Halaqa: Saturday, March 8, 2014

Topic: 17th Word, Pg 226

What is the difference between using the faculty of will/choice with consciousness of the Creator and without? (i.e. believer and unbeliever)

**It (the faculty of will) can never penetrate the past nor discern the future, and in regard to my hopes and fears concerning these, was of no benefit.**

Practically, we tend to live in the moment.

* When I am hungry, I want food right at that moment
* When I am tired, I want to sleep

But our fears are always associated with the past or future (what will my action bring for my future)

* As I eat a great meal, I carry the hope that I will always have a good meal to enjoy
* I lay on my bed to rest, but I fear the impending results of the exam which I sat for yesterday.

My concerns have to do with the past and future

* Apart from my free will (ability to choose), I realize that I have nothing
  + Yet, I also realize that my free will is limited
  + I only have the ability to desire but no ability to will anything to existence

My free will grants me the ability to make choices but apart from choosing/asking/hoping/wishing, I cannot allay my fears completely

This is the point at whichbelief (*iman)* solves my worries

* Unbelief: If I don’t believe in the Creator (the One who is omnipotent and knower of everything), my free will has no ability to penetrate the past or the future
  + I may be able to hope BUT I cannot guarantee
  + We may be able to prepare BUT we cannot guarantee
* Belief: I am under the ownership of my Creator as is this whole universe. From my observation, nothing has the ability to create itself but except by the will of a Conscious Creator
  + He has given me free will
  + He gives me my desires, hopes and fears
  + I am SURE of His Creator-ship and return all my fears and hopes to the One who creates

As an unbeliever, there is no hope because everything is happening according to ‘accidents’ or ‘natural laws’

* There is no conviction that a Conscious Controller controls that which is happening

For a believer, his understanding of free will is different.

**Belief takes its reins from the hand of the animal body** (material power) **and hands them over to the heart and the spirit** (represents the vehicle of belief)**, and may therefore penetrate the past and the future. For the sphere of life of the heart and spirit is broad.**

In the eyes of the believer, it is the knowing providence (He) who is going to guarantee the future

* Regardless of my free will, I have no power to penetrate into the past or future so that I can alter it
* Belief changes our perception of the world
  + When I believe that this universe has a Creator (a Conscious Creator who knows what He is doing and is the Source of existence of this universe), I am at peace with Creation
  + The so called “natural laws,” that are nothing but the way the Creator creates, and that seem to be constant, are all under the control of the Conscious Creator who knows what He is doing

My free will is just to express my needs

* I am aware that free will does not create anything
* It is only capable of asking
* In the eye of believer, he knows that he is unable to guarantee anything AND he is at peace with that

We may wrongly think that our free will guarantees the future BUT introspection makes us realize that we have no ability to guarantee anything at all. All we can do is ask.

Unbelief, on the other hand, does not incorporate the concept of ‘asking’

* It assumes that creation, itself, creates
  + Eg: Nature is the determinant
* But if one begins to investigate the truth of such a statement, it quickly falls apart so the unbeliever is in reality living a lie of self-deception.

Belief: Nature is the result of a Conscious choice. Itself, it cannot create.

My hopes and fears (an innate part of my humanity) are essentially about the past or future. With belief, I am able to find solace in my hopes and fears because I am assured about the future. The Creator of the future is Omniscient, Wise, Merciful etc.

* I hope that tomorrow I will wake up
  + I cannot guarantee it
* As a result of my belief, I hand my hopes over to the Creator of the universe
  + Since we are aware that there is a Conscious Creator, we know that I have to present my hopes to Creator because I have no control over anything

\*What does belief preclude?

* The Creator is Eternal and Absolute
* My life is eternal and is not limited to this worldly abode

In the eye of an unbeliever, life only consists of this world

* He cannot guarantee anything
* Since I cannot express my hope to unconscious, blind nature, life is entirely meaningless

In the hands of free will, there is no guarantee BUT your hopes and fears will never lead you to annihilation

* Example: I hope that I will live tomorrow
  + If I am given life tomorrow, it is because my Creator willed for me to live in this world another day
  + If I am not given life tomorrow, it is because my Creator wills for me to not live in this world another day
    - But I will live in another realm of existence

Belief corresponds directly to our human nature (of seeking peace and assurance in response to our hopes and fears) WHEREAS unbelief contradicts my humanity

* As a human, I see that I have hopes and fears
  + With unbelief, my hopes and fears lead to complete despair
  + With belief, however, my hopes and fears help me realize my need security and ultimately leads me to find the Source of Security, God

We may have encountered spiritual traditions that present a ‘peaceful’ way of living by encouraging selflessness, positive thinking, etc

* While these values are good and ought to be encouraged, most spiritual traditions neglect the underlying purpose behind these actions
* People mistake the success that comes with these values as being wholly dependent on the value itself
  + In reality, living according to these values is just part of the order set by the Creator

On the other hand, Islam explains why we ought to be positive and selfless

* Positive: The Conscious Creator is constantly creating with Absolute Wisdom so there is absolutely no reason to despair
* Selfless: Being aware of the reality that we are all created beings here to acknowledge His creatorship. I am not caught up in trying on my own to build a false world for myself; I cannot create anything at any time.

We see that each and every one of us has hopes and fears.

Belief: Since the Creator has given me this sense of hope and the consciousness of His presence; I have to present my hopes to Him

* **Allah says: If you pray to me, I will respond to it**

Analogy: I want a car

* God says: I will respond to your hope
* If you present your hopes to Him by obeying His rules in the creation, it is guaranteed
  + You getting it, depends on you following His wisdom
  + It is just upon me to present my desire to Him by following His wisdom manifested in His acts of creation, the universe
  + If I am aware that the rules in the creation are His choice, His wisdom, and that when I follow these rules in fact I am praying to Him to respond to my prayer, that awareness is the belief: Only He is able to guarantee everything

With belief, it is as though I have submitted my order form to the right manufacturer (Creator of this universe) and am at peace knowing that He will give it to me if it fits His will

* We just have to be aware that we are presenting our desires to our Owner
* Once you present it to the Creator, you leave your desires with Him because you know that your desires are not YOURS but have been given to you.
  + Through my belief and confirmation as a result of my observation of His acts in this world, I know that He will never contradict His promise

*Khulfu’l- wa’ad:* Contradicting one’s promise

* For God, it is impossible for Him to contradict His promise
  + Otherwise, it contradicts Himself

He Created me with the desire for paradise

* If He does not give it to me, will it not be a contradiction to His promise?
  + Allah says: Come to Me, present your desires (which I have given to you), and I will answer those desires
    - Don’t impose yourself on Me, though
    - You just petition
    - I decide

Belief: Desire for paradise is given to you by your Creator

* If you present this desire to the Creator, He promises that He will respond
* At the very moment you return your desires to Him, you are with the Absolute Creator AND, essentially, that is being in paradise; you have found the Source of your desires, Who is All-Mighty

At any moment that we present our hopes (or seek to secure our fears) to Him, our hopes and security are guaranteed.

* The moment that I fail to present it to the Creator, I will be in anxiety (black dot) because nothing in the universe can penetrate into the future so that they will guarantee it, they all wait to be given existence
* But when I send my desires to the Creator, I am at peace

Analogy: I want an apricot and I got it

Unbelief: Nature gave me this apricot because of a series of accumulated chances

* All I get is a single apricot

Belief: The apricot was given to me by the conscious will of the Creator. It is not a result of accident.

* When I receive the apricot, I say: My Creator has Absolute knowledge of my desires and is responding to my desires
  + I acknowledge **the right** of the apricot to be returned to the Creator
* I don’t just get a single apricot but Eternal mercy, compassion and grace through seeing the signs in the existence of the apricot, pointing to the absolute qualities of its Creator,
  + You are with the Absolute Source and are in paradise

O’Creator of the apricot, you are telling me through this apricot that you know me and are responding to me. I want the taste and pleasure of this apricot eternally.

* Your desire, as presented to Him, is guaranteed
* Otherwise, it would be a contradiction because I cannot fathom a reality in which the Creator contradicts Himself
  + It would be meaningless

We have to train ourselves to refer each and every moment to our Creator

* To achieve this, we have to be aware of the Creator’s Conscious Will present in Creation

If at every moment I am aware of the Creator, I will always be in paradise (ideal state)

* Belief is the source of all happiness, peace and security
* Unbelief is the source of all hopelessness because we are living in an imaginary world

Unbelief: Desire for paradise exists by chance

* Chance is nothing but a made up word

Don’t slip into bargaining with God

Analogy 1: I want a car

Why do I want it?

* To satisfy my expectations

You may follow the order BUT you cannot guarantee it

* You express your hope by obeying the rules established by the Creator
* You may get the Car by obeying His rules though unconsciously
  + You may not be aware of it, but your getting it, is still the result of His Conscious Will
* You may not get the Car
  + You may blame it on your ‘efforts’ or on your ‘bad luck’, but in reality it is still the result of His Conscious Will

You think that it is the result of you ‘working hard’

* All you get is the car
* But eventually, you will die and leave it behind or the car will stop functioning
  + My desire for eternal happiness remains unfulfilled

Analogy2 : You plant a seed

Regardless of whether you believe in God or not, the seed will grow BECAUSE of the order set by the Creator

* If you recognize the Creator of the order (believer), you don’t only get the harvest
  + You also get peace knowing that it is from the Eternal Source
* If you don’t recognize the Creator of the order (unbeliever), all you get is the harvest

Let’s say a rat comes and eats the seed

* This also happens within the order
  + But, I cannot anticipate this order
* When it happens: The believer says, this is because of God’s will
  + I obey the order as much as I know, if I have not learned the order of the creation enough I should keep investigating
    - That is my duty
  + The rest, I leave to God

“It is upon God to decide”

* God does not arbitrarily respond
* I have to first acknowledge my reality (that He is the Creator of everything)
  + I trust Him and His Creation
  + In that, there is guarantee
    - Because, I return my ‘hope’ to the Absolute Creator and leave it to Him

If I don’t obey the order set by the Creator, it is a rebellious action against the Creator and I am contradicting my own reality.

* We have to first obey His order
* A believer is expected to be conscious that He is obeying the order of the Creator
  + As a result, the believer has hope (in the Creator’s Conscious Will)
  + This hope is real because of his awareness of the Creator
* An unbeliever, on the other hand, is obeying blind nature that has no will
  + As a result, the unbeliever has no hope
  + This contradicts his humanity

Divine determining encompasses both the order I am knowledgeable about AND the part of the order that I do not know, e.g. the choice of the creatures with free will

Belief is the way of certainty

* It is not a shortcut

As far as I can know, there are certain rules of the universe

* I have to obey these rules because they are established by the Creator
* I cannot guarantee the results NOR can I guarantee that I am obeying ALL the rules
  + I acknowledge that I don’t know plenty BUT that He knows everything
    - I trust the Creator of everything
    - I cannot trust myself because I can only know as much as I am enabled to know
      * + Belief enables me to be at peace even when I realize that I may not know everything about an event
        + Instead of being in a state of panic, I am at peace knowing that He creates with Absolute Wisdom.

Belief: I am referring this Absolute World to an Absolute Creator

* I am absolutely sure as a result of my observation of this universe that the Creator of this world is Absolute

If our world only consists of this world and nothing else, there is no Absolute truth

* But this world, is the product of an Absolute Source
* If your first premise is wrong, everything else is wrong

Belief = certainty in your conclusion

* I am Absolutely sure that this computer has a maker by the one who knows the program of the whole computer
* The apricot cannot be its own creator. It has to be the product of the One who created the whole universe
  + Whoever created the whole universe can be the only One who creates every single atom
  + Belief in the Absolute is certain

Believer : free will 🡪 connects future hope to the Absolute creator = peace

Unbeliever: free will 🡪 extends its hope to chance and unconscious nature, which results in a dead end = death => end of existence => absolute hopelessness. This results in constant anxiety