Halaqa: Saturday, November 23, 2013

Topic: Second station of the 17th word

***Cry not out at misfortune, O wretch, come, trust in God!***

***For know that crying out compounds the misfortune and is a great error.***

The author is training our human souls - those that are already convinced about the existence of a Lord - about how to practically apply this belief.

* Just by simply saying ‘I believe in God’ does not guarantee security
* Belief in God needs to be experienced in every aspect of our lives
  + It is easy to say that ‘God is the creator of everything’
  + But when you are afflicted with some pain/misfortune, at that point are you still able to find solace in the fact that God created everything OR do you detach yourself from God at that point and see events in isolation?

We have become dependent on many things in this world that we may not even be aware of

* As a result, we place our ‘trust’ in these things rather than the Creator of these things

God created the world and He sent the prophet with a message.

* I believe in all of them BUT in my practical life I may not apply this to my belief statements

Remember, the devil is in the detail, so while you may accept that God created everything, when it comes to specific instances we lose ourselves in the situations themselves and forget God.

It is easy to think of the hereafter as something that will happen after we die (big picture)

* Satan will not try and come to dispel such big claims
* Where he tries to make us slip, are in the details

Similarly, most people will not deny God. They see and confirm the fact that this universe is created and must have a Creator.

* Satan does not try and destruct this big claim

Followers of religion may be innocent BUT the people who institute a religious organization are responsible for why they are instituting the religion.

* Christians don’t mean to have a false concept of God, just like the Muslims didn’t consciously chose to have the correct concept of God
* We have to be sure that we consciously affirm our belief in God and make the distinction in that which is preached by different religious institutions.
* Be aware that a lot of what we ‘believe’ in, is a result of our affiliations with religious institutions AND not what our hearts believe in

Christians don’t go to church because they are convinced of the concept of trinity but rather because they are convinced about the oneness of God.

* We have to distinguish between the true claims and the influences of institutions

I believe in God and I believe in the hereafter, but when something unpleasant happens to me, I dislike it.

* If God is the creator of everything, should I not be approving and glad with everything He created
* But yet, I see that I have been given this sense of dislike
* How do I reconcile my given sense of dislike AND His creatorship?
  + How can I bring my belief in God to be applied in practical situations?

***Find misfortune’s Sender, and know it is a gift within gift, and pleasure.***

***So leave crying out and offer thanks; like the nightingale, smile through your tears!***

Pain is real BUT suffering is not.

* Suffering is a result of our interpretation
* We are not told to not cry
  + The pain is real
  + But at the same time, we have to smile

Nightingale: The bird sings for the love of the rose BUT cannot get it

* When the rose blossoms, the nightingale sings

You want to have your house, but a typhoon comes a wipes it away

You want to be young, but you are growing old

* It is hurting
* But at the same time, you want to achieve a safe place to stay and a healthy lifestyle
  + Instead of interpreting the events as a ‘misfortune’ and saying that God is hurting me
  + We should try and perceive these ‘details’ under the umbrella of the whole universe, which you have ascribed to God

The One who created the microcosm is the same One who created the macrocosm

* Similarly, our belief of Allah as the Creator of the universe needs to be transfixed to the minute details of our daily life.

We have to strive not to lose ourselves within the specific events BUT rather to position them as part of a creation in the whole universe

* Remove yourself from the abyss
* Ask yourself: Can the purpose of the universe be vicious? Is the purpose of the universe to harm people?
  + When I look at the universe on a macro level, everything seems to be happening perfectly and in a good manner
  + But when a specific event afflicts you and it hurts you, ask instead: Why is this hurting me?
    - Who is the creator of the misfortune?
    - What is the purpose of the ‘pain’?
    - The Creator of this universe cannot be crazy
      * Don’t accuse the creator of the whole world as being ‘negative/mean’ because of one small event affecting you

Historically, every authority wants to make his or her subjects believe that they are fortunate while those who are not under their authority are unfortunate. They subsequently want to impose their authority on the ‘fortunate’.

* We see that those who have power politically always want to bring ‘bad news’ that is happening and how they propose to make things better
* It is an age-old political tool to establish authority

When calamities happen around the world, countries rush to offer help as a way to justify their legitimacy, thus leading their citizens to believe that they are good people taking care of the needy, so they desire loyalty to their authority.

* That is why we always hear the news of bad events and the authorities are taking care of the people and helping those who are afflicted by them.
* Thus they make people believe that they are in the authority in order to secure the peace and comfort of the people they are ruling over. This is the way of securing their own position and to keep receiving the tax revenues.

Example: You have a sore throat.

There are two ways you can interpret the scenario.

1. Commonly adopted: Think about all the other organs and systems in your body that are working. Be patient about the negative and be grateful for all the other things that have been given to you.

- However, methodologically it does not solve the existence of the sore throat

1. Your sore throat is still causing you pain AND ignoring or sidelining it, is not Nursi’s approach. He strives to establish a way of thinking that addresses the pain you are experiencing.

* Find the misfortune’s Sender
* Know that it is a gift
* Offer thanks for the ‘misfortune’
  + It may be hurting, but be thankful for the sore throat
  + You will be crying in pain, but at the same time you will be thankful
    - The Creator of the sore throat, is the Creator of the universe (step back from the details)
    - Place the existence of the sore throat as part of your entire existence

Why are you here?

What is expected from your existence?

Why do you think all these blessings (life, sight, memory,etc) are given to you?

Think about the purpose of your existence

* All the qualities are given to me to know the Creator of that particular quality
  + Your eyes are given to you so that you may know that the Creator of your eyes, is the Source of all power of sight
  + Your brain is given to you to know that the Creator of your brain is the Source of All-Wisdom

Why did the Creator of the sore throat give you a sore throat?

* So that you may know the Creator (the purpose of our existence)

Is there a purpose in the existence of the sore throat?

* Yes, although it hurts
* The Creator of the universe cannot be crazy, as I observe. Everything is happening so purposeful and with so much wisdom

I have double functioning qualities given to me

1. When I am given something, I am happy
2. When I want something, I seek that it be fulfilled
   * In both cases, we have to return to the Source who is providing me with what I want
   * When you are in need of something, human qualities turn to the Source that can provide you with what you are in need of

Humans have been created with these two characteristic:

1. Being grateful for what is given
2. Being needy for what we desire

If we never get old, fall ill, don’t die WE will never think of the Source that provides you with everything.

* If there was no transience and signs of our existence being so fragile (something that we cannot sustain and constantly subject to change) we would not look for the Source that sustains us
* These ‘changes’ help me fulfill the purpose in my existence because it draws my attention to the Source
  + Hence, we offer thanks to the transitory nature of this creation

You feel hungry so that you may be grateful when our needs are satisfied.

* We can find the cure, only through your illness
* We can only find eternity, through your transience
* We can only find the Absolute one, through your fragility
* Only through experiencing the transience/misfortunes, can we find the Creator

Understand who is taking care of this world and use that understanding to perceive the specific event that is hurting you

* **If there was no ‘pain’ we will not realize that we are needy**

I don’t like illness/death/suffering – we exploit the feeling INSTEAD of looking into the wisdom of these things and the purpose of creation

* Instead of questioning our feelings, we superficially live our lives based on our emotions/desire and say, since I don’t like being ill, illnesses are bad.
* There are a million other things that are functioning perfectly so perceive your illness/suffering within this concept

Whenever you encounter something that you dislike, ask:

* I don’t like this
* Why don’t I like it?
  + Is it because of my disliking OR am I endowed the ability to dislike it and to cry because of it?
  + It has been deliberately created to fulfill a function
  + Look for the reason
* Don’t start denying all the realities in the world, just because you cannot figure out the wisdom in one occurrence

We human beings are endowed with the opposite qualities:

1. Being thankful for the good we receive and benefit from it. This is one way of finding our Lord, God
2. Disliking the bad we are afflicted and thus being in need of relieving ourselves from the effect of that misfortune. We realize that only the one Who holds the universe under His authority can relieve us from that misfortune, again we find our Lord, God to relieve us from it.

That means in both ways we fulfill our purpose of existence, which is to know who our Lord is and submit to Him.

When we submit our existence to Him, we find the eternity because He is eternal and we realize that our existence is dependent on His Eternal Creatorship. As long as He is eternal, can I only trust my existence in his Eternity. That is the source of my relief from all my existential worries.

* That is the only source of eternal happiness that we human beings can ever have.
* This happiness is the fruit of belief in God. (That is what we mean when we say, be aware of your “belief rights.”)

***If you find Him not, know the world is all pain within pain, transience and loss.***

***So why lament at a small misfortune while upon you is a worldful of woe?***

***Come trust in God!***

If you cannot find Him, the whole world becomes a source of pain

* When you do not have *iman (*certainty in belief), the whole universe becomes a meaningless joke
  + Your enjoyment (knowing that it will end), becomes a source of torture because you know that it will soon disappear
  + Not only does a ‘misfortune’ (sore throat) cause you pain, but everything in your life is painful
* It is easy to say that the universe has a creator than to put this belief into practice
  + When you put it into a practice, you do not get caught up in the transient things
  + However, if we see that this whole universe is not a joke and that everything is so perfectly created with so much wisdom
    - It would then be contradictory to say that the whole world is meaningless

Example: If we knew that you will not get a degree, or any education, would you register in that school?

* No.
* So why then should we go to the school of life if we are not going to get anything?
* Your belief in God is an all or nothing scenario
  + It is either ALL Meaningful OR ALL Meaningless

Your whole existence, including your sore throat, starts making sense depending on which scenario you choose.

Therefore, we need to use our belief in the creation of this world by a Conscious God, and apply this belief in every event that we encounter, bad or good. They all draw attention to the purpose of our existence, which is to know who our Lord is. Thus, we need to look at the wisdom in their creation.

Similar to the concept of birth rights, we have belief rights that we are not using

* We don’t realize the immense benefit in the simple confirmation of ‘I believe in God’
* We don’t really appreciate the importance of belief and what it brings to us
* A great majority of people believe in God but they are not aware of their belief rights.