

Third Speech in the Conference: 'The Muslim Youth... Pioneers of Real Change'

The Youth Represent the Best Opportunity

(Translated)

States, organisations and human societies have long been concerned with the youth – this is true today and will continue to be so. This is due to what accompanies this stage in terms of physical and mental development, which makes this age group the most prepared and open to activeness, vitality, creativity, excellence, leadership, zeal, endurance, generosity, sacrifice and progress amongst other beautiful qualities.

In the cultural globalization that we live in today, it is noticeable that the word 'youth' is connected in the minds of many to the stage in which the greatest proportion of bodily pleasure is sought, and the love for fun, joking and staying up late (or wasting time) are most prominent within it. This is reflected in concerns for a variety of flavours of sport and art. It is this stage in life that the Coca Cola Company advertising campaign summed up in their slogan for this year: "*Taste the Moment*". The giant company did not only create this slogan only but it was also accompanied by a deliberate style of writing 'Coca-Cola', a specific design for the red disk, the external appearance for the bottle and a regiment of recruited celebrities to promote this product. The global Coca Cola media campaign condenses its message to carry its values along with the western philosophy about life in regards to the relationship of the human with the universe and life in a number of seconds.

The media numbs the one on the receiving end so that he surrenders to its message, follows it and accepts the contents of any coded or hidden messages. The societies in the Muslim lands have become weak consumer societies after having been productive and progressive. The problem is not in the culture of consumption alone but extends to the corruption of the states and erosion of the identity. The Arab televised media, since its beginning, has portrayed the young person, characterised by the western culture in his speech, clothing and general tastes, as being representative of the developed, balanced and happy individual. This is whilst the one who is committed to Islam is portrayed as having an unbalanced and dismal personality. It represents a media stench that is oblivious to the disparity between the culture of the young Muslim who thinks, interacts, produces and works within the framework of the Hukm Ash-Shar'i to illuminate his path, and between "*Taste the moment*" which lives just for the moment whilst limiting happiness to short-lived sensual or bodily pleasures or satisfaction. But it is the cultural penetration and intellectual globalism being forcefully imposed upon us in the Muslim world, that seeks to make their concepts about life that spring from other than our ideology, the great Deen of Islam, the concepts that we adopt, defend and work to concentrate within our societies, even if they are in opposition to our Aqeedah and viewpoint about life.

The media portrays the youth as being an age group that seizes the moments of happiness and dedicate themselves to searching for pleasures whilst at the very same time they go over the top in respect to lamenting the reality of the youth and their problems in terms of unemployment, free-time, wasting time and depression. They besiege the youth with negative images, of crime, drugs, depravity and corrupted morals and focus upon these behaviours and negative models until this becomes a fixed idea applied upon the youth and increases them in misery. The media does not endeavour to implant a positive image that spreads hope and shows the youth that this stage in life represents the stage of achievement, progression and development. And that is because this media does not work to elevate the Ummah.

My Honourable Sisters...

In the world today with the continual development of the means of connection and communication, the ability of the one possessing money and influence to spread one's thoughts and promote them has become great. The television, radio and print media in its different forms penetrate the world from its furthest part to its nearest without any significant obstacles. And so they enter every house, its sound resounds in every ear whilst its picture grabs hold of every eye. These styles of media work to send a message to the youth in a practise to dampen thought. So it does not present the real problems of daily life in a serious, subjective and unbiased manner and if it was to do so then it would only be for the purpose of taking the very direction that the

owner of the channel or media medium, whatever it may be, is content with. They work on agitating instincts and tickling the emotions and stirring them without any noteworthy use or benefit that is hoped for, offering nothing other than a negative influence. The systematic distraction via the local, continental and international football matches continues almost unabated. One match or competition does not come to an end except that it is followed by another. Whoever is saved from attachment to football is presented with wrestling, car racing and other different forms of wasting time. We don't hear any mention of our brothers in Cameroon, the Ivory Coast or Gambia unless it is within the context of the African Cup, as if the bonds of brotherhood are restricted to the football series!!

The one who is not interested in sports is told he must conquer the world with his buried talents whether in singing, drawing, dancing, fashion shows or acting. In all of this, he is open to spending his money and time alongside the other spenders. They deceive and entice him to look for his talent in indulgence and triviality so that he wastes himself in searching for everything that is not noble. Television programmes, competitions and activities to search for artistic talents fail to address the frustrations of the truly talented and those working in the fields of scientific research and inventions, and those who excel. The media sedates the youth whilst the emigration of minds continues and the processions of scientists and those who are outstanding continue to leave a land that has denied their excellence and frustrated their talents.

The media has distorted the image of the society within the Muslim lands, defaced the true realities and corrupted the taste of the youth whilst reflecting an image that is contradictory to the reality of this society. So the female is narcissistic and spoiled and has no preoccupation apart from powdering her face, fashion and cooking programmes, while the male is selfish and elusive with multiple relationships, whereas the societal relationships are based upon materialism, benefit delusions and false emotions. I can recall at this point the *Book of Songs* by Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, a book of collections of poems and conversation that distorted the history of the early period of Islam and the image of the Golden Age of the Islamic civilisation that filled the eyes and ears and dazzled the world as a whole, when he restricted it to the maids, palaces and rarities of the kings! The Muslim society was portrayed to represent a languid society in which amusement prevailed and desires dominated within it. A society that lived for the moment and 'Tasting the moment'. We should not overlook that this book was published in its first edition in the West; the orientalist took interest in it and recruited an army of investigators and critics to raise its status for their own aims.

In the world today, the state plays a pivotal and central role in assisting the media in undertaking its role. Therefore, it is the state that provides licences to private mediums to practise their work and support them morally and ethically. This is in the cases where the government is not the actual owners of the media and its support base. That which our youth are exposed to in our Islamic lands, in other words, is an organised systematic attack that seeks to concentrate the concepts that are contrary to our viewpoint about life. They make our youth, our own children, place no value in respect to our rapid efforts. These are the efforts that began to provide fruits in the huge process of change and the blessed revolutions of the Ummah, the spark of which began in Tunisia 'the green goodness'. The colonialist states and the custodians of globalisation stand behind this intellectual order and support it morally and materially. The owners of the private television channels and other media, who have adopted their thought and proceeded upon their path, represent the spearhead in terms of the implementation of this attack. Standing alongside them and indeed in front of them is the ruling class in the Muslim lands who have adopted the same methodology and ideas, enabling those to spread their corrupt and declined culture that we witness today.

The repeated media message is 'Leave yourself to us and don't leave the comfortable velvety couch... Why should you spring into action when you can see, discuss, cook, practise sport all whilst you are in front of the television? Why spring into action whilst it is within your capability to undertake political mobilisation and interact with the events, when you can sit upon your velvet couch watching TV and using communication sites?' It is as if the media is demanding the youth abandon their roles as pioneers for real change and instead accept feigned enjoyment, to waste the most beautiful years of their life and not accept any responsibility. As if the youth are not entrusted and qualified to undertake that.

My Distinguished Sisters...

When the child is raised in the embrace of smart phones and games without discipline or controls and become youth without limits to each of their actions and behaviours, then there is no wonder that we see the current abyss present within many families with the exception of those whom the Rabb (Lord) has been merciful to. After having in the past raised our young to make use of his youth before his old age, his health before his sickness and for him to strive and push himself in his young age to attain (reward) when he is older and to turn with the grinding wheel of Islam, to drink from the spring of knowledge and increase his provision of noble qualities and morals, after that, we have come to treat the youth like the one who is passing through death... The youth is present in the house with his body but absent in his soul and emotions, living far from his particular minaret. And so the statement of the poet became a reality:

A people have died but their virtues have not

And a people have lived whilst they are amongst the dead

The media and its mediums are a weapon that is a double-sided blade. From one angle they open up horizons to the person and enable that person to communicate, proceed and benefit, whilst from another side they direct one's thinking, influence behaviour and make one a sponge to absorb every deviant thought and every extreme path... He is drawn by the winds without having any power (to resist).

To confront this challenge, it is necessary to revise and understand the Islamic view towards this age group. Have they been specified with anything in particular in terms of Ahkam (rulings)? And has a special standing and regard been made for them?

To counter this media reach and pressure that disfigures the identity of the Muslim youth, it must have an equally strong force and be opposite in its direction. It requires a media force established upon ideological bases that reject the separation of the Deen from life, a media that is established within the scope of a complete organisation that treats the problems of the Muslims upon the basis of the Hukm Shar'ii. This media pollution is impossible to confront with a limited Islamic media that addresses specific groups and as a consequence does not have an impact upon the society. Rather it necessitates a radical change for the society that restores the affairs to what they should be and accomplishes the balance between the Aqeedah of the Ummah, its culture and the media address directing it. This matter can appear to be a hard task however what makes it easier is the great Islam becoming rooted within the life of the Muslims.

The subservient media has found a fertile ground and found youth suffering from an intellectual and emotional vacuum, revolting against their reality and thirsty for change. However, it is a revolution that revolves in a limited and fixed orbit... It is a revolution that lacks an objective and so it is essential to focus upon this objective so that matters can be set right... It is essential to stir the thinking, strengthen the Islamic identity and concentrate the meaning of worship to Allah.

Let the cry rise up from around us and let the remembrance of Allah remain the most beautiful... Subhaanallah Wal-Hamdu Lillah Wa Laa Ilaaha Illallah Wallahu Akbar.

﴿وَالْبَاقِيَاتُ الصَّالِحَاتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ أُمَّلًا﴾

“But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one's] hope” [Al-Kahf: 46].

﴿سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ * وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ * وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ﴾

“Exalted is your Lord, the Lord of might, above what they describe. And peace upon the messengers. And praise to Allah, Lord of the worlds” [As-Safaat: 180-182].

Written by

Huda Muhammad (Umm Yahya)