

Material Science and Spiritual Science

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Excerpt:

In his talk, the Maulana draws comparisons to discuss why no advancement could take place in spiritual world whereas material world witnessed great advancement and a material civilisation came into being. He analyses that while reason and rational thinking were the premise of material world, heart-based spirituality was the idea that the spiritualists subscribed to. For thousands of years, heart remained the focus and consequently no progress could be attained in the field of spirituality.

Explaining the ill-effects of focussing on heart-based spirituality, the Maulana explains that because thinking did not develop amongst people, the idea of 'Love thy enemy' was never imbibed and followed. This happened because man could not discover the ideology of love. He did not realise that all amenities around him and the civilisation that he sees were an outcome of enormous sacrifices made by men over countless years. Consequently, the Muslims could not fathom the concept of well-wishing for other men and the idea of doing dawah work remained non-existent.

Citing references from the Quran, Hadith and life of the companions, the Maulana discards the concept of 'Shafaat,' or guaranteed salvation (as is widely held by Muslims) saying that believing in this concept inculcates complacency. In order for mind to develop, constant realisation of being accountable for one's deeds is utmost. This coupled with clarity on the fact that paradise will not be had by way of recommendation will ensure that man actively plans about the life hereafter.

Introduction

As per my daily routine, I was listening to the morning feature being aired on the All India Radio station. The announcer was narrating the significance of today's date. On May 20, 1498, Vasco de Gama had reached India. Vasco de Gama was a Portuguese explorer and left Lisbon and after about a year's journey had touched upon the coast of Southern India. This was not a simple thing. At that time, Europe was looking for new markets and was filled with the spirit of exploration and discovery. While earlier, the political monopoly was basis 'sword' but after Europe witnessed Industrial Revolution, it ended. Though some Muslims still live in the era of sword, it is an anachronistic practice.

Vasco de Gama was appointed to command an expedition equipped by the Portuguese government, whose intention was to find a maritime route to the East. After struggling for a year, and undertaking an arduous journey, he made it possible. His voyage launched the all-water route from Europe to Asia. This event gave an impetus to Portuguese trade affairs and soon it became a world power. Portuguese government rewarded Vasco de Gama immensely and made him the Governor of Portuguese India under the title Viceroy. He left Portugal and soon after reaching India, Vasco de Gama fell ill and died. His efforts however, gave Portugal a place on the world map.

This made me question that several such advancements were made in material world but in the five thousand year old history of spiritual world, no such progress was made. Why was there this difference? I compared this with my recent visit to Turkey, where I spent a week. It took me seven hours to reach Istanbul from Delhi whereas when Maulana Shibli Nomani had travelled from Turkey to Istanbul, it had taken him twenty days. I went back to think how man progressed from animals as his mount to steam engines, motor cars and aircrafts. All this advancement took place in the material world and a material civilisation came into being. But nothing like this happened in the spiritual world; we cannot say that a spiritual civilisation came into being. The question remains that why could material science progress as much and why did spiritual science lagged so far behind.

Progress in material world

The reason for such advancement in the material world pertains to reason and rational thinking. Mind is the biggest blessing bestowed upon man by his Creator. By virtue of utilising his mental faculties, man could discover countless new ideas and items and this journey continues till date even though an entire civilisation has come into being. Contrary to this, man laid the foundation of spiritual science on 'heart'. But heart was only a pump, it neither had reason nor thinking or ability to contemplate.

For thousands of years, people only paid attention to heart and consequently could achieve no progress in the field of spirituality. Because of being heart-based, several mythical stories came into being in this discipline. For example, according to a legend, the renowned Sufi saint, Hasan Basri travelled from Basra to Mecca to perform Hajj but he did not find the Kaaba there because yet another Sufi saint, Rabia Basri had to perform Hajj and Kaaba had got displaced and reached the place where Rabia Basri lived! The irony is that not only are such preposterous stories considered holy, they are also printed and propagated.

Similarly another legend has it that Guru Nanak once visited the Kaaba. There he was lying with his feet in the direction of the Kaaba. Someone objected and so he moved his legs in a different direction. However, the Kaaba also got displaced in the same direction and in fact started following the direction of the legs of Guru Nanak. All such stories are falsehood but people believe in it without questioning because they do not apply reason. This is because spirituality was considered heart-based, and such thinking left no room for rationality.

Spiritual science could not progress because it was based on heart, which did not have the capacity to think. It must be remembered that facts are discovered only by utilising the power to think. Material science was reason based and they used reason which allowed them to make discoveries. Spiritual science was made heart-based and left to comprise of meditation, *dhyan* and focussing on heart, which eventually led to nothing. It only left behind an aggregate of mythical stories.

Basic Formula of Spirituality

The basic formula of spirituality is what Jesus said, 'Love thy enemy.' This formula is given in the Quran in the following words:

Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is better; then you will see that one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend. (41:34)

The Book only tells the principle, it is up to man to discover and learn the lesson in its complete sense. Unfortunately, love culture neither exists among Christians nor Muslims. First and Second World Wars were fought between Christians and led to massive bloodshed and losses. Where was that formula of love? Likewise in case of Muslims, wherever they get an opportunity, Muslims indulge commit suicide bombings and killings; they die themselves and kill others. This is because the ideology required for love culture was discovered neither by Christians nor by Muslims because they kept searching in the heart, which led to nothing.

How thinking leads to ideology for love culture?

I subscribe to mind-based spirituality and this is the basis of my mission and would like to explain how thinking leads to development of love culture.

The life that man leads in this world (full of amenities and facilities) is a result of the efforts of entire mankind. For example, the cloth you wear was not brought by Prophet Adam. According to the Quran

They started covering themselves with the leaves of the garden. (7:22)

After leaves and barks, man discovered leather to cover his body. So, when you wear your clothes, you must remember that the entire mankind was engaged in the process which led to this form of cloth; it was after tedious efforts that a cloth mill came into being so that man can wear clothes in the form he uses today.

You must always personalise the discoveries you see in the world surrounding you. Thinking in this manner will arouse within you a storm of affection and love towards mankind. Love arouses in response of what man gets. For example, I have seen how people used to drink in hands, then in leaves, in tin or aluminium tumblers and after a long time it became possible that water today can be served in a steel or glass tumbler. So, when I drink water, I remember the entire history and I feel so thankful because of what mankind did for me.

When I went to Turkey, I realised that travelling is a unique blessing. No other creature uses a mount to traverse distances. Air travel for instance has a far-reaching history behind it. Earlier, man used to travel on feet because he had no mount. Then, after a long process, man identified horse from amongst the countless species of animals, as a custom-made mount! After much struggle, wheel was invented. The wheel is considered to be the most important mechanical invention of all time. Nearly every machine built since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution involves a single, basic principle embodied in one of mankind's truly significant inventions. It's hard to imagine any mechanized system that would be possible without the wheel or the idea of a symmetrical component moving in a circular motion on an axis. From tiny watch gears to automobiles, jet engines and computer disk drives, the principle is the same. As man overcame the boundaries of land travel, his curiosity about the world around him increased. To his aid, man had developed a means of traveling on water even before he had domesticated the horse.

Historians are unable to pinpoint when or where the very first water vessel was set afloat. But, however it happened, the addition of the boat changed the face of transportation. Boats allowed man to, for the first time ever, cross bodies of water without getting wet. After a long phase, Archimedes discovered the principle of hydrostatics and man discovered better means of navigating on water surface. Later, steam ships came into being and after this aviation science developed. Man went on to discover the science of space and all these put together led to the creation of a civilisation we see today. Today, it seems like it all happened during a short period but it was not so. Several people continued their unremitting efforts and sacrificed themselves for this cause. When I think about all this, it seems like I have got all of this for free. For example, you see these pair of spectacles, people used to get blind due to eye disorders and lack of available treatment. Man discovered the treatment for eyes, invented spectacles and we were saved from succumbing to blindness! After thinking about and realising that all the blessings I avail today have taken this form due to contribution of mankind at large, can I continue to harbour hatred in my heart for my fellow human beings? I say therefore that ideology of love therefore is arrived at by thinking and contemplating.

Even though the principle ‘Love your enemy’ existed always, man continues to harbour hatred for his fellow human beings in one form or another. This is because man did not discover the ideology for love. He did not realise that all amenities around him and the civilisation that he sees were an outcome of enormous sacrifices made by men over countless years. Such an understanding could be developed as a result of mind-based spirituality. Because spirituality was considered a heart-based discipline, all these items worthy of reflection and conscious realisation remained unknown.

Causes of tension

Tension is the most common phenomenon in the present-day world. I would like to add here that tension *always* is because of some other person. You will not find anyone who would be tensed because of galaxy or ocean. I therefore say that man lives in tension because of other men; living in tension means that you have failed to acknowledge the contributions of other men in the life that you lead today. I have seen the time when wooden slippers were used, which used to hurt feet. When you think about how today’s custom-made shoe came into being, you would be filled with the feeling of gratitude and love towards others. Neither Muslims nor others harbour love because none could discover the ideology of love. This was because the discipline through which man could discover this ideology, that is, spirituality was considered heart-based. Expecting heart to think is similar to expecting nails, hair or other parts of one’s body to start speaking. For thousands of years, elderly only taught how to focus on heart.

They did not encourage the use of mind. This is why spiritual science never progressed and man till date, continues to live in tension and hatred. The source of eradicating this malice would have been spirituality, which in this case was reduced to the status of mythological stories.

Disadvantages of heart-based spirituality

The biggest disadvantage of heart-based spirituality in Muslims was that they could not discover the concept of well-wishing for other men. As a result, the concept of dawah work was eliminated from their minds. According to the Quran, Prophet said

I am your sincere and honest adviser. (7:68).

This means that the basis of dawah work is well-wishing. When you wish well for others and care for them, it fills you with a pressing need to tell others the message of God so that they know what shall come to pass after they die. If we remain conscious of the beneficence and think that man gave us so much – from the structure of my house, to my clothes, my camera, my spectacles, aircraft. I owe everything I have around me to the immense strife and countless years of research and sacrifices of mankind. Thinking so would fill us with the urge to give something in return. You would want to acquaint mankind and all these who sacrificed themselves for you, with the truth in the Quran. This will be your tribute to mankind's sacrifices, that, man has given you much and in return you are giving them the message from their God!

But Muslims today have become devoid of well-wishing and dawah work. Being so, they are not even eligible for living in this world because they neither acknowledge God nor acknowledge man. This is because of lack of developing the ideology of love. They continued to focus on heart-based spirituality whereas they had to fathom the truth by applying reason. It is often held that Islam and reason are not related. This is a highly baseless assumption because of which Muslims continue to be unaware of the biggest truths of life. Quran stresses on use of rational and logical reasoning as is clear from the following verse

So that you may understand (43:3)

Example

Muslims believe in the notion of '*shafaat*,' which implies that on the Day of Judgement, Prophet Muhammad will appear on the gate of paradise and ensure that his community enters paradise. Until this happens, no one else will enter paradise. It must be clearly understood that this concept is sheer fallacy because it is nowhere mentioned in the Quran or Hadith. No such verse can be found in the Quran which indicate such an occurrence. It must be borne in mind that man cannot get to inhabit paradise by way of recommendation. According to the Quran

Vie with one another for your Lord's forgiveness and for paradise (3:133)

This notion pertaining to recommendation has a great disadvantage which became clear to me by reading a recent report. It was earlier thought that thinking about death makes man sad and unproductive. But according to recent research, death has a positive contribution in man's life. I was thinking about death and realised it had two aspects - compulsory eviction from this world and compulsive closure of the door of return to this world. Research indicates that those who think about death live in suspense and as such they undergo continuous brainstorming. In doing so, man receives nourishment from both physical and spiritual point of view.

In light of this research, I realised that when man believes in the concept of *Shafaat* or guaranteed salvation, he will no longer live in suspense. Doing so, will make man complacent and he will not remain fearful of God. Such behaviour will discontinue brainstorming and intellectual development of man. Brainstorming begins when man gets a shock. So, if you realise that it is up to God to inhabit you in paradise or cast you in hell, you will live in fear of God. According to the Quran, Prophet said

**I am not the first of God's messengers, and do not know what will be done with me or with you
(46:9)**

The concept of *Shafaat* makes one live in a world of false hopes. It stops intellectual development as there is no brainstorming. Man begins to live in a false sense of conviction.

It is noteworthy that the notion of *Shafaat* did not exist till the era of companions. It developed amongst Muslims after the era of companions. All companions used to live in the fear of being cast into hell and as such they constantly underwent brainstorming. But after the concept of *Shafaat* or guaranteed salvation entered amongst the Muslims, no great mind was born except *Ibn Khaldun*, who was a secular person.

In the thousand year history, not a single creative writer or thinker was born amongst the Muslims. This was because the concept of *Shafaat* killed brainstorming and made Muslims believe that getting entry into paradise was their birthright.

According to a Hadith

Allah jab kisi se mohabbat karta hai toh use museebat mein daal deta hai (Tirmidhi)

When God loves a believer, He casts him into problems.

This means that God creates a situation of shock so that brainstorming and intellectual challenge arise in man, which would then lead to his spiritual development. A companion saw a tree being cut down and he said,

Kaash, mein darakht hota jo kaat diya jaata. (Ibn Maja)

Wish I was a tree and would have been axed.

According to a tradition in Al Bukhari, when Caliph Umar was hurt and on his death bed, his son said to comfort him that he had striven all his life and had been fortunate to have had companionship of great people. Umar scolded his son and asked him not to arouse any false hopes in his mind. His strife is no big deal and even if God's judgement balances his deeds, he would be grateful. Even Abu Bakr and Umar used to live in suspense. Today every Muslim lives in a false sense of conviction that their paradise is fixed. The result is that Muslims have become devoid of wisdom because it is challenge and brainstorming that arouses intellectual development. But because of living in the concept of guaranteed salvation, Muslims are no longer fearful of God. They do not realise that paradise can only be had after the decision of God. While judgement of entry into paradise will be based on one's actions in the pre-death period, the final decision to place man in paradise will rest with God. It is certain that no recommendation would lead anyone into paradise. Prophet Muhammad once said,

Khuda ki qasam mein nahin janta (3) agar che mein khuda ka rasool hun, kya kiya jayega mere sath aur kya kiya jayega tumhare sath (Al Bukhari)

Swear to God, I do not know (3) even though am the messenger of God, what would be done with me and what would come to pass with you.

Even though the Prophet himself made it clear that the knowledge of the result of the hereafter, rests with God alone, Muslims deviated and developed baseless notions. The disadvantage is that Muslims lost creative thinking and became a community devoid of wisdom. The very creation of Pakistan for example, was wrong. It was the biggest blunder of history which happened because Muslims have lost

the ability to think correctly. Even today, I live in India and consider the entire nation as my land. I don't like being called a minority. I am an Indian. That is my identity. It is presumed that Muslim leaders have done a significant job by instituting the concept of minority and majority in the Indian constitution but to my mind this is a worthless initiative.

Conclusion

The notion of guaranteed salvation in effect, deprived Muslims of challenge, brainstorming, shock treatment, living in suspense because of which they lost their ability to think correctly. For example, Caliph Umar was a great companion, yet he always lived in the fear of God. That is why he could develop his intellect so much that he expressed such wise lessons as the one recounted below

The choice in life is not between all good and all evil but between greater evil and lesser evil.

(Al Abqariyyat)

According to a recent news item, it was reported that America wanted to demolish Mecca-Medina just like Hiroshima-Nagasaki. This is an absurd piece of news and if Muslims were wise, they would have said that this rumour stands rejected, prima facie. There is not even the slightest chance that America would do such a thing. Muslims do not realise that terrible incidents (like dropping an atom bomb) happen just once in human life. The atom bomb in Hiroshima-Nagasaki was first and last. America for instance, had to retreat from Vietnam, Afghanistan – were atom bombs dropped there? No.

The problem is that the idea of guaranteed salvation snatched away all items of positive thinking and left Muslims devoid of intellect. Prophet Moses had prayed to God saying that He [God] may take away anything from his people except their wisdom. God said in reply,

O Moses! When we have to deprive someone, the first thing we take away is the ability to think.

(Talmud)

This is the case of present-day Muslims. All over the world, they have succumbed to unwise policies. In Burma, for example Muslims were in majority in Arakan. Some Muslims arose to establish Arakan as an Islamic state. When the administration perceived them as a threat, Government squashed their efforts. The same people who earlier lived comfortably in Arakan, are today paying the price of their absurd policies. In Singkyong, Philippines, Bosnia – everywhere Muslims were in good condition but because of lack of thinking, they lost all that they had.

The concept of guaranteed salvation led Muslims to foolishness and made them devoid of brainstorming. I am not saying this because I wish to criticise, am only trying to make the community realise the reality, consciously. Awakening requires a language of hammering. Consciousness is not an outcome of sweet talk, not even in an individual let alone a community.

May God give us the ability to understand the truth and spread it to others.

Question-Answers

Q1: None of the companions suffered from tension like the present-day people do. What is the cause of this difference?

A: Tension is an outcome of living in material issues. No one is tensed because of paradise. Companions had hereafter-oriented thinking unlike people today who have world-oriented thinking. In order to be tension-free, man must develop hereafter-oriented thinking.

Q2: Please explain, “Apne aap ko qabr walon mein shumar karo.” (Think as if you are from amongst the dead.) (Ibn Maja)

A: This is a form of expression. It refers to thinking about death. When I was thinking about death, I realised that it would mean compulsory eviction from this world. Everything, my land, my companions and my country would be left behind. The remembrance of death is the biggest source of brainstorming in man.

Q3: What is the significance of the CPS Sunday lectures?

A: There are two kinds of talks - one that revolve problems and issues that exist in the world around us. People sit together to discuss these issues and raise hue and cry about it. It is my understanding that people are already prepared for attending such gatherings and need not be prepared additionally. The other kind is the CPS lectures. In my view, people are not prepared for such lectures. Making a person a prepared mind therefore assumes paramount importance.

Q4: Those who have a lot of material attainments lead a more tensed life. Has man been born to live in tension and then die?

A: The formula is to tell people to adopt contentment (qanaat). Man has unlimited desires and so even when he gets everything, it appears less. In such a scenario, only contentment can be the solution. People live in the psyche of greed (takassur) which is the root cause of tension. They should be extricated from greed-culture and brought to contentment culture.

Q4: Who do Muslims consider as their well-wisher?

A: Unfortunately, present-day Muslims consider their biggest ill-wisher as their well-wisher. This is what happens when communities degenerate. He who does not care for you, would say only the 'good' things to maintain his leadership.

But one who is a true well-wisher would tell what is good according to the Quran and Hadith, without caring for his leadership. In other words, a person who feeds the degenerated mindset of Muslims appears good to them whereas one who attempts to rectify their degenerated mindset is seen as an ill-wisher. In recent times, all those who became famous amongst Muslims were those who fed their degenerated mindset.

Q5: In daily life, we keep developing complaints about other people. What is the formula for saving oneself from this complaining mindset?

A: My formula is, 'Save yourself. Let everything else go to *bhaad*.' This is the only formula and there is no other formula. This has been given in the Hadith,

Alaika nafsat (Baihaqi)

Save yourself.

Q6: Is the concept of 'Shafaat' in Muslims same as the concept of 'Atonement' in Christians?

A: Yes, they are similar. In fact, *Shafaat* is a *muzahaat* (innovation) of the concept of atonement. A person told me that he met a Christian acquaintance and shared with him how afraid he was about what would come to pass on the day of Judgement. The Christian replied that he is not fearful because Christ was crucified and died with sins of mankind. According to Christian belief, the Original Sin committed by Adam is hereditary and is passed on to all succeeding generations. To do away with the sins of all mankind, God sent His Son, who died on the cross taking away all sins. This belief, as per Christians is basic and would determine salvation after death. This concept of guaranteed salvation, as was in the form of atonement in Christians, came to be known as '*Shafaat*' in Muslims.

Q7: How can I find God?

A: You should become a true seeker but the most difficult job is to become a true seeker. People live in conditioning of different kinds and therefore are not able to make themselves a true seeker. Truth gives man the conviction to talk about it. The way I speak is because I have found the truth. Had I not found it, I would not have had the conviction to speak in this manner. Man discovers truth himself and not by way of someone else telling him about it.

Q8: 'Khuda ka shukr hai ki hum ummat e Muhammadi mein hain' (Thank God, we are born in the Muslim community!). Is it correct to say such things?

A: First you should find out the criterion to say what is right and what is wrong. The criterion is the life of the Companions. I know of no Companion who said something like this. This is not as per their mindset and as such saying such a thing is completely wrong.

Q9: According to a Hadith, 'Tumse pehle ke logon ko sawalon ki kasrat aur nabi se ikhtilaaf ne tabaah kar diya.' (Prior to you, people were destroyed because of the frequency of their questions and dissent with the Prophet.)

A: Questions are of two types. This Hadith is not condemning questions in the absolute sense. It is pertaining to those questions which are done as a hair splitting exercise. Seeking answers to questions for clarification is good. If done only as a matter of debate, it is entirely wrong.

Q10: What is the importance of listening in doing dawah work?

A: Listening is very important. I listen with an empty mind. Dawah is not the name of announcement. It is the name of addressing the mind of man, which can happen only when you understand the mind of the other person.

Q11: How can we know about our conditioning?

A: Man can know about his conditioning himself - by undertaking self-introspection (*muhasba*). Merciless introspection is required to know your conditioning. There is no other way.