**Wednesday, September 11 2013**

**When affliction befalls man, he cries out unto Us, whether he be lying on his side or sitting or standing; but as soon as We have freed him of his affliction, he goes on as though he has never invoked Us to save him from the affliction that befell him! Thus do their own doings seem goodly unto those who waste their own selves.”**



**Yunus (10):12**

How does this verse apply directly to you? Does it?

How should I treat this verse, and subsequently the Quran?

How does this verse connect me to my Lord?

Breaking the verse down: When I am in a bad situation, there is a degree of desperation to seek a way out. But once the problem is alleviated, I forget that I ever received help.

When we are enjoying life without any affliction, we tend to separate ourselves from Allah BUT when we are in trouble and in a difficult situation, we call on Allah.

How do we know that Allah is the provider of all our needs (during our good times)?

* What is the evidence that leads us to the conclusion that Allah is our provider and creator?

I need to reach this point of conclusion through my experience and confirmations: There is no way for me to understand the blessings I have unless I attribute them to God.

Our claims need to be grounded in experience and conviction.

Through my interactions I should be led to the conclusion: I cannot explain the events happening in this world, in any other way, other than to God and hence conclude that He is the creator of everything.

Belief needs to be a PERSONAL confirmation and not something sloganic or based off pre-conceived judgments.

Most of the Muslims take things for granted and don’t think about the things we do or say.

As believers, we need to learn the language of conviction, NOT the language of borrowed traditions or imitation.

God speaks in order to guide us towards understanding that which we do not know

* But we have to take that which He says and confirm it based on our own personal experiences
* Don’t ever say: God says this, and hence it must be so
* Rather: I read this from the book of guidance, investigated it AND I confirmed it
	+ This confirmation is what must be reflected in your language
	+ Only then will your words be filled with wisdom AND not pre-established traditions

We need to learn how to speak to non-believers

* Don’t just say: I am a Muslim, so I pray because it says so in the Quran
* Make a stand that convinces you AND the non-believer
* Many people will not listen to us if we speak in ‘islamic’ terms

The reason we speak in ‘islamic’ terms usually stems from a position of inferiority.

* As a way to cement our identity and make ourselves feel good about ourselves, we end up using pre-judged terms
* We ought to be careful and aware of our shortcomings in this regard

Methodology that we should adopt when reading the quran:

1. Argue with the verse so that it will be a guide
2. Don’t alienate the verse by reading it for ‘others’
3. Read it as an intimate speech from your creator to you (like how a mother engages a child)
4. We need to step away from limiting the Quran as a source of knowledge instead of seeing the book as a source of guidance

Experience: When you are really ill, and you feel helpless, you run back to Him. But when you get well, you attribute your wellbeing to your lifestyle BUT by doing that you are wasting who you truly are.

The problem has to do with our definitions of ‘normal’ and ‘abnormal’

* When something becomes ‘abnormal’ we try and investigate the source of this abnormality
* But when things are normal, we don’t question or try to find out about the source of all that is normal

Ina lilahi wa ina ilayhi rajeoon: The solution lies in the statement

Why do we waste our ownselves when we say my health is NORMAL and only seek refuge when things seem ABNORMAL?

* When things are ‘abnormal’ it is then that I acknowledge my neediness and my reality
* Which is better? To acknowledge or be ignorant of your reality?

When we say that the revolving of the earth is normal, we are actually setting ourselves up for trouble BECAUSE we don’t question the source of the Earth.

What are we wasting, in the context of this verse?

* Time: Anything that is not getting me close to God, is a waste of my time
	+ How are you expected to get closer to God and to not waste time?
		- By remembering God THROUGH the blessings I have.
		- Everything that I have, has been given to me. There is no way I can create anything.
		- But **because I take for granted all that is given to me (and not take any lesson from them), I am wasting all the opportunities presented to me to fulfill my purpose of existence in this world.**

Always keep in mind the purpose of your existence!

* You are not here to become rich
* Neither are you here to become knowledgeable on specific topics
* We are here to know who we are, what I am
	+ To do that, I have to think about everything that I interact with and to see my creator in that
	+ We lead healthy lives most of the time
		- Only when we are ill, we remember that I am needy and weak and that no one can help me except Him
		- At that point you come to realize your reality
		- It is good that you realize your identity BUT what happens when you are not ill?
			* Who gives you your health?

We are wasting our lives, because we are not remembering God (our purpose in this life) during all those times that we are ‘normal’

* The Quran is a reminder for us to help me realize my reality
* It is a wake up call but we have to be comfortable with it and realize that my creator is trying to guide me towards the right way of living
* Right way: Making your life a legitimate way to live NOT just about eating halal

We need to change our perception of the Quran

* It is a book that should guide us to appreciate our lives
* It is NOT a book of codification
* The rules that we have to follow, are founded in the belief teachings

When you are ill/hungry/sad, you will inadvertently turn to God. But the Quran is reminding us, about turning to God, even when we are not ill/sad/satiated(which is our situation most of the time) BECAUSE otherwise we will be wasting all those times of our life.

* The reason for that is because we take for granted our health and the food we eat

We need to remember God when we have a home NOT only when we are homeless.

In a fight or flight instance, my instincts kick in automatically.

* In dire need, we automatically rely on God
* That is how we have been created

How do I truly be grateful of all that I have WITHOUT having to lose what I have first?

* Apart from the rituals we so religiously perform, we are most of the time not present with God
* We need to train ourselves to speak and think about religion in a way that is not restricted to rituals
* Focus on matters of belief
* Start seeing God in everything we do and interact with NOT only when we stand for prayer, or when we fast.

The point is not about living in fear of ‘losing’ that which you have and hence loving it. Rather, you ought to be grateful and love that which you have out of your awareness of the One who created the situation for you.

In order to wake up for tahujjud, I have to have a very strong tie with my creator

* To get that, we have to first emphasise on the belief teachings in the Quran
* We have to study from the belief perspective, for which we can find example everywhere around us

We usually associate the term wastage to food or to materialistic possessions

* We don’t think about the changing seasons, the setting sun, etc
	+ Aren’t we wasting the demonstration by the creator who is calling us to closer to Him because by observing these demonstrations we will have no choice BUT to conclude that He is the creator of the universe
	+ Observance of God is only possible by interacting with all that He displays for you
		- He is karim, mu’nim, muhaymmin
		- He is the One who gives us everything freely
		- Remembrance of God needs to be by experience NOT by imitation

Question: Did God deliberately create us to forget?

* We should stop speaking from God’s perspective
* Why do you forget? That is how you are created
* The ability to forget has been given to me, as has the ability to remember
* It is up to me to educate myself to remember my source of existence OR to forget it
* We ought to remember by questioning that actions we partake it
	+ When we breathe in, billions of chemical reactions follow
	+ Who is making that happen?
	+ Think about it AND you will automatically prostrate in admiration of the creator
	+ The demonstration is so amazing, subhanAllah
	+ God is making it obvious to us who we are BUT we choose to be heedless by simply attributing it to a ‘normal’ event

Why don’t we get excited when we witness the trees growing, the abundance of fresh air, etc?

* There are zillion of things for us to contemplate on the existence of God
	+ What does sleep mean?
	+ How does your body get rest from sleep?
	+ How are you awakened every morning?
* The whole universe is an exhibition of miracles
* The artist of the universe is displaying His art here
	+ Even the most simplest of matters, requires the artist to execute them

These are matters that we need to think and contemplate on INSTEAD of becoming involved with issues affecting the world

* If we don’t take care of ourselves, we are wasting our own lives
* Prevent yourself from falling into the trap of ‘fake’ importance
* We need to train ourselves to live in this world to observe the miracles displayed by the creator in this world
* That is belief
* Everything else is mere imitation

We have to remember that we have been given free will

* We are free to chose remembrance OR to be negligent

Always seek to question the belief perspective in matters that we are confronted with and remind ourselves that everything is from Him.

Deliberately ponder on the verses and reflect on them. The verses of the Quran are meant to guide you, so read the Quran from that perspective.

Ironically, when we are in troubling situations, we remember God. When we are unwell, we remember Him.

* God does not want us to be unwell YET most of the time we are inclined to be neglectful
* Calamities are created for our benefit so that we may draw nearer to God
	+ We should not ask for calamities BUT when we are presented with calamities, we should see the wisdom in it and NOT rebel against it
	+ From our own experience, we realize that we get closer to God in times of hardship
	+ That means we should not label hard events as ‘bad’
	+ If I don’t take lesson from the hard event, it is ‘bad’ for me
	+ The event in and of itself is NOT bad

**“And thus it us: if We let man taste some of Our grace, and then take it away from him – behold, he abandons all hope, forgetting all gratitude [for Our past favors].**

**“And thus it is: if We let him taste ease and plenty after hardship has visited him, he is sure to say, “Gone is all affliction from me!” – for, behold, he is given to vain exultation, and glories only in himself.”**

**Hud (11): 9-10**





When the affliction is removed from us, We say: hardship has left me alone (by itself) NOT by the creator.

Then the sun rises and the weather is beautiful, we tend to say: It is all happening by itself.

The Quran is reminding me to change my way of thinking!

Hardship has left me is a result of our lack of understanding that there is a deliberate will behind ALL events

* When we say things are normal, we will be inclined to say that hardships have left us out of their own accord
* It is because we fail to see that everything that is normal has been given by the creator AND hence only then can we say things that are ‘abnormal’ are being relieved from Him.

Haiyya: To become exuberantly joyful and excited

* Dua: O’ Allah, increase my *haiyya* at that which you have created
* Ponder and reflect with deep contemplation on everything that we interact with
	+ How does a rabbit, that breathes air and eats grass, have such a complex set of senses?
		- We have to think about creation deeply
		- Don’t just say that the rabbit and all is complexities are ‘normal’

Don’t just say things are ‘normal’ and ignore them

* See everything as a miracle, because it is
* That way, when afflictions are removed from our life, we will consciously and with conviction be able to say that the affliction has been ‘removed’ from us by the One who is managing order and balance in this world because there is an All-Powerful will behind everything we see.

What is religion?

* We tend to usually give a set of common answers such as ‘religion is a way of life’
* Religion is the very practical aspect of our lives such as the excitement we experience when we see a single leaf sway in the wind
* We have to change our world view and how we explain our existence and everything around us
* Thinking about everything that we take for granted is the crux of religion
	+ Don’t reduce religion into a habit
	+ Consciousness and awareness is a MUST
		- Always ask: What is the purpose of my life and the meaning of my existence
		- That is the core of your religion, which unfortunately has been neglected.

The verses we studied thus far, highlight to us, how shaky our worldview is BECAUSE we do not have a strong foundation about our creator.

**“And as for man, when his Lord tries him and [thus] is generous to him and favors him, he says, ‘ My Lord has honored me.’**

**Whereas, whenever he tries him by straitening his means of livelihood, he says, ‘My Lord has humiliated me.’”**

**Fajr (89): 15-16**







Through these verses, God is highlighting to us our actions and how we tend to respond to situations BUT reminding us on how we should respond and live our lives.

**“Yet as soon as He has removed the harm from you, lo! Some of you [ begin to] ascribe to others a share in their Lord’s divinity.”**

**Nahl (16):54**



* We are inclined to commit *shirk*
* Why? We often associate the term with worshipping idols BUT this verse is reminding us that *shirk* is part of human condition
* The Quran is really dealing with all of us, as humans

When we read the Quran with contemplation, we will realize that God is teaching us and telling us about our weak points, just as our parents would to keep us on the straight path.

A typical example: The medicine cured me.

* Attaching power to the immediate cause is what *shirk* is
	+ The food is operating in me
	+ The air is affecting me
	+ The sun is the source of life

Through these verses, the creator is teaching me that as soon as a hardship is removed from us, we tend to commit *shirk* because we attribute power in the alleviation of the hardship to causes BESIDES God!

* Never attribute situations to causes
	+ It is cold NOT because of winter
		- The weather is created AND your ability to feel cold is created
		- Don’t establish horizontal relationships because that is where we commit *shirk*

You are created. The sun is created. The sunlight is created. The speed of the beams is created.

* Everything is created
* The laws are created by God
* The order is under the control of the One who creates everything that comes under His will
* The laws, the sun, the sunlight, etc… NOTHING exists without the will of God

The Quran teaches us that whenever God wills, He creates it to order (Be, and it is!)

Is there anything in this world that can be attributed to something other than Allah?

* Investigate it and only by investigations will you be able to confirm the statement *la ilaha illAllah*

We have to renew our language and use it carefully

* Always question what you say

Don’t just say, Allah created it. Explain how you arrived at that conclusion.

Similarly, don’t just say: It is a scientific claim. Investigate what scientific means and you will realize that what man attributes to science has no base, unless connected back to Allah.