

Islam, the Most Perfect and Highest of Revealed Religions

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In the Name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate

And who is better in speech than he who calls unto God and does good and says, 'Verily, I am of the Muslims. (41:33) In the history of peoples and communities, sensitive moments and turning points always exist and in those moments, objective and subjective conditions prepare for real transformation and a fundamental and basic revolution.

But the extent to which this revolution and transformation can take place in these moments most certainly depends upon the extent to which the people of this nation and community have found subjective transformations and changes in belief and to what extent they believe in their goals, ideals, desires and finally the belief in the fact that their destiny takes shape by means of their own hands. In order to change the present situation into the desired state, to what extent are they prepared to put forth efforts and self-sacrifice.

Without doubt, the present Islamic community is passing through one of these sensitive moments and turning points. The future will show that we Muslims, at the present time, are standing upon one of the most determining and culminating points of the history of Islam. The direction and way of the future of Islam, more than at any other time, depends upon the will power, faith and efforts of today's Muslims.

The existing context -whether internally within the Islamic community or on a global scale -is completely prepared for a revolution and deep transformation in the complex of the world of Islam. The extent, to which the Muslims themselves shared in the bringing about of this suitable context is not important.

The important thing is that existing conditions which essentially stem from unavoidable political and economic transformations of the most recent years of our world. result in a kind of severe dependence of third world countries upon developed countries, prepares a suitable context towards a transformation and change to the advantage of freedom and real independence of the whole of the third world and, in particular, the world of Islam.

Fortunately, the world of Islam has ample privileges in comparison to other third world countries whose efforts are put forth for freedom and independence. The most important of these privileges is Islam, a freedom-giving school of thought and a way of life and Islamic culture which acts as a rich and fertile support.

Without doubt, if Muslims decide to stand upon their own feet and find their own real identity

and without fear or the feeling of inferiority and inadequacy, lean upon their religion and culture, not only will they be able to free themselves from the claws of colonialism, stagnation and backwardness which has gripped them for more than two centuries, but they can simply develop themselves into the form of a 'force and a third power'.

In order to transform the world of Islam into a third force which, taking into consideration its possibilities and its natural wealth, can easily be changed into the most powerful pole of the world. They are lacking nothing other than will power, faith, self-reliance and continuous efforts, faith in religion and one's school of thought, faith in culture and one's authentic, historical identity and finally faith in the fact that one must build one's destiny oneself and not that one be a toy in the hands of the powers and super-powers.

In the midst of this, Islam, this most perfect and highest of revealed religions and also the culture of Islam are endless sources which can help the community of Islam seek its freedom from the bonds of colonialism and backwardness. But the important point is here that if these two are not understood correctly, not only will they not help the greatness, independence and self-sufficiency of the Muslim community, but it is possible that they will lead them to their further and more severe dependence.

The explanation of this point that the understanding and comprehension of Muslims of Islam and Islamic culture, in particular, that of the intellectual and educated Muslims in this century, takes time. How they are affected by the criteria, rules and finally, the taste of and the particular view of Western culture? To what extent does this view lead to metamorphosis and the altering of Islam? To sum up, it must be said that this problem exists and it itself is one of the most important factors, perhaps, the most important factor because efficiency and the thundering force of Islam, this Divine generosity in the freeing of the Islamic community, has been down away with.

In truth, this is the erroneous use and incorrect interpretation of Muslims which did away with the great force and the force of being a builder of destiny of Islam and they continue to do so, otherwise, Islam is that very religion which throughout its history, in whatever time that it was correctly comprehended and interpreted, it was a factor of glory, greatness and the happiness of Muslims. Thus, the present most essential and immediate duty of we Muslims is that we correct our comprehension and understanding of Islam which is powerfully affected by the spirit of our times and that is affected by Western culture.

From another point of view, to what extent can Muslims make use of Islam as a religion, creative school of thought and the giving of freedom and of the culture of Islam as a rich and fertile support towards its salvation and independence. It most certainly depends upon to what

extent they can free themselves from the bonds of suppositions, pre-judgments, and the feelings of inferiority and finally fear and inferiority in face of others and the activation of the spirit of the dominated of our time.

The individuals of a community who desire independence must have first reached independence. Independence, before being economic and political, is intellectual and cultural. An independent people and community need independent people and people are independent who do not fear singularity and independence. The individual who is captive of his own subjective suppositions, the suppositions which directly and indirectly come about by means of colonialists and their propaganda and captive of the inferiority complex and inadequacies and all of his efforts are this that however much he builds himself according to the tastes of others, however much his faith and beliefs and finally, religion, history and his personality is altered and destroyed, he cannot be independent. Such a person cannot defend the independence of his nation and community.

A nation and a community can be independent that at least respects itself; it takes on the form of self-respect. Self-respect means respect of principles, criteria, genuine ideals and originality without any change. No people or community can attract the respect of another to an extent greater than his own self-respect.

Let us shorten our words. Until the time that each individual of a nation does not reach independence and obtain the state of self-respect and his principles and criteria and he has not re-discovered his personality and real identity and has not found faith in his return to the self of himself, his religion, history and his culture, speaking about independence will be no more than a falsity or, at the most, a slogan.

Those people and that community is independent which, without any fear or awe intends to live by his culture, and ideals and not that he makes useless efforts so that it corresponds to criteria and other's tastes and which not only do they not have any relationship to his culture and religion, but they are essentially opposed and even in contradiction to them.

More frightening than this is that not only does he live according to the tastes of others, but, in order to make it acceptable to others, he explains his religion, history and culture in such a way, or let's say, alters it in such a way and takes pride in the very metamorphosized religion, history and culture which have been metamorphosized by his own hands. He forgets that before pride in such a religion and culture is an honor to that religion and culture because of its inherent values, it is an honor which has been poured into the framework and criteria which is shown as being progressive and making it acceptable depends upon those criteria which can be researched and more correctly, have been altered.

For the correct understanding and analysis of this problem of the fact that our understanding of Islam and Islamic culture is influenced by criteria, tastes and special methods of the West, we must know the culture of the West and its peculiarities. This is outside the scope of our discussion. But why should we hide it? Essentially, this culture, these rules, criteria and world view and way of thinking, if they are completely against the rules, the world view of religion and the substance of religion, in particular, Islam, they are at best, most often, opposite. The essential substance of each religion is nothing more than faith in God and that the human being must live for the sake of God and according to God's commands which are nothing other than those religious commands. Thus the message of each religion is that the human being yields to God and His commands while the essential core of today's way of thinking rests upon a kind of centering on humanity and it is upon this principle that the new culture and civilization has taken shape and its rules and criteria are brought into being. This has progressed to the point that people of our times think that it is even this religion which must serve people and not the opposite. The method of study and way of thinking of contemporary beings is incapable of comprehending the real identity of religion. To what extent is it barren and incapable? Here the discussion is not about the truth of religion. The discussion is about the fact that if we want to understand this religion, understand it as it is and not as we want it to be or we expect it to be, our study of it must be based upon its spirit and criteria. This question, in particular, in knowing Islam encounters more importance. This stems from the spread and depth of knowing Islam. That is, not only is the relationship of man and God spoken about, but also all of the problems which a human being encounters with them. They have a unique kind of cosmology, history, astrology and finally, a theology which are particular and which do not have the slightest similarity with that which the new culture has expressed about this. Now if we have accepted that Islam is a widespread and complex which has a particular method of understanding and interpretation of the world, history and human beings, this method has no similarity with the new way of thinking. Thus, why should study it from behind the rose colored glasses where the color of the glass determines the view of the world, criteria, and rules of the new culture. Worse than this, in order to prove its identicalness, we attempt to explain it and interpret it. Is not the least danger of such a study the alteration of Islam? It is our duty to make Islam be known correctly and not to make it acceptable. When the aim became to defend Islam by making it acceptable then it is Islam which is the sacrifice of the tests and criteria of others. In this way, not only have we altered Islam but we have sustained

self-loss, and we have given rise to feelings of inferiority and self-inadequacies. The person who is attached to his beliefs simply because it is acceptable by others, even though this taste is in inherently against the substance of those beliefs, in truth, the taste of other shakes his personality and authenticity. This tells of the greatest extent of inferiority and self-inadequacy. These words are not only correct about the study of Islam, but also correct about the study of Islamic culture. The principles of thinking and world view of the West is based upon a kind of self-centeredness and absoluteness. Not only does he look out upon the whole of the world and history solely from the window of his culture, civilization and interests, but, essentially, he knows his culture and civilization to be of the highest ever born.

That is, not only does he understand the past history and legacy of others in relationship to the special growth of his culture and civilization, but the principle of his judgment about them is based upon the fact that this culture and civilization in total, to what extent is it agreeable and in accordance with his personality, criteria and tastes.

From another point of view, the clear-sightedness and way of thinking of the West in knowing other cultures and, in particular, the culture of Islam, depends upon a kind of selected knowing along with pre-judgment. That is, in the first place, from that which we call Islamic culture and which has come into being 14 centuries ago, only chooses those elements which in his opinion have played a role in the growth of Western culture. Secondly, he looks with a kind of pre-judgment, the pre-judgment of which is influenced by knowing the value system and his tastes. In his opinion, the value of this culture is suitable with the balance of its harmony with that very particular taste and his own criteria.

With such a method, what value can studying Islamic culture or any other culture have? To what extent does it have the qualifications to tell of the truth and nature of this culture? The truths and realities will only be understood when, in the first place, they are studied in their totality and completeness. And secondly, they are studied and re- searched with attention to its spirit and particular criteria.

It is most unfortunate that most of the almost unanimous Muslim intellectuals and educated people with such a view and criteria which, in the first place, is strongly quantitative and secondly, is strongly influenced by pride and unlimited prejudice of the West. They have studied Islam and Islamic culture and continue to study it. More unfortunate than this is that they never doubt their method of knowing and essentially, is their method right or wrong. Based upon such a knowing, they want to save their society.

If Islam is just and valuable, it is because of its inherent values and truths and not because it suits the criteria of others. Attempts towards proving the truths or invaluableness of Islam by

showing its harmoniousness with other cultures and schools of thought, rather than outwardly defending Islam, is an implied defense of those schools of thought and cultures. If we know Islam to be just, it is other thoughts and schools of thoughts which must be measured with it and not Islam with them.

These words in particular are more important when speaking about Islam because Islam is eternal; it is a Divine religion, revealed to a creature whom God sent for the guidance and happiness of human beings which is the source of all perfection. Thus, in the same way that God is the gathering of all absolute perfections, Islam is also the gathering of all absolute perfections as well as Islamic culture.

Without doubt, Islamic society cannot find its way without the help of its culture which is the heritage of 14 centuries of struggle and activities. But the question is this that these cultures can only help the Islamic community when they are understood in totality and completeness and with attention to their spirit, nature and criteria.

The value of this culture as a rich, historic support and also as a solution for the future of the Islamic community, relates to its essence and nature and not because it helped new cultural growth. Of course, this does not mean that Islamic culture has no value because of its help in bringing about the new culture. Rather, the question is this that this is just one of the values of this culture and not all of them.

Pretending greatness and relying upon this segment not only does not help the better knowing of the value of the greatness and glory of the Islamic culture, rather, in that way, other segments are not taken into consideration. Its least result is the ignoring of the highest and most valuable segments of this culture which have no effect, from the point of view of measuring by quantity, in the bringing about of the new culture.

Let us speak more briefly and frankly. We are Muslims and followers of the Qur'an. The person who believes in Islam must accept all of it. The Qur'an strongly criticizes people who accept some part of it and ignore other parts. Thus, if we have accepted the Qur'an in totality and completely, the Qur'an frankly states, 'Verily this Qur'an guides unto that which is the most upright and announces glad tidings unto the believers who do good that they shall have a great reward.' (17: 9).

Tens of verses and hundreds of traditions can be found similar to this which, in a direct and indirect way, gives reasoning for this subject. Now if we have accepted these subjects, we must seriously, in our understanding and comprehension, revise our view of Islam. It is not that the Qur'an says, 'And lose you not heart and grieve you not, for you shall gain the upper hand, if you only be true believers.' (3:139).

Is it not that the Qur'an frankly says, 'Ye shall gain the upper hand if you only be true believers.'?! What is the result of these words? Is it other than that if we are not believers thus we do not have the upper hand? Is it not that the Qur'an says about the Islamic community, 'You are the best group that has been brought forth for mankind.' (3: 110) or it says, 'But for God is all honor and for His Prophet and for the believers.' (63:8).

These verses can serve as good examples of our incorrect comprehension of Islam and our imperfect faith towards Islam. Thus, in the first place, we must revise our understanding and faith towards Islam. If this word does not take form today, tomorrow will be too late. It is not clear whether or not in the near future such an opportunity will be obtained like the present one so that the community of Islam can take advantage of its independence, freedom, glory and greatness.

Yes. It would be tragic if the powerful and thundering of the 'revival of Islam' which in the last few years has spread throughout the Islamic world and reached its climax with the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, is silenced unless it achieve a correct interpretation of Islam and Islamic culture. Every social flow, necessarily must have a suitable support system as to thought and belief, otherwise, sooner or later, it will be destroyed. History remembers many strong will powers-builders of destiny -which have been silenced because they could not contain its thought and culture.

The strong wave of the 'revival of Islam' results from the firm will and thunderous pure feelings which are urgently needed for a correct interpretation of Islam and Islamic culture. This duty, in the first place, calls the attention of the religious scholars (ulama) and Muslim thinkers who can however quickly offer the interpretation to eager Muslims.

The religious scholars and responsible thinkers with faith who have no purpose other than serving Islam and Muslims and who were always firm like a mountain, they feared no blame from any accusers, and introduced Islam as it really is and not as they wanted it to be or that they accepted it to be. Neither do they fear from the dominating power of the attractive forces of Western culture nor are they subdued by power and bewitched by the East and West, rather they lean upon Islam and rely on God, the Most High.

What is the explanation of the role of Islam in bringing about the Revolution of Iran and the reason why this Revolution is an Islamic will be lengthy. But, in summary, it must be said that this revolution resulted from the sacrifice, perseverance and the seeking of martyrdom of the people who knew and still: know that their ideals and ideas are crystallized and embodied in Islam, the people who did not think about anything other than Islam and still do not. Those people wanted Islam and nothing else.

Thus, their Revolution was for the 'establishment of a just Islamic government before it was a toppling of the filthy, hired Pahlavi dynasty and the anti-Islamic sinister regime of the monarchy. Essentially, they opposed the Pahlavi regime which was a barrier towards the establishment of an Islamic government for, in essence, it was Islam and nothing else. Yes, it was Islam that not only gave perseverance to the people of Iran when confronted by the most savage and tragic massacres, plunder and murder but also it made them withstand penetration when confronted by the conspiracies and the propaganda of the earth-devourers against them. Thus, the Islamic Revolution of Iran whether before victory or after victory was not only inclined towards the super-powers but even by leaning upon Islam and its Islamic identity, it stood against them.

The most important slogans of the Revolution of Iran, whether before or after the Revolution are the slogans of 'independence, freedom, Islamic Republic'. The victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran proved its correctness in the best form possible. They would not have known Islam if it had, from the point of view of the Iranian nation been less interpreted as the embodiment of the complex of their ideals and ideas and Islam as the container of all of their desires.

This Revolution, without doubt, would not have achieved victory. This Revolution, in the first place, is Islamic for the reason that Islam was not only the means for achieving other goals, but from the point of view of the Iranian nation, it was a goal which with its accomplishments, all other desires were realized.

Without doubt, in bringing about this way of thinking and following it, this Islamic Revolution of Iran with the guidelines of the leader of the Revolution, Imam Khomeini, has played a most sensitive role and has been an essential determining factor. The most important particularities of Imam Khomeini is his true faith in Islam and his active commitment to it and his incomparable trust in God, the Most High. The most important particularity of his understanding of Islam is that this interpretation and way of understanding is in no way effected by Western culture. For him, Islam is pertinent and not something else.

The best witness for this subject are his messages, writings and more important that all of these, his behaviour and his way of life. Thus, careful consideration of his views and messages will not only effectively help in the better and deeper understanding of the Revolution of Iran, but also it will help with the correct understanding of Islam and essentially, religion. And among them there are some who say, 'Our Lord! Give us good in this world and good in the (hereafter and save us from the torment of the Fire.' (2:201