

THE ROLE OF
ULAMA
IN FACING
CONTEMPORARY
CHALLENGES

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This lecture was delivered on Thursday, 12 December 2019 at a dedicated programme for Ulama at the Darul Ihsan Centre's new premises in Sea Cow Lake, Durban, South Africa. A large number of Ulama, including senior Ulama gathered for this programme and were given some thought provoking advices by the guest of honour, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani Saheb (hafizahullah).



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INTRODUCTION

The status and position of the Ulama as leaders and guides of the Muslim community is an undisputable reality. The Ulama are in fact the heirs of the *Ambiya alayhimus salaam* in the sense of being their spiritual successors and representatives of their mission on earth. As such it is extremely important for Ulama to understand the onerous responsibility they have to shoulder. Additionally, it is imperative for Ulama to be fully equipped to fulfil this role and duty with competence and excellence. It is a favour upon the Ulama that the senior Ulama and elders keep reminding them and empowering them with useful and beneficial advices on how to go about fulfilling their responsibilities.

This lecture delivered by a leading and senior-most scholar of our times, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani (Hafizahullah) at Darul Ihsan Centre on Thursday, 12 December 2019 is an excellent discourse that sets out the subject in a captivating manner using the analogy of the stars as sources of guidance in the darkness of the night. Senior Ulama were present at the lecture and found it very informative and beneficial. It is a valuable resource especially for young Ulama and should be read repeatedly to gain maximum ben-

efit. By the grace of Allah Ta'ala the lecture was translated, transcribed and published by Darul Ihsan Centre. We make dua that Allah Ta'ala accept this humble effort and reward all who were associated with this publication in anyway.

Mufti Zubair Bayat
Ameer, Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre
13 Muharram 1442 / 2 September 2020

Bismillahi Rahmanir Raheem

All Praise is due to Allah, Peace, blessings and salutations upon our Master Muhammad *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*.

My respected and honourable Ulama, among who there are some senior scholars present, friends and colleagues. When a person is in the company of his own fraternity, then it feels as if he is in the company of his close family relatives.

South Africa is a long distance from where I have come. I have come to this country from the Asian subcontinent, which is a 12-hour flight from here. All thanks and praise to Allah Ta'ala.

THE UNIQUE EFFORT AND VISION OF OUR PIOUS ELDERS

It is most heart-warming to know that Islamic institutes (Darul Uloom) have been established in this country along the very pattern of the syllabus and system established in the subcontinent by our elders, Hazrat Maulana Qasim Nanotwi *rahimahullah* and his colleagues. This is a source of great pleasure and a testimony to the deep insight, sincerity, and vision of these great elders. Their efforts have been blessed with global acceptance.

The extent of acceptance achieved by Hazrat Maulana Qasim Nanotwi *rahimahullah* may have never crossed even his own mind,

the reach of his humble efforts have exceeded all expectations – no one would have imagined that a small seed planted in Deoband, far away from the hustle and bustle of Delhi would have achieved such distinction in the world. The blessings of our elders has spread far and wide from North to the South, East to West and encompassed the entire world.

We pray that Allah Ta’ala send His special mercies upon our pious elders and grant us the ability to follow in their blessed footsteps and through it let the light of Islam spread to the far corners of the world.

My respected friends, whatever I am going to say today is not a lecture, where I speak and you listen, rather this is a mutual discussion – just as students revise the lesson learnt for that day – so regard this as the revision of the day’s lesson. The lesson I have learnt from my teachers, will be revised and refreshed with the help of each other here.

ULAMA ARE LIKE THE STARS IN THE HEAVENS

Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* has mentioned in a hadith that the status and importance of Ulama in this world is like the position of the stars in the sky. The function of the stars is to give light and direction to the inhabitants of the earth. In the past people travelling in the desert and dark waters of the sea were able to find their way through the ‘guidance’ of the stars. Today, there are many technological instruments that are able to give a person directions – through radar and satellite technology aeroplanes and other modes

of travel are able to find their destinations.

The hadith further says that when these stars are extinguished and their light no longer shines, then people will not be able to find direction. This example has been cited to explain the responsibility of Ulama – that in whichever environment Ulama find themselves they should shine and become a means of guidance for that community.

AN ALIM IS LIKE A LANTERN

In another hadith it is mentioned that the example of an Alim is like a lantern. A lantern burns itself and gives light to those around it. An Alim ‘burns’ himself out to provide guidance to people. There is an important lesson here – we generally assume that in this hadith there is a glad tiding for Ulama, however whilst the virtue is mentioned, the responsibility is also clearly spelt out. Only when a person will sacrifice himself and be a source of guidance for others will he be regarded to be a true Alim. We need to ponder over this, what are our responsibilities? To what extent are we delivering on our responsibilities?

CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY IS TO GUIDE PEOPLE

The first and most important responsibility of an Alim is to give guidance to people. The verse of the Qur’an says, “*And by means of the stars they are guided.*” (Surah An Nahl – Verse 16). People find the straight path through the guidance of an Alim. An Alim should give guidance to people in every aspect of human life.

One such responsibility is Imamatus. This is such a responsibility that is a direct function of *Nubuwwat*. From all the works of Deen, Imamatus is one that is directly related to the mantle of *Nubuwwat*. Ulama teach and do other Deeni work – however these works are not conducted in the precise format of their origination – some modification has taken place. However, Imamatus is such a duty that remains unchanged from the time of its origin in the era of Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*. The number of rakaats have remained the same, the style and method of Salah remains unchanged.

THE IMAM IS RESPONSIBLE

The responsibility of an Alim is to provide guidance to the people in all aspects of life. Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* has said “**The Imam is responsible.**” We have limited this understanding to the validity and invalidity of Salah. However, in reality the Imam is responsible for his congregation in all aspects of their lives.

The degree of concentration and devotion in the Salah of Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* is recorded in the hadith – his devotion and level of communication with Allah Ta’ala is well known, however in his Salah, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* use to monitor the Salah of the Sahabah *radiyallahu anhum* through the ends of his eyes. Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* use to glance to the right and left to ensure the Sahabah *radiyallahu anhum* are performing their Salah correctly – and if any error was detected then he would advise the person about it after Salah.

TIME GIVEN TO CORRECT SALAH OF ONE UMMATI

It is recorded in a narration of Bukhari Shareef that there was a young companion who came to the Masjid and performed four quick rakaats of Salah. Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* observed him performing his Salah and when he completed, said to him, “Repeat your Salah as you have not performed Salah.” The companion repeated his Salah and Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* asked him to repeat it again as it was still incorrect. In some narrations it appears that this happened several times. Eventually this companion said, O’Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*, this is how I perform Salah - so Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* advised him that when you perform Salah it should be done with *ta’del* – meaning the postures should be performed correctly and calmly.

So this is a *Fiqhi* discussion as we know, to consider the different aspects of Salah in terms of its validity - however the point to ponder over here is; in order to rectify the Salah of one *Ummati*, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* gave him his personal time to observe him perform twelve rakaats of Salah and kept guiding him. Can any person be more occupied than a Nabi, however for the rectification of the Salah of one *Ummati*, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* dedicated so much time ...

RECTIFYING ERRORS IN THE SALAH OF OUR MUSALLEES

What is our condition? We have been making Imamat for years, yet the errors in the Salah of our *musallees* remain as they were since

day one. Have we sat down the youth and offered to listen to their recitation of Surah *Fatiha*, *Sana*, *Tashahhud*? They continue reciting incorrectly – in some instances we find some people remain silent in Salah without reciting anything, they do not move their lips, possibly reciting *qira'at* in their hearts or minds, yet we know that in *qira'at* the lips must move otherwise the obligation of *qira'at* will not be fulfilled.

In many Masjids, you find if a '*muqem*' performs Salah behind a *musafir* then how does he complete his Salah? I would think 80% do it incorrectly – this is not their fault, it is ours – we have not taken the trouble to teach and explain these aspects – we have regarded our 'job' to perform the Salah and leave. But we have no real concern about how the Salah is being performed by our *musallees* and whether they are doing things correctly. This is as far as Salah is concerned. However, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* gave guidance to the *ummah* in all aspects of life. All matters minor and major were taught.

DELAYING SALAH TO RESOLVE A DISPUTE BETWEEN TWO MUSLIMS

We have learnt that the *Takbeer Ula* of Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* was missed only in his last illness and some Salah were made *qaza* in the battle of Khandaq when the battle was very intense. However, *Takbeer Ula* was only missed when he was genuinely unable to make it to the *Masjid*.

Yet when it came to the attention of Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*

that in the *Qabila Banu Salama* (a clan in Madinah), two Muslims were locked in a dispute, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* went to the area of *Banu Salama* as there was a Masjid there also. Some companions accompanied Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*. The accompanying Sahabah were requested to wait at the Masjid whilst Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* visited the disputing parties to help resolve the problem. In the effort to help them overcome their issues, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* spent so much of time explaining to them and guiding them that some feared the Asar Salah will be missed. After waiting for some time, Hazrat Ali *radiyallahu anhu* and Hazrat Bilal *radiyallahu anhu* asked Abu Bakr *radiyallahu anhu* to perform the Asar Salah. Hazrat Abu Bakr *radiyallahu anhu* due to his humility and soft nature declined to go forward. Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf *radiyallahu anhu* was then requested – he went ahead and commenced the Salah. As the Salah was in progress, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* arrived. Upon realising the return of Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*, Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf *radiyallahu anhu* began stepping back from the *musalla* to allow Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* to continue with the Salah. However, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* indicated to him to continue and performed his Salah behind Hazrat Abdur Rahman bin Auf *radiyallahu anhu*.

Let us ponder and reflect on this episode! Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* displayed such concern for a matter of dispute between two parties that he tolerated being delayed for his *Jama'at Salah*, when besides missing the *Jama'at Salah* in his last illness Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* never delayed or missed his *Jama'at Salah*. Such

was the importance was given to resolving a dispute between fellow Muslims.

Let us reflect, as Imams are we doing this effort today? If there is a fight between two parties, or a family dispute between children and parents or there is a marital problem somewhere and if the issue is not reconciled then it could lead to a divorce, are we willing to assist? Do we regard this as our responsibility, or do we feel if we perform our five Salah then we have done our job? People are left to resolve their disputes how they want. We need to inculcate the worry for the Ummah within us.

TRAINING PEOPLE TO TAKE UP POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Let us look at this incident from another angle. In the presence of Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* no Sahabi wished to make Imamat. However, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* in his last illness and in this incident where Abdur Rahman bin Auf *radiyallahu anhu* went forward to perform the Salah, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* allowed him to continue, as he had the concern for training and preparing individuals for responsibility in future. There is a great need for people to be trained in a manner that they are able respond to and fulfil the Deeni needs of people. We learn from this prophetic approach that all these aspects are incorporated into the responsibility of the Imam.

CONCERN ABOUT THE LIVELIHOOD OF PEOPLE

Similarly, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* was concerned about the livelihood and financial well-being of his companions. Near the fort of *Banu Qaynuqa* there was a market place of the Jews where the Muslims use to trade. On one occasion, a Muslim woman had taken her goods to sell in that market when a mischievous and uncouth person lifted her clothing and exposed her *aura*. The Muslims were furious and enraged by this cowardly act and besides protesting this vile action, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* made an effort to establish the *Souqul Madinah*, so Muslims could trade safely. Just as Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* established *Masjidun Nabawi and the Suffah*, he also established the market place of Madinah Munawwarah. Today, in Madinah Munawwarah, in the direction of the *Qibla*, there is a market place located there, which was the original market place established by Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*. So we learn from this that Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* made an effort for the livelihood and business propositions of Muslims also.

To give support to people in all aspects of life is a major responsibility of the Uama - to be concerned about the challenges and conditions that afflict Muslims is a duty of the Ulama.

VISIT TO BANGLADESH AND ADDRESS TO THE ULAMA

I had visited Bangladesh and found huge institutions established by the Ulama – institutions much bigger than the Madrasahs in India. In terms of the numbers, comparatively to India and Paki-

stan, the Madrasahs in Bangladesh were much bigger and Muslims are in larger numbers with Masjids well attended. When given the opportunity to address the Ulama, I congratulated them on these achievements and stated that this was really pleasing and encouraging to see so much of good work being undertaken, however it seems that in certain other areas of Muslim need, such progress and effort has not been made. It seems there is a lack of interest in other critical areas of Muslim practice. There was no visibility of Ulama in any of the Islamic banks in the country as key positions which should be held by Ulama, were occupied by ordinary people. The Bangladesh government has a Muslim leadership and membership wherein there should be Ulama representation, yet there was a clear absence of Ulama in these structures. Similarly, in other positions of influence and importance in the country it was found that Ulama had little or no representation and these areas were mainly taken up by non Ulama.

The order of the world does not and cannot run on Imamah and Madrasah alone. We learn that Hazrat Sheikhul Hind *rahimahullah* had established the *Jamiatul Hukumat* in Afghanistan in the time of the colonial British rule – together with other Ulama like Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi *rahimahullah* and some of his students with the purpose of participation in these key areas of service.

SOUTH AFRICAN ULAMA HAVE COMMAND OVER THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

In this country (South Africa), these concerns and responsibilities should be driven by the Ulama as you have command of the En-

glish language which is the first language of the world today. With command over language, an Alim can influence many areas of public life. Limiting oneself to the Masjid and Madrasah is insufficient. Most definitely the responsibility of the Madrasah and Masjid is great and important, however broader Ulama representation in different fields like law, finance, civil institutions, etc. is important.

As an example, in India today, the cases of MPL, Babri Masjid, etc. that require technical expertise are all handled and represented by Hindu attorneys. Muslims in India do not have the calibre of attorneys to represent their Muslim community in the Supreme court of India. Ulama should become influential and guide people in all areas of their social lives.

ULAMA SHOULD OCCUPY POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY

Another important aspect to remember is the Qur'an Shareef has mentioned, *"We have beautified the heavens with lanterns and made them to pelt the Shayateen..."* (Surah Mulk – Verse 5). The entire space from the earth to the heavens has been beautified by these stars. Ulama have been likened to stars in their ability to guide and adorn, so it follows that Ulama should take a position of beauty in terms of their responsibilities. Every item has its beauty according to its function – the beauty of a house is adorning it with those items that decorate a house. An Alim's beauty is his character, manners, work and the way he carries himself. This is not related to physical beauty as an Alim is recognised through his actions. People look up to him as a person of outstanding qualities and good character.

An Alim's conduct in relation to *awaam* (ordinary people) must be better and more refined.

ADVICE TO AN ALIM WHO COMPLAINED ABOUT HIS COMMITTEE

In a certain community people had some complaints about the Imam, so I was requested to assist in the matter. I called on that Alim and advised him. The Alim complained that the trustees were guilty of committing many wrongs themselves. One of them was a bank employee and another was involved in some other prohibited occupation, etc. I asked him whether he ever gave a lecture on the prohibition and harms of interest. He replied in the negative – so I questioned him as to why he hasn't done so and strongly urged him to. I reminded him that the *mimbar* is his platform and it is for the purpose of the guidance of the community. The trustees do not enjoy this privilege of speaking to the community from the Masjid platform and no one can stop the Imam from speaking the truth.

I further advised him to uphold his position of integrity as the Imam. Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* has given us the maxim for an Imam, i.e. the one who is most learned in *Qira'at* has the first right to perform the *Salah* – if all are equal in this regard then the most learned in *Shariah* and the laws of *Salah* – if all are equal in this regard, then the one who displays the most *Taqwa* in his life, and if all are equal in this regard then the one who is eldest as this is also one measure of seniority in a person.

So Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* has given criteria for who can be

the Imam but there is no such criteria for the *awaam*! There is no criteria to say that the *muqtadi* must be a good reciter or learned or pious - the *muqtadi* can be on any level - he could be a drunkard or a rough person, he could also be a sinner and transgressor, whoever he is, there is no criteria for a *muqtadi*. Should he present himself in the Masjid, no one can stop him from coming and performing *Salah*. So I advised this Alim that he should not make *qiyas* and judge himself in relation to the *awaam*. Thus we learn that for Ulama, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* specified criteria, whilst there are no criteria specified for the *muqtadi* and *awaam*, to this extent we find that even hypocrites use to perform Salah behind Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*.

So I reiterate, as Ulama our level of practice should be higher than that of the ordinary folk.

STORY OF A SHAYKH WHOSE TALK BECAME MEANS OF A SLAVE'S FREEDOM

Shaykh Awwamah (*Hafizahullah*) - may Allah grant him a long life - is a prominent Alim who many of you have heard of. He has written a book titled *Al Muallimul Irshadiyyah* - it is a very good book which Ulama should read. In this book he mentions an incident that occurred either in Damascus or Halab - there was a great Alim who use to give Fatwa and people had a lot of confidence in him. The governor of the locality who was a Turkish national use to attend the Shaykh's Jumuah lectures and use to bring his slave with him. One day it happened such that everyone was greeting

this Alim – the Governor’s slave also greeted and made *musafahah* with him and took him aside and requested the Shaykh to give a lecture on the virtues of freeing a slave. The Shaykh agreed to fulfil the slave’s request of delivering a lecture on the virtues of freeing a slave. Now several weeks past and no talk was given – after about 6 months on one Jumuah the Shaykh delivered the talk as agreed and after the talk the governor (who was affected by the talk) called his slave and freed him. The slave was overjoyed and thanked the Shaykh, that by virtue of his lecture he is a free man today. The slave however also complained to the Shaykh that he delivered this lecture 6 months late. Had he given the talk when it was requested then he would have been freed much earlier. The Shaykh explained to the slave that he was an ordinary simple person, who lived on basic necessities not owning any slave or property. He explained, that when the promise was made to give this lecture he began saving a little bit from his monthly salary – "about a week ago my savings grew to the amount that I could purchase a slave – so when I came to deliver the Jumuah talk, I made intention that I am coming to Jumuah with intention of freeing a slave, and this is the reason my speech had such an effect on the heart of your master – if my speech didn’t have the effect of action behind it then your master would not have accepted my advice so easily."

We see how important this is – words must be backed up with action. When words are supported by action then they become effective. In today’s time we need to think about this, our actions, our manners and ways, how much of effect is there in our actions today and how much are we lacking these qualities?

Therefore, an Alim should be prepared for the responsibilities of serving people in all aspects of their lives, and secondly his actions and manners should be of a better standard than the ordinary people.

PERFORM YOUR SUNNATS IN THE MASJID

Let's consider the point, it is preferable to perform one's Sunnat Salah at home, but today if an *Alim* has to practice on this by reading his Sunnats before and after Salah at home, then the congregation will be led to believe that our Imam does not read Sunnats. Some will object and others will assume that to perform Sunnats is not necessary. Therefore, some Ulama have written that in such an environment, the Imam should perform his Sunnats in the Masjid. This will become a silent means of *dawat* and an affirmation in the hearts of the people that to perform the Sunnats before and after Salah is important. It will also be a means of protecting the Alim from ill thoughts of the people. Only when people will have confidence in their Imam will they take what he says seriously, otherwise not.

ULAMA SHOULD OPPOSE FALSE IDEOLOGIES

The third aspect that the Qur'an has mentioned is the speciality of stars for pelting the *shayateen*. This is also an important aspect. We understand from this that in every era the false ideologies that arise, be they those who 'regard' themselves Muslims, or whether these groupings are from other faiths. To respond to these false ideologies is the responsibility of the Ulama. To take up this challenge

and ground these ideologies is the responsibility of the ‘stars’ of the *Ummah*, that is the Ulama. This role should be fulfilled by Ulama in accordance with the position given to them.

Let us ask, are we fulfilling this role? At times we find that on relatively ‘small’ issues we put in a lot of effort – at times it is a ruling or difference which is unrelated to the people of that area or they are not aligned with that position but we are putting our energy into it – whereas at the present moment the type of onslaught that is waged against Islam, are we really doing anything to defend Islam against this onslaught?

THE ONSLAUGHT ON ISLAM – ARE WE PREPARED?

I am addressing you, O’Ulama (the Ulama of South Africa) – today the most commonly spoken language in the world is English. We have a small institution in India called *Al Ma’had Al Islami* where we have established a department of Dawah. On one occasion we invited a lecturer who spoke on Islam and *mustashrikeen* (the orientalisks). He presented a list of topics on objections of the *mustashrikeen*. The list was so long that a book could be published out of it. The guest explained that in the west today the situation is such that daily some article, book, research or subject matter is published defaming Islam. This material is published widely in the four most spoken languages in the modern world, viz. English, French, Spanish and German. Now look at our condition – what people are saying about our *Deen*, about our Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* – yet we are not even aware of these developments – we are emotional and reactive – we say we are prepared to die for Islam – this

is a noble thought – but understand what is happening – how can we overcome these challenges – how can we strategise to deal with these issues.

DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE DOOR TO DOOR

As an example, if we make an effort to publish a general booklet on the life of our Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* and deliver it to the door of every non-Muslim in our locality – then we will see how the misunderstandings of people will be removed – it could even be the basis of many turning to Islam. This is a simple example that I have presented.

Similarly, in Ramadan, we should arrange Iftar programmes in our Masjids, Madrasahs, offices and homes where we can invite non-Muslims. On such an occasion, some introduction to Islam, Qur'an and the aspects pertaining to the goodwill of Islam can be conveyed - the purpose of fasting and its benefits can be discussed – the importance of charity in Islam, etc. In this way we will be able to alleviate the misconceptions they have about Islam. But unfortunately our minds do not seem to go towards these aspects. Huge expenses are incurred in our Iftar programmes and functions that have no religious benefit, no benefit for the upliftment of Islam – we just take personal benefit from it. There is no attention paid to the external issues that we are facing in this respect. We should endeavour to develop the capacity and opportunities to convey the beautiful message of Islam in an academic and professional manner so people will be able to understand and relate with these teachings.

EXPLAINING THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM AND CLEARING THE MISCONCEPTIONS

As an example, in India at present, there is a huge controversy about the rights of women in terms of Islamic law of inheritance and succession. The objection is, for example, if the father or mother passes away then the male gets double the portion of a female. In the West this is considered to be an injustice on the woman – and the objection is that this matter is established directly from the Qur'an. Of course, for us it is sufficient that it is the word of Allah and Rasul *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*, however with respect to non-Muslims and some of our youth who are affected by doubts and uncertainties – when they are told that this is the law of the Qur'an, they are not willing to accept the argument without reasoning and explanation. Allah Ta'ala protect the Imaan of our youth who are of this mind-set – but the question is how do we engage these young people to restore their conviction?

As a practical example, I've had the opportunity to address this issue with some attorneys of the Supreme Court of India and explained it in this way that this matter is related to *Nafaqa* where the maxim in Islam is that whosoever's responsibilities is greater, then the rights of such a person are also greater – and the person who has greater capability of fulfilling rights will be required to shoulder greater responsibility. So the capability and strength of a man is greater in relation to a woman. If a man doesn't get employment in his town or country, then he can go to another town or country to work – if a woman is educated and qualified and does not find

employment in her place of residence then for her to travel to find employment elsewhere will be difficult as she will be constrained by aspects of security and other limitations. Since a man has the greater capability to earn and seek employment, so a greater responsibility has been placed on his shoulders.

A man is responsible to look after his parents, his wife, his children, etc. whereas there is no such responsibility on a woman, she is not even responsible for her own personal maintenance. As long as she is unmarried, her care is the responsibility of her father, and once she's married then she is the responsibility of her husband – if her husband is late then her son is responsible to care for her.

So I explained further, because the responsibility of a man is greater than a woman, therefore his rights are also more, and because a woman has no financial responsibility placed upon her, her portion of inheritance is in accordance with her non obligation – therefore she receives half in relation to the male.

To assume that the reason woman is receiving a lesser portion is to disgrace to her, or because she is of a lesser status is incorrect. Rather, it is based on her not having any financial responsibility. If a person has 2 children and places greater responsibility upon one of them, naturally the one who is doing more work will be paid a higher wage.

I explained to them further with another example. In Islam the father has a higher rank to his child. In an instance where the father murders his son (Allah protect us all) then *qisas* will not be taken from the father. Nabi *sallallahu alayhi sallam* said, “You and

your wealth belong to your father” – this is the status of the father – whereas if we look at a scenario where a person passed away and there is a father and a son who are among the inheritors of this estate, then notwithstanding the fact that the father’s rank is higher than the child, the Islamic law will require that the son receives a higher portion of inheritance and the father will receive less. So, if the maxim was based on rank and position then it would suppose that the father gets a higher proportion, but the father will receive a lesser proportion here.

Another rationale in point is that of the father who inherits from his late child. The father will inherit less from his child in comparison to the child inheriting from the father. This is so because the father is in the phase of life where he has completed all major financial responsibilities to his family – and the child whose parent has passed away is in the beginning phases of family responsibility in terms of expenses towards education, utilities, etc. So here we find that though the status of the child is lesser than the father, the child will receive a greater share due to the child having greater responsibility.

When we presented this explanation, the attorneys of the Supreme Court were impressed and expressed their approval by saying that this is an excellent explanation which we are able to understand logically. I have humbly presented these explanations to elucidate my point of how we should endeavour to make people understand the reality of Islam – but first, we have to develop this capacity within ourselves.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FELLOW CITIZENS

Another important area of consideration is our relationship with our fellow countrymen – we will only be able to allay their misunderstandings when we are able to talk to them.

Once I visited Britain. We were taken on a visit to a prison, I cannot recall the name of the prison, however this prison was a maximum security prison where the most hardened criminals were incarcerated. So I joked with my host, that I do not wish to be harmed in any way – they also jokingly assured me that no harm will come to me.

In the prison, the state has given different religious denominations the opportunity to help and rehabilitate the prisoners through faith and advise them about the harms of criminal behaviour – the person who was the head of the Religious Department was a Christian Bishop. He received me very well with a lot of respect.

As we spoke, he started asking me questions about Islam. I explained that our religion requires us to believe in all the messengers including Musa *alayhis salaam* and Esa *alayhis salaam* and no faith can claim exclusivity to any messenger. He responded by saying that it appears in your teachings that Muslims should not befriend the Christians and disbelievers and that there should be no mutual friendship between us. I responded by drawing his attention to the following; by asking him whether a Muslim man marry a *Able Kitab* (woman of the book)? He replied in the affirmative – I then explained that this means that a Christian woman can be the wife or mother of a Muslim and if you really think about it, the relationship

of a mother and wife is one of ardent love – a person is not as close to his father as he is to his mother, and after the mother’s love a man loves his wife the most. So if we suppose that Islam teaches Muslims to have hatred for a Christian then how could Islam tolerate a Christian woman to be the mother or wife of a Muslim.

I then explained further to him that in the time of Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*, the Jews use to secretly spy on the Muslims – in all the battles that took place at that time like *Badr*, *Uhud*, *Khandaq*, etc. the Jews were instrumental in instigating trouble between Muslims and the disbelievers – therefore in light of this mischievous behaviour, the Qur’an advised Muslims not to have any intimate relationship with the disbelievers through which their secrets would be exposed. It is evident that no country or nation wants its enemy to know its inner workings and secrets. I advised him to understand his question in the light of this background.

So I am stressing on this aspect, that first we must empower ourselves with the skill and knowledge with which we can convince others, and our relationship with them must also be such that wherever we find there are misunderstandings then we have a channel to engage with them and explain the proper perspective.

GREAT NEED FOR EXPERTISE AND EFFORT

The environment in the west at present is such that there is a great need for this expertise and effort – and it is my conviction that the excellence with which you will be able to do this work (referring to South African Ulama), the Ulama of Indo Pak region will not be

able to. The reason is that they do not have command of the English language as you do and secondly they do not live in the society that you live in. When a person lives in a society, then he develops the ability to engage with and respond to the challenges of that environment. It is my belief and desire (dua) that if the Ulama of South Africa drive this effort of taking Islam to the people, then I have great hope that this entire continent can be brought to Islam.

Some Muslim countries have endeavoured to establish Dawah efforts in African countries. King Faisal *rahimahullah* of Saudi Arabia initiated such efforts where the propagation of Islam was undertaken. These efforts yielded a significant amount of good results. Regrettably, today the Muslim governments have 'sold' their countries and 'sold' their land, so there is no hope in them. Therefore, my passionate plea to you (Ulama of South Africa) is to establish a Dawah faculty in every Masjid and in every Madrasah that will drive this effort of propagation.

One dimension of propagation is to make an effort among Muslims - Masha Allah - this effort is done very effectively by our brothers in the effort of *Dawat & Tabligh* and we should support and assist them in this. Moreover, the other dimension of propagation is to convey the message of Islam to the people of this land. This effort cannot be done by the ordinary individual. This effort requires a person of *tarbiyat* (self-reformation). When giving *darwat* to Muslims, and one explains to the next person the importance of performing Salah, he will not feel offended as this is his belief. However, to invite a non-Muslim to Islam requires one to be witty, wise and knowledgeable. One should know the dynamics of Islam well and

also know a bit about other faiths. If a doubt or objection is raised then he can respond confidently. So it's my passionate plea that you develop and activate a programme whereby in every Masjid, Madrasah and institution a Dawah department is established that will focus on bringing Islam to the masses. The people of this land are simple minded and easy to influence, so your task will be much easier in gaining their acceptance.

In the history of India we find that the efforts of Muslims was to strengthen the political power of the state and they established the Taj Mahal and Lal Qil'a – but sadly today the Taj Mahal and Lal Qil'a are popular in the world but Muslims are forgotten, so you should take lesson from this.

DAWAT OF THE AMBIYA WAS PRIMARILY TO NON-MUSLIMS

If we look at the lessons from the Qur'an, you are all Ulama here – if we take a very conservative estimate we will find that 80 to 90 percent of the effort of the *Ambiya* was directed towards non-Muslims – and if the verses of *Ambiya* are analysed then some 10 percent will be addressing Muslims and 80 to 90 percent were to non-Muslims, so we should revive this Sunnah of the *Ambiya*.

It has been mentioned in one hadith that when the effort of Dawat to non-Muslims will be neglected then Allah will cause the enemy to subjugate you. We are witnessing this outcome with our very own eyes today.

Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* said that if one person accepts Islam because of your effort then I will be a guarantee for your entry into Jannah. To get Jannah in this country is very easy as the local indigenous people of this country are simple minded people. Focus your effort on one person, assist him financially and give him encouragement, hold his hand, help him and bring him to Islam – you will walk with the ‘permit’ of Jannah in this world. There is a great need to focus upon this effort – sadly we are not focusing upon this effort.

USE THE MOST EFFECTIVE AND ADVANCED MEANS OF PROPAGATION

There is one other thing I wish to say, and I’m not sure if you will be offended by it. The most effective form of Dawat is individual Dawat. If we begin to interact with the local people who work in our houses, shops and organisations, the businessman with his clients, employer with his employees and customers, the doctor with his patients in a positive and favourable manner a great change will come about.

Additionally, those avenues of propagation, which are permissible, through which our message can be conveyed more widely, then we should utilise these mediums effectively.

Today, in India due to us not having used these opportunities effectively, a barrier of hatred has been erected between Muslims and non-Muslims. When Nabi *sallallah alayhi wasallam* was given *Nubuwwat*, we have read in the history, how did he convey the message? First he called the tribe of Banu Hashim for a meal. Haz-

rat Ali *radiyallahu anhu* was present at this invitation and after the meals he conveyed to them the message of Islam. In Seerat ibn Hisham it is mentioned that Nabi *sallallahu alayhi wa sallam* gave the invitation for meals twice. What do we understand from this? We understand that to facilitate the conveying of the message by using monetary encouragement and to make *ikraam* of the people is established from the Sunnah. We need to focus on this aspect. Today, just as we spend huge amounts on Madrasahs and Masjids – which is good and important – in the same manner, to bring the creation to realise who their Creator is, we must allocate an amount to spend from our earnings in this regard also.

ASCENDING MOUNT SAFA AND THE MEDIA OF THAT AGE

When Nabi *sallallahu alayhi sallam* was instructed to openly announce the message of Islam, he chose to ascend the mountain of Safa and make his announcement. In that time, it was the practice of the people of Makkah, when they needed to make any important announcement, a person would ascend the mountain of Safa and call out to the people to congregate. In that time of *jahiliyyah* because not much importance was given to morality and dressing, to show the urgency and importance of a matter the person would remove his clothes – people would understand from this that this is a very important matter and would congregate. So Nabi *sallallahu alayhi sallam* utilised the most advanced and ‘sophisticated’ form of media of that era which was to call out from mount Safa and the entire Makkah gathered there and Nabi *sallallahu alayhi sallam*

conveyed to them the message of Islam. However, he refrained from doing anything unlawful in using these means.

DAWAT IN THE TOXIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE ERA OF IGNORANCE

Furthermore, if we look at the time of Hajj which was another major gathering. At that time the Hajj was not as we know it today. There were a lot of prohibited acts that were committed – people use to wine and dine – some use to remain in the Haram and not go to Arafat, remaining behind to sing poetry about their families. These were all impermissible acts. If the people of the Haram didn't give clothing to the pilgrims, then the pilgrims would make Tawaf naked, yet despite all the prohibitions that use to take place in this environment, Nabi *sallallahu alayhi sallam* use to go and give Dawat of Imaan.

In this manner, another mode of media in vogue at that time was to write letters to people to convey a message which was also done by Nabi *sallallahu alayhi sallam*.

So in order for our message to reach people, to get them to understand and remove their doubts and objections we need adopt the various means and mediums. We need to focus on this so that the light of Islam reaches as many people as possible.

ULAMA MUST STEP UP TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Look, if Ulama give Dawat, they will give it following the prop-

er method and if non-ulama do it there is a possibility they will overlook certain finer points in their propagation. It is my humble appeal to all Ulama to consider these three principle aspects:

- ❁ **To be concerned about all aspects affecting the *Ummah* and to regard this as our responsibility,**
- ❁ **To enhance and elevate your practical life higher than that of general people,**
- ❁ **To articulate the message of Islam and respond to people with regard to their doubts and to propagate the message.**

May Allah give us the ability to implement these advices and let the winds of guidance spread throughout this land like how it spread in the Arabian Peninsula.

Wa sallallahu alayhi wa aalihi wa sallam

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani (*Hafizahullah*) is the General Secretary of the Islamic Fiqh Academy, India and a founder member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board. An eminent Islamic scholar with expertise in Islamic jurisprudence and a deep understanding of the Quran, Sunnah, Shariah and various disciplines of knowledge, Maulana is at the forefront of the Islamic Scholarly fraternity, guiding the Muslim community on contemporary challenges.

Maulana has inherited rich scholarly traditions from his family of reputed scholars, specifically his father Maulana Zainul Aabideen rahimahullah and grandfather Maulana Abdul Ahad Jalavi rahimahullah. Due to his versatile and dynamic approach, Maulana is a well-known personality, regularly delivering lectures and sermons in Hyderabad on current day topics to guide the community.

Maulana had learned and practiced Islamic jurisprudence under the guidance of famous Islamic jurists like Maulana Minnatullah Rahmani rahimahullah and Maulana Mujahid-ul-Islam Qasmi rahimahullah. He has authored more than 50 books on a wide range of topics and pioneered more than fifteen institutions of Islamic edu-

cation, research and jurisprudence across India. He has introduced specialisation and super specialisation in Islamic education, a pioneering work. His broad outlook, ability to provide solutions to the modern day problems and represent Islam in all spheres of Islamic society has made him a sought after figure in the Islamic World.







About Darul Ihsan

Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre provides education, guidance, social, empowerment and welfare services to the community. In providing this service, we adopt a holistic approach, that gives due importance to basic needs as well as human rights and dignity of those that we serve.

Founding Philosophy

Darul Ihsan Humanitarian Centre is a multi-purpose, humanitarian-services providing organisation. 'Ihsan' means compassion towards mankind and to act with excellence. The Centre was established in the year 2000 with the primary objective of serving humanity and alleviating poverty and hardship locally and abroad. Since its inception, it has developed and established many humanitarian projects and provides a variety of free services to the community.

Key Objectives

One of the key objectives of the Centre is to promote a better understanding of humanity and peace, thereby serving as a bridge-builder between faiths and communities. Through guidance, Ubuntu and empowerment, the organisation hopes to train and develop the youth to become torch bearers of hope, peace and compassion to humanity.

