

ISLAM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful and the Most Beneficent

ISLAM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

(This paper was presented at the meeting held by The General Islamic Conference in Mecca in the year 1962, 1381 Hijra)

FALSEHOOD IN THE GARB OF TRUTH

One of the bizarre wonders of the sublime mould in which Allah the Almighty created man is that he rarely gets inclined towards naked corruption and unmasked evil because of which Satan is often forced to present his mischief and corruption in the deceitful garb of virtue and goodness. Satan could never have deceived Adam in Paradise by saying to him that he (Satan) wants to make him (Adam) disobey God so that Adam could get expelled from Paradise. Rather he deceived them (i.e. Adam and Eve) by saying:

"Shall I direct you to a tree of eternal life and an abiding kingdom?" (Quran 20:120)

Human nature has been the same ever since. Even today, all the mistakes and acts of folly that Satan has led man to make are getting accepted in human society with the backing of some or the other fraudulent slogan presented in a deceitful garb.

THE FIRST DECEPTION: CAPITALIST AND SECULAR DEMOCRACY

One of the greatest deceptions of our times carried out against mankind is Social Justice. For a long period of time, Satan has been deceiving the world in the name of Individual Liberty and Liberalism and in the 18th century he got the system of Capitalist and Secular Democracy established based on the above mentioned ideologies. At one point in time, the hegemony of this system was so glorious that it was thought to be the final word in human progress and every person who wanted to be called a progressive was forced to raise the slogans of Individual Liberty and Liberalism. People used to think that if there was any system for human life then it was this very system of Capitalism and Secular Democracy which is established in the West. But gradually there came a time when the whole world realized that this satanic system has filled God's green earth with oppression and tyranny. Later it became impossible for Satan to deceive mankind anymore by these ideologies.

THE SECOND DECEPTION: SOCIAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNISM

Then it wasn't too late that Satan came up with another deception called Social Justice and Communism. He is now setting up a new and different system in the cloak of this lie. Up until now this new system has filled numerous countries with such a nasty tyranny which is unprecedented in human history. This deception is so powerful that many countries are getting ready to accept it as the final word in

human progress. This deception has not been exposed as of yet.

EXTREME INTELLECTUAL SLAVERY OF EDUCATED MUSLIMS

The pitiable condition of Muslims is that they have an eternal guidance preserved in the Book of God and the conduct of His Messenger which cautions them against satanic insinuations and is enough to show the light of guidance in all matters of life for eternity but these poor souls are ignorant of their own religion and are utterly overwhelmed by colonialism's cultural and intellectual onslaught. That's why every slogan raised from the camp of dominant nations is quickly echoed here too. In an era when the ideas unleashed by the French Revolution were in full force, every educated person in Muslim countries used to deem it his duty to assert these ideas at every appropriate and inappropriate occasion and cast himself in their mould. He used to think that without doing it he cannot earn any respect in the world and would be considered regressive. When this age passed, our modern educated people changed their orientation and loyalty too and with the advent of the new age people raising the slogans of Social Justice and Communism began to be born amongst us as well. It was tolerable to some extent even up to this point. But what's outrageous is that we have such a group of people rising in our midst who want to change the orientation of Islam along with every change in their own orientation. As if these people just cannot live without Islam. Having Islam is a must for them. What they desire is

that they want Islam to adopt the thing by following which they hope to make progress and hence “save” Islam from being called “a regressive religion”! So based on this very thought they tried in the past to prove that the Western concepts of Individual Liberty, Liberalism, Capitalism and Secular Democracy were Islamic concepts too. Now they are trying to prove that the Communist concept of Social Justice is found in Islam too. This is the point where the intellectual slavery of our educated people and the height of their ignorance reaches the pinnacle of humiliation.

THE REALITY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

In this brief paper, I want to explain what Social Justice actually is and the right way to achieve it. Although there is little hope that those who are hell bent on enforcing Communism thinking it to be the only way to achieve Social Justice would admit their mistakes and turn away from it because an ignorant person, as long as he remains merely ignorant, there are chances to rectify him but when he comes to power the illusion of *ما علمت لكم من اله غيري* “I didn’t know that you had a god other than me” (Quran 28:38) does not leave him capable of listening to anyone’s explanation. But by the Grace of God, the common people are always in a position that they can be warned of such satanic deceptions by explaining to them in a reasonable way. And these are the very same common people by deceiving whom the misled and the misleading people promote their own perversities. For that reason the objective of my paper is actually to state the truth openly and clearly.

SOCIAL JUSTICE IS ONLY IN ISLAM

The first thing that I want to explain to my Muslim brothers in this regard is that those people who raise the slogan of "Social Justice is in Islam too" are absolutely incorrect. The correct thing to say is that Social Justice is in Islam alone. Islam is that True Religion which the Creator and Lord of the universe revealed for man's guidance. And it is the job of the Creator and Lord of mankind alone to establish justice among the people and set what is just and what is unjust. Neither anyone is authorized to suggest the standard of justice and injustice nor anyone has such an ability to establish true justice. Man is not a Master and Sovereign of himself that he is in any way authorized to set the standard of justice for himself. His position in the universe is that of a slave and a subject. That's why setting the standard of justice is not his job but the job of his Master and Sovereign. Regardless of what high stature a man is and no matter if not one but many men of high stature use their minds together, nevertheless there is no escape from the limitedness of human knowledge, the brevity and inadequacy of human intelligence and the assaults of desires and biases on human intelligence. Due to these reasons, there is no chance that man could develop a system for himself which could actually be based on justice. Whatever the kind of justice may seem in this system in the beginning, soon practical experience proves for real whether it has justice or not. Because of this reason, every human system proves to be defective after working for a while and getting disillusioned by it man proceeds to conduct yet another foolish experiment. True justice can be

found only in that system which is made by the One Who is Holy, Perfect and knows the hidden and the open.

ISLAM'S OBJECTIVE IS JUSTICE

Another thing which must be understood in the beginning itself is that one who says "there is justice in Islam" says less than what is true. The truth is justice alone is Islam's objective and the very reason why Islam came is to ensure justice. Allah says:

"Indeed We sent Our Messengers with Clear Signs, and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that people may uphold justice. And We sent down iron, wherein there is awesome power and many benefits for people, so that Allah may know who, without even having seen Him, helps Him and His Messengers. Surely Allah is Most Strong, Most Mighty" (Quran 57:25)

These are the two things to which if a Muslim is not oblivious then he would not make the mistake of turning to a source other than Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) in his quest for Social Justice. The moment he would feel the need for justice he would know that nobody else has justice nor anybody else could have it except for Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). And he would also know that in order to establish justice all he has to do is to establish Islam, total Islam, without any addition or deletion. Justice is not something different from Islam. Islam itself is justice. Establishing Islam and establishing justice is the same thing.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Now what we have to look at is what this Social Justice is in reality and what is the right way to establish it?

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

Every human society is constituted by thousands and millions and billions of individuals. Every individual of this mix has a soul, intelligence and consciousness. Every individual has his own independent personality and has opportunities to grow and thrive. Every individual has his own peculiar taste. He has some desires and proclivities. His body and soul have some necessities. The position of these individuals is not that of soulless parts of a machine wherein the main thing is the machine and these parts are meant only for this machine without having any personality of their own. On the contrary human society is a collection of living and conscious human beings. These individuals are not for the society rather the society is for them. The purpose for which these individuals come together and form a society is that they can have the opportunities to fulfill their needs and meet the demands and requirements of their body and mind by helping each other out.

INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

All these individuals are accountable to God individually. After the end of a specified period of test (which is designed separately for every individual) everyone has to render their accounts before God as to what kind of a person he made of himself with the talents and faculties given to him in the world and by utilizing the means which were placed at his disposal. This accountability of man before God is not collective but individual. On that Day clans, tribes and nations are not

going to render their accounts rather by cutting off all the bonds of worldly relationships God shall produce every man in His court and ask him separately about what he did in the world and what he made of himself?

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

These two matters – human development in the world and man's accountability in the Hereafter – demand that man should have freedom. In a society, if an individual is not given opportunities to develop his personality to its fullest as per his own liking then the humanity in him will get stunted, he will suffocate, his talents and faculties will get suppressed and by finding himself trapped and besieged, he will fall prey to inertia and idleness. Then in the Hereafter, most of the responsibility of the mistakes of these trapped and besieged individuals will get transferred to those who were responsible for creating and running such a kind of social system. They shall not only be held accountable for their own individual deeds but also for forcing other innumerable individuals (against their wishes) to become defective personalities (in accordance with the wishes of those running the system). Obviously no one who believes in the Hereafter could even imagine to stand before God with such a heavy burden. If he is a God-fearing person then he would definitely be more inclined towards giving more and more freedom to the human beings so that the responsibility of what an individual makes of himself lies solely on him and not on those running the system.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND THEIR AUTHORITY

That was about individual freedom. On the other hand look at the society which is constituted by clans, tribes, nations and the whole humanity in that order. It begins from a man, a woman and their children which forms the family. From these families are formed tribes and communities which then form a nation and the nation creates a state for the enforcement of its collective will. The real objective for which these social institutions in their various forms are needed is to give the individual opportunities to develop his personality to its fullest through the protection and help of these institutions which he otherwise cannot get on his own. But this basic objective cannot be achieved without every institution having authority over individuals and a bigger institution having authority over the smaller so that it can prevent the encroachment of an individual's freedom upon others' freedom and utilize the individuals which is by and large required for the well-being and development of the society. This is the point where the problem of Social Justice arises and the contradictory demands of individualism and Socialism assume the form a complicated knot. On the one hand human well-being demands that an individual should have freedom in society so that he could develop his personality to the fullest according to his talents and liking. And in the same way family, tribes, communities and various other such smaller groups should enjoy their freedom in circles bigger than them. But on the other hand human well-being also demands that a family should have authority over the

individual, clan and community over family and state over all individuals and smaller institutions so that none could cross their limits and oppress and tyrannize each other. Later on whole humanity would have to face this problem that on one hand the persistence of the freedom and sovereignty of every nation and state is necessary and on the other hand the presence of a higher regulatory authority is also important so that nations and states do not transgress their limits.

Now what in reality is Social Justice? Social Justice is that everyone – individuals, families, tribes, communities and nations – should have appropriate freedom and along with that various social institutions should have authority over individuals and each other as well and different individuals of the society are utilized which is required for social welfare.

THE FLAWS IN CAPITALISM AND COMMUNISM

A person who understands this reality well will come to know at the first glance that just as the system of individual liberty, Liberalism, Capitalism and secular Democracy which was established as a result of French Revolution was against and inconsistent with Social Justice so is Communism or rather more, which is being embraced by following the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The concept of the first system was that it gave freedom to the individual beyond the appropriate limits thereby allowing him to transgress against family, tribe, community, society and nation. This loosened the

regulatory power of the society a lot which was meant to utilize individuals for social welfare. The concept of the second system is that by making the state extremely powerful it almost seizes the freedom of individuals, families, tribes and communities and gives so much authority to state to utilize the individuals for society that individuals become soulless parts of a machine than being soulful human beings. He is lying who says that Social Justice could be established in this way.

COMMUNISM IS THE WORST FORM OF SOCIAL OPPRESSION

Actually it is the worst form of social oppression which was not found even in the times of Nimrod, Pharaoh and Genghis Khan. What reasonable person would call it Social Justice that an individual or a few individuals sit together, write their philosophy down then by using limitless powers of the state impose it on millions of individuals living in a country, seize their wealth and land, nationalize factories, turn the whole country into a prison where the doors of criticism, cry for help, complaint, outcry and legal justice are closed for the people, ban any other group, organization, platform from which people could speak up, press in which people could express their opinions and courts of justice whose doors could be knocked on for justice, widen the spy network to such a large extent that each person is scared of another lest he be a spy, so scared that a person had to look out in all four directions before opening his mouth in his own home lest there be an ear close by listening to him or a mouth which could take him

to face the Government, then have elections to create the illusion of Democracy but also making sure that anyone who differs with the writers of this philosophy is disqualified from standing in the elections and anyone who has his own opinion and is not a sell-out either is stopped from getting admitted to their group?

Hypothetically even if the economic wealth is distributed equally – although no Communist system has been able to do it yet – even then, does justice mean only economic equality? I don't ask whether there is economic equality between the rulers and the subjects of this system or not? I don't even ask whether the dictator of this system and the peasant living under it are equal with regards to their standard of living or not? I only ask that even if total economic equality is established between them for real then is this what Social Justice stands for? Is this justice that the dictator and his comrades are free in imposing the philosophy which they wrote it themselves on the entire nation through police, military and intelligence but no individual is free to open his mouth to utter even a word against this philosophy or even a tiny aspect of its implementation? Is this justice that the dictator and his handful of comrades have the right to use all the means and resources of the country and form organizations of all kinds for the promulgation of their philosophy but not even two people who have a different opinion from theirs have the right to form an organization, address a gathering and publish even a single word in the press? Is this justice that by evicting all the landowners and factory owners from their lands and factories there remains only one landowner

and factory owner in the entire country whose name is the Government which is in the hands of a few people and these few people take measures which renders the entire nation powerless making the transfer of power from these people to other people literally impossible?! If by man is meant only his stomach and if human life is not limited to just economics then how can mere economic equality be called justice?!

By committing oppression and injustice in every walk of life and by suppressing every aspect of humanity people are made equal in the distribution of economic wealth alone and the dictator and his cronies become equal to the masses in the standard of living even then creating equality through this grave tyranny will not be considered Social Justice rather it is as I have told you just now the worst social oppression with which human history was never acquainted.

ISLAMIC JUSTICE

Now I will briefly explain to you what justice in Islam is? In Islam, there is absolutely no room for a man or a group of people to concoct a philosophy of justice, a methodology of its implementation, impose it over the people and disallow anyone to say anything against it. Never mind Abu Bakr As-Siddiq or Umar ibn Al-Khattab, even Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was not in a position to do such things. There is no place for dictators in Islam. Only God enjoys the status to be obeyed unconditionally. Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) too was subject to His command and obedience to the

Prophet was mandatory because he used to give commandments that were revealed to him from God not because he concocted a philosophy by himself. In the system of governance of the Prophet and his successors only the Divine Law was above criticism. Other than this every person had full rights to open his mouth on every matter all the time.

LIMITS OF FREEDOM OF AN INDIVIDUAL

In Islam, Allah has Himself set the limits within which the freedom of individuals must remain. He has Himself specified the things that are forbidden for a Muslim from which he should stay away and things that are obligatory for him which he should fulfill. He has also set what rights a man has over others and what rights others have over him, in what way the ownership and transfer of property to him becomes legitimate and what those ways are by which the wealth accrued becomes illegitimate for him, what obligations does a man have for the welfare of individuals, families, communities and entire nation for the welfare of the society and what services could be made compulsory for them? All these issues are enshrined in the permanent constitution of the Quran and the Sunnah which cannot be revised by anyone and none has the right to add anything to it or subtract anything from it. According to this constitution, a person does not have the right to violate the sanctions placed on his individual freedom but no one has the right to take away the freedom he has within those limits. He cannot go near those means of making wealth and those ways of spending it which are declared forbidden.

If he were to go near them then the Divine Law will regard him liable to be punished but his rights over his wealth made from those ways that are declared lawful are totally preserved and none can deprive him from spending it through ways that are legitimate. Likewise, he is obliged to fulfill the obligations imposed on the individual for society's welfare but any extra burden cannot be laid on him except if he agrees to it voluntarily. The same case is with the society and the state as well that he is as obliged to render the rights of the individuals as he has the right to get his rights from them. If this permanent constitution is practically implemented then such a complete Social Justice will be established after which there won't be any need for anything. As long as this constitution remains, no matter how much anyone were to try, he cannot deceive the Muslims into believing that Communism, which he has borrowed from some place, is the same as Islam or that it is Islamic Socialism.

Such a balance has been struck between the individual and the society in this constitution of Islam that neither the individual is given the freedom that could hurt society's interests nor the society is given the authority by which it could take away the individual's freedom which is necessary for the development of his personality.

CONDITIONS FOR THE TRANSFER OF WEALTH

Islam specifies only three ways for the transfer of wealth to the individual – inheritance, grants and earning money. Only that inheritance is valid which the heir receives from the wealth of its legitimate owner within the

limits. If the grant is from a Government then it would become legitimate only if it is given from Government assets in a legitimate way either in the interests of the society or as a reward for a good service to society. Moreover, only that Government has the right to authorize such a grant in this way which is being run in a democratic way according to the constitution which gives the people freedom to hold it accountable to them too. As far as earning money is concerned then in Islam only that earning is legitimate which does not come from any unlawful way. In Islam, money from theft, usurpation, short-measuring, cheating, bribery, swindling, prostitution, monopoly, interest, gambling, fraudulence, industry and trade of intoxicants, businesses that promote obscenity, pornography and sex, is forbidden. Whatever wealth one gets by adhering to these regulations is his legitimate possession regardless of it being more or less. No upper or lower limit can be stipulated for such possessions. Decrease in this kind of wealth does not legitimize that other people's wealth be confiscated and added to it nor the increase in this kind of wealth is any reason to forcibly reduce it. However, Muslims do have the right to question the wealth accrued from transgressing the legitimate boundaries that *من اين لك هذا* (From where did you get it?). First, there should be a legal investigation into the acquisition of this wealth and if it is proved that it was not acquired in a legitimate way then the Islamic Government will have the right to seize it.

RESTRICTIONS ON WEALTH EXPENDITURE

An individual is not given free rein to spend even the wealth acquired through legitimate means, rather some legal restrictions are imposed on it so that the individual may not spend from his wealth in ways that are harmful to the society, and to the religion and morality of the individual too. In Islam, no one can spend money on sin. The doors of alcohol consumption and gambling are closed. The door of adultery too is closed. Islam does not give anyone the right to engage in the enslavement of people and slave-trade so that rich people may fill their homes with slave-girls. It imposes restrictions on extravagance and luxurious lifestyle beyond limits and does not legitimize the filling up of bellies while the neighbour goes hungry to bed. Islam gives the right to a man to enjoy his wealth only through legitimate and legal ways and if he wants to grow his money then he can do that only through lawful ways. He cannot violate those regulations which the Divine Law has placed on earning money.

SOCIAL SERVICE

Then Islam imposes Zakath on those individuals who possess wealth exceeding the Nisab Zakath is a compulsory act of worship that requires Muslims who own wealth at or above a certain threshold to donate a portion of that wealth typically 2.5% to those who are eligible. This threshold is called Nisab.

Moreover, it imposes Zakath on tradable assets, crops, herded animals and some other kind of wealth like gold, silver, paper currency held in cash or in the bank at a

specified rate. Take any country and calculate it for yourself that if Zakath is collected formally according to the Islamic ways and is formally distributed in areas determined by the Quran then would there be any person in the country deprived of his needs within few years?

After this, Islam distributes the amassed wealth of the individual as inheritance after his death lest it stays hoarded permanently.

ERADICATION OF OPPRESSION

Although Islam prefers that transactions between landowners or farm owners or factory owners and labour occur with mutual understanding without the need for any legal interference but in cases where there is unfairness then Islamic Government will have the right to interfere and can set the rules of justice through law.

THE LIMITS OF NATIONAL OWNERSHIP FOR PUBLIC INTERESTS

Islam does not make it unlawful for the Government to run an industry or business under its management. If there is an industry or a business which is in public interest but individuals are not ready to run it or running it under their management is against public interest then it can be run under the management of the Government. Similarly, if an industry or business is being run by the individuals in ways that are harmful to collective interest then the Government can take over the business by paying compensation to those individuals and can make arrangements to run it in a different way. The Divine Law does not prevent the

Government from taking these measures. But as a principle, Islam does not accept that all the means of wealth creation be owned by the Government and the Government alone be the industrialist, trader and owner of wealth and land.

CONDITIONS FOR THE UTILIZATION OF TREASURY

With regards to the Treasury, Islam has stipulated categorically that it is the wealth of Allah and the Muslims and no one has the right to utilize it as if they own it. Just like all the other affairs of Muslims, the Treasury should be managed in consultation with the nation and its representatives. Money taken from anyone and spent on anything or anyone should be done in a legitimate way as per the Divine Law and Muslims have the right to question it and hold it to account.

ONE QUESTION

As closing remarks, I want to ask this question to every thinking person that if Social Justice stands for economic justice alone then is the economic justice which Islam ensures not enough? Would there be any need after this for which taking away the freedom of all individuals, seizing their wealth and enslaving an entire nation by few individuals becomes inevitable? After all what is stopping us Muslims from forming a genuine Islamic Government in our countries in accordance with the Islamic constitution and enforcing the whole of God's Law as it is? The day it happens, not only there wouldn't be any need to earn the grace of Communism rather countries influenced by

Communism would feel by looking at our system of life that the light without which they were wandering in the dark is right in front of their eyes.

