

Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, Sept 21, 2007

Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah

Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim

In ancient times, religion was national as in the case of Egyptians, Romans, Greeks and Iranians. Later on, it became racial as in the case of the Jews. Christianity taught that religion is an individual and private affair. Many “western” nations, after centuries of bitter conflict between the church and the state, resorted to secularism having despaired of divine guidance in the matter of law. It was the Quran that for the first time gave the message to humankind that religion was neither national nor racial, not individual and private and that its purpose was to unite and organize humans on the basis of monotheism despite all natural distinctions. True Islam is not theocratic in the way this term is understood in the West and needs and has no clergy.

The Romans had secularized their law and codified it in digest forms like the 12 Tables. In England, it was pre-eminently built up by gradual accumulation of special instances and the law developed by a system of judicial precedents. In the Quran, the law is constantly tempered by elements such as Ehsan (liberality, magnanimity and equity), Tawazun (equilibrium), Furqan (criterion), Qist (balance) and Adal (justice). This law is ideal and valid for all ages and cannot be codified as it is continuously developing in a dynamic fashion. The essential difference between Quranic law and western law is that the former is based on direct revelation and being of Divine origin it is virtually immutable. It is wider in scope than the Anglo-Saxon law (which is based on Roman law) for it includes international relationships besides public and private laws like protection of minorities who can enjoy protection of fundamental rights such as personal liberty, freedom of speech and freedom to deal with property and franchise. *No Compulsion in Religion* [2:256] There shall be no compulsion in religion: the right way is now distinct from the wrong way. Anyone who denounces the devil and believes in GOD has grasped the strongest bond; one that never breaks. GOD is Hearer, Omniscient.

Religion according to the Quran, means life in the world lived with a spiritual attitude that cleanses all that it touches. [3:104] Let there be a community of you who invite to what is good, advocate righteousness, and forbid evil. These are the winners. Accordingly, the attitude of a Muslim towards religion is not like a *Sunday suit*, which he can put on when he enters a place of worship and put off when he is dealing with the affairs of everyday life. For this very reason, Islam never developed a church that ordained priests as a class separate from the laity.

A true religion should rise above the shackles of racial and spiritual egoism, such as being the chosen people of God, above intolerance, clergy hypocrisy and bigotry

which religious tradition all over the world has fostered. As a result, the church hopelessly became the kingdom of the priest, for the priest and by the priest, instead of becoming the Kingdom of God on earth. In today's false Islam, the position is far worse with *fatwas* spewing out day and night. The beauty of true Islam is its sincerity; its lack of intricate theology, its conformity, its absence of contradictions and that it needs no imperial support and demands no inquisition.

Undeniably, this modern world has had remarkable hi-tech scientific advancements that have revolutionised the lives of the people. The world has shrunk to a global village and the problem of distance has been reduced so we can cover the farthest part of the world in the shortest possible time. However, this elimination is entirely an outward phenomenon.

The world is groaning under mental and physical abhorrence of nations and people to one another. Everyone feels like poles asunder. People of the world aspire to develop a universal brotherhood but they cannot achieve it owing to an absence of a crystal clear basis or value on which to bond divergent races, creeds and colours. Hence, the relevance and importance of the basis laid down in the Quran comes into focus.

World organizations have not succeeded because they never treated varied national and ethnic groups as equal partners in the harmony of nations. People may talk about racial toleration but we are always fighting a losing battle. Only Islam gave us the most valuable concept of human brotherhood, equality and fraternity. It is of immense importance to humankind.

The Quran defines the basic factor that binds humankind in unity. *The Only Criterion For Distinguishing Among The People* [49:13] O people, we created you from the same male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in the sight of GOD is the most righteous. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant. This proves that national and tribal divisions of humanity are for recognition and characteristics and not based on *Machiavellian and Lutheran* based theories of nationalism, which divide humanity into watertight compartments.

In order to create a deep sense of oneness and togetherness among diverse races, religious and cultural groups, the unity of the Supreme Creator and the common origin of humans had to be traced back to Adam. This would be a part of the universal faith known as Submission. The verse quoted above addresses all humans and not just a "O you who believe" since all humans have descended from Adam and his spouse known as Eve. Racial, ethnic and national differences, attitudes and characteristics have no significance as they are just for identification. Before Almighty God, all are equal and the most honoured are the most upright.

At the time of Revelation, the social structure of ancient Arabs was founded on blood kinship. The Quran completely transformed this mode of thinking cementing the courage of faith and belief to traditional bonds. It built up a solid structure for fraternity and demolished all traditional frameworks of tribe and family. It aimed at establishing a classless culture woven together by eradicating internal conflicts and strife. It created and constructed a social structure based on lofty moral ideals. This is a fact and feat acknowledged even by an eminent non-Muslim scholar like Prof. H.G. Wells. (The Time Machine, War of the Worlds.) Incidentally, men like G.B. Shaw and Prof. H.A.R. Gibb have justifiably predicted why Islam is to be the future religion of mankind.

On account of true faith and belief, the Quran inspires us in times of war and at the same times moves us in peace. Submission has heroically survived and regains its vitality even after repeated setbacks. We owe our credit to it and we owe our degradation to ourselves. The moment our daily life and politics were detached from our religion did we decline and now the cup of misery is full to the brim that is because pure faith (iman) has little or no real hold on our lives and actions.

Real world democracy, which signifies an equality of status for all humans can be attained only through true Islam (Submission). It possesses such a mighty spiritual influence that as soon as a person joins this order, he feels himself raised to a level where all distinctions of race, class, creed, colour and rank disappear *as if waved away by a magic wand*. This spiritual power will continue till the end of the world, God willing. The Quran has a definite view of human destiny and this concept embraces the entire human race irrespective of all barriers. True Islam renders a great service to the cause of humanity; no other social order has such a record of success. It unites in an equality of status, of opportunity and of endeavour so many selections of people. It possesses the power to reconcile apparently irreconcilable elements of race and tradition. It teaches by cooperation and rule by consensus. *Murder, Suicide, and Illicit Gains Prohibited* [4:29] O you who believe, do not consume each others' properties illicitly - only mutually acceptable transactions are permitted. You shall not kill yourselves. GOD is Merciful towards you.

What makes Islam dynamic is its spirit of mutual consensus that means to exert with reasoning a view to form an opinion on a legal question not specifically stated in the Quran. An example would be sudden and new needs of society, public order and the well being of the people. However, utmost care should be taken to keep Quranic injunctions firmly in mind with persons who have sound Quranic knowledge. Such a person may be more learned than others but that does not constitute him into a separate class, they are not vested with any special authority and enjoy no special privileges.

As a way of life, Islam is the only practical means of making Monotheism (Tauhid) a living feature in the intellectual and emotional life of humankind. It demands loyalty

to God, not to thrones. Since God is the ultimate spiritual basis of all life, worship of God alone virtually amounts to man's loyalty to his own ideal nature. The ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by true Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in its variety and change.

Islam does not divide the unity of man into a conflicting duality of spirit and soul, which are both constituents of each other. In Islam, soul is spirit realising itself in time and space. The worldly and spiritual aspects are the obverse and reverse sides of the same coin. Life is an undividable contract in which the spiritual and the mundane are not fragmented. The Quran, while admitting the material world as a definite reality, constantly mentions the soul as the primary component in man's being. *Different Priorities* [3:14] Adorned for the people are the worldly pleasures, such as the women, having children, piles upon piles of gold and silver, trained horses, livestock, and crops. These are the materials of this world. A far better abode is reserved at GOD.

It is tragic and rather ironical that in spite of lofty and transcendent teachings of the Holy Quran on universal brotherhood, equality and fraternity that Muslims are going astray by diverse racial slogans and deviating from the path of virtue. Instead of being ideal examples of merit they have succumbed to narrow minded sects and this is a tragedy that mocks the very basis of Submission. It is imperative that the so-called "Muslim" Ummah and so called "Muslim" nations chalk out an integrated programme of action. It is true that, by the Grace of God, there has been a great resurgence and reawakening among us when we decided to embrace the religion of submission. However, the task is far from finished and there are "miles to go before we sleep". The utmost priority is for all to accept Submission as the only path to follow. *Submission: The Only Religion* [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.

With the revival of true faith and submission to God alone, a submitter society would certainly become, Insha Allah, leaders of men and nations. God in the Quran assures this. *God's Promise Kings and Queens on Earth* [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.

Only then can we be economically, socially, industrially, psychologically and politically self sufficient and independent. This would lay the foundations of a workable modern submitter state. We can realise our destiny, Insha Allah, by acquiring knowledge as a very powerful weapon. The Quran keeps open the gate of investigation and can unravel the mysteries of nature, elevate our minds and widen our

scopes and horizons. The height of scientific progress forecast by the Quran has not yet been attained. The whole world of creation is full of materials that await our application for their development and utilization. There are millions of things in the universe, in the realm of the stars and in the bowels of the earth and the ocean that have been created for human use. All these have yet to be harnessed in order to meet the increased requirements of human society. The Quran tells us this repeatedly.

Overwhelming Signs of God [2:164] In the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that roam the ocean for the benefit of the people, the water that GOD sends down from the sky to revive dead land and to spread in it all kinds of creatures, the manipulation of the winds, and the clouds that are placed between the sky and the earth, there are sufficient proofs for people who understand. [6:97] And He is the One who made the stars to guide you during the darkness, on land and on sea. We thus clarify the revelations for people who know. [6:99] He is the One who sends down from the sky water, whereby we produce all kinds of plants. We produce from the green material multitudes of complex grains, palm trees with hanging clusters, and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranate; fruits that are similar, yet dissimilar. Note their fruits as they grow and ripen. These are signs for people who believe.

Blessings, comfort and happiness are within our grasp, Masha Allah. Sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone and this sovereignty is delegated to be implemented within the limits prescribed by Him as a sacred trust. No one has the power to make new laws in respect of matters already dealt with in the Holy Quran or make any law repugnant to that law. [9:40] He made the word of the disbelievers lowly. GOD's word reigns supreme. GOD is Almighty, Most Wise. The Quran will always be absolute to the judiciary and the executive. Anything else would be a curse and an impediment to human progress and civilization. There is nothing in the Quran that is unworkable today or stands in need of renewal due to fresh adjustments. The Quran is for all time, praise God.