

The secret of divine wisdom

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Excerpt:

In his talk, the Maulana explains the importance of wisdom and the pre-condition to acquire it. Citing from the Quran and Hadith, he explains that a believer develops wisdom only if he adopts a completely peaceful way of living.

Violence serves as a killer of wisdom because as soon as man's mind gets embroiled in fighting, the process of thinking comes to a halt. This principle is applicable at individual, community, national and international level.

As per the law of nature when confrontation ends, wisdom is allowed to prevail and as a result, better ideology triumphs. Unaware of this, present-day Muslims are wasting their energies by engaging in violence – passively or actively and as a consequence of their negative mindset, they have lost the ability to think correctly.

The lesson:

Wisdom is a blessing of God and adopting a culture of violence deprives us of this blessing.

Introduction

Wisdom (referred to as “*hikmat*” in Arabic) is a precious asset. Any task - big or small, whether pertaining to an individual or a community, national or international affairs – requires wisdom. The question that arises therefore is how can wisdom, which is essential for man’s success, be acquired.

Divine Wisdom

In my opinion, the following two Hadith convey the secret of divine wisdom. One of these is in reference to Ramadan. During the last ten days of Ramadan, Prophet was given the knowledge of Laylat ul-Qadr (Night of Desitny). According to the tradition,

The Prophet came out to tell when Laylat ul-Qadr was, and two of the Muslims were arguing. He said: “I came out to tell you when Laylat ul-Qadr was, and because these two men were arguing, so it [the knowledge of when Laylat al-Qadr was] was taken away from me. (Bukhari)

This is a very unusual Hadith but commentators have not been able to draw any profound lesson from it. This is because traditionally only the literal meanings of the Quran and Hadith were considered. Whereas according to a Hadith in Mishkat, the verses of the Quran have a specific meaning, which is contextual, and at the same time, they convey a principle for general application as well. In the light of the above Hadith, the tradition pertaining to Laylat ul-Qadr conveys a universal principle. According to this principle, wisdom received from God is withdrawn when man succumbs to fighting culture. Fighting culture therefore becomes a killer of divine inspiration. According to a tradition,

Tum mein se har shaqs be ilm hai, siwai uske jisko allah ilm de

**Each one of you is devoid of knowledge, save one whom God endows with knowledge
(Muslim)**

God is the ultimate benefactor of man. Everything – from man’s very existence to all that exists in this universe - has been provisioned by the Creator. It is however important to understand that availing any blessing has a pre-condition. For example, light of sun reaches Earth from a distance of (approximately) 93 million miles.

If man were to close his eyes, light would not reach him and he would remain blind, even though there was light all around! Similarly, the above Hadith conveys the precondition for man to receive wisdom. Such a person who seeks to receive inspiration from God should adopt the culture of peace and free himself from anger and all other negative emotions. Prophet Muhammad said

Beware of the wisdom of a believer, he sees in the light of God! (Tirmidhi)

It follows from the above two traditions that a believer is one who does not subscribe to violent methods and leads a life of peace. Such a person grows in wisdom. These Hadith traditions convey the secret of wisdom, that is, till the time we are positive and moderate, the mind would function normally. But, as soon as the mind gets involved in fighting culture, the process of thinking comes to a halt; the precious mind no longer works and the situation is similar to closing eyes and remaining in darkness even though there was light all around! Let me explain this through examples at individual and community levels.

Example – individual

In a city, several schools were running under the aegis of an organisation. The principal of one of these schools got into a dispute with the management, which increased so much that the matter was taken to Court. Consequently, the management expelled him from his position. It was during this period of expulsion that I met him. Upon hearing the entire incident, I rebuked him at his mistake. Thereupon, I advised him to apologise to the management and withdraw his case irrespective of whether or not the management reinstates him at his previous position. Further, I asked him to pursue a Doctorate degree. He acted on my advice, apologized to the management, withdrew his case from the Court and started studying. His actions turned around the situation for him – he was reinstated by the management, he studied and earned a Doctorate degree and today, he is the Director of the same Group. Let us understand the events that changed the situation. When the principal got into a dispute, he lost his ability to think correctly and under the influence of Satan, his mind started thinking negatively. However, once he understood that engaging in a dispute is futile and decided to think and act positively, his changed approach made him successful.

This example clarifies that when negative thinking sets in, wisdom is lost because the ability of mind to think correctly is jeopardised.

Let me cite another instance. A person set-up a small business in partnership and his partner usurped all the money and made him virtually penniless. The penniless partner was so angry that he wanted to kill the one who had betrayed his trust. He told me that he wanted to take revenge from his partner. I told him that he must remember that *“revenge is also avenged”*. If he kills that man, his children in turn would kill him because that is how the principle of revenge works. My reasoning addressed his mind and when his anger subsided, he asked me for advice. I asked him if he were left with any money, after incurring the loss. He said he had twenty thousand rupees. I told him to start afresh with that money and he agreed to do so. A year later when I met him, he told me that not only was he more contented now but through his new venture he had made up for all his losses and recorded profits. How had this change come about? Till the time this man was driven by negative emotions, his mind was not able to think creatively. However, as soon as he changed his mind-set and started thinking with a positive outlook, his mind channelized the positive energy and the creative potential in the direction most suited and beneficial to him.

Example - group

Prophet Muhammad began his mission in 610 A.D. It is a well-known fact that the Prophet of Islam was repeatedly challenged by his opponents in ancient Arabia. There were several instances of wars and violence. Then the Prophet managed to finalize a peace treaty between the Muslims and their opponents, known as Al-Hudaybiyah Peace Treaty. Historical records show that this peace treaty finalized, apparently giving no justice to the Prophet of Islam, but the Prophet concluded this treaty by delinking the question of justice from the question of peace. According to a tradition, when the peace treaty was being concluded Ali bin Abu Talib wrote the document and he mentioned in it, "Muhammad, Allah's Apostle ." The emissary of the opposing party said, "Don't write: 'Muhammad, Allah's Apostle', for if you were an apostle we would not fight with you." Prophet Muhammad asked Ali to rub it out, but Ali said, "I will not be the person to rub it out." Prophet then rubbed it out himself only so that Treaty could be concluded and peace would prevail.

As soon as the Peace Treaty was signed, fighting culture came to an end and wisdom prevailed. It enabled the energies of the believers to be utilized in peaceful constructive activities instead of being dissipated in a futile armed encounter. Following peace, even the opponent camp began re-assessing their actions. The well known taabii, a disciple of the companions, Ibn Shihab Az Zuhri says:

"Never before in Islam had there been such a great victory before Hdaybiya. Whenever Muslims and non-Muslims met one another, before Hdaybiya they came to the point of confrontation. But when peace prevailed and war was stopped under the treaty, people became safe from one another. In this peaceful atmosphere, they interacted with one another and began exchanging their thoughts. Then whoever had an occasion to hear about Islam, and had sound judgement, entered its fold. After the peace treaty, within a period of two years, as many people or even more accepted Islam as had done so before, only over a much longer period of time."

According to the tradition narrated by *Jabir ibn Abdullah*, there were only 1400 men with the Prophet on his journey to Hdaybiya. But two years after that, when the Prophet set out for the Meccan March, he was accompanied by ten thousand companions. At its beginning, the Hdaybiya peace treaty appeared to mean nothing but surrender and humiliation and traditions have it that on account of the unconditional acceptance of the enemy's terms, some Muslims held the Treaty to be a humiliating pact (*Seerah ibn Hisham*, 3/365). But God saw it from the point of view of its practical result in the future. The principle was that a Treaty which allows wisdom to prevail creates a triumphant situation. Therefore, while the Companions like Umar were not in favour of this treaty, Quran on the contrary revealed the following verse soon after the Treaty was signed,

Truly, We have granted you a clear victory (48:1)

The reason for this was that according to this Treaty it was agreed that for ten years there would be no war between Muslims and the opponent tribes. The end of fighting was in fact synonymous to the opening of the door of dawah.

When confrontation ends, wisdom is allowed to prevail and as a result, better ideology triumphs. In this case, the opponents of Prophet Muhammad did not have any ideology, they were simply idol worshippers. Contrary to this, Prophet Muhammad propagated an ideology - the ideology of monotheism. 'Clear victory' in the verse above refers to this nature of man, which allows him to give a positive response even though he previously succumbed to negativity.

Present-day Muslims, like ancient tribes, glorify violence. Every day there are reports in media which give an account of the violence committed by Muslims – either practically or at the level of thought. All, for instance, harbour negative thoughts about Israel or America. Every Muslim is involved in promoting fighting culture – either passively or actively – and each has a negative story to tell. Someone's hand is on trigger, someone's is not. Someone commits suicide bombing and others defend the acts. Instead of condemning the violence being committed, present-day Muslims engage in complaining and speaking ill about others. As a result, Muslims no longer have the ability to think correctly. The proof of this assertion is that Muslims have the Quran but they have become oblivious of it.

I received a call from Mr. Mehboob who has been distributing Quran and other literature to intelligentsia in Mumbai. He told me that recently he took an appointment with a renowned cardiologist, Dr. Agarwal. He expressed that he was not a patient but wanted to meet the Doctor for some personal work. He got the appointment and when he reached for the meeting, the Doctor called him inside. Upon meeting him, Mr. Mehboob presented to him a copy of the Quran. The Doctor stood up and thanked him profusely saying that no one had given him a Quran till date! Countless such instances keep coming to pass with our team members. The present-day Muslims will have to understand that instead of promoting violence they must acquaint people with the message of the Quran, which can win hearts and address minds.

Muslims have lost wisdom

Every Muslim does not commit violence himself but he never condemns the violent action of other Muslims. On the contrary, they refer to others as “oppressors” (or zaalim). It is because Muslims have been promoting violence – actively or passively – that they have failed to develop their intellectual abilities. They no longer think patiently because if they could, they would immediately relinquish the culture of violence and adopt the culture of peace. They would recognise the need of disseminating the word of God and become involved in discharging their obligatory duty. During the time of companions, printing press was not available and they used to travel to various places in order to spread the message of Quran. It was required that both the addressor (bearer of the message) and the addressee (recipient of the message) are not separated by distance.

Modern developments have revolutionised the way we operate. As I speak now, sitting in Delhi, I can be heard anywhere in the world. While companions had to undertake arduous travels to meet their addressee, it is no longer required. Earlier, companions had to memorise and recite the Quran to spread it, today printed copies of the Quran in various languages have been published. Quran is the answer to the calling of man’s nature. There are examples like Lord Headley Farooq, who hailed from a British royal family, and accepted Islam after the Quran addressed his mind.

There are several religions in the world that have sacred books but none can claim to have a preserved book. Without being rendered as preserved, the authenticity of the text becomes questionable. Quran is the only preserved book in this respect. The preservation as it is, of the revealed Book of God is no small occurrence. By virtue of being the preserved word of God, Quran has the power to address man’s mind but the violent culture of Muslims has deprived them of wisdom and they fail to understand this. The violent acts of Muslims – be it active or passive, bomb or propaganda-based – is against the spirit of Islam.

A real believer is one who discovers God and recognises the truth from God. It is his discovery that leads him to conviction and faith and makes him a well-wisher of mankind.

Unfortunately, instead of recognising and using the opportunity to spread the message of God to other men, Muslims are engaging themselves in false bomb and gun culture. The responsibility of doing dawah work devolved upon Muslims approximately fourteen hundred years ago but they continue to be oblivious of this obligation, till date.

During my visit to America, I was told about a programme aimed at teaching Arabic. I told them that in reality, it is wisdom that needs to be taught. All those who are in Arab, know Arabic but they are fighting for over sixty years now. At the time of Prophet Muhammad, three wars were fought – Badr, Hunayn, Uhud – none of which lasted beyond half a day; all others were skirmishes. Despite knowing Arabic, why can't Arabs realise that while in Prophet's time what was referred to as *Jihad* lasted only half a day, in the case of present-day Muslims, it is going on for over sixty years now. Given the futility of action, how can Arabs consider their actions to be Islamic? Prophet won in half a day of war but Muslims have only lost in six decades of struggle. This means that God is disowning the struggle of present-day Muslims. According to the Quran

You will have the upper hand, if you are believers. (3:139)

This verse conveys that success is for a believer who works in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and the Prophetic model. The real issue is that fighting culture does not allow wisdom to prevail. Such a time therefore becomes crucial for re-assessment. Instead of evaluating their actions, present-day Muslims engage in vehemently expressing their resentment against being victimised by the rest of the world. Be it the Muslim media or conferences, the same feeling of antipathy is reflected throughout the Muslim world.

Conclusion

The gist is that the violent culture perpetrated by Muslims has deprived them of wisdom. This is in accordance with the law of nature. Just as closing eyes would deprive one of light, likewise, being involved in fighting culture would make us lose wisdom. The first obligatory duty is therefore to *unilaterally* finish all forms of violence, whether passive or active.

According to a Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad told Companions

Break your bows, cut your bowstrings and strike your swords on stones. If people then come in to one of you, let him be like the better of Adam's two sons.

(Kitab ul Fitan)

It is clear from the above Hadith that any literature, media or ammunition used to promote and perpetrate violence should be destroyed and Muslims should seek forgiveness from God. Only then will positive thinking prevail in complete sense of the word. The need of the hour is that Muslims follow a u-turn and engage in promoting the message of God. This is the only way for them to attain wisdom.

Terminating the culture of violence is not a matter of faith; it is the law of nature. If man does not relinquish violence, he shall perish because fighting culture makes man bereft of wisdom.

The final time has come when man must be filled with the urge to rectify, re-assess and say, "I was wrong". Till a community, nation or individual do not accept that they was wrong, no new beginning can be made. A new beginning cannot be done by patching-up. A new beginning demands honest confession.

Claiming that others are victimizing and conspiring against Muslims serves no purpose. Present-day Muslims must seeks repentance with the resolve of never repeating their violent acts. If repeating once was unacceptable, Muslims have repeated many times over already. The only way for Muslims is to agree that the earlier approach was wrong and that they would no longer live in a besieged state of mind. Instead they would rise up for the cause of God and do dawah work. This should be the single-point aim of Muslims now.

I pray that God grants us wisdom and we are able to begin a new life so that we become deserving of the blessings of God!

Question – Answers

Q1: Please explain the meaning of “sustenance” in the following verse of the Quran. Does it refer to need or comfort?

There is not a living creature on the Earth but it is for God to provide its sustenance

(11:6)

A: There is nothing such as comfort-based sustenance. Comfort is the outcome of satanic psychology because man has not been created to lead a comfortable life. He is here for a test. “Sustenance” refers to the fact that God has created man for a test and has furnished that test paper he needs to undertake. Just as everything necessary for a student to write an exam is provided for by the examiner, likewise God has given man all that is required from the point of view of testing him. I once stayed as a guest at the house of an acquaintance who made me sleep on a mattress so soft that it was difficult to balance myself! Such things are an example of false luxury that man runs to attain.

God has taken upon himself to furnish man’s genuine requirements. All that is over and above this only adds to man’s distraction and drifts him from the path of rightful thinking. Will drinking water in a tumbler of gold help me more than drinking in a glass tumbler? Unfortunately, man doesn’t realise the futility of such acquisitions! It must therefore be clearly understood that sustenance is that genuine need without which man would not be able to take his test; rest qualify as satanic allurements.

Q2: I have often seen crowd applauding (and clapping) debates taking place between Islamic speakers and non- Islamic speakers. Is this the correct way of spreading the word of God?

A: This is clearly not a form of dawah work; rather it is a satanic act. Those who engage in debates are debaters, not dayee. Such applause is clearly against the example of Prophet Muhammad. According to a Hadith in Bukhari, adopting a practice, which is against the example of the Prophet, is a rejected act.

Debating is not an act of dawah. Instead it feeds communal pride, and is in turn a satanic act. According to the Quran

I am conveying my Lord's messages to you and I am your sincere and honest adviser.

(7:68)

Dawah work rests on well-wishing alone. No one amongst the companions used to clap because Prophet's address used to arouse repentance and re-thinking in them. Contrary to this, a sense of pride is aroused by way of fiery speeches, which is highly unislamic.

Q3: How naïve is it to consider reconciliation as cowardice?

A: It is unislamic to consider reconciliation as cowardice. If we opine so, what will we think about Prophet Muhammad? There is no other instance in history where reconciliation was done by unilaterally accepting the terms of the opposing party. This is an extreme example of reconciliation. Mr. Sajid Anwar told of an instance where the distribution of the Quran to non-Muslims was being discussed. An attendee interrupted the discussion and raised the question that if a non-Muslim disrespects the Quran and throws away the copy, who would be liable for punishment? In response, another attendee cited an instance whereby, a dawah contingent was sent to King of Iran. A companion took that document, which had Quranic verses. When he gave it to the King, he tore it away. So, the attendee asked who would be accountable in this case. This is no logic. It is misguidance from Satan so that Muslims refrain from doing dawah work. Reconciliation is not cowardice, it is wisdom and according to Quran it is the best way!

Q4: We consider several items of comfort and luxury as "need" and remain distracted. If this difference is discerned, many problems would be solved. Please give your remarks on this.

A: This something that each person knows himself. When you want more than need, it has a price and the price is that you cannot attain a great feat. You would remain engulfed in luxury. A man of mission likes simplicity and remains content on need. I once visited Rajasthan where I came to know about a person who had opened a new hospital for patients of Tuberculosis. The hospital was amidst lush gardens. I decide to visit him.

The hospital was well-built. When I went to his room, it had neither a table, nor couches. There was only a simple floor on which he was sitting and he used to speak very little. He was dressed very simply and was a complete picture of how someone who attains big feats leads his life. All scientists for example, lead very simple lives. Only those who have no other job but to eat, live and be merry, who talk like this.

Q5: An Arab cleric attributed absence of Jihad to the pitiful condition of Muslims.

A: This is a baseless assumption. Because Jihad is going on to the extent that it has become over-Jihad. The real problem is that Muslims are not able to distinguish between lack of Jihad and lack of result of Jihad. In 1948, Arabs gave the slogan that they would eliminate Israelites and cast them into the sea. This did not come to pass and Arabs were not able to eliminate Israel.

It is a fact that very few people are able to understand the principle of differentiation. If there is no result, they think no Jihad is taking place. Despite the fact that countless people have been killed, tunnels have been dug out and in the history of Muslims, so much Jihad has been done for Palestine as was never done. Muslims world over, either actively or at the level of thought are involved in it. The real thing is not that Jihad is not happening but that the Jihad is not leading to any result. Now, they should call Jihad off because a lot has happened and several generations have been destroyed, without any result.

Q6: You are very hopeful about dawah explosion taking place in Kashmir. Please elaborate.

A: I say so basis a simple logic. When man undergoes this experience that he undertakes violent activism and faces destruction in return, he undergoes second thought which makes him take a u-turn. Japan is a case in point. Before WWII, Japan was pro-violence. They were the ones who introduced suicide bombing (hara-kiri). But after being defeated in WWII, they took a u-turn. The Japanese Emperor, Hirohito had said, “*We have to suffer the unsufferable to take a new decision!*”

This is my opinion about Kashmiris. They did a lot of violence in the name of Jihad but it failed miserably. Over a lac of Kashmiris died and Pakistan fought four wars for Kashmir. The Government of Pakistan declared that it can no longer fight as it could not win in the last four wars. Pakistan became a failed state. Are Kashmiris devoid of thinking? It is inevitable that Kashmiris would give a second thought and the counter-productivity of their Jihad would compel them to think, take a u-turn and start a culture of peace. This is where my hope lies.

This has commenced already. There are several people who say that earlier they used to hurl stones at the army, now the present Quran to them. This is a good sign and this will only increase.

Q7: What role does sincerity play in acquiring wisdom?

A: This is a matter of law of nature. Studies in psychology reveal that if something happens that makes man lose his sanity, his mind will stop working and he would fall prey to negative thinking. Till the time man has sanity, sincerity and seriousness, his mind works fine.

Q8: I told a cleric that when Japan adopted the path of peace, it was successful and when Palestine adopted violence, it remained unsuccessful. The cleric said that Japan is a follower of America that is why it is successful.

A: This is a false argument and is completely devoid of logic. Such arguments are absurd and we can only pray for them.

Q9: You often convey a formula, 'One man, one mission' or 'One man, two mission'. How will this be practically possible?

A: I read an instance about Maulana Hasrat Mohani who was a radical person. British Government arrested him and imprisoned him. He was under rigorous imprisonment and was assigned the task of grinding wheat into flour. He was a freedom fighter and poet and during his days in the prison, he said

Hai mashq e sukhan jaari, chakki ki mushaqqat bhi

(Hasrat is continuing his hobby of composing verses side by side with the grinding of wheat)

The case of a dayee is quite similar. His chosen field of work should continue and alongside, he must continue dawah work and journey towards God-realisation. The earlier formula is not very practical and I think, the following formula is applicable to all, “One man, two mission.” You should continue with your livelihood, as per need and at the same time, should strive to attain God-realisation and continue to do dawah work.

Q10: Are the problems of Muslims a curse from God for not spreading the word of God?

A: Man cannot classify an occurrence as the “curse of God”. This is akin to entering into God’s domain. Within our limits, of being a human being, we would say that man lost his right thinking because of being engaged in violence.

Q11: How can we understand the general principles given in Quran and Hadith?

A: The only way is to save your ability to think. I will tell you two instances here. There was a Hakeem (Doctor) in Delhi, who never used pen to write a prescription. Instead, he would speak out the prescription. Someone asked why this difference in his way of prescribing medicines? He said that he did so to preserve his hands because he checks the pulse with his hands and so his hands should be very sensitive. The higher the sensitivity of his hand, the more quickly would be able to detect. Deoband’s Anzar Shah Kashmiri was very fond of mangoes but he had heard that sour mangoes deplete memory so he used to have a person by his side to taste the fruit first and pass only the sweet ones to him!

God has given a mind to all of us. The problem is that we are not able to keep intact our ability to think. In order to save our ability to think, we must not let intolerance and negative emotions set in. All these things take away our ability to think correctly. If only, we are able to save our wisdom, that would suffice, wisdom would do its job automatically.

Q12: How can we stop someone who plans to harm us?

A: This is a hypothetical question. No one plans just like that. Often people only report half the story. It is only upon provocation and incitement that retaliation is borne. Even animals do not attack without provocation. If you make the other person angry, he may react so you should ensure that you refrain from arousing anger.

I was once at Kingsway Camp where a person came on his bicycle and rammed into me. I got hurt and my spectacle broke. A policeman came at the occasion and wanted to file a report against the cyclist. I just sat in the corner of a road and when he asked me what report should be filed, and when I did not say anything, he simply said, “Baba ji toh kuch bolta nahin,” (*He doesn't say a thing!*). I was thinking that am bleeding and my spectacles have broken, what should I do now?

I went to the doctor to get the Tetanus injection and then got the spectacles repaired. People say as if, they have done nothing and others are out to harm them. But, in the light of my experience, I do not subscribe to this way of thinking.