

DELIVERED IN UK

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**Bismillah Alhamdulillah Rabbi A 'lameen wassalatu Rrasolehikarim wa ala alehi wa sahebi ajmaeen.  
Amma 'bad. Auzobillahe Minashetanirrajeem. Yureedunallahe beafwahehimwalau karehal  
kaferroonbeafwahehim walau karehal kaferoon.**

My dear brothers and sisters - I am so happy to be with you as I regard you to be the Trustees (Amanah) for the Islamic message in this part of the world and the corps group which is meeting in these camps with a view to refresh, deepen your own understanding and the message that you have to live by and share. It is a very important exercise and it is something that we all need, not casually, not sporadically but continuously, regularly and I must complement the brothers who have framed the programme that are deeply impressed by the issues taken up, their notation given. And I hope, insha' Allah, these three or four camps will enable you to have a better understanding of what we are and how we want to see the world.

With these short introductory remarks, let me come to the subject that has been given to me - Who Switched the Life Off? Yes, serious and widespread efforts have been made to switch off this light. It is often correct that in certain parts of the world or in the recesses of one's own source, light has diminished, marked shadows have lingered on, but this light can never be switched off, as I recited from the Holy.

Qur an "Yureedona walau karehal kaferoon

Let me come to the predicament of man, and the context in which we are today breathing, living and trying to live. While throughout human history we find that broadly speaking human beings can be grouped into two main streams. One stream is represented by those whose leaders have been Allah's Prophets, on those had been Allah's blessings, who gave light and guidance to human beings, made them realize their relationship with their Creator - Allah S.W.T. and prepared them to strive for their destiny - Allazina na amta alaiehim - This is one stream. And the other stream is those who refuse to follow Prophets, who try to find out their own way or change or deviate from the Prophetic path. Now within these two streams there are many varieties, variations. Yet these are the two main streams - one which relates oneself to the Creator, the other either refuses to relate itself to the Creator or refuses to accept the right of the Creator to give the guidance, tampers with it, tinkers with it. changes it, deviates from it, violates it. develop new concepts. Yet these are the two main streams. And the Prophets of Allah gave the same message of Islam. And this is a unique concept of what in modern parlance described spirituality. Spirituality) is nothing unique, distinct or isolated from the human reality, from the Divine reality, from the totality of the stream of guidance that has been provided - it is integral to it. And that is what insha'Allah we will try to understand as we come to the last part of our representation.

The modern predicament of man broadly begins from what is described in European history as 'Renaissance'. The movement spread over almost two centuries – 14<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> century, and representing a new awakening in almost all fields, thought, philosophy, religion, art. architecture, economy, politics, leading to what is described as period of enlightenment, the watershed. 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries when the new thought pattern was developed, new political power and hegemony was acquired, new economic power, industrial revolution, agricultural revolution took place,

followed by the last two centuries of further development in almost every field of existence. And more important the universal hegemony and the western civilization. Although politically the imperialism has receded, yet intellectually, economically, financially and even to some extent indirect political hegemony the supremacy of western civilization continues. Definitely Muslims are trying to rediscover their identity, they assert themselves. It is a process which has begun, yet we have a long way to go.

So in this context that we have to realize what is the intellectual, spiritual, cultural, moral, religious context in which we are living. Whether you look to the Greek thought, the medieval period or even the modern and post-modern periods. While a dominant trend has been one where drift from religion, the denial of God and efforts to explain Cosmos, universe, life, history in terms where God is not invoked - a kind of a self-sufficient understanding and explanation. And that lies at the root of all forms of alienation that have taken place during the last four to five centuries. Solitary thinkers who had presented atheistic views, denial of spirituality, some forms of materialism and privacy of matter has always been there. But as a dynamic, powerful, cultural, intellectual force, we do not find this in earlier periods of history or in other civilizations of the world. It is unique phenomena of the post-renaissance world that a whole intellectual paradigm, that the whole civilization an effort has been made to develop it on foundations not rooted in God. in eternal values, in acceptance of spiritual dimensions.

How this came by and why ? - are very important questions. Dark ages which have been the inuuedi.ic context of man's rebellion against God - that is renaissance and enlightenment. And man's rebellion against the Church - an effort to rescue religion, from the religious establishment - that is reformation. These two major movements have been the pacesetter. But one of the guinea was released from the bottom, then it assumed its own shape and posed new challenges. Initially it was a tyranny of the religious establishment and political authority that were cooperating in hand to hand together, that set human beings in that direction. It was access to Greek thought and also to Muslim thought because Greek thought also was discovered through Arab writers. Direct access was to take place in initial stage. Yet as this was taken place in a particular cultural millions, the whole movement was directed towards those symbols, those icons which characterized the medieval religious and political tyranny, the inquisition, the religious war. the intolerance, the suppression of powers, of freedom, of individual, and coalition between the religious, political and economical classes. Emergence of physical science has played a very important role in setting the tone for the new times. Pepticus Mark came up with ideas that differed from the orthodox. Originally the idea was that this universe is earth centred, geo-centric. earth where human beings live is the centre of the universe and man is central to the earth. Pepticus came with the idea that there are other calaxicus bodies and earth is not the centre of the universe - must be the sun. So religions enteric vision was given, floated" by Glalio - the Italian astronomist who through experiments tried to challenge (lie so- called scientific thought of the times and the critical issue had been (lie concept of constant constellation, the idea of movement velocity. He experimented with throwing different balls or different weights over a slope and to find out how much time it takes to move and the logical formulation of the Greek and the Christian that different weights

should take different times was challenged by him. And finally it was 1609 that he climbed the tower through different weights and demonstrated that different weights do not take different times to reach the land. He was persecuted subject to inquisition but he had innovated a process.

Then comes Newton ,building upon Galileo's thought. He looked upon the whole universe and not merely movement and motion within the world, came with a Law of Gravitation. But the philosophic implication of that Law of Gravitation was that it developed a thought paradigm where the movement of glacial bodies, physical world could be explained by resort to certain physical laws without invoking any transcendent authority. So a mechanistic view of the world was presented and in the light of that when Laplace developed the whole paradigm of solar system and presented it to Napoleon. Napoleon was fascinated by that presentation. But at the end of it he raised a very pertinent question. He said. "Laplace I do not find any reference to God in your explanation". And the answer was. "Your Majesty I do not need God to explain the movement of these human beings". Yet in Newton there was at least one small element that all measurements are possible only if in the universe there is at least a point which is beyond these measurement and which should be the basis of measurement and even that was done away when Einstein came with this theory of activity in which that constant point was no longer needed and everything became relative, earth related to cosmos and cosmos related to other cosmos and that is how a totally new explanation of the universe, its origins, its operation, its working was presented and in between a new methodology was developed which was not based on any axioms, any given constants, in fact where the central idea was that observation, experiment, formulation of hypothesis, acting of hypothesis through observation and experiment with given physical realities and if this hypothesis is verified we come to theories, laws on the basis of which prediction can be made. And if prediction are verified, this is enough to explain the physical world.

There was, however, a very important question of human beings - that was the vacuum. So in the 19<sup>th</sup> century efforts were made to find an explanation of the evolution of human beings also without reference to God. something which becomes self-explanatory. And there the contribution of Lamarck and the decisive contribution of Darwin be take note of. The scientific basis or otherwise is not the question at the moment. The point I want to bring home is that after explaining the universal, the physical world without reference to God. And for that theory of evolution played a critical role, a decisive role, and whatever weaknesses, gaps, contradictions, unresolved questions were there were by and large glossed over. That led to another area - the field of biology and field of medical sciences. And the last nail in the coffin was by Fraught who tried to plain the odds and behaviour of human beings in terms of stimuli, sub-conscious, the whole question of mind as something having a dimension beyond matter that was diluted. This led to in the biological science development of the Behaviourist school . Watsons work where a mechanistic explanation of the human was done. So now the soul was reduced to mind and mind explained away in the form of certain laws and instruments. Whole of this process was a gigantic effort to shut the lights off It is correct humans from the transcendent and the divine to deny the spiritual which is the link between the physical and the eternal. It is led to a concept of man. was self-sufficient and did not need any beyond, a concept of the universe which was not only self-contained but manipulate.

Science was not merely discovery of knowledge, it was also an instrument to manipulate knowledge, to use knowledge, to change the world. Religion was either given out of the field or marginalised. Spiritual values were denied. Truth no longer remained absolute, it became relative. Nothing was final, everything was changeable and human beings could in the same way be manipulated as the physical world can be. The whole question of social reform became an agenda of social policy. All the social sciences which developed during this period broadly followed the pattern of natural sciences and Divine origin of knowledge. Divine link to the physical world and moral framework for human actions. Both these links were This is how secularization of knowledge, discipline and policies took place, with the result that at the intellectual level it produced scepticism in place of certainty. At the social level and at the moral level it produced relativism as against absolute values, point of reference, rules of conduct, norms, which could set standard of life, which could tell human beings what ought to be. what is good and bad. what is justice. Everything became relative. And that is how a highly exploitative, unjust, man-centred society was created On the one hand in (the physical world, in the science and technology, economic development, political power, military strength great achievements have been made. The use of power, the purposes for which power is (to be harnessed, the type of society that is to be created, model of man of woman, of society. of civilization - that is the area where worst crimes have been committed. Balance, equilibrium, poise in the light of individual society has been lost. A one dimensional man and society have been developed. And this is not in keeping with the reality. That is why there is a conflict in every soul: there is tension in every unit of society; there is conflict, clash in every area of life. And more we know, farther we move away from the vision of a humane society in Westland very beautifully capture this situation when he says all our knowledge to ignore, where is the life we have lost in living; where is the knowledge we have lost in information; the cycles of heaven in twenty centuries have brought us away from God and near to....

The role of religion in human society has been at least a four levels. The first and foremost link with the transcendent, link with the Creator, link with the reality, link with the source. Second, providing human beings with guidance, norms and values, rules of behaviour (hidayah): individual or social life -how is it to be ordered. Third, belief in A'kherah - life beyond. Soul is the medium through which human body becomes capable of playing a role and after death soul survives and we enter into the life beyond That is a link with the..... the continuity. And fourth, the concept that wrongs of this world would be corrected in the A'kherah. That is human life is based on justice, and justice is not possible unless there is a life after death where the wrongs of this existence could be corrected, rewarded or penalized. Islam presents (that integrated view where Allah the Creator even before man came to the world two very important even look place. First a communal with Allah -Alastu be Rabbekum....Qaloo bala - Second the creation of Adam and Eve. brings them a trial, giving them knowledge - Allama Adam al-asma- Istikhlaf. role of human beings, their vision and their sending down ...(Arabic) It is a vision and inspite all these dark shadows and despite all the efforts to switch off the light, the light was dimmed, many sources were darkened and characters like Hitler. Stalin and Masovich were created, yet light has always remained. And human beings earnings for God. it has never been Even among the scientists all the surveys show

that those who believe in God and those who do not believe in God. almost their numbers are equal and this proportion has never changed, even in the 20th century when two surveys were made for the beginning and end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century..... And I want to say that all the major philosophers of history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century .stalling from through Arnold Toyanbee " Study of History" Sorokin. We find that all of them are unanimous that while we have passed through the age of materialism, of alienation from God, but revival of civilization is possible only by going rediscovering God. the moral principle and some anchor the spiritual, the moral and religious. And extremely enough the contemporary intellectuals - I would conclude by referring three of them - Brezenski one of the leading American thinkers who was Adviser to Cartor his book "Out of Control" is very interesting where he evaluates the failures of the only remaining super power - USA and spells out 20 major weaknesses of America. At the concluding part the last point is most important where he says "An increasingly pervasive sense of spiritual cultural onslaught promoting values" Then he says the only future lies in the revival of spiritual values. Robert Nixon in his last book makes it very clear that America is great, but America can survive only if it can strengthen two of its foundations. He said ultimately the American people must look mainly to religion, the family and themselves as the Divine force for spiritual renewal He says only through spiritual awakening and revival of family. America can survive and can continue as a super power in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

And finally I would refer to Robert Waguls "Fourth Great Awakening and Future". He is an economic Nobel laureate and he says: "Although the world the grand children would be materially richer and contain fewer environmental risks better solutions than we have found".

So we conclude by reciting once again the verse once with which we started that yes. very serious, very widespread, very categoratic efforts have been made to switch off the light of spirituality, of Divine guidance, of Divine reality, of human roots in the Divine of the descendent dimension. Yet the light was never shut off, light can never be shut off and inshaallah the light will be completed in the lumen Yureddonea beafwahchim walau karehal kaferoon.

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