Halaqa: Saturday, August 16, 2014

Topic: Cryings of the heart (Pg 231)

Two ways of approaching one’s life:

1. Forgetting about your reality; heedlessness (ignoring your true self)

* Not paying attention to our human qualities

2) Being aware and living with the consciousness of our true human qualities

***Don’t call me to the world; -- I came, and saw it was transitory***

In every object, we observe that it is transitory.

Yet, our human nature wants the object permanently.

* The nature of this world is transient
* Human nature rejects this transience; it seeks permanence

***Heedlessness was a veil; -- I saw the light of truth was concealed.***

A commonly heard adage, ‘ignorance is bliss’

However, in reality by being ignorant or heedless we are merely choosing to silence our reality

* Being heedless does not change our reality
* It only drapes a veil and hides what lies beneath

Analogy: I chose to close my eyes and then claim that everything is dark.

* In reality, there is light all around BUT I have chosen to shut myself from the light.

Some may say: There is no way to achieve eternal happiness, therefore let’s enjoy life momentarily (heedlessness)

* This is the result of perceiving teachings in religious scriptures as something ‘external’ to one’s reality
* We have to internalize the teachings in the scriptures
  + It is crucial and necessary that we use our individual human nature to confirm the revelation
  + The Quran always calls us to contemplate/think/ponder

God’s guidance comes to humans so that we may reach a firm conclusion

* But in order to reach this conclusion, we have to use our human nature
* Our given human nature and books of guidance are in synchrony; we just have to listen to our human nature

Be careful, however, not to condition ourselves to societal or traditional norms without any evidence, be it pro or against religion.

- Once we allow ourselves to be conditioned, we are no longer in a position to read and reflect on religious scriptures from a true humanistic perspective

No one should be allowed to interpret religious scriptures without paying attention to one’s own human qualities

* Religious scriptures are meant to speak to our true humanity
* We have to interpret the texts by checking the message with our own reality
  + Principles of Arabic grammar
  + Human nature
* If the message contradicts your own human nature, then we have to review our methodology of understanding
* Our human qualities are a SIGN that we have to use to confirm/reject the messages we come across

We have to find consistency within the entire text

* Remember, scriptures are meant as a GUIDE
* The message in the scripture informs us about that which we do not know
  + We have to use our GIVEN human qualities to investigate these messages

Analogy: My Creator has given me the ability to see

* I can visually see that there is a bag
* If the speaker in the message is highlighting the bag, I have to ponder more deeply about the bag
* I am being **reminded** about something that is beyond my field of visual experimentation

Liking vs. human reality

* We have to question our likings to check if our likes and dislikes are the result of being influenced by society OR if it is a reflection of our true human reality

We have been created in this world with opposite qualities

* Within this scale of opposites we have to compare and make a choice
* In the Quran, we see this opposites in examples of *light vs. dark*, *paradise vs. hellfire*, etc

Quran – the word of God – is being delivered through the Prophet.

* The companions observed the actions in the Prophet and heard the Quran from the Prophet’s mouth
* They were observing the walking and living Quran and witnessed the consistency between the word of God and actions in the Prophet

Purpose of the Quran is to imbibe a spirit of *ubudiya;* connecting oneself to God through physical actions

* This can be learnt through the teachings of the Quran and hadiths
* Belief in the Quran and the Messenger must be fused in order to understand the message holistically

If we are unable to connect ourselves to God through physical actions, the actions become mere exercises.

* Everything must be employed in order to fulfill a connection with God
* I exist to know who my Creator is; all my actions need to be performed with this awareness!

Example: Taking care of a child

* Why do we bother caring for children?
* The Creator can look after them
* There has to be a meaningful reason behind our actions
  + The reason is: Perform all actions so that you may fulfill the reason of your existence (i.e. to connect to the Creator)

Don’t reduce the **Quran** to a *mushaf* and don’t reduce the **Sunnah** to hadiths