Halaqa: Saturday, March 29, 2014

Topic: The 17th Word, Pg 226

**Yes, whoever finds the boundless sea of mercy, surely does not rely on his own mirage-like will and choice; he does not abandon mercy and have recourse to his will.**

‘Finds the boundless sea or mercy’

* How do you FIND him?
	+ Finding him does NOT mean the performance of obligations and duties

Example: Prayer

* When I pray, I am performing an obligation
* In doing so I am finding God
	+ But ask yourself: Are you really connecting yourself with God?

How can I connect myself to God in my daily life so that when I pray, it is not just an obligatory action BUT a real connection?

* We have to know who God is
* If you don’t know who God is, who/what are you connecting with?
	+ Knowing God needs to be real. It cannot be a figment of your imagination.
		- False approach: We imagine God by perceiving God in His terms. It is not a plausible methodology.
			* Analogy: You are trying to think in someone else’s shoes.
			* Your conclusions will never be accurate.
	+ To make it real, you have to experience and see Him in your interactions. It has to be grounded in experience so that you will understand God in YOUR terms.
	+ Be real!

I might say: I submit to God. He is the Only Creator. I cannot create anything.

But practically: When I choose between options, I say that I am creating a reality for myself.

* There is a break in consistency between an ‘imagined understanding of God’ and ‘practical reality’

If I REALLY had belief, I would say: I am submitting my desires to the Creator. My reality does not allow me to claim power over anything. Not only can I not create anything, my every choice is an act of submission.

While I am choosing, I am submitting to the already existent order.

* We are totally free to choose, but my choice is still only a submission to the current order

Examples:

1) Baking

* Am I baking the cake OR am I submitting to the already existence order in creation?
	+ The heat that bakes a cake is an order that already exists. I am just submitting to it.
	+ The way ingredients interact is an order that already exists. The ingredients are submitting to the order. Is my intellect submitting to it, too?

2) Learning

* Am I learning by myself OR am I submitting my desire to learn to the creator of knowledge?
	+ I cannot create knowledge. I find myself in NEED of knowledge.

Within my own realm of existence, I have to see that I cannot give a new form of existence to anything

* Any action I perform is nothing but a mere submission to the order that already exists
* When I pray, it has to be grounded in the fundamental belief that I am submitting to the order

Imaginative belief: I can see God in everything

Evidence based belief: In everything, I see no power to create. Nothing is the source of its own self. I can ONLY see His manifestation.

* I have to first **negate** the quality of divinity in everything
* Only then can I be led to the true Creator
* *La ilaha illAllah*

What am I doing when I am exercising my free will?

* I am submitting myself to the One who owns and creates everything
* I am only petitioning my will to Him
* I am not the SOURCE or CREATOR of anything

Analogy:

When I want water to boil, I chose to place the pot on fire and not on ice

* The relationship between water and fire already exists
* I only prefer one order over the other
	+ Fire does not make the water boil
	+ Fire is created. It has no power in and of itself.
	+ Fire (has no divinity/*la ilaha)* except that it points to its creator (*illAllah)*

If I did not have the knowledge that fire boils water and instead end up choosing to place the pot over a tub of ice, it is ok.

* I will see that the water is not boiling and learn that that order is such that water is boiled on fire, NOT ice; that is the order in creation

What matters is my attitude when I place the pot of water to boil. I ought to remember that the purpose of my life is to know my Creator

* If I place the pot of water on ice, I do it with the awareness that ice is created and the Absolute Creator commands the order
* When I see that the water does not boil, I learn that the order is such that water is not boiled on ice.
* Next time, I’ll place the pot on fire

We have to remember that the purpose of my life is not about getting the water to boil at the fastest speed.

What we do: Get caught up in trying to boil the water fastest WITHOUT being aware of the Creator.

* All we get is the boiled water
* But if we perform actions with the awareness of the Creator, in every moment we can be with the Absolute and Eternal One. Whether the water boils or does not boil is no longer of my concern.

There is immense order in the universe. Every single particle in this universe functions within an order. I will never be able to learn and comprehend every order. My responsibility is not about learning all the orders BUT to see the manifestations of the qualities of the Creator in each order.

Why is my responsibility not merely to learn about ALL of the order in the universe?

* I see I have a limited life
* I know that I have been given capacities to perceive what qualities are reflected in the creation
* The more I strive to learn, the more I realize there is always more to learn
* If the purpose of my life is to gather information about the things themselves, given that they are transient, it would be a contradiction of my existence.

Why is my responsibility to know the Creator?

* I realize that I have unlimited desires
* I despise the temporality of things
* When I pursue objects/goods/people/jobs, I am in essence seeking continuity; something that will continue to exist
	+ Introspection reveals that NOTHING in this universe exists forever
* Yet I have eternal desires
* The only way I can reconcile my desires with my existence is to find the source who created everything
	+ When I place my existence in His Eternal realm, I am at peace because I no longer trapped by an illusion (the illusion of continuity in this transient universe)

We have been exposed to an ideology as “the reality” that says: Nature is the source of everything

* Religion is perceived as an institutional establishment
	+ The ‘religious’ people feel that they have to defend these establishments
	+ However, it is impossible to defend these definitions of religion
* We have to revive the core understanding of religion by grounding it in logical and rational confirmations.

Today: Religion = rules and rituals.

* There is no realization of the relationship between my creator and my human qualities including my actions
* If we strive to understand the relationship between my being and my creator, I will see: There is no power of divinity in any single thing in creation. Everything is extolling God and glorifying Him.
* My actions (rituals) then become an act of submission, grounded in a firm sense of belief

Past: Religion = Understanding that everything is created by a God

* This understanding was the core of society
* When we read hadiths, we should be aware of the state of people and what their reality was like

Everything in creation is making *tasbih* and glorifying the Creator

* What does this mean?
* If we investigate, we’ll see that nothing has the ability to create or sustain. It only points to the Creator and is glorifying His act of creation

My duty: To find the signs of God here

* The only way I can find Him, is by negating divinity in every single thing

**Boundless sea of mercy**

* Can you see anything in the world that is NOT mercy?
* Everything is being given (nothing creates)
* We are only using it

While you are thanking God, He is not going to punish you



“Why should God punish you if you thank (Him) and believe in Him. And God is Ever Responsive to Gratitude, All-Knowing.” Nisa (4): 147

* **As soon as you realize that whatever you are given is coming from His mercy, you will be free from any negative feeling or illusions**
* Everything that you find, is a grace for you
* In the very act of acknowledgment, you are connecting yourself to the Absolute Source NOT to the food/child/property

Whatever comes to you, is coming from a Source that constantly gives and provides

* When you are with the Absolute Source of the whole universe, you are free from any ‘punishment’ because you are at peace

Everything is constantly changing and under His control

* When you eat something and it gets over, you are not sad
* You realize that the food is from the Absolute Creator and you are with the Absolute
	+ If you think the food is satisfying you, you will be sad when it gets over (the sadness you experience is a form of punishment to your own self)

You do not enjoy the cake

You enjoy the One who creates the cake

* Everything belongs to an Absolute Source

Worship = Submission

When we use our free choice, we are submitting ourselves to the Creator.

* We are not falsely assuming that our free will creates but rather, are in the presence of His mercy through our free will.
* In doing so, **we do not abandon mercy and have recourse to his will.**

Instead of giving false power to your free will, you rightly identify the One establishes the order of the whole universe

* In doing so, you are experiencing His will and His mercy

Everything that is happening in this world, is not based on the choice of the objects themselves (I observe that nothing has any power to create)

* The way the universe is operating, points me to the Creator’s Absoluteness and Creator’s will

Be aware of what you are doing

* When you are exercising your free will, you are submitting to the order in the universe
	+ This order is the will of the One who gives existence to the universe
* My responsibility: Consciously obeying His order

If we leave religion to only ‘not denying God’, we are subjecting ourselves to be defeated by materialists

* We have to consciously confirm God

How do we make choices: We will prefer what we think is good

* But what matters is the awareness when we are making the choice
	+ We have to remember that we are submitting to the One who has total control over anything

Analogy: Job application

Every step is an act of submission

* Not just when you are waiting for the result
* My responsibility: While I am using my hands to type the application, I am submitting to the One who has established this universe and this order in my body

Mistaken language: ‘Do your part and leave the rest to God’

* Every part should be returned to God in an act of submission
* How to avoid falling into this train of thought, we should ask ourselves at every moment: Can we create any single action?

Attitude when reading the Quran:

* Do we read it with the assumed claims that it is the book of God?
* Define for yourself what is meant by the book of God?
* Ask questions?
	+ How can I make sense of this book?

Don’t get lost in worldly life. When we do so, we stop questioning fundamental aspects of our reality.

* Instead of using my intellect on these fundamentals, I end up busying myself with superficial, worldly affairs.
* It may seem to provide solace BUT the solace is only skin-deep
	+ If we use our intellect to think about things, we’ll realize how lost we are.