

Keeping to Religion in the Past and the Present

It is well known that Islam, with which the Prophet Muhammad (S) had been sent by Allah, is the last of religions in the matter of Divine Legislation. Allah the Almighty says:

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah (S) and the Last of the prophets. (Qur'an, 33:40)

Since Muhammad (S) is the last of the prophets and messengers and his Book is the last of the Books revealed by Allah, so there shall be no Divine Book after the Holy Qur'an. Islam is the basic religion to which all the divine religions have been fused. Allah says:

He it is Who sent His Messenger with the guidance and the true religion so that He may make it prevail over all the religions; and Allah is enough for a witness. (Qur'an, 48:28)

After the advent of Muhammad (S) as prophet, it has become obligatory on all human beings to turn from the previous religions whether Judaism, Christianity, or any other religion and embrace Islam to worship Allah the Almighty according to the Sharia of Muhammad (S), because Allah will not accept any religion other than Islam since then. Allah says:

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter, he shall be one of the losers. (Qur'an, 3:85)

We understand from this that the Jews and the Christians however much they claim that their laws and legislations are true and that they follow the Prophet Moses (S) or the Prophet Jesus Christ (S), the reality requires that they must follow the Prophet Muhammad (S) since the moment Allah sent him as a messenger. A Christian has no right to say that he wants to remain on his religion, nor does a Jew.

The fact is that Muhammad (S) was sent as a prophet to all mankind and as a mercy to all people with their different races and beliefs. This does not mean that we condemn the previous divine religions, but Allah the Almighty knew that His people had distorted His laws. They made lawful what was unlawful and unlawful what was lawful for the sake of their own desires. Therefore, they went astray and made those who came after them go astray.

So the advent of Muhammad (S) the last of the prophets was a mercy to all mankind in order to allow them to restore themselves again and go back to the truth so that they would win the Paradise. However, most of people detest the truth. Desires, fancies and fanaticisms play with them and devils occupy them so that they become excessive in their deviation.

Allah says in this concern:

Those who disbelieved from among the followers of the Book and the polytheists could not have separated (from the faithful) until there had come to them the clear evidence; a messenger from Allah, reciting pure pages, wherein are all the right ordinances. And those who were given the Book did not become divided except after clear evidence had come to them. (Qur'an 98: 1-4)

It is also not sufficient that a Jew or a Christian says, 'I believe in Muhammad, but I will remain on my religion', as I myself have heard from some Arab Christians. We say to such people that Allah does not accept from them except when they actually follow him. Allah says in this concern:

Those who follow the Messenger-Prophet, who can neither read nor write, whom they find written down with them in the Torah and the Gospel (who) enjoins them good and forbids them evil, and makes lawful to them the good things and makes unlawful to them impure things, and removes from them their burden and the shackles which were upon them; so (as for) those who believe in him and honor him and help him, and follow the light which has been sent down with him, these it is that are the successful. (Qur'an 7: 157)

This invitation from Allah the Almighty was not limited to the Jews and the Christians, all of whom represented "the People of the Book", but it included all human beings with no exception.

Allah the Almighty says:

Say: O people! surely I am the Messenger of Allah (S) to you all, of Him Whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, there is no god but He; He brings to life and causes to die; therefore believe in Allah and His messenger, the Prophet, who can neither read nor write, who believes in Allah and His words, and you follow him so that you may walk in the right way. (Qur'an 7: 158)

The Holy Qur'an is too clear in stating the obligation of following the Prophet (S) and not just believing in his prophethood. This is the wisdom of Allah in sending the messengers. We have never heard in all the history of humankind that Allah has sent a messenger to say to people: remain on your religion which you have inherited from the messenger that had come before me. [1](#)

All of the prophets have called for belief in all the messengers of Allah, so that no one might harm their prophethood or be excessive about their real position and give them the position of a deity.

Allah the Almighty says:

The messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers; We make no difference between any of His messengers; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course. (Qur'an, 2:285)

If we know that Islam is the last religion that Allah the Almighty has endowed His faithful people with, so its laws and rulings are valid for every time and every place, because there is no prophet to come after Prophet Muhammad (S) and no divine book to come after the Holy Qur'an according to this saying of Allah:

This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion. (Qur'an, 5:3)

However, some Muslims, if not most of them, do not abide by the laws and rulings of Islam. They claim that these are difficult to carry out and that most (ordinary) people are unable to carry them out.

Some others, who are learned people, say that it is necessary to develop the rulings according to the requirements of the modern life. They see *ijtihad*² to be necessary in everything and claim that *ijtihad* is one of the virtues of Islam and one of its prides. These learned people may influence the minds of many young students, especially as they pretend that they love Islam too much and are too careful to apply its rulings.

These people justify the underdevelopment and deterioration of Muslims as they have not developed their religion from where it had been established fifteen centuries ago at a time where there was no means of transport except for mules and donkeys.

These people say that as for today we live in the age of rockets – whose speed exceeds the speed of sound, telephone, fax, and computer – through which man can contact with any place in the world within a few seconds. So we cannot remain looking at the Qur'an with that superficial sight where we judge against a thief by cutting his hand or a criminal by cutting his head by the sword...they often say so and have odd philosophies in this regard.

Once, I was talking with a university professor about this. In my talk with him, I said that the Messenger of Allah (S) has said:

There is no magnanimous young man except (like) Ali, and no sword except Dhul Faqar."

He laughed at me and said, "O doctor, do not say like this again. It was valid at the time of the Prophet (S) when the sword had a role in winning the battles and it was the only weapon which the heroes had pride for in their poems. Now we are in the age of the machine guns that shoots seventy bullets in a second and the jet fighter that can destroy an entire city in few minutes. In fact, we are in the age of the atomic and nuclear bombs that can destroy a continent in some moments. Are you ignorant of all this

and are you still talking about the sword and the courage of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib?”

I said, “This does not refute that or contradict it, and every occasion has its own context. Do you not see that when Allah talked about weapons, He included in one word all means of destruction when He said in brief:

And prepare against them what force you can and horses tied at the frontier. (Qur'an, 8:60)

Thus, the Qur'an connected what military means the people at the time of the Prophet (S) had to win battles with what the people of this time have. So, this statement of Qur'an –

'And prepare against them what force you can'. (Qur'an, 8:60)

can be understood by everyone according to the language of their time. The source and meaning of “**force**” is the same to the all, and this is like the saying of Allah:

...and We have made the iron, wherein is great violence and advantages to men... (Qur'an, 57:25)

Therefore, all weapons, whether the simple ones like the sword or spears or the developed ones like tanks, machine guns, and bombs are defined as means of “violence”. Similarly, all means of ease and comfort such as cars, airplanes, ships, televisions, and others are defined as “advantages to people”. Glory be to Allah Who has created iron and made it of use for people and taught them what they did not know.

Thus, the Holy Qur'an is in the hands of all kinds of people that every generation can understand it by the language of its age. And as for your saying “we cannot look at the Qur'an with a superficial view – that we judge against a thief by cutting his hand or a criminal by cutting his head by the sword”, if you try to replace the laws of Allah with manmade laws whose makers claim that they are more beneficent and merciful to people than their Creator is to them, then this can never be acceptable. It is undoubtedly clear disbelief.

And, if by “development” you mean the development of the means of execution against a criminal or the means of cutting a thief's hand, this can be discussed, because these are minor things that the Islamic Legislation did not concentrate on. Rather it concentrated on abiding to laws by carrying out the sentences determined by Allah the Almighty concerning “retribution”. Allah says:

O you who believe! retaliation is prescribed for you...And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may guard yourselves against evil. (Qur'an, 2: 178–179)

As for cutting the hand of a thief by a sword, a cleaver, or a modern tool, the legal ruler (judge) or the religious authority can give his opinion in the matter (by deriving it through the legal proofs).

What is important dear Sir, is that we do not replace the laws of Allah by the so-called positive laws that were agreed to by the European systems that have abrogated the death sentence against criminals however extreme their crimes were.

Allah says:

And there is life for you in (the law of) retaliation, O men of understanding... (Qur'an, 2:178-179)

The meaning of the saying of Allah here is that if we abrogate the laws of Allah and abolish the law of retaliation, our life shall be without safety and security and the criminals shall corrupt everything. Then, life shall become like hell with no goodness or peace.

This university professor debated saying, "Evil is not to be treated with evil. Statistics has proven that some of those who were sentenced to death for the accusation of a crime were innocent."

I said, "With my respect to you professor, but by your saying "evil is not to be treated with evil" you have made yourself more aware than Allah the Creator of everything and this is not your right. And as for your saying that some of those, who were sentenced to death, were innocent, this is another matter. To your knowledge, I say that Islam does not punish just for suspicion or accusation, but after evidence, witnesses and confession." The debate came to no use, because each one of us clung to what we believed to be right.[3](#)

It would be better thus to end this section with what Imam Ali (as) has said about the Prophet Muhammad (S) and about Islam. He said:

He (Allah) has sent him with the shining light, the clear proof, the right method, and the guiding Book. His family is the best of families and his tree is the best of trees; its branches are straight with its fruits hanging loose. His birth was in Mecca and his immigration was in the Good City where his mention was high and his call reached too far. He has sent him with a sufficient argument, curative breach and preventive invitation (that prevented every corruption of the pre-Islamic age).

He (Allah) has declared through him – the Prophet (S) – the unknown laws, suppressed through him the irrelevant heresies and explained through him the decisive judgments. So whoever seeks a religion other than Islam, his misery becomes certain, his firm hold is broken, his fall becomes great and his end comes to eternal sadness and severe torment...[4](#)

This is exactly as what has been declared by the Holy Qur'an:

And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the hereafter he shall be one of the losers. (Qur'an, 3:85)

I think that after this explanation, no argument or excuse shall remain for those who flatter their Jewish and Christian friends and say to them: We and you are on the truth as long as we all believe in one God

Who has sent Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad and if we are different as to the prophets, we have agreed on the One Who has sent them to us.

Allah says:

Say: Do you dispute with us about Allah, and He is our Lord and your Lord, and we shall have our deeds and you shall have your deed and we are sincere to Him. Nay! do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Are you better knowing or Allah? And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allah? And Allah is not at all heedless of what you do. (Qur'an, 2: 139–140)

1. Therefore, the Jews turned out to be racists by not accepting any as leader except those whose blood was Jewish. Thus, they gathered together their dispersed lot claiming that they were “the chosen people of Allah” and any other than them were not human. This was on the basis of Torah that was lost and ruined after the Babylonian Captivity at the hands of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar who occupied Jerusalem in the year 586 BC.

The Jews, who were not killed, remained captives in Babylon until the year 457 BC when they could go back to Palestine by the assistance of Cyrus the great king of Persia. After their returned to Palestine, a man called Ezra collected and reformed the books of the Old Testaments, which is the Torah of today.

From this, we know that between the loss of the Torah and its recollection, there were more than 125 years. During this period, most of the memorizers of the Torah had been killed or died in prison where they were forbidden to practice any religious activity. Therefore, the Torah had to have human interventions. So it is now full of fables, contradictions, untruths, distorted events and unrealities...etc.

The same thing happened to Christianity; the four Bibles were not written down at the time of Jesus Christ (as). The oldest one, which is “The Gospel of Mark”, was written down forty years later in Rome. Therefore, it was subject to distortion like the Torah at the time of Augustine who mixed between idolatry and the statements of the Bible.

The idolatry on which the idolaters of India, China, and old Egypt agreed on such as, the belief in Trinity and the ascribing of vices to the prophets (as) and even to Jesus Christ (as) influenced this. Moreover, they annulled the main purpose of all religions, which is to guide the human beings, when they claimed that Jesus Christ (as) had redeemed the criminals and sinners, so there was no necessity for any guidance after him or to send other prophets. For more details, refer to “The School Journey” and “The Guidance to the Religion of al-Mustafa” by Sheikh Muhammad Jawad al-Balaghi.

2. Using of one’s (usually a mujtahid) effort to form a judgment on questions concerning the Sharia and religious affairs.

3. The likes of this professor are those who have westernized and live with the complex of the yielding before the masses of iron and bricks amassed even if by stealing and assassinating other people or even entire humankind.

The Nazis, for example, since they felt that they had some arms, adopted the slogan of “the Aryan race”. Under this banner of racism, they destroyed civilizations and killed tens and millions of people in two destructive wars within time frame of no more than a quarter of a century. And the allies were not better than them. They invaded the different nations as colonists and tore those nations into pieces in order to be able to rule them and control their treasures and resources. In this way, they built their false civilization on bloods, sweat, and efforts of the suppressed peoples.

In the same way as the Nazi model, the American tyranny succeeded in blackmailing different countries and adopting the illegitimate child “Israel”. It secretly and openly brought up and assisted it by all means until it became a pit of the worst criminals and blood-suckers in the world.

Whereas, Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) had come to enliven the humanity inside a man following the true Mohammedan Islam and

saying, “A strong man is weak before me until I take the right from him, and the weak is strong to me until I take back the right for him.” He liberated man when he fought against the enemies of humanity. He said to Malik al-Ashtar when appointing him as the governor over Egypt, “...and do not be as predatory beast over them...for people are of two kinds; either your brother in religion or your equal in creation.” He also said, “Do not be a slave to another while Allah has created you free.”

So man whatever he is – black, poor, or weak – all walk under the banner of Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) that carries the high values of liberation and human rights. On the other hand some people become mean and weak before technology which is possessed by the traders of wars and the suckers of peoples’ bloods.

[4.](#) Nahjul Balaghah, sermon 159.

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