

*Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, October 28, 2005*

*Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah*

*Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim*

Insha Allah, this Qhutbah is entitled "Departures from true Islam". In spite of clear cut admonitions against divisive tendencies, the so called Muslims have broken themselves up from one community. [2:213] The people used to be one community when GOD sent the prophets as bearers of good news, as well as warners... The religion of Islam has been fragmented and divided and this has taken many varieties. People also make distinctions between parts of the religion by accepting what suits them and neglecting the rest. [2:208] O you who believe, you shall embrace total submission; do not follow the steps of Satan, for he is your most ardent enemy.

Another variation is taking what pleases them for one day of the week e.g. Friday or for one month in the year e.g. Ramadan and then being lost in the material world for the remaining 6 days or 11 months. The mosques of the Muslims are full on Fridays for their Jumma and are also crowded during the month of Ramadan. They offer only the noon prayers on Friday and / or observe all religious requirements during Ramadan but behave as if Islam does not exist for them for the remaining week or the remaining 11 months. In fact, there is a common saying among Muslims that at least don't lie and backbite during Ramadan as if it is okay during the remaining 11 months of the year!

Over the centuries, people have created differences, divergences, discrepancies, disparities, dissimilarities, departures, detours, dividers, deviations, digressions, deformations, distinctions, divisions, discriminations, disagreements, distortions, detachments, partitions and variations. God says in [5:3] ...Today, I have completed your religion, perfected My blessing upon you, and I have decreed Submission as the religion for you....When God Himself has perfected and completed something in the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad and we now have insignificant humans tampering with it. Is this not a horrible form of sacrilege ? [3:19] The only religion approved by GOD is "Submission." Ironically, those who have received the scripture are the ones who dispute this fact, despite the knowledge they have received, due to jealousy. For such rejectors of GOD's revelations, GOD is most strict in reckoning.

Then there is the attitude of sectarian prejudice based on personality cults or differences of view in the application and interpretation of religious doctrine by the so called clergy. [6:159] Those who divide themselves into sects do not belong with you. Their judgment rests with GOD, then He will inform them of everything they had done.

Many leaders of Muslims who are extremely arrogant and suffer from self delusion have brought about this. They themselves may not be aware of the extent of their departure from the path of righteousness prearranged by God.

According to popular belief, just in so called “Sunni Islam” we have 72 sects. Most of today’s sects happened when one “religious” leader e.g. Hannafi, Hambali, Shafi, Maliki, Wahhabi etc. tried to become a religious reviver and attempted to give “new directions” to the message of Islam. They were considered to be “righteous” men who put forward what they considered to be the most appropriate application of the words of God to the affairs of men in the world. However, they overstressed one aspect and ignored or downgraded another in this great religion of ours. Muslims follow the *fatwas* of these Imams and each one claims superiority for his chosen school which has become the basis for internecine wars between the Muslims.

How about the so called Sufi sect? Initially, their basic message was sound – the love of God and the love of humanity. They then fell into the blunder of firstly over emphasizing the personality aspect (the Pir and Murid relationship). They then belittled the life of this world and advocated hermitism and monasticism. [57:27] Subsequent to them, we sent our messengers. We sent Jesus the son of Mary, and we gave him the Injeel (Gospel), and we placed in the hearts of his followers kindness and mercy. But they invented hermitism which we never decreed for them. All we asked them to do was to uphold the commandments approved by GOD. But they did not uphold the message as they should have. Consequently, we gave those who believed among them their recompense, while many of them were wicked. The Quran allows us to live a full life in this world without getting lost in it and to always be conscious of the Hereafter. [2:201] Others would say, "Our Lord, grant us righteousness in this world, and righteousness in the Hereafter, and spare us the retribution of Hell."

The growth of sectarianism with its associated prejudice has done immense harm to the noble religion of Islam. It is one of the major factors responsible for producing an imprecise picture of Islam before people of different religions. Creative energies could be used for much better purposes. It is therefore obviously necessary that we should look for ways and means to eradicate the menace of cults and factions.

Why can't the so called Muslims follow the straight, right and clear path shown in the Quran? [11:1] A.L.R. This is a scripture whose verses have been perfected, then elucidated. It comes from a Most Wise, Most Cognizant. Unfortunately, the Muslims have an abysmally low lack of knowledge of the Quran and look up to the clergy for religious jurisprudence. [9:31] They have set up their religious leaders and scholars as lords, instead of GOD. Others deified the Messiah, son of Mary. They were all commanded to worship only one god. There is no god except He. Be He glorified, high above having any partners. However, sad to say, even if these people were well versed in the Quran it would be to either know the Quran by heart or knowing a Satanic inspired translation. This is the reason why I always say that “placement of souls” is one of God’s greatest gifts to us.

The Muslims have fallen into Satan’s trap either wittingly or unwittingly. Nevertheless, we know that all good is from God and all bad is from us [42:30] Anything bad that happens to you is a consequence of your own deeds, and He overlooks many (of your sins).

The Muslims also have the curse of visiting the tomb or mausoleum of their religious leader, scholar etc. after his death as if he was still alive. [35:22] Nor are the living and the dead;

GOD causes whomever He wills to hear. You cannot make hearers out of those in the graves. What is far worse is that they invoke the dead leader for the fulfillment of the supplicant's wishes or desires or to intercede with God on their behalf. [30:31] You shall submit to Him, reverence Him, observe the Contact Prayers (Salat), and - whatever you do - do not ever fall into idol worship. This is in blatant defiance of God's clear caution in [2:255] GOD: there is no other god besides Him, the Living, the Eternal. Never a moment of unawareness or slumber overtakes Him. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and everything on earth. Who could intercede with Him, except in accordance with His will? He knows their past, and their future. No one attains any knowledge, except as He wills. His dominion encompasses the heavens and the earth, and ruling them never burdens Him. He is the Most High, the Great.

What I fail to understand is that when God Himself has so clearly stated [2:186] When My servants ask you about Me, I am always near. I answer their prayers when they pray to Me. The people shall respond to Me and believe in Me, in order to be guided. Kindly note that this is a non *Qul* verse. *Qul* which means to *say* or *proclaim* is an Arabic word used so very often in the Quran, When questions were asked to Prophet Muhammad along came a telegram faster than the speed of light and out came God's answer from Muhammad's memory bank. Here Muhammad did not even receive a *Qul* because God gives the answer directly. Check out what is said in Psalm 90 vs. 15 & 16 -He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

The entire industry of worship both private and public at tombs of saints etc. for the grant of favours or help in the solution of a problem is a clear departure from the true path of Islam. It is an evil practice which has done the greatest damage to a true consideration of the spirit of Islam. Ancestor worship has also been an important cause of the breakdown of Islam and the growth of sectarianism [23:68] Why do they not reflect upon this scripture? Do they not realize that they have received something never attained by their ancestors? [2:170] When they are told, "Follow what GOD has revealed herein," they say, "We follow only what we found our parents doing." What if their parents did not understand, and were not guided? Instead, we should worship what our righteous ancestors worshipped. [12:38] "And I followed instead the religion of my ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We never set up any idols beside GOD. Such is the blessing from GOD upon us and upon the people, but most people are unappreciative.

Fanaticism and excesses in religion have been condemned. [5:77] Say, "O people of the scripture, do not transgress the limits of your religion beyond the truth, and do not follow the opinions of people who have gone astray, and have misled multitudes of people; they are far astray from the right path." Although this Ayat is addressed primarily to the Jews and Christians, it has an equal warning for the Muslims. Extremism disfigures the proper understanding and awareness of the religion of Islam as a whole.

Look at the importance people attach to the *burkha*, *pardah* and *hijab*. There are only two ayats in the Quran which directly touch on this matter. No ayat in any Quran stipulates that women who go out of the house should cover themselves head to toe with only their eyes visible. Further, they delude themselves into thinking that this is what Islam requires of them.

Some of them have no choice because they are forced by their husbands, family and society. They are degraded if they do not follow this evil practice. These people have lost sight of the more important aspects such as faith in the essentials and moral values in Islam.

There is an unfortunate tendency of linking events in Muslim history with its battles, victories and martyrdom etc. with the religion of Islam as if it were an essential part of it. Then there is the issue of who should have succeeded Muhammad. Most of these events gave rise to the formation of sects in the community and these have no relationship or relevance for the true religion of Islam as prescribed in the Quran. Yet there are Muslims all over the world who attach more importance to these events than to the words of God enshrined in the Holy Quran.

As regards business and day to day practices, Muslims make many inconsistencies in their commercial activities under the mask of valid strategies. They forget the basic moral values of justice and compassion which is so often spoken about in the Quran.

One of the most obvious and easy ways of achieving our objectives of bringing all Muslims to follow the religion of strict monotheism - [3:19] The only religion approved by GOD is "Submission." Ironically, those who have received the scripture are the ones who dispute this fact, despite the knowledge they have received, due to jealousy. For such rejectors of GOD's revelations, GOD is most strict in reckoning. They have to be educated to read, ponder and reflect on God's words in an Authorized English Version translated from the original and if they cannot understand English then they would have to read a translation from this version only into any of their languages where possible. Just getting a Hindi translation from Taj Office, Mohammedali Road will not do the trick. They also would learn to be more tolerant on Muslims who differ from them on some minor points in religion. Universally educating Muslims seems to be a daunting task but other religious groups have achieved this. When they appreciate a God inspired version they will know the different disguises and camouflage of idols, that Hadis, Sunna, making distinctions between Prophets and Messengers and sectarianism have to be immediately canned. Insha Allah, we have to evolve into a single school of thought – worship God alone, to patiently persevere, allow mutual consensus and never be fiercely intolerant. Progress can be made even if it is slow and difficult but only with God's help.

To end, Islam is a religion which asks for a complete submission and surrender to the Will and Commands of God and to commit our way of life to his prescriptions and prohibitions not just for one day in the week or one month in the year for our every living moment. You cannot over emphasise one aspect and neglect another because this is a blasphemy. If we claim to be good Muslims we must guard ourselves against these at all times. [26:89] Only those who come to GOD with their whole heart (will be saved).