

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ



لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

FRIDAY SERMON

HADHRAT MUHYI-UD-DIN AL-KHALIFATULLAH

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After greeting all his disciples (and all Muslims) worldwide with the greeting of peace Hadhrat Khalifatullah (atba) read the Tashahhud, Ta'uz, Surah Al Fatiha, and then he delivered his sermon on:

SPIRITUALITY AND MATERIALISM

There is a common belief among us that the Arabs and Muslims in general are spiritual while the West, i.e. industrialist and capitalist American and European societies, is materialistic. But how true is this claim?

Sometimes non-Western countries are included in this category, such as Japan and South Korea for instance. Most East European and Latin American countries are not considered to be Western. The West, according to a common belief among many historians, is made up of capitalist and liberal societies rather than socialist and communist cultures. The terms materialist and spiritual are contradictory. Obviously, good ethics can be found in both spiritual and materialistic societies. Spiritual means having attachment to faith and humanitarian values, the principles of mercifulness and compassion, social solidarity and the belief in life after death.

Spirituality and materialism are both seeking after happiness. Spirituality seeks happiness within the overall concept of God and His All-Power while Materialism seeks happiness without the Divine support, abandoning faith for the flimsy world. Spirituality teaches us to aspire for a better life, a more illumined life. Materialism teaches us to desire more material goods and material wealth, leaving behind the belief in the Retribution.

Permanent happiness and materialism can never be found together. Spirituality teaches us to be selfless; materialism teaches us to be selfish. Spirituality teaches us to love our fellow man. Materialism teaches us to love our material wealth. Spirituality does not compare. Materialism is subject to constant comparison, being the father of jealousy and insecurity. Spirituality takes the help of material progress, but it is never a slave to materialistic desires. Materialism cannot see how spirituality helps.

Spirituality lives in the present moment. Materialism lives in tomorrow's world of endless desires and yesterday's world of inevitable dissatisfaction. Spirituality enables peace of mind. Materialism, even with all the wealth in the world can never buy peace.

Materialism eventually becomes frustrated with its own limitations. Slowly, reluctantly and even unwillingly, materialism eventually turns to spirituality to feed its insatiable appetite for real happiness.

Materialism means behaviour based on power, repression, competition, free market policy, imperialism, technology and lack of belief in religion or life after death in addition to the coercive concept of survival for the fittest. Let us go back to the common belief that Arabs and Muslims in general are spiritual and that most Westerners are materialistic. On what criterion is this opinion based?

The answer is simple: Arabs are religious people or are ruled by faith while the West is ruled by materialistic interests. Claiming that we, Muslims are governed by religion may be true but what religion? Is it the religion of noble values or that of appearances and false rituals? For that we need to define what is a true Muslim, and we need to precise the Islamic aspects of Arab countries and their inhabitants. The true Muslim and true Muslim country guided by the Islamic laws, in other words, Allah's Laws, the Holy Quran and the *Sunnat* (practices) of His Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) surely shall inevitably be spiritual, preserving their bond with the true faith and God Almighty and striving for the hereafter, leaving behind egoism and the thirst for material things.

We cannot deny that the Arab countries nowadays are filthy rich, and with material riches comes also temptation and a loosening of one's spirituality to

embrace materialism and materialistic desires. Today we are facing two extremes of the Arab societies: being too materialistic or too extremist in matters of the faith, to such a degree that such kind of people take such bold steps, contradicting the holy commandments of Allah and they take their own definition of religion/ faith as the real one and thus they become so fierce to others which thus in turn projects a bad image of Islam, when in reality Islam is a religion of peace, it is the true faith.

For instance, over the years we have witnessed to what the Taliban and the Islamic state of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) have done, giving a false outlook on Islam, giving more attention to their own ostentatious rituals of the religion than to the noble values of justice, freedom, equality and dignity which Islam actually preaches.

In most Arab societies, relationships are now commonly based on the use of power, nepotism and self-interest. This is an actual fact which cannot be challenged. Money is a pivotal factor in shaping these relationships. Repression is a feature of many Arab societies today. Power is a highly valued concept which has been the theme of the majority of Arab poems even those composed before the advent of Islam. Weak people in our society do not count. They receive no support from anyone. Minority groups in our societies suffer a lot.

Let us now look at the West. Is it really materialistic? **If, yes, to what extent?**

Generally speaking, free societies not attached to spirituality and its essence are called to be doomed in the long run. The West though to a large extent materialistic is slowly but surely turning little by little to spirituality. And the best form of spirituality is found in ISLAM. People in such societies are realising the importance of spirituality in their lives and *Insha-Allah*, I pray that the time comes that the West merges in the true spirituality which Islam has on offer for this is the best form of spirituality and their connection to the Unique God, Allah shall then be guaranteed.

Whilst capitalism and the free market economy decide the destiny and fate of the people there, however, Westerners are aware of this fact and are making an effort to change it. The dominance of the free market economy does not prevent

people in the West from honouring spiritual and humanistic values such as justice, freedom, equality and social solidarity. This is a fact that cannot be denied.

Lastly, if we understand the spiritual or humanitarian to mean human dignity, then it is the West which is spiritual and we are the materialists. Instead of the values of justice and dignity, the behaviour of repression is predominant in our societies. Despotism has replaced dignity and chaos has replaced order.

So, now Muslim and Arab countries and all people involved, we need to ponder over this carefully and change our materialistic fate to that which Allah had already gifted us with when He directed us to Islam. We should honour the trust that He has placed in us and handed over to us in that which He has given us Islam as the best form of spirituality, as the best form of faith to enable us to reach to Him through perfect morals and human values, to help ourselves to reach Him and to enable us to help others also to reach to Him, *Insha-Allah, Ameen*.

May Allah change the fate of today's Muslims and help us revert to the Sahih al Islam of the times of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and to shape our societies like the Holy Prophet (pbuh) shaped the community of Islam in his days. *Insha-Allah, Ameen*.