

ISLAM & POLITICS

Lecture by

Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri

This is a subject highly interesting and significant in various aspects. Particularly in perspective of that misunderstanding which exists in the minds of our Western brothers. Those who have not studied Islam through its original sources or have seen it through some wrong demonstrations.

The word Islam is derived from the word "Salama", which means Peace, Safety, Security and Submission. When we look at some of the fundamental aspects of the Islamic culture, we can easily understand that the nature of Islam is peace.

For example: When two Muslims meet, they greet each other with the words "Assalam O Alaikum", (May peace be upon you). The concluding words of the Islamic prayer are: "Assalam O Alaikum Warah Matullah", (May peace and blessings of Almighty God be upon you). The welcoming words in the life hereafter for every believer as well as the name for paradise as stated in the Holy Quran are the words of peace. The words that Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing be upon him) recommended to recite after every prayer are: "O Lord You are The Peace, and peace originates from You, and peace returns to You, O our Lord we want a life of peace, And give us permission to enter into the house of peace." These are just few of the many examples to substantiate the nature of Islam.

There are 3 basic things in connection of Islam to be understood. The first is faith, the second is Practice and the third is the higher stage of excellence (spiritual perfection). Faith is known as Iman, which means peace. Practice is known as Islam, which also means peace. Spiritual excellence is known as Ahsan, which translates to peace and mercy.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh), while defining a Muslim as a believer stated: "A believer is a one who is so peaceful for others that he is known to be trustworthy as far as their lives, holdings and properties are concerned. He should be a peaceful and trustworthy man among the society. Only he deserves to be declared as a Muslim."

Again it is stated, Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) vowed: "By God he is not a believer, he is not a believer, he is not a believer, the one who could not provide peace and security to his neighbours."

Islam Not a Religion: In order to understand the relevance and the link between Islam and Politics we must first understand that Islam is not a religion. It is rather a "Deen". The Arabic word "Deen" maybe translated into "Religion" in the English dictionaries, but it is quite different from the English connotation "Religion".

Religion deals with the spiritual, moral, ethical, ritualistic and theological aspects, along with the acts of faith and with the reckoning of the Day of Judgment. Its primary concern is placed on how the spiritual link and relationship is to be established between a man and his Creator.

However, Deen is quite different. It is concerned with the whole entire conduct of life. Whether spiritual or temporal, religious or secular, domestic or societal, moral or material, social or cultural, economic or political, individual or collective, rather national or interna-

tional. Hence, Deen is a totality whereas religion is a part-and-parcel of Deen.

In non-Islamic societies, there are different sources for Law, different sources for Morality and different sources for Religion. But as far as Islam is concerned, its morality, its laws, its culture, its politics, its economic affairs, its domestic affairs, its civil affairs, its social matters, its matrimonial matters, all originate from the same source, and this comprehensiveness of the source converts Islam into a Deen.

How can a 1400Year old system solve the problems of Today?

A question arises that if Islam is a totality dealing with all the aspects of human life, how can it be possible for it to keep up with constant changes, whether social, political, environmental, demographical, scientific, intellectual, legal or economic, going on all over the world? How is it possible that a Deen be sufficient in fulfilling the needs and requirements of today? How can a Deen which was revealed 1400 years before fulfill the developing changes in the modern era?

Answer: In order to meet with the changing requirements of the human life at social and global levels, Islam provides a process of dynamics and evolution. A developmental and re-constructive process in its teachings. This is technically known as "Ijtihad" and "Ijmah". Ijtihad is a deductive and re-constructive process of reasoning and interpretation. Ijmah is the collective aspect of the deductive and interpretative process. So through Ijmah and Ijtihad the dynamics of Islam is regulated. This is how it competes with the developmental requirements of contemporary eras and meets with the changing contemporary situations of the world.

DEEN of PEACE

Islam has given a full-fledged political system, consisting of constitutional principles and social-economic order based on justice and equality. Islam is a Deen of peace, a comprehensive unity as well as a totality. It is an all embracing conduct of human life, dealing with the spiritual as well as the secular and temporal affairs; providing a beautiful balance between both the ethereal and earthly life.

Human Personality

Since Islam is a totality, it covers the whole conduct of human life and undertakes the responsibility to fulfill all of the needs of the human personality. All of the below requirements must be fulfilled in order to bring up a balanced personality.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Biological | 3. Socio-Economic | 5. Sytical | 7. Spiritual |
| 2. Socio-Biological | 4. Psychological | 6. Intellectual | |

What is the basis of the link between Islam and Politics?

Islam needs the establishment of a proper and just socio-economic and political order in the society so that a complete environment is provided for the upbringing of a balanced personality in the society. This is why Islam is not only a charter of divine spiritual guidance for individuals, it is a well coordinated system of beliefs and practices. Islam at the same time is a fully integrated philosophy of spiritual and secular aspects of the needs. It is at the same time a comprehensive code of human conduct, and a profound basis of a just socio-economic and political order of the society.

The Life of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh):

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)"s life can be divided into two phases:

- i) Meccan Period,
- ii) Medinan Period

1. Meccan Period

In the 13 years of his Meccan period he concentrated on the religious and spiritual activities.

2. Medinan Period

After migration to Medina he started his political life accompanied with the religious and spiritual activities.

Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) had established this link between Islam and Politics during his lifetime

The first step Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) took in linking Islam and Politics was that he gave the constitution of Medina and established the very first Islamic state in the form of a federation. This was the first written, regular constitution on which a state was practically regularized and various portions of the state regulated. In this sense, this was "The First" practical, written constitution of the world. This was the constitution, which provided the guarantee of fundamental human rights in our history.

In non-Islamic societies, there are different sources for Law, different sources for Morality and different sources for Religion. But as far as Islam is concerned, its morality, its laws, its culture, its politics, its economic affairs, its domestic affairs, its civil affairs, its social matters, its matrimonial matters, all originate from the same source, and this comprehensiveness of the source converts Islam into a Deen.

The concept of fundamental human rights was introduced to the West at the time of French Revolution and achieved its final perfection in the form of a charter of human rights through UNO. However, the basic charter of human rights was systematically provided by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) through the charter of Medina, the constitution of Medina and latterly through his last sermon of his last Hajj, which became the charter of human rights and obligations. After establishing a federation, he established the first Islamic state of Medina through that constitution.

Secondly, he entered into a political alliance with other communities and political entities, which existed in those days in the form of tribes, including them in this political commu-

nity known as "Ummah", "The Society".

The Third step taken by Holy Prophet (pbuh) was the introduction of a welfare state. He created a welfare based society through establishing an order of social brotherhood. Holy Prophet (pbuh) established a social brotherhood system in the form of "Moakhaat" in order to resolve the economic deadlock of the needy and the poor in the society. For the first time in the history of mankind, an idea of sharing of the poor and the wealthy was introduced along with the idea of circulation of wealth.

The fourth step taken by Holy Prophet (pbuh) was the legislation and the systemization of the political order.

Hence, the divine law protected each and every section of the human society. A full fledged system and a constitution was given by Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

There are specific fundamental, political and constitutional principles, which were provided by Islam. The Islamic political system exists without rigidity. It consists of dynamics, evolution, adjustments and adaptability from time to time, in order to meet with the changing circumstances of the society. Islam is a dynamical process and an evolutionary system.

Principles of Islamic Teachings:

1. There is absolutely no room for dictatorship, no place for monarchy or martial law in Islam. If a martial law dictator claims that he will present an Islamic martial law - he is nothing but fraud. Islamic system is based on nothing else but democracy.
2. Prescribing and promoting of the democratic political system and democratic culture.
3. Establishment of a parliament. Not the nominated "Shoorah" as it used to be in Pakistan some years before. It must be an elected and chosen parliament representing the people. In the days of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) there existed both a house of commons and a house of experts known as "Mujlisay Aam" and "Mujlisay Khaas".
4. Abolition of prerogatives. The Islamic political system does not find any place for special or privileged classes. Each and every person is equal in the eyes of the law.
5. Guarantee of fundamental human rights. The rights for the protection of life, property, business, honour, reputation, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of association. The entire charter of the fundamental human rights has been clearly given by Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as well as in the teachings of the Holy Quran. It would be a good aspect of mentioning that up till the time of Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) the international law that existed in those days asked for decapitation and beheading of the prisoners of war. It was Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who declared the killing and beheading of the prisoners of war to be prohibited. He gave them rights and liberated them.
6. Guarantee of human dignity and equality with discouragement of slavery and forced labour. There is no difference of race or colour or language in the eyes of Islam. Now, in our modern society we are fighting against distinctions of race

and colour and facing many problems with this issue. Islam provided this progressive revolutionary idea of equality of mankind 1400 years ago. He himself was an Arab but Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) declared:

"There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a non-Arab over an Arab, of white over a black or black over a white. All are equal"

7. Guarantee of economic justice along with the system ensuring the equitable circulation of wealth and eradicating the exploitative accumulation of wealth.
8. Establishment of respectable and peaceful relations with other states for a peaceful global co-existence.
9. Eradication of all kinds of oppressions, cruelties, injustices, and evil practices which are detrimental to mankind.
10. Helping of the needy & oppressed human societies and for the restoration of their basic rights in order to establish a peaceful global and progressive human society free from all kinds of fears.

What are important significant, political principles for an Islamic State?

1. Guaranteed protection of human rights in all circumstances. Its suspension or cancellation at anytime is completely prohibited.
2. Guaranteed protection of rights of minorities and their religious freedom. Islam protects them in the same way as it guarantees the freedom of Muslims in the society.
3. Upgrading of the women's status & protection of their rights. It was Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) who upgraded the status of women in the society and gave them similar rights as those that were being enjoyed by the men.
4. Elimination of slavery and forced labour in order to restore the dignity of mankind and provide them with the blessings of equality.
5. Elimination of terrorism and establishment of a peaceful secure environment. Islam has never been in favour of terrorism, rather it has always condemned it.

Terrorism:

Terrorism is not the case of religion, it is neither Islamic nor Jewish nor Christian. Terrorism is a social problem, a political, and an economical problem. There are many tribulations in a society and terrorism maybe committed due to any of those reasons. It is found right from the far East to the far West. Everywhere, every society possesses this crime.

Islam has given a full-fledged political system, consisting of constitutional principles and social-economic order based on justice and equality. Islam is a Deen of peace, a comprehensive unity as well as a totality. It is an all embracing conduct of human life, dealing with the spiritual as well as the secular and temporal affairs; providing a beautiful balance between both the ethereal and earthly life.