

ARTICLE

Have we returned to the days of Jahiliyyah?

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A cursory survey of the condition of the Ummah indicates that it has not escaped the terrible rot of degeneration and decadence that has overtaken the whole world. It is as though the Ummah has returned to Jahiliyyah (the dark ages of ignorance) along with the other nations of the world, despite being blessed with guidance and a beautiful Deen like Islam. The Ummah actually should have been showing the road to others and served as the guides to suffering mankind, but alas, the guides have themselves become lost and astray, so how would they be able to carry out their task and mission of guiding others!

A Glimpse of Jahiliyyah

What happened in the days of Jahiliyyah? Much can be written on this but in a jist, it was the worst of times to be living in the world. The strong and mighty oppressed and exploited the weak. The strong and mighty treated all others with utmost disdain and scorn. They were arrogant, proud and ruthless. They worshipped power and wealth - these were the only 'gods' they knew. The entire purpose of their living was to enjoy life and have fun and pleasure. Beyond the materialistic world, they knew nothing of a spiritual world. The strong and powerful did not believe in the rights of others in the first place, so the question of fulfilling of rights did not even arise.

On the other hand, the weak and down trodden awaited the first opportunity to rise and seek vengeance from the strong, and this was done without any regard for justice, mercy and compassion. Wives, daughters, women and orphans suffered the most. People fought over petty issues. Disunity, suspicion, enmity, hatred and harming others were the order of the day. People were cunning and shrewd, awaiting the first opportunity to deceive, trick and rob others. Exploitation was the order of the day. They spoke the worst of lies with the straightest of faces. There was no honesty, no modesty, no dignity, no shame, no values, no principles. The law of the jungle was the only law that prevailed. It was like the animal kingdom, if not worse. Mankind suffered terribly in those dark days. After this long, dark night, came the bright and brilliant morning of Islam, that brought relief and hope to the suffering world.

Today's Jahiliyyah

In our times, all of the conditions that prevailed in the Jahiliyyah days have returned to the world. The only difference is that it is disguised with a thin veneer and cover, so it is not seen so clearly. However, it is very evident for those who are able to see it. Leaving aside the non-Muslim community, if we look at the Muslim Ummah alone, how many of the attitudes and practices of Jahiliyyah are not found in us today?

The Arrogant and Wasteful Wealthy

Do we not see the wealthy puffed up with arrogance and pride? Their disdainful attitude towards the less wealthy is so glaring! How they flaunt their wealth! Whilst millions around them are grovelling in debilitating poverty, they squander huge sums in frivolous and vain pursuits and pleasures! Look at the

wasteful week-long wedding ceremonies of today! There is a mad frenzy to outdo one another in lavishness and extravagance. This is how the wealthy behaved in the days of Jahiliyyah!

Ill-gotten Wealth

Then, how is this wealth earned? The sad reality is in many cases, it is earned through exploitation, cunningness, dishonesty, unscrupulous and unethical ways! How many scams and scandals are not being uncovered in which Muslim names feature prominently nowadays? How many have very knowingly bought and profited from stolen goods, without a care in the world? How many are ruthless and merciless in making their claims and demands!

How many are driven by sheer greed and exploitation to make the most no matter what it takes! How many are there who care nothing of the hard-pressed who stands to lose everything and depend on their mercy, but will not bother to show any mercy, despite having the means to do so? They seem to enjoy kicking and trampling on those who have already fallen down! How many have used loopholes to evade and avoid paying their rightful debts and dues? How many a debt remains unpaid but the debtors have built up huge empires, and gone for Umrah after Umrah? All of this is done without a tinge of guilty conscience. In fact, people are quite proud and pleased about their 'achievements' in making money like this! This is how it was in the days of jahiliyyah!

Devices that promote Vices

Look at the craving for fun, pleasure and entertainment that consumes the lives and energies of the Ummah! Parties, shows, outings, dining out, movies, fares, functions and so forth, night after night, week after week is now the norm for many. The insatiable crave for gadgets and 'toys of entertainment' has overtaken young and old. Video games, PSPs, fancy mobile phones, DVD players, Dish TV, MP3 players, ipods, hand-held devices, etc. is the fashionable in-thing that consumes unlimited hours of time, leaving no time even for essential tasks in the lives of the youth. The vices of these devices is too well known. Indulgence in Haraam through these 'toys' in the form of pornography, music, vulgarity, images, etc. is the most beloved pastime of the youth. The behaviour of young boys and girls is so disgusting, that it is not worthy of going into details. All vestiges of modesty and shame are gone. Is this not what happened in jahiliyyah?

Trampling of Rights

The dark face of jahiliyyah was the rampant zulm and trampling of rights and ignoring of duties. How the weak and oppressed struggle for justice and fairness in today's jahiliyyah order, especially women! How prevalent is this not even in the Muslim community today? How many wives (and husbands) spend their lives in silent suffering and misery, because their spouses will not bother to fulfil their rights! If they dare to ask, it results in greater conflict and oppression. How many are they who resort to open abuse - physical, verbal, financial, emotional, mental and psychological, to oppress their partners?

After the years of abuse if the marriage eventually breaks, the bitterness and resentment at this time results in even further oppression. How many a malicious husband will withhold Talaq although they have no intention of continuing the marriage, just to punish and frustrate the woman? How many a divorced wife will not allow the father to visit his own children, out of spite? How many are they who will

not bother to pay maintenance towards their children after divorce, leaving the burden on the poor, divorced woman and her family to bear, whilst they enjoy with other women? How many take second wives for the fun of it and in secret, in many cases, and are hopelessly unable to fulfil the right of either of the two thereafter? Is this not a return to the order of jahiliyyah!

Family Ties and Sound Values

Long standing family relationships are shredded for petty reasons. Blood brothers and sisters are not on talking terms for months and years for trivial matters. Disunity, suspicion, malice and hatred have become the norm in many families. Even where there is no enmity, family relationships are weak and superficial. Nobody has time to visit family, and those who do, are not welcome anyway! Preference is given to friends over family.

Long established traditions, based on sound values and principles, have been thrown out of the window, and replaced with an artificial, vain and hollow lifestyle. Simplicity, hospitality, generosity, honesty, modesty, dignity, piety and other wonderful values are brushed aside as unimportant, and even scoffed at as being orthodox and old-fashioned, just as it was in the days of jahiliyyah!

The Remedy and Solution

The solution and remedy for this jahiliyyah was offered fourteen hundred years ago, and still remains the same today. The answers all lie within the Quran, the Hadith and Sunnah, and the guidance of the pious predecessors, and their righteous followers. If only the Ummah would seriously turn to this treasure, we will be rescued from the crushing grip of this modern-day jahiliyyah and we will be able to take up our rightful position of helping mankind to escape from its clutches as well, Insha-Allah. This is what our Creator wants from us and this is what the world expects of us Muslims!