Halaqa, Wednesday May 29 2013

Topic: Is the Prophet (PBUH) with you right now?

We have established four fundamental foundations of our being in this world

* not necessarily the foundation of religion

Our existence in this world makes sense only if we explain the existence of this world by attributing it to an Absolute one who is the source of this world and creates it

* Only then does this universe become something that we can explain
* Otherwise, this universe becomes something contrary and contradictory to our nature

If someone says that they don’t think they have to believe in God – that is his choice.

* From my perspective I see that I cannot explain the existence of this world in any other way other than by accepting God

When we look at creation, you will realize that there is a relationship that you have to establish between the absolute source of creation and this every transient world

For many people, throughout the ages of humanity, people have always been interested in questioning the existence of this world owing to the fact that humans are conscious beings

When I am hungry, I eat – that is my reality and how I am

Similarly, my conscience and my given sense of consciousness all lead me towards asking about my reality and the purpose of my life.

The world outside and my consciousness asks: How can you relate this ever changing world to a creator?

* It necessitates that the Absolute being be the creator of this world

But note, the way to confirm your belief is to go from the world (which you see) to the Absolute being and not to take a concept (God) and see things from His perspective.

* We should never take our belief for granted
* Belief requires certainty and this requires assurance

The Prophet (SAW), as we are told, used to be *amin* before he was a *muqmin*

*Amin:* A trustworthy man

* He was an *amin* tohimself which is why he was externally trustworthy
* He never contradicted himself and hence was in peace within himself
* Only after being *amin* in one’s own existence can that person be a believer
* If you are not *amin* you cannot be *mumin*

Our own physical being supported by our consciousness forces me to ask what my purpose is on this world BECAUSE

* I need to be sure of my existence
* If there was no meaning in our questioning, we would all commit suicide.
* Everybody knows that you are going to die one day, and if there was no purpose, how would it matter if you killed yourself today instead of waiting till your life gets taken away?

We live our lives without really being *amin* by ignoring our reason for existence

* If we can be confident and sure of our lives, we can live in peace

How to have this security?

When we communicate with the rest of this world, we are actually making use of our consciousness to constantly ask questions; what is this, what does all this mean, etc) we cannot really turn blind to the reality (we might ignore it but at the cost of leaving our humanity behind)

* If I don’t question, I am no longer a human being
* I am simply a living being
* What makes a living being a human being is the quality of consciousness (Reasoning, feeling, ability to question)

If somebody does not question, he is not a human being. He is just simply a living being

When we question the existence of this world, one of the main aspects that we seek to understand is the constantly changing nature of this world

* This aspect of constant change is also the most ‘problematic’ aspect of this world
* This world is not fixed, not static
* We are used to cheating ourselves by saying: Everything that exists now, is changing ITSELF to form its new self
  + Nothing repeats itself
  + I am not the same person now, as I was yesterday
  + Everything (endless levels) at every moment is a new creation
    - My biological body is changing
    - My physical self
    - My thoughts
    - As Ghazali says: There are 70,000 veils between me and the Absolute Source

The galaxy, the solar system , earth, position of light, seasons, my own cells, the atoms, electrons, neutrons….

* Nothing is stable
* I am not taking myself as I am from today to tomorrow
  + I am constantly changing
  + So the ‘me’ tomorrow is different from the ‘me’ today
  + Who is realizing this change?
* We are not used to explaining beings in this way
  + We tend to refer to the changes within us as being static and simply transported across time
  + But that is not true

A lot of philosophers ignore this reality: Change is taking place at a radical level

* A moment ago a particle exists
* At the very next moment, a very different particle exists, though they might be similar
* Just by being similar does not mean that the particle can recreate itself

To a certain extent, we need to delve into this matter

* Ask yourself: How can you explain the change from one moment to the next?
* The material world is coming into existence continuously
* The material never gives a break to its being
* It continues to exist but it continues to change, too

The Quran suggests that this continuously changing universe is the result of Divine evolution, i.e. God’s will

* Whatever He wills, it is there

Analogy: A person is thinking of his wife

* He is imagining that he is with his wife
* He obviously cannot give existence to what he imagines
* Bu if he had the power and quality to create what he imagined, his imagination would be sufficient as a ‘will’ to see something happen
* God is saying that when He wills something, it happens (Be and it is)
  + The universe shows that whoever willed this universe has created it
  + My power of imagination is my source of understanding about the nature of will (that whatever the Absolute Source wills, He can create)
    - Human: As I will it, I can imagine it
    - God: Similarly, when He wills it, He can make it physically happen.

Time= continuation of change

* It is not an external existence
* Because as humans we have been given the ability to record previous happenings, we give it a separate dimension of existence
* There is reality in the concept of time (it exists)
  + But it is given existence

We have the ability to remember what happened yesterday (it is real, not imagination)

How do we understand this change in the world as willed by the creator?

* I cannot go out of this universe and observe what God is doing
* But when I look at this world and see how it is coming into existence I conclude:
  + It must be that God’s will is represented by a kind of creature that executes His will in the form of created beings (Angels)

What I see in this world is just the execution of the transformers of absolute will into this temporary world.

* According to the Quran, these transformers are called angels

The creator’s will is performed (executed) by some sort of creature that I am experiencing (I feel, interact, touch, think, etc)

* God sends His message through angels
* God sends the act of creation through angels
* I can explain this world only through angels executing God’s will
  + This is how the Quran presents this universe and angels with us

We see no disobedience to the Lord of the universe

* Everything happens perfectly within a perfect order and balance
* Every action manifests the qualities of the Absolute being
  + Other than the Absolute quality, nothing can be the source of existence of anything in this universe.
  + Everything in this world, is itself subject to continuous change
  + Its existence is sustained by the One who Himself sustains this change

We understand that angels must receive the will and transform it into this limited, temporary, create realm of existence

* We cannot directly relate this continuously changing world into an Absolute Source
* God’s commands have been willed an enacted by something that transforms it

Example: Let’s assume that we do not see the sun but we see the qualities reflected by the sun

* I see something constantly flickering
* I ask: Is it directly from the mirror?
  + As I dig into the glass, I realize that it is not the source of light
  + The particles are neither the source of its own existence
  + The particles cannot even give existence to its second form (we tend to tie existences up but in reality each moment is a new creation)
    - When we look at the whole creation, we see nothing but change
    - At the micro level, there has to be change taking place, that leads to the obvious changes on the macro level

‘Your cells are continuously changing and are undergoing a chemical reaction’

* When you observe the cells under a microscope you see the various reactions and processes going on
* Every second more than 5,000 chemical reactions take place in each cell
* We think we are simple beings but we are extremely sophisticated and complicated creatures
* Nothing is fixed but is constantly changing

Objects that are produced in a factory are constantly undergoing a process that results in the final product

* At each stage it was subject to change

What I see is the result of creation – I can only explain this result by saying that what I see is the reflection of the source. The created object has no ability to create itself and there has to be a separate Absolute source

* The mirror (angel), the source (God),
  + The reflections that I see (creation) is nothing but angels
  + All that I see in this world are angels
  + We are within an ocean of angels
  + Angels occupy every space; how sacred!
  + Every single being is sacred

Everything is sacred because everything is a reflection of its source and points to the creator through the speech of the mirror (angel)

* The angels proclaim the qualities of the creator to the observer

This is the foundation of Quranic cosmology.

Things cannot ‘develop’ by themselves

* Look at yourself; you cannot change a single moment of yourself
* Never take change for granted
* Change = a new form of creation

Some people often say: There are endless universes

* They understand that at every moment a new universe is being created
* There are endless acts of manifestation of the qualities of the creator

When the angel of death comes to you, welcome the angel

* We love our existence, so why not let it continue in a different form
* Why do you bother about death?
* It is just another form of existence

It does not mean that we are going to kill ourselves BUT if the act is executed by the will of God by an angel, I welcome it.

What is the meaning of this creation?

* It is awesome
* Everything is created by an Absolute source
* Things are coming into existence and are reflected to me by angels
* But what is the meaning of all of this?

This is when the creator sends His message: Two ways-

1. The message reflected in the mirror and as proclaimed by the angels

* If you are conscious of your existence, when you see a bird you don’t just say you see a bird
* Rather, you see angels manifesting the qualities of the Creator
* The creator must speak to me

Analogy: I don’t know how a computer works

* If the maker of the computer is wise, he should teach me how to use the machine
  + The maker must be wise because look at the computer, it is a testimony of the maker’s qualities
* The user must be supplied with a handbook
* The manufacturer’s handbook must teach me how to use the computer
* Otherwise I will destroy the computer

What is expected from the wise engineer?

* To tell me what to do with this universe

He must speak to me in a way that I understand (*tanazul*; coming down and speaking at my level)

* The Quran, Torah, Bible are messages that speak to us to tell us what our purpose in this universe is
* All the questions that rise in our consciousness must be answered in the book
* I have to read the book as an answer to my questioning.

If I don’t question, the revelation does not speak to me.

There is an iphone.

* I don’t want to use it
* I don’t want to understand how to use it
* There is a handbook next to it BUT if I am not going to use the iphone, I won’t even bother to read the manual
* People who purposefully neglect reading the manual, have made a choice that they are not going to use the phone.

Some people don’t look for the manual book, they don’t read it and end up destroying the machine

* We don’t bother to read it because we are not asking questions about the ‘phone’ itself
* The handbook will only speak to you as much as you question the ‘product’
* The questioning power has been placed within you. If you don’t use it, you will never get any answer from the speech of the creator
* The manual book will only speak IF you ask questions.

Who made us, why did He make it, what is expected from us from the maker….

* If I don’t question, there is no answer from the Quran

Even if you have memorized the Quran, there is no benefit.

* You can only benefit if you ask questions because only then will you get answers.

1. There is an instructor employed by the creator who gives me the message and teaches me how I should utilize the handbook and how I should practice it

* When you go to school, you get a textbook BUT you also get a professor
* You work through the textbook through the instructorship of the professor
* Otherwise, you will be left alone to understand the teachings of the text

How do you know who is your instructor and how to be with this instructor?

Verse in discussion (sorry, I could not catch which verse it was exactly but it was in reference to a verse in which Allah SWT says that if you don’t have the Prophet with you, you will be punished)

Is the Prophet with us?

* If he is not with us, we are going to be punished
* Punishment means: Here is the universe, I want to learn it BUT I go crazy because I do not have the tools and means to do so

People who are immersed with historical information might say (in relevance to this verse) :

* In the past, when the Prophet was sent, they rebelled against the Prophet and in doing so, they deserved God’s wrath
* In taking away the Prophet, God punished them

The methodology is ridiculous

* If this is true, why is God telling me about a historical event that seems to have no direct connection to me?

If the Prophet is not with us, then the punishment will be with me.

How can the Prophet be with you?

* The Prophet is not with me BUT his sayings are with me
* Put the Prophet’s sayings into practice in your life
* BUT what is essential for you is to be conscious of the existence of the Prophet
  + As the sun, clouds, people, my body, etc exists, I must be as sure about the existence of the Prophet and the Message.
  + The concept of messengership must exist

This world has an owner

* It has been transformed from an absolute world to a temporary transient world by angels
* This world is accompanied by the action of the creator and the speech of the creator
* The One who represents this message/speech is the messenger

If you lose this consciousness, the messenger is away and we are punished.

* If you don’t have your instructor with you, you are trying to make sense of this universe by yourself and you will mess up
* The awareness that there must be a messenger is what will save you from being punished
  + How did the Prophet believe in God?
  + How did the Prophet believe in angels, eternal life, message of God, etc?
  + I should get instruction from him
* Never reduce messengership to superficial actions (length of beard, how you walk, etc)
* The awareness and consciousness of the messenger must take priority

If someone asks: How do I understand this world?

You say: Let’s ask the Professor

* This awareness is a must
* Accordingly you will understand the messenger

If you miss this important part, you will reduce the sayings of the Prophet to the level of material actions and not to theoretical matters.

* In which conditions did he perform actions?
* What was the purpose of his actions?
* The Professor is teaching me how to do a certain experiment in the lab (he is only preparing the ground so that I will not make accidents in the lab)
* This awareness is a pre requisite to understanding hadiths
* Otherwise, you cannot get the sunnah of the Prophet

The most important Sunnah of the Prophet is to become an *amin* man

* A man in peace with his own being
* Not contradicting himself

Strive not to contradict your human reality

* Your understanding of the world should be in line with your reality
* Do not just imitate others, because then you are not using your human faculties and are contradicting yourself

The notion of Prophet is to ask:

* Who are you?
* Did you contemplate on your existence?
* Were you bewildered at your existence?
* What is my reality?

We should not turn people into apes.

* Give them real reason that the message presented by the Quran
* *La ilaha illAllah*
* The messenger is in this world to make me change my world view

We are in this world facing all sorts of challenges…

* But have you ever thought that the Prophet was always with angels and he never worried about anything
* Not that he never did anything
* He never WORRIED
* Whatever he felt that he need he asked the creator of everything
* There was no room for worry , anxiety or despair
* Because then you are not concentrating on the message received that everything is in His hands
* If the message bearer is disappointed (the professor does not know how to behave or how to do a certain question) you will quit school

We need to develop a concept of messengership that really convinces you

* I will always try and hear the voice of the creator speaking to me
* Everything around you glorifies Allah so listen out to them and join their glorification
  + This is what saying Alhamdolilah, SubhanAllah and MashAllah really ought to be based on
  + You will always be full of joy
  + The universe is the melody
  + Your joyful experience is not reduced to the time when you are praying or reciting the Quran

The message if all around you, so join the orchestra.

* The Messenger is the conductor of the orchestra
* He invites us all to say *Allahu Akbar*
* If you don’t see this aspect of the messengership and keep it alive you will be punished
  + And this ends up as we see today with rising cases of depression
  + Mass murderers; Because they find life utterly meaningless
  + The punishment is with them

The case that has been presented is all in black and white but in reality nothing is always black or white.

* There are moments of gray, sometimes darker and at other instances lighter
* We always have degrees of awareness

How aware are you of the voice of God echoing in the universe?

* The degree of awareness is another issue
* But first establish whether you hear this voice or you don’t

You are either aware of the existence of the Messenger in this universe or you can choose to be completely blind about his awareness

When you get in the car and you do not have GPS (the Prophet), will you know where you are going?

* You will get lost
* But if you know that there is GPS that will guide you, you should not forget to take it with you
* This is akin to having the awareness of the messenger AND awareness that he will guide you

God will never punish me while the Prophet is with me

* It means that I will never get lost while the GPS is with me

First step is to have the awareness of the Propeht

* The details will follow

When you go to the mosque and look to the Prophet to find out how to pray, you are with the Prophet but when you are out and about in the world, you will feel flustered (punishment) because you are not with the Prophet

If something happens that you do not like, you will go crazy

* But if you are always with the Prophet, then you will always be *amin*

You might know all the sunnahs for prayer, fasting, wudu, etc BUT you have limited the Prophet’s speech to your rituals

* It is not completely wrong
* But rather, you have to base your whole life with the Prophet

What is sunnah in looking up at the sky? With the ants around you?

* Are you aware of how you should establish your relationship with the ant of the floor?
* If you don’t, you ask the Professor
* You always ask the Prophet so you will never fail

Let’s say that you don’t know something

* It does not matter as long as you are aware that you have the Prophet/instructor with you all the time
* Because you can ask him
* This consciousness saves you
* Acknowledge that the Prophet is with you and that messengership exists
* You won’t mess up because you don’t do as you wish
  + You choose the instructions of the Prophet
  + Otherwise, my creator is crazy
  + He creates everything, gives me the impulse to use it but does not give me guidance on how to use it

This consciousness completes your cosmology.

Who are you?:

You are a student of the Quran

* The Quran never says you are from Turkey or Pakistan
* Quran says that you are from the world of the spirit
* The Quran never lets me define myself by my nationality
* The Prophet, too, never introduced himself as such

Never reduce religion to a fraction of your life

* Otherwise it merely becomes an act of imitation

Enlarge the view of the existence and of the creator to make it real for yourself

* The existence of everything will then become meaningful
* Otherwise, we live in a meaningless world and imitate our identities based on superficial boundaries

Are we created with our human potential to compete with other religions and races?

* We are created to know our creator
* We are equipped with the best qualities to communicate with the creator
* Thi si our purpose of existence

As long as the Prophet is with me, there is no punishment.

Don’t think of the Prophet as merely flesh and bones

* The Prophet as *rasul* is eternal
* Get this eternal dimension of the messenger and join eternity with him
* As long as you exist, the prophet should be with you
* And with that, there will be no stress, anger, temper etc.

When someone is insulting you, you ask yourself what is the wisdom in his insulting you

* The concept of the messenger within you saves you from punishment

The Quran is the speech of God in order to tell me stories?

* Obviously not. God is not a storyteller
* The Quran is teaching you something right now
* His is the eternal speech
* You need to have the Prophet with you all the time otherwise you will mess up