

Friday Khutbah - 01/02/2013

The Challenges facing Muslims

The challenges facing Muslims at our present time are many and varied. Some of these challenges are internal within the Muslim *Ummah* while others are external. The external challenges are represented in the hostility of the people of falsehood from the various religious groups, sects, ideologies etc.

Some from among these groups want Muslims to follow them in their materialistic life-style and not to be any different from them. Some want to manipulate Muslims politically and to exploit their financial resources. Others even go as far as occupying their lands. These are a few examples of this animosity of *Ahl Al-Batil*.

The second types of challenges facing Muslims are the internal ones. These, in my view, are even more dangerous than the external challenges because they pave the way for the external challenges to work. The way of the Qur'an in explaining the causes of defeat and weakness of nations is to attribute them to internal factors. In the Qur'anic expression it says: "Say it is from yourselves"

Had Muslims been steadfast on the straight path, then these challenges would not have harmed them much. However, they broke their covenant with Allah and this resulted in their problems. In the *Hadith Sahih*, *Rasulullah (Salla Allahu alaihi wassalm)* said: "Whenever a people break their covenant with Allah, their enemies will have the upper hand over them." So, breaking the covenant of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) i.e. disobeying Him is the cause of defeat while on the other hand obeying Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) is the cause of power and victory. As Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) says in the Qur'an: "O you who believe! If you will aid the cause of Allah, He will aid you and make your foothold firm."

How can Muslims expect that Allah will give them victory when they abandoned *Salat* and *Zakat* and consumed *riba*.

The challenges which Muslims face are in many aspects economical, political, social and scientific and technological; however, in essence our crisis is a crisis of *Iman* and *akhlaq*.

One of the challenges which have been facing Muslims for long decades is the challenge of political tyranny and the dictatorship of the rulers. We were pleased for the downfall of the tyrannical regimes in some of the Muslim lands in the last two years. But unfortunately the challenge of political tyranny has been replaced by another challenge in these countries - which is no less serious than the first challenge. This is the challenge of disagreement and disharmony within the Muslim *Ummah*. This challenge has been one of the major challenges facing Muslims. Disagreement, keeping to oneself and desertion of others is easy while harmony and unity are difficult and require effort and patience. It is for this reason that the believer who patiently mixes with other people is better than a believer who does not mix and he is impatient as the Prophet (*Salla Allahu alaihi wassalm*) said.

Disagreement at the level of society, country and the *Ummah* as a whole is a very serious disease. It is something which is totally against the spirit of the *deen*. The unity of the believers stems from the unity of the Lord whom they worship and towards whom they turn their faces. This is in direct contrast to what the polytheists who turn to many gods do. For when they turned towards many gods, this led them to disagree and disperse. This is understood from the words of Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*): "And remain turning penitently

unto Him, and fear Him, and establish prayer, and be not of those who join gods with Allah. Those who split up their religion, and become sects each party rejoicing in that which is with itself!”

Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) has explained in His book that the basis of the relationship between the believers is brotherhood and loyalty. He (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) says: “The believers are nothing else than brothers.” He also says: “And the believers, men and women, are protecting friends one of another...” And He says: “Verily, your Walî (Protector or Helper) is none other than Allâh, His Messenger, and the believers...”

Allah (*subhanahu wa ta'ala*) commands Muslims to be united and to avoid disagreement. He says: “And dispute not lest you lose courage and your strength departs..”

The Islamic Shar’iah has prohibited any saying or action that contradicts or negates unity between the believers, and thus weakens the Muslim community. These include those acts mentioned in the Qur’anic verse: “O you who believe! Avoid much suspicion, indeed some suspicions are sins. And spy not, neither backbite one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? You would hate it....”

They also include what the Prophet (*salla Allahu alaihi wasallam*) said in the *Hadith*: “Do not envy, hate or turn your backs to one another..... Be servants of Allah brothers. A Muslim is a brother of another Muslim; he does not wrong, look down at or let him down. The blood, property and honour of a Muslim is inviolable by another Muslim.”

The symbol of *ahl al-Islam* by which they distinguish themselves from others is that they are keen to adopt harmony and the sense of togetherness among themselves, and hate disagreement, dispute and disunity.

So, try your best to be supporters of one another and promoters of harmony and unity between Muslims. Avoid being advocates of disagreement and dispersion. Do not be of those whom Allah said regarding them: “Verily, those who divide their religion and break up into sects you (O Muhammad) have nothing to do with them. Their affair is only with Allâh, Who will tell them what they used to do.”