

## Islam in a new age

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

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*Excerpt:*

*In his talk, the Maulana explains that the new age is pro-Islam and not anti-Islam, as is wrongly conceived. Quoting from the Quran and Hadith, he cites several predictions, which forecasted the arrival of the [present] age of opportunities where believers would be able to attain a higher form of realisation and also undertake higher form of dawah work!*

*Unfortunately, Muslims remained immersed in negativity and became fully deprived of this understanding and as such have not been able to avail the modern-day opportunities. A key role in disabling positive thinking was played by clerics, who shut the doors to Ijtihad, which was encouraged both in Quran and Hadith so that believers can develop their ability to think creatively.*

*Explaining further he says that when God opens the door to opportunities, it is implicit that God's succour shall follow. When it rains, it silently tells that if a farmer sows seed, God will foster its growth into a tree. It is therefore implicit in the opportunities that if man stands up to avail these, he will receive divine succour. Towards the close, the Maulana urges the believers to imbibe the "I will do it" spirit and recognise the opportunities to attain higher form of realisation and disseminate the message of dawah work!*

## Introduction.

This topic is of immense importance as it must be understood that the new age is pro-Islam and not anti-Islam, as is wrongly conceived. If you discover the fact that the new age is pro-Islam, such a realisation would open an ocean of divine blessings upon you. According to a Hadith,

**Meri ummat ki misaal baarish jesi hai; nahin malum ki uska pehla hissa behtar hoga ya dusra hissa. [My community may be likened to rainfall. It is not known whether its first half would be better or the second one.] (Al Tirmidhi)**

The analogy quoted above, is a way of expression and not a matter of doubt. It is a known fact that the later part of the rains is better for crops and spreads greenery. By giving this example, Prophet Muhammad implied that the later part of his community (*ummat*) will be better. It must be understood that this verse **does not** in any manner, convey the “superiority” (or *fazilat*) of the community.

## Concept of Superiority.

The concept of superiority [*fazliyat*] is alien to Islam. The above interpretation is in light of the fact that the community of the last Prophet [Muhammad] would remain forever. The books that were revealed before Quran could not remain preserved and therefore, their followers were also rendered unauthentic and were no longer the messengers of God. In the case of Prophet Muhammad’s community, God especially preserved the Quran and all that pertained to the religion. By virtue, of its preservation, it was ensured that the blessing of a preserved religion continues and reaches the later generations. It therefore became possible that the later-day bounties and blessings are bestowed upon this community of Prophet Muhammad. It is therefore not a matter of superiority but a matter of the age we live in.

A host of verses in the Quran and Hadith, convey the glad tidings about the age that was to come. In this age, there was a treasure-full of opportunities to attain higher form of realisation and higher form of dawah work! But Muslims are fully deprived of this understanding and have not become a part of this opportunity. They think that the modern age is anti-Islam and as such they have not been able to utilise the opportunities that have opened up.

## References from Quran and Hadith

According to a Hadith, Prophet Muhammad said

**Islam mein jo halaal hai, woh bahut hi vaazeh hai aur haraam bhi bahut hi vaazeh hai. Unke beech mein kuch mujtaba –e haal (unclear) cheezein hain.** *[Islam clearly spells out that which is Islamic and that which is unislamic. Between these two are some unclear items.]* (Fathul Baari)

This spectrum of ambiguity constitutes an ocean of things. People however, remained unaware of the meaning of this Hadith throughout history. *Allahma Anzar Shah Kashmiri* was a top Muhaddith and had voraciously read the Hadith literature. He writes in his book, “*Ye saara zakhira jo Hadith ke alfaaz pe hai, us mein mujhe Hadith ke maane ko le kar kuch nahin mila.*” *[Amidst this ocean of information available on the literal meaning of Hadith, I could not find one “explanation”.]*

Strangely, he could not find the interpretation of this Hadith anywhere. This Hadith is mentioned in Bukhari as well as in Ibn Hajar’s book ‘Fathul Bari’ which is considered as an encyclopaedia of Hadith. But he said something very important, “*Is Hadith mein jo baat hai, uska jan paana mumkin hai par thode logon ke liye. Ye un logon ke liye mumkin hai jo mujtahid hain.*”

It means that for understanding the bigger meaning of Quran and Hadith, an Ijtihaadi mindset is required. It means that because of being devoid of Ijtihaad, Muslims could only attain a lower form of Islam, while remaining deprived of the higher form of Islam.

Prophet had given a serious advice to the community on this account,

**Ijtihaad har haal mein karo, chahe galat bhi ho jaye.**

**[Do Ijtihaad even if you end up committing an error.] (Al Bukhari)**

According to another tradition,

**Agar Ijtihaad sahi ho, toh doguna sawaab hai aur agar sahi naa ho, galti ho jaye to bhi ek sawaab hai.** (Al Bukhari)

This is to motivate and encourage believers to do Ijtihaad, which will lead to God’s blessings: the only condition being that the intention of the believer must be right. That is, the intention of the believer must be to develop proximity to God and attain God-realisation. Intention is the check in this case because man has control over his intention. Man should not seek to gain publicity or fame; the only motive of Ijtihaad must be to understand the religion of God and develop realisation.

## **Ijtihad's importance**

Prophet Muhammad stressed on Ijtihad so that believers attain high form of dawah work, proximity to God, and God-realisation. There are several verses in Quran and Hadith which inform about the new opportunities that will open up in time to come. According to the Quran,

**Why has no sign been sent down to him [Prophet Muhammad] from his Lord? (Quran, 10:20)**

According to this verse, God did not give any miracle to Prophet Muhammad. Those who say that he was given a miracle, say so of their own accord. It must be understood that not being assigned any miracle does not describe any deprivation in the religion that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad. Instead, it marks the onset of a new world, full of opportunities that would unveil in future. God had destined that because of the Prophetic revolution, a new world will emerge and those things that happened as a miracle earlier would now happen through technology. For example, Prophet Moses was given the miracle that if he were to cast his staff on the ground, it would move as a serpent. In this case, God demonstrated the motion of matter, through miracle. Today, the movement of matter can be seen on a grand scale – in the form of cars and airplanes.

God had therefore, destined a higher form of technology, to come into existence, which would replace miracles. When God announced to Prophet Muhammad that there will be no miracle, it actually meant that he would be given a *super* miracle, which would be witnessed by the entire ummat (community)! And today, we see, matter running in industries and on the roads! This was done to ensure that it becomes possible for every community to see and utilise the opportunities that would unveil.

## **Great Lesson**

I read a strange news item, recently, an extraordinary event which enriches the faith of a believer! The English daily, Hindustan Times ( March 16, 2012, Page 17) carried a news item, "*Google Earth helps Indian reunite with family!*" An Indian man, who was separated from his family while begging in Madhya Pradesh when he was just five, was finally reunited with them 25 years later after locating his village on Google Earth. Saroo Brierley was adopted by an Australian couple and taken to Tasmania where he became a successful businessman. He lost his Indian family while begging at Khandwa train station, as he accidentally boarded a train going in the wrong direction. Brierley revealed how he spent a decade scouring Google looking for signs of his hometown. Using Google Earth, he used to spend so many hours zooming in and out looking for something he recognized.

From a vague memory of Khandwa train station and surrounding area, he was eventually able to find the area on Google Earth. He then joined a Facebook group for his home town Ganesh Talai and managed to piece together the details by emailing members of the group. He had memories and images of the town he grew up in, the streets he used to wander and the faces of his family. He told the news reporter, "To this day, I still can't believe I managed to find my family, considering India's population size and how young I was when I lost them!"

I will now tell you another incident. According to Quran and Hadith, Prophet underwent Isra (or Miraj) during the final period of his stay at Mecca. *Isra* means "night journey". During his journey, the Prophet went to Jerusalem from Mecca and returned in one night. People often consider it to be a spiritual journey but I think it was a physical journey. God had done away with the difference of time and space to make this happen! Next morning, when Prophet told about his journey, the Meccans started deriding his claim. Then to verify the truth of his claim, the Meccans appointed a person from among themselves who had visited Jerusalem to question the Prophet. As that man started asking questions Angel Gabriel put a map of Jerusalem (*Masjid-e-Aqsa*) in front of Prophet. The man used to keep questioning and the Prophet used to give an answer to all his questions. It was only after he satisfied himself, that it was believed that the Prophet actually underwent on a night journey!

Both these instances are comparable. The distance between Mecca and Jerusalem is 1,300 kilometres approximately and the distance from Tasmania to Khandwa, is roughly 10,300 kilometres. What happened in Khandwa was the same as that which happened in Jerusalem! This time it happened as a result of technology! This is what Quran and Hadith foretold, about the age where the Prophet's ummat will have a part in gaining higher realization!

Such big feats are taking place but Muslims are stuck up in trivialities and consider everyone an enemy. According to a Hadith

**Allah is deen ki madad secular logon se karayega**  
**[God will send help for this religion through secular men.] (Al Bukhari)**

Advancement in information technology means that God opened the doors of His blessing so much that even the secular people were deployed to do God's work! Just like the boy could spot Khandwa from Tasmania, similarly it has become possible that you spot your Madus around the globe, by being at any other place and then do a high level planning for dawah work!

## **We live in a world of opportunities**

This is a world of opportunities but people have marred Muslims in negativity. An Arab Sheikh wrote- '*Three snakes that are engulfing us!*' referring to the western society. This is a baseless claim!

According to a Hadith:

**Ek waqt aayega ki meri ummat qila fateh karegi bina talwar chalaye! (Sahih Muslim)**

**[A time shall come when my community shall conquer the fortress without the use of sword!]**

This is not a matter of chanting *nara-e-takbeer*! The above Hadith is explaining a “scope” that in later times, the power of sword will be inferior to the power of ideology, peaceful method and technology.

I would also like to mention at this point that the predictions in Quran and Hadith are of two kinds. One pertains to an individual and the other refers to an era. Let me explain this further.

## **Prediction related to an individual**

According to the Quran, God said about Pharaoh (Moses' contemporary),

**We shall save your body this day, so that you may serve as a sign for those who come after you.**

**(10:92)**

The event of Pharaoh's death happened 3,000 years ago and the verse was revealed 1,400 years ago. At that time no one knew that the Pharaoh's body was really intact. It was a Professor Loret who, in 1898, was the first to find the mummified remains of the Pharaoh who lived in Moses' day. It was rumoured that the pyramids housed the curse of the Pharaoh and who ever entered it and invoked the curse, died. The team of archaeologists examined carefully and came to know that the pyramids contained poisonous gases, released from the excreta of a small bird that had made the pyramid its dumping ground for many years. The team then provisioned for these gases to be sucked out using suction machines and like this they paved their way inside, where to their amazement they discovered the mummified body of the Pharaoh!

For 3000 years the corpse had remained wrapped in a sheet in the Tomb of the Necropolis at Thebes where Loret had found it, until July 8, 1907, when Elliot Smith uncovered it and subjected it to proper scientific examination and Carbon-14 dating. In 1912 he published a book entitled *The Royal Mummies*.

His research had proved that the mummy discovered by Loret was indeed that of the Pharaoh who 'knew Moses, resisted his pleas, pursued him as he took flight, and lost his life in the process.' As early as the seventh century A.D., the Qur'an had asserted that the Pharaoh's body was preserved as a sign for man, but it was only in the 19th century that the body's discovery gave concrete proof of this prediction.

I would like to cite another example here. According to a verse in the Quran,

**The Romans have been defeated in a nearby land.**

**They will reverse their defeat with a victory within a few years. (30:2-4)**

In a battle which took place between the Romans and Iranians in the seventh century, the latter had a decisive victory. The power of Romans was crushed and it could not be imagined that they would even attempt a comeback. In such circumstances, the above verse was revealed. Within a span of next nine years, Romans re-gathered an army and gained victory over Persians. This was an overwhelming event and gives a believer stronger conviction to believe in God and live in well-wishing of mankind!

### **Prediction related to an era**

**We shall show them Our signs in the universe and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth. (41:53)**

In the seventh century, when Quran was being revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, only traditional arguments held sway. Gradually times changed and scientific era came into being. The scientific discoveries proved the veracity of the Quran in the rational framework.

The Quran made the following prediction, foretelling the coming of the age of globalisation,

**When Gog and Magog are let loose and swarm down from every hillside and they spread out. (21:96)**

In this verse, “global mobilisation” had been predicted, which came to pass as God opened opportunities and travel industry boomed. Earlier a *dayee* had to go to a *madu* but today, the *madu* comes to a *dayee*! Believers should remain immersed in gratitude! Despite such opportunities, Muslims have turned a blind eye and perceive everyone as an enemy. In all Muslim countries – Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, etc, tourists from all over the world come but Muslims view them as “enemies”.

God opened the doors so that *madu* reaches the *dayee* and so that Muslims can spread the message of God. The negative and baseless assumptions of Muslims have killed *Ijtihaadi* point of view in them.

### **Ijtihaadi point of view**

According to a verse in the Quran,

**So that We might show him some of Our signs. (17:1)**

The above verse which is in the context of Isra (Prophet Muhammad's night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem) uses the term "signs". To understand this verse better, I did Ijtihaad and realised that "signs" in this verse do not refer to signs in Jerusalem but to the journey itself being a "sign". The Prophet was made to undertake a very fast journey from Mecca to Jerusalem and it was an indication that such forms of transportation and communication will come into being that would make the entire world, a global village.

Just as Prophet Muhammad had done a fast journey, God opened avenues for the entire mankind to travel with such speed to do dawah work. When I think about this, my courage and conviction increases manifold to think that God opened such a plethora of opportunities that can be availed to perform greater dawah work. All these things are in Quran and Hadith but Muslims could not understand the meaning and neither did they avail any of the oceanic opportunities that God made available. Muslims should have run towards the opportunities to avail them but because they do not have Ijtihaadi mindset, they have instead succumbed to negativity, hatred, sadness and despair.

This world is such that in complete sense of the word, man should become positive about it. Religious freedom, communication, printing press, electronic media – opportunities of doing dawah work effectively, which hitherto never existed have now been made available so that the following Hadith comes to pass,

**No house will remain – big or small – where the word of God has not entered. (Musnad Ahmad)**

This does not mean that angels will come and usher the word of God, this refers to the opportunities that God will provide so that man can do universal dawah work!



## Conclusion

According to a Hadith,

**Nange aur bhuke, bade bade makaan banayenge.**

**[The penurious and poor will construct huge houses.] (Al Bukhari)**

Earlier only agriculture was economy but after industrialisation and opening of business opportunities, everyone can earn money and develop infrastructure. Secular people utilised these opportunities to find greater technology but Muslims who had to avail these opportunities to do dawah work, have failed miserably. All Muslims across the world are immersed in negative thoughts because of which they are not being able to do Ijtihaad and extract themselves out of this abyss of negativity and unawareness.

Clerics have spread such wrong notions dissuading people from exercising Ijtihaad on account of punishment in the hereafter. This is absurd. A believer should only keep his intention checked. Quran and Hadith are such treasures of knowledge but unfortunately, the clerics have shut the doors to all knowledge!

It is so strange that the events that unfolded in the world, made English a language that was spoken worldwide. At the same time, printing press ensured that Quran could be prepared and spread. But Muslims could not avail this opportunity. There were two *fatwas* that restricted this. According to one fatwa Quran could not be published without its Arabic text and according to the other fatwa a Quran with Arabic text could not be given to a non-believer because of concerns of disrespect. Like this, backward thinking of Muslims deprived people of getting knowledge from the Quran.

The door for availing English translation was opened up by secular publishing houses who saw the demand for English and decided to publish the translation of the Quran without Arabic text.

God brought about printing press so that Quran could be published and simultaneously tourism became rampant. But believers declared printing haraam and declared tourists as enemies. In doing so, the Muslims deprived themselves of all the opportunities of higher realisation, higher dawah work and higher form of courage.

All those of you have who have got the opportunity to know the new world, its opportunities and importance of dawah work, must arise with “*I will do it*” spirit! That is, if no one else does it, I will do it! Government, communities do not do it, but I will do it!

You must understand the new era and recognise its opportunities so that the moments given by God can be availed for attaining higher form of realisation and proximity to God, all this while doing dawah work. You must kill negative thinking and the complain mindset and become a completely positive thinker.

When God opens the door to opportunities, it is implicit that God’s succour will come. When it rains, it silently tells that if you sow seed, God will foster its growth into a tree. It is therefore implicit in the opportunities that if you stand up to avail these, you will receive divine succour.

I pray that God gives us the courage and conviction so that we attain marefat and do dawah work and reward us with paradise in the hereafter.

#### Question-Answers

*Question 1: How should we bring into action, the belief that we will present ourselves before God?*

Answer: You have to think about it every day. According to a UNESCO dictum, “*violence begins from the mind.*” I think everything begins from my mind. I think about everything. When I was sleeping last night, I thought, my father, mother, wife and neighbours, acquaintances died, I too will die. There is nothing mysterious about this, only that people have to start thinking.

*Question 2: How should we prepare ourselves to love God?*

Answer: People do not want to sacrifice. They want to love God while they continue to love the worldly pleasures. If you have to love God and get reward for it, you will have to leave all other loves – material, family children, etc. Both are not possible. The price is that all other forms of love will have to be left out. You should leave the love of *gair-ullah* and the love of God will be instilled in your heart. Else you should not talk about it.

*Question 3: Is word-to-word study of the Quran the best way of understanding the Quran?*

Answer: There is no best way – you should only contemplate and do dua. You cannot apply “techniques” to read and understand the Quran. Once a translation was published, which had a meaning underneath each word but all these techniques do not work. The only method is to contemplate and pray to God so that the meaning of the Quran is made understandable.

*Question 4: All religions teach the followers to do good deeds. Why should a person follow Islam then?*

Answer: This is not a matter of all religions; it is a matter of Islam being a “preserved” religion. It is not a choice between many. It is a matter of preservation. The text, history of other religions is not preserved. Every other religion is on the basis of mythology and scholars are unanimous on it. Islam therefore, is the only authentic version of religion of God. The same religion came earlier as well but people could not preserve it. Islam is neither complete nor superior; it is just the authentic version of religion of God. If one is sincere to know the religion of God, one will not have a second opinion on this and will take the religion that is based on history, rather than religion based on mythology.

*Question 5: Religion should be flexible. Islam is very rigid and should not have do's and don'ts.*

Answer: Islam gives complete flexibility. Religion has two concepts – based on revelation and based on social phenomena. Forming an opinion about Islam, on the basis of Muslim practice is not right. Other religions do not provide flexibility but Islam does.

*Question 6: Should dawah work be done with Muslims?*

Answer: Dawah work is for everyone – anyone who has questions and doubt about Islam.

*Question 7: Please explain: the Quranic verse 25:54 which says that God created humans from water and created the ties of blood as well as marriage?*

Answer: This verse indicates “relationship”. One is basis blood and other is “relationship”. It means that the relation that is formed is a blessing of God because relationships do not exist among animals. Every animal lives alone and well-wishing and love is not found in them. People consider this to mean that family is a social framework of relationships and does not take it as a thanksgiving. If God would not have kept these emotions and feelings with neither blood nor relationship, we would have been like animals.

*Question 8: What is the importance of contradictory thinking?*

Answer: People become angry when criticised because they think highly of themselves. Irrespective of how scientific and rational the argument is, it is taken as an offence. Contradictory thinking is to consider yourself as modest but when you see that people are not following the right path, you criticise. So, to criticise others, thinking you are nothing is a difficult job. But God has kept this speciality in man that he can contain contradictions. Man must convert this potential into actual.

*Question 9: What is the difference between pro-Islam and pro-Muslim?*

Answer: Pro-Muslim means “community based”. Islam is an ideology and pro-Islam means that you think only in the context of an ideology. Both lead to two different kinds of thinking. If you have only Islamic mindset, there is no room for hatred.

*Question 10: Is there any difference of status and ranks in the Muslim community according to castes?*

Answer: Hadith does not have any classification and neither does it have any ranks. It is a phenomenon of the Indian subcontinent because of the caste-system that prevailed here. Muslims Islamised this caste system and took influence of their surroundings.

*Question 11: Though patience is a great virtue but what should we do when we feel that we are on the verge of losing patience?*

Answer: This happens with people who do not lead a thinking life. This is animal behaviour. Man is a thinking animal and must develop his thinking. Those who do not develop their thinking face such problems.

*Question 12: What is the difference between worship and dawah work?*

Answer: Worship is mandatory upon a believer if you want proximity to God. Dawah work is to spread the message of God to others. *Ibadat* (or worship) is to adopt the religion of God at a personal level and *dawah work* is to spread the religion and message of God to others, outside of you. One is internal and other is external.

*Question 13: Where can we go to find God if we cannot see him?*

Answer: Man sees nothing. It is a big fallacy. What we “see” is an appearance, we cannot even see our real being – the mind or soul. We see only physical appearance of parents as well. So is with God, we see God’s creations but if you want to see God, then this eyesight is not capable of doing so. A book titled, “*Appearance and Reality*” (by Bradley) explains this concept.

*Question 14: I don’t want to get angry. Please suggest measures with reference to Prophet’s life.*

Answer: When you get angry, you will have to manage it. You will have to activate your thinking instead of your emotions. People activate emotions when they get angry. But you must learn the art of anger management.

*Question 15: Why is it that Muslims do not understand that Salman Rushdie and his kind need to be addressed even more as hatred pushes wrong-doers even farther?*

Answer: Hatred has become a community mindset of Muslims. The responsibility of this lies with our leaders and hatred has become an atavistic instinct. To finish it, we will have to kill it from its root.

*Question 16: Mosques use loudspeakers to do dua which creates a disturbance for all.*

Answer: This is a clear bidat but because there is freedom and these are electorate, nothing can be done about it. It is the appeasement and vote politics. The following Hadith foretold the transgression that was to ensue in later times,

**Masjidon se awazein buland honghi.**

**[Loud voices will be heard from the mosques.]**