Halaqa – Saturday, May 18 2013

Topic: 11th word from the book, The Words – Aims of our Life

\*continuation from May 11 2013

It seems to be representative, but it’s not. We will try and see the differences between the aims.

We need to train ourselves to read slowly, and to contemplate on the meanings over time. Unfortunately this runs contradictory to the way things are done in school.

Fourth aim: **To proclaim your worship** to the court of the creator’s dominicality verbally and through the tongue of your disposition.

* In simpler terms: To proclaim your worship (the fact that you are an abd, ubudiya)
* Abd, does not mean slave or servant
* It refers to the one who declares his reality openly and submits to it
* Without submitting to your reality, you cannot submit to the creator of you
* ‘I am created’: Knowledge not submission
* Submission is the **acknowledgment** that everything has been given to you and that nothing can be taken for granted.
* We have to train ourselves to locate our position in this world
  + Who are we?

It is easy to know, but to be aware of it is, is not easy. We tend to forget our reality and jump into our ‘cultural religion’

* Establish your position and delineate your coordinates in existence
* You acknowledge that you have been given a special existence within this special world and now I have to pay my **due**
  + Due: If I am given something, I have to acknowledge it. Nothing more.
* It is very difficult to admit that we own nothing and everything has been given to us
* We need to be consciously aware that everything is given
* Pay your due by responding back and acknowledging the true owner of all that you have
* When you acknowledge the true owner, your usage of all that has been GIVEN to you will change
  + You will perform actions and use objects/senses/etc with the awareness that they are not yours
  + i.e. You will be acting in His (the owner’s) name.
* When you experience happiness from using a pencil, you will be directing the happiness to the owner of the pencil
  + This is worship. Responding back and proclaiming to the owner

**court of the creator’s dominicality**

* Acknowledge that He is the owner of all the gifts (His court)

Water and heating is paid by the landlord - it is included in the rent.

* Regardless of how much water you use, you pay the same amount
* So why does it matter that we ought to be careful with how much water we use?
  + Because, you should acknowledge the true owner of the water
  + Just because your landlord pays for the water, he is not the owner of water
  + We are both consumers, and we are consuming water from the court

It does not matter who pays and how much he pays.

* The water does not belong to us
* When using water, I have to proclaim my worship to the court of my Lord

Let’s say that we are at war and you enter the land of your enemy. Even if you know that your enemy is going to kill you, do you have right to destroy the properties you come across on your enemy’s land?

* No. Your enemy does not truly own all that exists on his side of the land
* Trees, animals, humans, etc do not belong to your enemy
* They are consumers, just like you and I.

It is not easy to have this understanding alive in our minds all the time.

“This does not belong to me, it belongs to someone else – so I don’t care.”

* We think we are not responsible but we are responsible for everything around us
* The tree is a present to us from our Lord because we are using it
* This irresponsible characteristic embedded within us must change
* To do so, we have to first consciously remind ourselves that nothing truly belongs to anybody
* Everything belongs to our creator
* And if we are put in contact with an aspect of creation, created by our creator, how do you think we ought to interact with it?

This is what it means to “proclaim your worship to the **court of the creator’s dominicality”**

**“verbally and through the tongue of your disposition”**

* Just saying *Alhamdolilah* is not enough
* You are expected to express your worship and offer your worship to your Lord through the tongue of your disposition (your instinct/fitra) as though it is your first nature
* If someone has got used to something, we use the phrase ‘second nature’ but we have to make worship our first nature
* But this needs training
* To make something, as who you are, needs experience. You cannot make it happen just be knowing
* You have to train yourself

In order to ride a bicycle, you have to train and practice on it. You cannot just read books about it

* But when you try to learn physically, you will fall
* Knowledge is needed but it is never sufficient
* Somebody may tell you all that you need to know about riding but you will still fall
* We need the training

Only through confirming and internalizing what you learn to your human senses will you be able to use it practically.

It is not wasy tp present our worship to our Lord through using our disposition because we are usually introduced (as far as religious matters are concerned) to ‘knowledge’ (things that are needed to be a muslim, rituals that must be practiced, what you should abstain from according to the rules, etc).

Spiritual training: If you do not get on the bicycle and try the action PHYSICALLY, you will never learn how to ride a bicycle

* We have to train ourselves physically and we cannot imitate

Even if I know how to recite the Quran in a proper sense (tajweed), knowing how to practically pray, giving money to charity physically – my worship must be in the form of my first nature (it has to be my disposition)

* When you perform these actions, what are you really doing with your own senses?
* Are you really experiencing that by training your sense you are the worshipper of your Lord?
* Through your actions, can you acknowledge that He is Lord and not you?

Example:

Using water irresponsibly because you know that it doesn’t matter how much you use, you still pay the same amount.

* Unless it becomes your first nature (that the water does not belong to the person who pays for the water)
* Your usage of water should have nothing to do with payment
* The water does not belong to the landlord or the causes
* When you are using water, you are receiving the blessings of your Lord
* Who paid for it, has nothing to do with the matter
* It changes your worldview entirely

The global earth, directly belongs to your creator, who is your Lord!

Train your connection with the rest of the universe by seeing that every single thing is under the control of the creatorship of the lord of the universe.

* When you breathe in air, are you aware that you are experiencing the blessing of your Lord?
* Are you really feeling that you are receiving His blessings?
* Your senses and feelings should directly see the connection of your Lord with you
  + Don’t connect to the air
  + Connect to the creator and owner of the air

You receive a present from your loved ones

* If someone asks you how much is the gift and wants to buy it from you at a much higher price, would you sell it?
* No, why?
* The gift, is a physical manifestation of love from your loved one
* It embodies the relationship and feeling between the two people
* The embodiment of love cannot be sold regardless of the price

Similarly, all that is on this earth is a physical manifestation, an embodiment of His relationship with you – can you then waste it away?

* Everything is an embodiment of love from my Lord

What we are being trained in this world is that the relationship between you and the object is that the object satisfies you (functionalism)

* Its value depends on how it functions in your life and what it contributes to your life
* When you go to the shop and buy a pair of glasses, you buy something that serves a function

Revelation comes from your Lord and tells you that the line of relationship should change to acknowledge the owner and creator of the objects and the senses that appreciates the objects

* You will realize that your Lord recognizes you and that you are always in contact with your Lord

A famous expression we hear: If you find God, you find everything

* God is the owner of everything
* If God is your friend, and He is with you, you need nothing else
* Everything becomes your friend, because everything is His present to you
* But such a perspective needs training
* For this we need to encourage each other

You pray, you do good actions, you perform religious rituals, etc – whatever you do – must be for the purpose of training.

We should develop ourselves to understand that everything is from your God, then your relationship with Him becomes of first nature to you.

* So regardless of whether you sell, buy, eat, drink, etc (interact) with His creation, you recognize and are of the awareness that everything is from Him

We should strive to establish a relationship with our Lord so that it becomes our first nature. It is not easy but we should keep striving.

Are we are that the tomatoes growing in my garden do not belong to me but are given to me?

* Am I aware that this sense of seeking ownership over these tomatoes has been given me so that I can appreciate the gift of my Lord?
* When I am selling the tomatoes to those who need it and getting some money back in return, I recognize that my needs (for money) are being given to me
* It is not that you should not be selling the tomatoes because they are a gift to you BUT rather about having the awareness when you interact with the buying and selling of the tomatoes

We have to concentrate and really think about our coordinates in the universe

* Locate where you are
* You do not need to specify where you
* Once you make the coordinates (latitude, longitude) clear, people know exactly where you are
* We need to figure out our coordinates (who am I , where I am, what is happening to me and what is the purpose of my life here?)

Establishing your religion on your existential position must come first

* Re orientate the definition of your religion
* Just know where you are

You are in the cradle of your Lord

* Everything is being taken care of by Him
* Analogy: When we were babies, our parents took care of us without a price
* Do we experience the reality that we are babies in the hand of our Lord?
  + Unfortunately, not.
* We might pray religiously BUT do we acknowledge our reality?
  + If we don’t, what is the point of performing all the religious actions?
* Locate your coordinates first!!!
  + You will then act accordingly and your actions will be meaningful
  + Your actions will be firmly founded
* If you skip this step, your actions will be imitative

We have to be aware that although the culture we grow up within may be apparently religious or not, we have to look for our coordinates first and establish the realization of reality before going into actions.

Only after learning how to ride a bicycle, will you be able to cycle on the main roads and experience the traffic.

When you really experience that you are in the care of your Lord who is the owner of the whole universe, when you come out of your house and encounter a red light, you will stop

If you aware that rather than obeying the rule of American administration, you are obeying the order of the lord of the universe, you will obey the rules of the world because you know the rules established by your Lord does not ask you to rebel.

Analogy: If you cut your finger with your knife, you are disobeying your law (you do not want to inflict pain on yourself)

* We think we are harming and hurting ourselves (practically, yes)
* But in reality, we need to become aware that we are disobeying the law or order of my Lord
* I am going against His will
* His will is not to hurt myself
* I know that just by observing the way that I am created
* I have no right to disobey my creator, so I will not cut my finger: This is worship.

When you are walking on the street, you will not litter on the street NOT because you want to be environmentally friendly BUT because you are obeying your Lord.

* If the reason for you not littering is because you are concerned with society, you are missing the opportunity to utilize your life to in devotion to your lord

When you stop at the red light, you do it because you realize you have no right to cause anarchy in the system

* This awareness, or dislike for disruption and chaos, was given to you by your Lord and you are being conscious of it
* You are not doing it because you want to avoid a ticket or because you are obeying the police orders

If you are aware that this the command of your lord, you are worshipping Him

* It is nothing to do with our reality (horizontal relationships)
* We have to establish the vertical relationship

The concepts we have been raised with are false, they are not real

* They have nothing to do with my existence
* My being in this universe is to acknowledge who my lord is

Respect other people, because they are created by your Lord (worship) NOT simply because I have to be a kind and respectful citizen

* In the latter scenario, your actions have no real foundations
* We should lay foundations that govern all our actions in our lives
* Our whole life should be worship

Assigning labels to people might not seem like the best approach but people will not be accustomed to interaction if we ask them to introduce themselves based on their ‘coordinates’

* We have to be sensitive to the society we live in
* The Prophet SAW was extremely sensitive and respectful of the people’s accustomed way of life so as to not cause alienation

If I speak to people in a language that they are not accustomed to, they will move away from you and it will breed alienation

* The Prophet SAW respected the people around him and they way they did things
* We should approach situations, step by step

Of course, establishing a foundation is very important BUT remember that the Prophet (in his first 23 years of Prophethood) he used to follow the society he was living in and respected the ways of the people

* The people at that time would drink and intoxicate themselves
* But he did not stop them until the injunction came to him from Allah
* And when the injunction came, he introduced it to his people gradually.
* Establish the foundations first

This is also the law and order established by our creator

* We realize that even physically, our bodies gradually adapt
* Things do not happen immediately
* If someone cuts his finger, the finger gets repaired BUT it takes time

If something is strange between you and other people, we have to follow the path of gradual change

* Nothing changed suddenly in the practical life of the messenger of God
* But foundations need to established first

If someone asks you for money, ask yourself:

* Are you aware that the money belongs to the Lord of the universe
* Am I aware that the needy person belong to the creator of the universe
* Am I aware that my sense of giving to needy has been given to me by the creator of the universe?
* Am I aware that my requirement to care for myself is also given to me by the creator of the universe?
* The way we are created teaches me what I need to do
* This order in the world has been presented to us by our Lord
  + We do not need to learn the order of the world (walking, eating, sleeping, etc)
  + What we need is the awareness that everything in this world is by the order of the universe
    - When I perform an action, am I aware that I am obeying the order of God?
    - This dimension of awareness is missing

We should not reduce religion to the order itself. We have to incorporate the awareness of obeying the order.

If you establish your faith firmly, your action will be necessitated BUT if you establish an action firmly, it will not necessitate the belief.

* To what, then, are we going to give the priority?

Your action will gain value based on your awareness of the action

* We have to establish this missing point

When discussing the foundation of belief, we should not jump into practical rules

* Instead, establish how we should learn how to ride the bicycle (IMAN FOUNDATION)
* Then go and ride the bicycle (EXPERIENCE)
* No point teaching him the rules of riding a bicycle if he has never experienced riding a bicycle (FIQH and SHARIAH)

This was the primary purpose of the Quran

* To establish the belief foundation
* And then on top of it, rules
* While we are establishing foundations, do not jump into rules (a mistake often made by people who grow up in the Muslim community)