

The Window

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Islamic Movement: Political Freedom & Democracy

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It is the duty of the (Islamic) Movement in the coming phase to stand firm against totalitarian and dictatorial rule, political despotism and usurpation of people's rights. The Movement should always stand by political freedom, as represented by true, not false, democracy. It should flatly declare its refusal of tyrants and steer clear of all dictators, even if some tyrant appears to have good intentions towards it for some gain and for a time that is usually short, as has been shown by experience.

The Prophet (SAWS) said, "When you see my Nation fall victim to fear and does not say to a wrong-doer, "You are wrong", then you may lose hope in them." So how about a regime that forces people to say to a conceited wrongdoer, "How just, how great you are. O our hero, our savior and our liberator!"

The Quran denounces tyrants such as Numrudh, Pharaoh, Haman and others, but it also dispraises those who follow tyrants and obey their orders. This is why Allah dispraises the people of Noah by saying, "But they follow (men) whose wealth and children give them no increase but only loss." [Surat Nuh; 21]

Allah also says of Ad, people of Hud, "And followed the command of every powerful, obstinate transgressor". [Surat Hud: 59]

See also what the Quran says about the people of Pharaoh, "But they followed the command of Pharaoh, and the command of Pharaoh was not rightly guided.[Surat Hud: 97] "Thus he made fools of his people, and they obeyed him: truly they were a people rebellious (against Allah)." [Surat Az-Zukhruf: 54]

A closer look at the history of the Muslim Nation and the Islamic Movement in modern times should show clearly that the Islamic idea, the Islamic Movement and the Islamic Awakening have never flourished or borne fruit unless in an atmosphere of democracy and freedom, and have withered and become barren only at the times of oppression and tyranny that trod over the will of the peoples which clung to Islam. Such oppressive regimes imposed their secularism, socialism or communism on their peoples by force and coercion, using covert torture and public executions, and employing those devilish tools that tore flesh, shed blood, crushed bone and destroyed the soul.

We saw these practices in many Muslim countries, including Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, (the former) South Yemen, Somalia and northern African States for varying periods of time, depending on the age or reign of the dictator in each country.

On the other hand, we saw the Islamic Movement and the Islamic Awakening bear fruit and flourish at the times of freedom and democracy, and in the wake of the collapse of imperial regimes that ruled peoples with fear and oppression.

Therefore, I would not imagine that the Islamic Movement could support anything other than political freedom and democracy.

The tyrants allowed every voice to be raised, except the voice of Islam, and let every trend express itself in the form of a political party or body of some sort, except the Islamic current which is the only trend that actually speaks for this Nation and expresses its creed, values, essence and very existence.

However some Islamists still have their reservations on democracy, and are even wary of the word "democracy" itself.

What I wish to tress here is that Islam is not democracy and democracy is not Islam and that I would rather that Islam is not attributed to any principle or system. Islam is unique in its means, ends and methodologies, and I do not wish that

Western democracy be carried over to us with its bad ideologies and values without us adding to it from our values and ideologies in order to integrate it into our comprehensive system.

However, the tools and guaranties created by democracy are as close as can ever be to the realization of the political principles brought to this earth by Islam to put a leash on the ambitions and whims of rulers. These principles are: *shura* (consultation), good advice, enjoining what is proper and forbidding what is evil, disobeying illegal orders, resisting unbelief and changing wrong by force whenever possible. It is only in democracy and political freedom that the power of Parliament is evident and the people's deputies can withdraw confidence from any government that breaches the Constitution, and it is only in such an environment that the strength of free Press, free Parliament, opposition and the masses is most felt.

The fears of some people here that democracy makes the people a source of power and even legislation (although legislation is Allah's alone) should not be heeded here, because we are supposed to be speaking of a people that is Muslim in its majority and has accepted Allah as its Lord, Mohammad (SAWS) as its Prophet and Islam as its Religion. Such a people would not be expected to pass a legislation that contradicts Islam and its incontestable and conclusive rules.

Anyway, these fears can be overcome by one article stipulating that any legislation contradicting the incontestable provisions of Islam shall be null and void because Islam is the religion of the State and the source of legitimacy of all its institutions and therefore may not be contradicted, as a branch may not run against the main stream.

It should be known that the acceptance of the principle that legislation or rule belong to Allah does not rob the Nation of its right to seek for itself the codes necessary to regulate its ever-changing life and earthly affairs.

What we seek is that legislation and codes be within the limits of the flawless texts and the over all objectives of *Sharia* and the Islamic Message. The binding texts are very few, while the area of "permissibility" or legislative free space is quite wide and the texts themselves are so flexible and capacious as to accommodate more than one understanding and accept more than one interpretation, which leads to the existence of several schools and philosophies within the expansive framework of Islam.

I perused some laws that were passed in Qatar recently, and have found them to include scores of articles that rest on realizing interests and removing evils, but were not directly introduced by texts except for one or two of them.

The most serious danger threatening the Muslim Nation and the Islamic Movement is the rule of the Pharaohs who believe that their opinion is infallible and is right itself that can never go wrong. Such rules adopt Pharaoh's logic, "I but point out to you that which I see (myself); nor do I guide you but to the path of right." [Surat Ghafir: 29]

To these rules, every opinion that runs against theirs is rejected, even accused, just like Pharaoh spoke of Moses, "What I fear is lest he should change your religion, or lest he should cause mischief to appear in the land!" [Surat Ghafir: 26] *

*The above article (Islamic Movement: Political Freedom & Democracy) has been lifted from Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi's book **Priorities of the Islamic Movement In The Coming Phase** that has been published by Dar Al Nashr, 41 Sherif Street, P.O.Box 1347, Cairo 11511, Egypt. A widely traveled eminent Islamic scholar from Egypt, Dr. Qaradawi is currently working as Dean of the Faculty of Shairah, Qatar Islamic University.

Bibliography

Martin Lings' book 'Muhammad' unlike many other books on the life of the Prophet (SAWS) is based on the earlier Arabic sources of the eighth and ninth centuries. He has an unusual gift for narrative and has adopted a style extremely readable and reflects both the simplicity and grandeur of the story. The result is something that can be read with equal enjoyment by those already familiar with the life and works of Prophet Muhammad (SAWS) and those coming to it for the first time. Despite the vastness of the subject, this biography makes easy and absorbing reading for any one interested in religion as such. For those interested in Islam in one way or another it is mesmerizing. For its superb quality, the book was awarded a prize by the Government of Pakistan and the author received a decoration from the President of Egypt. Published by The Islamic Texts Society, 5 Green Street, Cambridge, CB2 3JU, U.K., the book has so far been translated and published in French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, Arabic, Turkish, Malay, Sinhalese, Urdu and Tamil languages. This monumental work of Martin Lings known among the Muslims as brother Abu Bakr Siraj Al Din has been translated into Bengali recently by brother Abu Jafar in most ornamental, fascinating lucid and soothing language. The 552 pages hard bound book *Mahanabir Jiban Alo* (cost Bangladesh Tk.350.00) has been published by Hakkani Publishers, Momtaj Plaza, House No. 7, Road No.4, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205. Tel: 9661141-3. Fax: (88 02) 9662844. 8610774. E-mail: aahcl@bangla.net

Glimpse from World Press

The Microscopic Quran: Quran on a Card

Muslims can now carry the Holy Quran like a credit card, thanks to Brother Talal Itani, who perfected a technique to individually "write" the text of Quran on the card using a computer-controlled light beam. The card is scratch-resistant, and the text is written deep below the surface. Each card comes with its own optical quality durable metal magnifier. The real test is for the users to read such small print. Brother Talal Itani says that the miniature edition is a powerful *Dawah* tool where interest in the Quran can be created by offering such a novel edition. For information check out Website: www.dallassignal.com [Islamic Horizons (USA)]

No Hijab In German School

Ms. Anischa Schavan, Minister of Culture in the State of Baden-Fortenbridge, Germany has defended her refusal to employ a Muslim teacher, Farhat Lodin, saying that if she had allowed her to go into class with her *Hijab* headdress, it would have had a negative psychological effect on the young students. Germany has now over 700,000 Muslim children attending German schools which represent a third of the total number of school children in Germany, the German Minister said. [The Message International(USA)]

Human rights Violated in Tunisia

Tunisian Government is harassing political opponents particularly with Islamic loyalties, the members and supporters of Ennadha Movement for their views, withdrawing work permit because of political convictions and putting them behind the bar. The glaring example of human rights record in Tunisia is that recently Ali Ben Sghraier, a former school teacher, out of desperate situation placed himself in the middle of the main market in the town of Douze in Tunisia together with his wife and two of the youngest of his seven children with a placard: 'I have no permission to work, I am hungry. Does anyone wish to buy my children?' - reports Impact International, UK.

Persecution of Dawah Workers

Some 550 members of Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul Muslemoon*) Egypt have been arrested in recent months of whom 170 are still in detention; 20 leaders were on trial in a military court, reports Impact International, UK. Egypt has been in permanent state of emergency where political cases are disposed of in military courts. Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, is totally dedicated to reform society according to Islam and strictly follows constitutional lines.

Jewels of Al-Quran

It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces towards east or west; but it is righteousness -to believe in Allah and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Messengers; to spend of your substance, out of love for Him, for the kin, for the orphans, for the needy, for the wayfarer, for those who ask, and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer, and give Zakat, to fulfill the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient, in pain (or suffering) and adversity, and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth, the God-fearing. (*Surat Al-Baqarah:177*)

Gems from Al-Hadith

Abu Hurairah (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAWS) said: When a man dies, accrual of merits in his favour from good deeds ceases except from three actions-(1) a charity which continues after his death, (2) knowledge left behind from which men continue to benefit, (3) righteous off-springs who pray for him [Muslim].

Quotable Quotes

"Terrorism has assumed many forms: sanctions, resort to brutal force, the threat to use such force, nuclear weapons, and arms of mass destruction, as well as the conditions imposed by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. It is imperative that a distinction be made between actual terrorism and the struggle engaged in by the persecuted groups against their persecutors, which is seen by some as terrorism."

[Abdurrahman M. Shalghem, Libyan Secretary for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation]

Internet-based Islamic Library : A Noble Urge

Witness-Pioneer (www.witness-pioneer.org), an Internet-based non-profit Islamic organization focusing on research and education, is developing an Internet-based Virtual Islamic Library that will be comprehensive and authentic source of knowledge about Islam. Currently books in the library are primarily in the English language. In the later phases of the project, there is plan to add books/ articles from other languages. If you have time, a computer (a scanner will be excellent, but not required) and an Internet connection, you can join this group and help it to materialize this noble effort. You will really enjoy spreading the knowledge of Islam. Please let them know your decision by sending e-mail to wp-vil@egroups.com. If you know someone who may be interested in this noble effort, please forward this message. For further details contact Hafiz Abdur Rahman, Virtual Islamic Library Coordinator.

Have A Glance

*StartecSM - A Multicultural Online Community For Free Email Internet Access. News.Sports. Entertainment.Chat Contact Website: www.estimate.com

Editorial

This is the 8th issue of "The Window". We have come a long way. Praise to Allah (SWT) and thanks to the brothers and sisters for kind cooperation and encouragement. This issue of "The Window", in addition to news and other items, includes an article by Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (Islamic Movement: Political Freedom & Democracy extracted from his book: Priorities of the Islamic Movement In The Coming Phase) and a review of the Martin Lings' book "Muhammad" which shall *InshaAllah* immensely benefit *Dawah* workers. In the next issue of "The Window" we intend to publish more interesting articles. Be in touch with us and never hesitate to contact.

Ma'As Salam.

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Mostafa Khaled

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