Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on Feb 01, 2013

Islam Iman & Ihsan (Part 5)

Today’s khutba is the fifth and concluding one in a series of khutbas delivered earlier on Hadith Jibril and the three levels of faith—Islam, iman, and ihsan referred to therein. The khutba today will focus mainly on discussing the last part of the hadith that alludes to the ‘Hour’ or the Day of Reckoning. The part of Hadith Jibril relating to the Hour says, ‘He (Jibril) said, ‘Inform me about the Hour.’ He (the Messenger of Allah) said, ‘About that, the one questioned knows no more than the questioner.’ So he said, ‘Well, inform me about the signs thereof (i.e. of its coming).’ He said, ‘They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings.’”

The ‘Hour’ (al-Sa’ah) refers to the Day of Judgment when human beings will be resurrected and brought before Allah (SWT) for the final reckoning. This has been alluded to in numerous ayat of the Qur’an. “The Last Hour is bound to come. There is no doubt about it. God will raise up those who are in their graves” (al-Hajj, 22:7). The knowledge of the timing of the Hour is with Allah alone because it is from the unseen (ghayb). “He alone has knowledge of the Hour, and to Him you shall be returned” (al-Zukhruf, 43:85). “The people question you concerning the Hour. Say, ‘Its knowledge is only with Allah.’ What do you know, maybe the Hour is near” (al-Ahzab, 33:63).

That is why the Prophet (SAW) when asked by Jibril (AS) about the Hour expressed his ignorance of it. Allah had revealed to the Prophet (SAW) only some of the scenes that will come to pass on that momentous day. In fact, Allah advised him what to say to the people when they approached him asking about the Hour. “They will ask you about the Hour: when is it due? Say: ‘Knowledge of it rests with my Lord alone. He alone will reveal it at its proper time. It hangs heavy in the heavens and the earth. It will not come upon you except suddenly’” (al-A’raf, 7:187). He is also asked to tell the people, “Say: ‘I possess no power to help or harm myself, except as God wills. If I had had knowledge of the Unseen, I would have sought to gain much good and no evil would have touched me. I am no more than a warner and bearer of good news to those who believe’” (al-A’raf, 7:188).

The Hour is something, which everyone will come to know potentially very soon. Essentially, the Hour of every man comes when he dies here in this world, and one could die at any moment. The Qur’an mentions five things the knowledge of which is only with Allah. “Truly, God alone has knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Surely, God is all knowing, all-aware” (Luqman, 31:34).

Just as all the Prophets and Messengers of Allah came with the news of the Hour to their people, so did Prophet Muhammad (SAW) came and informed us about the Hour and its signs through the verses revealed to him in the Qur’an, and through his ahadith. “What are the disbelievers waiting for, other than the Hour which
will come upon them unawares? Its signs are already here, but once the Hour has actually arrived, what use will it be then to take heed?" (Muhammad, 47:18). We are also told, “The time of reckoning has drawn near for mankind, yet they are heedless and turn away” (al-Anbiya’, 21:1).

The first sign of the Hour is the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). He was the last and final Messenger of Allah and the Qur’an that was revealed to him is the final divine guidance to the entire human-kind for all times to come. People were given the choice to accept or reject this guidance. “And Say, ‘the truth is from your Lord, so let whomever desires believe, and whomever desires reject’” (al-Kahf, 18:29). Imam al-Bukhari recorded from Sahl Bin Sa’d (RA) that he saw Allah’s Messenger bring his index and middle fingers together, while he said, “I have been sent before the Hour as these two fingers.” This indicates that the Hour is close at hand. As against this statement about the Hour being very near to us, some may argue that a period of 14 centuries has already passed since the time of the Prophet (SAW), and that is a pretty long time. We have to understand that we are used to measuring days according to our serial time, whereas each day with Allah is like one thousand years of our counting. According to Allah’s measure, therefore, the Prophet’s advent had been only a day or a day and a half away from our present times.

The two signs of the Hour stated by the Prophet (SAW) in Hadith Jibril are: (1) the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and (2) you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings. As for the first sign, one of the interpretations is that increased slave-trade will entail that a daughter is transported for the sake of trade and subsequently freed, and later her mother will be transported for the sake of trade, and the daughter will buy her and make use of her services unaware that she is her mother. It has also been said that it means that slave women will give birth to kings. Another way this is explained is that children will show disrespect to their parents. Indeed, it is not uncommon these days to see this phenomenon, even within Muslim families. Rather than being home and family oriented, and contributing their best toward strengthening the institution of family, more and more women are seen lobbying for feminism, women’s liberation, equal rights as men, and so on.

As for the second sign, it is true that the Arabs of the Gulf States (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain etc) used to be poor barefooted shepherds and today we see them to be owners of imposing tall buildings that grace the skyline of the main cities of these regions. One has only to visit Dubai, Riyadh or any major city in the Gulf States to witness this. A search on the internet is enough to take a glimpse of this ‘rags to riches’ phenomenon. The oil-rich rulers, the coterie of advisers around them, and the exceedingly rich individuals and families in these desert lands are by and large exactly how the sign of the Hour depicts about them.

There are numerous ahadith that depict the sign of the Hour, and most of these signs are being witnessed before our own eyes. Some of these ahadith are:

“The Hour will not arise until every tribe is led by its hypocrites.” When the kings and leaders of people are in this circumstance every other circumstance will be reversed: the liar will be believed and the truthful person disbelieved, the unreliable person will be trusted and the trustworthy person distrusted, the ignorant person will speak and the knowledgeable person will be silent or totally non-existent, as is authentically narrated that the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, said, “Some of the signs of the Hour are that knowledge will be removed and ignorance will dominate,” and he advised, “that knowledge will be removed with the death of people of knowledge so that when not one person of knowledge remains, people will take ignorant leaders who will be asked and thus give judgment without knowledge and will go astray and lead others astray.”

Indeed, it is scary to see that many of the great ulama’ have died in the last century, not to talk of the great classical scholars of the past. The number of authentic ulama’ are very few and diminishing fast with the passage of time. We see that this prophecy also has come to pass.

In his Musnad, Imam Ahmad reported via Abu Nudrah that Abu Sa’id (RA) said, “One day the Prophet (SAW) led us in praying the afternoon prayer (Salat al-‘Asr). Then he stood and addressed us until sunset. He mentioned everything that was to happen until the Day of Resurrection, and left nothing unsaid. Some of us re-
membered it, and some of us forgot it. One of the things he said was: ‘O people, this world is full of attractive temptations. Allah has appointed you as vicegerents (Khulafa) in this world, and He will see how you will act. So guard yourselves against the temptations of this world and of women.’ Toward the end of the speech, he said, ‘The sun is about to set, and what remains of this world, compared to what has passed, is like what remains of this day compared to what has passed.’”

Anas ibn Malik (RA) is reported to have said that he will relate a hadith that no one else can relate. He said, ‘I have heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) saying, ‘The signs of the Hour are that religious knowledge will be diminished, ignorance will prevail, adultery will be committed openly, and women will outnumber men until there will be one man to every fifty women.’

Indeed, this is what is taking place everywhere, be they lands dominated by Muslims or non-Muslims.

Abdullah (RA) said, “The Prophet said, ‘Just before the Hour, there will be days in which knowledge will disappear and ignorance will appear, and there will be much killing.’”

Again, this is what we are witnessing today. Genocide and ethnic cleansing among other acts of aggression have decimated entire populations in our so called civilized world.

Abdullah ibn Umar (RA) said, “The Prophet (SAW) came to us and said, ‘O Muhajirun! (emigrants from Makkah to al-Madinah) you may be afflicted by five things; God forbid that you should live to see them. If fornication should become widespread, you should realize that this has never happened without new diseases befalling the people which their forebears never suffered. If people should begin to cheat in weighing out goods, you should realize that this has never happened without drought and famine befalling the people, and their rulers oppressing them. If people should withhold zakat, you should realize that this has never happened without the rain being stopped from falling; and were it not for the animals’ sake, it would never rain again. If people should break their covenant with Allah and His Messenger, you should realize that his has never happened without Allah sending an enemy against them to take some of their possessions by force. If the leaders do not govern according to the Book of Allah, you should realize that this has never happened without Allah making them into groups and making them fight one another.’”

Indeed, we see all this happening today. Fornication is rife; diseases such as ‘Aids’ is a malady, which was never heard of before. There is swindling in commercial transactions, and we see frequent draughts and famines in different parts of the world. Many if not most rulers do oppress their subjects. Many Muslims tend to pay zakat reluctantly. There are some who argue that since they already pay hefty taxes to the Government, payment of zakat is therefore no longer obligatory upon them. Muslims have broken their covenant with Allah, as a consequence of which, Muslim lands are being pillaged and plundered by outside forces. Muslim leaders do not govern according to the Book of Allah, and we can see the Muslim ummah engulfed in sectarianism with Muslims fighting with each other. There is not one Muslim country in the world where Shariah is being followed in toto. The Prophet had prophesied just as things stand.

‘Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) said, “The Prophet said, ‘If my Ummah bears fifteen traits, tribulation will befall it.’ Someone asked, ‘What are they, O Messenger of Allah?’ He (SAW) said, ‘When any gain is shared out only among the rich, with no benefit to the poor; when a trust becomes a means of making a profit; when paying Zakat becomes a burden; when a man obeys his wife and disobeys his mother; and treats his friend kindly while shunning his father; when voices are raised in the mosques; when the leader of a people is the worst of them; when people treat a man with respect because they fear some evil he may do; when much wine is drunk; when men wear silk; when female singers and musical instruments become popular; when the last ones of this Ummah curse the first ones - then let them expect a red wind, or the earth to swallow them, or to be transformed into animals.’”

In another narration, Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) said, “The Prophet led us in praying Salat al-Fajr. When he had finished, a man called to him, ‘When will the Hour be? The Prophet reprimanded him and said ‘Be quiet!’ After a while he raised his eyes to the sky and said, ‘Glorified be the One Who raised it and is taking care of it.’ Then he lowered his gaze to the earth and said, ‘Glory be to the One Who has outspread it and has
created it.’ Then the Prophet said, ‘Where is the one who asked me about the Hour?’ The man knelt down and said, ‘I asked you.’ The Prophet said, ‘The Hour will come when leaders are oppressors, when people believe in the stars and reject al-Qadar (the Divine Decree of destiny) when a trust becomes a way of making a profit, when people give to charity (sadaqah) reluctantly, when adultery becomes widespread - when this happens, then your people will perish.”

Among the greater signs of the Hour are that the awaited Mahdi will appear; he is the first of the greater, and clear, signs of the Hour. There will be no doubt about his existence, but this will only be clear to the knowledgeable people. The Mahdi will rule until the false Messiah (al-Masih al-Dajjal) appears who will spread oppression and corruption. The only ones who will know him well and avoid his evil will be those who have great knowledge and iman. The false Messiah will remain for a while, destroying mankind completely, and the earth will witness the greatest fitnah (tribulation) in its history. Then the Messiah - ‘Isa (AS) will descend, bringing justice from heaven. He will kill the Dajjal, and there will be years of safety and security. Then the appearance of Yajuj and Majuj (Gog and Magog) will take mankind by surprise, and corruption will overtake them again. In answer to the faithful prayer of ‘Isa (AS) to Allah, the Most High, they will die, and safety, security, justice and stability will return. This state of affairs will continue for some years, until the death of ‘Isa (AS).

The scholars differ concerning the order in which the other greater signs of the Hour will come about. They are:
- The destruction of the Ka'bah and the recovery of its treasure.
- The rising of the sun from the west.
- The emergence of the Beast from the earth.
- The smoke.
- A wind will take the souls of the believers.
- The Qur'an will be taken up into heaven.
- A fire will drive the people to their last gathering place, and
- The Trumpet will be sounded: at the first sound everyone will feel terror; at the second sound all will be struck down; at the last sound all will be resurrected.

We are living in times pervaded with Secularism and Godlessness. A multitude of mankind is disenchanted with the ‘Sacred’ and with anything to do with the ‘Unseen’. They believe in empiricism or the doctrine that all knowledge is derived from observation, experiment and sense experience. We need to understand that this life is nothing but a life of deception and illusory pleasure. We need to understand that there is God, and that the real life is the life of the hereafter.

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