

From Creature-worship to Creator-worship

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

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Introduction

At a recently held summit in New Delhi, one of the participating speakers attempted to raise concern over the ideology that drives the terrorists. While addressing the gathering on the topic of terrorism, he pointed at how the miscreants commit the heinous acts of terror on the premise that God, in return, shall grant them paradise. Riding high on his irreverence, he went on to state that in rewarding those who are instrumental in proliferating terrorism, God appears to be suffering from Alzheimer's disease. (Times of India, November 22, 2009).

Referring to the Quran, the same speaker mentioned that it was a peaceful Book. If Word of God (Quran) teaches peace then why did he associate the so-called *jihadis* with God? This issue demands great forethought and an objective analysis. It is important to understand that the activities of militants and suicide bombers are a manifestation of their self-styled jihad. In fact, such incidents depict a gross misinterpretation of the concept of Jihad, as alluded to in Islam.

The beginning of creature-worship

History of religion tells us that the seventh century A.D. witnessed an unprecedented revolution, brought about by the advent of Islam. Prior to this, *shirk* or creature-worship had dominated the world. A reference in the Quran cites an imploration made by Prophet Abraham to God, in the following words:

"My Lord, *they* have led so many men astray!" (14:36)

In the above verse '*they*' refers to the stars, moon and the sun, which people mistook as deities. These celestial objects aroused such fascination in man that he attributed supernatural powers to these lifeless objects and began worshipping them. This thinking continued for thousands of years and during this period not much progress could be made in the field of natural sciences. It was the coming of Islam that ended this concept of nature-worship and gave the world, the concept of monotheism.

The age of monotheism

The revolution brought about by Islam, marked the rise of the ideology of *tawheed* (monotheism). The most significant aspect of this new development was the removal of nature from the pedestal of divinity. This shift of divinity from nature to God was in fact, core to the revolution brought about by Prophet Muhammad. This was essential because until then man viewed nature only in the context of divinity but now with the shift in the ideology, the frame of reference shifted.

Referring to this ideological change, Henri Pirenne, a Belgian historian, said,

"Islam changed the face of the globe. The traditional order of history was overthrown."

This change did not occur overnight. The process was initiated by the Prophet and his companions as they removed nature from the status of divinity. This enabled man to explore nature and culminated in the form of modern civilization, discoveries of which facilitated a deeper realization of God. However, the atheists hijacked the newly discovered realities and crooked them to construe arguments to disprove the existence of God.

Failure of Muslims to utilize the modern developments

During the period when scientific discoveries were taking place rapidly, the Muslims empires in Spain, Turkey, India, etc. were disintegrating. The rise of colonialism and the downfall of Muslim rulers led Muslims to view the colonial powers as conspirators. This long harbouring negativity has today taken the form of suicide bombing.

The Muslim scholars (ulema) failed to realize that **science was the theology of Islam**. The negative feelings of Muslims clouded their objectivity to the extent that they could not use the realities discovered by Science to prove the existence of God. For instance, science categorized evidence as - direct and indirect. Direct evidence was observable to naked eye. Indirect evidence was inferred from events or occurrences. This stupendous discovery made everything – from a leaf blade to a drop of water – an evidence of the existence of God! But Muslims failed to use it for doing dawah work.

Direct evidence is not possible because this world is a testing ground and as a pre-condition to the test, direct evidence has been shrouded by a veil of doubt and confusion. The direct evidence of God will become observable only in the world hereafter. According to a Hadith:

“You will view God (in the hereafter) like you view the full moon.” (Al-Bukhari)

The ideas promoted by atheists

Science was making fascinating discoveries but while their negative mindset costed Muslims the opportunities that were opening up, the atheists on the other hand were quick to hijack these developments and misinterpret them so as to propagate their ideas. For instance, science discovered the principle of causation according to which every effect was preceded by its cause like the rain which was a result of a variety of causes. The atheists misinterpreted this principle and said, *“If events are due to natural causes, they are not due to supernatural causes.”*

No scientist ever proffered such a claim. It were the atheists who mutilated scientific discoveries and misrepresented them to garner support. It was therefore incumbent upon the believers to correct this misinterpretation by citing the real facts so that man could be compelled to admit that **nature is so meaningful that it cannot be explained without believing in a meaningful Creator.**

Muslims no longer have the dawah mindset

The biggest problem of the present-day Muslims is that they no longer have a dawah mindset. They live in the psyche of self-obsession and hatred. It is in fact quite ironical to notice that when Muslims were in possession of political power, they lived in arrogance and when faced with defeat, they developed a negative and defeatist mentality. In both the situations, the mindset of doing dawah work was non-existent. The so-called jihad of fanatics is nothing but a manifestation of the negative mentality of those involved. The very fact that their endeavours did not receive God's succour suffices to prove that it was not Jihad. A verse of the Quran says,

“God will surely help him who helps His cause.” (22:40)

An acquaintance, who got an opportunity to interact with American soldiers based in Afghanistan, told while recounting the experience, that these soldiers opined that the lack of interaction between the local Afghan population and themselves was responsible for worsening the situation. The locals indulge in bombings and make every attempt to kill the American soldiers as they considered them to be their dire enemies. A perfect example of negative thinking and consequent loss of opportunity, this most unfortunate behaviour of local Afghans reflects that instead of considering the Americans as their *madu*, Muslims are viewing them as their enemies.

Lessons in history

It is notable to cite that at the time of the first Gulf War; approximately two thousand Americans had embraced Islam merely by listening to a talk on Islam, organized by an Egyptian Professor. The Islamic history reiterates time and again that the greatest factor responsible for the dissemination of Islam was interaction between Muslims and the *madu*. According to a verse in the Quran,

“Follow the nature as made by God.....That is the right religion.” (30:30)

This means Quran is a verbal representation of that which lies within the unconscious of man. Upon reading the Quran, man realizes that it is the voice of his own nature. An American who embraced Islam said, “*I did not convert to Islam, I reverted to the religion of my nature.*”

The importance of interaction must not be underestimated. Interaction allows the believer to share wisdom with his *madu*. In fact, interaction is so beneficial that even *compulsive* interaction helps. This is exemplified through the case of the Tataari tribe. Giving an account of the factors that led the barbaric Tataaris to embrace Islam, Professor Hitti wrote, “*The conquerors accepted the religion of conquered.*” Professor Arnold further explains that after their conquest, the Tataaris had enslaved Muslims. Though they were a barbaric tribe, devoid of a religion, the aftermath of their conquest marked the beginning of compulsory interaction between them and Muslims. Gradually, they got deeply influenced by Islam and embraced it in large numbers.

Conclusion

The most unfortunate development that took place in the last few centuries was the complete obliteration of the concept of dawah from the minds of Muslims. Both the Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) and the Islamic literature that developed during this time, finds no mention of dawah. From being masters of political activities, Muslims have now become the Masters of *hatred and enmity*.

During his last sermon, Prophet Muhammad said,

“Spread the message of God worldwide.” (Musnad Ahmad)

According to traditions, Companions became so overwhelmed by becoming proponents of the dawah mission that they moved forth in the direction their horses faced, leaving behind their home, their hearth. That is why graves of very few Companions are found in Mecca and Medina. They reached the far ends of the distances they could traverse.

The spreading of Companions to disseminate the message of God was the first *Diaspora* in Islam. As they spread in lands, Companions got immense opportunities to interact. Interaction makes 'difference' evident which in turn creates curiosity. Curiosity leads to questioning and dawah work.

The second Diaspora has taken place already. Muslims have gone out and settled themselves in foreign countries. But the purpose of the second Diaspora is to earn money. In fact, Muslims prefer not interacting, let alone attempting to do dawah work with their *madu*.

Branding the world as their enemy, Muslims have shut all doors of interaction for themselves. Muslim congregations are held only to discuss the so-called discrimination and conspiracy and even the biggest stages are used by them, not to spread the message of Islam but to protest and share their bitter feelings. All this is because Muslims today lack the dawah-oriented approach.

For a *dai*, every person must be a *madu*. There can be no disparity in this regard. A *dai* must be genuinely caring and must feel that *madu* has to be saved. The panacea to all ills of Muslims is to develop the mindset of doing dawah work for those who indulge themselves in destructive thinking and suicide bombing, will be cast into eternal damnation.

May God guide us to the right path!