

Essence of the Message of Islam and Necessity for Understanding its Objectives

The religion of Islam embodies all the features of justice, tolerance, easiness, and mercy. Scholars, old and past, are of the position that all what achieves these ultimate objectives shall be categorized as belonging to the religion of Islam, and that what contradicts or opposes them are in actually in contradiction to the religion of Islam itself, objectives, and purposes. That is because Islam is the religion of moral ethics, and its message has to do with perfecting this message. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is reported to have said, "I was sent to perfect good character."¹ It is thus clear the true message of Islam has to do with trustworthiness, loyalty, honesty, righteousness, keeping the kinship relations good, generosity, helping others, nobility, chivalry, preventing harm from afflicting people, removing of harmful objects from the road, giving hand to people in distress, saving whoever seeks your help, and relieving people's afflictions. On the other hand, all what is opposite has nothing at all to do with Islam or its objectives. This includes telling lie, treachery, betrayal, breaking promises, severing the kinship relations, behaving in a very impudent and insulting manner at times of conflict with others, selfishness, and straitening of the breast. In actuality, one should keep far away from those people who possess with these traits and from their so-called religiosity, because they, with these manners and traits, make people dislike the religion of Islam and even bar them from accepting it. In that way, they cannot be described as callers to Islam, even if they claim otherwise and take oaths to affirm that. There is no good in them, nor do their oaths weigh anything even though their speech might please and surprise you. Referring to this second category of people, Allah, Glorified is He, says: "There is [a kind of] man whose views on the life of this world may please you [Prophet], he even calls on God to witness what is in his heart, yet he is the bitterest of opponents. When he leaves, he sets out to spread corruption in the land, destroying crops and live-stock-God does not like corruption. When he is told, 'Beware of God,' his arrogance leads him to sin. Hell is enough for him: a dreadful resting place." (The Quran, 2:204-206) He, may He be exalted, also says: "When the hypocrites come to you [Prophet], they

¹ See Al-Bayhqi, *Al-Sunnan Al-Kubra* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-'lmiyyah), vol. 10, p. 323; Hadith no. 20782.

say, 'We bear witness that you are the Messenger of God.' God knows that you truly are His Messenger and He bears witness that the hypocrites are liars— they use their oaths as a cover and so bar others from God's way: what they have been doing is truly evil— because they professed faith and then rejected it, so their hearts have been sealed and they do not understand. When you see them [Prophet], their outward appearance pleases you; when they speak, you listen to what they say. But they are like propped-up timbers—they think every cry they hear is against them—and they are the enemy. Beware of them. May God confound them! How devious they are!:

(The Quran, 63:1-4)

Islam is indeed the religion of work, production, perfection and providing benefit to the entire humanity. This is actually the practical application of the approach of Islam. It has nothing at all to with unemployment, laziness, civilizational backwardness. That is to say that those who are given the names of Muslims place burden on the religion of Allah, the Almighty, and a parasite upon His creation.

Old and contemporary scholars unanimously agree that the ultimate objectives of the Sharia revolve mainly around realization of people's interests; that is to say that wherever the interest is realized, this is the Sharia of Allah, Glorified is He. In this regard, Imam Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali, may Allah have mercy upon him, says: "What is meant by the word *Maslaha* (interest) is to preserve the objectives of the Sharia which are five: to preserve one's religion, soul, intellect, offspring, and property. So, all what includes the preservation of these five fundamentals is regarded as *Maslaha*, and all what does not achieve them is regarded as an act of corrupt, whose removal is *Maslaha* (interest)."²

In the same connection, Imam Al-Shatibi,³ may Allah have mercy upon him, says: "It is legally known that Sharia is laid down to realize the interests of people; that is to say that legal obligation is indicated to ward off an act of corruption, or to bring about

² See Al-Ghazali, *Al-Mustasfa Min I'lm Al-Usul Li Al-Ghazali* (Beirut: Dar Al-Kutub Al-Imiyah, 1st ed., 1993 C.E. / 1413 A.H.), p. 174.

³ He is Abu Muhammad Abd Allah ibn Ali ibn Ahmed ibn Ali Al-Lakhmi Al-Andalusi Al-Shatibi. He was born in 433 A.H. in Shatiba, Andalusia. He learnt *Qira'at* (various modes of recitation) in his country at the hands of Abu Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Abu Al-A'as Al-Nafazi. He died in 532 A.H. See Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Siyar A'lam Al-Nubalaa'*, vol. 20, p. 92.

a benefit, or to achieve them both. So, what is categorized under any necessarily belongs to the relevant category. This does never contradict the objectives of the Sharia. On the contrary, what is forbidden is to intend to bring about what contradicts the objectives of the Sharia."⁴

He further added, "Laws are laid down to realize the interests of people. So, commands, prohibition, and choices are all intended to realize the benefits and interests of the legally commissioned people because Allah, the Almighty, never acquires any benefit from all this legislation."⁵

Al-Shatibi further added, "The Sharia is mainly intended to preserving people's interests and warding off corruption. This is actually indicated by its general and conclusive proofs, which is evidenced by induction. So, anything that is contrary to that is not legally considered."⁶

Commenting on the same point, Ibn Al-Qayyim,⁷ may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "The Sharia (of Islam) is all based and founded on wise actions and achieving the interests of people in both this life and the life to come. It includes all aspects of justice, mercy, interest, and wisdom. So, any matter that is not relevant to justice is certainly an act of injustice, and thus transcends the limits of mercy to cruelty, the limits of interest to corruption, and the limits of wisdom to irrationality. As such, it does not belong to the Sharia, even if it is regarded as belonging to it by virtue of interpretation. The Sharia is laid down to establish the Justice of Allah among His slaves, His Mercy among His creation, His Shadow in His earth, and His Wisdom

⁴ See Al-Shatibi, *Al-Muqfaqt* (N.P., Dar Ibn Affan, 1st ed., 1997 C.E.), vol. 1, p. 318.

⁵ Ibid, vol. 1, p. 234.

⁶ Ibid, vol. 5, p. 230.

⁷ He is Abu Abd Allah Shams Al-Din Muhammad Ibn Abi Bakr Ibn Ayoub Ibn Sa'ad Ibn Hurayz Al-Zara'i Al-Dimishqi. He is known for the nickname "Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyyah" or "Ibn Al-Qayyim". He was born in 691 A.H. He is a jurist, a *Mufassir* (one who explains the verses of the Quran), and a well-versed Muslim Scholar who is highly qualified to make personal reasoning. He is one of the most prominent scholars of the Hanbali School of Law. The list of his most important writings includes *I'lam Al-Muawqqi'n*, *Al-Turuq Al-Hakimah fi Al-Siyasah Al-Shar'iyah*. He died in 751 A.H.

See Al-Zirikli, *Al-A'lam*, vol. 6, p. 56.

definitively proving His, Glorified is He, Existence and the trustworthiness of His Messenger, may Allah's Peace and Blessings be upon him."⁸

In the same vein, Imam Al-I'zz ibn Abd Al-Salam,⁹ may Allah have mercy upon him, said: "All the legal obligations are mainly based on (achieving) the interests of people in this worldly life and the Hereafter. Allah, Glorified is He, stands not in need of the worship of any of His creatures. In truth, people's obedience does not avail Allah, nor does their disobedience cause Him, the Almighty, any harm, to the extent that had they all gathered together to help the worst heart of them, this would have diminished nothing from My Sovereignty, and had they all gathered together to help the most pious heart among the, this would have increased nothing at all in my Sovereignty. People can in no way do any harm to Allah, nor can they do Him any benefit, for they all are liable to err except whom he guides on the Right Path, and they all are hungry except whom He feeds, and they all are naked except whom He provides garments to."¹⁰

He further added, "It is not concealed to any man of sound mind that acquiring pure interests and warding off pure corruption away from man and others are something good and praised, and that giving precedence to the most preponderant interest is good and praised, and so is warding off acts of corruption, starting from the worst to what is lower than it. Wise men also agree on these points. Various laws agree on the prohibition of unlawful shedding of blood, honors, properties, and acquiring the best of sayings and actions."¹¹

⁸ See Ibn Al-Qayyem Al-Jawziyyah, *I'lam Al-Muawqqi'n*, vol. 3, p. 3.

⁹ He is I'zz Al-Din (an Arabic sentence literally means the dignity of religion), Sheikh Al-Islam Abu Muhammad Abd Al-Aziz Ibn Abd Al-Salam. He is a well-versed scholar and of the most prominent scholars of his time. He is known for the nickname "*Sultan Al-U'lmaa*" (lit. the Sultan of Scholars). Born in 578 A.H., he acquired the various branches of knowledge including the sciences of *Tafsir*, *Hadith*, *Fiqh*, *people's different opinions*. He is highly-qualified to make *Ijtihad*, and died in 660 A.H. See Ibn Al-I'mad Al-Hanbali, *Shadhrat Al-Dhahb fi Akhbar Man Dhahab*, (Beirut: Dar Ibn Kathir, 1st ed., 1986 C.E. – 1406 A.H.), vol. 7, p. 522.

¹⁰ See Abu Muhammad I'zz Al-Din Ibn Abd Al-Salam, *Qawa'id Al-Ahkam fi Masalih Al-Anam* (Beirut: Dar Al-Marif), vol. 2, p. 63.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 4.

All in all, the essence of Islam, acquiring the secrets of its tolerant message and its ultimate objectives and purposes, and the application of all of this in light of the latest developments and requirements of this era is an urgent necessity to face contemporary challenges, to curb the reigns of terrorist and extremist groups, to lay siege to the extremist ideology, to break the manacles of stagnation, misunderstanding, and narrow mindedness, to get out from this narrowness to a vaster, wider and easier world- a world that is more mature and conscious and that has a robust vision, with the aim of realizing the benefits and interests of countries and people, and to disseminate the excellent human values that achieves security, safety, peace, stability, and happiness of the entire humanity, for the best of people is the one who brings about benefit to others, and he does not deserve to be delivered to life whoever lives only for the sake of himself.