

THE DÎNÎ CONDITION OF THE MUSLIMS & OUR RESPONSIBILITY

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Analyse

If you have not made any effort until now to accurately analyse the religious condition of the Muslims, then at least sacrifice one day for this purpose. Pencil and note-book at hand, leave early one morning. Instead of going from door to door, go only to a few places where huge numbers of various denominations of Muslims can be met.

For example, begin your morning at the meat market. Analyse the religious condition of the Muslims who are buying and selling meat and record it in your notebook. Next go to the vegetable market and judge the condition of the greengrocers. Then proceed to any such market place where many Muslims own shops. Analyse the general religious condition of the Muslim traders and clients. Make your way to a factory and see the religious condition of the Muslim employees. Proceed to the railway station and observe the cart and trolley men and judge their religious condition. Then go to an area where people who are classified as labourers, such as the washer men, water-carriers and house-workers. Live and study them as well as their family's religious condition. Proceed onwards to the court and see the Muslim litigators, witnesses and brokers. Also witness the condition of the Muslim lawyers, attorneys and judges occupying the judicial bench.

Similarly go to a police station and observe the condition of the policemen, clerks and constables. Advance from there to an Islamic college or Islamic school and glance at the religious condition of the professors, teachers and students. If coincidentally, in the city any social gathering or political conference of the Muslims is taking place, then cast a cursory glance at the Muslim leaders of national politics and those who claim to represent Islam. Go to a Muslim newspaper office and analyse the piety and knowledge of Dîn in the editorial staff, writers and other staff. Also go to a Masjid of any locality and estimate how many people come for Salâh from the thousands of inhabitants who reside there. From amongst those who come, how many are elderly people, how many are youngsters, how many are educated, living in affluence and are well-dressed and how many are uneducated, poor and wearing torn and tattered clothing.

If in your locality, there is a Dârul Ulûm, then visit it as well. Observe how many students are from your city and from amongst them who are from respected families or popular households. Meet and speak to the teachers and students, and analyse how much of weakness there exists in true religious spirit amongst the

majority of them and from a purely religious point, how low and depressing is the intellectual and practical condition of most of the individuals.

Go out of the city to a nearby village where the Muslim population is in the majority. Study their lives and obtain some information about these villagers.

The Results

The day when you make this effort and analyse, you will realise that amongst the present-day Muslims, there is not even one percent who are aware of Dîn, of Allâh ﷻ and Rasûlullâh ﷺ and whose life can be called an average Islamic life.

Alas! When only due to ignorance and negligence such a huge number of those who affirm to Islam, and have connection to Rasûlullâh ﷺ have gone so far away from Dîn, have become so alien to Nabî ﷺ, then for the religious people to live, remaining unconcerned about the reformation of their brothers and to remain preoccupied in their occupations with ease and comfort is definitely ignorance of a great responsibility.

Our Responsibility

Amongst the acts of goodwill, righteousness and piety, Islam has regarded mutual help as a compulsory act upon every Muslim. Now when close to ninety nine percent of the Ummah is drowning in the ocean of ignorance and negligence and the only relationship they have with Islam is by name, then in this condition if we do not fulfil our duty of *دعوة الى الخير* (calling towards goodness), *تواصي بالحق* (emphasising the truth upon one another) and *تعاون على البر والتقوي* (assisting one another in acts of goodness and piety), if we do not take care of our brothers wondering astray in the valleys of ignorance and negligence and we do not make every possible effort to make them aware of Allâh ﷻ and His Rasûl ﷺ and connect them with Islam, then definitely we are great criminals, void of all compassion.

The Greatest Obstacle

Especially when these huge numbers of Muslims and their un-Islamic way of life is the greatest obstacle for non-Muslims to understand Islam, and the purpose of *لنكونوا شهداء على الناس* (so that you may serve as 'examples' for the people) is being completely lost. Anyway, this is completely clear that as long as the Muslim nation does not become a living example of Islam, every effort in presenting Islam to others will remain without result.

The Ambiyâ ﷺ

Definitely, it is completely correct and ethical according to the general norm for doctors and practitioners not to treat the patient as long as he or his close relatives do not concede to treatment. However, it is not permissible for the inheritors of the Ambiyâ ﷺ and for those who have been entrusted with this treasure of Dîn, that they become unconcerned, apathetic and uncaring about the religious reformation of those who are ignorant and negligent, with this notion in mind that when any seeker comes and desires his reformation, then I will show him the path. If some people assume this, then definitely their opinion should be reviewed. For the bearers of Dîn, the beautiful lifestyle of the Ambiyâ ﷺ is worthy of emulating.

Who is ignorant of the fact that these great personalities would go themselves to these ignorant and negligent people and would leave no stone unturned in guiding and rectifying them?

Read intently these words of Nûh ﷺ as mentioned in the Qur'ân:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا ﴿١﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٢﴾ وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٣﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جِهَارًا ﴿٤﴾ ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَعْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا ﴿٥﴾ (سورة نوح)

O my Creator and Sustainer! Verily I called my people (towards You) day and night. My calling them made them run further away. And whenever I called them so that You may forgive them, they placed their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their clothing remained stubborn (in their ignorance and misguidance) and displayed pride and arrogance. (O Allâh ﷻ) then too I called them in a loud voice. Then I explained to them both openly and discreetly.

Besides Hadrat Nûh ﷺ, whichever other Ambiyâ and Messenger's *Tabligh* and *Da'wat* (invitation and calling) is mentioned in the Qur'ân, it is a common characteristic in all of them that they would proceed personally for the reformation and guidance of the ignorant and negligent ones, not waiting for these people to come to them.

Imâm Ghazâlî رحمه الله

In Ihyâul Ulûm, Imâm Ghazâlî رحمه الله writes, focussing the attention of the religious class towards the obligation of teaching and nurturing the ignorant and masses: "It is not permissible for those who have knowledge of Dîn to sit and wait for someone to ask them so that they can inform him. However they should call people towards them (becoming *Dâ'is* (inviters) and seekers) because they are the inheritors of the Ambiyâ ﷺ. The Ambiyâ ﷺ would not leave people in their

ignorance but would go to their gatherings and invite them. In the beginning, they would go to their gatherings and invite them and they would themselves go to their doors, inviting every individual, then teaching them the lessons of guidance. This is necessary because those who are spiritually ill are not aware of their own illness." (*Ithya'ul Ulûm vol.4, Chapter - Medicine for Repentance*)

A Possible Misgiving

It is possible that based on our plea and on this remark of Imâm Ghazâlî رحمه الله, a person might have a doubt that this approach of the Ambiyâ ﷺ was with regards to the disbelievers, that the Nabî would take the message to them and move around making effort for their reformation and guidance whereas you are inviting us to do the effort of *Da'wat* in this manner for the reformation and guidance of Muslims, whereas the Ambiyâ ﷺ would not roam about behind the people of Îmân and would not go to their houses in this manner. Rather, the believers would themselves come and attain *Ta'lim* (instruction) and nurturing from them.

The Answer

If these people who have this misgiving in their hearts ponder deeply, then it will not be difficult for them to understand this reality that the original duty of the Ambiyâ ﷺ was to link people to Allâh ﷻ and to place on His path of servitude those people who had forgotten Allâh ﷻ and those who had ventured away from Him. However in their eras, since this was the condition of only the disbelievers, thus they only took their message to them in their gatherings and groups. Those who accepted the message had attained a flaming Îmân, understood its value, and immediately developed concern to learn and mould themselves accordingly, immediately upon accepting Îmân. The Ambiyâ ﷺ did not have to go to their houses to teach them the matters of Dîn. Instead they would go around seeking knowledge just like a very thirsty person seeks water.

Our Era

Unfortunately during our era, the condition of the majority of people called 'Muslims' in regard to their heedlessness of Allâh ﷻ, is in front of our eyes. The importance and appreciation of Dîn and the seeking of knowledge and moral character of Dîn is completely lost. Thus, there is no other way but to make them aware of Allâh ﷻ and at least teaching them the basics of Dîn so that they can be connected to true Islam instead of just having an Islamic name. There is no other way other than taking the message to them ourselves, conveying to them the fundamentals of Islam, and making effort to create within them the *talab* (desire) and *qadr* (value) of Dîn.

Different Levels

There are those scholars and 'religious' people who feel: "Our duty is only to present our services of teaching and nurturing to those who come to us having

desire for knowledge and reformation and to answer according to our knowledge only to those who ask a religious question". Most probably, the reason for this error is that at the time of pondering, they did not bear in mind the various different levels and ranks found in reformation, nurturing and teaching.

Otherwise, this reality is completely evident that it is an important *Fard* (compulsion) to make at least so much effort which would keep an unmindful person, who is unaware of the basics of Islam, has no desire to learn Dîn nor become religious, within the fold of Islam. Definitely, this is an important duty, which cannot be neglected at any time.

However, to reach the stage of complete perfection like attaining expertise in acquiring the knowledge of Dîn or to attain a high rank in *Tazkiyah* (purification of the character and soul) according to the methods of the *Sûfiâ* are not *Fard-Ayn* (compulsory) on every Muslim, nor are we responsible to invite all to attain these levels and to make effort upon them. Therefore, for these duties and functions, this method is completely correct that whosoever comes with desire, service to him should not be withheld. An effort is not made for every person to acquire this. These are those works which our Madrasahs and Khânqahs have taken responsibility for. Here that approach is adopted which is completely correct in its sphere.

Our Plea

The object of our request and plea, through this short treatise is to draw the attention of the religious class, is not the work and effort of the stages of perfection which the Madâris and Khânqahs are fulfilling. Rather it is the basic work of spreading true Îmân and religious understanding amongst the ignorant and unmindful Muslims, creating fear of Allâh ﷻ and concern of the hereafter and teaching the necessary aspects of Dîn.

There exists no universal Dînî system in our era which has taken responsibility of fulfilling this task as it ought to be fulfilled and meeting the necessity of this service. In fact, the reality is that those individuals and some groups who are doing something in this line are not even doing one thousandth portion of the effort actually needed to combat the present condition of the Islamic world! Therefore according to opportunity and ability, the fulfilling of this service is compulsory upon all the people of Dîn and it is our responsibility that we take care of those Muslims of our areas who are negligent and we make some arrangement for their reformation and for teaching them what is necessary. If not, there is a danger of severe questioning.

Share the Responsibility

Those personalities involved in other important services of Dîn such as teaching, writing, reformation and guidance etc. (May Allâh ﷻ bless their efforts, make it more beneficial for the Ummah and may He accept it.) can at least draw the attention of those people who have trust in them and those who are under them in this work and themselves keep an eye on their work or they may even hand over the task of supervision to some other capable person.

For this basic and initial work of Dîn amongst the ignorant and negligent masses, there is no need for a special rank of knowledge or qualification. Yes, there is a necessity for the guidance and supervision of the people of knowledge and understanding. The manner of doing this work, which has been experienced, is very simple and straight forward. The necessity is only that the religious class assume this responsibility on a wide scale. As Maulânâ Ilyâs رَحْمَةُ اللهِ عَلَيْهِ has said: "For the necessity of working amongst millions at least the equivalent of thousands should arise for this work".

Today Dîn has become alien and the call is made to the people of Dîn and Îmân:

مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ

Who are my helpers for the Dîn of Allah ﷻ

Khutbah of Rasûlullâh ﷺ

A Khutbah of Nabî ﷺ has been narrated in the famous book of Hadîth, Kanzul-Ummâl, wherein Rasûlullâh ﷺ severely reprimands those who are negligent in Dînî teaching and reformation of the masses. Hereunder follows the gist of this Hadîth: "Once, Nabî ﷺ stood on the *Mimbar* to deliver a sermon. Addressing the people in an angry tone, he said: "What has happened that some people have knowledge of Dîn, but those tribes around them are deprived of it? Why don't these people make an effort to spread knowledge amongst their ignorant and unmindful neighbours? And why don't they reform them by commanding righteousness and prohibiting evil? And also, I say to those who do not possess Dînî knowledge and are living amongst those who have Dînî knowledge, why do you not make effort to learn Dîn from your learned neighbours? (The narrator mentions that Nabî ﷺ addressed these two groups thrice in this manner and then said) Either these two groups change their ways (i.e. those who know should teach the neighbours who do not know and those who do not have knowledge should attain knowledge and training of Dîn from their learned neighbours), otherwise I will inflict upon them a severe punishment in this world."

It is mentioned that in this reprimanding address, mentioned in this Hadîth, Nabî ﷺ was especially referring to the Ash'arîs. These people generally were learned and had understanding of Dîn. However, those people who lived nearby them, in

the jungles and by water-places were void of knowledge and understanding. When the Ash'arîs come to know of Nabî's ﷺ warning, they presented themselves in the service of Nabî ﷺ and said: "If other people, due to their misfortune, do not attain the knowledge of Dîn, then too are we responsible for them?" Nabî ﷺ replied: "Yes, every group which knows has the responsibility of making an effort of teaching and spreading the knowledge of Dîn to those in their surrounding areas who do not know. Those who do not know are responsible for learning and gaining knowledge. Whoever from either group is lax in their responsibility will be deserving of punishment."

Thereafter, the Ash'arîs asked for grace of one year to teach and give moral training to those unlearned tribes. Nabî ﷺ granted them this grace and recited this verse at the end:

لَعْنُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى بْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ (سورة مائدة)

The crux of this verse is that the Banû Isrâîl were cursed by two of Allâh's ﷻ Messengers, Hadrat Dâwûd عليه السلام and Hadrat Îsâ Ibn Maryam عليه السلام due to their transgression and excesses. One great crime of theirs was that they did not make an attempt to prevent those evils which had become rife.

An Important Hadîth

I had seen a Hadîth recorded in Imâm Ahmad Ibn Hambal's رحمه الله book, *as-Salâtu wamâyalzamuhâ*, which has been printed in Egypt together with Hâfiz Ibn Qayyim's رحمه الله book, *Kitâbus Salâti wa Ahkâmu Târikihâ*:

"On the day of Qiyâmah, a person will lay a claim against his neighbour in the court of Allâh ﷻ that he had not been trustworthy towards me. He will say in answer to this:

يَا رَبِّ وَعِزَّتِكَ مَا خُنَيْتُهُ فِي أَهْلِ وَلَا مَالٍ

O my Master, by Your Honour, I never betrayed him regarding his family nor his wealth.

The plaintiff will say: Definitely, he did not betray me regarding my family or wealth. However due to my neglect and misfortune I used to sin. This person did not make an effort to prevent me in spite of seeing me doing so."

Added to the many verses of the Qur'ân and Ahâdîth which are well known and famous regarding the emphasis of propagation, teaching, reminding, advising the truth, commanding righteousness and forbidding of evil to the unaware public, these two Ahâdîth are also clear proofs of this fact that it is the duty of the pious and the bearers of knowledge of every place that at least they make effort and concern of reformation and a basic necessary level of teaching and training of

those Muslims living in their environments who are unaware of the basics of Dîn and who are living a life of forgetfulness of Allâh ﷻ due to their ignorance and negligence.

What Answer Will We Have!

The more one ponders about it, the more surprised one is that how can we be so negligent about such an important obligation. What answer will we give on the day of Qi'yamah regarding those thousands of Allâh's ﷻ servants who call themselves Muslims and live close to us and who due to their ignorance and our sinful neglect are living a life completely cut off from Allâh ﷻ and His Dîn and who are passing their lives and dying having forgotten Allâh ﷻ.

Awareness

That Dînî Da'wat and that line of reformation and propagation which has been over-and-over described in these pages is in reality an effort in fulfilling this obligation. Its main objective is to create a general awareness and value for Dîn and true Îmân amongst the Muslim nation by means of a special system of general teaching, training and reformation.

Hasten!

This has been repeatedly mentioned and now too I say that regarding this work, we are not inviting you to join any special group or organisation and do work. Our request is only that you stand up for the service of Dîn and in this regard fulfil your duty. Furthermore study the manner and way of those servants of Allâh ﷻ engaged in this lofty work. Then, if by any chance your heart is not at ease with all its ways of working, then whichever aspect or whichever way you are satisfied with, commence your efforts accordingly.

At this time, the world is moving very swiftly. Distances of years are being traversed in days. If we spend this time too in negligence, then there is a danger that these advantages and opportunities for the revival of Dîn and reformation of the Muslims could soon cease in many areas.

العجل العجل ! الساعة الساعة !!

HASTEN, HASTEN! NOW, NOW!

{Adapted from Al-Fârûq, Karachi, Jumâdal Ūlâ 1427}

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