

## HAKKI AYGÜN

Respected sir, respected protocol, dear brothers and sisters and youth who have responded to our invitation from abroad and homeland. I salute all of you with respect and love.

Approximately one hundred years ago, Imam Bediuzzaman Said Nursi addressed to a congregation comprised of ten thousand people including hundreds of scholars in Jami'ul Amawiyya (Umayyad Mosque) in 1911 when he was 35 and this sermon was first printed in original Arabic and then in 1955 in Turkish with Imam's translation under the name of "Hutbe-i Şamiye (Damascus Sermon)". In Damascus Sermon Imam Nursi put forward the six dire sicknesses as factors which allowed foreigners, Europeans, to fly towards the future on progress while they arrested us and kept us, in respect of material development, in the Middle Ages by observing the social realities and the Qur'anic truths.

The sicknesses are these; first: The coming to life and rise of despair and hopelessness in social life. Second: The death of truthfulness in social and political life. Third: Love of enmity. Fourth: Not knowing the luminous bonds that bind the believers to one another. Fifth: Despotism, which spreads like various contagious diseases. Sixth: Restricting endeavour to what is personally beneficial.

Imam Nursi stresses the importance of 'al amal', that is, having a strong hope for the mercy of Allah as a solution for despair and hopelessness which he considers the most important obstacle before Islamic world and he heralds depending on the verse "Despair not of the mercy of Allah" (Zumar, 39:53). He says: "The future shall be Islam's and Islam's alone. And its ruler shall be the truths of the Qur'an and belief. Therefore, we must submit to divine determining and our fate of the present, which is that ours is a brilliant future, while the Europeans' is a dubious past."

While giving this good news Imam relies on following arguments: The truths of Islam have capacity to develop and progress both spiritually and materially. History shows us that the more the Muslims have embraced their religion the more they have progressed and the more they have loosened their relations with Islam the less they have progressed. The other religions have an adverse situation.

Furthermore, from the blessed time of the Prophet (PBUH) up to the present, not a single event in history has shown us a Muslim who has embraced another religion, whether old or new, in preference to Islam, as a result of reasoned argument and conclusive evidence. However, history shows us that followers of other religions are gradually approaching and entering Islam on the strength of reasoned argument and cogent proofs, sometimes in groups.

Moreover, mankind has been awakened and aroused by the sciences of civilization, in particular; they have understood the true nature of humanity. Without any shadow of a doubt, they are not able to live without religion, aimlessly. For that reason, an inclination of seeking true religion has been kindled in everybody. In our age where reason dominates, of course, the Qur'an will prevail since it makes all its arguments confirm to the reason.

Yes, it is only Islam which will prevail the world spiritually and materially and will lead people into worldly and ethereal happiness is only Islam. "If we were to display through our

actions the perfections of the moral qualities of Islam and the truths of belief, without doubt, the followers of other religions would enter Islam in whole communities; rather, some entire regions and states, even, on the globe of the earth would take refuge in Islam.”

Respected brothers and sisters! The Islamic world which gets away from these truths and has been aloof to the religion has been in the grip of the despair for a few centuries. This despair and hopelessness have entered into the heart of the Islamic world, destroyed the lofty ethics of Muslims and dampened its spirits. Communities which are inflicted with this illness have brought them to ruin with rhetoric like “we are not good, whatever we do we cannot compete with Europe and USA” though they have enough amount of good human and natural resources.

Due to these despair and hopelessness those countries with a few millions in the West have turned the Muslim countries with large populations in the East into servants and colonies for them. Again, due to these despair and hopelessness a Zionist community with a few millions population has been destroying an Islamic world with a population approximating two billion with plots and mischiefs.

It is time to change this situation and to cut off head of that despair with the sword of “Despair not of the mercy of Allah” (Zumar, 39:53). This is possible through living by true Islam and a way of life deserving Islam, and living the principles and truths of Islam and faith and Qur’an depending on the help and mercy of Allah.

I would like to talk about an event regarding this issue. Before battle of Trench, while the trenches were being excavated, the companions came across a hard and big rock and they were not able to break it. They reported the situation to the Prophet (PBUH) and the Prophet (PBUH) grabbed the sledgehammer of Salman al Farisi and hit the rock. At every time that he hit the rock he said “Allahu akbar, the keys of Damascus and Byzantine were given to me, Allahu akbar, the keys of Persia were given to me, Allahu akbar, the keys of Yemen were given to me” and by that way he broke the rock into pieces and gave the good tidings about future. While he was doing this he had tied two stones to his stomach because of his severe hunger. Furthermore, his tribe and relatives were initiating an attack against his mission.

This event in the age of bliss reminds us another event in recent times. Imam Said Nursi, al Mujaddid of the age was exiled to Barla a village without path on the mountains. He was not allowed to see anybody. One day, they climbed the Mountain Çam with a disciple named Shamli Hafiz Tawfik. When the Tenth Word titled Resurrection treatise was completed with help of Allah Imam Nursi said “Alhamdulillah, we have broken the backbones of (defeated) the unbelief. Then his student said, “O Imam, you have written a treatise and you say we have defeated the unbelief. However, in Istanbul, now, they are printing books of unbelief incessantly.” Imam answered him, “O brother! We carry out our duty and do not interfere with the will of Allah.”

Yes, Imam has done his duty and showed and announced to the world that the Qur’an is an inextinguishable sun” The Risale-i Nur collection which destroyed naturalism which is the fortress of unbelief and fought against the movements of unbelief disguised under the cover of

philosophy and science and illuminated both the heart and mind and spirit showing the light of tawhid had a great role in saving the Islamic world from despair and hopelessness.

Valuable brothers and sisters,

The second illness which caused the backwardness of Islamic world is the death of truthfulness in social and political life. Truthfulness is the basis and foundation of Islam, and the bond of fine character, and the disposition of elevated emotions. Since this is the case, we must bring to life within us truthfulness and honesty, which form the foundation of our social life, and cure our moral and spiritual sicknesses with them. Salvation is possible only through truthfulness and honesty. And as for lying, it is to slander the All-Glorious Maker's power. Unbelief in all its varieties is falsehood and lying. Belief is truthfulness and honesty. Thus, as a necessity of the ruling of the verse "So keep to the right course as you have been commanded" and principle of "either truthfulness or silence" it is obligatory that we make truthfulness main principle in our individual, and social and political life.

Third illness: It is love for enmity and enmity to love. The prescription for that is: The thing most worthy of love is love, and the quality most deserving of enmity is enmity. The reason for love for people of faith is illuminated chains such as Islam, faith and humanity. The reasons of enmity are small private issues. Someone who treats somebody as an enemy makes a mistake by breaking that luminous chain. Love and fraternity are nature of Islam.

Fourth illness; unawareness of illuminated ties binding Muslims together. One of these is consciousness of being ummah. The foundation and spirit of our true nationhood is Islam. Through the bond of this sacred nationhood, all the people of Islam are like a single tribe. Like the members of a tribe, the groups of Islam such as Arabs, Turks, Kurds, Laz, Circassians, Albanians, Africans, Malaysians, Afghans, Caucasians and the other communities are bound and connected to one another through Islamic brotherhood. They assist one another morally and, if necessary, materially.

Another connecting point of Muslims is a legal consultation. The verse **وَأْمُرْهُمْ شُورًا بَيْنَهُمْ** orders consultation as a main principle. As throughout history people shared their information and views and by that way humanity developed and the sciences and technology improved. In the same way, the key for unity of Islamic world and its world dominion is consultation. As the individuals negotiate with each other, in the same way the communities and states also should negotiate with each other.

The fifth illness is despotism and tyranny. The remedy for that are Islam and the Qur'an. "The legal freedom which derives from the Qur'an orders two principles: First; a Muslim does not impose pressure to anybody. Second; he does not obey the oppressors and this is possible through being a true servant to Allah because someone who becomes a true servant to Allah does not become a servant to others. One who is not a servant of Allah is obliged to be servant to everything.

The sixth illness is restricting endeavour to what is personally beneficial. However, in this time evil and wrong-doing are not only restricted to those who perpetrate them. Rather, it becomes a transgression of rights of millions of Muslims. As the evil mounts up thousands fold, the good-deed –that is goodness touching the sacredness of Islam- also does not remain

restricted to the perpetrator. Rather, that good-deed becomes advantageous for millions of people of faith spiritually.”

Furthermore, with the lesson that the Qur’an and faith give a Muslim “If I die, at least my community lives and I have an eternal life in the collective personality of my community”. For that reason the value of a man is measured by his endeavour for his community. Whoever has an aim of saving his community, he is a small community alone.

Respected guests,

Our path is glorifying the name of Allah and having a strong hope for pleasure of Allah and His mercy. Our profession is to have love for love and enmity for enmity along with truthfulness. Our aim is to adopt the ethics and attitudes of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and enlivening his Sunnah. Our guide is the Qur’an. Our chief is the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Our weapon is the certain proofs of the Qur’an and truths of faith and Qur’an. Our prescription is obeying the Qur’an and establishing the Islamic unity. The main dynamics for our development are coming together of the hearts under the Qur’an, replacement of the nationalism with Islamic nationalism and reordering of education, working hard and abandoning the sins.

I am ending my speech with following words of Imam in the Damascus Sermon.

Long live truthfulness! Death to despair! Let love endure! Let mutual consultation find strength! Let those who follow their own whims and desires be the objects of blame, reproach and detestation! And on those who follow Guidance be peace and well being! AMEN.

May Allah’s peace, mercy and blessings be upon you.