

Preface

As regards religious thought, it is an urgent necessity to propound Islam as an ideology which benefits both integrative and consistent principles and sees to men's social life as well.

Before this. Islamic studies were mostly devoid of these two important characteristics. Hence. In comparing Islam with other schools of thought and ideologies of our time. These studies couldn't lead the researchers to a fruitful conclusion and a crucial judgement. It means they have neither been able to show the integrity and uniformity of Islam as a whole; nor been able to define its relation to other schools of thought.

Furthermore, these studies have not considered the practical aspect¹ of life and especially social influences. They have mainly been abstract rather than concrete. Hence, the result has been nothing more than an abstract knowledge. Regarding men's social life. The structure of society, responsibility and duty. These studies have not offered any clear and special proposition.

Another point is that in many cases, the Qur'an, the decisive and undoubted document of Islam, has not been able to play an elucidative role in man's life. Instead, suspicious narrations and traditions have been more reliable and dominating. Thus, the religious beliefs have developed regardless of the Qur'an. Because of this lack of relation and attention which are themselves the effects of some particular factors scrutinizing the verses of the Qur'an has given way to superficial and perfunctory reading. Such fruitless reading, heedless of mundane reward, was only for the sake of other worldly reward. In this way the honorable Quran has become a means of demagogy in the hands of common people.

Having this reality in mind, it is necessary to consider three important characteristics in Islamic studies, which every learned and committed thinker is expected to pay special attention to.

First of all. Islamic learning; teachings and system of thought, should get rid of abstraction and mere thought. Islam like other schools of thought should apply to practical responsibilities and social life of man. Moreover, each speculative aspect of religion should be probed to see what pattern for man's life, and what aim for this existence (including the ways to achieve such aims) it offers.

Secondly, all the aspects of Islamic thought should be studied as a consistent whole and an integrative unit. Considering these aspects, a few points should always be kept in mind: each aspect is a part of the whole religion: each is a constituent of a compound, each one is like a brick in a solid building, and finally all of them are in complete harmony with each other and not separated. Approaching Islam in this way will result in a thorough understanding of the principles of Islam. Such an understanding will enable us to present a general and over all pattern of Islam as a perfect and clear ideology which is in proportion with the multidimensional life of man.

Thirdly, for the understanding of the Islamic principles, fundamental religious documents and texts should be regarded as the original sources, and not the personal comments and judgements, nor the stored and subjective knowledge of different people. Thus, the outcome of such an investigation will eventually be Islamic, and nothing except that. To achieve this end, the Qur'an is the most authentic and perfect document which can be relied on. Of course. Deep meditation on the Qur'an is necessary while reading it as it itself orders us.

What has been compiled in this treatise is a gist to show the effort for achieving the above-mentioned purpose. The initial treatise was in the form of a report on Islam in a series of successive lecture. In these lectures effort was made to search for the most important bases of Islamic thought through the most valid and vital dimension, that is the through the eloquent verses of the Quran. Then through explanatory description which is the method of scrutinizing the Qur'an. The above-mentioned base in these verses were specified. If necessary, in order to explain or emphasize, use was made of the accurate Traditions of the Prophet of Islam (P. B. U .H.) and the infallible Imams (peace he upon them).By applying this method. Besides scrutinizing some verses of the Quran, each time one of the principles of Islam was explained as a part of Islamic thought and ideology from a practical and committed point of view.

Finally, to enable the listeners to have in mind a summary of the presented subjects the outcome of each lecture was written down on a sheet of paper and was given to the audience every day. These summaries, in turn, can be a source for an independent and continuous thought. What is presented in this book is the collection of these summaries (with a slight change) whose publication is an answer to the acceptable and logical requests of many listeners.

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