Halaqa: Wednesday, August-20-14

Topic: Divine Determining – Part 5

**Recap from last week**

1) Movement = change

* From our perspective, we observe movement. But if thought more deeply, every movement signifies change
* Change takes place within the time dimension (an aspect that is often overlooked)

2) This universe exists within SPACE and TIME

* We cannot isolate objects and place them solely within the space OR time dimension
* Anything that exists, must exist within space and time
* We are bound within these two dimensions

Example: Moving train

* From creatures’ perspective, it seems as if the train is moving only when its engine is switched on and the wheels actually move
* It does not matter whether the train is physically moving or not; with every passing moment it is changing
  + We have to be aware of this reality
* Conscious creatures can discern that the universe exists within space/time

3) Nothing can be the creator of itself

* The cause of existence of a thing cannot be of the same nature as itself
  + **If an object is created within space/time, its Creator must exist beyond space/time**
* All objects are dependent for their existence; if something is dependent, it necessitates having an Agent on which it is dependent
* Anything which is subject to space and time, cannot be independent
* Therefore, the Creator of any object cannot be subject to space/time
* I conclude that the Creator must be Absolute with all of its qualities
  + Absolute: A definition based on negation which is a result of that which is observed
    - That which is not LIMITED
    - Not within the limitations of space/time
    - Not subject to change
    - Not dependent

\*without *lailaha* we cannot proclaim *illAllah*

The universe exists in a circular, closed shape for a reason; there is no way to escape the limited/finite universe

* None of us can escape the limitations of this universe
* Everything in this world is finite
  + Anything finite cannot be the Creator
  + Yet, the fact that everything exists demands that there is a Creator
  + The Creator must be Absolutely Infinite

We can NEVER grasp what Absolute is; we can only define what Absolute is not.

* Why? Because we are created.

Understanding metaphors in the Quran through the following example:

A 2-d object cannot have 3-d properties because of the nature of its existence

* Regardless of the 2-d object’s size, it will never perceive the qualities of a 3-d object

In order for me to understand my Creator’s speech, He must speak to me in a language that is within my perception

* Therefore, when the Creator cites examples of the trees, mountains, hand, animals, He is drawing examples so that we may understand within my space/time limited existence
* From the examples presented, I am led to conclude about the Absolute Creator

In the Quran, it is mentioned: I created mankind in my image

* It does not mean that I can be Absolute OR that my Creator can be limited
* Rather, what it means is that I have been given the ability to know my Creator through all the qualities He has given me

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Divine Determining: Whatever exists is determined by the Creator of the space/time universe

* We cannot compartmentalize the Creator in terms of “pre” or “past”
* “Pre” and “past” are terms used by beings limited by space/time

Pre- destination

* An understanding from human perspective since we are part of the space/time universe

“If God (beyond space/time) knew before I did (within space/time)…”

* We have to beware not to confuse ourselves between the two realms of existence

Divine determining does not determine our choices. The Absolute Creator (who is not subject to space/time) knows my choice by His Absolute knowledge. He determines the creation of the space/time universe (everything in creation points to the Absolute Creator) according to His Absolute knowledge (not subject to space/time) encompassing the human free choice without Himself being subject to time.

* He sets the whole universe according to His Absolute knowledge
* He establishes the order of the universe, which includes what I choose with my partial free will.

Our practical lives tend to be overly focused on the space dimension (# of buildings, summer is hot, many stars in the sky)

* As I contemplate the changes, I realise that the universe exists simultaneously within a time dimension
* When I speak of the Creator, I have to speak without space/time limitations
* Whoever determined the universe, is the One who is not subject to space/time
  + Therefore, when He determines, He determines all at once

Determination: A decisive free will that makes something exists

* A free choice has willed creation to exist deliberately
* This Absolute Creator has willed everything INCLUDING my choice to exist
  + My choice is known to Him Absolutely
  + He does not determine my free choice BUT His determination includes my free choice.
    - He created me with my free will
    - He knows what I am going to choose because He has accordingly created the whole universe in accordance with my choice where I exercise my free will.

For me - Tomorrow is the future; Yesterday is the past

For the Creator, everything exists because He is beyond the limitations of space/time

Paradise/Hell is a ‘future’ creation in my perception BUT for the Creator, it is all part of His Absolute Creation.

The universe already exists from the beginning to the end as far as the Creator is concerned

* We are merely observing slices of creation
* We change (because we are limited by space/time)
  + The Creator is Absolute; He never changes

We can believe in God, not because we have seen Him; rather, it is because we have experience His signs

Similarly, we believe in hell and in paradise, not because we have seen either; rather; it is because we have experienced the signs of ‘pain’ (hell) and ‘pleasure’ (paradise)

* According to my perception of existence, my experience of pleasure and pain differs