Halaqa: Wednesday, September 10, 2014

Topic: Divine Determining Part 8

What we observe in the world:

* **The particles, which are lifeless, deaf, blind, unconscious, and similar to one another, are in motion in their growth and development.**
  + We are used to thinking that living beings are developing from ‘live cells’
    - Cells, comprised of minute particles are GIVEN life
    - The particle itself has no life at this very moment, apart from that which it is GIVEN
    - And neither can it have life at any moment prior or in the future, because the particles characteristically are lifeless
  + But if we investigate these ‘live cells’, we observe that it has no conscious will
  + Knowledge, wisdom, consciousness (qualities we find in human beings) need a source
  + We have to investigate what/who this source is?
* **That means they are in motion in accordance with the immaterial measured proportions of the tree or animal, which come from Divine Determining [Knowledge], and are governed by those proportions.**
  + We cannot attribute movement and growth to the objects themselves because the particles within the objects are lifeless AND have no conscious will
  + The tree is growing with a certain form and manifests specific qualities as per WHOSE will? We have to investigate this observation!
    - Everything in creation has its own unique form and qualities
    - Nothing in this universe is a copy of another
  + Every object (trees, stars, animals, planets, fruits, etc) in creation has been uniquely decided upon to exist
  + At every moment, I find myself with a unique form and a unique personality
    - This requisites a conscious will that has chosen a specific quality to exist over another

When the name of God is mentioned, the believer stands in awe

* Not because it is a religious requirement
* Rather, it is because of the awareness of the Creator’s Absolute-ness
  + At every moment, each individual is given a unique personality
  + At every moment, cells are undergoing hundreds of thousands of reactions
  + The Creator has made this universe a witness for us so that we may know Him
    - If we are realistic with ourselves, it is inevitable that we will stand in awe because we realize that the Creator is Absolute

Example #1: When I am anxious about tomorrow, I can find solace in the knowledge that the One who created TODAY, knows what will be created TOMORROW because everything is prepared with such precision

* For example, in the existence of a seed, I can see that the One who created the seed has programmed it such that it contains qualities that will germinate at a future time
* With Him lies Absolute Knowledge

Example #2: When an incident happens, I remember it the next day.

* The way I am created, demonstrates that acts are remembered
* For me, because I exist within a time-bound universe, there is yesterday, today, tomorrow
* But for the Absolute Being who determines the existence of every single being at every moment, there is no yesterday, today or tomorrow.

We have to always base our claims on our own observations, otherwise we risk being irrelevant to the conscious, thinking human being who is looking to reach conclusions based on his/her experiences.

We are unable to perceive the Absolute, not because we are limited in our capacities as humans, but rather because we are CREATED.

* The very nature of our existence as created beings makes it impossible for us to perceive the Absolute

Whenever I refer a matter to the Creator, I have to remember that He knows and He creates ABSOLUTELY

* Absolute means beyond the dimensions of space and time
* When I want something to happen tomorrow, I turn to the One who creates without any limitations
* I do not know what will happen tomorrow but I am aware that the Creator knows with His Absolute Knowledge.
* In order to acknowledge my createdness and His being the Absolute Creator I have to turn to Him and present my need to Him. Acknowledgement is the most important function of prayer.

**2 kinds of Divine Determining:**

1. **“Evident Divine Determining”: It specifies the physical nature, states, and parts of the tree which the seed comprises.**

* All the qualities of the seed are decided by the Creator
* Within the seed, the qualities of the tree-to-be are recorded
  + We can conclude that the order of the Creator is exactly the same
  + There is no change in the way the Creator creates.
  + Observe how things are being brought into existence
    - By learning the way/order of existence, we are learning the way the Creator creates.
    - We are all bound by the way of the Creator (Divine laws, or more often referred to as natural laws)

**Natural**: Objects coming into existence by themselves

* But if we investigate the matter, we quickly observe that nothing in this universe has the ability to create or sustain itself.

**Divine:** Objects are subject to the will/choice of a Creator

* This Creator cannot be of the nature of this universe (i.e. Divine)

Example: Cloning might seem like a human creation

* But in reality, cloning itself is happening and is being done according to the laws of the Creator
* Scientists have to follow the laws of creation that is already evident in existence

**Evident**: Observable creation

* By observing the way objects are coming into existence, we are in essence observing Evident Divine Determining
* Everything in this universe is only observing and following the law of the Creator
* Through my observation and by obeying the Divine Law, I am in essence beseeching the Creator
* I am simply obeying the law and asking the Creator
  + He creates
  + I have no ability to create. I am only able to ask.
  + My every ‘ask’ is a prayer whether I am aware that I am praying or not.
    - All our actions and initiatives, that we choose based on our free will, is a prayer.
    - We cannot establish a law
    - **If we really think of it, whenever we use our free will, we are PRAYING to the Creator.**
      * **Being aware of this reality makes us worshippers (*ubudiya)***
      * We should not reduce worship to prescribed prayers only
        + Every action is a prayer

As humans, we are responsible for our conscious choices (our nervous systems, circulatory system, digestive systems, etc are all beyond our control)

* Our senses are being trained so that we may be in contact with the Creator and live in presence of His awareness at all times
  + However, we may often forget so we have to train ourselves to constantly remember the purpose of our existence; i.e. to acknowledge the Creator.
    - We are given the opportunity in this life on earth through exercising our free will, to develop our potentialities to get to know who our Lord, Owner is. We may be in paradise but we will be experiencing Paradise as much as we develop our given capacities.
    - Everything that is going on in this world is nothing but the manifestation of the Creator’s qualities
      * We have to pay attention to our interaction with existence

Example: Eating

* If we eat without the realization that we are being fed (the Creator is feeding us), we are not developing our abilities to get to know who the Sustainer is
  + The act of eating remains merely a monotonous repetitive action.

We are being given the opportunities to know our Creator.

* Our responsibility is to use these opportunities by acknowledging the Creator in every action we choose.
* It is up to us how we would like to use the freedom of choice given to us.

As much as we are aware that whatever is created is the result of Divine determining, that much we will be performing our ultimate worship.

* Consciousness and awareness is the most essential quality in our action
  + We ought to be aware that we are constantly interacting with the Creator’s Will
    - The taste I experience is given by the Creator
    - The fear I experience is given by the Creator

The Creator is teaching who He is through the universe.

* We have to pay attention and live with consciousness so that we may be aware of the Creator’s lessons.

Anything that happens beyond the scope of my free will is not my responsibility

* However, I have to take a stand before it with my free will
  + Example #1 : I do not want to die. I obey all the laws of creation to avoid my death.
    - But when the time comes, I die. I cannot do anything about it
    - My responsibility is to not consent to an action and to act upon it within my free will as much as possible with the qualities I have been given.
  + Example #2: Fire in the building
    - I run from the fire because I find it within myself to dislike fire and death
    - If I die while running, it is not of my responsibility
* I am responsible to make the best choices in as much as my abilities and capacities are concerned.

1. **“Theoretical Divine Determining”: It specifies the stages, states, forms, motions, and glorifications which the tree will undergo and perform over the period of its life.**

* We will never be able to know which bird will come and eat the leaves of a tree
* We will never know that a storm will result in the uprooting of a tree in the days to come (NB: The butterfly effect)

Everything happens according to the law of the creator BUT it is us who do not know what will happen tomorrow.

* What we can be sure of: The Absolute Creator knows, even if I do not know.
* There are things in creation of which we are unsure but the Creator must know
* We have to always look for the laws in Creation but at the same time, we have to be aware that there are endless things that we will never know
  + This is not because we are limited in our capacity
  + Rather, it is because we are CREATED and are in complete submission to the Creator whether we choose to accept this reality or not.
  + The One who is creating this universe is Absolute and knows everything
    - From one end, I have to try and understand the Divine Laws, and comply with them to the best of my abilities
    - On the other end, I have to accept that there are some actions that I will never know because I have no absolute knowledge. E.g. I will never know what a cat will do tomorrow. Any animate being with a free will can exercise its free will in any way that I will never know for sure.
      * My relationship with the Source is one of complete submission and humility
      * I desire that only the best happens to me tomorrow YET I cannot control it
        + Since I cannot guarantee what will happen tomorrow, I have to submit myself to the owner of this universe
        + I have to subject my free will to Him; worship
        + The only One who can guarantee is the Creator, so we have to ask.
        + All we have to do is to acknowledge that we are created beings.

By constantly being in a state of worship (i.e. submission), I live in the presence of the Absolute Creator.

*Abd:* Being aware of my desires and at the same time being aware that I cannot by myself fulfil or control any aspect of it.

* I can only ask the Creator
  + I do so by either following His evident laws OR by being aware that I will never know His theoretical divine determining.

**2 types of Books:**

1. **The clear book (*kitab mubeen):* The notebook of Divine Will and creational commands (divine laws) 🡪 Evident Divine Determining**
2. **The clear record (*imam mubeen):* Non-observable order indicating the Preserved Tablet, which is Divine Knowledge 🡪 Theoretical Divine Determining.**

When the laws are not manifested to us, the laws are non-observable and are part of the *lawhu’l-mahfuz (*preserved tablet)= Absolute Knowledge of the Creator.

* It is just not known to me BUT it is known to the Creator
* Not everything is known to Us
  + However, we have to be aware that everything is known to Him
  + At every point, we ought to turn ourselves towards Him

You may take all the precautions necessary as per the laws manifested in the universe BUT there will always be an element of uncertainty

* Therefore, even while I am observing the laws, I ought to be aware that He knows everything and we don’t
* In every act, we are in a position of submission because we will never know everything and we cannot created anything.
  + We are completely dependent beings and we have to be aware of our reality
  + Q: So what? What should this lead/what is the outcome of this on the way I live my life?

I am only responsible for my free will. I am not responsible for His Absolute free will

* His free will encompasses my free will
* It is He who sets me free

Divine knowledge cannot be known to me except as much as it reveals itself to me in the Clear Book

* But not everything is revealed in the clear book
* Divine Knowledge is Absolute and I will never be able to comprehend it in its entirety
* Everything is created according to Divine Knowledge

When the Quran uses the phrase *kitab-ul-mubeen*  it is a reference to this physical, observable universe. On the other hand, when the Quran uses the phrase *imam-ul-muubeen*, it is a reference to the aspects of creation which points to the Absolute Knowledge of its Creator.

“Evident Divine Determining,” refers to the manifestation of Absolute Divine Power, which is observable and does not change. Human beings can discover the principles of its functioning.

“Theoretical Divine Determining” refers to the manifestation of Absolute Divine Knowledge, which is observable. Human beings cannot always discover how it is going to manifest in any future time. But what we are experiencing in the universe that everything is well-ordered by Divine Knowledge.

**Divine power is the source, Divine Determining is the pattern.**

* Power is manifested within the pattern
* The Creator’s power is manifested according to His knowledge.

Power writes the meaningful book on that pattern.

Theoretical divine determining encompasses evident divine determining. Even in instances where divine determining is evident, as observed through the order in the universe, for us there will always be unforeseen and unknown aspects that govern the moment.