

Introduction

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted. (Quran, 49: 13)

The issue of human rights, for being an inherent one, has a history as old as human age on the earth. The subject was born when mankind came into existence on the Earth. The bigger the human society and the population grew, the vaster the human rights issue was expanded. It has always been the source of freedom-seeking and freedom-fighting movements and it remained the eternal and perpetual ideal of mankind.

The historians have unearthed documents in their studies and researches that are indicative of the fact that mankind stressed its natural rights and basic freedom and liberty 2000 years before B.C.

The emergence of Islam in 610 A.D. was not only the milestone, but was a golden and perpetual chapter in the human history. Because of the contents of its teachings, particularly in the human rights, it was welcomed and accepted by the oppressed people in a vast part of the globe and found many followers.

According to a well-known researcher, thinker and scholar, Abul A'la Maududi, the people in the West have the habit of attributing every good thing to themselves and try to prove that it is because of them that the world enjoys this and that blessing, while claiming that "they originated in the West."

They also have a habit of pretending that all the bestowments and privileges are rooted in the West, whereas the very first historical document on the human rights, Magna Carta of Britain, The Great Charter of the Liberties of Britain was issued by John (England's king at the time) in 1215. Though the Magna Carta itself came into existence six hundred years after the advent of Islam, this and the subsequent documents, as valid and firm evidence, prove that the West is lagging behind Islam on the

issue of the human rights. Its failure to pay attention to human dignity and its delay in its fight against oppression and tyranny which mankind has suffered during centuries is evident here.

When you study the concepts of the human rights in the Islamic teachings you realize that it is clearly indicative of the fact that the human rights system in the Islamic law and the teachings of the Prophet (S) are much more comprehensive and more perfect than what is claimed in the West. The reason is the fundamental difference between the two legal systems of West and Islam, in viewing mankind and his material and spiritual characteristics. In the Islamic law, criteria of humans' erudition and wisdom, humanity and spirituality, has been paid specific attention. On the contrary, West's approach to mankind is not based on spiritual and ethical factors.

On the other hand, as ethics and religion can play the role of the strongest support backing the materialization of human rights, strengthening ethical and religious values in every society will cause expansion of support for the human rights. On the contrary, ethical downfall or ignoring religious values, because of having a negative impact, leads to violation of the human rights. Thus, if laws and regulations in force are left unsupported by the great spiritual and ideological support of the individuals in a society, the ultimate attained consequences will not be favorable. In today's world, failure of the UN's human rights organizations and the international documents (declarations) to address religion and religious beliefs has caused it to fail to develop support of the human rights. The pathetic conditions stemming from violation of the Human Rights that we witness day-to-day around the globe is the result of the above fact.

In the series of essays which follow, we intend to briefly introduce some of the teachings of pure, true and real Islam. We try to show the legitimacy of the Islamic laws, while comparing it with the West's flamboyant, showy and loud, but empty, baseless claims, so that everyone will know how much human being owes to Islamic teachings and to law of the holy prophet.

And of God to success.

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