Synopsis of the Friday Sermon delivered by Ameer Mustapha Elturk on Nov. 7 & 21, 2014

“Dawah with Insight – Part 1”

The Islamic Worldview

The subject of dawah is of great importance for Muslims since it is they who will have to perform the prophetic task of guiding and calling people unto Allah (SWT). The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was instructed by Allah (SWT) to, “Say (O Prophet), ‘this is my path, I and all who follow me, call unto Allah with conscious insight (in conjunction with reason, basirah). And Glory be to Allah and I am not of those who associate partners with Him’” (Yusuf, 12:108).

The Prophet (SAW) in a very profound and timely hadith said, “Whoever is overtaken by death while seeking knowledge for the purpose of reviving Islam, there will be one level between him and the Prophets in Paradise.” The hadith informs of the greatest award and the highest position in Paradise, for those who seek Islamic knowledge for no other reason than reviving Islam. It also suggests that there will come a time when true Islam will be on the verge of extinction and needs resuscitation and revival.

The Prophet (SAW) prophesized that knowledge will one day disappear. Ziyad ibn Labeed reported, “The Prophet (SAW) said, “There will be a time when knowledge disappears.” I said, “O Messenger of Allah, how can knowledge disappear when we read the Qur’an, we teach it to our children and our children teach it to their children until the Day of Resurrection?” The Prophet said, “May your mother lose you, Ziyad! (An expression that means, ‘What are you saying O Ziad?’) I thought you were the wisest man in Madinah. Do not these Jews and Christians read the Torah and the Gospel but they do not act upon what is in them?”

It is now clear why one needs to acquire such knowledge. If Islamic revival is the real objective then we need to know what real Islam is. Unfortunately, the ummah today is practicing an adaptation of Islam, certainly not the kind that was established by the Prophet (SAW) and his noble companions (RAA), nor the Islam that progressed and was practiced by the rightly guided caliphs.

One might ask, is the Islam of ISIS the real Islam? Is the Islam of Al-Qaeda and Boko Haram the real Islam? If the answer is no (which it is), then what is the real Islam? And if the pursuit of knowledge is for the Islamic revival then it should be a priority so we may be effective not only in making dawah but also in reforming ourselves and our surrounding society.

There are two types of knowledge; acquired knowledge such as the physical and social sciences and revealed knowledge. The hadith stated above clearly addresses revealed knowledge, the knowledge of the Qur’an and hadith, the tradition of the prophet (SAW) based on the hidden revelation (wahi al-khafiyy) and inspiration. As
Allah (SWT) attested, "He (the Prophet) does not speak from his own desire, it is merely a revelation inspired (to him)" (al-Najm, 53:3-4).

With many ideologies present today, one must possess this type of knowledge and be able to convey it in a way that is understood by intellectuals or the elite of the society as well as common people. (The subject of “Calling with Wisdom, dawah bil-hikmah” and “Calling with Good Preaching, dawah bil-mawizah al-hasanah”, have been discussed in an earlier khutbah.)

Therefore, deep insight and knowledge of Islam and our faith is a necessary prerequisite for those who are serious about fulfilling their duty of dawah and want to be considered among the true followers of the Prophet (SAW).

The ayah from surat Yusuf quoted above, “Say this is my path, I and those who follow me, call unto Allah with basirah…” clearly mentions those followers who are sincere believers with conscious insight accessible to reason, with sure knowledge and with complete certainty.

The main source of acquiring this basirah, (pure, clear, and true knowledge) is the Book of Allah (SWT). The Prophet (SAW) imparted this knowledge to his disciples and companions (RAA) who are considered among the best of humanity. Their path was the same as that of the Prophet (SAW), as they called unto Allah with the same insight and knowledge.

Fortunately for us the knowledge that was imparted 1,400 years ago is documented and available to dive into to extract the pearls of wisdom for the purpose of reforming ourselves and our society.

Sadly, the world is flooded with ideologies and worldviews that make one puzzled and confused. Muslims are leaving Islam for lack of genuine knowledge and understanding of our faith. Atheism is on the rise due to lack of spiritual support and confidence in science alone.

Pagan Arabs, at one time, were also dazed and confused, Allah (SWT) sent Muhammad (SAW) to teach them and the rest of the world about themselves and the universe. The first thirteen years of his mission were dedicated to the teaching of the Islamic worldview, belief in Allah, belief in the hereafter (akhirah) and in the institution of prophethood.

Two fundamental questions must be asked; one, what is the reality of my existence and the world around me? Two, if the objective of learning is to revive Islam then what is Islam?

In brief, Islam is a system based on an ideology or a worldview. This ideology is called Tawheed or Unity of God. Tawheed is the basic philosophy of Islam. This philosophy is derived from a set of beliefs that are purely based on the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In other words, Iman (or faith in the unseen) is our ideology, creed and doctrine.

Moreover, Islam is a divinely inspired system or social order that is a complete code of life for the benefit of humankind. Islam, unlike Communism, Socialism, Capitalism and Secularism, which are manmade social orders, is a comprehensive social, political and economic order based on Divine guidance.

But Islam’s social order will not succeed unless one understands the Islamic thought and worldview. In order to truly understand and appreciate the philosophy of Islam we need to look at the big picture.

We need to investigate and ask the very basic, fundamental and philosophical questions: what is the reality of my existence and the world around me? Who are we? Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? What is the purpose of my existence? What is the purpose of this vast universe? Was it created, has it been

1 Visit www.ionaonline.org for the audio lectures and synopsis.
there forever, is it going to remain here forever? What happens to me when I die? Is this life the only life or is there another life? Among many other questions that left sages and philosophers dumbfounded for centuries.

Unless one is aware of and familiar with other worldviews one will not appreciate the Islamic worldview. The Naturalism worldview of atheists, agnostics and existentialists believe that the material universe is one-dimensional and is all that exists. There is no such thing as spirit or soul. Everything can be explained on the basis of natural law. They view man as absolutely material and as the chance product of a biological evolution. They believe that human species will one day cease to exist.

To them Truth is discerned from scientific proof only. Only what is verified by the five senses is real and true. They believe morals are individual preferences or socially useful behavior. In other words no objective values and morals exist.

On the other hand, consider the Pantheism worldview, Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists, and New Ageists among others subscribe to this worldview. Their beliefs are diametrically opposite to Atheism. They believe that only spiritual dimensions exist and everything else is an illusion. Brahman (or God), is eternal, impersonal and unknowable. In other words, they believe everything that exists is part of God or that God is in everything and everyone. They believe man is spiritual, eternal, and impersonal. To believe that you are an individual is an illusion.

They see Truth as the experience of unity with the “oneness” of the universe; Truth is beyond all rational description. They believe that there is no distinction between good and evil. Instead, “unenlightened” behavior is that which fails to understand essential unity.

The Islamic worldview on the other hand teaches the existence of a personal God who created a finite material world and that reality is both material and spiritual. The Universe as we see it has a beginning and an end. Humans are a special creation of God. They are personal, eternal, spiritual and biological.

The Islamic creed teaches that the Truth about God is known only through revelation. Metaphysical truths are also known through revelations while the truth about the material world is gained through both revelation and the five senses in conjunction with rational thought. Moral values are the objective expression of an absolute moral being.

It is through delving into the Qur’an and Prophetic hadith that we may understand the true reality of our existence and the universe around us. Learning and genuinely believing in such knowledge will help us shed all false worldviews. It will help us live this temporary life in a peaceful and harmonious way with other fellow human beings and the environment.

Lastly, our intention in this pursuit of knowledge must be purely for the sake of improving and reforming ourselves while assisting in the process of the Islamic revival. Otherwise, the knowledge acquired may only serve our ego.

May Allah (SWT) support us as we seek such knowledge for such a noble cause, ameen.