

UPHOLDING THE DIGNITY OF ISLAM

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ. وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ
أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ.

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ سَيِّدَنَا مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدَهُ وَرَسُولَهُ.
اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ وَسَلِّمْ وَبَارِكْ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ أَجْمَعِينَ.

أَمَّا بَعْدُ،

فَيَا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ، اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ أَوْصِيكُمْ وَآيَاتِي بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ، فَقَدْ فَازَ الْمُتَّقُونَ.

Let us increase our righteousness to Allah the Almighty by doing all that He prescribes and and leaving all that He prohibits. May we be blessed by Allah the Almighty in this life and the hereafter.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Be grateful for the blessings of Islam that Allah the Almighty has given us. Many Muslims in this country do not need to go through much difficulties and challenges to get the true guidance because they were born Islam. Indeed, Islam has brought about a prosperous, complete and God-given way of life. Although revelation was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the Arab world, the teachings of Islam is universal. It can be practised by anyone regardless of race and location.

Allah the Almighty says in chapter 5 (surah al-Maidah) verse 3:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

Which means: *This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favour upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion*

Dear brothers and sisters,

Among the major challenges faced by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) during the revelation process, was to change the way of life of the *Arab Jahiliyyah* (ignorant) community who worshipped idols. Even before this, Prophet Ismail had brought revelation of the divine Islamic religion, but they were then submissive to Satan's instigation and chose to live in ignorance and darkness. This led to a life of uninhibited alcohol consumption, war among tribes, racism, slavery and downgrading of women in society.

The pious predecessors (*salafussoleh*) always observed the seriousness of the Prophet (pbuh) in upholding Islam in society. They consulted the prophet (pbuh) on all matters such as his words, his actions, his way of dressing, his way of preaching and his morality and these were meticulously recorded in book of hadiths and prophetic biography (*sirah*). All the narratives suggest that the prophet (pbuh) educates us to be proud of the values that Islam has brought into our lives without the need to change the identity of our race and nation.

The prophet (pbuh) himself narrated this when he was among Companions from various races and nations. They were Suhaib al-Rumi,

Salman al-Farisi and Bilal al-Habshi who were the pillars of early Islamic power. Without the need to change the identity of their nation, they were nevertheless proud of Islam. The prophet (pbuh) himself, being a native arab, was reported to have worn the roman garb beside practising the lifestyle of the arabs. This universality is the basis of unity of the ummah.

However, the Prophet (pbuh) had forbidden Muslims from resembling the ways of non-Muslims, especially in matters relating to their religion, acts of immorality or practices which are contradictory to Islamic values. The Prophet (pbuh) in a hadith of Abu Daud and narrated by Ibnu Umar:

مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

Which means: *Whoever imitates a people is one of them.*

Islamic scholars stated that the prohibition of imitating the lifestyles of unbelievers covers matters pertaining to religion or those that contravene Islamic law.

In the book of *Syama'il Muhammadiyah*, Imam al-Tirmizi narrated in a hadith that the Prophet (pbuh) once changed the style of hairdressing while in Makkah and in Madinah. The purpose was to ensure that the muslims' appearances were different from their main enemy; the musyrikin in Makkah and the jews in Madinah. The Prophet (pbuh) strived not to resemble their way of life, even in matters concerning world affairs.

Dear brothers and sisters,

As Muslims in Malaysia, let us be aware of how much we really want to incorporate islamic values in our lives. Let us start with ourself. Look at some muslims who are so proud to emulate the non muslim way of life especially in dressing and socialising. It is true that in order to establish Islam, we do not necessarily have to follow the Arabic culture such as wearing the jubah (long robe). But this does not mean that we need to imitate or prioritize the Western-style of dressing and thinking which is contradictory to islam.

Similarly in matters of entertainment. Our country is rich in local art. The Prophet (pbuh) recognizes human rights to entertainment according to local culture as long as it does not contradict Islamic laws. However, some muslims indulge in songs and dancing from the west which allows men and women to mingle freely and expose their *aurat* (“nakedness”).

In conjunction with Syawal, let us rethink how far have we embraced the laws (syari'at) of Islam in ourselves, our families, our communities and our country. Do not be too complacent with the liberal Western lifestyle that contradicts the Shari'a, thus distancing ourselves far from the pleasure of Allah the Almighty.

Allah thenAlmighty says in chapter 3 (surah Ali Imran) verse 19:

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمْ

الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾

Which means: *Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. And those who were given the Scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them - out of jealous animosity between themselves. And whoever disbelieves in the verses of Allah, then indeed, Allah is swift in [taking] account.*

بَارَكَ اللهُ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقُرْآنِ الْعَظِيْمِ، وَنَفَعَنِيْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ بِمَا فِيْهِ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ
الْحَكِيْمِ، وَتَقَبَّلَ مِنِّيْ وَمِنْكُمْ تِلَاوَتَهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، أَقُولُ قَوْلِيْ هَذَا وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ
الْعَظِيْمَ لِيْ وَلَكُمْ، وَلِسَائِرِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ، وَالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ، فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ فَيَا فَوْزَ
الْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ وَيَا نَجَاةَ التَّائِبِيْنَ.