The Philosophy of Creation

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

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Excerpt:

In this talk, the Maulana explains the philosophy of creation and begins by elaborating how this topic has held the curiosity of man since times immemorial. Several books have been authored to address this theme but no concrete philosophy could be determined till now; all the books only lead to more confusion. The Maulana explains that his study has led him to understand that owing to their lack of awareness of the divine scheme of things (Creator's scheme of things), the philosophers and thinkers could not explain existence.

In order to understand this, we will have to bear in mind that man is a perfectionist; he is a born idealist. Each one of us harbours the concept of ideal society, ideal marriage, and ideal rule – "ideal" is interwoven in human mind. If people understand this dichotomy that *this world* is to select individuals and not to bring into being an ideal system whereas the *world hereafter* (paradise) is where a perfect system will come into being, their negativity will finish and they will understand the correct approach of thinking and line of action.

Introduction

This topic has held the curiosity of man since times immemorial. Since the times of the Greek philosophers, several books have been authored to address this theme but no concrete philosophy could be determined till now; all the books only lead to more confusion. This field of study is referred to as "*ontology,*" an important branch of metaphysics, pertains to the philosophical study of the nature of *being, existence* or *reality* as such; it deals with questions concerning what entities exist or can be said to exist,

Ironically, despite being a subject of all philosophers, not even a single one of them could give a satisfactory answer to the question, "Why creation?" According to the Quran

Do you imagine that We created you without any purpose? (23:115)

The above verse conveys the Quranic challenge that there is a purpose behind the creation of man. But, throughout history, the philosophers, reformers and thinkers convinced themselves – directly or indirectly - of there being no such purpose in creation. This is a big challenge faced by the religion of monotheism. According to the religion of God, He created man with purpose but studies outside religion (metaphysics et al) unanimously agree that man's creation has no purpose. A philosopher said

Everything in this world is beautiful, except man

A book titled, "*Man, the Unknown*" deals with how the creation of man cannot be explained. Bertrand Russell was referred to as *the philosopher of no philosophy* but in reality this applies to all philosophers of ontology.

Why could philosophers not discover the purpose of human existence?

I have been thinking for a long time why Quran on one hand claims that man's creation has a purpose whereas studies outside religion have not been able to discover a purpose for human existence. Why there is a contradiction between the above mentioned Quranic claim and human knowledge. To find the answer to this question is the answer to the challenge posed before monotheism.

My study has led me to understand that reformers and thinkers have used a wrong yardstick to evaluate existence. Owing to their lack of awareness of the divine scheme of things (Creator's scheme of things), the philosophers and thinkers could not explain existence.

In order to understand this we will have to realise that man is a perfectionist; he is a born idealist. Each one of us harbours the concept of ideal society, ideal marriage, and ideal rule – "ideal" is interwoven in human mind. Man, always searches perfection in all aspects of his life and this perfection is embedded in his mindset. Pertaining to each aspect of family, society or politics, man wanted to discover a perfect model. Because the philosophers could not discover the perfect model, they declared that *creation is meaningless*.

After reading a lot on this topic, I have reached the conclusion that God does not intend for man to make his life in this world, perfect. This is not the plan of God. Contrary to God's scheme, man's yardstick is based on perfection. God's plan is individual-based and not system-based. In other words, coming up of an ideal system is not as per the plan of God, that is why God did not create such situations in this world which could pave way for an ideal system.

What is the Creation Plan of God?

God created a perfect world called paradise and God's target is to inhabit paradise. In order to select individuals deserving of dwelling in the perfect world of paradise, God made this world a "selection ground."

God divided the human lifespan into two periods – pre doomsday and post doomsday. *Pre-doomsday* (the world since Prophet Adam) became the *selection ground* to select individuals worthy of paradise. This is because perfection is possible at an individual level but not at the level of a system or society because God has given freedom to man and no one's freedom of choice can be curbed. So whenever some men strived to establish an ideal system, some others undid it. Let me explain this with an example.

In ancient times, rule was based on kingship. A set of philosophers arose who gave the view that kingship (or monarchy) is not ideal and the rule should be *of, by and for* the people. Many philosophers arose in Europe for example *Rousseau,* who gave the concept of democracy and after a long struggle, democracy came into existence. But what actually happened was that instead of political king, a democratic king came into existence. Democracy paved way for a new type of kingship. Subsequently thinkers like Marx arose who opposed this system. Then, *corporate world* came into existence. But today even this system has collapsed and there is a lot of anger and revolt against the corporate world (latest example being Italy). So, one after the other, from king to democratic king to corporate king, nothing could fully match the ideal yardstick of man and failed. Let us evaluate the reason.

Why could man not create an ideal world?

Man cannot create an ideal system in this world because man possesses freedom, granted to him by God. Man cannot abolish this freedom. This is the case of Muslims countries. First, there was revolt against *King Farooq*, he was ousted. He was succeeded by *Gamal-adbul Naseer* who met with a similar revolt and was replaced by *Anwar Sadat.* After *Sadat,* came *Hosni Mobarak* who too was overthrown in a recent revolution. The current premier too has started facing the heat. The reason for this turbulence is that when witnessing a systemic change, people presume that they are going from the *imperfect* to the *perfect*, when in actual fact they are going from *one imperfect to another imperfect*; from one *less-than ideal* to another *less-than-deal*.

The root cause is that both the Muslims and secular people made justice as their target in this world - just society and ideal system – a target which was unachievable. When all the efforts in the direction of achieving such a system failed, its proponents succumbed to violence and extremism to vent out their frustration. When Satan gave the challenge, to God he probably had forethought about this weakness of man. He said to God

I will bring all but a few of his descendents under my sway. (17:64)

Satan vowed to lead man astray from the feelings of gratefulness towards his Creator. Acknowledging God is the biggest attribute of man. He can acknowledge only when he is devoid of negative thought. Satan cast man (Muslims and secular people) on a target of achieving the unachievable ideal. Failure to achieve the goal leads to hatred, intolerance, protest, extremism and violence.

Individual-centric efforts

It must be understood that efforts must be individual-based and not system-based.the right thing to do is to target an individual and re-engineer his mind so that he becomes a positive thinker and a grateful being. Success can only be attained at individual level but not at system level. Several great individuals were born throughout history, whereas, no ideal system has ever come into being, ever. For example, the two sons of Adam, Cain and Abel once had a dispute. When Cain said he will kill Abel, the latter said

If you raise your hand to kill me, I will not raise mine to kill you. (5:28)

This was ideal that even if you commit a crime against me, I will not retaliate. Similarly, Prophet Noah lived for 900 years in the well-wishing of man. Such a dayee can be brought into being only at individual level. Likewise, Hajra was an individual who agreed to dwell in the desertlands of Arabia with her suckling child, only so that a new generation comes into being. According to a tradition in **Bukhari**, when she asked Prophet Abraham if God had ordained him to do so and he replied in affirmative, she willingly agreed and said,

Then, God will not let us waste away.

Individuals with such high character have been born throughout history. This is the plan of God. To bring in to being such individuals of high character and select them for the perfect world of paradise; those individuals who gave the example of attaining greater *taqwa* (righteousness and piety) and conviction on God. According to a verse in the Quran,

Whoever obeys God and Messenger will be among those He has blessed: the messengers, the truthful, the witnesses, and the righteous. What excellent companions these are! (4:69)

It means from across the history, all high-character individuals (Prophets and others) will be selected and inhabited in paradise, the ideal society.

Paradise, the ideal world

It must be understood that paradise is an "ideal" society which cannot come into being in this world; it never was and never will. For example, in our history, Hazrat Hussain started a movement to end oppression and it continued till Yaseer Arafat but no result could be obtained from the struggle. Ideal justice still did not come into being but many high-character individuals lost their lives. For example, during Muslim conquest of Iran, a soldier found a jewel-studded crown. The soldier wrapped it in a piece of cloth and brought the crown to his General, in the darkness of night. When the General asked his name, the soldier quietly left saying, *"He for whom I have done this, knows my name."* Such selfless, honest and pious individuals have been born in society throughout history. Therefore, according to God's scheme of things, this world is a selection ground and from the entire history (since Adam), deserving candidates are being selected basis their deeds, who will be inhabited in neighbourhood of God (paradise).

The mistake committed by philosophers

Philosophers and reformers have always wanted to create an ideal system in this world itself. But when as per the divine scheme of things, this does not happen, both Muslims and secular start living in negativity. They see a *rival* (an enemy) at all times. So, while the movement against this "enemy" will begin peacefully, it will lead to protest and violence subsequently. This is a result of system-based approach. Therefore, both secular and Muslims must first understand what is the scheme of God because an understanding of this will enable them to plan their approach rightfully so that "*everything falls into place*!"

The basic problem with the concept of *ontology* is that they want to see a perfect system in this world itself; which is not possible. If people understand this dichotomy that *this world* is to select individuals and not to bring into being an ideal system whereas the *world hereafter* (paradise) is where a perfect system will come into being, their negativity will finish and they will understand the correct approach of thinking and line of action.

God-realisation

According to science, the history of this world is spread over 15 billion years. First the material world (stars and planets) came into being, following which, the solar system, earth, water and life-forms came into existence, one after the other. It was then that man came into being. God did all this so that such a being could be brought into existence as would strive and attain God-realisation (*Marefat*). According to the Quran

I created the jinn and mankind only so that they might worship Me (51:56)

Seeing such a vast universe, man can imagine the greatness of God and by utilising the resources in this world he unfolds his potential to build the personality worthy of dwelling in paradise. To discover God is to recognise the glory of God through His signs and reach God-realisation because when that happens, such men will

Those who believe love God most (2:165)

The innumerable blessings of God will arouse utmost love and for God the thought of God establishing His scale of justice on the Day of Judgement will send a shudder within man. Such men who attain God-realisation will become embodiments of all positive values – peace, spirituality, well-wishing. God-realisation is not a limited phenomena, it is the source of all positive values.

Discovery of truth leads to personality development and leads to emergence of a new personality and a new way of thinking. These are called spiritual/ divine/ religious values. The transformation within man is commensurate to depth of God-realisation. This is why God's target is to inculcate ideal within an individual's character.

When I discovered that God has made this world as a selection ground and his scheme is *individual-based*, then all my efforts were directed in bringing about a change within myself. Such a feeling does not call for any negativity or confrontation. In other words, individual-based thinking leads to positive thinking.

On the contrary, those who assume their target to bring about a change in system, thrive on negativity. This is because someone is already managing the system and when you want to overthrow him, he will resist and this will lead to confrontation, protests and violence.

Individual-based religion stands on positivity as against the system-based religion, which leads to violence and negativity. System-based concept therefore is a hurdle in bringing into being those candidates who would be selected for dwelling in paradise because it eliminates the feeling of well-wishing and peace.

When we view this world as a "*selection ground*," it becomes a source of positive thinking. The real criterion for those who will be selected is that they will be positive in complete sense of the word and be filled with feelings of thanksgiving and peace. According to the Quran,

Only the words of peace and tranquillity (56:26)

Imitation in religion

Quran mentions how practices of polytheists were imitated by religionists since ancient times. The verse reads

These are but their baseless utterances (Muzahaat) (9:30)

For example, the concept of Trinity in Christianity is an imitation of the Greek philosophy. Greeks believed reality to be three dimensional and gradually Trinity became a part of Christian theology.

Likewise, the system-based concept is also an imitation. It is the result of modern age thinking. Thinkers like Marx (propounded economic system) and Rousseau (propounded political system) brought about a system-based thinking in the world. This was taken up by Muslims and they interpreted Islam as a system-based ideology. Islam which was an individual-based ideology was propagated as a system-based religion. This is proved from the Quran and Hadith which addresses individual alone. The target of Islam is to build an individual who would attain *marefat* and *taqwa* (God-realisation and pious character).

Disadvantages of system based ideology

If we evaluate on the basis of its result, we will find out that the imitation of system-based ideology among Muslims led to increased extremism and violence. Contrary to this, is the individual-based ideology, which leaves no room for negative thinking. Man only focuses on improving himself. In other words, the latter targets an individual's development and the former targets development of the social system.

It must be borne in mind that the only way in which a system can ever be developed is by way of developing individuals. This is so because eventually it is the individual who brings an act into fruition. As per UNESCO's dictum, "*violence begins from mind*" but this is true not only for violence but for every thought. Every thought begins from the mind of an individual. When mind changes, other things will undergo a change. I am not saying that by changing the mind, an ideal system will get created. This is not possible. Change of minds can lead to ideal individuals, which is the target of God.

This world has been created for a limited period. Knowing this secret is very crucial because it allows you to adopt the correct target and the correct line of action. Therefore, our team must clearly understand that our mission is not system-based; it is individual-based.

The yardstick that people use to imply that work is happening is large displays and huge crowds. This is a wrong criterion. The correct yardstick is result. Biggest stages and crowds have not yielded any result because they did not target individual minds. It must be understood that crowd can only lead to negative result. For example, to oust British rule from India, Indians took to streets. British went out but things did not change for better. Targeting individuals is the only way of attaining positive result.

Conclusion

The success of individual-based ideology has been experienced many times but people refuse to learn lesson from it. For example, I had once read that under the president-ship of *Zia-ul Haq* in Pakistan, clerics went to him with a proposal of implementing Islamic rule in Pakistan. He said, if you get me two hundred people who are *un-purchase-able*, then I will establish. Clerics said they would not be able to manage that number. Haq said, if they cannot arrange the desired people despite the flourishing number of seminaries and mosques under their control, then Islamic rule could not be established.

Those who actively propagate stage activism have not been able to yield any result. On the other hand, if individuals are made the target, it yields the desired result. Since Prophets till date, individuals have been born who would were great in their conduct. The Creation Plan of God is the correct yardstick, not our own judgement.

For example, communal riots take place at several places in India. Every day, there are articles and speeches in the Urdu newspapers, which propose instituting an anti-riots law and anti-riot police to control the situation. I think nothing will happen on this; we have heard this from long. The only remedy to control communal riots is that Muslims stop getting emotional.

Recently, communal riots took place at a place in India and it caused great destruction. I met a person from that place and I asked him where it all started from? I always give importance to the start. No news item reports where it started from because principally, *the one who starts is responsible*. Only then will you be able to do a root cause analysis and find a way out. He said that it was popularised that a copy of the Quran is kept in a temple. Speeches and reports were published assuming the Quran is being disrespected in the temple; even though this was not the case. When Muslims protested, the police tried to explain that nothing can be done in this case. But they refused to control their anger and as a mark of their protest, Muslims stoned and in return, police fired and many died.

Everyone has God-given freedom and we cannot abolish anyone's freedom. You can only control your emotions. Even on trivial issues, Muslims get emotional and fuel the riots. Here also, Muslims must know God's scheme of things. Muslims create much hue and cry over *Shatm-e-rasool* (disrespecting Prophet) and get very violent. This is though the Quran says

Do not revile those [beings] whom they invoke instead of

God, lest they, in their hostility, revile God out of ignorance. (6:108)

In this verse, Muslims have been asked to refrain from disrespecting deities of other religions. Nowhere in the Quran has it been said that others should not be allowed from disrespecting Prophets or companions. The other thing is that Muslims should not give an opportunity to people by getting emotional; then things will remain peaceful.

In conclusion, as per God's scheme of things, this world is a selection ground and such individuals are being selected who demonstrate high character and are capable of being inhabited in perfect the ideal world of paradise, which comes later. According to the Bible, the transgressors will be segregated from the pious. The good ones are therefore being selected. According to the Quran

My righteous servants will inhabit the Earth. (21:105)

This world is therefore not to establish an ideal or just system but to pave way for *marefat at individual level*. Making later as your target, makes you positive and full of virtuous thoughts and is the basic principle of life. Just as secular philosophers deviated so did Muslims and they also strove to create an ideal world. The real thing is that man should be targeted which is an achievable target, devoid of hatred. When God created man and ordained angels to prostrate. Angels cautioned that man will create unrest in the world. I used to wonder why they said so. This is because man is a paradise-seeking animal and it is the search of paradise which has made man a perfectionist. Man must therefore strive to inculcate a personality worthy of being inhabited in paradise. If he understands the difference that this world is a *selection ground* for individual and not for making ideal society, people will be able to avail opportunities and positive thinking will emerge. This is the target of CPS – to inculcate wisdom in man so that he is able to unfold his intellectual potential!

Question – Answers

Q1: Why was Khilalfat e Rashida (era of four caliphates) considered ideal?

A: This notion has been developed during later times (particularly, the Abbasid period). In fact, at the time of the Prophet and his Companions, the term, "*Khilafat-e-Rashida*" was not even used; the caliph was simply referred to as the *Ameer ul Momineen* (Leader of believers). The appointment was only from the point of view of administration. It must be understood that any political system defines first of all, the procedure for selecting a Head of State. Since Muhammad was a Prophet, he became the head of state. After Prophet's demise, Abu Baqr was made the Caliph. When people gathered, it was said that two Caliphs should be selected – one from *Quraysh* and another *Ansaar*. Then A Hadith was presented that Caliph to be from *Quraysh*. Abu Nakr nominated Umar. After Umar, a board was constituted which elected *Uthman*. Later Ali was selected. All these four were selected in a different way. This was not a perfect way that each was selected differently and very recently family caliphate came into being. How will you say this is perfect. So, it was not a perfect regime but an administration. People say it literarily. This is no flaw it means that this is not the scheme of God. Each companion was ideal in character, their work was not to construct an ideal system.

Q2: Why does God need to test man? He must know before hand who is capable fo living in paradise and who is not?

A: This is a great blessing of God that He created man – gave him the senses – and created an eternal world for him so that he can stay in paradise. But their has to be a rule governing it. God gave freedom and those who are passing in the test, are being selected, rest are being separated. To find a good job and good business, man struggles, now why do you want a different system for paradise. This is becoming a 'man of double-standard; which is a very bad thing. Yesterday, I was thinking, in month of October some great people died – Nobel Prize winner (in medicine) died 3 hours before, Steve Jobs, Jagjit Singh (the singer). If you do not believe in paradise, there is such a sad picture of the world. To accept paradise is a way of wanting to understand the life positively. Instead of asking such question, man must concentrate on making himself a deserving candidate for paradise.

Q3: Should we target intellectuals of common man?

A: You can target both. God has given all intelligence to understand the laws of nature. Only the way of addressing will differ. With someone you will talk on academic lines and with the other simply.

Q4: Why have Muslims failed to understand the Creation Plan of God despite having the preserved guidebook?

A: I don't have an answer to this "Why". My understanding is that the subject of Quran is to acquaint man with the Creation Plan of God. Why was man born? What will happen after man dies? What lies in store in future for him? Read the Quran and if you feel that my understanding is correct, you should accept it.

Q5: One of our companions said, Dawah cannot be effective unless there is ideal society?

A: This is a self-styled statement because no Prophet ever did it. No Hadith or Quranic verse preaches this. Prophet Muhammad did not do this.

Q6: How can we become objective thinkers instead of emotional thinkers?

A: Emotions are a part of human beings, man just need to control them. According to the Quran

Who restrain their anger and are forgiving towards their fellow men. (3:134)

It does not say that anger will not be there instead those who are able to control it. God has given this quality to man that he can control and judges with his mind to evaluate things in terms of result.