Halaqa: Wednesday, April 16 2014

Topic: Longing for Paradise. What is the solution? (Part 3)

We have a sense of consciousness but we don’t always listen to our consciousness.

* It is challenge and we usually exist in a state of flux
* How can we overcome this and what is the solution?

Quran says: Every being will receive death/ For everything there is an appointed time (*ajal)*

* Although we can never be sure of how long our ‘limited time’ is, we are sure that there is an end.
* There is nothing in this world that does not have an end because everything is limited
  + We may be unable to grasp existence of beginning and end of the whole universe BUT through our experiences with creation, we can see a beginning and end of life in this world.

Analogy: Receiving a fixed monthly salary

* *Ajal* can be thought of in terms of one’s monthly salary
  + My monthly salary is $100
  + The money that I receive will be used. The question is: Will I be benefitting from the money I use OR will I just be losing it?
    - For every $10 spent, I will have $10 less in my monthly account.

Parallel: We have a lifespan of 60 years.

* For every year that passes, my age increases BUT my total lifespan is decreasing
* With every passing moment, I am losing from my appointed number of days (*ajal)*
* You gain a breath in each moment BUT you are losing breaths from your total share

The amount of sustenance prescribed for us is fixed.

* We may enjoy each dish we eat thinking that it is a ‘gift’
* But at the same time, with every ‘gift’ is a loss
  + We are losing from our prescribed/set portions

A young person is happy that he is growing BUT the reality of the fact is that the person is also losing from his ‘total age’.

If you use it, you lose it

* How can I overcome this contradiction so that my desire to keep gaining (and not losing) be satisfied?
  + By questioning the source of everything
  + If I acknowledge the source of everything (the One who gave me a fixed number of years, breaths, etc)

In my own existence, the pain I feel with every ‘loss’ is a sign BECAUSE I dislike losing each moment

* It is a sign that I ought to refer each moment back to its owner
* The problems (and pains) begin as soon as I attribute an independent existence to the event/moment/treat
* If I recognize that EVERYTHING, including myself, is being created, the loss of each moment is not really a loss because by losing that moment I am learning that I cannot own anything
  + I am in the Creator’s realm and everything belongs to Him.

We often hear the phrase: Don’t be religious. Just enjoy ‘life’

But, I realize that I cannot just enjoy life because I instinctively know that every dollar I spend means that I am losing from my total wealth.

There must be a reason for the days/sustenance I have been given that support my human nature

* Human nature: Desire for perpetual gain. Abhorrence for loss.

I will experience a benefit in every moment IF I realize who the Giver of each moment/provision is

I will experience perpetual pain if I perceive ownership of each moment/dollar and attribute it to myself.

If my life only consists of days here on earth, it would be a depressing reality BECAUSE with every passing moment, I am only losing days.

* For it to be a meaningful existence I have to find meaning in every ‘moment’ and not ‘lose’ each moment that passes.
* I want to see the benefit of my actions at every moment, in that moment itself.
  + Don’t deceive yourself with false ‘future’ promises

Analogy: A book has x number of pages, similar to the number days in my life.

* With each page I read, I am left with (x-read pages)
  + Similarly, with each day of my life that I grow with, my total number of years are decreasing
  + Living, then, is painful and has no real meaning

But, if I see that each word on a page has meaning, I pay close attention to the words and sentences.

* As I extract the meaning, I am not ‘losing’ the page BUT am experiencing a connection with the author and ‘gaining’ the information that he chooses to deliver through the words
* I am in direct connection with the author
* Although I am reading ‘lines’ in the book, I am connected to the author
  + The number of pages are not important
  + What is important is for me to extract meaning from words so that I can be directly in connection with the author.

Similarly, we are all qualified to read the signs in this universe

There are 3 elements when we read:

1. Me: I have to first see that my existence is meaningful
2. The object (creation): I will search for meaning in all of creation
3. The author/creator (God): The meaning will connect me to the author

Rather than eating an orange, I have to READ the orange and look for meaning in it, in the qualities of the orange, my experience while eating it and connect myself to the author

* If I eat it without looking for meaning, I am just eating ‘paper’

When we read a book, we are not really concerned with the physical paper itself. Rather, we are concerned with the meaning that is being imparted.

1. I am endowed with the ability to understand meaning
2. The book itself has meaning (it is not meaningless paper)

* The meaning exists within its existence
  + For materialists, however, existence is nothing more than just a piece of paper
  + In doing so, they are torturing themselves
  + They choose to deny any meaning and when one denies meaning, how can there be a connection to the author?
  + Existence becomes futile when we don’t use our human qualities to read meaning.

I should use my abilities to decipher meaning BECAUSE I have been given the ability to do so.

As soon as I start reading the meaning, there is NO value in the paper itself.

* If I don’t seek to extract the meaning, I will be in pain because each page (moment) is being lost and cannot satisfy my desire for eternal happiness
* But if I am absorbed in the meaning, I will have no concerns whether the book has 10 pages or 100 pages. Each page conveys meaning that the author intended for me. I read it and connect myself to the Absolute author.

If we communicate with the Creator, we see that in all of creation is a message and we can experience the Creator’s mercy, provision, compassion, etc.

* The objects itself have no value EXCEPT that it transfers a meaning to you

The author is communicating with you through the meaning in the book.

* You don’t need the author to be present in front of you
* It doesn’t matter if the author is dead
* You are still in connection and communication with him

His (God’s) way of creating is such that at every moment, He is creating endless books

* The author of this universe is Absolute
  + How do I know?
  + Nothing in this universe has the ability to create
  + But yet, everything is sustained in such perfect harmony
  + There needs to be a Creator and He must be beyond this universe.
  + Beyond the universe is beyond my perception and I can only describe that as being Absolute.
* If I look for meaning in creation, every moment I am in connection with the Eternal Creator
* Death no longer matters because I am always gaining meaning from the Absolute Creator.

**070.042**

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**Sahih International:**So leave them to plunge in vain talk [indulgence] and play about, until they meet their Day which they are promised

Life of materialists: With every step, I am getting closer to my death

* Meaningless existence
* Life is such a torture

Life of a believer: With every step, I am in connection with the Absolute Creator

* Existence is a mercy
* Life gives me an opportunity to know my Creator

**Leave them:** If I indulge in meaningless talk (eating paper), life is meaningless. I might else kill myself now, if I am eventually just going to die.

We are all between two numbers.

Let Y be days in our lives.

Let X be the days that pass

* For every day that passes (x), I am left with (y-x) days
* When x=y, we will be left with nothing

At the end of every day, it is gone.

* Unbelievers are enjoying nothing because they are constantly in loss
* Leave this idea (of a meaningless world) alone
* It brings absolutely NOTHING but loss

We are reminded in this verse to make sense of our own interaction in the world.

* It is not about belittling people who don’t share your beliefs
* Rather, this verse is saying that we should leave THEM (attitudes that do not see meaning in creation)

*Muminoon* (believers) are together (as brothers)

* Not our physical bodies BUT rather our beliefs
* **Quran is speaking to our HUMAN QUALITIES (unlimited)**
  + **The Quran is the book of Absolute guidance**
* Don’t reduce and restrict it to limited space and time

***Yahudu****:* Plunging into something and becoming engrossed in it

* Getting lost in the matter itself
  + Don’t get lost in meaningless talk (price of an orange, location of purchase, weight of an orange, vitamins in the orange, etc)
    - Through putting vitamins in the orange, the Creator is telling you something (MEANING)
    - Look for the meaning
    - Meaning is anything that connects you to the Eternal Creator because only that satisfies our desires

قُلِ اللّهُ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ

**“… Say: “God!” – and then leave them to play at their vain talk.”**

**An’am (6): 91**

* Should I just utter the word and leave?
* Rather, we have to establish the relationship with our God
* Let them play with their vain talk. We have to connect with God.

Person 1: I prefer Californian oranges to Mexican oranges’

Muslim response: ‘ God prepared these oranges for us. Look at how they are prepared so perfectly for my taste.”

* Leave the vain talk and connect to the Creator
* Otherwise, everything is just meaningless

**023.054**

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**Sahih International:**But leave them in their confused ignorance [flood, deluge, liberality] for a time [until they themselves realize their error]

Where the unbelievers are going is leading them towards a dead-end

* What point is there in accumulating wealth? In trying to increase one’s lifespan?
* The purpose is to get in touch with the Creator of the book of the universe

**051.050**

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**Sahih International:**So flee to God. Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.

How can I flee to God?

* I am going to flee from ‘vain’ talk and connect myself with the Creator in every situation that I am
* There is no need for my to flee to a mosque or to a different country
  + With the right attitude, you can be with God anywhere, not only in a place of worship

In this universe, there is no meaningless word or letter

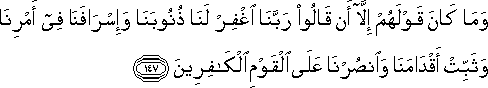
* You are always with a meaningful act of creation

The one who brought us this message is teaching us that we should never forget to flee to God

* Don’t divide one’s life into compartments of religious and mundane
* Every moment is a sign and a message from your Creator.
* Read the book of the world. There is no single meaningless word (creation) in this world
  + Study the science (right down to an atom), every single thing has meaning

If we connect to the author of the book of this universe, we will always be in eternity.

**003.147**



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**Sahih International:**All that they said was, "Our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our transgressions: Establish our feet firmly and help us against those who resist faith."

**Sins**: Not reading the meaning in pages and wasting the ‘words’

* Of course it includes telling lies, stealing, etc
* If we are in contact with the Creator, there is no way we will steal or tell lies because we will not be losing ourselves in the ‘page’ BUT are connected to the Eternal creator
* Once we establish foundations, these ‘moral actions’ become easy
  + **The real sin is when we disconnect ourselves from the author**

We can only ask for forgiveness, if we acknowledge the author

When we don’t have a foundation, performing moral (religious) actions become different.

* **It is like trying to water plants from their branches INSTEAD of their roots**

The religious ‘rules’ that we are taught by the Prophet are for the sake of an Eternal God

* If we keep this in mind, we will willingly perform the actions
* If we aren’t connected and driven towards the eternity, then the actions will seem like a burden.

As far as I am concerned, I only have the free will to choose to read OR to ignore the message

* The meaning that you then receive from creation is directly from the Creator
* We are not independently creating meaning

Materialists choose to distort meaning BY rejecting the presence of meaning in creation.

I have to see the compatibility between my ability to understand and the meaning in creation.

- If there is no compatibility, then creation would be contradictory

**Establish our feet firmly*:*** In the connection between creation and the Creator

How can I enjoy my life if I am not religious?

* If I disconnect myself from the Creator, I am in absolute loss

These verses are commonly thought of us portraying Islam as a religion that is snobbish.

* But that is because we see ourselves as independent beings
* Rather, we have to see the Quran’s message as being Absolute, thus speaking to me in an abstract sense. When I establish my feet firmly in connecting myself to God, I will receive the help of God against falling into the “dead end” interpretation of the creation presented by people who resist belief in the Creator.
* Even if I am in contact with the people of nonbelievers in God, but I will never fall in their misguidance.