

Living in a world of competition

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Introduction

This principle of nature, in brief, favours healthy competition. Competition arouses challenge and choices opted lead to consequences. Man cannot escape from the consequences of his actions. This aspect of man's life has been explained in the Quran variously. A verse puts it as:

We have created man into a life of toil and trial (90:4)

"Toil and trial" in the above verse does not denote affliction. It implies that according to the law of nature, man will repeatedly face conditions that challenge his status quo. This is because every man has the freedom to run in the race of life and strive to attain his goal. As we all run, confrontations are bound to emerge as some may win and others may lose. In other words, freedom paves way for competition and competition may result in victory for some and defeat for others; this is what the above verse means. If in such a scenario, a man complains upon being defeated, his complaint is false because defeat is a result of the law of nature and his complaint will not change this result. For example, people often complain that they are being discriminated against. They should rather say that in times of competition, they could not compete and are hence lagging behind; to call it discrimination is to paint it in negative light.

When man attributes his failure to a conspiracy, he transfers the blame from himself onto others. Man must have the courage to accept his failure. Acceptance of mistake is so crucial that God set forth its example in the very beginning of creation. Quran describes how Satan deceived Adam and he ate the apple of Forbidden Tree (*Shajar-e-mamnua*). But Adam did not blame Satan for it. Rather he accepted the blame and sought repentance from God saying,

**Our Lord, we have wronged our souls: if You do not forgive us and have mercy on us,
we shall be among the lost (7:23)**

This example clarifies that the primary question to ask is why man gets misled by promptings? In other words, the responsibility is solely man's own. No one else can be blamed for it. Blaming others is in reality, a boomerang practice.

The Babri mosque controversy

The Babri mosque issue is a perfect example of going against the law of nature. The present-day Muslims have degenerate so much that instead of introspecting where they went wrong, they instead blame me for criticising their wrongdoings.

Islam lays down a clear principle in this regard. According to it, the believers should not give others a chance of disputing with them. This is indicated in the Quran as follows:

Let them not dispute with you (22:67)

The mosque at Ayodhya was constructed in 1528 by Mir Baqi, adjacent to the site called the *Ram Chabutra*, a sacred place for the Hindus. According to the principle given by the above verse, the mosque should have been constructed at a distance from the sacred place of Hindus in order to avoid any future dispute. Ironically, no alim gave the fatwa that the mosque was not constructed according to the principles of Islam. Failure to give this fatwa resulted in misguidance of the Muslims. The dispute rose to such an extent that ultimately the mosque got demolished.

In this case, a practical example was also available from the history of Islam. In 638 AD, during the caliphate of Umar Farooq, the second caliph, Palestine was conquered. It was then that, at the request of the Christians, Umar Farooq travelled to Palestine in order to finalize the agreements between them and the Muslims. It is recorded in history that during his visit the following event took place: "Umar was sitting in the courtyard of the Church of Resurrection in Jerusalem when the time came for prayer. Umar then turned to the Christian Bishop and asked where he should say his prayers. The priest replied that he could pray right where he was seated. Umar, however, said, "No, it is not proper for me to pray inside the Church, because any Muslim who may come here subsequently, will maintain that since Umar has said his prayers here, a mosque should be built on that very spot. Umar, therefore, moved a stone's throw away, and said his prayers. Muslims did come to the city later on and, as he had foreseen, built their mosque at the exact point where he had said his prayers. This mosque exists to this day (*Masjid-e-Umar*) – short, but discreet distance away from the Church.

Such was the enlightened attitude of the true followers of the Prophet Muhammad, who averted the crisis in advance with their foresight. If a mosque had to be built, they did so, but away from any place which was likely to become controversial. But later-day Muslims, without any kind of mature deliberation, have insisted upon saying their prayers at places which are the subject of controversy and have built mosques right there on those very spots, without, it should be emphasized, adding one single brick to the bastions of Islam.

The precedent set by Umar should have served as guidance for the Muslims. But this did not happen. In building the two places of worship adjacent to each other, the Muslims provided an opportunity for dispute. The reason for this blunder is that the present-day Muslims have adopted the cultural religion. They have become ignorant of the teachings of the Quran and Hadith.

Avoiding Confrontation

Our world is based on competition and it has no place for confrontational approach. It is therefore in the best interest of man to avoid confrontation and strive in an environment of healthy competition.

Some days ago, I had a strange observation. I realised that God has taught *principle of avoidance* to the animals. Adjacent to my house, is a telephone wire on which squirrels run. Once when a squirrel was passing, another one began trotting from the opposite direction. As the two came close to each other, one of them instantly turned upside down and made way for the other. I was amazed! Even though a squirrel does not possess human-like intelligence, yet it knew how to avoid confrontation. This is the secret of life and the Creation Plan of God. In other words, a distance must be maintained in order to avoid confrontation. For example, cars on the road maintain a distance between each other to avoid collision. This rule applies in every aspect of life.

Satan will mislead, man must save himself

At the onset of creations itself, God established the principle that Satan will mislead man, he however will have to strive to avoid being misled. In case, he succumbs and is misled, man must then feel truly repentant and seek forgiveness from God. Adam for instance, could have laid the blame on Satan but he did not do so. He assumed complete responsibility of being misled by Satan and sought forgiveness from God.

In other words, man must accept the status quo and take corrective measures to amend it because competition will not be eliminated from the world. For example, post-pious caliphate, Umayyads formed the empire. Later, the Abbasids supported by the Iranians, overthrew the Umayyads and established their rule. While Umayyads were supported only by the locals, Abbasids eventually flourished because of support from foreign and mightier powers from nearby lands. Similarly, Ibrahim Lodhi once ruled Delhi but the Mughals overthrew him. Competition therefore is not a matter of a community versus community only; it is a universal law that applies everywhere. It is best for man to take proactive measure to prevent the occurrence of any confrontation but if it does take place then in such a case, he must follow the following teaching of the Quran, which reads thus

Reconciliation is best (4:128)

In other words, man must accept the status quo instantly. For example, in Palestine a status quo came into being in 1948. The land was divided between the Arabs and the Jews on a fair basis. The Arabs should have instantly accepted this status quo. But the Arabs did not and they continue to suffer till date.

Principles of life

The first principle is to not perform an act which leads to dispute. One must foresee and proactively take measures of avoidance. However, if you are not able to take precautions and an event of dispute arises then accept the status quo immediately so as to continue unhindered on the path of success. If you are not able to take any of the above two options, then realize your mistake and accept it by saying, "I was wrong". The Arabs for instance should agree that they were wrong in not accepting Balfour Commission division. Following these approaches is important because casting blame on others and not accepting the status quo are practices that run anti to the Creation Plan of God.

Man therefore can only choose to accept the Creation plan of God; there is no other choice. It must be understood that he lives in a world of competition where only those thrive who are able to sustain themselves amidst this healthy competition; others lose out. On the contrary, if upon losing, the failure is attributed to conspiracies, it will yield nothing.

Most severe aspect of blaming others

The policy of blaming others has a much deeper repercussion. Had Adam blamed Satan, he would not have sought forgiveness and made himself worthy of God's forgiveness. In other words, he would have deprived himself an opportunity to re-think. The same is the case with the present-day Muslims. All of them remain immersed in negativity on some account or the other because of their inability to understand the creation plan of God.

The Bible says, *Blame thyself*. This means that cause is within man; he only needs to search within. No cause is outside. The Muslims have reversed the rule. For everything, they blame others - be it the British, the Americans or the Jews – and continue to thrive on negativity.

Muslims have got rid of man-oriented thinking

When Prophet Muhammad migrated to Medina, a substantial population of Jews existed there. The Prophet strove to ensure peaceful co-existence amongst all communities. An example illustrates how. Once the Prophet was seated and he saw a funeral procession of a Jew. The Prophet immediately stood up in respect. Seeing this, a Companion asked the Prophet why he did so, to which the Prophet replied: *Was he not a human being?* The Prophet did not see the Jew as an enemy but as a human being. This example illustrates that the Prophet had man-oriented thinking and he wished well for everyone. Unlike the present-day Muslims, he neither complained nor blamed others for any situation. Being in Mecca for thirteen years, the Prophet and his companions faced severe hostilities. But, he never complained about this to anyone. There exists no such reference in the Hadith or Seerah. He just preached his message of One God and the Hereafter. By putting the injustices faced at the hands of the Meccans in God's bucket, the Prophet and the Companions were able to maintain hundred percent positivity.

Negative mind-set of Muslims

Post media and journalism, Muslims have written innumerable articles referring to the so-called conspiracy against them. They perceive themselves under siege and as second-class citizens. This is the talk of every household and gathering. No one thinks the big disadvantage this brings. That is, the Muslims have become negative thinkers and are living in hatred thereby.

In promoting negativity, the Muslims have lost their eligibility to paradise. It is very important to understand that this world has not been created for play. You are in this world and your record is being formulated which is being made by angels – unseen force of God — so that those people can be identified who can inhabit paradise.

Paradise is the place which is only peace,

They will not hear therein anything vain, only greetings of peace (19:62)

In Paradise, man will live in love, well-wishing and remembrance of God. All pain shall be taken away. In this world such people are being selected who fulfil this condition to be settled in Paradise. Every time you speak ill or negative, your name is being struck off the list of angels as a person who does not deserve Paradise. And it has to be understood that you will have to live amidst negativity then only will be your true test to see whether you are actually free of hatred or not. People will commit excesses against you and transgress bounds and in such situations will be your real test.

In the Monk who sold his Ferrari, is not as per the Plan of God. God desires that you live amidst problems, where people give you pain and think against you. Yet you save yourself. According to a Hadith,

Do not become like others (Al- Tirmidhi)

Despite all the wrongs that happen, do not blame. Stay away from negativity. Angels also live amidst us and positivity is the hallmark of angels.

Towards the end

According to the unawareness of scheme of God, you fell into trap of negativity and eventually became deprived of paradise, eternally. Bible says for people who do not prove themselves deserving of Paradise, Eternal gnawing and gnashing of teeth. He shall think that mine was the case of missed opportunities, eternally. In this world, you are shouting that we have been made second-class citizens but you will be made second-class citizens in the hereafter.

You should say, We cannot afford hatred. We cannot afford negativity. We cannot afford violence. Because we cannot afford to lose paradise and be deprived eternally. That which was explained right at the beginning of creation, explained through Companions is what Muslims are still unaware of. This is because their emotions are their religion. All this has to be pondered over.

When I walk out of my house, I always fear falling down and dying. My father Fariduddin Khan died on December 29, 1929. We lived in a village on outskirts of which he used to go to see the lands. As he was returning, midway, he fell down. He got paralytic attack and could never speak again. I only remember him as a quiet soul who passed away in the morning. Death comes at a point of no-return. If I wish to return, it is impossible. Death makes two things impossible – Return to this world (to your family, to your people) and to undertake a new action. Effectively, return and starting a new venture, both finish. One who remembers death, can he fall for hatred? He will cast it aside and say that we cannot afford to lose Paradise. We have to Save Ourselves.

Despite the suffering, we have to save ourselves from negative reactions or else you will not form a paradisiacal personality. One with even an iota of negativity will lose deservation of paradise.

Hatred arises after negative experiences but that is the moment of test. You have to save yourself from such a mentality. All Muslims have created an 'enemy' and are speaking against it. Doing so they have actually become enemy to themselves. The one who announces the enmity of others is effectively saying that he is the biggest enemy of himself in terms of result as he has made himself incompetent for Paradise. In this world, you either care for yourself or hurt yourself. Enmity against others is enmity against yourself. It is entirely a case of boomerang. This is a very serious issue and must be considered deliberately.