Halaqa: Saturday, March 22, 2014

Topic: 17th Word, Pg 226

We have to first establish confidence in the text

* Only then can the text be used as a guide

Some may say that people are unable to think about religion because their basic needs are yet to be fulfilled

* We need to be aware that our most primal need is to know about my existence. It is not about feeding or sustaining myself.
* We ought to bring people’s attention to the fake/delusional things that they are occupying themselves with

The Quran is calling us to think about our existence first

* Why does your hunger exist?
* Why does your sight exist?

When we concern ourselves with solely the physical world and our physical senses, we dichotomize our existence with respect to God

* My existence (senses, hopes, feelings) is perceived as an entity that is independent and not part of God’s purposeful constant creation.

In contrast, if I focus on my state of existence at every moment, even if I am hungry, I am still at ease. How?

* My ability to feel hunger is given to me by my Creator
* It is not ‘I am feeling hungry’ but rather, ‘ I have been made to feel hungry’
* You are no longer isolating yourself but positioning your existence with the Creator’s Will
  + There is comfort and peace in knowing that the hunger you experience is not YOURS

*Da’wah* is not about the talking in religious terms BUT rather about making people aware of their existence.

When we don’t talk about religion from an existence point of view, religion becomes a cult-like practice because it is just the repetition and inculcation of rituals with no understanding whatsoever.

**The solution is this: to forego one’s own will and leave matters to the Divine will; to give up one’s own power and strength, and seek refuge in the power and strength of Almighty God, to adhere to true reliance on Him.**

Giving up power means to realize that the power we possess is not really ours. Rather, it is a trust (*amanah)* that I may refer and return it back to its real owner.

* I tend think my power belongs to me
  + But, if I investigate, I realize that I have no ability to create it
* The power is given to me
  + What I ought to do: Use the power I have been given to acknowledge the real owner of power

I only have will. I use my will to ask the only real Power to create.

* It is never me who is making/doing/creating/talking
* When I falsely assume that I am performing actions, I am actually living my life in a state of delusion

Within human nature lies the awareness that though we may be able to perform a function today, our senses and capacities will deteriorate with age

* This sense of helplessness is prevalent within all of us
* We can either acknowledge this reality and investigate about the one who Creates every moment OR deny the reality and live in ignorance

Our dislike for aging is a call from our Creator that says: You are not at all powerful. But I am, so trust in Me.

* When we don’t trust in His Power and return our ‘perceived’ ownership to Him, we are in reality committing a psychological suicide because our conscience cannot find peace in the reality we have set up for ourselves

Seeking refuge in the Almighty and adhering **true** reliance to Him

* True reliance: Complete submission
* Fake reliance: Submitting in certain aspects but assuming power in other aspects
  + I build the building
  + I look after myself
    - God will decide my time of death

I am here to be trained so that I may understand who I am and who my real owner is

* We have to engage ourselves in this process of learning while in this world

Adam had to come out of paradise to go through the training (on earth), before returning back his Lord.

* Similarly, we here to be trained
* Train yourself well and for what really matters
* We are not here just to be the fittest. “Survival of the fittest, **so that you will be fit to die?”**

Many spiritual teachings say: Money should not be worshipped. While it is a good teaching, have we thought more deeply about why money should not be worshipped?

* Money has become understood as the most powerful tool today
* But, Islam teaches us that NOTHING has any power (quality of a deity)
  + Money, power, status are all created concepts with no reality
  + They may seem to work and have power in our day-to-day existence BUT if we spend time to investigate and think about it, we will realize that neither money, nor power has any ability to create.

God Almighty, The Owner, The Creator – All these terms will be void if we can find a deity within nature

First define who God is for you

* If we don’t define who God is, we aren’t building a strong foundation but merely come up with assumptions about God
  + Our understanding of God ought to come from investigating the universe and realizing that He is Absolute
    - When we don’t investigate and define Him, we start coming up with identities for Him
      * This is how certain faiths end up ascribing a son to Him OR start perceiving Him in different forms
  + From the get go, if we can convincingly establish that He is Absolute, there is no need for Him to be personified or have a son?

Analogy: Study a piece of art

* The dots of paint cannot just come together by themselves
* There must be a conscious will that chose to put the paint together as they are
  + You can trace the qualities of the painter through the painting
  + Every speck in the painting points to the painter
    - Everything in creation DIRECTLY points to the Creator who is All-Knowing

1. Define God in a way that is logical and rational

- He is the Necessarily Existent One

1. The more you get to know Him through creation, the more your relationship with Him gets solidified

- In everything you will begin realizing His attributes and be engaged in *la ilaha illAllah* at every moment.

How do I go from acknowledging Him to relying on Him?

* Reliance on Him can only be the result of my realization of His existence
  + I can rely on Him only as much as I realize that He exists

*Example 1*

*I feel hungry.*

*Believer: I have been made to feel hungry (acknowledgement)*

*Believer’s response: I chose to petition to the Creator of my being and express my desire for food*

*🡪 I am returning my desires to my Creator*

*🡪 In the very act of returning my desires, is an act of submission and reliance. How?*

* *By returning my desires to my Creator, I am saying: O’Creator, you are the One who makes me experience hunger. I have no control over how my stomach digests food or how my small intestines absorb the digested food. Neither do I have any control over the chemical processes that take place within my body. It is You who makes me experience the feeling of satiation and that of hunger.*
* *The purpose of my hunger is so that I may remember the One who is in control of me and of everything around me*
* *By being in His presence, I let go entirely and* ***rely*** *on Him because I am comforted in knowing the only one who provides, will provide as per His will.*

*Example 2*

*Giving food to the needy*

*Believer: I have been made to feel compassionate towards the person and to want to help him/her*

*Believer’s response: I choose to return my emotions to its real owner and not claim ownership over the sense of compassion I experience*

*🡪 By returning the sense of compassion to my Creator, I am saying: O’Creator, you are the One who has made me feel helpful towards person A.*

*🡪 When I choose to give food or money to the needy person, I am acting in His name because the qualities are all from Him.*

* *I am not deluded into think that I will solve the needy person’s problems because I do not see myself as a separate, independent identity*
* *Both the needy person and me are created beings.*
* *My responsibility lies in recognizing that the emotions I feel in response to the needy person do not belong to me. Rather, they have been given to me.*
* *I place all of my feelings and hopes in the court of the Creator and rely on Him, the true Creator to create*
  + *I am in peace because I have already established that the Creator creates with complete and absolute wisdom*

*🡪 I am just a messenger of the Creator’s mercy and compassion*

The fact that I saw the needy person is created by God

The fact that I have feelings of compassion is created by God

The fact that I help is created by God

The fact that I turn away my face from the event is also created by God

* Humans, innately have been set with a moral compass
* We choose to either be aligned with it OR to do diverge away from it
  + We only choose how we want to respond to a situation. It is the Creator who creates the reality of our response.

Everything is Created by Him with a conscious Will

* My responsibility is to acknowledge His ownership in everything
  + I have to acknowledge Him in health and in illness
  + Neither health nor illness is bad
    - If I dislike illness it is because my Creator wants me to dislike it since He gives me the ability to dislike it
    - It is He who wants me to run away from being ill

If we are aware of the Creator’s presence in our lives at every moment, we will be unable to make immoral choices because we will constantly be acting in His name.

I have the ability to return each moment to the Creator or to live my life in an illusion

* This is the result of belief in God and being reliant on Him

When I feel hungry and grab a bite, I have to be aware of who is feeding me and who is taking care of me

* My reliance of God happens at every moment
  + Not when I do not have food
* Be aware that I am weak and needy

Reliance on God without realization of God is not real.

* You have to be aware of God in every moment
  + As much as you are aware, you are reliant on Him because you know that only He is All-Powerful

Can you put your trust in the owner of the universe that He will give you eternal happiness?

* I exist in order to be a candidate for eternal happiness. Whoever made me, created me with the need for eternal happiness.
* This is my existence right
* **Eternal happiness is everyone’s existence right**

Who has the power to give me eternal happiness?

* Only the One who has given me this need
* My journey here on this earth is to search for the one who can provide me with this need
  + The more I search for the One, the more I know Him and His qualities because nothing can be the source of existence of its own qualities except that it points to the One who created it.

Because I have this need, I have every right to expect eternal happiness from the One who has given me this desire

Regardless of whatever happens, I will be aware that its only purpose is to make me know who the Creator of the event is

* I cannot rely on anything in the world except Him
* Why?
  + Because there is no other source that is able to provide anything for me

All situations, events and feelings are given to you so that you may know who the Creator is

* My awareness of Him is what I need to train myself in

Allah says, through the messenger: I never break my promise. And His work, the universe witnesses this.

The believers are guaranteed paradise.

(Guarantee lies in belief)

* Don’t bargain with the Creator
* When you bargain, you are setting yourself against the Creator and not realizing that you are part of the Creation
  + In giving yourself an independent existence, you cannot rely on the Creator because you are not aware of your own created-ness

*Mumin*: Believer

* He is the One who creates belief. We are only asking to be believers
* At every moment, I have to acknowledge that He is the Creator. In as much as I do that, I am being made a believer

Don’t set up an independent existence for yourself.

The way the world is coming into existence is a witness to His promise that He has Absolute free will

We need to train ourselves to see beauty in death

* Death teaches me that I cannot guarantee the end of anything, nor can anything guarantee the end of its own existence
  + Through this understanding, I know that nothing relies on itself for its existence
  + Only then can I be led to the One who creates and sustains everything

Eternal happiness does not mean the absence of worldly pains

* When you realize the beauty of being needy, or the beauty in the existence of death, you are in reality in the presence of God
* Being needy or being in pain is a way of realizing our need for Him
  + It is not ‘torture’
  + Rather, it is a way of teaching me to know who my Lord is

When you are hungry, you are experiencing a death of satiation

* This ‘death’ highlights your neediness and points you to the One who creates every moment of existence

Paradise = Belief in god

Belief in God 🡪 Relying on God

Scriptures say: God provides food for the birds

I read: When I see the birds eating, I see that it is only God who can provide it

* The text is pointing me to Him.
* It is NOT asking me to see things from His perspective. It is asking me to look at the creation and see His presence there.

Food is guaranteed because our needs are from Him

* Belief in God is acknowledging Him and recognizing yourself as part of His creation
* His Creation encompasses Absolute Will, Power and Mercy
* The fact that He has given you the need means that only He can fulfill the need
* When we separate ourselves from God, we think of guarantee as a bargain
  + I pray. I must get reward or food.
  + On the contrary, getting food is not the point. Being with the Creator is the main essence of all our emotions.

\*Don’t take your existence as independent from the Creator.