Halaqa: Saturday, October 5, 2013

Topic: The Fourth Ray

Last week re-cap: Through Islam we learn verified belief

* The ability to verify belief is also given to us

**He had also given me the knowledge and love of God within belief**.

* If the knowledge and love of God is not based on belief, this love is not really a type of love that ought to be cherished
* A love that is fitting to humanity, is when it is based on belief
* We have to acknowledge the source of our qualities (belief) and change this human sense (love) according to the source
  + If we realize that the source is Absolute, we will use the sense of love in infinite terms
  + Otherwise, we will limit our love to ‘material’ concerns and not for our unlimited human capacity
    - We will busy ourselves with feeding the needy and providing them with a shelter
    - When we see that someone is clothed and well-fed, we think that they are fine
      * But our human qualities require more than just material objects
      * We are much more complex and have qualities beyond material things that we have to fulfill
    - Human needs have been reduced to material needs and hence removing any belief aspect from it
      * Belief: satisfying our human needs by connecting it to our source

**Through this He bestowed a rank through the bounty of existence at which one may stretch out the hands to reap benefits, through praise and laudation, at all the levels from the sphere of contingency to the necessary world and realm of the Divine Names.**

Example: I an interested in possessing a certain object but I don’t want to just satisfy my material needs. I also want to satisfy my feelings, which expand to eternity.

Although my stomach is filled with food at this moment, I still desire to satisfy my emotions of eternal satisfaction

- If I recognize that the bounties I fill my stomach with are coming from an eternal source, I will love the eternal source instead of loving the temporal, material food

I want to make sure that my life is eternally secure but to do that, I will not be satisfied with temporary gratifications.

* Our human qualities look for an eternal source of security
* This eternal source represents Himself in the transient objects that we interact with
* Whatever He presents to me, demonstrates to me that the Source must be necessarily Eternal

When you eat a fruit, after 2-3 helpings you are satisfied

But, your need for happiness is eternal

* You want a source that will satisfy your happiness forever
* The One who provides the fruit reveals to me that He is Eternal
  + In order to make the fruit, an Eternal Source is needed
  + If the Source is not eternal and Absolute, He would not be able to make a single fruit
* Human beings perceive the manifestation of eternal compassion and love in one transient fruit
* We then should connect ourselves to the source of the qualities manifested in the fruit
  + I don’t love the fruit
  + Rather I love the qualities (Divine Names) that the fruit brings to me

If you don’t see the infinity of the source through the world, you cannot love the God.

* I love God because through this world He reveals His Eternal self to me
* That is what it means to love within belief

The Quran presents a model of thinking that ought to start with all our actions as we do it

* The Quran is not about something that is set to happen later

If someone thinks that he will be miserable in the world but will happy in the afterlife, it is a baseless idea

* We have to experience the satisfaction and happiness of God’s guidance NOW
* Death or the lack of material possessions should mean nothing (and not cause you happiness)
* You live in a position of self-contentment because you are living in the presence of the One who is Absolutely merciful
  + The one who deprives himself of this understanding, punishes himself
  + He chooses to be punishes and God creates the result
  + God says: If you ask me for Eternal happiness, you will get it but if you don’t get it, you will not get it
    - God does not put you in darkness
    - Similar to how I put myself into darkness by purposely choosing to close my eyes

Without reaching out into the manifestations of God’s absolute qualities, we cannot love anything.

**He had also given me in particular knowledge of the Quran and wisdom of belief.**

Knowledge of Quran = wisdom of belief

If the Quran is not taken as a source of wisdom of belief, then we are not benefitting from the Quran

* Quran teaches us the wisdom of belief
  + Why should we believe
  + How should we believe
  + What is the benefit of believing?
  + How true is belief?
* Even when the Quran seems to talking about rules, we have to see the wisdom in belief first
  + Only then will the rituals offered to us (in a general sense) exist as part of the Quran’s entire belief system
  + Otherwise the Quran will be nothing but a book of law if you take the rules of the belief context
    - Although the verses that mention about rules are few in number, we still have to look at those verses in the belief context
    - In order to give zakah within belief context, you are not just giving money away. *Rather, you are declaring your world view and sense of worship to your Lord*

Your actions have to be a declaration of your world view!

You can’t compare *sharia* laws to common law because *sharia* law exists within a separate belief system.

We have unfortunately become obsessed with laws because we are products of this material world

* We have to be very careful of this and be aware of the actions we perform and how they are placed within our belief system

**He had also given me in particular knowledge of the Quran and wisdom of belief through which bounty he has bestowed on me superiority over many creatures.**

* The Quran must be read for this purpose
* If you cannot confirm what the Quran says (that is is the speech and guidance of my creator) then reject it
* Only by reading the guidance offered in the Quran will you feel that you are superior over all other creature
  + Until you reach this understanding, you are not reading the Quran correctly

Why don’t we experience this superiority?

* Because we don’t see the Quran as having his purpose and so we do not see it.

If we read the Quran and try and compare the ‘rules’ it presents to other systems we will be missing the biggest point of the Quran which is to present a belief aspect. Don’t get caught up in such debates:

* Quran collects x amount of tax whereas other societies collects y amount of tax
* Some societies encourage going to pubs whereas the Quran encourages going to the mosques
* You are not looking at things in with a belief perspective

The Quran teaches us matters of belief in all our human qualities (both physical material and eternal qualities)

* Think of yourself as a human being
* Not as an animal
* If you don’t want to use your human qualities, then so be it
* But be aware that you have both human and animal qualities

We have to be aware of the system that we inherited from the Prophet (SAW) but don’t reduce it simply to a social or political. Rather, see everything with a belief dimension

Acknowledging your superiority is not about being arrogant, rather it is about being aware that only human beings have inherited the spirit of God

* We have a connection with my Lord
* Although I am a created being, I can know the Absolute One
  + That is what the Quran offers us
* I don’t have to remain in this world as an insignificant creature living between life and death
  + My spirit cannot accept that my life will eventually in death

I belong to Him NOT to nature, to a social institution, to a country or to my family

* Trust yourself to the Absolute One
* It is not a feeling of pride BUT a feeling of recognition of the creator

Don’t see yourself as a microcosm. You are equal to all the qualities that the Absolute creator manifests in the universe from the beginning of time

* Your existence, in every moment, is equal to the whole universe
* Don’t waste it
* Nor should you be proud and arrogant
* But don’t waste all your precious qualities

**He has also given me comprehensive abilities like the above-mentioned whereby I might be a complete mirror to His oneness and Eternal Besoughtedness, and respond with universal worship to His universal, sacred domincality.**

As far as our human consciousness is concerned, we can perceive that everything that is happening in this world is a result of the creator’s eternal qualities

* We are a mirror to this Being
* You are at the centre of the whole universe
  + Only through you does everything get observed and use
  + Only when we use something, do we see that its existence is worthy
  + That is what we humans are endowed with
    - The ability to reflect His qualities in everything around us
    - SubhanAllah!

He is everywhere. Everything is His dominion and His qualities are manifest every where

* I respond to all these qualities and say that the quality I interact with is from Him
* We don’t just say that a fruit is sweet. We respond by saying, it is created by the One who is entertaining me and everyone around me
  + Worship in a universal way
  + Universal manifestation of worship

By receiving 1 fruit, I understand that You create all fruits in the universe

* Everybody who is fed today, is being fed by you
* You are the nourisher of the universe
* All by getting in contact with 1 fruit
* Through the abilities He has given me, I am able to conclude that He is the creator of everything and responding universally

Not just *alhamdolilah* BUT *alhamdolilahi rabbil-alameen*

*-*I’m not just thankful of being fed myself but I praise the One who is merciful provider of EVERYTHING!

**And as unanimously confirmed by all the holy scriptures and books He had revealed to men by means of the prophets, and attested by all the prophets, saints, and purified one, He buys from my existence life and self – as stated by verses of the Quran – which are gifts and in trust to me, so that they will not be lost and go for nothing.**

My creator wants to buy back me and my human qualities (vision, emotions, concerns) that He has endowed me with

* In return, He is going to give you paradise

Being aware that everything we have is His and I am using everything in His name

* To acknowledge His presence in this world
* Not just for my own limited worldly benefit BUT to know who my Lord is
* I have to use my eyes not just for these worldly pursuits for otherwise they will only lead me to my grave
* Rather, use your eyes to see the bounties manifested in front of you to see the qualities that they have
  + All our senses are the windows to our spirit
    - We taste, see, smell, hear to detect the qualities of the Absolute Being
    - If we use our properties to see the source, we are returning our qualities to the rightful Owner and in doing so we get an instant reward - being in the hands of an eternal being
      * This recognition relieves me from all of my existential anxieties
      * Paradise is guaranteed
      * If I ‘sell’ all of God’s properties back to Him
        + This news comes to me from the Prophets
        + That is why we have to be thankful to the Prophets

Anytime that you acknowledge this reality (everything , be thankful to God and thank Him for sending the prophets to you because they taught you this.

We are here to train ourselves in ‘selling’ our qualities back to Him

* If we strike a deal once and for else, there is no point in life

We are like tides that ebbs and flows.

* We will fail, but it doesn’t matter
* As long as we are aware and repent for our mistakes
* The class of the universe, is always open UNLESS we strip ourselves away from the class

The universe is open. You have been given an ID card (life). All you need to do is accept that you are student.

- We have to be careful that we don’t end up rejecting our purpose here in life is to learn

If we don’t sell the qualities back to the creator, no one else can ensure its perseverance.

**He has repeatedly and categorically promised that He will preserve them in order to return them, and that as the price He will give eternal happiness and Paradise. This I understood with ‘the knowledge of certainty’ and believed with utter conviction.**

We don’t see religion for ourselves, as humans

* We see it is a social institution
* Once you see it as a social institution, then you no longer need the belief aspect that accompanies all the rituals and laws
* The first crime that is practiced (unintentionally) is to reduce the rules of religion, merely to rules (without belief)
  + Studying of the rules became a science
* This neglection has cost the Islamic community a lot
* That is why we have to revive the Islam that was taught to us by the Prophets

Hadith: How ever you are, you will be ruled over.

* No one can stop you of contemplating about the creator when you are eating, regardless of the rule in your society
* But of, course, the society’s rule also has an impact but there is an effect from both a personal and societal level
* Just remember that we have to watch out for our ownselves.

Thus, I was taught by the verse For us God suffices, that my Sustained, the Glorious and Munificent One, ‘opens us’ (al-fattah) through His Name of Opener the forms of the hundred of thousands of varieties of animals and plants from limited, similar droplets and seeds, with the uttermost east, speed, and perfection, and as we mentioned before, gives man this astonishing importance, making him the chief pivot of the works of His dominicality; so too He will create the resurrection of the dead and Paradise and will bestow eternal happiness as easily and definitely as He will create next spring. Had it been possible, I would have declared through the tongues of all creature, but since it was not possible, I declared by intention and through and imagination. For us God suffices, and He is the Best Disposer of Affairs! And so I want to repeat it through all eternity.

* We are the centre of his rububiya (dominicatlity) and through it can we practice ubudiya
* We can understand that He is everywhere

He is demonstrating, in the universe, that the creator of the universe, can create billions of species of animals and plants at once, with no difficulty

* So don’t despair about your death
* You will be resurrected just as He does so every spring
* These are all promises of the creator

We have been given the ability to imagine that the whole universe is being provided for

* You don’t have to see it all

Without establishing *hasbunAllah* you cannot say *wa-ni’mal wakil*. After understanding that He provides for everyone, everything, only then can we comfortable say that He is Best Disposer of Affairs.

Glorification of everything in all the universe, on behalf of all the universe.