

# **'Islamic renewal in South Africa – a Practical Direction'.**

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*Assalamu Alaykum*

*Alhamdulillah wa shukrulillah;* All Praise and Thanks to Allah for all that we've received.

I take this opportunity to thank our Shaykh, our teacher and guide, Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi for everything that we've received from him; for his care and concern for everyone of us here, for his deep concern for all of the Muslims, for his desire that Allah's Deen be uppermost, for his enormous patience with us, his picking us up, his encouragement and his spurring us on. One may ask, spurring us on to what, where to perhaps, and we are reminded of the verse in Surah *Yasin*, A man came running from the far side of the city, saying, 'My people! Follow the Messengers!'

This is all that our Shaykh has called us to. He calls us to worship Allah alone and to follow the Messenger, sallallahu alayhi wa sallam. We thank Allah for the gift of his company and pray that we can honour this gift.

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My address to you today is entitled;

**‘Islamic renewal in South Africa – a Practical Direction’.**

The fact that we speak about a renewal requires that we at least put into context the current Islamic, or let us say, Muslim presence in South Africa.

We are aware of the arrival of the first Muslims to South Africa - a significant body of Muslims of Indonesian and Bengali origin, amongst whom were Sultans and Shuyukh who fought in the way of Allah. It is as a result of the efforts of exceptional men like Shaykh Abdurahman Matibi Shah and Shaykh Yusuf of Maccassar that the presence of the Muslims was felt in a relatively short time. An active *dawa* programme inviting people to the Deen of Allah ensured that the deen would spread throughout the Western Cape. One only has to look around the hills of Cape Town to encounter the tombs of these great awliya, like guardians overlooking this great Muslim city. Today, this province still enjoys the status of housing the largest Muslim population in the country.

The other large component of South Africa's Muslim community *comprises* Muslims of Indian origin who migrated as a trading class and spread into the interior. They organized themselves according to the villages and towns they came from and set up *madaaris* and established *masajid*. **The model upon which the functioning of these institutions were based reflected the crises of the Muslims in the subcontinent - Muslims who found themselves without the central political authority of the Moghul Dawlet.** In India, the ulema among these communities established *Darul 'Ulooms* in an attempt to protect the Muslim identity. The foremost among these were the Deobandi and Bareilvi, both taking the name of the towns they were situated in, not far from the last seat of Muslim Rule in India, The Red Fort of Delhi.

Devoid of Sultaniyyah, the inevitable result for the Muslim Ummah was that we saw for the first time the emergence of a priest class in Muslim society, sitting in moral judgment over it.

It is not within the scope of my address to delve into the detailed history and development of the various communities in South Africa, suffice it to say that they generally display similar characteristics in their organisational framework.

Today for instance, various Ulema Bodies, funded by the business communities which they serve, act as representatives to government, monitor and vet fund raising and provide halaal certification to the food industry and the banking sector. Internal factionalism within this grouping has further embarrassed the communities they are deemed to represent.

The truth of the matter is that the Ulema are not the real power of the Muslim community. The pretence that the mullahs have power and rule by

some special privilege is in the words of Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi in his latest work 'Political Renewal', "**the unacceptable face of unnatural governance.**"

By illustrating the failure of the Ulema's capacity to assume authority, it becomes pertinent to examine the political class's failure to provide inherent solutions to societal pitfalls. Shaykh Abdalqadir once spoke of an event which took place between him and a Mexican intellectual who was embarking on a literary pilgrimage to Ernst Jünger. During their encounter, he related to the Shaykh the event which was to serve as a catalyst of his political awakening. When Mexico City suffered a severe earthquake, which saw thousands killed and injured, it became manifest that the Government of Mexico was in a state of paralysis. This, in turn, led the community to mobilise in order to carry out the functions which were to restore society to normality.

The reason I share this with you, is so that we can all realise that if we do not take care of ourselves and our community, no one else will. To further indicate the incapacity of the political class within South Africa, we turn our attention to the recent riots in Standerton. Here, R30 million disappeared from municipal coffers which was allocated to the general upliftment of the community. The political class is not there to help the poor. On the contrary, they are there to help themselves. Only the Muslims can break the strangle-hold of the financial elite and the political class.

We have one million Muslims in the Western Cape – this is our strength. We need to look after the people of the Cape Flats and couple our programme with strong Da'wa in the north. As Shaykh Abdalqadir says in his new book 'Political Renewal' –

“The political class is unable to govern, untrained, untaught, and utterly unworthy. The present pit into which they have dug themselves involves a century of digging.”

The first obligation for Islamic renewal is the acceptance of ‘Amr over ourselves. As Shaykh Abdalqadir further mentions in a previous paper –

“When the Muslims cease to be governed by their Ulama, like the deviant sect, and are led by the strongest among them, who in turn take public Bayat then take Zakat from the community through collectors – then at that point the usury epoch will fall to pieces, doomed by Allah, the end of an age. Islam will have re-awakened and ancient promises will have been fulfilled.”

There is no Jumu’a prayer without ‘Amr, for the mimbar belongs to the Amir. The Amir takes the Jumu’a prayer or appoints an Imam Khatib to deliver the Khutbah and lead the Prayer. The Zakat is taken under the authority of the Amir. It is not a private sadaqa. The beginning and end of Ramadaan is based upon the confirmation of the sighting of the moon and not by merely sighting the moon. And the Hajj is led by the Amir or the one appointed to lead the Hajj.

We have learnt that the community will not be set right except by what set it right at the beginning. From our foundational imperatives our program of action will emerge:

## **ONE**

Minting of the Dinar, Dirham, and Fulous. A programme for minting the coins for the establishment of taken Zakat and the appointment of Zakat Collectors will be implemented within the coming year.

As we will hear tomorrow in more detail, our Indonesian Community under the leadership of Pak Zaim Saidi are already quite far advanced in the minting and distributing of the coins throughout the largest Muslim country in the world. At this moment Hajj Tariq Deane is working closely with Indonesia in order to develop a programme tailored to our situation here. Support for the currency of Islam can only increase, given the ongoing financial crisis.

## **TWO**

Shahada Festivals. Originally initiated by Shaykh Abdalqadir, we now intend to hold four Shahada Festivals in the next twelve months – two in Durban and two in Johannesburg.

Anyone who was present at the first Shahada Festival in Johannesburg City Hall, or who has seen the film of the event, will confirm the enormous impact such Da'wa can have.

Some of the fruits of that event are sitting among us now in this room. With their quality of character they give us real hope in our vision of a Muslim Southern Africa.

## **THREE**

The Feeding of Muslims on the Cape Flats. This will be expanded into other regions of the Western Cape in the coming year, and then out into the rest of Southern Africa.

We have already held a number of feeding events in Mitchells Plain, where food is provided and served by our Fuqara, Qasidas are sung, and strong bonds are gradually built up.

An established Sunna of the Muslims, feeding the poor is nowhere more relevant than here.

#### **FOUR**

The Establishment of Mobile Clinics. This will be implemented in order to provide people with basic medical assistance.

The Muslim community of the Western Cape has been utterly neglected by the State welfare and medical systems. Islam brings health, and by providing direct medical help we can alleviate some of the burden of poverty.

And by helping the Muslims in this way, we hope to elevate the Deen and involve our young Muslims in that Service which Shaykh Abdalqadir described last week as the activating principle of Muslim community.

#### **FIVE**

Establishment of Muslim Labour Union: The function of the MLU will be to protect and defend the Muslim worker. The Union will cut

across all sectors of industry where Muslims face similar difficulties in the workplace.

## **SIX**

Encourage trade among the communities across the world, and in particular, provide a mentorship program for the young emerging trader.

And finally... **SEVEN**

Sending Da'wa groups to different regions of Southern Africa, which is how this community was originally started and how it has always expanded. We will focus especially on the Zulu and Bafokeng Royalty, and on Da'wa toward the Coloured and Afrikaner communities of South Africa.

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**In Conclusion,** I would like to end where we began, with the words of Shaykh Dr. Abdalqadir as-Sufi:

“That group – the new Bedouin – are ready to take their impulse to unity to its highest point.

Without Asabiyya the Bedouin remain isolated individuals. The slave is alone. His religion, he has been programmed to accept, is his own private privilege – nobody else's business.

This guarantees that they will not pose a threat, except as isolated individuals, that is, criminals.

The Bedouin who cannot engender Asabiyya among themselves are assured continual slavery. Any impulse to unify is taught to be socially disruptive. The only group activities permitted are groups of common interest in sexual practices, sport and concerts. There are social workers to sedate the lowest class and psycho-therapists to *ass-wage* assuage the angst of the technical élite. Atheism offers anxiety as its existential fee that must be paid for 'maturity'.

Once belief in the Divine surges through the Bedouin as a group, the Asabiyya takes on its transformative power. At that stage the Asabiyya group recognise that to overcome the isolation principle of the dominant group it is vital that unity is enhanced, indeed guaranteed. The only means to the highest unity is by the appointment of a King."

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