Halaqa: Saturday, March 2, 2013

Denial: Deliberately cutting your connection with the things you are experiencing here

I may like or dislike something – that is not the point

* Go to the root of the feeling; acknowledge the source of existence of the feeling

Nursi emphasizes on the need for modesty – not on intelligence but modesty (do not be arrogant; accept your reality)

* Your reality is the need to acknowledge your source, submit to it and not resist it
* Do not ignore the one who truly owns everything

We know that nothing can exist by itself but we fail to accept His ownership and His control over everything.

The universe has already been prepared for me.

If anybody says: I can ascribe everything in my environment to an accidental occurrence, then so be it. But in reality (if we try and find conclusions, we will realize that we cannot ascribe anything in the universe to accidents.)

Question the existence of EVERYTHING

* Commonly heard: “This adapts itself to the environment” BUT there is a failure to understand the existence of ‘adaption’
  + What is the reason for adaption
  + How does the idea of adaption even exist?
* Similarly when we say, it grows or it evolves we have failed to explain why it is growing/evolving
  + Where did you get the concept of growth?
  + You have to be able to explain growth and the qualities that we often take for granted

If we do not question, there is no answer

People criticize the religion from an institutional perspective or with respect to traditions but when it comes to the core of belief, it is very difficult to deny the truth of religion

* Of course this universe must have an owner
* The owner must be a conscious being

Analogy: Two man enter a desert. One of them is humble and modest and the other proud and arrogant.

* Desert: Universe
* Humility/Arrogance: Ways of approaching the universe
* We are free to choose by ourselves which way we want to take

Why do we not use *iman* as something to do with modesty?

* We say we are Muslims
* We submit ourselves to God
* We follow Shariah, etc and so we have to dress a certain way and THIS IS MODESTY, but technically we are going about things in the wrong way
  + I don’t dress a certain way to achieve modesty
  + I have *iman* which instills me to be modest and HENCE I dress a certain way
* No one questions the foundational *iman*
* Rather modesty needs to be the base/founding principle of our actions
  + Modesty in our humility

How should we understand the words trial and tribulations in this world?

**After this field of trial and place of examination their munificent sustainer invited them..**

* When you feel that you are going through a trial or tribulations, we understand that it was for an educational purpose
* You understand that you are being taught something here
* You acknowledge that our munificent sustainer is inviting me to eternal happiness in recompense for my belief
  + How can I confirm this?
    - Put yourself on a trial
    - You appreciate and acknowledge the source as the munificent one
    - Do you experience eternal happiness?
    - If you acknowledge the source, you have eternal happiness because you are connected to the source of grace/the creator
    - Acknowledge the One who created the trying situation/beautiful experience
      * It does not matter whether you like the experience or dislike it
      * What matters is for you to ask about the very existence of the situation
      * Who gave it existence?
      * Can you ascribe the existence of viruses to themselves?
        + They most certainly cannot be the reason of existence of their own being
    - Seek out the source of existence of EVERYTHING
      * What sort of qualities should the One who gave existence to the whole universe and everything in it have?
      * Can He have limitations to the universe or must he be beyond it?
      * By your simple act of acknowledgement, you are connecting yourself to eternity
      * By saying that a ‘virus’ cannot exists by itself, it must have been created by the Absolute One who created everything, you are automatically connected to the Eternal Source
      * You do not have to die to experience eternity
    - When you eat a fruit and enjoy it, you can immediately experience eternity by acknowledging the true creator of the orange
    - We need to experience eternal blessing through our actions.

Hereafter = The end of ANYTHING and EVERYTHING

Even after I die I will still be in the hands of my creator – I am still not in the ‘akhirah’ but I am experiencing a hereafter.

Typically my understanding of akhirah is the end of my life

* Why not I change my understanding to see that akhirah is the end of every moment/day/month/yeah
* Kullu shay-in
* Everything has a beginning and an end

Remember that the universe does not only contain you – there are a million other creatures

* Just because you have been told not to eat pork doesn’t mean that pigs should not exists
* Pigs also exist as a way for you to acknowledge your creator
* There is a wisdom in the creation of everything

We are training ourselves to say: I am connected to the Eternal Source. If He is Wise, He is Absolutely Wise. If He is Just, He is eternally Just. I am a product of this Eternal Absolute Source. I belong to Him and I experience my belonging to Him in my very own existence at this moment.

I do not need to die to experience His eternal mercy. You can experience it at this very moment.

Analogy: You have a card. You do not know that it has an unlimited credit balance. You use it only once. When someone tells you that it has an unlimited credit allowance, you are relieved of all burdens.

Belief should bring this feeling of ease and calmness.

If we do not feel it, that means we are not using belief correctly.

Qn: How do I come from the conclusion that He is Eternal Merciful to the understanding that He must be Merciful to me in the afterlife?

Answer:

Verse - you will never find any change in the way the creator acts with you

Look to the universe to ascertain the truth of this verse. Is there any sign that the creator is not wise? Does He keep changing His mind?

We can always verify the revelation with the witnessing of the universe (PRINCIPLE)

* How can I verify that I will be treated in an eternal way by an eternal God when I haven’t died yet?
* That is a result of your misconception of akhirah
* Every moment has its own end (akhirah)
* You have to practice the practical results of your belief at every moment.

Look at the universe – is there any sign that he is not wise in creating everything in the universe?

Think about it!

To understand the creator, look at yourself!

Everything has a perfect wisdom yet many fail to understand the meaning in everything around us.

* Some people may ponder and claim that there is no use in the appendix
* But would it be fair for us to then conclude that the creator of this whole universe and all the galaxies is crazy that he created something useless?!?!?

We cannot come to the conclusion that the creator of the universe creates everything perfectly and occasionally slips ups. It contradicts the very understanding of perfection.

* If you have evidence of this, then ok but we don’t.

**The result of our belief must be practiced in this world within the action that we are experiencing** (Main point of the halaqa)

Their munificent sustainer invited them to eternal happiness in **recompense** for their belief and to the abode of peace for their adherence to his religion of Islam.

Islam means the message from our creator – revelation

- Do not reduce Islam to simply a religion

To understand why the author used the word recompense, read the 6th chapter of the book, The Words.

But in very simple terms, recompense gives meaning to the fact that for every action you do, there is a result.

Against the conventional understanding of Divine Determining (Qadr) – where everything is determined by God – we have to reconfigure our understanding of Qadr as far as human actions are concerned.

We have to understand Qadr in contrast to human free will.

Stars don’t have free will so they have to be as they are.

My existence has to be as it is, but my connection to the rest of the universe does not have to be as it is because I have been given free will.

When it comes to human relationships with the rest of the world – our free will takes priority in determining our next steps.

* Why?
* Because that is the way Allah has created me.

I choose He creates.

* God’s will is that I am free
* It is He who puts me in the position to choose
* As a result of my choice, He **recompenses** my choice
* I do not deserve it but it is His choice to reward me when I choose to submit my reality to my creator
* He says: I am going to reward you when you choose to submit your reality to your creator.
* This is the principle of sunnah

Drinking tea: If you drink it and fail to recognize the source, all you get is tea because you cut yourself off from the eternal source.

If we fail to see the source, we fail to see the abundance of eternity

We find it difficult to imagine that my free goes before God’s free will

* Who are we?
* How are we going to command God to do that?
* Allah has given you this ability and has put us in the position to make choices.

As such, we have to take good care and make the most of this ability to choose.

* He is not going to angry at us if we do not acknowledge the owner of our actions
* But all you will get is the things you have enjoyed
* You will not experience the abundance of eternity
* You have cut yourself of from the eternal source
* When you die, you will have nothing with you
* But if I understand that my lord is eternally munificent, I know that He rewards me with an eternal blessing if I connect myself to Him (my choice)
* Remember that everything we experience (both paradise and hell) is a result of our choice.
* God does not put me in paradise/hell. I put myself there based on my choices
  + Allah creates both paradise and hell

Conventionally, people may say: God is great and because He is so great we subsequently distance ourselves from him and fail to connect with Him.

We have to understand that God has put us in the positions we are in now (because only He can create) and we have to acknowledge Him in all our actions.

As far as our relationship with the world is concerned, we are in front of God. We cannot change the way the universe functions (we can’t change the alignment of the stars, moon, etc) but we have been given free will in certain aspects.

I have been given freedom by my creator to be in front of Him

* If you do not plant a seed, He does not create the tree
* To say, if God wills, He creates without understanding its relevance in our daily lives is just rhetoric

Every allegorical teaching in the Quran is there to guide you.

If you sow the seed in the soil, your recompense is tree that has tens of thousands of seeds

* But you have to put the seed
* You have to connect yourself to God
* If you connect, the reward is eternal happiness but if you don’t, your reward is nothing

For their adhering to the religion of Islam: Adhering to the message he sends to me

* The message is universal, as old as humanity, speaks to human beings
* You can really see the repercussions of the message in yourself so that you may confirm it

That is why the religion of Islam is the religion of fitra (the way you are created)

Islam is essentially appropriating your human qualities

* If I do not see anything within myself that reciprocates what Islam says it means that either the message is wrong or my attitude is wrong
* E.g.: How can I confirm the news of the hereafter if we haven’t been there?
  + How can I confirm the existence of things that are ghaib?
    - YOU CAN CONFIRM THEM
  + If you can’t confirm them, you can’t believe it. Otherwise you are imitating.

How can we confirm the news about ghaib (something beyond the limits of this creation) when no one has seen it?

* Imitation is not belief
* You have to confirm that the source of existence of this universe is ghaib by witnessing that His qualities are beyond this universe.
* Although you cannot describe the source of the universe, you can confirm it because you realize that you are unable to adequately describe it.
* You cannot understand the Quran with a dictionary; the Quran has its own vocabulary

Just because you may not Arabic, does not mean that you correctly understand the Quran.

If you restrict the meaning of a word based on your own perceptions, you have closed off yourself to the depth of meaning in a word.

People might say that a word had a certain meaning during the time of revelation. If we then subsequently try and understand the Quran based on these historical references, we are secularizing the Quranic language.

Quran is the speech of the universe – there is no ancient/modern time for the creator

Because the source is eternal, there is no difference between the time of revelation and now

* We cannot put the Quran in a historical time bound
* Every passage in the Quran has current day references

We borrow words and meanings from our practical lives to try and understand the Quranic vocabulary

* Instead, seek an understanding that is universal
* What is the promised land for you? How can you reach the paradise in 40 years of training? How will you save yourself from the bondage of Pharaoh of your time?
  + Pharaoh = The ambitions of your ego
  + How can you relieve yourself from Pharaoh?
    - Connect yourself to the Eternal source

Human arrogance is always with the human being. I can easily be carried away by my ego. Alternatively I can choose to free myself from the bonds of ego by connecting myself to the creator

We need to free ourselves from the language limitations we impose on ourselves.

We have to establish how we understand the Quran, by first defining what the Quran is

* What is the purpose of the Quran?
* Why does God speak to me?
  + If you don’t ask this question, you will not find the Quran. Rather you will find your sacred *mushaf*.
    - You will study your *mushaf* and not the eternal speech of God
  + Difference in exposing yourself to the speech of God and studying your *mushaf*

Don’t take a label for yourself – You are not just a believer. At the moment, you are on trial to test whether you connect yourself with the creator or not.

Belief automatically results in eternal happiness.

Never use political/social identities (we are Muslims, they are Christians to understand revelation.)

In reality, whatever attitude you take is what determines your ‘religion’.

If we can get rid of the boundaries that label certain groups under certain banners, we are threading down the wrong path.

**Keywords: Recompense, Islam, Connection**