

Man and the laws of nature.

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Excerpt:

In his talk, the Maulana says that the starting point of life is to know about the laws of the world we live in. A person, who does not know this, will work at random, and inevitably fail. All other elements in nature function in obedience to the laws of nature laid down for them by their Maker. But there is a difference between the status of man and that of the physical world. While the entire universe is doing so under compulsion, man exceptionally has the freedom to follow the laws of nature of his own will.

Citing instances from the life of the Prophet Muhammad, the Maulana explains that the secret of his success was to view history as changelessness in change. Elaborating the wisdom behind this lesson, he said that a wise man is one who learns to differentiate between that which is changeable and that which is not. Drawing from the last two hundred years of Muslim history, he says that it has been so shaped as a result of Muslims not being able to apply the wisdom of this Prophetic sunnah.

The lesson:

One aspect of life is subject to change [and can never be retrieved like political reign] while another aspect of life is that which remains unchangeable [the opportunities that exist]. It is upon man's wisdom to accept that which changes and focus energy on availing the opportunities that exist!



Introduction.

It is the starting point of life that we know about the laws of the world we live in. A person, who does not know this, will work at random, and inevitably fail. According to the Quran

Do they want a religion which is different from the religion of God, though the entire universe follows it (3:87)

Here, the term "religion" is not in the sense of religion but in the sense of law of nature. Everything in the universe—the sun, the moon, the stars— have all completely subjugated themselves to God's will; they cannot make the slightest deviation from the path He has ordained for them. Similarly, all other elements in nature function in obedience to the laws of nature laid down for them by their Maker. But there is a difference between the status of man and that of the physical world. The physical world has been given no option but to submit to God, whereas man has been given free will. He is not bound by fixed laws like all other created beings. He has been given freedom of thought, option and action and is required to submit to the will of God by his own choice. This is the secret of success of man.

Body of man is the vehicle of his soul and while the body (or the vehicle) keeps changing, the soul remains unchanged. Let me explain this in detail. Cells are the fundamental units of human body. Scientists estimate that our bodies contain anywhere from 75 to 100 trillion cells. Cells do everything from providing structure and stability to providing energy for functioning of vital processes. Cells within the human body have different life spans based on the type and function of the cell. They can live anywhere from a few days to a year. Upon completion of their life span, these cells disintegrate and their place is taken up by new cells which are regenerated within the body. It so happens, therefore that within a fixed span of time, man's entire body changes. The speed of replacement is slow when young and increases when old. It is said that man's body changes completely in a decade. This can be best expressed in the following words of a philosopher, who said, "Personality is changelessness in change."

This changelessness in change teaches man a valuable lesson. That, in life some things change and some others do not change. This is an important lesson for man to learn and apply in his life.

According to a verse in the Quran

We bring these days to men by turns. (3:140)

The above verse is in the context of political power, which keeps changing hands. Just like, one's monopoly extends only so far as his soul is concerned and not over the body because body will keep changing. Likewise, political power has always changed hands throughout the human history and this teaches man that it is not possible to monopolise political power. For example, there was a time in India when kings ruled, then Mughals came, followed by British and then democratic parties. Thus, we understand that political power is a subject of change.



The difference between what "changes" and what "does not".

In order to lead a successful life, man must know the difference between what is changeable and what is not. The last two hundred years of Muslim history have been shaped so as a result of Muslims not knowing what is changeable and what is not. Every time, power changes hands, man must know what changed and what did not. Because whatever has changed will never come back.

Let us take the example of Prophet Muhammad. He started his mission in Mecca in 610 A.D. At that time, the holiest place in Mecca, the Kaaba, which was built by Prophet Abraham for the worship of One God, had come to house 360 idols. This was as a result of prevalence of idol worship which gradually came to dominate that area. The situation at the time of Prophet Muhammad was a very provocative one. But under the guidance of God, he took a revolutionary decision – he separated the unchangeable from what had changed. In this de-linkage, lies the whole wisdom of Islam.

He understood that the 'presence of idols' was the *changeable* part. There was no idol at the time of Prophet Abraham but as the tribes took to idol-worship, they gradually placed their idols inside the Kaaba. By the time of Prophet Muhammad, this number had reached three hundred and sixty. Amidst this change was the one thing, which was unchangeable – and that was *opportunity*. The worshippers of these idols used to visit Kaaba in groups to pay homage to their respective idols. Prophet Muhammad converted this "gathering" into his audience. While a change came about in terms of the presence of idols inside Kaaba, there was no change in opportunities. He did not confront that which had changed (protesting against the idols, breaking them, etc.). Instead, he realised that it was a temporary phase because it was a part of that which continuously changes. That which does not change is opportunity. He therefore ignored the presence of idols and used to visit these gatherings and recite the Quran to those present. That is how dawah was performed by utilising the opportunities.

Ignoring that which changes and sticking to that which will not change, is the wisdom Islam teaches. The result was that in 23 years, the entire Arabia came within the fold of Islam. This was the single biggest formula of his success. An American publication entitled, "The 100: A Ranking of the Most Influential Persons in History," puts Prophet Muhammad as the first person on the list. Dr. Michael Hart, the author of the book cites that Prophet Muhammad has been listed above all others because he was "supremely successful" in both the religious and secular realms. Dr. Hart described the events from the life of the Prophet Muhammad but he failed to discover the formula that made him so successful. This formula has remained unknown to Muslims themselves and lack of awareness of this formula has led to their failure in every field.

Examples of lack of understanding.

Under the Balfour Declaration in 1948, Palestine was partitioned into two. Roughly half of the land was given to Israel and the remaining to Arabs. Instead of realising the opportunities, Muslims began protesting. They failed to take lesson from the life of the Prophet. According to the Quran

You have indeed in the Prophet of God a good example. (33:21)

It is important to note here that one is Sunnah and the other is wisdom pertaining to the Sunnah. Muslims understood the Sunnah partially but could not discover the wisdom behind the Sunnah.



That is why people could never understand the reason behind the Prophet's decision to ignore the idols (which was a changeable condition) and instead recognize the opportunity, (the permanent aspect).

Rule in Palestine likewise, was subject to change. It is known that Muslims reached there in the time of second Caliph and ruled for next thousand years, before that the Romans ruled the place. Change of leadership and power had to happen so if Balfour verdict divided Palestine, then Arabs should have accepted it.

Instead of learning from the wisdom of Prophet Muhammad, Muslims fought with Israel, According to yesterday's news, a huge procession was organised in the name of Tahafuz-e-Aqsa [protection of Al-Aqsa]. The question is why did the need for Tahafuz arise? It happened because Muslims failed to understand the wisdom of the Prophet and fought with Israel. According to the division under the Treaty, Al-Agsa mosque was in the land allotted to Arabs but today as a result of their intolerant and unwise policies, Muslims lost what they originally had. Today, they are left with West Bank and Gaza strip areas.

The wisdom of Sunnah was neither discovered by the author of "The 100" nor by Muslims. This wisdom lay in understanding that while change of rule is imperative, future must be planned in context of the available opportunities.

It is critical to realise that there is one thing which is subject to change and one which is unchangeable. The human body is a demonstration of this principle. It can be said that history is a record of changelessness in change. What changes is political power and what remains always, is opportunity. It is also important to understand that that which is subject to change cannot be re-lived. For example, if today the erstwhile kings of India or the Mughals want to re-establish their rule in India, it cannot happen. It is only the existing opportunities, which must be availed.

But Muslims have failed to learn from and practice the wisdom of prophetic sunnah. For instance, in Kashmir, Muslims have been fighting for last sixty years for gaining the lost political power. Kashmir became a part of India like other states and Muslims of Kashmir should have accepted this development. They should have focussed their energies on availing the opportunities that existed in India – business, education and dawah work! These opportunities will never cease to exist – no one can take this away from because it is unchangeable. Prophet's life was a demonstration of this principle that in man's life, there exists an aspect which is subject to change. When change happens in this regard, it must be accepted. On the other hand is that aspect of life which does not change. This aspect should be discovered, and available opportunities must be utilised.

Pakistan is yet another example of failing to utilise the available opportunities. Pakistan lost Bangladesh and Kashmir – this had to happen. They should have forgotten the loss and moved on to avail the opportunities they had. But Pakistan failed to do so. If it would have done so, Pakistan would have seen great development. Today, they are enveloped in turmoil of war and have been declared as a "failed" state by the world. After incurring substantial losses, now they are again attempting to rebuild their ties with India, calling it the "Most Favoured Nation."



According to a recent report published in Untied States of America, Pakistan has become addicted to the "Hate-India" psychology. This negative outcome was a result of the fact that Pakistan chose to focus their energies on achieving that which had changed (and could not be retrieved); they did not bother to utilise the opportunities that existed for them.

I have met many educated and intelligent Pakistanis living abroad, whom I asked why did they leave their country. All of them were of the view that there is no peace in Pakistan and life is spent in fear of someone barging inside the house anytime with a gun. The best brains of Pakistan, an asset to the country, left Pakistan and settled elsewhere. Today, the people of the country live in hate culture only. Recently it was in news that they attacked their own Parliament. Such events happen because hate culture eventually breeds violence, which then engulfs all. This is the situation of the entire Muslim world. Having harboured hatred all this while, they now live in violence. While they spend time in reciting praises of Prophet, they have not been able to emulate the example established by him.

The Prophet taught that certain things in life are changeable so man must discover the unchangeable items that he is left with because what has changed had to happen. He taught – do not fight for what has already been lost instead plan your life with whatever you have. We must save ourselves from succumbing to such a mindset of fighting over what has been lost. Doing so results in negative thinking and makes others seem as usurpers and enemies. Muslims have lived in this mentality, which has made their personality negative and have rendered them incompetent for doing dawah work.

I met a few people from Turkey and asked them if dawah work was happening there. They thought his question was unusual because Turkey has an overwhelming majority of Muslims. I told them that it was not an unusual question and that they had a great opportunity of doing dawah work among the tourists who visit their country. Turkey, being a hub of architectural development at the time of Ottoman Empire is home to several historical monuments and as such attracts large number of tourists. Unfortunately, the Muslims in Turkey find this thinking alien as they have made pursuits other than dawah work, their focus in life. Even today, Muslims in these countries think that Ottoman Empire was disintegrated as a result of conspiracy done by Western nations.

I have done a detailed analysis of Prophet Muhammad's life and realised that a one-point formula of his success was to view history as changelessness in change.

Positive thinking is an asset

The biggest asset of man is positive thinking as it generates all positive virtues. Negative thinking on the other hand, is the source of all kind of evils. One of the biggest contributions of Islam is that it gave such a goal to its believers, as will never make a believer negative. For example, if a person has made ruling the country as his goal, and if his party faces defeat during elections, he will become negative. On the other hand, the goal given by Islam is 'Dawah work - Dawat-e-ilallah'. This goal ensures that man always remains a positive thinker. It makes him a well wisher for mankind and creates madu or human-friendly behaviour. The goal of dawah work continues non-stop and no where do you feel that your work has halted.



The first blessing is that it makes you a well wisher for everyone and secondly God ensures that there are no hurdles in the way of doing peaceful dawah work. So you find a goal which is always achieved irrespective of the government or rule.

You can always get Quran's translation or books about the Prophet's life printed and distribute them among people anywhere you go. Therefore, in comparison to other worldly goals, dawah work is the one which can be carried out continuously.

While doing dawah work, a dayee interacts with a madu and answer the questions raised by the madu. In this way, a dayee faces an intellectual challenge, every moment. Dawah work therefore, develops the intellect of a dayee continuously. This is a great blessing from God! My experience is that half my knowledge is through books and the other half is through exchanging with others! Dawah work presents a great blessing for a dayee who by encountering the intellectual challenges during interaction with the madu, goes on developing his intellectual abilities.

Dawah work never leads to frustration. In all other goals, people feel frustrated – business sees loss and gain whereas a political party sometimes wins and suffers losses at other times. So, in every field, there is sometimes loss and sometimes profit but in dawah work there is always profit.

According to the Quran

Who speaks better than one who calls to God. (41:33)

So, if the other person accepts your dawah, a dayee is profited and if he does not accept it, it is profit still because a dayee is God's ambassador. Dawah work never lets a dayee sink into frustration. All other goals and targets lead to frustration. I am in the field of Dawah work and with the grace of God have never felt frustration even for a single moment in my life.

I learnt the differentiation between practice and wisdom of practice, which I did not read in any book but realised as an outcome of my discussion with people. Likewise, I discovered that God, while managing freedom of man, is also managing the history of man! I did not read it anywhere but came to know about it because dawah work casts a dayee between people and he is forced to listen to objections and questions of others, which opens the horizons of his knowledge. This leads or encourages a dayee to re-think. If I did not do dawah work and only read books, I would have become an intellectual dwarf. It is only when a dayee meets a madu with an ideology, will his mind face a challenge and develop.

For example, people questioned why there is suffering in life. Gibbon wrote that "human history is a register of crimes." This is because the yardstick of such people is different. It is said that the biggest argument against God, is "problem of evil!" Thinking about it, I realised that God will never abolish the freedom of man, else how would He test man? This world is a testing ground for man and his freedom will not be taken away before the Day of Judgement.



But God did not want derailment of history to take place. He wanted man's freedom to remain without jeopardising history and this was a very intricate job! Man cannot make this happen. Christ had said,

Man cannot do but God can!

Since then, the argument against problem of evil has come to an end. I know that evil situations and sufferings will come to pass because of the freedom granted to man. Because God is managing history, He ensures that opportunities still remain for man! All philosophers of the world say that because world has evil how can we say that there is God? I realised that if you see evil alone, you will not be able to understand. But if you see it in light of man's freedom, you will be able to explain it and also understand that God will also let the opportunities remain!

Of the many benefits of dawah work, brainstorming is an important one! Not only does a dayee understand things better through this process, he is able to explain it better!

Conclusion

I do not have an iota of protest because am able to explain negativity and do not harbour even a bit of complain in my heart. I discovered that unwanted incidents are a result of man's freedom. Godgranted freedom also brings with it, the option of misusing the freedom but this is a result of God's planning.

Most people get angry when they are criticized or disobeyed. I have experienced tough times because of many people but I never get angry because I realize that it is not the person's fault but God's planning of giving him freedom of choice.

I need to therefore discover all opportunities and learn and apply the wisdom of the Quran. This teaching of Islam is neither known to Muslims nor to secular thinkers. All of them have strived to bring about an ideal government and system but it could never come into being because that system will be created within man's society and even if one man misuses his freedom, everything will be jeopardised. For example, someone misused his freedom and killed Gandhi, another man misused it and planned to put Christ on the cross, it is therefore never possible for an ideal society to come into being! And when this does not happen, they end up blaming others for their ill-fate! Socrates, Aristotle, Plato all were obsessed with the concept of an ideal society. Since then all men have been trying to achieve it but when it does not happen they blame each other and fight. Ideal justice cannot be achieved. And when it cannot happen, the aggrieved end up fighting. The entire human history is devoid of this understanding.

Our mission is to extract the world from the tempest of negativity, and teach them to accept the reality. It is an important part of dawah work to be able to explain the phenomenon of human life and the negativity. So a dayee has to save himself from the negative attitude and make others aware of God's scheme of things. Instead of fighting with the problems, a dayee should search for the opportunities. God brings about seasons and likewise, freedom is a function of this freedom granted by God.



Question-Answers

Q1: What is the limit of "need"? How should we decide what is needed and what is not?

A: There are three levels: *need*, *comfort* and *luxury*. This is not a matter of what is Islamic and what is unIslamic; it is actually a matter of whether man wants to relax in life or have a purpose. People, who earn to lead a luxurious life, live like animals. God has given mind to man so luxury alone cannot be his goal as that will be equivalent to living at animal-level. If man discovers bigger realities of life and enters into the world of knowledge, he will have no time! People don't know this and therefore they expend their lives – earning and dying. This matter is whether man wants to live like an animal or achieve a bigger goal. If he wants to unfold the extraordinary capabilities of his mind, utilising which man can achieve bigger feats, everything else will appear meaningless. The biggest scientists of the world did not lead a luxurious or comfortable life; they only led the life of bare necessities. So, it is about choosing between securing - comfort for the body or development for the mind.

Q2: What principles are adopted to develop strong affection for God?

A: This is not about rules and principles. It is about discovering the importance of this matter. That God created man in this world and when he dies, man will have to stand before God and be accountable for his worldly deeds? If in this world, man did not love God – He who created him, made this universe custom-made for him - how will man ever face God? When man discovers the bounties of God, he develops strong affection for Him. For example, thinking about the phenomena of speaking and listening in itself arouses within man an ocean of thanksgiving. This is just one of the countless blessings of God. The entire matter therefore, pertains to thinking!

Q3: Can we use the example of Bait-e-Aqba for the use of opportunity of dawah among the tourists? A: Aqba means valley. When Prophet was in Mecca, he sent two companions, (called Mukris- the one who reads out to others) to Medina who used to recite the Quran to people. As a result, many people came within the fold of Islam in Medina, some of whom came to meet the Prophet. They did not come to Mecca but met him in a valley (Aqba). The meeting with the first group is referred to as, 'Bait e Aqba e Ula' and the meeting with a second (larger) group is called, 'Bait e Aqba e Saani'.

As far as tourists are concerned, dawah work should be done among them but this incident of *Bait –e-Aqba* is not related to it.

Q4: Will punishment be for eternity in the hereafter?

A: This will be known only when man reaches in the world hereafter. To understand better, the analogy that comes to my mind is that if a person did not go to school and then did not get a good degree from university, he will pay for it throughout his life. Similarly, if man does not enter the hereafter with preparation, he will have to pay the price. Man lives within time and space and as such can know this as a principle - that if an opportunity is missed, its price will have to be paid!



O5: With freedom, man always has the opportunity to misuse it and cause violence. In such a situation, how can peace be maintained?

A: Wholesome establishment of peace is not the goal. An individual can be made a peaceful thinker but the entire system cannot be made peaceful. This is why those who talk about "just" system are talking ideal. Our goal is to make an individual just and not to make the whole world's system ideal because for that man's freedom will have to be taken away, which is not possible in this world.

Q6: Is madu responsible for maintaining peace for dayee?

A: It is the concern of a dayee to normalise the situation so that dawah work can happen unhindered. The best example of this is the life of Prophet. He adjusted unilaterally in all conditions only so that normalcy could be maintained. Holding madu responsible for establishing peace is unnatural and impossible. Dayee should take up the responsibility and arise with, "I will do it" spirit so that dawah mission can be carried out unhindered. For example, Indian Muslims get up to protest everyday and this leads to confrontation and hatred. Muslims should abolish their negative sentiments unilaterally. Because only when peace is established, dawah work can be carried out.

Q7: Today, I went to Nehru Park and distributed copies of the Quran. One person said, "I have been waiting to read the Quran for the last 10 years. Now I am 80 years old and am thankful to God for choosing me!" Why do Muslims not give Ouran to non-Muslims when Prophet expressly commanded that the word of God must be spread to all?

A: The biggest fitna of Satan is to distract Muslims on the basis of religion. In this case, Satan has popularised the fitna of "behurmati"- disrespect – due to which Muslims do not give the Quran to non-Muslims. It must be clarified that this is a meaningless fitna. Muslims must give as much Quran as possible. Quran has been revealed so that it can be spread to mankind. There is no disrespect and sin in doing so! Either translation or Arabic text, any can be given to non-Muslims!

This *fitna* arose because of misinterpretation of the following verse of the Quran,

Which none can touch except the purified. (56:79)

The literal translation of this verse is that only those touch it who are clean. This verse refers to angels. This verse is referring to a fact that is happening already. It is news, not an ordainment. For example, command for people to pray is to tell them to pray. But the clerics wrongfully ordained that people should first be made clean and then made to touch the Quran. When God used to send the portions of the Quran to Prophet, angels used to get it. It was not revealed in any other way. Angels are made of Noor, it is through them that God communicates with humans. It does not say that those who are unclean should not be made to touch.

Q9: I met a Muslim who follows a Muslim Guru. He had his teacher's picture on his mobile and used to look at it affectionately. Historically, idol worship began like this. Please comment.

A: Doing so is an indication of strong affection and strong affection with anything other than God, is shirk. Shirk arose from individual cult and if a person is made the focal point of affection, it amounts to shirk.



010: I was talking to a cleric and he said, dawah is farz-e-kafaya [obligatory for some]. I told him that is farz-e-aen [obligatory for all] but he said this is circumstantial. Please explain.

A: This is a false notion. Every companion considered himself as a dayee. They never thought that only Prophet should do dawah work, and they have been relaxed.

Farz-e-aen is what is compulsory for every individual like namaz is obligatory on every individual. If you do a work which helps people at large, for example constructing a bridge to ease the way, it is Farz-e-al-kafaya. Dawah work being Farz-e-aen means that whoever you meet it becomes obligatory upon you to do dawah work with that person. Muslims residing in particular country, have dawah work as a farz-e-aen – it is their prime duty to spread the word of God to all in their country. Even the companion in travel is your neighbour. Anyone, whom you come in contact with, has to be told the Truth else he will hold you responsible in the hereafter for his unawareness. It does not mean that everyone should be a speaker. One should keep literature at all times and give it to any person whom one meets. You have to be a distributor, not necessarily a speaker. Those who think otherwise have conceived it as a self-styled notion.

Oll: A cleric said to me, "Real dawah is that which is in line with Prophet's way of working". You all do not do real dawah work, only distribute the literature." When I explained this being a result of change of era, he became silent. Please comment.

A: It is indeed a result of change of era. The companions who were sent to Medina to do dawah work were made *mukris*; today's believers have to become a distributor, because printing press has opened hitherto unprecedented dawah opportunties. The message is the same, the difference is only superficial.

012: Please explain "self-hammering".

A: People only hammer others. Finding one's own faults is seldom done by a person – this is selfhammering. In other words, man must reckon before he is reckoned with [by God]. Everyone knows his weaknesses and in solace one should think about these weaknesses and how should they be overcome.

Q13: What is the concept of joint family in Islam?

A: Joint family is not determined by Islam. It is a practical issue and is governed by a person's situation. I can only say that marital life has problems always. If the couple lives alone, lives with family or even if he or she does not marry - problem remains. In fact, life itself is a problem because man has been created amidst problems. Wherever you live, you will have problems. The real thing is to know the art of problem management and not of confrontation.

Q14: Please explain the following verse of the Quran

"No one to whom God has given the scriptures and on whom he has bestowed wisdom and prophethood would say to men, Worship me instead of God. [He would say rather], Be devoted servants of God, for you have taught and studied the Scriptures. Nor would he enjoin you to take the angels and the prophets as your lord; how could he command you to be disbelievers after you have *submitted to God.*" (3:79-80)



A: Personality cult is a tragedy of history. People hold their prophet so piously as if he is to be worshipped! I listened to a speech in which the speaker's words had ct down all differences between God and Prophet (on account of there being no connecting word between God and Prophet in the first article of faith!). This is a ridiculous notion! Personality cult is what leads to idol worship of the elders of the community. This is what Muslims have done to the Prophet Muhammad today! Instead of worshipping God, they have given the same status to the messenger of God! Such people should be scared of their showing on the Day of Judgement.

Q15: Please explain the following verse of the Quran, "Will they not, then, ponder over this Quran? Or are there locks upon their hearts?" (47:24)

A: The term "lock" refers to conditioning because of which man is not able to think and the meaning of Quran does not reach the mind! Every man is an outcome of conditioning. So "lock" is a symbolic word.

Q16: What is the academic way of studying Quran and why should man study Quran?

A: Man must know why God created him and that is the reason, he must study the Quran! You should read the Quran and pray to God, there is no other rule to read the Quran.

Q17: What should we do to love God, truly and how should we stay away from negative thinking? A: To love God truly, you will have to remove your mind from affection of Gair-e-Khuda.

018: Man is truly helpless but he thinks he is in control due to support given by God. How can we realise our helplessness at all times?

A: Helplessness can be realised by thinking. It can be experienced any moment. Now I am speaking, only few months back I could not speak! I still think how it was when though I had a tongue and brain, I could not speak! What happens to you and others at all times, serves to remind man that he is helpless.

019: If an ideal society is impossible, how would you look at Medina at the time of Prophet after Meccan conquest?

A: In Medina, at an instance, Prophet distributed the war spoils and a companion came and said,

"You were not just!" (Al Bukhari)

Muslims have conceived false and romantic notions. There never was and there never shall be an ideal society in the world! Because God will never abolish the freedom that he has given to man.

Q20: How should we look at what Prophet did to idols when Mecca was conquered?

A: When Mecca had idol worshippers, Prophet did not touch the idols. But when the Meccans embraced Islam, they themselves did away with the idols because there was no one who would worship them. Breaking idols is not in Islam. What Mahmud Ghaznvi did to idols in India, is completely wrong. I condemn it fully.