Halaqa: Saturday May 25 2013

Topic: Aims of our life

5) Like on ceremonial occasions a soldier wears all the decorations he has received from his King, and through appearing before him, displays the marks of his favour towards him, this is to consciously adorn yourself in the jewels of the subtle senses which the manifestations of the Asmâ-i Husnâ (Divine Names) have given you, and to appear in the observant view of the Pre-Eternal Witness.

What does this mean?

Analogy: What do you feel when you serve your friends?

* You feel blessed because you realize you have something to give
* On the outward: You carry a tray jeweled with food
* The sense of serving is within you, it is subtle

You acknowledge that the sense of serving is given to you by your creator and you practice this sense of service

Being conscious of the fact that the subtle feelings have been given to us (previous stage) BUT now, I help others in the consciousness of my elevated status.

Whether you externally practice or not, that is your choice.

* But when you externally do it, it becomes a decoration for you

Example: You are successful in performing a certain action

* Your success has been acknowledge externally with a ‘badge’
* But when the badge becomes apparent, you will always act in accordance with this externally manifested badge.

Soldiers are given boots, badges, tools etc by the army’s commander

* Everything is from the commander so why is there a need for the parade?
* The parade serves as a way for the soldiers to display and admit all that has been given to them
* Similarly, while we perform a service, we are doing it in the observant view of our creator
	+ This realization and acknowledgement that I am not showing up to people
	+ Rather, I am explicitly expressing myself to my creator
	+ ‘O Creator, this is what you have given me’
	+ You know what God is doing BUT you have to be conscious of it

We do not express the senses manifested in us as a display to our Creator under whose view we are.

What does I am under the observant view of my creator mean?

* It is not about being under the surveillance of God
* It is about having a sense of awareness
* It is about YOU and what YOU feel when you are serving others
	+ You feel good
	+ This ability has been given to me and I am using it
		- There are many people who are not aware of the fact that they have been given these qualities ( Stage 1 )
		- Some people may be aware that the qualities have been given to them BUT they are not aware why they have these qualities which in essence serves as the manifestation of the Divine Names (Stage 2/3)
		- Why are you manifesting these qualities?
			* To connect yourself to the giver of these qualities
			* But no one can really measure or test whether you are really connecting yourself
			* It is an internal experience (This is the 5th stage we are discussing)
			* To the extent that you experience the connection internally and you perform outwardly manifested actions as a result of this internal connection, to that extent you have mastered this stage.

When we express what is within us (as a result of our own inner conviction and awareness of God) in our external interactions, we have ascended to the fifth stage in the aims of our life.

I am given the capacity to experience my inner feels externally

* I wear the badges and walk in front of my creator as a result of my inner feelings and confirmation
* This awareness makes your belief something substantial in you.

We may never experience this stage because we are simply not aware of this reality

* It does not mean that we are bad people
* But it needs training

If am given the sense of service and I am not practicing it , I am rejecting my reality.

Concentrate on who are you and the things that you do:

* When you fast, what are you really doing?
	+ Don’t restrict yourself in the categorical definition of it
	+ That is not your reality
	+ Identify yourself and your position
	+ Accordingly, connect yourself to the society with that position

Unfortunately what we do is that we identify the society (Muslim, Christian, religious, etc) and put those labels on ourselves.

* If I am a member of the Muslim society then I am X, Y and Z.

Instead, define who you are first. Only then you should establish your relationships with others based on your definition of yourself.

Example: Risale is serving

* Whatever is going on within him, is of no concern to anyone else
* We have to demonstrate what is within us and serve people SO THAT others may take into heart
* That is what the Prophets did. The put into practice what they themselves are.

You want to change society.

* Yes, you can change society but to do that you have to change people around you
* To do that, you have to serve others
* You cannot force people in matters of religion (in matters of realizing their own self)
* You cannot change anybody other than in helping them realize what their reality is

The practice of the Prophet is that he only proposed, practiced and suggested UNLESS he was physically attacked.

* He went stage by stage in his relationship with the people around him based on their levels of understanding and awareness

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* **Sahih International:**[Moses] said, “O Aaron, what prevented you, when you saw them going astray,
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**Sahih International:**From following me? Then have you disobeyed my order?”



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* **Sahih International:**[Aaron] said, “O son of my mother, do not seize [me] by my beard or by my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, ‘You caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe [or await] my word.’ ”
* ‘O son of my mother’: Mother represents compassion and so by referencing mother, it is a delicate and subtle way of saying deal with me with compassion

People come to the Prophet and they accuse him of causing fractions and rifts by not following the values that the society already has:

* Everyone is sitting and no one is serving but this one person comes along (with an awareness of his reality) and begins serving
* In the case of the Prophet (SAW), he was accused of causing fraction within society. So was the Prophet Abraham (why do you come and belittle our idols, asked the people of that time to Abraham).
* Every culture has certain symbols
* When the Bedouin approached the Prophet, he said: I am calling you to worship the creator of the universe
	+ The first stage is to ask others who is your creator and who is the creator of everything?
	+ People think that belief in God is the final stage in belief. It is actually the first step in living your life.
	+ The Prophet is using his wisdom and speaking to the people at their stage
	+ From being totally ignorant of the very basic purpose of one’s life and coming into the first stage of realizing who your God is

When we read the hadiths or the verses of the Quran, we should be aware of our reality

* Don’t just repeat and imitate
* What was the circumstance and reality of the Prophet’s teaching

Sunnah is to ACT wisely – not just saying what the Prophet said or did without thinking about its suitability for the audience.

If anybody wants to study hadiths, he needs to be qualified within his own self and have gone through the 9 stages of our aims of life

What is missing in Muslim scholarship now is that they concentrate on learning Arabic and learning the methodology of jurisprudence

* They specialize in this BUT before you reach this point, you need a specialization in belief which is presented to us by the Quran
* If you do not have this vision, you cannot understand the hadith
* Your interpretation of hadith will just be a repetition and not the sunnah
	+ Sunnah is acting as the result of your awareness of the mission of the messenger
	+ Prophet’s are here to teach us how to attach ourselves with our lord

Qn: It is difficult to be in this state of awareness all the time. How do I navigate around this?

* You cannot understand the Prophetic mission unless you have understood your own reality
	+ Just like how you will be able to understand what a teacher is saying in accordance to your capacity
* We have to focus on our reality of being alive in this world
	+ As we go through this journey, we have to connect ourselves to the guidelines (hadiths, sources)
* We may try to gauge our realization by certain actions
	+ We have to make a fine tuning about the relationship between iman (aqeedah) and amal (action)
	+ Iman definitely comes first

When you serve others and say: God created me with this ability and I am serving it. While doing it I am demonstrating God’s attributes to others. I am doing a good job (one level of realization)

To progress to the next stage, you need to reassess your belief.

Belief supports and fortifies the value of the action. Actions do not support the value of your belief.

Belief makes you put action to practice but the opposite is not true.

* If we really concentrate on the belief side of training, which constitute the majority of the teachings of the Quran (95%), our actions will fall into place

Don’t reduce belief training to knowledge of definitions and categories.

If you want to learn the names of Allah and the Prophets, , go ahead. But by simply listing the names and attributes of God, you will not gain anything and will not realize anything about your reality.

Practical teaching is something that carries on till the day we die

You can only practice as much as you realize

* Don’t stop people from performing actions you deem wrong
* You need to serve them be making them realize their own reality (this service ought to be the result of your inner awareness and manifestation of the divine names)
* This does not mean that we should neglect actions but at the same time we should be aware that actions gains its value only from belief
* Concentrate on belief and it will fortify actions

If you realize that you have forgotten about an exam, you will leave everything and start preparing with whatever time you have.

* Similarly, when you realize that you have to worship God (depending on the level of awareness), you cannot not do it.

When you realize that you are created anew at every moment, you will ask yourself what your purpose is and everyday becomes an opportunity for you to prepare yourself for eternal life

* You have to turn every action into eternity by doing your actions in the name of the eternal one
* This is the consciousness we have to develop
* There are several layers and the more we concentrate on the belief side, the more opportunity you will be given to progress on the belief ladder
* But if you will start concentrating on actions, then you will reach a stagnation point because without belief you cannot advance your relationship

Ask yourself: What is lacking in a person that prevents him from praying?

* Seek the prophetic wisdom on how the Prophet would respond to this man?
* He would say something in accordance to the Quran but based on belief training
* We have to first acknowledge that we have to start all our interactions with people on matters of belief
	+ Don’t get flustered about people’s actions
	+ As long as they are convinced about their reality, they will perform their actions.

Once the Prophet established belief, then prayer comes and few years later the prohibition of alcohol, and then the need to defend yourself

* There is a process that needs to be allowed to evolve
* We should not behave in an unwise way

When we read the Quran and the hadith, we should concentrate on having a clear mind about seeking the foundations of things (belief: how can this make me conscious of my reality)

Establish your belief first.