

Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, January 14, 2005

Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah

Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim

Why do we see all around us “Muslims” getting hammered, losing every battle, having the lowest levels of literacy, standards of living, being looked down upon and even being the greatest victims in terms of the recent *tsunami*? Insha Allah, we all have an urgent need to reinforce our faith in God alone. At the time of Prophet Mohammed we had a position of strength and distinction. Why do we have today degradation and lack of physical and moral vigour? Unless we honestly realise this weakness and make a sincere thrust to improve ourselves, there is little hope for any improvement of the community. [13:11]Thus, GOD does not change the condition of any people unless they themselves make the decision to change....

Can any Muslim search his soul and say with confidence that he is following God’s proven system? If the answer is in the negative, then why put the cart before the horse, we have to check ourselves first.

One of the main causes for the present day humiliation is the two faced belief we have in God. On one hand, we call ourselves Muslims but we disregard the tenets of true Islam (Submission). Some accept partially, others in mere fragments. [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.

We have to live and die by God’s rules. We tried to act extra smart and audaciously accepted “*freedom of choice*”. [33:72] We have offered the responsibility (freedom of choice) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they refused to bear it, and were afraid of it. But the human being accepted it; he was transgressing, ignorant. Now that we undertook this impossible task and it was too late for us to go back, the Most Gracious favoured us by bestowing on us gifts of senses, intuition, will power, emotion, initiative and independence which are not found in any other of His innumerable creations. Intellect creates understanding and perception inducting creative activity to transform the environment. God also undertook to guide us in our efforts [92:12] We provide the guidance.

God made us of clay but blew into us from His spirit. [55:14] He created the human from aged clay, like the potter's clay. [32:9] He shaped him and blew into him from His spirit. And He gave you the hearing, the eyesight, and the brains; rarely are you thankful. By virtue of this spirit we are expected to bring our body and soul into harmony with God’s plan and universal will. God endowed us with a natural instinct [30:30] Therefore; you shall devote yourself to the religion of strict monotheism. Such is the natural instinct placed into the people by GOD. Such creation of GOD will never change. This is the perfect religion, but most people do not know. Thus, we have a duty

to preserve the model on which God created us. In spite of our rebellion, we are born with purity, innocence and righteous inclination towards virtue but we soon get corrupted and contaminated with false doctrines, customs, practices, superstitions and selfish values. As a result we get materialistic and aggressive and we yearn after what is evil and forbidden.

From the Old Testament, we understand that Adam and Eve were responsible for the *Original Sin* and the whole of humanity has to now pay the price. But the Quran has no place for vicarious atonement of sins. [53:38] No soul bears the sins of another soul. We are responsible for our own acts since we have been given full liberty and initiative to act according to our own judgment. We make our own fortune and destiny, though God is fully aware of it as we are all pre-destined.

[17:13] We have recorded the fate of every human being; it is tied to his neck. On the Day of Resurrection we will hand him a record that is accessible. On the Day of Judgment we are judged by our own record [17:71] The day will come when we summon every people, together with their record. As for those who are given a record of righteousness, they will read their record and will not suffer the least injustice.

[95:4] We created man in the best design. [95:5] Then turned him into the lowliest of the lowly. We are expected to struggle and toil in our life. [90:4] We created the human being to work hard (to redeem himself). God wants us to go from the depths of darkness to the higher realms of light and truth.

And God gave us the Quran. Prior to this, for a long time there were no clear directions for day to day life as the real Gospel of Jesus was lost. No scripture apart from the Quran is so rationalistic with its constant emphasis on reflection [30:24] Among His proofs is that He shows you the lightning as a source of fear, as well as hope, then He sends down from the sky water to revive a land that has been dead. In these, there are sufficient proofs for people who understand.; to take heed [14:52] This is a proclamation for the people, to be warned herewith, and to let them know that He is only one god, and for those who possess intelligence to take heed.; to understand [16:67] And from the fruits of date palms and grapes you produce intoxicants, as well as good provisions. This should be (sufficient) proof for people who understand.; to reflect [10:24] The analogy of this worldly life is like this: we send down water from the sky to produce with it all kinds of plants from the earth, and to provide food for the people and the animals. Then, just as the earth is perfectly adorned, and its people think that they are in control thereof, our judgment comes by night or by day, leaving it completely barren, as if nothing existed the previous day. We thus explain the revelations for people who reflect; and to know [7:32] Say, "Who prohibited the nice things GOD has created for His creatures, and the good provisions?" Say, "Such provisions are to be enjoyed in this life by those who believe. Moreover, the good provisions will be exclusively theirs on the Day of Resurrection." We thus explain the revelations for people who know.

While Europe was going through a 1000 year long age of darkness, God gave a mental revolution to the Arabs who were the original recipients of the Quran and made them pioneers of a scientific outlook. Then the rot set in.

The Quran sweeps aside the cobwebs of superstition, ignorance and gloom and heralds an age of reasoning and advancement. Nevertheless, the Quran does tell us about miracles which are the *happening of an impossibility*. However, the Quran preaches how to harness the secrets of nature and the scientific truth in natural phenomena.

[3:191] They remember GOD while standing, sitting, and on their sides, and they reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth: "Our Lord, You did not create all this in vain. Be You glorified. Save us from the retribution of Hell.

God gave us two choices – *you either believe or you don't*. We have the steep and intricate path of virtue or the easy path of vice. [90:10] Did we not show him the two paths? [90:11] He should choose the difficult path. Ironically and thank God for that the difficult path leads to days of bliss but the path of pleasure leads to rebellion and self destruction.

When we follow evil, we disgrace ourselves as the lowest of the low from a high position and are divested of all the good we are capable of. We are hasty, impatient, weak, anxious, selfish, ungrateful and vain and we make the biggest blunder of mistaking God's bounties of strength, wealth, position, influence and power to be our own achievements. God also gives us subtle gifts of knowledge, talent, creativity, flair etc. which are also not our own but endowed by God to us. We have to be grateful and thankful. [25:43] Have you seen the one whose god is his own ego? Will you be his advocate?

In our strife and struggle, we will suffer hardships. If we exercise patience and restraint God will smoothen our way. If we have a true and sincere desire to obey and please God, our difficulties will vanish [94:5] With pain there is gain. [94:6] Indeed, with pain there is gain. [24:55] GOD promises those among you who believe and lead a righteous life, that He will make them sovereigns on earth, as He did for those before them, and will establish for them the religion He has chosen for them, and will substitute peace and security for them in place of fear. All this because they worship Me alone; they never set up any idols beside Me. Those who disbelieve after this are the truly wicked.

Our success and failure in this world and the Hereafter depends on our own endeavors. God will make our path easy because we fear God [92:7]. We will direct him towards happiness. But for the arrogant, the selfish and the greedy [92:10] We will direct him towards misery. They love this fleeting, temporary life and have rejected or at least are unconcerned about the Hereafter.

It is perhaps a paradox that poor and illiterate Muslims sometimes have a stronger faith and fear of God and the Hereafter than many of the so called educated ones though all

of them follow illegal sources of Hadith and Sunna. We understand that the rich believer is better than the poor believer assuming their levels of submission are equal. So it is the educated and so called enlightened Muslims who need to strengthen their faith and follow the righteous path.

Once the belief in the Hereafter is unconditional, it will be easy to realise that this world is only a temporary abode – a transit point to the everlasting life hereafter. When we die, we merely change our residential address. Why should be so naïve when knowledge and wisdom is at hand. The fact that we are constantly being observed and recorded according to which we are answerable should be a powerful deterrent for us in any case.

Unfortunately, the Muslim community has lost their glory in the same way as the Children of Israel. They too have projected themselves as the favoured ones without fulfilling the duties assigned to them. [2:47] & [2:122] O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I blessed you more than any other people.

We should not take the narration of events such as the history of the Children of Israel as mere stories. Such happenings have been related to warn the Muslims lest they should also indulge in the same foolishness. There are clear cautions as to how God's system works if one disobeys Him. Consequently, the person or community loses their importance and the authority or command is passed on to some other people. [5:54] O you who believe, if you revert from your religion, then GOD will substitute in your place people whom He loves and who love Him. They will be kind with the believers, stern with the disbelievers, and will strive in the cause of GOD without fear of any blame. Such is GOD's blessing; He bestows it upon whomever He wills. GOD is Bounteous, Omniscient.

People make just half hearted attempts to get out of this predicament. Most believe it is futile to expect a change overnight. However, a beginning must be made somewhere and somehow. We have to firm up our faith in God alone. Here people will find it difficult to change completely in one go. The path that leads to salvation is the revival of faith in the Day of Judgment and the process of accountability. We must realise that we are being watched by God constantly.

[52:48] You shall steadfastly persevere in carrying out your Lord's command - you are in our eyes - and glorify and praise your Lord when you get up. This is what is conveniently forgotten and pushed aside when following the code of do's and don'ts. If we make a check list of how many times we remember being watched while doing something we should not, the score would be appalling.

God repeats this several times in the Quran and we claim that we know it fully well. This aspect is perhaps the most neglected. God reminds us of his omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. [57:4] He is the One who created the heavens and the earth in six days, then assumed all authority. He knows everything that enters into the

earth, and everything that comes out of it, and everything that comes down from the sky, and everything that climbs into it. He is with you wherever you may be. GOD is Seer of everything you do. [58:7] Do you not realize that GOD knows everything in the heavens and everything on earth? No three people can conspire secretly without Him being their fourth, nor five without Him being the sixth, nor less than that, nor more, without Him being there with them wherever they may be. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, He will inform them of everything they had done. GOD is fully aware of all things.

[59:18] O you who believe, you shall reverence GOD, and let every soul examine what it has sent ahead for tomorrow. You shall reverence GOD; GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do. [62:8] Say, "The death that you are trying to evade will catch up with you sooner or later. Then you will be returned to the Knower of all secrets and declarations, then He will inform you of everything you had done." [64:4] He knows everything in the heavens and the earth, and He knows everything you conceal and everything you declare. GOD is fully aware of the innermost thoughts.

Nothing can escape God's watchful gaze and none of our actions can be hidden from him. It is in our own vital interest that we keep in mind that we are being d persistently and incessantly. When God knows every fleeting thought that crosses our mind how would it be possible to keep our dealings in hiding ? Once we bear this in mind diligently it would be likely to work as a restraint to keep away from all that is forbidden for us.

Human nature is such that once we are totally conscious that we are being observed – be it our speech, deeds or even gestures – we could change, Insha Allah. Why can't we cultivate this consciousness of God's presence and observance ? This, along with a firm belief in the Hereafter would make us literally *shake in our shoes* when doing anything God has prohibited. We have to seek the righteous path available in abundance in the Holy Quran. So these are among the basic fundamentals which need to be reviewed and revived. The elements of belief are so simple and straightforward that it does not require any formal education or training to understand. [11:1] A.L.R. This is a scripture whose verses have been perfected, then elucidated. It comes from a Most Wise, Most Cognizant.

We are weak and we must seek God's grace without which we can do nothing and with which we can do it all. We have to translate the Will of God. Only unflinching faith in God alone can help us gain our honour and pristine position.