

Islamic Ideal – Maulana Shah Abdul Aleem Siddiqui RA

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Sisters and Brothers:

According to Islamic teaching, every Muslim must act as a born missionary. For, Muslims have been described in the Holy Quran as the “best of nations” on the ground that “they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong”. Therefore, if Muslims of the present day fulfill this neglect, they can only be classified in the reverse category both in this world and in their accountability before God. History bears witness to the fact that so long as Muslims continued to fulfill this great task of the active and dynamic realization of Islam, they continued to enjoy an enviable position in the comity of nations. Its neglect brought them down and we may be sure that if they return to it once again, they will regain their position.

The need for such a revival the call of Islamic Missionary activity, is indeed more pressing today than ever before. Among all the instruments which the opponents of Islam employed for checking the advancing Islamic tide, none was as successful as false propaganda, which at times assumed the most horrifying forms. In his book, Mohammed and Mohammedanism, Bosworth Smith has given a brief account of those calumnies and vilifications. And not only he, many other honest non Muslim scholars have admitted that no religion was ever more calumniated than Islam. This campaign of misrepresentation met with something more than success. Today, the average Westerner possesses such strange notions about Islam which are simply staggering and he hates this religion in the same proportion as he ought to have loved it had he known the true picture. Besides the Westerners, there are men and women in the Muslim Fold itself, who, because of the one-sided Western education, know only that picture of Islam which their anti- Islamic teachers have painted before them and consequently suffer from uneasy conscience. They are the descendents of Muslim parents they are the inheritors of a great and noble tradition. But they never did have the opportunity of learning that tradition from the right source and have, therefore, become a source of weakness to themselves and Islam.

The dissemination of Islamic Knowledge is therefore the crying need of the day and calls for a determined, organized and well coordinated effort, which should be planned in accordance with modern conditions.

While I say this, I wish to warn Muslims against that type of formal and lifeless propaganda which certain people have learnt to carry on in the name of Islam. Superficialities cannot carry us far and the glory of superficial attempts is always short lived.....

What we need is a high class and honest Islamic intellectual campaign, on the one hand and the radiation of the light of Islam by personal example, on the other. My thirty years labour in this field has convinced me that it is ultimately man which attracts man. It is the personal and practical example set by the preacher in his total personality which counts above everything else. This is a fact which many of us seem to have forgotten today and have belied our own history. Need I remind my Muslim friends that it was the personality of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) which, beside the correct intellectual presentation of Islam, was responsible for the most wonderful revolution of human history. Again the whole history of the spread of Islam revolves round the personalities of those who were in their own persons shining illustrations of Islam and possessed not only the knowledge of Islam by also a share from the Spiritual magnetism of the Holy Prophet. Read and re read history of the propagation of Islam in India or Indonesia or China or Africa or any other part of the Muslim world and you will come across the same story everywhere. I wish my Muslim friends to study history and then cast a glance at those attempts where hundreds of thousands of pounds are being spent on formal and lifeless propaganda. Such attempts cannot bear comparison with even the quiet efforts of those who in their Missionary work were relying solely on their

sincerity and piety, not to speak of the glorious record of our great ancestors who carved out a whole world for Islam by sheer Missionary effort.

I have said this to stress the all important fact that any effort on our part cannot be fruitful unless and until it crosses the sheer literary boundaries and illumines the path in the moral and spiritual domains on the basis of personal example.

Friends!

Islam is above and beyond those conceptions of religion which have generally come to prevail today with some people religion consists in few rituals and a few prayers. With others it is a blind faith in certain supposed ultra natural verities where human reason can have no say. With certain others it is synonymous with "ism" and has reference to some particular aspect of life. Then there are people who interpret religion as individualistic faith, in which everyone is free to speculate and believe and which has no practical relation with the social life and its implications.

Unfortunately, these wrong conceptions are being applied to Islam also in one way or the other. But the fact is that the Islamic religion is co-existent with nature and comprehends human life in its totality. Islam is a complete code of life which contains perfect guidance for all the aspects of human activity, namely, faith and practice, devotional and practical, individual and collective, social and moral, political and economic. Islamic life therefore, is a life which reflects the Islamic guidance in all these aspects. A Muslim is he who believes that God exists, that the world is a moral order, that God sends down guidance to humanity through his chosen Prophets and that he must submit his will and his whole activity to that revealed guidance. A Muslim is he who believes and acts accordingly.

The word "code" may not however, mislead us to think that Islam is only a social ideology, Nay, as pointed out already, it gives man in all his natural yearning. In fact, it starts not from the social side but from the divine. It starts from the point where natural sciences end, where our physical senses refuse to go further where the philosophical discussion of the "Great Reality" or in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, the "Unknown" begins. Where our physical capacities proclaim their inability, Islam guides to the deeper recesses of Human consciousness. It opens the doors to the mysteries of life and death and of the Great Beyond through prayer and worship, on the one hand, however mundane, if performed in the light of God's commands, is "worship" and leads to spiritual progress. The five daily prayers in Islam are in Reality the spirituality diet which causes the soul force of a consciously practicing Muslim to grow even as our timed daily food guarantees our physical growth. Communion with god and social living in accordance with God's revealed law, from the road to saintliness in Islam.

My Friends!

Every code of life has a reference to a certain ideal. Without fixing up an ideal, we cannot have a code of life. The cause of the confusion which is prevailing in the world today is that either the ideal is not well defined or it has been defined in a limited perspective or it is not defined at all.

For this reason, the first thing that Islam does is that it presents a rational ideal for man. The Holy Quran says; "And I have not created the Jinn and Mankind except that they shall worship me." (51:56)

In the Hadith Qudsi, God says: "I was a hidden treasure. I loved to be known. So I brought forth creation."

The purpose of our creation is our attainment of the knowledge of God and his Attributes. Further, every particle of this universe is a manifestation of God's attributes. Hence when a Muslim engages himself in scientific pursuit as a true Muslim whether in the field of Geology or Astronomy or Chemistry, his goal is the Knowledge of God. The Holy Quran Says:

"Verily, in the creation of the Heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day, are signs for persons of understanding, who remember God standing, sitting and reclining on their sides and ponder

over the creation of the heavens and the earth (and say O our lord! Thou not created all this in vain. Glory be to thee! Preserve us from the doom of Fire". (3:188)

Thus even the purely scientific pursuit has a deeper significance in Islam. The true Muslim scientist does not stop at the discovery of Physical causes, but proceeds further to realize the working of the "Great Beyond". Such an attitude can be possible only when the ideal of God realization remains constantly in the forefront. Hence, the Holy Quran says:

"Say verily, my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death are all for Allah, Lord of the worlds, who has no partner (in His Kingdom) (6:162)

Elsewhere the Holy Quran teaches us to repeat: "For God we are and unto him is our return."(2:156)

Thus when the ideal is God alone, a Muslim should conform to the Divine Law in all aspects of his life, individual as well as social. This brings us to the point that a Muslim has to keep constantly to the Golden Mean, to the focal point of moderation. Going astray from that point is termed in the science of Medicine as "disease", in the science of Morals as "inequity" and in the science of Social life as "war". Essentially, the focal point is God and when we move away from him and his Laws, we commit what in religious terminology is called "sin", and its consequence is "disease" on the physical plane, "inequity" on the moral plane and "war and strife" on the political plane.

What the world, therefore needs today most is the effort to bring rebellious humanity back to God. We should especially reform our educational systems in such a way that the rising generations may learn to know and love God and to follow his Guidance. That alone will ensure peace and healthy progress in the world. Without that we can expect mankind to continue to descend deeper and deeper into the pit of war and strife and misery.

My Friends!

I leave this message in the hands of those admirers and followers of Islam who have a permanent residence here. I hope they will present the best model and sever the cause. Thank you all.