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| **Date** | Saturday, February 20 2016 |
| **Topic** | Supplication of Jonah |
| **Part** | 4 |

**The Third Flash *(continuation):* Even if the entirety of creation had become his servant and helper, it would have been of no avail. For causes have no effect. Since Jonah saw with the eye of certainty that there was no refuge other than the Causer of the Causes, and unfolded to him was the meaning of divine oneness within the light of divine unity, his supplication was able to suddenly subdue the night, the sea, and the whale. Through the light of divine unity, he was able to transform the belly of the whale into a submarine, and the surging sea, which in its awesomeness resembled an erupting volcano, into a peaceable plain, a pleasant excursion.

Eye of certainty=** making sure for your own self.

***How am I going to get rid of my troubling conditions?*** Jonah made sure for himself that there was no refuge other than the Causer of the causes. The apparent causes themselves do not listen to our demands, they have no consciousness, no will. They are employed. Therefore, why not go ask the Employer to help you (i.e. the One that employed what I perceive to be causes).

Just as Jonah was searching for the Source of the real solution, I need to seek the Cause as well.

* ***Where is this event going on?***
* **In Jonah’s own perception.**

We usually understand these types of narrations as miracles. They may or may not have happened; I am not here to confirm that. It may also seem that the verse about Prophet Jonah does not apply to me since I have a rather comfortable life and am not stuck in a whale's belly or in need of a miracle. This verse is not meant to simply make us 'believers/non-believers in miracles. What I ought to do is to apply the story to my life so that I may extract the guidance for me. The fact that the Speaker is narrating this event to me must have something to do with me right now,

***What should I do with this event?***

* Take Jonah’s case and apply it to my own conditions, to my own life because there is guidance there.

The author demonstrates to us how to take guidance by giving us the extreme example of Jonah.

* **We need to interpret all the narrations of stories in application to my own practical life.**
* 1/3 of all the Quran refers to Prophet’s stories
* It cannot be all in vain or just for the sake of stories
* We have to extract meaning so that it guides us

**"There is no other refuge other than the *Causer* of causes."**

* Analogy: If there is no switch in the room, you go to the technician and request light in the room. The light system is under the control of the technician.
* Similarly, if I find myself in a desperate condition and do not know what to do, I have to turn to the One who controls the event and situation I find myself in.
* *How am I going to do that?*
* Look at how Prophet Jonah did it; The Quran is teaching us how to ask the One.
* When I want light in a room, I have to seek out the technician of the building and ask him verbally. I cannot just simply say to myself 'I want light'.

**We must express our need to the *Causer* once we realize what we are seeking.**

* We have to:
1. Realize our needs and realize that the lights themselves cannot respond to my needs, there is a One who establishes the lighting system and controls its order. I have to come to the realization that I have to extend my desire to Him, not to the bulbs and the wires.
2. Express our needs through our human qualities so that it may convey my realization. If I do not REALIZE my need, where to present them, just uttering words (prayers/duas) carries no real meaning.
* In the Quran, verbal sayings are related to the reader’s acknowledgment/consciousness.
* My needs can be expressed verbally but it needs consciousness first.
* Realization🡪verbal expression.
* Verbal speech can only be valuable if it conveys my realization.
* When Jonah realized the Causer of the causes, he unfolded the meaning of Divine Oneness.
* We have to train ourselves to seek the *Causer* of causes.

***What is Divine Oneness?***

* We can experience that this universe is a result of Divine Consciousness. It could not have happened by accident.
* **I can comprehend the concept of the existence of a Creator** but I cannot comprehend the Creator because His essence is beyond this universe.

The order in the universe allows me, to a limited extent, to manipulate the causes.

* Example: When you shut the door and heat your house, you will find your house warm but the external climate remains cold. You cannot stop the icy cold rain.
* Prophet Jonah realizes that he cannot really stop the storm or escape the belly of the fish; the ORDER of control is not within his scope. In this instance, he has to turn to the Causer of causes. Similarly, we have to realize the CONTROLLER of everything in all the events we experience.
* ***Who is the One arranging all the details in my life?***
* **When we start investigating the details of each particular instance, we are able to observe the qualities of the Creator in operation. We do not get veiled by the 'causes' (molecules, particles, soil, wind, etc). This leads us to the realization that the One who gave this universe existence is the One controlling everything.**

Practically, whenever we interact with qualities in this universe we should ask:

* Can the objects of our interaction own the qualities they possess?
* Can objects act by themselves?
* We will realize that nothing has the ability to control its own existence ***(lailaha)***. **All the qualities that we observe have been GIVEN by the Creator *(illallah).* It is the choice of the Maker.**
* We have to train ourselves to keep this awareness alive every time.
* Example: My breathing is not the result of my control. I have absolutely no control over the movement of air molecules down my windpipe.
* Through this process of reasoning, I come to the awareness that the inaccessible Maker and Creator is connecting Himself to me through all the qualities manifested in this universe.
* This is how my perception of Divine Oneness gets transformed into Divine unity.

The universe has a Creator: This is just a starting point for establishing belief.

* Real belief is about truly connecting ourselves with the Creator through each and every event we experience.
* Divine Oneness🡪Divine unity.
* Through the story of Jonah, we are being told about the need for us to connect with the *Causer* of causes. In a situation where we find ourselves unable to 'act' upon the causes, we inevitably realize the fallacy of reliance on 'causes'. In that instance, we have to go through the transformation from Divine Oneness to Divine unity or in other words, turn to the *CAUSER*.

We can only truly experience a relationship with the Creator of this world by communicating and connecting through events/objects.

* Analogy: If you carry a book and claim that the author is great without actually reading it, then you have not established a relationship with the author. Only after interacting with the book can you relate to its author and realize that the book is meaningful. That is, if you are aware that the meaning does not come from the book itself (paper, ink and symbols). The book and its parts are just employed to carry the meaning to its reader.
* Similarly, the book represents the universe, each paragraph represents an event. The universe is a vehicle of conversation with its Author. When I communicate, I understand that I am with the Author. The book of the universe is continuously changing but its being meaningful is a constant. So, we understand that this book is a vessel of a live conversation with its Author. The universe is an ever-changing book. That is, its Author is always speaking to me. **This awareness is belief.**
* Creation is refreshed and belief needs to be refreshed. My perception of creation is changing continuously. My awareness continues until I die.
* The Creator is continuously communicating and distributing the message, which enables us to communicate with Him so that we may become aware of Its existence in our life. It just needs training, awareness and consciousness.

The seed, darkness, fish, water, waves, wind..... NOTHING listens to you, nor is under your control. But if you are in contact with the One who controls all of these elements, you do not feel 'helpless' because you realize that you were never really in control. Through your own realization, you will get out of the helpless situation because you are in contact with the Creator.

* As a result of this realization, the Maker of this universe (which was originally perceived as a very distant and alien being) can now be experienced so personally. The Maker of the universe in my perception becomes the Maker of this event Who is communicating with me and transferring meaning to me through this event.
* I love the Creator of this universe because of how I feel His presence in my life. **I can only feel His presence if I consciously engage the universe around me and search for the source of its existence.**

By now we understand that:

1. The universe has a Creator.
2. All the qualities within the universe are not their own but have been given to them.
3. Connect yourself with the Creator through the experiential moments with all of creation.

False misconception: The universe is fixed and the qualities embedded within each object in the universe acts on their own. ***How do I get out of this mindset?***

* Look within each element at each moment and you will realize that the Creator cannot be isolated from the creation. The universe together with its each and every element is in a continuous dynamic connection with its Creator.

The universe is given existence continuously because every moment of every being is given existence at that time. Just like the first time you read a book, it left you with an impression. The second time you read it, it gives you another layer of meaning. This means that the second time the meaning you got from the sentences changed for you. Similarly, with every interaction in the “book” of the universe you get a new message just for you. If I do not pay attention to the continuous renewal of existence, I am bound to hit the wall.

Renewal of existence is evidenced by the changing conditions I experience within myself. I am training here. We are always experiencing emotions, the daily changes in time, satiety, hunger, etc. Each moment is offering us an opportunity to communicate with the Creator

* If we do not reflect on these moments and how we are using our qualities, we are missing out on the opportunities to forge a connection with the Creator of this universe.
* Just by reflecting on our own existence, we see and realize that change is continuously taking place and everything is being renewed with each passing moment.
* Real, meaningful belief requires us to continuously interact with the universe so that we may connect with the *Causer/Conscious Will*.
* Submit to the Creator, the Causer of the events and acknowledge your impotence. The end goal of each moment is our acknowledgment of the Creator so that I may exist and live my life in a state of submission, in connection with the Eternal One.

After this realization we turn to the narration of the story of Jonah in the Qur’an. In the story Jonah found that he is in the belly of a fish. This represents that we think we are in the belly of a fish while we are living within this natural universe with its recalcitrant laws of nature. We cannot change the order of existence; we are imprisoned by this order. We cannot stop aging and ultimately dying, disappearing from our existence. This contradicts our human expectations.

This perception of existence is simulated in the story of Jonah as he felt that he is in the belly of a fish, a huge one but a fish engulfing his existence, never allows him to change the course of order in his existence. He feels suffocated.

As he comes to the realization that this existence cannot be by its own, it cannot exist by itself. It has its Creator Who is the creator of everything including his feelings and expectations. Then he turns to its Creator. As soon as he realizes that the things are under the control of their Creator Who is consciously making everything as a result of Its Conscious Choice. The existence of the universe witnesses this reality. Then the belly of the fish, as he thought it to be, makes him realize that this transient universe is teaching him who his Creator is by its being transient. The Creator must be revealing Himself to Jonah by every act of creation introducing him His attributes through the creation. **This transient universe is nothing but a means of conversation of the Creator with conscious human beings**.

This realization makes Jonah understand that he is not in a belly of a fish but in a submarine, carrying him into another type of creation where he can experience what he has been yearning for. He understands that his yearning for a permanent existence is under the control of the Creator of his feelings.

It is not the verbal expression of his uttering this supplication that changes his perception but **the change in his perception makes his tongue utter these words of the supplication**.

Thus we conclude that we should not be in expectation of a miraculous happening as soon as we utter this supplication, but a miraculous change will take place in our perception as soon as we come to the realization that **this universe all together is a submarine taking us to the presence of the Creator Who must of necessity be Absolute in His Being**.