



# Unleashing Your Potential

## The Power of Critical Thinking



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Lecture 2

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

• قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ۗ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

- Are the ones who know equal to the ones who do not know?" Surely only the ones endowed with intellect would remind themselves.

# Lecture 1

## Karbala: Prescription for Reform.

*“...represents a brief flight that our spirit makes along with Husayn's spirit.....”*

– Ayatollah Mutahhari

# Lecture 2

## Power of Intentional Living

*Own free will.*

*Path which others fix for us*

*Path Allah chooses for us.*

# Topics to Come


1. **Karbala – an instrument of reform**
2. **Power of Intentional Living**
3. **The power of Critical Thinking**
4. **Time is life's capital**
5. **Value Proposition of insaan**
6. **Emotional Intelligence – EQ v/s IQ**
7. **Living a purposefully and Relevantly**
8. **Nurturing the Next Generation**
9. **Concept of the Society of Believers**
10. **Life is a Journey – Islam is the vehicle**

# Power of Critical Thinking

قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ <sup>قَالَ</sup> إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ

Are the ones who know equal to the ones who do not know?"

Surely only the ones endowed with intellect would remind themselves.



*"If doing right pleases and  
doing wrong displeases you,  
then you are truly a believer."*

– [Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)]

# Poverty of Thought

إِنِّي مَا أَخَافُ عَلَى أُمَّتِي الْفَقْرَ وَلَكِنْ أَخَافُ  
عَلَيْهِمْ سُوءَ التَّدْبِيرِ

I am not anxious about the incursion of poverty among my community; that about which I am afraid for them is crooked thinking.

That which poverty of thought will bring my community is much worse than that which economic poverty will bring them. [P]

# ***Faith, Morality & Reason***

- Gibrail to Adam
  - Aql - Intellect
  - Imaan – Faith
  - Haya - Morality



# Imam Ali (As )

- *God has characterized the angels by **intellect without desire** and anger, and the animals with **anger and desire without reason***
- *He exalted man by bestowing upon him all of these qualities.*

# Faculties of the soul

- 1. The power of intelligence
  - (*al-quwwah al-aqliyyah*) - angelic.
- 2. The power of anger
  - (*al-quwwah al-ghadabiyyah*) ferocious.
- 3. The power of desire
  - (*al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*)- animalistic.
- 4. The power of imagination
  - (*al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah*)- demoniac.

# Levels Human perfection

- Man stands between two extreme points
- below the level of beasts
- surpasses high station of angels.



# **Critical Thinking**

**Intellect**

**A faculty we share with  
angels**

# Critical Thinking

- Thinking – A religious Obligation
  - Not to do so is to betray one's fitra
  - Where will Mother Teresa go?
- Thinking is not an option!
  - how to think correctly an important effort.
- Bahloul and Junaid
  - **Speak, Eat Sleep**

# ***Thinking – A religious Obligation***

- Allah has given us capacity to think.
  - We have a religious obligation to use our minds to think correctly

• لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

- "God does not burden any soul save to its capacity." (2:286)
- Reach the conclusions through one's own intellectual struggle - not someone else's

# "Intellectual knowledge –

- Cannot learn it by accepting it on the basis of authority.
- Intellectual knowledge
  - mathematics,
  - logic,
  - philosophy,
  - theology.
- Discovered by the intelligence by asking "Why?"

**Not just accepting the answers but  
questioning answers**

# ***No Taqlid in Usul***

- Matters of Islamic Law - required to follow a mujtahid.
- Intellectual sciences - can not follow a mujtahid.

**Follow a mujtahid in what you practice but not in what you believe**



# ***Tahqiq***

- Accept that  $2 + 2 = 4$  on the basis of someone else's expert opinion?
  - **You need to understand it**

## ***Belief with Understanding***

- I believe in God because my mujtahid told me so !!
- Performing salaah doesn't mean understanding of the One you are praying to.

## ***Not Thinking - not an option!***

- *Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one.*
  - ~ *Malcolm S. Forbes*
  - **Nasruddin and Walnut & Melon**
- **What defines "correct" thinking?**
  - Creative Thinking – Clever Devils
    - Umar Khayyam – Ghalib
  - Thinking Ahead
    - Nasruddin refusing to write a letter

# No Taqlid in Usul .....

- Tawheed is believing that He can not encompassed in imagination and
- **'Adl is that there is no accusation towards Him. -**
  - Imam Ali (A.S.)

# Let us think Critically!

- If Allah did do something unjust then :
  - **Knowingly** - would make Him unjust (***Dhalim***).
  - **unknowingly** - would make Him ignorant (***Jahil***)
  - **forced to do it** would make Him reliant (***Mohtaaj***)
- **Allah is neither *Dhalim, Jahil, or Mohtaaj***
  - So the question of doing something unjust does not arise

# **“Is humankind free in their actions?”**

- Imam Musa Kadhim (A.S.) :
- There are only 3 possibilities -
  - Allah is fully responsible for the human actions
  - Both the human being and Allah are partners in the responsibility of actions.
  - The human being is fully responsible for his/her actions

# "Is humankind free in their actions?"

- If Allah is the originator - punishment for sins would be unjust
- If both the human being and Allah are partners in sin than that too is gross injustice - the weaker partner is punished for an action committed together.
- So the only logical argument is that the human being acts according to his/her own will.