

RECLAIMING MUSLIM HERITAGE: THE ROLE OF MUSLIM UNIVERSITIES

IMAM BUKHARI ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE 1431/2010

BY DR. ABDULLAH JIBRIL OYEKAN, MFR.

FRIDAY 27TH DHUL HIJAH 1431 (3RD DECEMBER, 2010),

AT MUSLIM UNIVERSITY OF MOROGORO, MOROGORO, TANZANIA.

Praise be unto Allah, the Originator of all Creation; Who Created man from clay and appointed him His viceroy on earth; Who, out of His beneficence and mercy, has sent down revelations through His Prophets to man, to guide him from darkness unto light. We praise Him, the Owner of all praise, as He deserves. We seek His guidance and protection in this discourse. We invoke His choicest bounties and bliss on the Imam of the prophets, the Leader of mankind, Muhammad ibn Abdullah and on his household, his companions of eminence and all who follow the Guidance until the Last Day.

I feel highly honoured to have been invited to deliver the Imam Bukhari Annual Memorial Lecture for this year. My general intention, bi idhni-Allah, is to stimulate action by directing attention to areas that I deem vital for the survival and development of the Ummah of Muslims. If I do mention anything that you are already addressing I hope you will derive some satisfaction from having been vindicated.

In this discourse I want to share my thoughts and ideas with you about how to redress the present dismal state of the Ummah by drawing inspiration from the glorious legacy left by our predecessors whom Allah blessed with success in their time both materially and spiritually, and

who have stamped indelible imprints on human history. I believe that the difference between us and them is in the type of Muslim individuals each group has been able to generate. Of course, for us, as Muslims, hope is never lost in any situation. All we have to do is to mobilize necessary efforts in the right directions before we can expect positive outcome, as declared by Allah, *ta'ala*,

***'And nothing accrues to man save what he has striven for.'*¹**

I make bold to say that Muslim Universities have a very big role to play in this the effort to reform the Ummah and rid it of the causes of its present abject state.

There is no doubt that Muslims do not predominate in any sector of our present world. Right now Muslim land is being occupied in Iraq and Afghanistan with near impunity and no Muslim country raises any voice, talk less of any action. Those small groups that dare to resist are labelled terrorists and their resistance is used as excuse for drone attacks in which innocent lives and property are destroyed with reckless abandon. At the same time, especially in the West, post September 11, 2001, Muslims are stereotyped as terrorists and subjected to special, humiliating treatment in the name of security.

On the political front, the picture of the Muslim World is one of disintegration, open conflict between States, and, indeed, paralysis in protecting Muslim interests and rights the world over. The enemies of Islam always make sure Muslims are at each other's throats over any issue, thereby guaranteeing inaction or ineffectiveness on the part of he

Muslims while they perpetrate their own plans to dominate them. The enemy-controlled world press repeatedly group Muslim States in opposing camps and then find means of whipping up conflict between them, thereby obviating the possibility of any co-ordinated or coherent Muslim action. Even when faced with a common enemy like Zionist Israel, Muslim Arabs are unable to find unity, while seemingly content to be classified as pro or anti-American. So subservient are some of the rulers of some Muslim countries to the United States of America that one could easily surmise that they are convinced they owe their positions more to the grace of the U.S. than to Allah!

All the various supposedly unifying bodies like the Organisation of Islamic Conference, the Arab League, etc, are lacking in seriousness, moribund, totally ineffective and many a time, a source of embarrassment for all right-thinking Muslims. At times they are little better than soap-operas.

Within many of the Muslim countries, individual liberties have been suppressed to such an extent that their governments are little different from totalitarian regimes. Human rights are trampled upon with levity and impunity and rulership is sustained through widespread corruption and vote-rigging at elections on the relatively few occasions when they do occur. The general picture is therefore one of most unprincipled, deceitful and corrupt leadership that is almost the antithesis of the God-fearing souls that are supposed to head Muslim States.

A most worrying development in the last few years is the phenomenal increase in the shedding by Muslims of each other's blood. The ease with which Muslim groups are ready to start fratricidal wars makes one doubt whether those involved could ever be considered Muslims, given the very strong pronouncement of Allah on the fate of anyone who takes a Muslim's life without a just cause. At one time, Muslims were killing each other simultaneously in Morocco, Algeria, Somalia, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. It was as if *Daru-l Islam* or *Daru-s Salam* had changed places with *Daru-l Harb*. Of course, this might well have been orchestrated by the enemies of the Muslims since such internal dissipation of energies would weaken any Muslim military capabilities. But why have Muslims been so lacking in circumspection as to make themselves so cheaply susceptible to such devastating tactics?

In quite a few instances, the frustration of Muslim youth with the regimes in these countries has been manipulated by nihilist groups with hidden agendas to turn them into over-radicalized, irrational militants. They are somehow brainwashed and convinced to blow themselves up and in the process kill or maim scores of invariably innocent Muslims and cause severe damage to property, targeting even mosques! The mindless slaughter of Muslims by those claiming to be Muslims is a real problem that the Ummah must find a quick and adequate answer to. It is a phenomenon of the present era as it was unknown in the Muslim world on such a scale until recently. Therefore, finding the solution to it devolves on the present era of Muslims.

On the economic front, the situation is not any better. The relatively huge amounts of natural resources which Allah, *aaz wajalla*, in His infinite mercies, has planted in the Muslim land, particularly crude petroleum, have proven of little benefit because of the unIslamic, parochial attitude of rulers. Finding themselves with more funds than they had capacity for, instead of pursuing a global, Ummatic path and investing the surplus funds in largely populated Muslim countries like Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, they decided to hold them in the banking and financing institutions of the West, where they have become available for the benefit of the enemies of Islam! (*The D-8 Economic Group, promoting economic collaboration between 8 Developing Muslim countries comprising Pakistan, Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Nigeria and conceived by the former Turkish Prime Minister, Professor Necmetin Erbakan, is however a good step in the right direction*). Many Muslim countries are avoided by thorough investors for reasons of political instability. So many opportunities for job creation and economic development are lost in the petrodollar Muslim countries, as consumerism continues to be the vogue and there is little evidence of the intention to 'make hay while the sun is shining' by the establishment of the foundations of a sustainable industrialised economy. In the mean time the capitalists continue to part these countries and their petrodollars by the promotion of avenues of unnecessary expenditure like lavish celebration of birthdays, and invention of new spending events like Mother's Day and Father's Day.

In his masterpiece, *'Islamization of Knowledge'*,² Prof Ismail Raji al Faruqi, (may Allah sanctify his rest and incline to him mercifully),

traces the origin of the malaise of the Ummah of Islam to the defeat of Muslims by non-Muslim forces. I quote:

'Muslims were defeated massacred, robbed of their land and wealth, of their life and hope. They were double-crossed, colonized and exploited: proselytized and forcefully or bribefully converted to other faiths. And they were secularized, Westernized and de-Islamized by internal and external agents of their enemies'. He goes further, 'In the mass media of the world, the 'Muslim' is stereotyped fanatic, fundamentalist, archaic, and anachronistic'.

He then pinpoints what he termed the self-perpetuating core of the malaise. He asserts;

'There can be no doubt that the main locus and core of the malaise of the Ummah is the prevalent educational system. It is the breeding ground of self-estrangement from Islam, from its legacy and style..... The educational system is the laboratory where Muslim youth are kneaded and cut, where their consciousness is moulded into a caricature of the West. Here, the Muslims linkage with his past is severed; his natural curiosity to learn the legacy of the fathers is stymied; here, his willingness to touch base with them and spring towards creative representation or Vergegenwarting (i.e. the making present and alive again) of Islam is blunted with the doubts the system has injected into every recess of his consciousness'.

It is remarkable that these observations that were made in 1402/1982, almost 30 years ago, are still apt and accurate, with only relatively new happenings like the advent of suicide bombers needing to be added. Is it not tragic that the alarm raised by one of the greatest

Muslim intellectuals of our age has been generally ignored while the situation continues to get worse with new inventions available to the enemies of the Ummah, like the internet, that can be used to do as much harm as good since it can be used to invade the minds of the unwary users? Obviously the situation cannot be left to continue to spiral downwards.

Where lies the way out?

It is to be found I believe in the Quranic verse;

***'Surely Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change from within themselves.'*³**

When we examine the history of Muslims, we see a slow and very difficult beginning, where survival was guaranteed only by Divine intervention at Badr. The Sahabahs were however highly steeped in the tenets of Islam and well-grounded in the understanding of their faith. They understood well what was expected of them and were ready to sacrifice all they had for Allah's cause. They did not seem to have an insatiable appetite for things material and when they came out of the formative crucible of Islam under the watchful eyes of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), each was a God-fearing soul, devotee of Allah, highly principled, deriving his standards and values from his faith, focused on giving a good account of himself before Allah on the Day of Judgement, sharing a common vision of Islam with his fellow Muslims, knowing the role expected of him in the Ummah and being ready to play

it with his best efforts. They epitomized compliance with the Quranic command;

‘Say; verily my Salat (worship), my sacrifice, my living, and dying are for Allah, the Lord of all creation. He has no partners. This am I commanded, of I am the first of those who surrender to (Him).’⁴

That was the type of product that came out of 13 years of Prophetic tutelage in Makkah and 10 years in Medina. It was this brand of human-beings who laid the foundation for Muslim conquests, became the torch bearers of knowledge and brought into the world an Islamic Civilization that is still unmatched in the rapidity with which it evolved. In any area that Muslims excelled in, we find the pious believer, with high moral standards, sound integrity, loftiest loyalty to the Ummah, unqualified readiness to give selfless service and much sacrifice in Allah’s cause. Whether as ruler or foot soldier, as merchant or artisan, as public servant or self-employed, noble qualities like honesty, integrity, dedication, hardwork, sense of responsibility, inculcated from Islam were brought into play, resulting in excellent performance all round.

Let us illustrate these observations with anecdotes around some well-known achievers of the glorious era. Ameerul Mu’mineen, Umar ibn Khattab (R.A.A) reportedly used to declare openly; *‘If a mule stumbles on a road in ‘Iraq, I am answerable.’* The welfare of a beast of burden on a road in ‘Iraq, thousands of kilometres away, was of sufficient concern for the Head of the Ummah to remind himself of his liability if the road is unsafe for the animal! How many Heads of State display this broadest

sense of responsibility in the world we live in today, where impunity is the order of the day in many Muslim States?

Accountability was always well-embedded in the consciousness of public officers. It is related that Umar ibn Abdi-l Azeez would light a State-funded lamp while working at night at home, and immediately put it out and light his own lamp as soon as he was done with State business. See how meticulous he was and the length he was ready to go to ensure probity in handling State property. How many among today's rulers ever think of a demarcation line between what belongs to the State and their private properties? Is it not a fact that most behave as if the whole of the State is private property, while some even seek to bequeath it to their offsprings so as to establish their own dynasties? Contrast this with the firm directive that Umar ibn Khattab (R.A.A) gave on his death bed that the name of his son, Abdullah (R.A.A), should be deleted from the shortlist of candidates to be considered for succeeding him because he did not want to create any precedent of son succeeding father, even though Abdullah was well-qualified in his own right to be considered for leadership.

When we examine other areas of achievement in the golden era of the Muslims, we find always an aura of piety covering every individual achiever. Let's consider a narration about the highly successful Military Commander, Khalid ibn Walid (R.A.A). It is related that he was one day leading an attack by Muslim forces against a fortress, and when they could not achieve a breakthrough long after his estimated time, from his military experience, that it should have taken them to overrun the

fortress, he stopped the attack, called his troop together and addressed them. *'There must be something wrong with us for which Allah is denying us victory, and I want to find it out.'* He thereafter identified all those who did not perform Salatu-l Subh within its proper period that morning and ordered them to remain behind. With the remaining, fewer troops, he broke through in their next attack! Khalid's military successes were based on himself and his troops being in the good books of Allah at all times.

The origins of the great civilization that our predecessors in faith brought to the world and which dominated the world for close to eight centuries between 200 and 1,000 A.H. and transformed human knowledge in all its ramifications were equally based on the teachings of the Quran and the Ahadith of the Prophet, like,

'The search for knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim, male and female'

'He who goes out in search of knowledge is in Allah's path until he returns.'

'If anyone travels on a road in search of knowledge, Allah will cause him to travel on one of the roads of paradise, the angels will lower their wings from good pleasure with one who seeks knowledge, and the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth and fish in the depth of the water will ask forgiveness for him.'

The superiority of the learned man over the devout man is like that of the moon on the night when it is full over the rest of the stars.

The learned are the heirs of the prophets who leave neither dinar nor dirham, leaving only knowledge, and he who accepts it accepts an abundant portion.¹⁵

The Muslims who had been tutored by the Prophet (S.A.W), his companions and the following generations acted on these strong promptings of the Prophet (S.A.W) and took to knowledge as a duck to water. In fact, it was thanks to their activities that various masterpieces of ancient Greek science and culture that had laid buried in tottering libraries or museums were rescued and prevented from disappearing from the face of the earth altogether.

The Abbasid Caliphs, based in Baghdad, starting from Abu Ja'far Al-Mansur (183/754-204/775), culminating in the glorious years of Harun Al-Rasheed; (195/766-238/809) who ruled from Baghdad from (215/786-238/809), and Al-Ma'mun (242/813-262/833), spearheaded the efforts to acquire all available knowledge. There was no stone unturned as all Greek, Syrian, Persian, Indian available manuscripts were acquired with voracity. The first efforts were necessarily directed at translating the texts into Arabic, thereby popularising them. Available works on virtually all subjects, astronomy, mathematics, physics, medicine, geography, chemistry, natural history, were thereafter edited. They did not hesitate to approach any authority irrespective of their

faith or creed in acquiring manuscripts. Caliph al-Ma'mun, is said to have written to the King of Sicily asking for the entire contents of the Library of Sicily. The King obliged him with copies of the books in the library. Similar approaches were made to the then Byzantine Emperor, whose response was also positive. They also ignored religious differences in engaging competent people like Thabit bin Qurrah a Sabean and Hunain ibn Ishaq al-Ibadi, a Christian, as translators. It is also reported that al-Ma'mun once used a hundred camels to transport handwritten books and manuscripts from Khurasan ('Iran) to Baghdad.

Various institutions of learning were established, the most prominent of which was probably *Bayt al Hikmah*, built by Harun Al-Rasheed, but later expanded by Caliph Al-Ma'mun and renamed *Dar al Hikmah* (House of Wisdom). The most prominent scholars of the time, including al-Kindi, Al-Kwarazmi, Thabit ibn Qurrah, Banu Musa Brothers Ahmad, and al-Hasan, were engaged by the Caliph al-Ma'mun at the Dar al Hikmah to join hands in the translation of masterpieces from all over the world as well as hold discourses and discussions on advancing the frontiers of knowledge. Even the Caliph used to join in their discussions. Knowledge was popularized all over Muslim land. Schools and universities began to spring up from Andalusia to Baghdad, to Central Asia where cities like Konya, Samarkand and Bukhara became centres of learning and letters.

After translating and digesting these earlier works, the Muslim Scholars of the golden era then began to advance the frontiers of knowledge in the various fields and the world was to benefit

tremendously from their creativity. For example, they pioneered and developed trigonometry which revolutionized mathematical science by immensely simplifying mathematical calculations involved in astronomy.

The constant linkage between the efforts of the great personalities of the golden era and their faith is another unmistakable characteristic of their time. A taste of the spirit in which they approached their task is provided by the opening section of the introduction in Yaqut al Hamawi's Geographical Dictionary:

“Praise be to Allah who has made the earth like unto an expanse and the mountains like unto stakes, and spread therefrom peaks and gorges, deserts and towns; Who has caused river to gush forth through the land, and streams and seas to flow; and who has guided His creatures to take dwellings unto themselves and to construct well-made buildings and homes. Whereupon thy have raised edifices and founded cities, carved habitations out of mountains, and contrived wells and cisterns. He had made their eagerness to raise that which they have raised and to build that which they have built, a warning to the heedless and an example to following generations. He said, and He is the most truthful of Sayers:

‘Have they not journeyed through the land and beheld the end of those before them who were more numerous than they and mightier in strength, and who left a greater mark upon the earth? Yet all that of which they possessed themselves availed them not’. (Qur’an, XL,82.).

*I give praise unto Him for that which He has given and bestowed, for inspiring rectitude and guiding to it, for imparting understanding and making wisdom manifest. May Allah bless Muhammad-the elect among His prophets and apostles, the most favoured among the pious and those beloved of Him, he who was sent with guidance and with the perspicuous religion, of whom it is written, **'We sent thee not, save as a mercy to all creatures' (Qur'an, XXI, 107)**-and the noble and saintly members of his household and the select and righteous Companions. May Allah save and preserve them all.*

This is a book on the names of countries; on mountains valleys, and plains; on villages, post-houses, and dwellings; on seas, rivers and lakes; on idols, graven images, and objects of heathen worship. I have not undertaken to write this book, nor dedicated myself to composing it, in a spirit of frolic or diversion. Nor have I been impelled to do so by dread or desire; nor moved by longing for my native land; nor prompted by yearning for one who is loving and compassionate. Rather, I considered it my duty to address myself to this task, and being capable of performing it; I regarded responding to its challenge as an inescapable obligation.

I was made aware of it by the great and glorious Book, and was guided to it by the Great Tidings, wherein Allah said, glory and majesty to Him, when He wanted to manifest to His creatures His sign and warnings and establish their guilt by visiting upon them His wrath.

'Have they not journeyed through the land? And have they not hearts to understand with, or ears to hear with? Surely as to

these things their eyes are not blind, but the hearts which are within their breasts are blind.’ (Qur’an, XXII, 45.)

This is a reproof to him who has journeyed through the world and has not heeded the warning and to him who has contemplated the departed centuries and has not been deterred.

Allah said, and He is the most truthful of Sayers: ‘Say: Journey through the land and behold the manner in which the disbelievers have met their end.’ (Qur’an, VI, 11.)

In other words, consider how their dwelling places were razed, all traces of them obliterated, and their lights extinguished in punishment for disregarding His commandments and transgressing against His prohibitions. This message is found in other unabrogated verses setting for the irrevocable commandments and prohibitions.

The first verse is a reprimand, clearly set forth, because of previous prohibition of the offense. The second is commandment manifestly prescribing an obligation. This is from the Book of Allah, which ‘shall remain untouched by falsehood, in the future as in the past,’ (Qur’an XLI, 42.) and which shall never suffer impairment as to its composition or form.”

The religious motivation and the desire to be of benefit to fellow Muslims are very transparent.

Another notable fact about the glorious period is the generation of individuals of versatile scholarship who were considered Universalists because their expertise that spanned several subjects. Popularly known

as *hakim*, each could at the same time be a physician, a writer and poet, an astronomer, physicist, theologian, jurist, philosopher, mathematician, etc., all in one! This contrasts with the modern era where over-specialisation is the order of the day.

It is pertinent to mention here some of these prominent sages because of their enormous contributions to the glorious era. Just as Allah *ta'ala* sent His Prophets (A.S.W.S) as human models who demonstrated by their live examples that Allah's message was within our human capacities to practise, the contributors to the glorious era have demonstrated the veracity of the Qur'anic ayah

'And do not become faint-hearted (against your enemy) nor be sad and you will be superior (in victory) if you are indeed (true) believers'

Their names must be immortalized for having shown that **if we are sincere believers, we will dominate our world.**

The names mentioned hereafter are not by any means the only ones that can be credited with noteworthy achievements but their contributions span a few disciplines and hence their preference for reference. They are namely:

Abu Yusuf Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi (c.185/801-c260/873)

Physician, philosopher, mathematician, chemist, logician and astronomer. His interests were 'encyclopaedic'; He was engaged in Dar ul Hikmah by Caliph al-Ma'mun for the translation of Aristotle's works.

Muhammad ibn Musa al-Kwarazmi (d. 249/863)

First outstanding Muslim associated with mathematics, also an accomplished astronomer. His work '*Al-Jabr wa'l muqabalah*', gave Algebra its name. He introduced Indian numerals into the Muslim world, and because the West came across the numerals through his works on Arithmetic, the term 'arabic' was given to the numerals. His Latinised name, Algorithm, for a long time meant arithmetic in most European languages and is still used today for any recurring method of calculation that has become an established rule.

Muhammad ibn Zakariya Al-Razi (c.251/865-313/925)

Greatest clinical physician of Islam, whose authority in medicine is said to be second only to Ibn Sina's, but whom he surpassed in observational skills. He was also a philosopher and musician.

Abu Nasr al-Farabi (c.258/870-339/950)

Philosopher, physicist, mathematician, musician, Sufi. 'First person in Islam to classify the sciences completely, to delineate the limits of each and to establish firmly the foundation of each branch of learning'.⁷

Abu al-Hasan ibn Haitham (c.354/965-430/1039) (Alhazen)

Physicist, mathematician, astronomer, physician. He was the greatest of Muslim physicists. His major work, *Optics*, influenced the optical writings of Roger Bacon, Witelo and Kepler in the West and many later treatises by Muslim scientists. He also made significant contributions to the study of the anatomy and diseases of the eye.

Abu Raihan al-Biruni 362/973-c.442/1051

Physicist, mathematician, astronomer, geographer, explorer, historian. Some have considered him the greatest Muslim scientist. Certainly among the foremost intellectual figures of Islam.

Abu 'Ali al-Husain ibn Sina (370/980-428/1037) (Avicenna)

Reputed to have written two hundred and fifty works of different lengths despite living in turbulent times. He was reknowned as physician, philosopher, theologian. His work on medicine, *Canon of Medicine*, was the standard textbook for medical students in Europe up till the 19th century. His impact on Western philosophical thoughts was also immense. Indeed there is still on-going contention amongst Western historians as to whether he was a greater philosopher than physician or vice versa.

The list is almost endless but mention must be made, even if only cursory, of other great individuals as **Abu-I Fath 'Umar ibn Ibrahim al-Khayyami (Umar Khayyan in the West), Abu-I Walid Muhammad ibn Rushd (Averroes in the West), Nasir al Din al-Tusi, Abu-I Qasim Khalaf ibn al-Abbas, Al-Zahrawi, the great surgeon of Cordoba.**

The Islamic Civilization of the golden era was not confined to one particular area of human endeavour. It pervaded all the spheres of human activity. It covered all sectors of living, education, healthcare, agriculture, architecture, recreation, civil and mechanical engineering, transportation, water supply, commerce, industrial production, public

facilities (public bath). The inventions of this era are legion. Some of these have been well-captured in a book entitled '*1001 Inventions, Muslim Heritage in Our World*' compiled by the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation, UK'.⁸

(The Foundation has also mounted an Exhibition based on the contents of the book which was run in London, Istanbul, and New York. The book and the exhibition are the sort of material and effort that we need for the reclaiming of Muslim prominence in the world).

It must also be emphasized that the Islamic Civilization under reference was not a freak event not a flash in the pan. **It endured for over eight hundred years!**

Allah, *ta'ala*, affirms:

'.....and you will not find a change in our Sunnah (rule or way)'⁹

Hence there is no doubt in my mind that if we follow the footsteps of our predecessors in faith, we can reclaim the prowess that they achieved to predominate in their world.

We need to carry out a lot of research to identify how and why we are different from them. It is obvious, for instance, that the God-fearing devotee of Allah of high Islamic moral standards, with Islamic vision of life, dedicated, and loyal membership of the Ummah who was ever ready to sacrifice, property, limb, and even life, in Allah's cause and who constituted the bedrock over which the Islamic Civilization of the past was founded is an endangered species in the present time. Without our regenerating the genuine Muslim individual and repopulating our

countries with him, we should forget about recreating the Islamic Civilization. Even if we achieve any progress, it will not be Islamic Civilization.

By the Qur'anic declaration.....

'you will be superior (in victory) if you are indeed (true) believers⁶.

It is quite clear that the label true believers cannot apply to our present generation of Muslims given our present, subjugated, subdued state. Yet many of us still believe they are true Muslims. With most of us, Shaitan has succeeded in substituting a kind of pseudo-Islam for the genuine Islam and our lands are now heavily populated by counterfeit Muslims. We seek refuge in Allah, *aaz wajalla*, from Shaitan and from these words of His ever applying to us.:

'Say, 'Shall I tell you the greatest losers in respect of (their) deeds'?

'Those whose efforts have been wasted in this life while they thought that they were acquiring good by their deeds'¹⁰

I believe that the only way forward is for us to seriously research into how those who brought about Islamic Civilization in the past went about it. There are already strong indicators that certain systems operating in our countries constitute self-perpetuating 'viruses' and must be expunged. For example, as I mentioned earlier, Professor Ismail Raji Al-Farouqi, (may Allah sanctify his rest and incline mercifully to him), already identified the colonially grafted educational systems in our

countries as the main bug largely responsible for the current malaise in Muslim lands. He also advocated a five-point work-plan with the following declared objectives:

1. To master the modern disciplines.
2. To master the Islamic legacy.
3. To establish the specific relevance of Islam to each area of modern knowledge.
4. To seek ways for creative synthesis between the legacy and modern knowledge.
5. To launch Islamic thought on the trajectory that leads it to fulfilment of the divine patterns of Allah (SWT).

He then outlined 'The Necessary Steps leading to the Islamization of Knowledge.'

This a good start and there is lot to be done in the implementation of these sound ideas.

However, we need to ensure that **the main objective continues to be the islamization of the Muslim Ummah**. I believe we should conduct intensive research to really discover how the Muslims of old were brought up and acquired the Islamic character that pervaded their era. There should be launched an International Islamization Project in which all Muslim Universities must participate, with one of them or some neutral body like the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) co-ordinating. The project has to be necessarily detailed and comprehensive. The main goal is to have curricula that guarantee that,

by the time he finally leaves our learning institutions, like this University, it will be Islam to the right of him, Islam to the left of him, Islamic in front of him, Islam behind him, Islam above him, Islam below him. He will be completely enveloped in Islam.

The Project should start with the assembling of the best available Muslim expertise to;

- Develop educational curricula of universal applicability in the Ummah that cover Pre-Nursery, Nursery, Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Education:
- Establish an institution similar to the famous *Daru-I Hikmah* of the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun and engage therein Muslim experts commissioned to write textbooks that are attuned to the universal curricula: arrange for translation to relevant languages of the Ummah as appropriate; and
- Prepare Teacher Training Manuals that match the Universal curriculum and which every teacher in every educational institution would have been put through.

Since the project is to cover all learning ages, it would be necessary for participating universities to have model institutions at nursery, primary and secondary levels where the outcome of the research efforts can be put into practice and monitored. Regular seminars and workshops have to be organized to assess progress and collate findings.

The word 'Muslim' in the names of some universities suggests they have their work cut out for them. Apart from reflecting Islamic

ideals principles in their structure and culture as well as operating as a university in the modern sense, they are expected to be pragmatic and concerned with Muslim affairs, more than any conventional institution. The burden of Muslim affairs will be impossible for any one institution to handle effectively; so, there has to be collaboration and networking between the various Muslim Universities. As the Qur'an puts it;

'And those who disbelieve are allies of one another If you do not do so, there will be fitnah and oppression on the earth and great mischief'¹¹

I can imagine that some level of co-operation already exists between the Muslim universities. However, I believe whatever is the current arrangement; there should be a formal platform for the collaboration.

It should be well-publicised and have websites and other networking facilities where information about on-going research in the institutions can be accessed.

These Muslim Universities must be a beehive of activities. Research and Development (R&D) must be always on-going, not just on the International Islamization Project, but on many other fronts. A Muslim University, for instance, can research into the phenomenon of suicide bombing and how to curb it.

It is recognised that funding is paramount for R & D to take place at all. Therefore, we have to develop skills for raising funds, which are

available within the Ummah, before our enemies find ways to cart them away.

We should find hope in Allah's promise:

'As for those who strive hard in Our cause, We will guide them to our path'¹²

'.....And whosoever fears Allah and keeps his duty to Him, He will make a way for him to get out (from every difficulty),

And He will provide him from (sources) he never could imagine, And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him'¹³

In conclusion, the message of this discourse is that Muslims can once again dominate the world by returning to their roots and finding out how the great Islamic Civilization of the past was established; then to follow the footsteps of their predecessors meticulously, to be able to recreate Islamic civilization in our time. This would involve generating the Islamized individuals that constituted the bedrock of that civilization. Muslim Universities have great roles to play in bringing about this desired goal. Indeed if institutions like M.M.U were to be fully guided by the Ahadith of the Prophet (S.A.W) on knowledge, particularly that 'the search for knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim, male or female', they would be seeking to graduate students with a perpetual thirst for useful knowledge. I emphasize 'useful', since the Prophet (S.A.W) did ask us to seek Allah's refuge from knowledge that does not benefit. Their graduates will be incurable addicts of beneficial knowledge throughout

their lives. This is bound to make them huge assets for the Ummah, and can only bring the re-establishment of Islamic Civilization closer.

Finally I will like to end my speech with a request. The inscription, 'The world is held up by four pillars; the wisdom of the learned, the justice of the great, the prayers of the righteous, and the valour of the brave', adorned the top of the entrance to each University in Muslim Spain. May I request that the same be done at this university, and that M.U.M, champions the spreading of the idea to all the other contemporary Muslim Universities? I believe this gesture would provoke a feeling of solidarity among these institutions and a nostalgic linkage with the universities of Muslim Spain.

And praise be to Allah at the end as at the start.

REFERENCES

1. Qur'an, 53:39
2. 'Islamization of Knowledge', 'General Principles and Workplan'-Professor Isma'il Raji Faruqi: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1402/1982
3. Qur'an, 13:11
4. Ibid, 6:162
5. Mishkat Al-Masabih: Vol. 1: Book II
6. Qur'an, 3:139
7. Science and Civilization in Islam-Prof Sayyid Hussain Nasir
8. '1001 Inventions. Muslim Heritage in Our World' Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilization
9. Qur'an, 17:77
10. Ibid, 18:103-4
11. Ibid, 8:73
12. Ibid, 29:69
13. Ibid, 65:2-3