

RESURGENT ISLAM

The name, 'Ideology of Islam' brings instantly to our mind the beauty of an ideological revolution with all its splendours in a bygone era. We know that it was and still is, ideologically speaking, superior to all other religious ideologies in existence. It is practiced (?) by billions and billions of Muslims all over the world. It is true that they follow entirely different systems in different countries or communities but with an important common factor that is the belief that, Allah the One, the Eternal is the Sustainer of all the worlds. Basic rituals such as Swalah, Fasting and Hajj are performed more or less uniformly.

Islam is generally understood to be the last of the Semitic religions introduced in this world. However the fact remains that it had been the religion of Allah, right from the introduction of human beings in the world. All the Prophets, Adam to the last of the prophets, Hadrath Muhammad, Peace and Blessings of Allah be on him, advocated the very same ideology, that is Islam. The Ideology can be summed up in a nutshell as 'it is absolute submission to God, the Almighty, the uncaused Cause of all beings, the Lord and Sustainer of the Worlds'. The word 'Islam' did not have the same connotation during the time of Prophet Muhammad or earlier, as it has come to assume now. The Arabic word 'Islam' means absolute submission and surrender, heart and soul, to the Divine Unity, God the Eternal. This has been the theme of all Divine Messengers and Prophets all the time. They did not split it into two branches as spiritual and material or dunyavyi and uqhraviyi. The word 'Muslim' is defined as one who surrenders, heart and soul, to the will of God Almighty. He is God-conscious every second of his life. The followers of Deen, the applied Ideology of Islam have been promised to be God's vice-regents to guide this world to its final destiny. It is a promise from the God Almighty and will not be an empty one.

Though Muslims are nearly one-fourth of the total population the world over, they are the most hated, even among themselves. They are downgraded as terrorists and a new word 'Islamist' has been brought in to replace 'Muslim' having a connotation that they are the followers of an ideology to be hated.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

There had been heavy structural damages done to the Edifice that is Islam, due to lack of proper upkeep by default or consciously undermining the foundation for personal or short term benefits by the persons wielding power. The Ideology by itself cannot have faults as it is from Allah, the Almighty. The Divine Writ was revealed in the language of the tribe to which the great Arabian Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be on him, belonged. It was delivered in their native classical Bedouin Arabic language so that they will have clarity in their understanding. Further the prophetic life of the Messenger of Allah was spent in their midst and he could rehearse the ideology for them. We can safely assume that Allah had prepared the ground to have him the opportunity to touch and live through all the aspects of life a man might encounter in this world. Only the magnitude and environments (paradigms) may be different at different time frames. The Divine Writ, the essence of the Ideology and all the parameters necessary to adopt under any circumstance is with us tamperproof and accessible universally. The universality and authenticity of the Book are clearly vouchsafed by Allah Himself, the Lord and Sustainer of the worlds. It confronts us directly without intermediaries and tells us that there is nothing in it which is difficult to understand. We will be enlightened on what we are looking for in it if we sincerely apply our mind. This appeal is to all irrespective of the intellectual level of the reader.

Later generations have devised methods to make it a religion more intricate than the existing ones by developing theologies and canon laws in line with other contemporary Semitic religions. It was further complicated by developing a new system of records of the actions and sayings of the Holy Prophet,

collecting them from the legends circulating during the periods of third or fourth generation of Muslims claiming that those legends had been preserved in the minds of the chain of people and handed down orally as Hadeeth. Even the legendary sayings and actions of the earlier Caliphs whom they designated as the 'rightful Caliphs', were also collected and reverently codified. They even concocted a 'saying' of the Holy Prophet that 'you follow my tradition as well as those of my rightful Caliphs'. The fact is that Holy Prophet could not know that there will be Caliphate system after him or that they will assume the title of Caliph. After the demise of the Holy Prophet, Aboobacker Siddique not only rejected the suggestions outright and refused to assume title of Caliph. He assumed the designation only as 'Commander of the Faithful'. However this designation did not survive for long as the administration fell into the hands of power monger dynasties delivering a major blow to the survival of the Ideology. They manoeuvred the Ideology to be split into two parts as 'Material and Spiritual' [Dunyavyi and Uqhraviyi], as mentioned in the second paragraph above. The first one will be looked after by broad coalition of rulers, leaders and Mullas, and the second one to be the responsibility of the individual. 'Amal Salih [good deeds] was redefined as rituals like Prayer, Fasting and Charity.

Islam was taught as complicated jumble of rituals consisting mainly of five pillars. These are to be looked after very well. They never told the students where these pillars are to be founded. Probably this negligence has contributed to a great extent for the system to become very shaky. However the Holy Book indicates very candidly that the Ideology is founded on the perfect and infallible foundation of Touheed, the Divine Unity. It states that every human child is born a Muslim, sinless and pure, thus dismantling the very foundations of the earlier religions, especially the Semitic ones.

Islamic Ideology was brought in, in its final form as the last and final Testament when the human intellect has matured to comprehend the injunctions and ready to develop a universal brotherhood of God's bond-men. The so called pillars, the rituals, are the reinforcing wires of the total edifice we are asked to build on the foundation. The building blocks provided by the individuals involve or impinge on the community in general. The bulk of the building blocks come from Amal-as-Şalihath, mutually advocating Haqq and advising patience in adversity: [Surah 'Asr' – The Flight of Time – No.103]. One of the so called pillars, Zakah is the compulsory ritual which again impinges on the welfare of the society and hence to be managed and administered collectively. But alas, this has consciously been fudged so that nobody is sure on how to go about it at all! The bulk of the construction material for the edifice comes from good deeds of the individual through the inter-action in the society. It is clear that the edifice, Al Islam, can be built only with the above mentioned components assembled in the proper order and form. The foundation and the reinforcements alone cannot bring about the intended structure.

The House of Islam started showing the cracks right from the ascendance of the third Caliph, if I am permitted to think aloud. Having assumed office it was incumbent upon him to administer justice and punish the persons behind the brutal murder of his predecessor. It was a historic opportunity to set the stage for the administration of Qur'anic justice. But it was not done. There are many grey areas in the formative periods of Islamic administration. History is not at all candid. May be it was fudged purposely. The incumbent administrator is not just a king. He was the Commander of the Faithful with full responsibility to uphold the ideals of Touheed. The crack became a gaping hole at the ascendance of the fourth Caliph. It was generally known that the assassins of the third Caliph were from the Alaviyi group and accusing fingers were being pointed towards them. The third Caliph held sway all over the Middle East, North Africa and central Asia! He was the most Powerful State-head in the contemporary world. However the Caliph who succeeded him did not make any serious attempt to book the culprits and mete out justice as ordained by Allah. He was to have set precedents in model judgements as one of the authors of history in the making! However he chose only to make his position safer by shifting the capital of the Islamic Republic away to a province, the Governor of which was more sympathetic towards him.

History repeats itself and it can be said that it still goes on and on in the Muslim countries. The last victim of assassination was King Faisal of K.S.A. There must have been serious efforts to concoct legitimacy for their selfish actions and a system had to be devised to make it happen. Issuing of fatwa or religious edicts were one of the routes. They had to invent some Hadeeth to back up their actions. Once it was known that the rulers were easy on these things, innovative minds would have worked overtime to produce Hadeeth to back up anything on demand! Those on high authority favoured the system and conveniently ignored any reference to the Holy Qur'ān. We find in history that the edifice of Islam crumbled by the end of first century of Hijra. Again by the end of the second century "Islamic Edifice built by Muslims is dead; long live the Ideology of Islam".

The scholars endowed with rational thinking among those who imbibed the exhortations and leads in the Holy Qur'ān went on to discover a new branch of philosophy, the Science! They laid the fundamental theories of all branches of modern science. They dominated the world of science for 500 years, to the end of 11th Century C.E! [Age of Jabir -750 CE to that of Khayyam -1100 CE]

The gauntlet thrown at the believers by the Divine Writ remains unchallenged even today after fourteen and a half centuries and it will remain so to the Day of Reckoning. The only course open to us is to go back to the Holy Qur'ān and start from scratch to reconstruct the Islamic Edifice. At present human intellect has bloomed almost to its fullest extent. Its vast experience (input of environmental data) has made the paradigms of concepts on matters of everyday life to shift a great deal. However the Divine Writ is eternal and paradigm-shifts can have no adverse effect on it. If we delve deep in the Holy Book we are assured of success. Our intellect will come up with answers to deal with the shift.

We are instructed to beseech Allah, the Dispenser of Grace, for protection from the dark side of the instinctive aspect of our intellect (the Satan), while approaching the Holy Qur'ān. Our mind must be freed from dogmas, pre-conceived notions, and cults and keep it oriented to a positive mode. The Holy Book clearly advocates Dynamic Orthodoxy moving in concert with the shift in paradigms of the day to day life. Success is guaranteed by Allah, the Most High.

Prof. Philip K. Hitti has pointed out in the 'History of the Arabs' a fateful event which was the disastrous turning point in Islam. It was the shift from the pursuit of ʿIlm to that of Fikĥ. Of course it is better for us to leave it alone so that it can be another branch of philosophy for the Ulema. The only course open to us now is to adopt the Holy Book as our undisputed Imam to lead us to the Resurgence of Islam. All the other materials like Fatwa, decisions made, at times absurd, on hypothetical cases by great Fakeeĥs of bygone era and volumes and volumes of Hadeeth created and recorded centuries after the Holy Prophet, can be left to the philosophers to exercise their minds.

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