

The Significance of the Taliban for the Muslim Ummah

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A Personal Comment:

There, on the opposite side of the river, a fisherman casts his net - he is standing on the stern of his small boat rowed by another man. Now, the net-caster, his net thrown, beats the fast-flowing Nile water with a long stick, there where small narrow fields are planted with sugar cane, maize, and trees bearing bananas.

I sit in the shade of a palm tree, almost in the middle of one of the strips of fertile green that bounds both sides of the river. Nearby, an Iblis waits, patiently watching the water. Beyond, on both sides, is the desert where yesterday I walked, alone, under the strong, hot sun, until it was time for Asr. It was good to be there, bowing, kneeling, prostrating, in submission to the one and only God, saying the same words in the same language as the Prophet himself (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), nearly one and half thousand years ago. I felt connected - to the desert, the Sun, the land around, to the Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*), to my brothers and sisters around the world, suspended in time, and so keenly aware of my fragility, my mortality, my smallness, among the creations of Allah *Subhana wa Ta'ala*, who created this desert, this life-bearing river, the Sun, this planet, and this man, sitting in the shade of a tree.

Now, as I sit here, I think about the beautiful and profound simplicity of Islam. For Islam is simple, beautiful, and profound. It is simple in theory, simple in practice, and both human and futuristic: far superior to any and all the philosophies, the ways, the political ideas, that I have studied over the past three decades. Why? Because it places us where we truly belong - providing as it does an appreciation and understanding of our fallibility, and providing as it does guidelines to make and keep us human: possessed of an awareness of our Creator. For it this awareness that is beginning of our humanity, just as it is the guidelines given in the Quran and Sunnah which, if followed, can take us to and keep us upon the path of honourable personal conduct in both our private and our social lives.

Islam is futuristic because it is a gateway to the next and most important life - that which awaits us after our mortal life, here on this Earth, has ended. It is futuristic because it reveals how we can and should live our lives: as honourable, well-mannered, human beings who are careful, out of respect for their Creator, not to over-step the bounds of right conduct, and who thus follow the true middle way that lies between the two extremes of prideful arrogance and addiction to our own desires, our own selfishness, our own personal fulfillment.

Every time I return to a Muslim land I am aware of two things. First, how many Muslims seem to be Muslim in name only, imitating as they seem to do the ways of the *kaffir*; second, of what this modern world really needs. Does this world really need more wealth, more luxuries, more materialism, more development, created by the idea of "progress"? Does the so-called "under developed world" have to play the Western game according to Western rules in order to achieve something called "happiness" and something called "prosperity" and something called "progress"?

Every time I return - and especially now as I sit here under a beautiful blue sky, with desert beyond the small patches of food-producing land - I ask myself what is the

true meaning of prosperity, of happiness, of progress, of wealth? Is the fisherman there, casting his net again, happier than the vastly more wealthy Western man I saw on my journey through London, sitting in his expensive car? Is there true wealth here, in a simple living, in a simple submission to Allah *Subhana wa Ta'ala*? In a simple acceptance of this life as a gateway to another, eternal, life? The answers to such question all depend on our perspective, on one fundamental question: what is the meaning and purpose of our lives, as individuals?

Islam provides one answer, which I as a Muslim have accepted, and it is an answer which everyone - as Allah *Subhana wa Ta'ala* says - is free to accept or reject. This Islamic answer is a simple one, and it is that our purpose, the meaning of our lives, is to strive for Jannah, for the eternal life of Paradise, through a complete and simple submission to Allah *Subhana wa Ta'ala*.

The Taliban:

Several years ago, I came to consider that the Taliban were Allah's blessing to the Ummah - that they represented all that was good, and honourable, about Islam, and that in their leader, Mullah Omar (*hafidhahullah*) we had another excellent example, similar to *al-Khulafaa' al-Raashidoon* and *As-Salaf as-Saalih*: that he did indeed merit the title *Ameer-ul-Mumineen*.

Why is this? Because the Taliban had returned to the fundamentals of Islam, purely from a desire to please Allah *Subhana wa Ta'ala* and Allah *Subhana wa Ta'ala* alone. These were indeed honourable Muslims - who sought to implement Islam and who, through Jihad, were prepared to die to defend Islam and fight those who desired to destroy Islam and a true Islamic community.

It occurred to me - as I travelled, talked to Muslims, and read and studied all I could - that the Taliban were an example of the recent revival of authentic Islam: that they had perceived, and understood, the essential simplicity and beauty of Islam, and thus rejected any and all attempts to imitate the *kuffar*; that is, any and all attempts, from whatever reason or motive, to move away from the fundamental truths of Islam.

Thus I understood how the Taliban represented a fundamental if rather neglected principle of Islam - that of *Zuhd* in *dunya*. That is, the desires of this life comes second - after the desire for Jannah; after the desire to obey Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*; after the desire to love and follow His Messenger and Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*).

Understood thus, all the rhetoric of the *kuffar* - all the rhetoric of the tame and moderate Muslims subverted by the *kuffar* - about prosperity, about the poverty of the Taliban and their land, about the "backwardness" of the Taliban, is seen for what it is: irrelevant; un-Islamic.

For the simple truth is that, in this life, we do not need very much - but what we do need, above everything else, is to follow the clear, the simple, the beautiful guidance given to us by Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* in the Quran and the Sunnah. We need, that is, to humbly submit to Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* ; to humbly obey Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* ; to love His Prophet (*salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam*) and so be Muslim, in our hearts, our thoughts, our way of life. And that is all. For it is *Zuhd* in *dunya* that moves us towards that simple submission to Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* that is Islam.

Propaganda Against the Taliban:

There was something quite inspiring about the Taliban - many Muslims sensed this, as did many who did not like the revival of Islam which was occurring, in Afghanistan and elsewhere. More and more young Muslims, it seemed, were being guided to the right path by the example of the Taliban. The Taliban had even begun to create the foundations for a genuine Islamic community - ruled by *Shariah* and *Shariah* only - as they had begun to encourage Muslims to migrate to Afghanistan to help in the revival of Islam, and in the construction of what many hoped would one day become a new *Khilafah*.

Those in the West who disliked Islam and who had worldly plans of their own for the world thus came to consider the Taliban a threat, and so began a campaign against them, using the power of the Western Media - which was in their control, directly or indirectly - to try and discredit the Taliban, in the eyes of the both Muslims and non-Muslims, and using as they often did the services of the many tame and "moderate" Muslims who believed that imitation of the *kuffar* way of life was "a good thing" and that "Islam needed modernizing". In addition, the so-called leaders of many Western nations began agitating for sanctions against the Taliban, with some advocating direct intervention by that *kaffir* organization, the mis-named "United Nations".

This campaign, by the *kuffar*, by the enemies of Islam, culminated in the invasion of Afghanistan by Amerika, and in the installation of a puppet, pro-American regime.

The Significance of the Taliban:

Despite the invasion, despite the propaganda of the *kuffar*, and despite the attempts by the *kuffar* to subvert Islam, the Taliban have not been defeated, *Alhamdulillah*. The significance of the Taliban, for us, is that they have revealed, in what the *kuffar* call "the modern world", the beautiful, the noble, the true, path of Islam. They have steadfastly rejected all the many and varied temptations of this modern world - the temptations of the way of life of the *kuffar*. They have remained honourable, focused on Jannah, and remained steadfast in following the Quran and the Sunnah, and these alone.

If the recent events in Afghanistan, in Iraq and elsewhere, reveal anything, it is this - that we, as Muslims, have a choice: we can allow ourselves to be influenced by the *kuffar*, by the ways and ideas of the *kuffar*, by the temptations, the materialism, of this world, or we can follow the clear and noble and quite simple guidance given to us by Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*.

May Allah (*Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*) protect us from all forms of *Al-asabiyyah Al-Jahiliyyah*, forgive us for our mistakes, and guide us to and keep us on the Right Path.