

## **THE NEED TO REVIVE ISLAMIC HERITAGE**

The Industrial Revolution signalled the beginning of enormous amounts of scientific and technological developments, acquisition of new laws of nature and discoveries of natural phenomenon. With this newly acquired knowledge, man has advanced intellectually and has been able to provide the material products to satisfy physical needs and desires. This, therefore, implies that mankind has found paradise with his ability to satisfy his every need. Can we say that United States and Europe, which are the manifestation of western civilization at its peak, is then paradise?

Is paradise filled with violent crimes, pollution, suicides, unemployment, alcoholics and discrimination (political, social and economic)? We hope not.

Then what is missing ? Why was such wealth of knowledge been unable to bring satisfaction to the cravings of man to find true happiness? This wealth was acquired and used solely on the basis of having the knowledge for itself and to meet the short-term problems which would surface. There was never a thought to comprehend the whole picture, only a segment of it with the false belief that facts and figures were the answers to all the problems. In other words, man's orientation towards knowledge, towards life was only seen through the materialistic, the physical qualities and with the annihilation of the true spiritual needs.

Speaking of only elements, a human being is worth less than two dollars in its chemical composition. Is this all that you and I are worth?

No. The value of a human being cannot be measured in dollars and cents. There is a hidden and forgotten quality within each human being that simultaneously distinguishes the individual as well as harmoniously fits the individual to all of mankind. This is the essence of the spirit of God which brought light and beauty to the clay-form of man. So, to find the spirit, one must re-establish the ties of one's mind with one's soul and thereby renew the ties of man with God, with the whole scheme of life, to fit the piece of wealth to the whole treasure. Islam provides the way to this treasure when its nature is perceived, probed, and applied within oneself, within society.

This task is not an easy one because it is a never ending process. The starting point is with the recognition of God, the Absolute, and to know the nature of that spirit that is inherent within each of us. This is a process which is the responsibility of the individual for the values and principles that drives a person through life are different for all.

Does this mean that Muslims reject everything conceived within the Western World? Does it mean to go back to the beginning, to only the traditions? Does Islam force the believers to stop facing the realities of the existing western civilization ? The answers are not simple to give.

Islam itself, is not a static religion - it advocates acquiring knowledge, and promotes perpetual growth at all levels. The difference and the basic difference between Islam and western thought is that Islam is based upon the One and Absolute God from which

everything else is relative. Western thought, on the other hand, has isolated itself to the point where the achievement of scientific and technological thought is the absolute human spirit, his authentic feelings and values have no place in this framework. Thus science and technology is not rejected; it is absorbed as a means, and not the end, of answering the necessities of modern life.

To appreciate the richness of Islam, you need to understand its traditions, its history, its development which helps you to know and practice the revelations in the Quran. This is the heritage of all Muslims and to this heritage, each of us try to make a contribution, however small. One thing must be remembered, and that is that our heritage and history is a point to refer to when we study Islam, when we apply the principles within our daily living. This is what the people should seek for, find, know and practice what they believe. Let us look at our heritage and see what can be gleaned and then try to fill the same essence of principles, laws into the present system with the aid of scientific and technological knowledge.

This is the time for reconstruction: reconstruction of thought, reconstruction of social morals and ethics, and of belief. Education and awareness are needed in order to arrive at understanding this process. It means to really search deep within yourself and thus as each individual makes this searching probe, it forms the search of the society into itself.

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