pleasure in helping
* You have been **given** the ability to help
  + You can acknowledge it or not

For all your senses/feelings, look for it source

* Be realistic
* I can see that all the qualities within me are omnipresent in the universe
* Whoever made the universe must have the qualities within me
  + Not because the scriptures are telling me so
  + But because I am experiencing it
* This is why I’ve been given life
  + To be aware of my life and my qualities so that I can come to a conclusion about the universe
  + The universe is huge and is continuous
  + Remember that the manifestation of all qualities in the universe are continuous
    - Just by realizing that you can conclude that the source of the universe is beyond this universe
    - It cannot be limited within this space and time
    - If it is beyond this space and seemingly timeless dimension and beyond this universe, I cannot define this source
      * I cannot really describe the source within the qualities of this universe because His qualities are endless
      * i.e. Absolute

This is why, the main teaching of the scripture is *la ilaha illAllah:* There is no source of this universe other than Allah and His existence is beyond this universe

* Belief in God makes sense
* You experience it
* It should not be contradictory
* To deny my reality, is not worth it
  + What will I gain my denying my reality?

There is no source of existence beyond this universe other than Him

* I realize this statement makes sense
* I am confident with it
* Belief in God, an Absolute being, is true and substantial for me
* There is no way for me to not believe in it
  + It is not about because I am following a certain religious sect
* I’ve experienced it and confirmed it for myself

*Ash-hadu*: It is ME who is witnessing

* Otherwise, by simply referring to other scholars you have not confirmed your belief
* You cannot borrow or inherit belief
* Belief can only come from within, as the result of conviction

Don’t worry about people out there who might say they believe but seem to be doing it without true conviction

* Stop being obsessed with what other people do and think
* Focus on yourself
* If they ask you, then you can share with them and help to guide them
* But at the end, they should conclude for themselves
* You cannot really inject belief into them nor can you graft religion into their being
* Show them the methodology instead

Use yourself.

In reality, if we know how to read the Quran, you will see that the Quran is replete with this message

* Every source is read within a set of expectations
* If my understanding of religion is narrowed to rituals and actions, I read the text only for that
* We are warned in the Quran not to be carried away by our egoistic aspirations
  + We are not supposed to get carried away in the idea that we are the best and look for ways to prove it to people around us so that we may become popular etc
* We are selective, it is our reality.
* We search for answers based on the qualifiers you set out
* We need to be selective of what we are seeking
  + What is the most important question for which you need answers?
  + What is your purpose?
* Establish your foundations first
* To establish my foundation, I have to look to the scripture to get an answer to my existence
* The other verses will make sense in due time

When we are uncertain about the ‘selections’ we are making, we should ask ourselves:

* Does the aim of what I am striving towards allow me to make sense of my existence wholly and without any contradictions?
* For example: If someone says that they are selecting choices because of their need for wealth AND they wonder if it is the right way of going about things, they should look within themselves and ask questions:
  + Is the purpose of my life to accumulate wealth and then for me to eventually die without any of it?
  + Does not that seem contradictory?
  + As humans, we have been given the qualities to question ourselves
  + Do it!

We have to perform actions as we are doing BUT this methodology we are learning just encourages us to ask questions

* Why are you doing it?
* Who is the source of it?
* What does it reflect?

Example: You are traveling. You would have checked all the possibilities and booked the ticket accordingly based on your schedule, budget, etc. Once you book the tickets, you plan all your activities around it so that on the day of the flight, you will be at the airport at the required check-in time.

\*Similarly, why don’t you use all the qualities given to you to take care of the future (the future that does not end with death)

Ask yourself, what is the real purpose of the qualities of prudence and preparation that we have exercised within us?

* Don’t we see that the seasons prepare for the next?
* The moon/sun prepare for their
* The earth is preserved
* Who is taking care of all this precautions?
* All the qualities within us are given so that we can be aware of these qualities functioning at a universal level

Nobody is saying, when you are hungry don’t eat.

* The purpose of eating it so that you know you have a source who is providing all the nourishment for you
* Just because you may be aware of this reality at one instance, you don’t stop eating
* Whenever you are hungry you eat
* Why?
* To remind and exercise our acknowledgement of our creator being compassionate
* While we are eating, we are expected to be conscious of our actions

“Stop eating BUT pray”

* This alternative paradigm does not make sense to my being
* If you are conscious of your reality, your act of eating is also an act of drawing nearer to your Lord
* Satisfy your baser desires BUT do it with awareness
* Then approach the prayer rug and worship Him
* This is why the Prophet SAW said: When you are hungry, eat and then pray
  + Why?
  + Because **experience comes first. Expression will then follow**
  + It is so simple and not contradictory

The creation of this world and this universe is NOT a rival to God

* This worldly life is not an alternative to the hereafter
* It is a means to attain the hereafter
* If you were not in this world you will never be able to know what the hereafter is or can be

Be aware of why you have been given the qualities you have

* Whatever comes from within me, in reality, comes from God
* Take it as a gift and use it as a unit of measurement

There are some evil impulses within us that are put in front of me to deny my reality

* Instead of helping someone, I can walk away
* By doing so, I will be denying my reality and my urge to be kind simply because I have the choice to do another action
* Similarly, you may deny God in your actions BUT you will find no evidence to substantiate another way of life other than what dedicated to God

For example, since, through your partial power, knowledge, and will, you have made your house in well-ordered fashion, you should know that the Maker of the palace of the world is its Disposer, and Powerful, Knowing, and Wise to the degree it is greater than your house.

* My ability to make a house has been given to me so that I may question the maker of the universe
* The ability to take care of your family, is a means for you to question who is taking care of the family of this universe
* All the qualities have been given to us so that we may use it to know who the source of this universe is
* This is necessary and is the crux of our lives
  + Everything else is secondary
  + The actions will come if you are convinced

We have to use our units of measurement to measure in terms of space and in time

- If you follow the continuous renewal of the maker of the universe, you will be convinced that He must be of the nature that is out of this universe