Halaqa: Wednesday, September 17 2014

Topic: Divine Determining Part 9

**Divine Determining seems to be binding us down, negating our freedom. Does it not?**

My responsibility is to investigate existence and reach a conclusion with regards to it

* For example, I can either be upset at an injustice or choose to be ignorant
* If you are able to use your fingers, you are responsible as to how you use it.
* If you do not have fingers, there is no responsibility upon you with regards to using your fingers.
* Instead of waxing lyrical about that which others do not have, I should focus on my realm of responsibility and work on that.

If I am biologically or physically disabled, I am not responsible for the situation that I have been decreed to be in.

Divine Determining NEVER prevents us from using our free will

* However, we can only use our free will within the realm that we have responsibility over
* The conditions we find ourselves in are GIVEN to us and we can only act within this limited field.

Example #1: I read about injustices taking place

* I did not choose for injustice to exist (the existence of the event is beyond my realm of responsibility)
* BUT, my responsibility lies in how I respond to the injustice that already exists
  + My response is WITHIN my realm

Example #2: I was minding my own business and walking responsibly when a drunk driver hits me

* I have no control over the action
* My responsibility lies in how I ought to interpret the event that occurred
  + We have to remind ourselves of the purpose of our existence so that we may interpret the event in an acceptable manner

**Divine Determining and the human power of choice are aspects of a belief pertaining to state and conscience which show the final limits of Islam and belief; they are not theoretical and do not pertain to knowledge.**

Understanding Divine Determining requires us to first have a firm foundation in other aspects of belief.

* Classically, there are 6 pillars of belief
  + Belief in something called **God**
  + Belief in something called **angels**
  + Belief in the fact that God, the creator of this universe, speaks through revelation, which are known as **books**
  + Belief in the fact that God employs certain people called **Prophets** to carry the message from Him to me.
  + Belief in the fact that there is a **day** on which I will be resurrected
  + Belief in Divine Determining
    - Unlike the previous 5 pillars of faith, belief in Divine Determining does not have an **object** to believe in
    - To believe in Divine Determining, we first have to establish a firm foundation of belief in the first 5 pillars
    - Belief in Divine Determining is implementing the first 5 pillars in our practical life.

When I say I believe in Divine Determining, it means that I already have believed in God and that He creates this universe by employing angels, who act in His name.

God says: You will find Me as you know me.

* We will only be able to entertain God’s presence in our lives as much as we know about Him
* We have to make the effort to train our senses as the signs of their Creator so that I can make sure that God really means something to me

There is no independent belief when it comes to Divine Determining

* It is a combination of the previous five beliefs and how we implement those beliefs in our daily life.
* Without establishing a firm foundation, we may misunderstand Divine Determining (*qadr)* and use it in a language that makes no sense.

We may often find ourselves in conversations about *qadr* and while Divine Determining may seem limiting and stifling, it is only because we have failed to fully comprehend belief in the first five pillars of Islam.

* Divine Determining needs to be understood in light of the belief in God, Prophets, Angels, Scriptures and Resurrection.

We have to first understand the “Realm of God’s Act of Creation” and the “Realm of Human Free Choice.”

* Although I choose a particular way, I cannot create it
* I am only using my free will to ask the Creator to create it for me
  + God promises that He never breaks His promise or changes His law of creation

We are constantly in a relationship with the Creator because we are constantly ‘asking’

If someone acts unjustly towards you, the action itself was not your choice

* As far as your responsibility is concerned, the action was by Divine Determining
* Now that the action has happened, my responsibility lies in how I respond to it

We find ourselves in an already existing universe

* The ‘why’ question is irrelevant
  + We cannot question the Creator
  + We can only use our free will to understand the wisdom in creation
* We cannot reason about anything created in this universe with a taken for granted belief in God
* Belief in God must be our conclusion as we investigate objects in this universe.

Example: Perfection in fruits

* Everything is so perfectly created with slices, skins, flesh, etc
* My duty is to investigate how the fruit came into existence and conclude that its Creator is All Knowing, Wise, Absolute and He is entertaining, sustaining me
  + I cannot ask: Why did He create the fruit?
    - It is a futile attempt at questioning. I cannot direct this question to its Creator. I have to take the fruit and investigate its existence with the capacity I am given to find out the qualities of its Creator how they are manifesting themselves in its existence.
  + When I investigate the fruit, I am led to the conclusion that its Creator is Absolute
  + Since Absolute is not within the limits of this universe, I know that asking ‘why’ questions is irrelevant

Beware of speaking from God’s perspective.

Our free will has been given to us

* We cannot kill our ability to choose
* As far as our free will is concerned, there is no such thing as pre-destination
  + He Creates as we choose

We have to educate ourselves about the attitude we adopt towards creation

* When an event takes place which I dislike, I am responsible in how I respond towards it
* We have to educate ourselves on how we should control our responses
  + To pray means to acknowledge that I am impotent, imperfect to create and that I am in help
    - This acknowledgement itself is a CALL for help
  + To ask for forgiveness means to acknowledge that I did not educate myself on how I should control my ‘emotions’
    - Acknowledge that it was a mistake due to my own shortcomings and lack of education
* By taking this attitude, I am enforcing my choice of ‘submission’ to the Absolute Creator

The reason He gives is because we ask.

* Whenever we perform an action, we have to perform it in the form of a prayer (ask)
* If we perform a wrong action, we have to seek forgiveness for it.

My responsibility is to not develop a complex towards that which is beyond my responsibility (eg. Height)

* We are responsible for our decisions
* The ‘end’ is not the goal

Example: Trying to determine my aptitude

* My responsibility lies in how I am going to use the ability and whether I will be thankful to the Creator of this ability.
* This ability is given to me so that I can think of the Source of its existence. While I am using it I realize that this ability is just a sign drawing my attention to its Absolute Source.
* The job that we do is not of primary importance
  + What matters is how we utilize our qualities to know the Creator of these qualities
* As I go about searching for which job I should pursue, I ought to remember that it is not the job that eventually matters BUT the fact that everything is a means of getting to know the Creator
  + I may or may never find the perfect job, but through my journey, if I keep discovering the qualities of God, my journey is meaningful.

We are not created in this world to find the perfect job. We are created to obey the laws of Creation.

* Foundational law of Creation: We are created beings, under the Absolute dominion of the Creator. We have to submit to Him in our action.
* My responsibility is to try.
* The outcome is dependent on Him.

We use our free will to express our ‘wish’ but we cannot create anything

* We are responsible for as much as we have been given
* We have to make our effort, as much as the reins of our free will extend to, and accordingly get to know the truth

The Creator must be just because we see in the existence of the universe perfect balance and equilibrium. We find ourselves in different circumstances with no choice of ours. We are responsible only for how we choose from among the given opportunities.

**Divine Determining and the power of choice have been included among the matters of belief.**

**Divine Determining is included in order to save the self from pride, and the power of choice is included to admit the responsibility of the self.**

* *Qadr* has two aspects (power AND knowledge/proportion)
* We find ourselves with the power of choice BUT how we have exercised it?
  + What matters is the amount of effort we employ with respect to that which we have been given; how we have regarded them: As our property or created for us by the Owner of the Universe.

The existence of tree in the garden is the same regardless of the scenario (whether you grew it OR whether you found it there)

* What matters is how we respond to the existence of the tree
* The tree (found there) is from God
* The tree (I planted) is the result of God’s grace to me
  + In both instances the end goal is the same: To acknowledge that in both cases it is created by God.