

National Seminar on

# The Role of Ulema in Promotion of Peace and Harmony in Society

22,23 June 2011



ULEMA SEMINAR REPORT

June 22 – 23, 2011

# **The Role of Ulema in Promotion of Peace and Harmony in Society**



**Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)**

Post Box No. 2110, Islamabad, Pakistan,  
+92-51-2291586,  
[www.san-pips.com](http://www.san-pips.com)

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# Introduction

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A two-day seminar on *The Role of Ulema in Promotion of Peace and Harmony in Society* was held in Islamabad on June 22-23, 2011. The seminar was organized by Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS), a research and advocacy think-tank based in Islamabad.

The purpose of the seminar was to discuss the role of religious scholars in promotion of peaceful and tolerant religious/sectarian narratives in Pakistani society and to develop an understanding of appropriate ways to create a constituency for peace by engaging religious scholars. As many as 46 prominent religious scholars, representing various schools of thought, participated in the seminar.

During the seminar proceedings religious scholars unanimously called for an increased role of religious scholars at the national and regional level to work for peace and sectarian harmony. They were in complete agreement that discouraging all manners of violent tendencies in society was a collective responsibility of all Pakistanis including religious scholars. While pledging to strive for a peaceful and tolerant society in Pakistan, they emphasized that differences of opinion should not be used as a channel to engender hatred and hostilities among the people. At the conclusion of the seminar, the religious scholars also prepared five sets of recommendations under different themes meant to enhance the scope and effectiveness of their role in promoting peace, tolerance and harmony in society.

This report transcribes the complete proceedings of the seminar, including religious scholars' addresses in each of the four sessions of the seminar and the subsequent discussions in the question-and-answer sessions. As the proceedings of the seminar were conducted in Urdu, an effort has been made to keep the original Urdu terms wherever it was felt that translation into English would not convey the precise meaning.

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# Inaugural Session

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## The Role of Ulema in Promotion of Peace and Harmony in Society

<b>Chair:</b>	<b>Maulana Muhammad Khan Sheerani</b> Chairman Council of Islamic Ideology (CII)
<b>Opening Remarks:</b>	<b>Muhammad Amir Rana</b> Director Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)

## Opening Remarks

**Muhammad Amir Rana**

**P**akistan Institute for Peace Studies is a research institute which studies various forms and aspects of conflict and provides policy recommendation in that respect. In this context, the scope of our work is quite limited compared to many other non-governmental organizations. Some of the research studies that PIPS has conducted so far focus on conflict analysis in different regions of Pakistan, such as Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir, as well as general trends and patterns of radicalization and extremism in Pakistan, role of media in conflicts and the situation in Afghanistan.

We have felt in our work on radicalization that it is a complex phenomenon that has multiple aspects and manifestations. We have made continuous efforts in the last two to three years to get at least a consensus definition of radicalization by engaging various academics and also religious scholars from Pakistan and abroad. The purpose has been to define radicalization in Pakistan's context because it is a relative term whose connotations also change with a change of the geographical context. Despite working a lot on the subject of radicalization we still feel that we have much to achieve in exploring the complex folds of radicalization in Pakistan. We have however been able to map some broad contours within which this phenomenon can be confined. Radicalization has multiple factors which include social, political, economic and religious, etc.

Today's gathering has two main objectives: first, to understand the issue of radicalization, and second, to seek guidance with regard to the possible role of Ulema (religious scholars) in establishing a peaceful and tolerant society.

Respected Ulema,

As you are aware, rather than showing any signs of improvement, the agonizing law and order situation in Pakistan has deteriorated further over the last few years. Statistics suggest that more than 31,000 people have been killed in Pakistan since 9/11 including innocent civilians and personnel of law enforcement agencies. Last year's statistics of violent attacks and death casualties are extremely distressing. Although some reports indicate that incidents of violence and terrorism in Pakistan fell by 11 to 13 percent in 2010 compared to the preceding year, however, compared to such incidents in other countries, Pakistan still tops the list.

The unrest and insecurity that we confront today has many forms which are known to all of us. Religious extremism is not the only factor but political and ethnic conflicts,



rising crime, and inter-tribal conflicts, etc., also contribute to this unrest. With the exception of a few areas we do not find any safe place in Pakistan from Khyber to Karachi.

Respected religious scholars,

In this context, an ordinary person like me either looks towards the state or towards the Ulema to find a remedy for the prevailing unrest in the country. It is distressing that the sectarian divide has deepened in our society to the extent that it is resulting in more conflicts and clashes among various groups and classes. Please let me say that the situation in our neighboring country India seems quite different. Almost all religious parties and sects that we have in Pakistan exist in India as well, including Sunnis, Shias, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, Markazi Jamiat-e-Ahle Hadith, etc. Many of you, I am sure, have friends and institutional links in India. It is strange that the kind of ideological and sectarian polarization that exists in Pakistan is not there in India. As we try to compete with our neighbors in all spheres, the situation with regard to achieving religious and sectarian harmony is far from encouraging.

These are some of the issues that we want to discuss in this seminar. I am thankful to all of you for sparing some of your valuable time to attend this event and discuss this crucial issue of national and international importance. Thank you all.

## **Keynote Address**

### **Maulana Muhammad Khan Sheerani**

This seminar is a positive and timely step. I will try to point out the origin of our problems. The human beings are a blend of matter and soul. Matter and soul are as essential for humans and human life as *Tana* and *Bana* (the threads used to weave the cloth which are arranged left and right, and up and down, respectively) for making the cloth. In their separate forms, they are nothing more than threads and have to be woven together in a balanced way to form the cloth. Similarly, a balanced growth of matter and soul produces a balanced human being. The pursuit of merely material life is not human but animalistic instinct. Likewise, by focusing on just soul, or spirituality, humans may achieve bliss but such a life cannot be considered human life either.

The start of problems in the Indian sub-continent, particularly for Muslims, can be traced back to the times when they were forced to abandon their traditional education system that was indeed a blend of scientific/technical and religious education. As both

kinds of education—technical and religious—were imparted from the same education institutions during Muslim rule in the sub-continent, the men of science and technology including astronomers, engineers and mathematicians not only acquired religious education but also observed religious and ethical considerations while studying and applying their modern scientific knowledge. Likewise, the religious scholars also possessed sufficient knowledge of science and technology.

Due to this blend of matter and soul the society was peaceful and calm, which Lord Macaulay had alluded to while presenting details of his journey to India in the British Parliament in 1835. He stated that he had visited India from one corner to the other but did not come across a single thief or beggar. He observed that wealth was abundant, peace prevailed everywhere and ethical values were of high standards.

As a first step, after this presentation of Lord Macaulay, a separation was made between the educational institutions based on religious and technical education. As a result, experts in science and technology got disconnected from religious education and environment, which in other words meant a complete disconnect from their past. When a nation is disconnected from its past it looks towards other powerful nations for securing a successful future. On the other hand, the institutions of religious education were targeted by declaring English as the official language; Persian was thrown out of the offices. As a result, students of religious institutions were now unable to get jobs or become useful members of society. The education of science and technology gradually phased out from these institutions. As their students started to lose facility of experiment and support of practical experience, the instruments of logic and rationale were displaced by *fatwas* (religious edicts) in institutions of religious education. And now we see the consequences of that in the form that when the whole world talks of rationality and logic, we, the people of religious education institutions, talk of *fatwa*. But there is a huge difference between the two.

After World War II, the [British] imperial power planned an honorable exit from the Indian sub-continent. It decided deliberately to divide Hindus and Muslims into two separate lands. The purpose was not to leave behind a united India where Muslims had once ruled for more than 800 years and the local populations, which still remembered the Islamic values of governance and its social benefits, could desire for revival of Muslim rule. A possibility of revival of Islamic rule in the huge India sub-continent meant to the imperialists losing all that they had achieved after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. So the British rulers thought it better to divide India with a plan that in the Hindu-majority areas, Hindus would remain dependent on them regarding the

governance system and law and in the Muslim-majority areas they could install their own establishment and rule.

Many of our problems today have political reasons. It is logical for a government that does not reflect the thoughts and sentiments of the people to create controversies that may be religious, territorial, ethnic or sectarian. These are indeed compulsions for the governments that want to sustain their rule and powers. Sectarianism is not an issue but it is predominantly a political requirement. Otherwise, since all religious scholars and sects are in agreement over the finality of prophethood, they should also know that no human being after the Holy Prophet can be termed as *maasoom*—only prophets are termed *maasoom*, which means that they are innocent and pure and remain sinless throughout their lives—and that his/her opinion cannot be deemed flawless. That means that unquestioned obedience is due only to prophets and it is not obligatory (*wajib*) to obey or follow religious scholars or even a *Mujtahid* (a Muslim jurist who has the highest level of scholarship, who interprets law and makes decisions based on *Ijtihad* i.e., makes decisions on matters by his personal effort by looking at sources of Muslim jurisprudence) because they are not free from sin and error. To make it more precise, we can say that it is obligatory for every *Mujtahid* to act upon his own *Ijtihad* but it is not his right to demand obedience of others on his *Ijtihad*.

Two principles of *Usūl al-fiqh*<sup>1</sup> are very clear. First, if there is no guidance available on an issue in Quran and *Sunnah*, the process of reaching an appropriate judgment is called *Ijtihad*. The process has three parts. The first part is about exploring and searching in Quran and *Sunnah*, which is termed as *Istiqra*. If a scholar comes across a *hukm* (Islamic legal ruling) during this search process, it would be called *Istinbat*. Then a link is sought between this *hukm* and its practical implementation, which is the third part and is called *Qeyyas*. This entire process is known as *Ijtihad*. One *Ijtihad* cannot block the way of another. Nor can a *Mujtahid* impose his *Ijtihad* on others. Those who are convinced by an *Ijtihad* can follow it and those who are not are not bound to follow.

The second principle of *Usūl al-fiqh* that is also very lucid relates to the matters which have a very clear *hukm*, or legal ruling or judgment of Islamic *Shariah* law, but there is no method available on how to act upon it. For instance, there is a clear *hukm* that Muslims should face the *Qibla* while offering their prayers. However, if 20, 40 or more people get into an odd situation in a field where they are unable to identify the direction of the *Qibla*, the *hukm* of *Shariah* is that it is obligatory for every individual to strive, or do

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<sup>1</sup> The study of the origins, sources, and principles upon which Islamic jurisprudence (or *Fiqh*) is based.

*Ijtihad*, to find the right direction. If one has a sense what the true direction is but follows another while offering prayers that is not acceptable to God.

Thus a *Mujtahid* can neither impose his/her *Ijtihad* on others nor can s/he absolve himself/herself from his/her own *Ijtihad*. All the religious scholars are aware of this fact. When it is clear that *Ijtihad* and knowledge are to guide one's actions, there should be no conflict. The conflict arises when all religious scholars try to impose their knowledge on others. This is not a desirable value in Islam. The purpose of acquiring knowledge is also quite contrary to this. It can, however, be a demand of a ruling regime that does not resonate with the thoughts and sentiments of the people.

It is not fair to attribute the religious/sectarian divide in Pakistan to religion, religious scholars and madrassas (religious seminaries). Instead, it is used to achieve power in a country which lacks well defined goals. Just think about what we have defined so far at the state level since Pakistan's independence. It is not yet determined what kind of system this country should have. It is mentioned in the Constitution that it will be Islamic but in reality it is not. The Constitution says that *Shariah* will be a source of legislation but in reality it is not. We also observe that the elections in the country are held not to elect persons but ideologies and philosophies. Some political parties talk of Islam, some of nationalism and some others of socialism. These are in fact ideologies and not individuals that contest elections. That means that there is a vacuum of goals, objectives, ideas and ideologies in the country. Hence, internal and external forces just get involved in a race to be ahead of one another in achieving power. We have so far not been able to determine whether the way to rise to power is through votes of the people or through the barrel of the gun.

The forces that have ruled this country for more than 35 years never needed a constitution or support of the people. What could then be the central focus of the country's internal affairs and external relation? We do not know who the real citizens of this country are, the taxpayers or those who collect and use the revenues. It is also not yet clear in our country how power will be exercised. Is the verbal expression equal to the constitution or law? Will the absolute majority of parliament have the right to make any legislation or will it be bound to do so keeping in view the limitations set by Quran and *Sunnah*?

In the absence of a defined method of achieving and exercising power, the law itself does not lead to some destination or achievement of objectives. A few things precede it. First, we see formation of a nation, *Millat* or *Ummah*, based on racial unity, a common way of thinking and a shared way of life, respectively. When the path is determined, the

nations willingly travel on it to achieve the destination and law is used to bring the transgressors back on the right path.

Therefore, I think that if you are really willing to do something positive, you ought to make Pakistan agree upon one point first. For instance, Western nations are clear that they want materialistic life. You call it human life or not but their path is determined whether it is for the sake of prestige or want of material. In contrast, we keep on wavering between desires of the material world and of human soul. We have not yet determined our destination, objectives and processes of wielding and exercising power. We need to think how this vacuum can be filled.

I would say that Pakistan is a piece of land and not a country. I would like to ask if Kashmir is part of Pakistan or India. If it is part of Pakistan then what is India's problem and if it is part of India what does Pakistan have to do with it? If you analyze this, you will say that Kashmir is neither a part of nor separate from Pakistan. So the conflict continues without any resolution. Besides this, we have another colonial legacy in shape of the establishment. Pakistan was basically established to keep the Muslims deprived of the benefits of Islamic system by subjecting them to the rule of the establishment. Now our parliament also says it has no power. Who has snatched its powers? Parliamentarians are in fact peasants and the establishment is their feudal lord or the real ruler of this country. If you want to serve the people in the true sense give them some direction and goals. The media, politicians, religious scholars, rulers and think-tanks should all come forward for that purpose.

We have witnessed that the Soviet Union came to Afghanistan, got defeated and disintegrated. The United Nations representative in Afghanistan invited the Mujahideen and offered his services to facilitate the process of formation of government. But they refused, saying that they had not made all the sacrifices only to create a vacuum in Afghanistan that would be filled by others. The United States left the region. Various Mujahideen groups started fighting with one another. The US feared that if it intervened, all these groups would stop the infighting and unanimously target it like wolves. Furthermore, the Mujahideen could gain international support and treat the Americans in the same manner as they had treated the Soviets earlier. So they carved out a plan to pit the inexperienced but motivated students of religious seminaries against the Mujahideen. Besides maligning Islam, this plan also opened the door of Afghanistan for the US.

Throughout this time, successive governments remained myopic to and failed to foresee the implications of their actions and policies for Pakistan and its people. Leave aside

those who introduced all these ills and who are above the Constitution and the people, but the irony is that our religious scholars also rendered them blind support. It was after American forces entered Afghanistan that the religious scholars abandoned their trips to Afghanistan and stopped sending Taliban there as if everything had become normal now for them or they had achieved their objective.

We all are responsible for this. Nobody including the government, religious scholars and politicians, can escape blame for bringing destruction on Pakistan. We all need to sit together to find solutions to our problems. I request religious scholars, politicians as well as the establishment and the government to take pity on this nation.

There is a saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that whenever you begin a new task, start it with the easiest step. Allah has blessed our people with talent and potential. Every segment of society has the ability to find this easiest step to start with if serious, selfless and humble efforts are made. This is the way which can lead us to unity and herald a new era of freedom for us.

## First Session

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### Features of a Peaceful and Balanced Society

**Chair:**           **Maulana Muhammad Hanif Jalindhary**  
General Secretary Wafaqul Madaaris Al-Arabia and Principal  
Jamia Khairul Madaaris, Multan.

**Speakers:**

1.   **Dr. Farid Paracha**  
Director Ulema Academy Mansoorah and a central leader  
of Jamaat-e-Islami
2.   **Dr. Syed Muhammad Najfi**  
Professor at Jamia Al-Muntazir Lahore and Deputy  
Director Taqreeb Mazahib-e-Islami Pakistan
3.   **Maulana Attaullah Shahab**  
Member Gilgit Baltistan Council and Chief Administrator  
Darul Uloom Gilgit
4.   **Dr. Khalid Zaheer**  
Religious scholar, Tanzeem Al-Murad, Lahore

## Dr. Farid Paracha

### National & Regional Perspective

**A**s far as features of a peaceful and balanced society are concerned, the Holy Quran and *Ahadees* (plural of Hadith; sayings and acts of the Holy Prophet) have described them in a very clear manner.

I believe that the Islamic system offers the best options and inherent fundamentals for achieving sustainable peace and establishing a balanced society. Islamic society is based on fundamental beliefs of Islam such as the oneness of God, the prophethood, and life after death. *Amr Bil Ma'arof Wa Nahi Anal Munkar* (ordering right and forbidding wrong), purification of one's self, submission to the will of God, and striving for success in the afterlife are some of the key objectives or desirable values in an Islamic society. How can any society be more peaceful than an Islamic society that is based on unity of thoughts, economic equality—which is also part of the Islamic system of prayers—and brotherhood?

We are however caught in a critical situation which disturbs all of us. Pakistan is in a state of war. More than 31,000 innocent people have been killed in this war so far, and more continue to be killed every day. Our economic losses have exceeded 68 billion US dollars. The number of internally displaced persons in Pakistan is higher than any other region in the world.

When we analyze the post-9/11 developments, particularly the arrival of US/NATO forces in Afghanistan, and their implications for Pakistan we should not ignore the role of the two world powers (the US and Israel) and one regional power (India). The agendas of all these powers are quite clear. Following the 1896 Protocol, Jews had started to strengthen their control on international media and investment. They want to establish a state which should include the rivers of Nile and Euphrates. They cannot tolerate Pakistan's nuclear power. The second big power is the US, and it is better to call it the West. For the last 1,400 years we have been fighting with the West. This recent phase of war started in the 1990s; not after 9/11 as it is usually said. After the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan in 1989, another war was declared against us. The NATO Secretary General had then stated that the world was previously facing red threat while now it was under green threat. Richard Mansour declared that Jihadi Islam had become a threat for the world. Books like *End of the History* by Francis Fukuyama and *The Clash of the Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington, insulting caricatures and desecration of Quran were all parts of this invasion. They wanted to take over the nuclear capability of



Pakistan or to make it ineffective, to capture oil resources and to assert that they were the superpower.

The third player is India. It has not recognized Pakistan in its heart. It forcibly occupied Kashmir and has made 62 dams on our rivers. Indian Army was involved in the violent incident of *Samjhota Express*; this is the only army in the world that plans terrorist attacks in other countries. India's involvement in acts of subversions in Pakistan is an open secret but we stand as culprits in the world's eyes because we cannot present our case effectively.

The Muslim world faces some longstanding conflicts including those in Palestine, Kashmir, the Philippines and Chechnya, etc. Rulers of Muslim countries, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), the UN and the so-called superpowers of the world are all silent. The UN resolutions on human rights and principles of democracy are being ignored. Any freedom movements that surface in these regions are called terrorists movements. They want to make it clear to us that it is unacceptable to them, if the Muslims decide anything either by ballot or bullet. Look at Hamas which remains unacceptable even after becoming part of the democratic/electoral process. This is the extraordinarily critical situation which I was referring to in the beginning.

We talk much about extremism in Pakistan. But we do not expand it to all levels. The secular forces are gradually advancing in the country. We see things happening against the Constitution of Pakistan and hear the seculars and non-believers talk against the religion and Islamic identity of Pakistan. This is another situation we face.

Then there are external actors. They have terrorist training camps in Afghanistan and their representatives are present in Pakistan in the guise of Blackwater; the Raymond Davis incident says it all. Even if they are stopped and caught at some security checkpoints, they are set free. Six of them were also present at the Naval Headquarters. Their presence is self-evident as they do not hide it and openly tell the number of their people present in Pakistan. On the other hand, innocent people are being killed in drone attacks. But things are smooth for them; 500 persons get Pakistani visas in one day and that also without security clearance.

Emerging debates about suicide attacks, *Darul Harb* (the house of war), and *khurooj* (rebellion), etc., are also an outcome of this specific situation we have been put in. These things are used to spread sectarianism in Pakistan. Sectarianism does not exist in Pakistan but it is created. Suicide attacks are conducted to hit the people belonging to different sects to fan sectarian violence. Similarly, the attacks on the military

headquarters in Rawalpindi and the naval base in Karachi were meant to weaken Pakistan's central nervous system. Some other attacks have tried to undermine Pakistan's relations with its friends such as China and Sri Lanka. The purpose of all these attacks is to declare Pakistan an unsafe country and then to create a check on its nuclear assets through the UN. Some steps taken by our rulers such as Gen. (retd) Pervez Musharraf's action against Lal Masjid and Jamia Hafsa in Islamabad and his ban on other organizations further compounded the problem.

At the end, I would like to say, keeping in view the responsibility of religious scholars in the global context, that *minber-o-mehrab* (places in mosques to deliver sermons and lead prayers, which are held by religious clergy) have great power, even more than the media. Undoubtedly, the media is playing a very good role. Religious scholars should also realize their responsibility and use the power of *minber-o-mehrab* to highlight the sanctity and value of human life, human rights, unity of *Ummah*, and guide the people in matters related to jihad. Incidents such as killing of a young man by Rangers personnel in Karachi and killing of five persons in Kharotabad, Balochistan, reflect that human life has no value. Holders of *minber-o-mehrab* are also responsible to keep the passion for jihad alive. There is a lot of propaganda against jihad these days and we are in a situation where we face enemies like India, the US and Israel. Only jihad can provide the best training to *Ummah*.

I would not talk about the curricula of religious seminaries. Preparation of Islamic curricula, as it has been indicated here, is imperative. It is clear from how the things evolved in Tunisia, Egypt and Turkey that if Pakistan's religious scholars apply their full force for the supremacy of Quran and *Sunnah* in the country, which is also a constitutional requirement, the purpose of ensuring a peaceful and balanced society can be achieved.

Furthermore, religious scholars should provide proper guidance to the people on sensitive issues such as *Darul Harb*, and should try to develop consensus among all religious sects.

It should be conveyed to the West that there cannot be sustainable peace in world until NATO forces are pulled out of Afghanistan, oppression is stopped against Muslims, and major conflicts in the Muslim world including those of Kashmir and Palestine, etc., are resolved.

## **Dr. Syed Muhammad Najfi**

### **Socio-Economic Perspective**

We are discussing features of a peaceful and balanced society in this session. God has created human beings as supreme and most dignified among all of His creations. He has put the sense of rights and responsibilities in human instinct; every human has a strong desire for his rights and an urge to fulfill its responsibilities. To have a peaceful and balanced society to live in is one of the basic rights of human beings but they are often denied this right. It is good that some organizations have lately been established to work for the rights of the human beings. The topic we have chosen for this session can be discussed in three ways.

First, we should be aware of what the Holy Quran, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his companions, and *Masumeen* (the Imams) have told us about a peaceful society. The second debate can focus on whether the society we are living in today meets the conditions for a balanced and peaceful society set forth by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), his companion and our predecessors. Thirdly, how can we bring about a change in our current position in order to achieve a peaceful society? I would like to say a few things while keeping my focus on some of the lectures of the *Ameerul Momineen* (leader of the faithful) Hazrat Ali, which are documented in *Nahjul Balagha*. Letter 53 and Lecture 216 tell us the basic features of a peaceful and balanced society. I will describe here only three features:

- 1) Equality is of utmost importance in order to establish a peaceful society. The equality which is described by the *Ameerul Momineen*<sup>2</sup> is for all human beings without any discrimination. In the words of Ameerul Momineen: "O people, those who are like you, they are your brethren in faith or are not your brethren in faith, are all human beings." We can further classify equality into five types.
  - I. There should be equality in rights and opportunities. All should be granted equal rights and opportunities irrespective of political or any other association, patronage or any other factor. The *Ameerul Momineen* said, "all people have equal rights, and there is no difference between the rights of Imam Hassan, Abdullah bin Abbas or Abdullah bin Umar."

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<sup>2</sup> A reference to Hazrat Ali, one of the closest companions of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

- II. There should be equality before the law. It is also essential to establish a peaceful society. If we follow the Holy Quran and life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) we will achieve equality and will not face any problem.
  - III. There should be equality in collection and distribution of Zakat and taxes; we can seek guidance from the concept of *Baitul Maal* in Islam. Today we observe in Pakistan that Zakat and taxes are collected from the poor and distributed among the rich. Things should not be working like this. If we bring equality in the affairs of *Baitul-Maal*, or collection and distribution of wealth and resources, our society will become peaceful and balanced.
  - IV. We will have to bring equality in our behaviors and our treatment towards others. When the *Ameerul Momineen* sent the son of Hazrat Abu Bakar to Egypt, he gave him three advices: (i) your doors should always remain open for them so that they can access you any time; (ii) you should soften yourself to the extent that everybody may like to come to you; and (iii) you should meet them with open heart. If we meet others with open heart, have a pleasant behavior and attitude, and soften ourselves as a goodwill gesture there would be no sectarianism, no prejudices nor other similar problems. The problem arises when we appear to be openhearted but in reality we are not. While referring to Quranic teachings we all concur that we are Muslims but when we come out of this shared reference we instantly split into Shias, Barelvis and Deobandis. We need equality in behavior and treatment in the entire society.
  - V. There should be gender equality. There is no difference between men and women with regard to rights and opportunities.
- 2) The second feature is related to freedom. We can discuss freedom under four topics. First, Islam provides freedom of faith or belief. Everyone is free to have whatever belief one wants to have. Secondly, there should be freedom of expression of one's belief and freedom of conducting research in a belief. Hazrat Ali never put restrictions on anyone including *Kharijites*. The third freedom is freedom of writing. According to a saying of Hazrat Ali, a ruler should describe the importance of freedom of expression and should have the courage and time to listen to the people. We see in Islamic history that rulers used to appear in public places to learn people's opinions. Finally, the role of the media and its

freedom, which is a critical issue these days. Though in those days there was no such media like we have today but you will be surprised to know how Hazrat Ali provided some valuable hints about it in his lectures, stating that it is their responsibility to promote positive things and discourage negative things; and it is their responsibility to advise the government to overcome difficulties. It is the responsibility of the media to not become self-centric and consider itself above everything. The media should bridge the gap between the people and the government, explain issues of violence, promote knowledge and convey wishes and criticism of the people to the government. By introducing this kind of freedom we can make our society peaceful and balanced.

- 3) The last feature which I want to describe here is related to law and order. Law and order does not merely mean that peace replaces terrorism in a society. It has vast scope. It includes human security, status security and economic security. In the absence of law and order and security we see human resource and capital fleeing a society or country. People should also feel secure that they have access to fair and indiscriminate justice. The judiciary should be independent and able to dispense justice to the people. It should not be the case like we see today in Pakistan that in matters of public interest such as terrorism, judiciary can do nothing except lamenting the absence of evidence and witnesses. Such issues need immediate attention of the government. We also need security of privacy, or peace of mind that no one is chasing us, recording our phone calls or observing our daily activities.

If we want to transform our society into a balanced and peaceful society we will have to abide by all the virtues I have mentioned above from lectures of *Ameerul Momineen* Hazrat Ali. At the end, I would like to add that we cannot form a peaceful society without educating our people.

## **Maulana Attaullah Shahab**

### **Sectarian Harmony**

I will say a few things on sectarian harmony and suggest some steps in that regard. We are all citizens of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. There can be two ways of unity in a state or country: shared religion or faith and shared ethnicity or race. There is usually no sectarianism and eventually no sectarian conflict or clash in countries that have the former type of unity. While in countries that have the latter manifestation of unity there will be no political, nationalist and racial conflicts. Unfortunately, neither of these exists

in Pakistan. The topic under discussion deals with religious unity but reference to ethno-political unity may help us understand it better.

The kind of violence we see in Pakistan in the name of religion is not only maligning the religious circles but also turning people away from religion. Use of physical violence instead of dialogue for settlement of disputes and conflicts disturbs the people about the role of religion and about those who use the name of religion. If we had ethnic and political unity in Pakistan we could have been able to conceal and compensate for a lack of religious unity. But it is unfortunate that political and ethnic polarization in Pakistan is not less than religious polarization. Without going into details, if we analyze the discussion between the heads of the two big political parties of Pakistan we will find it difficult to put all the blame on religious circles. The irony is that in a country which was established in the name of Islam the people are still slave to forces other than God.

Respected religious scholars,

The harms of sectarianism have reached such an extent that instead of wasting time in lectures and making analyses we should immediately start our unanimous struggle to check it. It is possible. We have examples of religious and sectarian harmony in our society in the past. At the time of the creation of Pakistan, everybody shared the same passion. It was the very first occasion when people belonging to different sects and schools of thought, while keeping their beliefs intact, put their best efforts for creation of a new country.

In the year 1952, five years after the creation of Pakistan, a meeting of all the prominent religious scholars of Pakistan, chaired by Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, was held and a 22-points resolution framed on the occasion. We cannot find a better example of sectarian harmony than this. It was a great event. In the following years, people from various schools of thought and sects participated in *Tehreek-e-Nizam-e-Mustafa*<sup>3</sup> irrespective of their beliefs and ideological reservations. It was a message to the world that the people of Pakistan were united in the name of Islam.

As Maulana Sheerani has mentioned earlier, sectarianism is not a structural problem of Pakistan. It is our rulers' political compulsion, who still follow the British policy of divide and rule. Almost each ruling regime in Pakistan has used this policy. As a result, we see that sectarian divide is now well entrenched in Pakistani society.

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<sup>3</sup> Movement for enforcement of Islamic system in Pakistan.

We all remember that a platform called Milli Yakjehti Council was once formed for promoting sectarian harmony in the country. All the religious scholars and sects, notwithstanding their differences, worked together in this religious alliance. Similarly, Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal<sup>4</sup> was also a good step to reduce sectarianism and promote religious harmony. The people of Pakistan linked their future to this forum and perhaps these hopes were somehow justified. However, we could not keep it intact for long. The circumstances may lead us to come together again.

I would like to request representatives of all the madrassa boards (Wafaqul Madaaris) who are present here that their joint forum of Tanzeemat-e-Madaaris is an excellent platform to promote sectarian harmony and unity of the *Ummah*. As I am a member of the Gilgit Baltistan government, I have advised it to establish an advisory and reconciliatory institute on the pattern of the Council of Islamic Ideology.

In the end, I would present some verses of renowned poet Qateel Shifai which describe our present situation:

*Oh Angel; These walls and doors have a relation to both of us  
Don't put it on fire as this home belongs to both of us  
You and I are the reason of its hustle and bustle  
O my brother! this town belongs to both of us  
Why we have to fight at every milestone  
During the journey, it will harm both of us  
It's better to seek guidance from conscience too  
Though have a reliable leader both of us.*

## **Dr. Khalid Zaheer**

### **Intellectual Perspective**

Respected *Ulema*,

I would like to present my views on the decline of the Muslim *Ummah* to a weak position and its consequences such as absence of a peaceful and balanced society. This is not merely a supposition but our faith that this world is not governed by the US, Israel or India but by Allah Almighty. Although it is true that our enemies have been conspiring against us but it is also true that we are also responsible for our destruction.

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<sup>4</sup> An alliance of religious political parties that formed provincial governments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (then named NWFP) and Balochistan after the 2002 elections.

Allah is the creator and owner of the whole universe and He cannot allow the desires of the US, Israel, India or any other country to destroy the universe.

It is not possible that we follow Allah's religion honestly and at the same time our enemies become successful in their conspiracies against us. I think we should be worried more about our ills and weakness, which have earned us the wrath of Allah and deprived us of His support. We should be worried about why we are so impotent that we fail to respond to conspiracies of our enemies. I would put a few things before you and invite you to think and raise questions.

A society can be peaceful only when its citizens hold balanced personality and thoughts. Though all the imbalanced personalities and extremists are not necessarily terrorists but all the terrorists are essentially imbalanced persons and extremists. If we want to put an end to unrest and violence we will have to first purge our society of extremist behaviors and attitudes. One of the many manifestations of this extremist mindset we see in form of 'statements' that are very common in our society such as: 'that person is liable to be killed; that person is out of the fold of Islam; he is an agent of Jews; those people are *mushrik* (those who deny the oneness of God); and it is against the honor of our faith to bear with them, etc.'

In order to create a balanced approach in society, it is imperative that the people, particularly religious scholars, think positively about those who disagree with their viewpoint. For this, they should first sincerely try to understand the viewpoints of others. Rejecting other people's opinions in a challenging and reactive manner generates only hatred. Sincere and honest understanding of others' views means that we show them respect despite disagreeing with them. In fact, moral and religious justifications for one's association with a particular viewpoint is also based on rational examination of all available viewpoints with the aim to search and choose the truth. Otherwise, a religious viewpoint would not be one's own but either adopted from environment or the result of brainwashing, which would essentially generate imbalanced behavior. Therefore, we need to create balanced and peace-loving approaches in our society.

The current curricula of various religious education boards teach only a specific viewpoint to their students. I think students should be provided with an opportunity to study the viewpoints of different religious schools of thought and to make this study unbiased one who teaches a particular viewpoint should himself be convinced of it. Secondly, there should be an open knowledge-based dialogue between the teachers and the students. Religious scholars have a great role to play in that regard.



It is also important to revive a practice from the early Islamic period when the rulers used to deliver Friday sermons and lead the Friday prayers. This means that only the government would have the right to prepare Friday sermons and appoint prayers leaders for Friday prayers. The practice would bring the rulers close to the people and mosque; they would be accountable to the people. Furthermore, as a result of this practice, mosques would no more remain a platform for sectarian feuds. Thirdly, religious scholars (those leading prayers and delivering Friday sermons) would become eligible to get [economic] benefits and privileges at par with government servants. Fourthly, religious scholars can use mosques as educational institutions to impart religious education and awareness to the people according to government policies.

Religious scholars should also emphasize creation of awareness among the people within their circles of influence about ethical values of Islam, such as truth, good behavior, peace and justice, etc. They should discourage the people from supporting or getting involved in acts of violence and fighting by telling them about the punishments for these acts in the hereafter. That would convince the people that their success in the hereafter does not depend on their association with any religious group but on their care about the rights of Allah and the rights of the people. In this way, imbalanced behaviors would automatically be eliminated from society and it would become peaceful and balanced.

## **Chairperson's Address**

### **Muhammad Hanif Jalindhary**

Four respected scholars have shared their views with us so far. Dr. Farid Paracha has shed light on regional, international and national factors of unrest and insecurity and shared with us his thoughts on how we can develop a peaceful and balanced society in light of Quran and *Sunnah*. The crux of his speech was that peace cannot be achieved without ending oppression.

Dr. Najfi has discussed at length the issues of equality, fairness and justice as well as independent promotion of education. He has discussed the requirements of an ideal society. The focal point of his argument was that people's rights must be protected and what belongs to the poor should not be given to the rich.

Maulana Attaullah Shahab's discussion was in perspective of sectarian harmony. He has emphasized that disharmony prevails at different levels in our society. We should try to

create sectarian as well as political harmony in society because the causes of unrest are not merely religious.

Dr. Zaheer has looked at the issue from a different perspective. He has indicated that the basic responsibilities of a government or state also include the fulfillment of religious obligations. The central theme in his view was self-accountability. It is due to a lack of self-accountability that we tend to ignore our shortcomings and try to shift the blame on others. We do not realize that we are also responsible for our circumstances. The essence of his address was that we should focus on holding ourselves accountable. I am thankful to the speakers for keeping the time constraint in mind and doing justice with the topic as well. I have presented the gist of their discussion being the chair of the session.

The prime objective of this seminar is to determine what role we all have to play in establishing a peaceful society. Peace is among the basic needs of a society. Like air, water and food, all human beings need peace and security to survive. The esteemed participants here are all men of knowledge and are aware of how Hazrat Ibrahim prayed to God at the completion of construction of the *Ka'aba*. One of the prayers was "Oh my Lord! Make this city (Makkah) a place of peace and provide its people with fruits." I would say that the Jews and the Christians also claim that they believe in the prophethood of Hazrat Ibrahim and Muslims already have faith. So Ibrahim's prayer was for the entire humanity. It was not for *Makkah* only but for the whole world. When there is peace at the centre there would be peace everywhere. As *Baitullah* (*Ka'aba* is also known as *Baitullah*) is like the centre of the world, this prayer of Hazrat Ibrahim is for all countries, nations and regions.

My respected colleagues have shed light on the factors contributing to imbalance and unrest in a society; it would be further explained in the following sessions. In my view, the major reason behind this imbalance is economic deprivation and we cannot hope to achieve peace without addressing that reason. The prayer of Hazrat Ibrahim has been mentioned at various places in the Holy Quran and whenever he prayed for peace, he also prayed for economic well being and livelihood. Allah mentions his blessings for the people of Quraish in *Surah Al-Quraish* in these words: "(He) who has fed them against hunger, and has made them safe from fear". Here hunger and food have been mentioned along with safety from fear, which is a state of peace.

The second important thing we need is justice. Oppression and violence cannot co-exist with peace. The former always generates rebellion and revolt while the latter is always instrumental in maintaining law and order and peace. Wherever in the world there is unrest and insecurity it is due to oppression and aggression. The only way to achieve peace and security is provision of justice to the aggrieved. I remember the day when I,

being part of a delegation from South Asia, visited the US on the invitation of the US State Department in 2004. During the last session, we had a meeting with the then US Secretary of State. The secretary asked me about the reasons for the gap between the West and the Muslim World. I replied, “You are the reason as well as the solution to this gap.” He asked me how and I then explained that US policies towards the world are based on double standards. If the US treats the world with fairness, we would believe that its policies are just. He asked me to explain further and I said that whoever was responsible for 9/11, we had condemned the attacks but the US nation and media had linked the attacks to Islam. Had anyone discussed the religion of those who bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Had their religion told them to do so? When a Yugoslav General murdered 750,000 people, his religion was not discussed either. Double standards abort peace and balance wherever they exist; including at the international, regional, national and even domestic level. We should not endorse wrong things stated by those who share our sect and should accept the right thing even if it is stated by those who do not belong to our sect. For if we continue to look at things through the lens of our own sect we would never be able to solve our problems. Our standards for endorsing and rejecting the things should be based on facts and should be free from sectarian bias. This is how we can do justice to our responsibilities.

Islamic society is based on compassion and brotherhood. It is free from economic deprivation and exploitations, injustice and discrimination. Islam emphasizes that appointments should be made on the basis of abilities and not caste or creed. Islam clearly describes the ways to conduct oneself in business, trade, and even borrowing and lending. The purpose is to avoid conflict. Islamic *Shariah* forbids the kind of business and unclear terms and conditions in dealings that can create conflict among people. For instance, a person buys something on credit and promises the seller to pay for it later without a clear mention of time. And the seller also does not make it clear when the payment should be made. This kind of dealings can lead to conflicts and Islam forbids them.

Islam also provides a balanced system of rights and obligations. We see that intellectuals and scholars of this age ask people to fight for their rights without considering if they are caring for others’ rights or not. Islam says that one’s obligations are as important as one’s rights.

We the religious scholars have a great responsibility. We, being the heirs to the legacy of prophets, have the responsibility to link the people to Allah. We have the responsibility to link the people with one another on the basis of humanity and faith.

## Question & Answer Session

**Question:** I am a student of science. I have heard nothing about that from the speakers today although everything you are using here is given to us by science including these microphones. Some of you have talked about the curricula of madrassas. But we see that *Dars-e-Nizami* has no room for science subjects. But at least astronomy should be part of the madrassa curriculum in which we are lagging far behind. You have mentioned many political reasons of our problems, including Israel and 9/11 but I think the real factor is our lagging behind in science and technology. I have heard the people of *minber-o-mehrab* belonging to various schools of thought and almost all of them say knowledge means religious knowledge. I do not agree with that. I have looked up the meanings of knowledge in different languages including English. Most of the sources equate knowledge to science. Without developing scientific and technological skills we would continue to lag far behind the world, and would never be able to stop drone attacks.

**Answer (Qari Hanif Jalindhary):** Let me clarify in the presence of leaders of the *Ittehad-e-Tanzeematul Madaaris* (the alliance of madrassa administrators) that astronomy is part of curricula of all madrassa boards. The other science subjects are also present and their education is provided at a certain level.

**Question (Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali):** My question is to Dr. Khalid Zaheer. Sir! You have said that mosques should be brought under state control and sermons should be delivered in consultation with the government as is the practice in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. My concern is that this is acceptable only in an Islamic government. As our governments use sectarianism as a political tool, why would they like to discourage sectarianism? Instead, I think, religious scholars should stand together and launch a joint movement to establish Islamic system and a balanced society, and ensure justice for all. The governments would never want such a thing to happen. Thus, how can you advise us to hand over the mosques to the government and then seek its permission for the kind of sermons we want to deliver?

**Answer (Dr. Khalid Zaheer):** Once I presented the same idea at another place. A person asked me, “you tell us that rulers should lead the prayers but what if the ruler is a woman?” I replied that if we revive this tradition and it becomes a norm then other related issues can be decided through debate and consultation but one thing is clear to all that a Muslim ruler can lead the prayers and deliver sermons. Education, awareness and understanding of religious issues are imperative to create meaningful debate that may lead us to consensus. But we should not hesitate to present our views and to discuss what kind of society we want. That is how we can reach some agreement.

We know there is little possibility for our rulers leading prayers and delivering sermons. There could be a disagreement on how it would be implemented. But I think if it happens it can bring positive change in our rulers and society. If you think otherwise, it does not mean we should stop talking about it.

**Question (Maulana Qazi Mahmoodul Hassan):** On one hand, we have rulers like Asif Ali Zardari and on the other hand scholars like Dr. Israr Ahmed. Would you prefer that your Friday or Eid prayers are led by Zardari? Please respond in yes or no.

**Answer:** I would refer to what Hazrat Abdullah Ibn-e-Umar said in a situation like this. He remained worried for some time about rulers leading Asr<sup>5</sup> prayers later than the prescribed time. He thought about it and described his understanding in these words: “I may say my Asr prayer on the right time but I am bound to offer my prayer that is led by my rulers.” If we move forward with a purpose of reform, Mr. Zardari can become like Dr. Israr. It is a process. We should take the first step.

**Question:** In events like this our religious scholars always talk about religious unity and harmony. We have five madrassa education boards which have nothing in common except the subject of Arabic grammar. Do you think there should be a common curriculum for all madrassas?

**Answer (Qari Hanif Jalindhary):** Yes. There are five madrassa boards. Three of them use the term *Wafaq* in their names while the other two are known as *Tanzeemul Madaaris* and *Rabitaul Madaaris*. Four of these boards including *Tanzeemul Madaaris*, *Rabitatul Madaaris*, *Wafaqul Madaaris Salfia* and *Wafaqul Madaaris Al-Arabia* have no difference in their curricula. There might only be a difference in the order of subjects or the teaching timetable. We have faith in *Fiqh-e-Hanafi* but it is also being taught by *Wafaqul Madaaris Salfia*. *Rabitaul Madaaris* of Jamaat-e-Islami also has the same curriculum. The Ahle Tashee (Shia) have different principles and different books and this difference is not new. Hence, I think, it is a misconception that madrassa boards have different curricula. On the contrary, the institutions of modern education have huge differences in their curricula. If you study the curricula of madrassa boards you would find the answer to your question.

**Question:** It is true that colleges and universities have different curricula but have the same board. However, do not you think that separate madrassa boards for different sects promote sectarianism? Is it not appropriate to have a single board that may include two representatives each from different schools of thought? Can a single madrassa board be helpful in reducing sectarianism?

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<sup>5</sup> Third of the five daily prayers offered by Muslims.

**Answer (Qari Hanif Jalindhary):** There are about 40 public and private education boards in Pakistan operating at the federal and regional levels. They do not provide similar education. Madrassa boards provide administrative facilitation to madrassas. To the question that separate boards for Sunnis, Deobandis, Shias and Ahle Hadith result in increased sectarianism, I ask you why do you include representatives of various sects in the Council of Islamic Ideology? You do so because you cannot skip over the ground realities. Similarly, Islamic Shariat Court and the peace committees have representatives of all religious sects. Look at the world around you. It is described in the constitution of Lebanon that their president would be a Christian, prime minister a Sunni and speaker of the parliament a Shia, for all these religious communities exist there. We also have Shias, Sunnis, Barelvis and Ahle Hadith and cannot force any person to change his faith. It is not bad to have separate administrative boards for religious education if we all stick to those areas on which all religious sects are in agreement. At the end, I would like to say that to establish an ideal and peaceful society we would have to respect each other. If we move forward with good intentions and good expectations we would succeed.

**Question:** We have heard some very positive and noble things from our respected scholars in this session. Would they try to spread these good messages in society after they leave this meeting?

**Answer (Mufti Muneebur Rehman):** As far as the management of this event is concerned, I am sure they would publish the unanimous recommendations that emerge at the conclusion of this event. This is however not our job to implement or enforce these recommendations. But at least we should take initiatives and try to change mindsets. Only then can we expect any change.

**Muhammad Amir Rana:** Someone asked about outcome of this seminar and indeed Mufti Muneebur Rehman has responded very well. The final report of this seminar would be published in English and Urdu and would also be disseminated to the media. However, the real objective of this seminar is to explore the role of religious scholars in promoting peace and harmony. As we desire and seek your role, you should also point out how people like us, who are trying to learn and understand these issues, can be helpful in achieving that. This seminar is a first step and we will try to hold more sittings like this in order to get comprehensive recommendations. We plan to take these emerging recommendations to other religious scholars and then may attempt to get the cooperation from the government also. We would seek cooperation from other segments of society as well if and where required.

## Second Session

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### Challenges to Creation of a Peaceful and Balanced Society

**Chair:** **Allama Syed Farhat Hussain Shah**  
Nazim-e-Aala, Minhajul Quran Ulema Council, Lahore

**Speakers:**

1. **Dr. Raghieb Naeemi**  
Principal, Jamia Naeemia, Lahore
  2. **Dr. Qibla Ayaz**  
Director, Center for Islamic Studies, Peshawar University
  3. **Maulana Qari Zameer Akhter Mansoori**  
Representative, Rabitaul Madaaris Al-Islamia, Pakistan  
and Principal, Jamia Al-Falah, Karachi
  4. **Allama Akbar Hussain Zahidi**  
Representative, Wafaqul Madaaris Shia, Balochistan
  5. **Qazi Mehmudul Hassan Ashraf**  
Principal Darul Uloom Islamia, Muzaffarabad
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## **Dr. Raghieb Naeemi**

### **Perspective from Punjab**

**P**unjab is distinguished from the rest of the provinces of Pakistan in many ways. It is the most populous province of the country. Many of the most populous cities of Pakistan, after Karachi, are in Punjab, including Lahore, Faisalabad, Sahiwal and Rawalpindi, etc. Law and order issues are directly related to population density. Secondly, the number and capacity of personnel of law enforcement is far below the actual requirement, over the last few decades the population of Punjab has increased tremendously but the number of police stations has increased only slightly.

Cities with big populations have many social problems. Education is not available to all. There are issues of polarization and class distinction; the poor classes are forced to live in slums that usually exist on the peripheries of big cities. Such social deprivations produce imbalanced and destructive personalities. Secondly, in cities with huge populations it is easy for miscreants and criminals to hide and operate; in smaller cities and towns, people know each other very well and it is easy to identify those who violate law and order. As a result, criminals take refuge in big cities leading to law and order issues such as theft, robberies and rape, etc.

Then we see that education facilities are discriminatory. For instance, in Lahore, there are expensive institutions such as LUMS and Government College University and at a distance of just a few kilometers there are schools that even lack furniture and students have to sit on the ground in classrooms. When the latter see the former going to schools/colleges in big cars they develop an inferiority complex. This inferiority complex eventually forces a child to commit actions that harm peace in society.

The remote areas of Punjab have diverse and extensive problems. There are issues of lack of education, health, and sanitation. People in these areas are deprived of almost all those facilities which people in big cities are accustomed to. Social and economic inequalities further add to problems of those who are either at a socioeconomic disadvantage or belong to a deprived region. The people living in areas of Central Punjab including Lahore, Okara, Sahiwal, Gujranwala and Sialkot have somehow consolidated their economic position. But regions of Potohar and Southern Punjab face extreme poverty and backwardness. If the government does not pay immediate attention, these regions would soon become breeding grounds for extremism and terrorism; extremist forces are already well entrenched in these areas.



Sectarian and ideological conflicts not only disturb peace in parts of Punjab but also undermine the logic of peaceful coexistence in a society. Especially during the months of Moharram and Rabiul Awal sectarian tensions are at their peak; the government has to ban movement of certain scholars in these days who flare people's sectarian sentiments.

Another issue linked to sectarianism is that about 95 percent of the clerics who lead prayers in mosques in urban areas of Punjab come from remote and less developed parts of the province, particularly peripheries of South Punjab's main cities, including Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Dera Ismail Khan and Multan. Students from these areas travel to religious seminaries in big cities to get religious education and after completing their education they do not go back to their native towns. Many of them start leading prayers in mosques in their host cities and gradually adjust there. Their way of thinking and approaches towards life are very traditional, and their religious education has a sectarian curve.

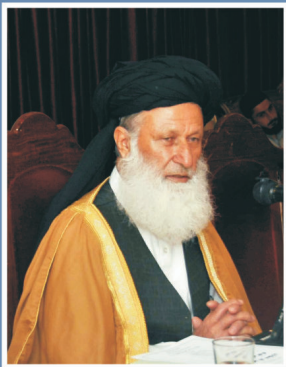
The people of rural areas of South Punjab get a different kind of justice compared to those who live in the cities. The *Waderas* (feudal class) provide justice to the people according to their own will. Middle class families have a lot of feuds among them. Inequality exists in South Punjab. The feudal families, or political elite, including the Legharis, Gilanis, Jilanis and Ansaris among others do not want people to grow out of their influence. They do not ask the people to get education nor guide or encourage them to go to cities and strive for a better life.

We would have to make progress in the social sector otherwise our young people, who are uncertain about their future, would be attracted towards messages of extremism and terrorism. Since they are confused and desperate, they can easily be used by extremist elements. We know a few banned organizations that have thousands of youth on their payroll. One of these organizations has more than 100,000 associates.

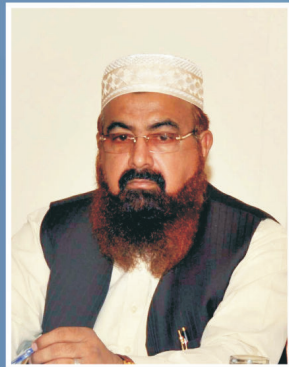
The extremist elements introduce the youth to an ideal state of mind where they see themselves as great heroes of Islam, or Mujahideen like Khalid Bin Waleed or Yousaf bin Taashfeen and feel that the onus for reforming society is on them.

At the end, I would like to say that we can maintain law and order in Punjab only through establishing a society that is based on higher ethical values, law, justice and equality. Without promoting these values we cannot achieve peace.

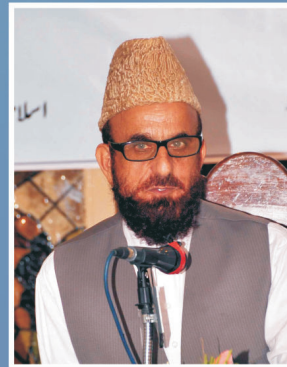
# Participants of Ulema Seminar



Maulana Muhammad Khan Sherani



Maulana Yasin Zafar



Mufti Muneeb ur Rehman



Allama Syed Jawad Hadi



Qari Muhammad Hanif Jalandhary



Dr. Farid Paracha

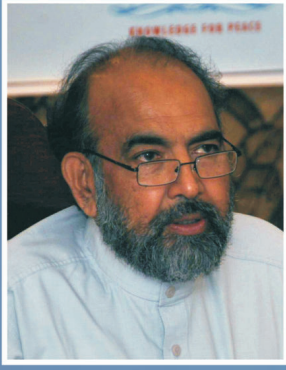


Dr. Raghieb Naemi



Pir Mudassar Shah

# Participants of Ulema Seminar



Dr. Qibla Ayaz



Dr. Syed Muhammad Najfi



Maulana Attaullah Shahab



Dr. Abu Al-Hasan Shah



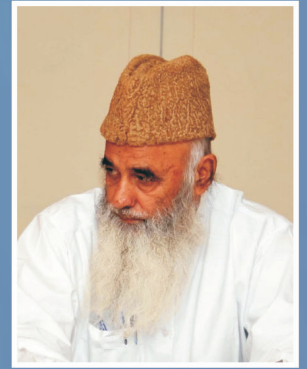
Dr. Khalid Masud



Allama Syed Farhat Hussain Shah



Mufti Muhammad Zahid



Maulana Muhammad Salafi



Khurshid Nadeem



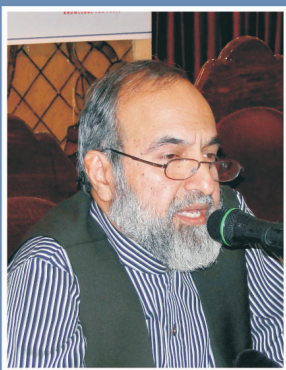
Mufti Muhammad Rafiq



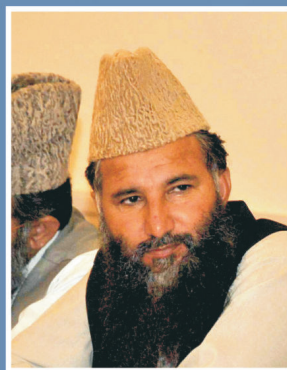
Allama Akbar Hussain Zahidi



Maulana Ziaullah Naqshbandi



Dr. Khalid Zaheer



Maulana Fazal ur Rehman Madni



Allama Younis Qasmi

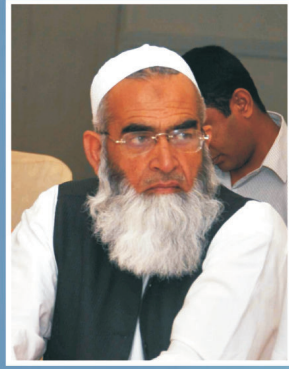


Allama Ali Bakhsh Sajjadi

# Participants of Ulema Seminar



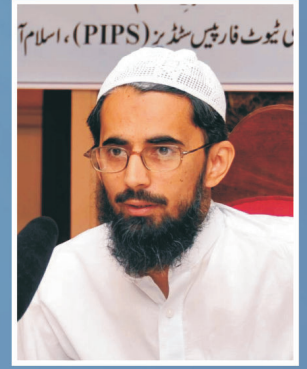
Sahibzada Syed Safdar Shah Gillani



Maulana Anwar ul Haq Haqqani



Allama Agha Amin Shaheedi



Allama Ammar Khan Nasir



Maulana Anis ul Hasnain



Maulana Abdul Qadus Muhammadi



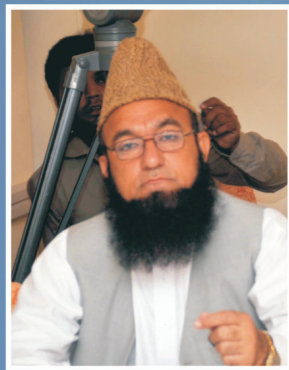
Qari Zameer Akhter Mansoori



Maulana Khalid Zia



Maulana Abdul Haq Hashmi



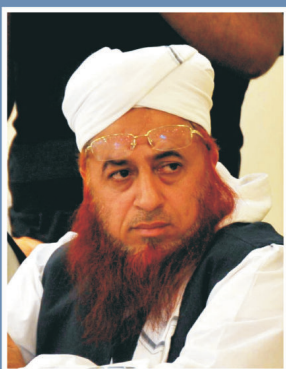
Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali



Allama Asghar Hussain Askari



Dr. Abdul Nasir Latif



Qazi Mehmud ul Hasan Ashraf



Maulana Babar Hussain Babar



Maulana Shamshad Hussain



Maulana Masud Baig

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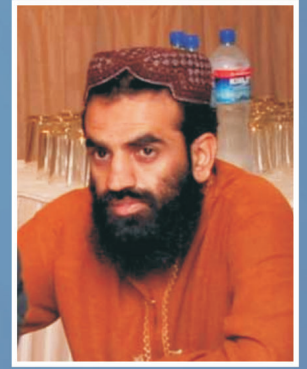
Maulana Muhammad Hayat Qadri



Pir Farooq Bahaul Haq Shah



Maulana Zikria Zakir



Maulana Amjad Saeed



## **Dr. Qibla Ayaz**

### **Perspective from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

Respected religious scholars,

It is fortunate that religious scholars with diverse viewpoints and belonging to different parts of Pakistan are here to discuss a crucial topic. I am not a religious scholar. Whatever I will discuss here is based on what I have learned from our respected religious scholars through personal interaction and attending events like this one and I am thankful to them in that regard. I will share with you my information about challenges to peace and security in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Though Federally Administrated Tribal Areas (FATA) is not an administrative unit of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, rather it comes under the federal jurisdiction, but we cannot exclude it from any discussion which is meant to analyze the situation of peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Therefore, the scope of my discussion on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa includes FATA also.

As far as maintenance of law and order and achievement of peace are concerned, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA are considered the most difficult regions not only in Pakistan but in the whole world. There is a lot of political concern around the world about insecurity and militancy in these areas. Historically, this region had been the best example of peaceful coexistence among people belonging to different sects and religions. Very few people know that besides Shia and Sunni sects of Islam some non-Muslim communities also live in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and are quite strong. For instance, you will find a large number of Sikhs as well as Hindus in the bazaars of Peshawar. There are Christian institutions including Edward College and others. The Christian community has its presence in administrative institutions as well. Besides Peshawar, Sikhs have a considerable population in Buner—an area adjacent to Swat—as well as in FATA. In the countryside of Hangu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Hindus still live side by side with the Shia community. Many of them once held the status of Malik (tribal elders) and were part of local Jirgas in those areas. Qadiyanis are also present in some parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and their families are considered very respectable. The people we call Khans are Qadiyanis. An entire village in district Bannu is populated by Qadiyanis. All these communities lived a peaceful and harmonious life together. There was no discrimination or violence against any community. But only few people know these facts.

Things started to change with the beginning of the Afghan resistance. Multiple factors are responsible for this change. The problem is extensive and cannot be comprehended

by analyzing the role of religious scholars alone. Many unseen forces are also involved in aggravating things. The traditional social structure of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA started to erode after the Afghan Jihad and with the passage of time it was replaced by a new social order. The old structure was based on Jirga, respect for tribal elders and people of wisdom, and certain other principles. These institutions got weaker and new institutions emerged. The new state of affairs is really disturbing.

Sectarian tensions mostly prevail in Hangu district and in Parachinar, administrative headquarters of Kurram Agency in FATA. People cannot travel from Peshawar to Parachinar by road. In cases of emergency, helicopters are arranged for them or they follow an alternative route that passes through Afghanistan and through which travel is much more expensive.

A similar Shia-Sunni sectarian conflict exists in Dera Ismail Khan where a number of prominent teachers at the universities have been killed in sectarian violence. A new group known as Pathri Group (stone group) has emerged in Dera Ismail Khan. Their name suggests that they are as strict as a stone, and unwilling to budge an inch from their position. We recognize all these realities. In FATA, particularly in Waziristan, there are many people who are not Pakistani citizens. They belong to different parts of world. Things are really very complex.

Of course religious scholars have a vital role to play in this situation. I would like to cite an example. When Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto dismissed the NAP-JUI government in Balochistan in 1973, NWFP (now called Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) chief minister Mufti Mehmud resigned in protest. The Baloch went to mountains to launch an armed resistance. But Mufti Mehmood, announced to pursue a constitutional and peaceful struggle despite support from hundreds of thousands of armed tribesmen. The Baloch harmed their cause by doing so. The Pakhtun and religious scholars including Mufti Mehmood could also do that but they did not. In the subsequent years, we saw a very vibrant role of Milli Yakjehti Council, which was an initiative of religious scholars meant for promoting harmony and tolerance among different schools of thought. The formation of government of Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, an alliance of religious political parties belonging to various schools of thought, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was another step forward. Religious elites successfully settled their differences by dialogue and maintained an environment of religious harmony for five years.

The current insecurity and violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA are very much linked to the situation in Afghanistan. The religious scholars now have a greater responsibility than ever before. Only they can settle the issues between Afghanistan and

the US. At present, two lobbies exist in Afghanistan, FATA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well as in the US and Europe; one is the peace lobby and the other is war lobby. Now, it is time for us to decide which lobby we want to join. The war lobby wants to continue the war in the region while the peace lobby wants to resolve the issue. Believe me, Obama is part of the peace lobby but the US Army is part of the war lobby. The latter wants to continue this war whereas the former wants to somehow manage a pullout.

War involves huge economy. People from the US, Pakistan, Afghanistan and other countries have earned billions of dollars in this war and are still minting money. An end to the war means an end to their income. This is not in the interest of the war lobby. Our religious scholars and religious circles inadvertently become part of the war lobby. If they become part of the peace lobby, our religious scholars have the capacity to end the war in Afghanistan. They should come forward to play their role, particularly in the present circumstances when the US wants some political settlement in Afghanistan. They should make the Taliban realize that there is an international dimension of the conflict in Afghanistan and that they should act according to ground realities instead of following their desires. It is not possible for the Taliban to rule Afghanistan alone. Ultimately, they would have to reconcile with other political stakeholders to form a consensus government according to the wishes of the people. I know some religious scholars in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who can influence the Taliban for a negotiated way to resolve the conflict. They can tell the Taliban that political reconciliation is not only the need of the hour but also a requirement under Islamic law. Likewise, religious scholars can also make it clear to the Taliban that some people do not want this issue to be settled through negotiations, without which Afghanistan would revert to civil war after the foreign troops pull out. This can plunge the entire region into turmoil and bloodshed.

As things stand now, I think Allah has provided the religious scholars with a great opportunity to play their role for a political settlement in Afghanistan. They should sit together and think about Afghanistan after US troops withdrawal. It is their responsibility. It is pointless to discuss if the May 2 incident (killing of Osama Bin Laden) had actually taken place or not. Instead, we should think on which points we can evolve some consensus. We should strengthen the US peace lobby that is in favor of a military pullout and political reconciliation. Our religious scholars can provide this lobby with a workable peace plan. The US perhaps would not do this on its own but would look towards the United Nations. Religious scholars can request the UN to appoint a representative for Afghanistan. This representative can be from Turkey or Malaysia, countries for which Taliban have a great deal of respect. The Taliban have already established an office in Turkey. Being part of NATO, Turkey has positive relations with the US.



I know the views I have expressed here are not so popular but we need to look forward. Sooner or later we would have to discuss about this option or other similar options. Religious scholars would also have to prepare themselves to face the emerging challenges by forgetting the rhetoric of the past. We should understand that international politics revolves around interests of nations. We have to determine and pursue our interests as the Pakistani nation, as Muslims, and as key stakeholders in the region.

I would like to suggest that Pak Institute for Peace Studies should hold the next seminar on this topic and invite those religious scholars who wield influence in the Taliban ranks and in the region and who are able to play their role regarding national and regional peace.

## **Qari Muhammad Zameer Akhter Mansoori**

### **Perspective from Sindh**

My respected friends,

We all have come here to attend this seminar with aggrieved hearts. I belong to a far-flung area of Sanghar district in Sindh. Sindh is known as *Baabul* Islam (the door to Islam). The religious scholars know the services of religious seminaries and *Aulia-e-Karam* (friends of Allah/spiritual leaders) from this region. Sindh, which was a stronghold of Islam even before the creation of Pakistan, faces extreme threats to its religious and spiritual values in Pakistan today. The problems which I am going to mention here are not only critical for Sindh but also detrimental to the survival of the country.

The biggest challenge for both Sindh and Pakistan is the true identification of our destination and enemies. We all know that the US is our common enemy. It is the enemy of the Muslim *Ummah*, madrassas and Pakistan. Even a child knows that. We should also determine a common destination for the people of Pakistan. When we analyze challenges to peace in Sindh we see that their nature is different in rural and urban areas. But violence is pervasive and requires an immediate and comprehensive remedy. I live in Sindh so I can tell you that I do not see a week or a day when someone is not killed. Just look at the media reports and you would see that war is going on there. Human life has no value. But the challenges are ever more perilous now. The writ of the government has practically collapsed in Karachi. The administration is helpless. Might is right is the only law. The city is being run through extortion, blackmailing and bullets. This is the biggest challenge in my opinion. One of the basic functions of any

government is to provide protection to the lives and property of its people. But the Sindh government has failed to do so. If it wants to secure peace, it would have to first establish its writ at all cost.

I would not waste time in citing examples of the government's withering writ as I have to sum up my submissions within the allotted time. Thousands of people have been killed in Sindh, particularly Karachi, in the last few years. All of you know what happened on May 12, 2007. Lawyers were burnt alive there. Shops and the markets were torched. The *Bhatta* (extortion) mafia is looting and killing people. Police stations, government officials, and influential people provide patronage to criminals. Media reports depict the absolute lawlessness in Karachi.

Now I would present my suggestions. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) has said that the oppressor should be stopped from committing oppression and the oppressed should be helped. We need to do so to achieve peace. Contrary to this, however, the oppressors are helped and the oppressed stand helpless in Pakistan. No government institution pays heed to grievances of the poor and the oppressed. Not only do people's lives and property remain unprotected but their losses are also not compensated.

My dear friends! The foremost challenge we face is how to stop the oppressor and listen to the oppressed.

Another challenge is to check US and Indian agents from operating in Pakistan. They are present in Sindh also; the media has also reported about that. For whom the airport in Jacobabad is being constructed and who is sitting there? Do we not see the NATO supplies going through the seaport? Do we not see how our country is being destroyed and how India and the US are using our people?

The third challenge in Sindh and especially in Karachi is related to ethnic and linguistic tensions. I am afraid that if these tensions are not addressed, neighbors will start killing one other's families. We have talked much about sectarian and religious extremism, why do we not see the ethnic extremism? The use of Sindh card, Mohajir card and other ways of blackmailing are routine political tactics to gain leverage over one's opponents but no one sees miseries of the people. Criminals in the cities are doing to the people the same as feudal elites do to the people in interior Sindh. In interior Sindh, people are slaves of feudal lords and lead miserable lives. There is uneven distribution of wealth and the gulf between the rich and the poor is widening. In cities, there are issues of extortion of money and kidnapping for ransom.

Unemployment and of price-hike offer another challenge. In cities such as Hyderabad and Sukkur alone tens of thousands of educated youth wander in search of job. The government's failure to provide them jobs would eventually force them to join either criminals or extremist organizations.

## **Allama Akbar Hussain Zahidi**

### **Perspective from Balochistan**

There is no region in the world that has not faced some sort of hardship or crisis. Crises are part and parcel of life. They are usually of three kinds: those created by the enemy to achieve its objectives against a nation; those created by man himself; and, those which come from God to test nations.

God makes people and nations go through difficult times to test their faith and to enable them to use their hidden qualities. "And certainly, We shall test you with something of fear, hunger, and loss of wealth, lives and fruits." (2:155)

Pakistan faces political, religious and ethnic/linguistic crises. It is hard to name a problem that does not exist in Pakistan. As my respected colleague Zameer Mansoori has also mentioned religious extremism is not the only factor contributing to terrorism but political and ethnic factors are also there. Instead of looking at the problems as a whole we tend to criticize the parts. Secondly, things have gone wrong on the whole at the societal level. While condemning the FC personnel for the Kharotabad incident we forget that the FC, police and other institutions are from this society. They are a part of us and our reflection.

We have to analyze what happened to our society. Are there some foundational problems or did we get here over time. But I think had this society behaved like it does today our forefathers would not have been successful in establishing a separate homeland for us. Obviously, it was a different society then.

One may ask which hardships are from God, which we have created ourselves and which are the ones created by our enemies. What should be the standard to distinguish one from the other? We have only one standard for that; we should obey God and follow his orders and remember that He tests us through these tough times.

We have observed how our people stood united and helped others during calamities such as the 2005 earthquakes and last year's floods. When we face a crisis that comes from the God, we come out of it as a nation while facing it courageously. But the crises we create ourselves are really disturbing.

Sometimes we manage to come out of these self-created crises and celebrate our achievement. But in fact there is no reason to celebrate; we should have been wise enough not to create them in the first place. Yes, we should celebrate if we succeed in averting our enemies' plans to put us into crisis.

Most of the crises in Pakistan are either created by us or by our enemies. The enemies used us in their war, created a mess in our country and then managed its pullback. It is now the responsibility of our politicians and religious scholars to take the nation out of this quagmire. God would not send angels to help us. We have to address our problems ourselves. It is time to be wise and bold. We should learn from the nations around us which have not only successfully come out of their difficult times but have also achieved significant levels of development.

The situation is really grave. We are simply terrified to hear about the kind of terrorism and crimes taking place in Balochistan. Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of area. You would be astonished to know that some far-flung areas of the province present centuries-old way of living and are without the basic necessities of life. The provincial and federal governments blame each other for this awful state of affairs. No one is willing to claim responsibility.

The Baloch people complain of their deprivations; Balochistan's Pakhtun population however does not express such discontent. Deprivations generate violence and rebellion. There is no doubt that the Baloch have been oppressed and have faced all sorts of cruelties. What should we do in this situation and whether religious scholars have any role to play here? We should not absolve ourselves from this responsibility. We often say that politicians, army and police, etc., are supposed to do this job. We are all equal partners in this 'crime' of not resolving the issues.

The change should be holistic. Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are parts of Pakistan. Without a sincere support from Islamabad and federal institutions, the provinces cannot bring the change. May God give our ruling elites wisdom and courage to keep the national interest above their personal interests.

The only platform available to religious scholars is the mosque. You know very well how many people go to mosques. Even then I think religious scholars' role is considerable in improving the situation. When even those who are at the helm of affairs say that they are powerless, I wonder who would resolve these conflicts in Balochistan.

But we can suggest some basic things that can be helpful in addressing the situation. Almost all respected religious scholars here have talked about enforcing the Islamic

system. But I think it is a gradual process and has a few prerequisites. In the present scenario, we should first try to focus on how we can get out of this confused state of affairs. For that a strong political system should continue to function. The change in any society does not come overnight. Read the history of *Akhwanul Muslimoon* in Egypt and you will find how painstaking and slow the process of change is. The religious scholars in Iran waged a struggle for more than two centuries to bring change. Our religious elites should not misunderstand reality. May God give us courage to fulfill our religious responsibilities.

## **Qazi Mahmoodul Hassan Ashraf**

### **Perspective from Kashmir**

Islamic scholars of all times are heirs to the legacy of teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). It is their responsibility to safeguard the Islamic way of life presented by the Holy Prophet (PBUH). More than 144,000 people benefitted from the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) during the 23 years of his life after God bestowed prophethood upon him. After the death of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), God Almighty safeguarded the religion of Islam through companions (*Ashab-e-Karam*) and family of the Prophet (*Ahle Bait*). This was the best period of Islam. We should study and follow that period to find solutions to our problems.

Respected religious scholars! After the Holy Prophet (PBUH) migrated from Makkah to Madina, he established an Islamic state there. Historians and scholars have termed Madina the first Islamic state. The righteous caliphs<sup>6</sup> later propagated this Islamic legacy to subsequent generations.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) advised the Muslim *Ummah* to seek guidance from his life and those of his caliphs for individual and collective matters. The purpose was to protect the *Ummah* from sectarianism. This saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) provides legal protection to the Islamic system which he and his companions established and practiced. Any efforts to reform an Islamic state would be useless if it is not based on the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his righteous caliphs. Pakistan was established in the name of Islam. I believe that the creation of Pakistan was the result of the movement that Muslims and religious scholars of the sub-continent had launched to protect the Ottoman Empire. This struggle (*Khilafah Movement*) raised political awareness among Muslims. Unfortunately, a group of the feudal, which was trained by the British, took control of Pakistan after 1947 and the real objective of its creation was lost.

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<sup>6</sup> Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddiq, Hazrat Umar, Hazrat Usman and Hazrat Ali (*Rizwan Allah-e-Alahum Ajmaeen*).

Being custodians of Islamic traditions and inheritors of teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), religious scholars have great responsibilities. I believe that most of Pakistan's problems are internal and we, the religious scholars, are not fulfilling our religious obligations properly and honestly. The status of religious scholars in a society is like that of heart in a body; their failure to function properly can lead to ailment for the whole society.

I think the fundamental responsibility of religious scholars is to strive for social reform in society through religious education. A review of Islamic history suggests that religious scholars never used political course to reform societies. They did not require or acquire political power and authority to perform their duties. Instead they travelled extensively and bore many difficulties to interact with people and spread the message of Islam. It was a result of their sincere efforts that hundreds of thousands of people embraced Islam.

The Divine purpose for sending Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to the people has been mentioned in the Holy Quran in these words:

“Indeed Allah conferred a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger (Muhammad) from among themselves, reciting unto them His Verses (Qur'an), and purifying them (from sins by their following him), and instructing them (in) the Book (Qur'an) and *Al-Hikmah* [the wisdom and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (i.e. his legal ways, statements, acts of worship, etc.)], while before that they had been in manifest error.” (3:164)

Failure of religious scholars to fulfill their responsibilities in mosques and madrassas, which have been assigned to them to achieve the four objectives mentioned above, would make all their other efforts to reform society futile.

As in any other part of the Indian sub-continent, the message of Islam reached Kashmir through preaching of *Sufia* (the pure people/ spiritual religious leaders) and religious scholars. Kashmir had always remained peaceful. I do not believe in externalizing problems of Pakistan and linking them to the Afghan or any other issue. I would also assert that many of our conflicts have their roots in British occupation of the sub-continent and also the injustices done to us at the time of partition. Without going into details, I would say that we tend to link our problems to religious seminaries, mosques, religious organizations or some particular school of thought but forget the British policy of divide and rule. The problems have continued to exist since then.

I would also say that we need to turn our religious seminaries and mosques into places of peace as they were during the periods of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his caliphs. Seminars like this should be held at public places in different provinces. The way we are talking here about peace and harmony should be observed when we provide education to students in our respective madrassas. Issuing religious decrees against others is not in line with the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his companions. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) always tolerated difference of opinion and treated even his enemies and non-believers with kindness.

I wish and pray that Allah may unite our religious scholars so that they can respond to the challenges, whether internal or external, facing our people.

## **Chairperson's Address**

### **Allama Syed Farhat Hussain Shah**

In this session four respected religious scholars have presented their views. Allama Raghieb Naeemi has described significance of Punjab with regard to its population. He has highlighted poor preparedness and capacity of the police, class-based education system, socio-economic inequalities among different regions and social classes, need for social development as well as hurdles in people's access to justice in the province. He has talked about presence of extremist elements in Punjab who have maintained their illusory authority in the name of jihad and called upon religious scholars to raise their voice against such elements.

Mr. Qibla Ayaz has termed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA the most difficult regions in the world. He has described how the Afghan issue has damaged Pakhtun society and its peaceful values. He has also mentioned peace and war lobbies and has indicated that there are some religious scholars in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who have influence among the Taliban. He believes that these scholars can contribute to resolution of the conflict in Afghanistan.

Allama Zahidi has presented his logical analysis of the crises facing Pakistan and ways to resolve them. He has mentioned oppression against the Baloch. Religious scholars should also play their role in that regard.

I recited a verse from the Holy Quran at start of my submissions that states: "And We made them leaders, guiding (mankind) by Our Command, and We inspired in them the

doing of good deeds, performing *Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat)*, and the giving of *Zakat* and of Us (Alone) they were worshippers.”

We all know that Allah sent prophets to lead the people to the right path. This responsibility now lies with religious scholars.

When someone wants to harm a sect it attacks the fundamental beliefs (*aqa'aid*, plural of *aqeedah*) of that sect. And an attack on one's belief system provokes one to extremism and sectarianism. The word *aqeedah* is derived from *aqad*, which means to 'tie something (firmly)'. So an attack on one's beliefs means an effort to discredit or break one's firm ties. Our beliefs have been attacked to create distances among us.

The other issue is related to presenting solutions to problems of modern world in the light of Quran and *Sunnah*. We live in a developed world, an age of science and technology. People raise questions about religion; for instance, can it still solve the problems of this modern world?

I think confusing and misleading ideas and interpretations in the religious domain form the greatest challenge today. A suicide attacker assumes that his death would lead him to paradise. He does not know that this is indeed a way to hell because he has been indoctrinated to think so through self-serving interpretation of Quranic verses and sayings of the Prophet (PBUH). It is the responsibility of religious scholars to present the true picture before the people.

Thirdly, criticism of Islamic values and practices such as covering the head, wearing *burqa* and growing and keeping a beard, also creates problems. The mosques and religious seminaries, which hold religious sanctity as well as Muslims with beards are seen with suspicion. This not only maligns Islamic values but also pushes people away from religion.

To begin with, religious scholars should strive to reform the distorted beliefs of the people. Secondly, they should find solutions, in the light of Quran and *Sunnah*, to all problems we face in the contemporary age and present them before the people to rescue them from their confused and misled understanding of religious realities.

Extensive work and thinking are needed for that. Just one seminar would not be enough; we need to hold more seminars like this. We need to end our sectarian differences. We have discussed many things today including the issue of religious decrees (*fatwa*). I have noted down some suggestions in that regard. If we want to improve our state of affairs, we would have to impose a complete ban on meaningless polemical debates (*munazra*)



that usually end in obstinate insistence and fighting. If necessary, such debates should be held under the auspices of the government. The government should evolve some mechanism to hear and decide about the disputed issues among different sects and then present a collective solution before the *Ummah*. The government should make strict laws to punish those scholars who issue *fatwas* to declare someone infidel or liable to be killed. The literature and CDs containing material and messages based on hatred, extremism and sectarianism should be seized and their further production/ publication banned. There is no dearth of suggestions or laws to check all these menaces but the real issue is implementation. People would continue to spread hatred, sectarianism and extremism until they are held accountable for their actions and brought to justice.

I also want to make it clear here that violence cannot always be ended by use of force alone. Once blood is shed you have to clean it with water and not with new blood. The wounds can be healed only by proper care.

## Question & Answer Session

**Comment (Maulana Fazlur Rehman Madni):** I have a few suggestions regarding the role of Ulema. All madrassa boards (*Wafaqul Madaaris*) can jointly hold programs like this seminar in all parts of Pakistan at the district, city and town levels. Besides religious scholars, representatives from other segments of society including political leaders, trade organizations, public organizations, media, lawyers and other civil society organizations should be invited to participate. This effort can change people's mindset in a positive way.

Secondly, the main responsibility of securing peace and solving people's problems lies with the governments, army and other state institutions. The religious scholars who are associated with madrassa boards have great influence among the religious political parties in Pakistan.

**Question:** Almost all of our respected speakers have underlined the fact that most of our problems are related to politics and government. Seemingly, there are little prospects for religious parties coming to power as they do not have any alliance. Do you think they can fulfill their responsibility of reforming the society through preaching and education?

**Answer:** Yes, you are right. Religious scholars are doing their job of preaching and spreading the message of religion and they will continue it.

**Question:** My question is directed toward Dr. Qibla Ayaz. Sir, you have said that the UN would be called in Afghanistan and the adjoining areas after departure of the US. You have also said that religious scholars should play their role. The situation is very complex regarding the role of religious scholars. Some reports suggest that some religious scholars have approached representatives of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan but their request for dialogue was denied. You have also mentioned Pathri Group that is extremely rigid. In such a situation when there are inflexible Pathri and Panj Piri groups among the Taliban, how do you see the role of religious scholars?

**Answer (Dr. Qibla Ayaz):** Perhaps my submission has not been understood in the proper context. I talked about negotiations in Afghanistan and not in Pakistan. The hardliner *Pathri* group is located in Dera Ismail Khan and it has nothing to do with Afghanistan. I would like to say again that the real world is different than the world of wishes. World War I and World War II had also ended eventually in negotiations. The Afghan conflict can also be resolved through negotiations. At present, there are two types of Taliban groups in Afghanistan: those who wish to throw the Americans out in the same manner as the Mujahideen had forced the Soviets to flee and then there are those who want to settle the issue peacefully. For negotiations, someone would have to come forward and take the initiative and as I stated earlier, I think the UN is also a possible forum in that regard. I had also said that if the UN appoints its representative for this purpose it should be a Turkish or Malaysian because the Taliban trust them. A Turk representative can be more effective in delivering the results because Turkey is part of NATO and the UN trusts it. Turkey also has the trust of the Muslim world.

Therefore, there are some religious scholars in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA who should negotiate with the Taliban. They can persuade the Taliban to keep their resistance intact through the process of negotiations. Gone are the days when the Taliban used to label other groups and factions as rebels. Ultimately, they would have to be part of a consensus government acceptable to all the stakeholders. Other options have grave implications for peace and stability of not only Afghanistan but also the region.

**Question:** You have mentioned peace and war lobbies and put President Obama in the peace lobby and the US Army in the war lobby. Do you think that the US army operates on its own in the same manner as Pakistan Army does, and how do you substantiate that claim?

**Answer (Dr. Qibla Ayaz):** The truth of the matter is that I cannot produce President Obama and Gen. David Petraeus here before you to prove my claim. In social sciences, we study how societies function. When we study how American society functions we

find that lobbies have a significant place in it. In the same manner as people offer bribes to members of national and provincial legislatures in Pakistan, American people also fund their political representatives but they do not consider it a bribe. For instance, gays have their lobby which is part of a big political caucus. I cannot say that the US Army works like Pakistan Army but I can say that it has its own vested interests that may sometime be different from those of the politicians.

War creates insecurity that in terms increases demand for security equipment such as walk-through gates and other gadgets and paraphernalia that we come across when we want to go into a hotel in Islamabad. Such security arrangements were once used for presidents and prime ministers but these days they are very common. It is the war lobby that earns huge profits by selling these machines and equipment. This war lobby works in FATA as well. A university's vice chancellor was kidnapped and released later after 100 million rupees were paid as ransom. Vice chancellor of another university is currently held by kidnappers who demand 500 million rupees for his release.

War lobbies and war economies have their own mechanics. In Afghanistan, the war lobby gets its share from the poppy cultivation; peaceful and stable Afghanistan would ruin its business. The war lobby exists in the US, in Europe and in Pakistan as well, where people associated with this lobby have made luxurious homes. This lobby is also present in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kabul. There is no other source of income in these conflict areas; no jobs, no agriculture and no business. Still there are people who earn millions of rupees while sitting at their homes.

A great war lobby is at work and, unfortunately, we lack awareness about it. Getting into a peace lobby brings many difficulties with it. Joining a war lobby, on the other hand, brings many benefits; you suddenly become a hero, people welcome you and put garlands around your neck. Our women, our mothers and our wives are becoming widows as a result of war. We have no option but to become part of the peace lobby. I think our religious scholars have the potential to help the world end this war.

## Third Session

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### The Role of Religious Scholars in Promotion of Peace and Harmony in Society

**Chair:**

**Dr Khalid Masood**

Former Chairman, Council of Islamic Ideology

**Speakers:**

1. **Maulana Yasin Zafar**  
Nazim-e-Aala, Wafaqul Madaaris Salafia
  2. **Dr Abu-al Hassan Shah**  
Vice Principal, Darul Uloom Muhammadia Ghosia, Bhera
  3. **Allama Syed Jawad Hadi**  
Former Senator, Principal, Madrassa Ariful Hussaini,  
Peshawar
  4. **Maulana Ammar Khan Nasir**  
Vice Principal, Al-Shariah Academy, Gujranwala
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## **Dr. Khalid Masood**

**S**o far we have concluded three sessions including the inaugural session. Maulana Muhammad Khan Sheerani noted during his speech in the inaugural session that there is lack of unity among us in religious and political affairs which undermines peace and other positive values in our society. Our respected speakers have discussed international, regional, social, sectarian and other aspects of peace in the session that followed. There exist almost similar issues in different geographical units of Pakistan. The sessions of discussion have also revealed that our religious scholars not only take care of matters pertaining to religious seminaries and mosques but also keenly observe the overall state of affairs in Pakistan. I see their analyses as unbiased and academic.

We will try in this session to determine what role religious scholars can play in transforming our society into a balanced society. This is an important subtopic linked to the broader theme of the seminar.

## **Maulana Yasin Zafar**

The topic of this session is ‘the role of religious scholars in promotion of peace and harmony in society’. Since yesterday, we have discussed almost similar topics and have learned a lot from respected scholars. This repetition of things is understandable. If you find it in my speech too, please consider it an exercise of revision. The desire to lead a peaceful and pleasant life is one of the basic human instincts. Man does not like unrest and disturbance. Allah sent prophets to spread message of peace and love. After completion of construction of *Baitullah* (the Home of God/*Ka’aba*), Hazrat Ibrahim felt that a city would be developed here so he prayed to God that He may bless this city with peace.

All the prophets wished and prayed for peace as they could propagate the message of God to the maximum number of people in a peaceful environment only. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) chose to confine himself to Sha’ab-e-Abu Talib—a place outside Makkah—but did not like to spoil the peace of Makkah. Likewise, he allowed his companions to migrate to Abyssinia and later himself migrated to Madina to avoid conflict and keep the environment of peace intact in Makkah. All virtues emanate from peace. Only peace guarantees life. Prosperity and happiness come with peace.

Islamic history is replete with examples of peace and peaceful coexistence. The Treaty of Hudaibiyah, which took place in the Islamic year 6 AH between the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the Quraish of Makkah, was meant to avoid bloodshed and violence in or

near the holy city of Makkah. Even before this treaty the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had strived for peace for 17 long years. It was after the Quraish breached the Treaty of Hudaibiyah that the Holy Prophet peacefully entered Makkah along with thousands of his companions. The number of people embracing Islam in these two years of peace had grown significantly; this growth was unprecedented in the previous 17 years.

Let me share with you how Islam reached Africa. Many high ranking generals were part of the mission. But the Berber tribes opposed Islam and continued creating trouble in different areas. Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Malik, who was the governor of Egypt at that time, appointed Musa bin Nasir administrator of that region as well as *ameer* (leader) of the Islamic forces present there. First, he established peace and maintained law and order in the whole region and then sent Islamic preachers to spread the message of Islam. Within a few months the Berber tribes embraced Islam and became the frontline soldiers of Islam.

That means that Islam flourished through efforts of traders and religious scholars who presented the teachings of Islam in a peaceful environment. The primary duty of religious scholars is to preach and invite people to Islam and that can be done best if there is peace and law and order.

The role of religious scholars can be divided into administrative and moral areas. As they are less likely to come into power or government, their administrative role is restricted to providing guidance to governments with regard to promoting virtues and discouraging vice. On the ethical front, religious scholars have a greater responsibility of educating and training the people to create Islamic and ethical virtues among them. As society is comprised of individuals, religious scholars should focus on each and every individual. This will make our society peaceful.

The foremost responsibility of religious scholars is to promote the oneness of God. All prophets preached that. Peace cannot be established in a society without this belief; imagine the situation if there are two gods. Therefore, it is the responsibility of Muslims and religious scholars to promote the basic religious beliefs including the oneness of God, finality of prophethood and life after death. If we are worried about the afterlife we would stay away from crime and bad deeds that disturb peace.

Religious scholars can discourage ethnic and racial divisions through propagating Islam's messages of equality and harmony. A sense of belonging to a superior race or ethnicity among the people creates conflict and tensions; such people can do anything to establish their supremacy over others. Religious scholars should tell the people that all

are equal in Islam. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had also said: “You are all the children of Adam, and Adam was created from clay.”

Being children of Adam we are all equal. No one has superiority over others and all have equal rights.

Religious scholars should also discourage greed and lust for money which plays a big role in creating unrest. People are tempted to commit crimes and do wrong for the sake of money. Unfair distribution of wealth is also a factor that contributes to unrest in a society. Religious scholars should also educate people about the value of justice and fairness. Justice is not confined to judicial authorities or courts only but we should observe it at homes, shops, factories and offices; all should justify their responsibilities. Eradicating illiteracy is also among duties of religious scholars. Educated and enlightened nations recognize the value of peace.

I would like to present some suggestions at the end that may serve the purpose of securing peace and harmony in society. We should all respect humanity without discrimination. It is imperative to establish peace. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) presented himself as the best role model with regard to respect for humanity. Secondly, dialogue is the best way to bring people closer and to create a peaceful environment. Thirdly, difference of opinion should not be made a source of antagonism. Our thinking capabilities can never be at the same level. I may hold any viewpoint but you should not consider me your opponent on the basis of a different viewpoint. Instead, if we take difference of opinion as a blessing, we can explore new avenues of thinking.

Similarly, promotion of a culture of tolerance and other high moral values is imperative for securing peace. For this purpose, religious scholars can create awareness among the people about Islamic commandments that demand that a Muslim must ensure that he does not cause any physical harm to anyone nor say anything that offends anyone.

It is unfortunate that people term religious scholars responsible for sectarian divisions among Muslims even though most of our religious scholars emphasize unity and harmony. It is true there are a few black sheep in our ranks but their mistakes should not prompt people to issue sweeping statements. There are many commonalities among different religious schools of thought which can serve as a starting point. It is useless to focus on disputed issues that have remained unresolved for centuries.

## Dr. Abu-al Hassan Shah

Peace is important for any society, be it an Islamic society, a secular society, a socialist society or a Hindu society. Peace is the backbone of society. Even the Islamic society cannot provide benefits to its people properly in absence of peace.

I would like to say that religious scholars have two sets of responsibilities: those that are directly related to their status; and those that are not directly related to them but still need their contribution.

With regard to the former kind of responsibilities, they can play a vital role in removing religion-related hurdles, such as sectarian divide and intolerance, in order to establish peace in society. People belonging to various sects/communities and sets of beliefs exist in all countries and they enjoy freedom to express their views. Unrest and sectarian tensions arise when freedom of expression is abused or used irresponsibly in speech and writings. Religious decrees that declare others non-Muslim or liable to be killed, refuting statements and literature, and use of abusive language for people and leaders of other sects create unrest. Others agreeing to it does not necessarily mean that my viewpoint is truthful. We cannot force others to subscribe to our viewpoint. So speech and writings should have a sense of responsibility and moderation so that a peaceful society may be established.

Another cause of sectarian-related unrest and violence are the approaches that religious scholars and clerics follow to teach their students and deliver sermons in mosques. The main focus of their lessons and sermons remains on asserting their truthfulness and falsifying others. This inculcates rigid and intolerant behaviors in their students and other audience. Hence it is imperative that our teachers and students practice and propagate Islamic values of tolerance, open-mindedness and kindness. The emphasis should be on religious education and not sectarian education. Sectarian interpretations of Quran and *Sunnah* should be discouraged. People should also be trained to tolerate difference of opinion. All sects and communities should be very careful while commenting about the Holy Prophet (PBUH), his companions and all other sacred personalities.

Other hurdles in establishing a peaceful society include injustice, the class system, lawlessness, inequality and corruption etc. The solution to these problems does not rest directly with religious scholars. However, they can play a vital role in addressing these issues. They enjoy respect and support of the people and their voices are heard by those sitting in government. Religious scholars should broaden the traditional topics of their



sermons and lectures to include in them description of Islam's social values and teachings that are useful to end envy, grudges, backbiting, family conflicts, and social and moral ills. Furthermore, religious scholars can guide people about the issues of lawlessness and price-hike. They should have a common platform to influence the government. If they can compel the government to declare Ahmedis a minority and not to abolish or amend the blasphemy law why can they not force it to address the issues of lawlessness, price-hike and corruption? They can do so by standing together.

At the end, I would like to say that besides hotels such seminars should also be held in religious seminaries and educational institutions. That would not only strengthen inter-madrassa contacts but also create an environment of unity.

## **Allama Syed Jawad Hadi**

Many noble and intellectual thoughts have been expressed in this gathering and different suggestions have come up. I cannot add too much to what has already been stated here but I would try to present what I have learned from my elders. I will begin with a few questions that crossed my mind as I saw the title of this seminar. It really is an exceedingly relevant and crucial topic to discuss. But why is it good to discuss the role of religious scholars only when the government, politicians, traders, other organizations and segments of society also have a vital role in securing peace in society? Perhaps the organizers of this seminar politely wanted to remind the religious scholars of their responsibilities.

But I do not think anybody in this gathering is unaware of the role of religious scholars. Hence creating awareness among religious scholars about their role also does not seem to be the true objective of this seminar. It is also possible that the organizers wanted to make religious scholars attentive to the subject by using very careful words because of the sensitive nature of our scholars. We really are very sensitive and readily take offence if someone tells us that we have some shortcoming or do not fulfill our responsibilities honestly. In that case I believe the purpose of this exercise may be to start a movement among religious scholars to joint strive for resolving the problems, and this seminar is just a platform to achieve that aim. Whatever the purpose, this seminar seems to be a positive exercise so let us pray to Allah for its success.

I am sure you also have questions about the subject matter of this seminar, and they would be more advanced than those in my mind. But let me share with you some of the questions that I have. Do religious scholars really have some responsibility or role in restoring peace? Do they have some role also in disturbing peace and law and order or

creating unrest in society? Do different segments of society expect that religious scholars should play their full role in restoring peace? Do religious scholars have realization of these expectations of the people? And finally, do they have the strength and capacity to play such a role?

These are some of the questions that came to mind as I was thinking about the topic of this seminar. There is another question: have religious scholars any role to eliminate the overall economic, social, political, religious and other causes that contribute to the current unrest and the deteriorated law and order situation in Pakistan or is their role required to eliminate some particular factors?

Whether you agree with me or not, the fact is that whoever refers to the aggravated law and order situation in Pakistan alludes to the unrest and lawlessness that have emerged from sectarian differences and clashes. However, political and economic factors also create many problems.

In such a situation we should ask whether religious scholars have played a comprehensive and effective role to address the issues related to law and order or if they are ready and willing to play such a role?

Religious scholars have a respectable status in society. They remain in direct contact with the people through *minber-o-mehrab* and the people seek their guidance on religious matters. Therefore, they have more chances than politicians, traders, and journalists to lead the people. Religious scholars should particularly discourage the negative trends that prevail in our society in the name of religion and should spread Islam's message of peace, love, compassion and brotherhood.

The Holy Prophet once said that if [religious] scholars are righteous the world would be righteous and if they are corrupt the world would be corrupt. This *Hadith* focuses on the role of religious scholars and they are held directly responsible for breach of peace and law and order in society. As black sheep exist in every segment, there are some among us who play such a role, either due to their insanity or bad intentions, which brings a bad name to all religious scholars. First of all, we will have to identify these black sheep. This requires courage, harmony and a common viewpoint. I hope we would not let our message to stay confined to this seminar hall but would stand together in society with a shared agenda to think and work for peace so that our respect is restored in the eyes of the people.

## **Maulana Ammar Khan Nasir**

We should first explore the role of religious scholars in the light of the Prophet's way of life (*Seerat-i-Tayyeba*), then analyze if they are playing their role properly, and eventually identify factors or shortcomings, which keep us away from following the path of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). As Maulana Yasin Zafar has argued, the role of religious scholars in a society should be based on the fundamental principles and practical guidelines in *Seerat-i-Tayyeba*.

A look at the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) reveals that besides focusing on preaching and inviting the people to Islam, religious and moral education and training of the people, propagation of the oneness of God and eradication of polytheism, he also paid full attention to issues related to peace and law and order in society, including traditional conflicts and clashes among various communities/tribes and other factors that could lead to conflict and bloodshed.

I will mention here three aspects of the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) life which are directly related to his efforts to ensure peace and avoid conflict and bloodshed. First, he presented himself as a perfect role model and set the best example of peace and love for his followers. He neither harmed anyone with his hand or tongue nor said anything provocative or harsh that might create tensions and disturb peace. He forgave even his worst enemies. As head of the Islamic state in Madina, he not only bore with insulting remarks and offensive acts of non-believers with a kind heart but also ordered his companions to be calm and peaceful in that regard. Hazrat Ayesha says that the Holy Prophet (PBUH) had never sought revenge from his personal enemies.

Religious scholars are inheritors of that legacy and inherit the responsibilities related to the dimension of preaching and education that went with the status of prophethood. That means that they should also present themselves as role models like the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to spread the message of peace in society and must refrain from saying or doing anything that may disturb peace and create unrest.

Secondly, we should learn from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) that he remained very much concerned about disputes and conflicts among people and tribes. It has been quoted by many in Islamic history that the holy Prophet (PBUH) used to travel to different tribes around Madina to settle disputes among families and tribes. One of the many exceptional announcements and decisions the Holy Prophet (PBUH) made after the conquest of Makkah was to forgive blood spilled in the days of ignorance, or the pre-Islamic period.

Thirdly, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) kept a vigilant eye on those places and social segments that could develop some sort of conflict and dispute in the future. He not only shared his realization of such future conflicts with his companions but also prepared and trained them in how they could deal with the situation after his death.

The Holy Prophet (PBUH) had envisioned that after his death the Ansaar<sup>7</sup> and the Muhajireen could clash over distribution of authority to rule and control the Islamic state. To avoid this, he gradually prepared the Ansaar to accept the leadership of the Quraish, or the Muhajireen, to rule the Arab and told them that God will offer them better reward in the hereafter for their services to Islam. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) was also aware that some Muslim rulers after his death might commit oppression and do injustices to their people. He provided very clear guidance to the people for such a situation, that is, to observe restraint from rebellion or use of sword against oppressor rulers until they commit some act of disbelief or infidelity. However, it remains our obligation to openly pronounce the truth before rulers. Similarly, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) also talked about the centuries-old tribal conflicts among Arabs in his last sermon at the time of *Hajjatul Wida* and advised the people not to go astray after him and spill one another's blood as they used to in the pre-Islamic era.

All religious scholars should seek guidance at least from these three aspects of *Seerat-i-Tayyeba* to promote peace in society. That is required and expected of them. However, the factors and ground realities that prevent them from playing their role are subject of a separate debate. It should also be discussed, as Maulana Yasin Zafar has very rightly pointed out, why a small minority of religious scholars is involved in promoting sectarianism. It is also our duty to identify and isolate such scholars and clerics. Otherwise they would continue to defame their respective schools of thought.

The day before yesterday, my father shared with me one of his childhood memories when he was just 10 years old. A religious congregation was held at his home and his elders encouraged him to deliver a speech in the gathering. My grandfather (Maulana Sarfraz Safdar) was also present there along with some other religious scholars. My father told me that he started to speak on the topic of *Qadiyaniat* and used abusive words for Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, leader of the Qadiyanis. At this, my grandfather rushed towards him, removed him from the stage and apologized to the audience while my father was still standing at the stage. He declared my father a child and his remarks uncalled for and said that he was not wise enough to understand that we should not abuse anyone.

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<sup>7</sup> Ansaar were the residents of Madina who embraced Islam and supported the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and his companions after their migration from Makkah to Madina; the migrants were known as Muhajireen.

This is the kind of role which religious scholars belonging to each school of thought should play. If they fail to do so, they would not be able to distinguish themselves from that small minority that creates sectarian tensions and hatred in society. We can get rid of our problems but that requires honest and sincere efforts.

## **Chairperson's Address**

### **Dr. Khalid Masood**

I would like to start with a verse from the Holy Quran in which Allah states: "He does not change what any people have until they change what is in themselves". What I have derived from this verse can be put like this that change in a nation comes through its people, evils in a nation are also caused by its people and accountability is vital for nations' survival. The role of religious scholars has been discussed at length and I feel happy that the objectives of holding this seminar were also brought under discussion.

In my opinion, the role of religious scholars is not confined to guiding the people in religious matters but they are also responsible to present themselves before the people as practical role models of the religious way of life. Furthermore, they are the conscience of an Islamic society. In this respect, it is their obligation to think about the widespread misconceptions against them and respond effectively. Religious scholars should try to determine the extent and nature of their direct or indirect role in securing peace and harmony in society.

Prominent religious scholars from across Pakistan are present here to respond to the questions that are being raised about them. And we have already discussed many questions. It has also been stated here that it is incorrect to hold religious circles responsible for all the ills we have today in our country. At the same time it has also been stated that they are somehow responsible for some of the problems, directly or indirectly, and that they need to reflect on that so that they can assert themselves positively and effectively to address those problems.

Since the start of the Pakistan Movement we have continued to live with some political, social, economic and other ambiguities. Failure to remove those would make our problems complex and worse. We need to check a few negative trends that prevail in our society. The first trend is related to law of the land, or rule of law. Our religious circles have raised certain questions about it which have put the people in a difficult and confused situation. We have been saying that it is not necessary for us to abide by the laws that the government forms. A law is a law and we cannot be selective about which

one to obey and which to ignore on religious grounds. When we say that a certain law is to be abided by and another not, we create conflict and confusion in people's minds. We need to resolve this issue with clarity.

The second trend is related to people's taking law into their own hand. The religious circles are accused of supporting or encouraging those who take law into their hands and establish private justice system in society; a reference has also been made to *Amr Bil Ma'arof Wa Nahi Anal Munkar*. It requires a separate debate to look at whether it is justified to take law into one's hand and punish the people through a private justice system for certain acts that are allegedly against religion, *Shariah* or *Fiqh*. We would have to see to what extent religious circles are responsible for that.

The third trend is related to presence of informal mechanisms for settling disputes in our society such as *Jirgas* and *Panchayats*, etc. People also seek guidance from religious scholars on several issues and this guidance is also considered a verdict. As a result, we see ambiguities prevail in our society. Another thing which has been discussed here in the social perspective and for which people point the finger at religious scholars is growth of sectarianism. Let me say categorically that establishment of madrassas and mosques on sectarian basis, for some reasons, has created this problem. Therefore, we need to ponder over this change, which has occurred in our society in the name of religion.

The biggest economic problem is the trend of non-payment of taxes that are imposed by the government. Zakat is a religious obligation and it has to be paid separate from other taxes. Ambiguity also exists about taxes and Zakat and religious scholars should guide the people properly. Similarly, confusion exists about bribery as some *fatwas* (religious decrees) say it is allowed if it is not possible to get your legal, or lawful, work get done without it.

Today, we talk about feudals and landlords. Before the creation of Pakistan, the religious scholars were of the opinion that the government can undertake land reforms or agricultural reforms to meet the needs of society. However, when agricultural reforms were introduced in Pakistan we witnessed disputes over it on the basis of right of personal ownership or property. Some people wrote books against it and others approached the courts. The government was informed that it does not have the right to take the land in its ownership. At that time, we defended the right of personal ownership and now we talk against landlords and feudals. This is also confusing.

We have also discussed educational problems. I would like to point out here that difference of opinion has remained a glorious part of our tradition. A discussion cannot move further without difference of opinion. Please correct me if I am wrong but I think our religious seminaries, before talking about their respective sects, used to teach their students different opinions in the study of faith, as explained and supported by different sects and their respective scholars with intellectual and logical evidence. At present, the curricula of different schools of thought have their main focus on teaching and highlighting the viewpoints of their respective sects. There is little emphasis on intellectual and logical debate. This education process makes the students to stick rigidly to their sects and leaves them unable to pursue further studies with a scope outside that of the perspective of the sect. This gives rise to intolerance and extremism as well.

## **Question & Answer Session**

**Question:** You (Dr. Khalid Masood) have served as chairman of Council of Islamic Ideology. According to the Constitution, once the Council presents its recommendations, the national and provincial assemblies and the Senate are required to make laws in accordance with the recommendations within two years. If the Council of Islamic Ideology had played its role with regard to advising the government and the judiciary, religious scholars would have been in a stronger position and the less educated youth which are being misled today would have been under their control. I had read the recommendations prepared by the Council about 10 years ago. I was among the religious scholars who had worked on Hasbah Bill. All religious scholars belonging to Deobandi, Barelvi, Ahle Hadith and Shia schools of thought had expressed their agreement on enforcement of *Shariah* that led to observance of *Shariah* laws in NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Religious scholars have been made target of propaganda. I want to ask how did you pursue the government or protest when it did not act upon the recommendations you had presented as head of the Council?

**Answer (Dr. Khalid Masood):** The Council of Islamic Ideology is not under discussion here. But as your question is related to it I will briefly discuss it. The Council has presented more than 80 recommendations but none of them have been discussed in the National Assembly or the Senate. Yes. The Constitution states explicitly that after the recommendations are presented they should be discussed within six months and legislation should be made within two years but even the first phase has never been initiated. Now, if you are asking about my efforts, let me tell you that we have done our best.

We approached the Prime Minister to raise our concerns. Later, I took the summary of the recommendations or review of the laws that the Council had made, to Senate Chairman Farooq Naek and the then Federal Minister for Law Babar Awan; the report comprised about 700 pages. I told them that the Council of Islamic Ideology had reviewed all the laws formed from 1726 until 2007 and given its opinion on them; there were some laws that had nothing against Quran and *Sunnah*. I requested them to take the recommendations to parliament as there was no reason why they would not be approved when a significant number of leading religious scholars were also in parliament. It followed formation of parliamentary committees but the issue was never resolved. I think the Council is now in a better position under the leadership of Maulana Sheerani to speed up the process as he enjoys the support of a big political party as well. I was not linked to any political party and made a lot of efforts in my personal capacity. Things are moving in a better direction now. The bureaucratic procedures also make the process slower. We present the recommendations to the Ministry of Religious Affairs which forwards them to higher authorities. The Ministry is asked to endorse the recommendations and a clerk at the Ministry writes a note on the recommendations which are finalized by the elite of religious scholars. The higher authorities take notice of this note only. It is a protracted bureaucratic process that undermines the importance of the recommendations as well. This is the practical situation that I have described.

**Question:** You have said that religious scholars do not talk about the rule of law and that failure to follow the existing laws would create unrest in society. But there are sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) which advise us not to respect laws that are against the commandments of Allah, Quran or the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The Holy Quran also tells us the same. Should religious scholars sit idle in the face of disobedience to Quran and *Sunnah* and endorse contemporary laws for fear of unrest? My second question is related to factors of unrest in our society. Do religious scholars have some role in this unrest or is it a global conspiracy against us? If the latter is the case then what can religious scholars do to foil this conspiracy?

**Answer (Dr. Khalid Masood):** You are right. If something against the commandments of Allah is being imposed there is no obligation to obey it. But religious scholars and Islamic jurists have set a procedure and course of action for it that does not allow individuals or a group of individuals to declare certain laws un-Islamic in their individual capacity and start flogging those, who according to them, oppose or do not adhere to Islamic law. Religious scholars have never gone to the extent of doing or supporting such acts. A book titled *Tareekh Tashreeh Al-Ajnai Al-Islami*, written by prominent Akhwanul Muslimoon leader Abdul Qadir Audah, is taught as a textbook in almost all Arab countries. About the situation that we discuss here the author has



argued that after the courts have made it clear in the light of Quranic injunctions that a crime had been committed and have announced a punishment for the culprit/s that is different from the one told by Quran or Islamic jurists, no Muslim can impose the latter punishment in their personal capacity. When you talk about foreign conspiracies some political and even terrorist organization use it to their advantage. I think nothing justifies the people taking the law into their own hands. I have not come across any case in the history of Islamic jurisprudence in which an Islamic scholar or jurist allowed that; they have indeed discouraged taking the law into one's hands even if there was the worst kind of non-compliance with Islamic laws. There should be an established legal procedure, and it should not be for individuals to punish the people who do something against Quran and *Sunnah*.

When religious scholars sit together and decide something through consultations they would reach a conclusion that would be quite different from an individual's personal conclusion. We should talk in very clear and precise terms about these issues so that no one gets an undue advantage. There is a clear and specific procedure for each and everything in jurisprudence and *Shariah*.

**Question (Mufti Rafiq Ahmed):** Maulana Ammar has said that like other people religious scholars should also be answerable to society. But this debate on religious scholars being able to present themselves before the court of the people creates intellectual and practical difficulties, particularly for religious scholars. When we say that religious scholars should be answerable to the people we should not forget the difference between *raiyyat* (the subjects) and *masuliyyat* (the accountable). If people are made the judge in the court that is meant for accountability of religious scholars it would create mistrust between the two. It can add to disturbance and unrest in society.

**Answer (Dr. Khalid Masood):** Imam Abu Ishaq Shatibi once mentioned that when a *fatwa* is issued, people do not ask the *mufti* (one who issues the *fatwa*) about his sources. That results in many complications. Pakistan Army also says it is not accountable to anyone.

**Question (Mufti Muhammad Zahid):** Dr. Khalid Masood has said that madrassa curricula mention other sects' beliefs but do not describe the arguments which different sects provide to support their beliefs. The situation is quite different at far as Sunni madrassas including those of Bareilvi, Ahle Hadith and Deobandi schools of thought are concerned. They present both viewpoints and arguments of other sects. For instance,

you can read the viewpoints of the four *imams*<sup>8</sup> of Sunni Islam with their detailed arguments in *Hidaya*. I think our main sectarian-related problems originate from each sect's unjust and incorrect presentation of other sects' belief before its followers. Many misperceptions exist among religious sects about each other's beliefs. For example, if I am a Deobandi, a Shia or a Barelvi may attribute a belief to me which in fact I do not have. A Shia may do the same. But these impressions may have no foundation in reality and the people may not hold the beliefs that we attribute to them.

The possibility of evolving a common curriculum was discussed here but that seems very difficult. However, a booklet can be developed and made part of curricula of all madrasa boards which may contain beliefs of all sects as described by their scholars. Every sect has the right to explain its beliefs, but no one should try to explain others' beliefs. Ittehad Tanzeematul Madaaris should take some initiative in this regard and develop some literature which includes at least the basic beliefs of all sects and also points of difference between different sects so that the above-mentioned misperceptions could be eliminated.

**Answer (Dr. Khalid Masood):** I think nobody has any objection to this proposal.

**Opinion:** *Amr Bil Ma'arof Wa Nahi Anal Munkar* (ordering right and forbidding wrong) is a fundamental responsibility of religious scholars. Although different religious organization today strive for *Amr Bil Ma'arof* but religious scholars have not taken concrete steps regarding *Nahi Anal Munkar* for which we look towards our rulers with helplessness. We, the religious scholars, are generally convinced on our role as prayer leaders (*imamat-e-sughra*) but we are not yet willing to lead the Muslims in religious and worldly issues (*imamat-e-kubra*) as the representatives of the Prophet. The second point which I want to raise is about the two distinct systems based on *wahi* (revelation) and *aql* (human intellect), respectively. If religious scholars had fulfilled their duties pertaining to strengthen the former, those upholding the latter would not have become dominant. I have a suggestion for religious scholars. They would have to take concrete measures to enforce the system of *wahi* while playing their role mentioned in Quran and *Sunnah*.

**Question (Allama Farhat Hussain Shah):** My question is for Maulana Yasin Zafar and Maulana Ammar Nasir. Both have mentioned and talked about *aqeedah-e-tauheed* (the belief in the oneness of God). Would you please highlight what are, according to you, some of the critical things which may put this belief in danger so that religious scholars pay attention to them and also guide the people?

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<sup>8</sup> Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Malik Bin Anas, Imam Al-Shafi, and Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal.

You have also mentioned that we should not indulge in acts of *shirk* (considering anyone other than God as lord of the universe). Many questions arise in minds with regard to *shirk*. The religious decrees (*fatwas*) declaring people *mushrik* (one who has committed *shirk*) create unrest and violence and people even start thinking it legitimate to kill one another. What are the acts which you think should be considered *shirk*, a *fatwa* can be issued about them? Maulana Abu-al Hassan has given a very wise suggestion that we should change our way of teaching as well as delivering sermons. I would like to ask him what are the best ways of teaching that can bring peace to our society? Finally, I would like to say to Dr. Khalid Masood that it is not merely religious scholars who can play their role but our rulers should also take care of such issues. They should not defame the terms and words that hold religious sanctity and respect. President Asif Zardari has recently used the word *maulvi* (religious cleric) in an insulting way. Words like *maulvi*, *haji* (one who has performed hajj/pilgrimage), *khaleefa* (caliph or deputy) and *ameer* (emir) are used to malign or abuse others. Do religious scholars not feel insulted by such reference and does that not create unrest and chaos?

**Answer (Maulana Yasin Zafar):** In my discussion I have said that being the inheritors of the legacy of the prophets, religious scholars should start their discussion with *aqeedah-e-tauheed* like prophets used to do. We should not think that all people in our society understand and practice the Islamic concept of the oneness of God; apparently there are many things in society which negate it. We will not go into details of this discussion. Islam has provided us clear guidance in that regard. To get out of the present state of affairs, our rulers seek help from those who themselves confront countless problems. We seek America's help to solve our problems while a Muslim should always ask Allah to help him in difficult times. As far as the issue of *shirk* is concerned I have not seen any *fatwa* so far that has declared that anyone committing *shirk* is liable to be killed. The situation we currently face has emerged due to *fatwas* about suicide attacks and the present form of jihad. That has nothing to do with *shirk*.

**(Maulana Abu-al Hassan Shah):** Allama Farhat Hussain has raised a question about ways of teaching that can lead us to peace and harmony. I tried to explain it in my address. Teaching and speech are two different things. Our religious scholars provide education to their students in madrassas through a process that is called teaching whereas a speech or a sermon is delivered by our orators and scholars in mosques. The teachers and orators both need to preach to their respective sects in the light of Quran and *Sunnah*. Quran and *Hadith* should be the source of our knowledge and education. My second request to religious scholars is that they should talk more about the subjects on which all the schools of thought are in agreement, such as ethics, way of living, social conduct, and *ibadaat* (forms of worship or observing obedience to God). Similarly, there

is about 90 percent agreement on fundamental beliefs of Islam including the oneness of God (*tauheed*), prophethood (*risalat*), revelation (*wahi*), angels (*malaika*) and the Day of Judgment (*aakherat*). If religious sects have a difference of opinion on some points they should educate their followers to show tolerance. Difference of opinion is a commended value but difference for the sake of difference is not.

**Opinion (Dr. Khalid Masood):** Your questions and answers have revealed many new things. Confusions also get reduced gradually. I have a question, which can also be treated as a suggestion, to all religious scholars sitting here who represent different religious sects in Pakistan. Can we not start focusing on commonalities while ignoring the disputed issues? Is there any way of getting united on some common points or supremacy of Islam in the same manner as we are together against foreign intervention in our country? We would have to take practical measures to bring our commonalities before the people.

**Opinion (Qazi Mahmoodul Hassan Ashraf):** The matter of *tauheed* has been discussed here at length. I want to say that there is no difference on it among religious schools of thought. As Maulana Zahid has said that the Barelvi school of thought, like all others, has the right to explain its viewpoint. It would be inappropriate to accuse Barelvis of doing something against the belief of *tauheed*. We all agree on *tauheed* and *risalat* (finality of prophethood). All religious sects describe the esteemed status of the Holy Prophet (*shan-e-risalat*). No one has the right to say that the Ahle Hadith school of thought describes *shan-e-risalat* differently. The trend should also be discouraged that if a Barelvi scholar describes *shan-e-risalat* others say that he has said something against *tauheed*. Similarly, when a particular school of thought describes its belief of *tauheed*, some others accuse it of affronting the Holy Prophet.

I would like to allude to the approach of our *fuqaha* (Islamic jurists). The manner in which Imam Shafi and Imam Abu Hanifa offered their prayers has two kinds of comparative relationship; one relation is of being 'better' and 'not better', and the other of being legitimate and illegitimate. Our predecessors used to respect one another in matters related to the former relation. Once Imam Shafi went to Jamia Abu Hanifa mosque in Kufa and led the prayers. As a gesture of respect towards Hanafis he did not raise his hands (*rafa yadain*) during the prayer. If we follow such behavior our miserable circumstances can change. At the end, I would say that most of our problems are created by our negative approach toward others based on our predispositions. If we start thinking positively about others many differences would subside. I fully agree with Maulana Abu-al Hassan that commonalities should be promoted.

# Formation of Advisory Groups

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## Group - I

### Role of *Ulema* in Eliminating Sectarianism from Society

<b>Moderator:</b>	<b>Allama Syed Farhat Hussain Shah</b> (President, Minhajul Quran Ulema Council)
<b>Initiator:</b>	<b>Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali</b> (Administrator, Al-Markaz-e-Islami, Hadeeqatul Uloom, Peshawar)
<b>Participants:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Maulana Masood Baig</b> (Jamia Banoria, Karachi)</li><li><b>Maulana Muhammad Salfi</b> (Jamia Sattaria, Karachi)</li><li><b>Allama Akbar Hussain Zahidi</b> (Jamia Al-Sadiq, Quetta)</li><li><b>Maulana Abdul Qadoos Muhammadi</b> (Columnist, religious scholar)</li><li><b>Maulana Attaullah Shahab</b> (Member, Gilgit-Baltistan Council)</li></ol>

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## Recommendations

- 1) Instead of focusing on points of sectarian differences, religious scholars should highlight and propagate those areas of jurisprudence and respective interpretations of Quran and *Sunnah* on which all religious sects are in agreement.
- 2) All schools of thought should take practical measures to stop the ill-educated and contentious 'clerics' from leading prayers and delivering sermons in mosques.
- 3) Sectarianism should be eliminated, and the following steps in particular need the utmost attention:
  - i. Speeches and writings that hurt the sentiments of others should be prohibited.
  - ii. All religious scholars must stop their followers from raising provocative slogans in the name of *fatwas*, or religious decrees.
  - iii. People should be informed about the intrigues of local and international conspirators with regard to fomenting differences among Muslims.
- 4) Mutual respect and tolerance should be promoted irrespective of difference of opinion.
- 5) A book, based on the beliefs of various schools of thought, should be compiled where the belief of each sect should be described by the prominent religious scholars of the concerned sect.
- 6) Quran and *Sunnah* should be made focal points in order to eliminate sectarianism.
- 7) The use of loudspeaker at mosques should be controlled and a code of ethics should be chalked out in that regard.
- 8) A national-level forum should be formed which should comprise prominent religious scholars and *Muftis* (expounders and interpreters of Islamic law). Only this forum should have authority to issue a *fatwa*.
- 9) Special activities/events should be promoted which bring together scholars from all religious sects, or schools of thought. The tradition of participating in each other's festivities and mourning should be encouraged.
- 10) Distribution or attribution of certain religious festivals to distinct sects should end and the religious scholars belonging to every sect should participate in these special occasions including *Moharram* and *Rabiul Awal*.
- 11) The process of promoting sectarian harmony, and mutual interaction and dialogue should be initiated from the level of madrasa students.

- 12) Names of madrassas, or religious seminaries, academic institutions and mosques should be general and acceptable to all sects, and these should not give an impression of sectarian differences and distinctions.
- 13) There are only a small number of people within each sect who provoke sectarianism. They should be identified and held accountable for their acts.
- 14) The literature and published material that is insulting and provocative, and contains *fatwas* aimed at refuting others or declaring them heretic should be confiscated.
- 15) Religious scholars should give priority to preaching of religion instead of propagation of their respective sects.
- 16) It should be made mandatory for the media to stop airing and printing programs and material, which may promote sectarianism.
- 17) All sects should prioritize issues of national security and law and order.
- 18) The harm, threats and devastation that has stemmed from sectarianism should be highlighted through speeches and literature.

## Group - II

### Role of *Ulema* in Eliminating Extremism in Society

<b>Moderator:</b>	<b>Mr. Khurshid Nadeem</b> (Religious scholar)
<b>Initiator:</b>	<b>Mufti Muhammad Zahid</b> (Jamia Imdadia, Faisalabad)
<b>Participants:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Pir Muddasir Shah</b> (Centre for Islamic Research, Rawalpindi)</li><li>2. <b>Maulana Fazlur Rehman Madni</b> (Jamia Islamia, Nowshera)</li><li>3. <b>Dr. Khalid Masood</b> (Former chairman, the Council of Islamic Ideology)</li><li>4. <b>Allama Muhammad Hayyat Qadri</b> (Jamia Ghosia Rizwia, Dera Murad Jamali)</li><li>5. <b>Allama Anisul Hasnain</b> (Jamia Madinatul Ilm, Islamabad)</li></ol>

## Recommendations

This group opined that religious scholars need to perform their role in the following three spheres in order to make the society violence-free:

### 1) State Affairs

- i. To ascertain the role of religious scholars in politics in Pakistan, their role in the history of the sub-continent should be revisited.
- ii. Religious scholars should be introduced to the idea of modern state and its institutions.
- iii. Peaceful means should be adopted to reform the affairs of the state.
- iv. The gap between religious scholars and other segments of society should be bridged.

### 2) Social Affairs

- i. Islam's spiritual teachings and its related institutions should be revived and reformed to reform society.
- ii. The role of *minber-o-mehrab* should be made more vibrant and effective for social reform.

### 3) Religious Affairs

- i. Only those religious scholars should be contacted for explanation and interpretation of religious matters that have authority and credibility.
- ii. Self-accountability should be promoted among religious scholars, religious institutions and organizations.
- iii. All madrassa boards should introduce a justified introduction of other religious sects in their curricula to promote sectarian harmony.
- iv. The interaction between top-level religious scholars from various sects should be extended to the grassroots.
- v. Fundamental jurisprudential, ethical and social principles should be taken into account while issuing a religious edict, or *fatwa*.
- vi. The cooperation and interaction between religious seminaries and international religious universities should be enhanced.
- vii. A forum comprising prominent scholars of all the sects should be established in order to have an opinion pertaining to issues of apostasy and expulsion (from religion).



## Group - III

### Suggestions to Counter Political and Socio-Cultural Factors of Extremism in Society

<b>Moderator:</b>	<b>Dr. Abdul Nasir Latif</b> (Madrassa Islamia, Ziaul Uloom, Mardan)
<b>Initiator:</b>	<b>Maulana Mufti Muhammad Rafique</b> (Jamia Islamia, Banori Town, Karachi)
<b>Participants:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>1. Qari Zameer Akhter Mansoori</b> (Jamia Al-Falah, Karachi)</li><li><b>2. Maulana Ali Bakhsh Sajjadi</b> (Madrassa Wali-ul Asr, Sukkur)</li><li><b>3. Maulana Muhammad Younis Qasmi</b> (Editor, Monthly <i>Khilafat-e-Rashida</i>)</li><li><b>4. Maulana Khalid Zia</b> (Jamia Muhammadia, Muzaffarabad)</li></ol>

## Recommendations

### Political Factors and Countermeasures

- 1) The democratic system is in turmoil because of intolerance in politics, inability of politicians and lack of leadership.
- 2) The politicians exploit the people for their vested interests and deny them their rights.
- 3) The system of governance in Pakistan is against Quran and *Sunnah*.
- 4) The state and the rulers are subservient to others and make foes out of friends and vice versa.

- 5) The political system of Pakistan is based on deception, treachery and hypocrisy. Until the political system and democracy are reformed and a prudent leadership emerges, political unrest would continue in the country.
- 6) An active and pragmatic role of religious scholars is imperative to put the political system on the right track.
- 7) Lack of commitment and agreement among politicians to resolve the issues deteriorates the situation further; instead of serving the people, their ultimate goal is to stick to power.

### **Social Factors and Countermeasures**

- 1) The rulers and the feudal elite are responsible for illiteracy, ignorance and lack of education among the people. There is a dire need to establish quality education institutions at public level.
- 2) Different systems of education generate different thinking patterns and cause imbalance in society. A balanced educational system capable of producing similar thought processes could contribute to peace.
- 3) The tradition of outright rejection of the decisions and suggestions of religious scholars by bureaucracy and rulers is one of the factors for the unrest in society.
- 4) Inequality, class distinction, vanity, character assassination of religious scholars, patronage of crimes by the rulers, lack of unity, prejudices, ethnic strife and opposition for the sake of opposition are important factors for unrest in society.
- 5) The negative role of judiciary, executive and the media, the divide between modernists and conservatives, disregard for ethical values and imitation of others also create segmentation in society.
- 6) Lack of moral excellence and righteousness, absence of a process of self purgation, an eroded sense of responsibility, prioritizing personal interests, deterioration of Islamic family system, lack of cooperation to fight against oppression, and lack of forgiveness and tolerance are reflections of imbalanced social behaviors.

### **Economic Factors and Countermeasures**

- 1) The feudal system is cancer for society and a solution based on *Shariah* needs to be adopted.
- 2) Economic inequality and unjust distribution of wealth are also vital factors which result in growing divide between the haves and have-nots.

- 3) Due to lethargy and laziness, income generation through hard work is reduced. Profit and income generating sources devoid of hard work should be discouraged.
- 4) There is disregard for Islamic principles of distribution of wealth (Sadaqah, or charity, and Zakat). Islam has clearly described the categories where Zakat and Sadaqah, etc., can be spent. These should be strictly followed.
- 5) Interest-based capital system is the cause of deterioration in society.
- 6) Electricity generation, strengthening of industry, agricultural production as well as better organization of technical facilities and best use of the resources of the country could bring economic stability.
- 7) Dependence upon foreign aid and loans should be minimized and resources should be generated from within the country.

## Group - IV

### How to Promote a Culture of Peace and Harmony in Society

<b>Moderator:</b>	<b>Maulana Babar Hussain Babar</b> (Darul Uloom Muhammadia Ghosia, Lahore)
<b>Initiator:</b>	<b>Maulana Ammar Khan Nasir</b> (Vice Principal, Al-Shariah Academy, Gujranwala)
<b>Participants:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <b>Dr. Syed Muhammad Najfi</b> (Jamiatul Muntazar, Lahore)</li><li>2. <b>Maulana Yasin Zafar</b> (Nazim-e-Aala, Wafaqul Madaaris Salafia)</li><li>3. <b>Maulana Abdul Haq Hashmi</b> (Rabitaul Madaaris, Quetta)</li><li>4. <b>Pir Farooq Bahaul Haq Shah</b> (Darul Uloom Ghosia, Chak Shahzad, Islamabad)</li><li>5. <b>Maulana Hassan Asghar Askari</b> (Bhara Kahu, Islamabad)</li></ol>

## Recommendations

- 1) Training and education of individuals plays a fundamental role in creating a tolerant culture in society. It should start from home and children should be prepared to resist negativity whenever they come across it.
- 2) Educational curricula, media, religious sermons as well as training workshops are some of the key tools that can be used to help individuals grow as balanced persons with strong character.
- 3) Education curricula including those of madrassas should not contain biased and discriminatory introduction or reference to any sect or community.
- 4) It should be considered as accepted norm that every sect has the right to have its belief interpreted according to their best understanding as well as to highlight and promote it in a positive manner. Moreover, the interpretation of the beliefs of every sect described by the follower of that sect should be considered as authentic.
- 5) The issues (religious, intellectual, political or social) that carry differences of opinion, should be discussed in a knowledgeable manner. Among scholars, such debates should be academic and at the public level they should reflect goodwill for others.
- 6) The writings of acclaimed figures belonging to various schools of thought which discuss tolerance, forgiveness, and acceptance of difference of opinion should be made available to the maximum number of people.
- 7) To defuse the impact of non-academic and mediocre expressions on controversial issues, the writings of respected top writers on these issues should be promoted.
- 8) There is ambiguity about various questions at the academic, intellectual and jurisprudence level and due to this ambiguity, intolerant behaviors are able to find a space. For instance, what are the principles and regulations and conditions for apostasy? What is the limit, manner and scope of discouraging bad deeds (*Nahi Anal Munkar*) in society? Who has the right and authority for jihad? The ambiguity on these issues could not be redressed without making them a focus of serious academic debates and discussions.
- 9) Tolerance and intolerance should be covered as a general social behavior instead of seeing the issue only in the context of religious elements. Moreover, the intolerant behaviors in different religions, communities, segments as well as intellectual and political groups should be equally discussed.
- 10) To eliminate intolerance and extremism, the causes (political, social and economic imbalances, oppression and injustice, undue and aggressive religious behaviors) should also be addressed.

- 11) Examples from history and the life of the Holy Prophet should be presented where social relations were maintained despite differences. Likewise, the events where people of knowledge gave respect to other people of knowledge should be highlighted. The diversity, patience and tolerance that we observe on the occasions of *Hajj* and *Umra* also need to be focused on.
- 12) The efforts that have been made for the promotion of a tolerant culture by other Muslim or non-Muslim countries should be introduced to people through media. By blending local situation with these experiences, people should be provided with proper guidance.
- 13) Dialogue between diverse segments of society (Muslims, non-Muslims, liberal and conservative, non-religious, etc.) should be a constant practice. Efforts should be made to invite the elements that display extremist tendencies rather than just ignoring them.
- 14) Such a trend should be promoted that efforts could be made to settle controversies among those belonging to various segments of society in order to bridge the gap between them instead of leaving them to settle the matter on their own.
- 15) The interaction between important personalities belonging to diverse opinions should be made public so that people may have a positive message and extremist tendencies could be reduced.
- 16) The responsible persons belonging to various schools of thought should mention the services, ideas or their personal interaction with other schools of thought in their writings, statements and sermons. Such forums should be established where people from every sect and segment of society could discuss collective issues.
- 17) Every school of thought should establish an internal mechanism of self-accountability and should remain vigilant against extremist tendencies within its fold. Moreover, extremists' tendencies should not get any support.
- 18) PIPS and other similar institutions should act as a bridge between various segments by promoting dialogue between them and should provide analytical and informative material regarding social issues and make it accessible to the trendsetters among all segments of society.

## Group - V

### The Role of Madrassas in Promoting Balanced Views in Society

**Moderator:** **Dr. Abu-al Hassan Shah**  
(Darul Uloom Muhammadia Ghosia, Bhera)

**Initiator:** **Maulana Zikriya Zakir**  
(Jamia Salafia Da'awatul Haq, Quetta)

**Participants:**

1. **Maulana Zia Naqshbandi**  
(Monthly *Fikr-e-Momin*, Lahore)
2. **Maulana Shamshad**  
(Jamia Muhammadia Islamabad)
3. **Maulana Anwarul Haq Haqqani**  
(Markazi Jamia Masjid, Quetta)
4. **Maulana Abdul Islam**  
(Jamia Masjid G-7 Islamabad)
5. **Allama Syed Jawad Hadi**  
(Madrassa Ariful Hussaini, Peshawar)

## **Recommendations**

- 1) Religious scholars and *madrassas* alone cannot be held responsible for the decay in society. The role of other elements should also come under discussion.
- 2) Students and audience should have the courage to accept criticism in a positive spirit.
- 3) Every segment of society should express its disassociation with mischievous elements among them who try to create differences.
- 4) Libraries of *madrassas* should contain books of all schools of thought.
- 5) Interpretation of decrees of any sect should be made only by a representative of that sect.
- 6) The books which carry positive debates on differences of opinion should be given more attention at *madrassas*.
- 7) The basic introduction to and awareness about modern knowledge and disciplines should be imparted to *madrassa* students.
- 8) The government should take measures to provide comparable economic benefits to *madrassa* graduates and religious scholars.
- 9) In order to nurture the intellectual discourse among religious scholars, measures should be taken to keep them updated and aware of current affairs.
- 10) *Madrassa* teachers and staff should be provided with high level training, and steps should be taken to enhance their capacity.
- 11) The commonalities between various sects should be highlighted and sectarian differences limited to only academic level. Moreover, they should be expressed in such a manner that controversies should not spread further.
- 12) On the occasion of special religious days, joint congregations should be held at *madrassas* and mosques.
- 13) By equating educational certificates of *madrassas* to other educational certificates, discrimination should be eliminated so that the *madrassa* graduates are able to serve the nation in different capacities in public and private institutions.
- 14) The policy of not criticizing others' sects and not abandoning one's own should be promoted.

# Concluding Session

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**Chair:**           **Mufti Muneebur Rehman**  
Chairman Ruet-e-Hilal Committee,  
President Tanzeemul Madaaris

## **Chairperson's Address**

Some of the recommendations presented here are very appropriate and useful but their outcome depends on how they are implemented. As actions speak louder than words, these recommendations or resolutions would produce results after they are put into action, otherwise this discourse is nothing more than an intellectual exercise. Some recommendations are difficult to implement, for instance, the suggestions to establish an institution to determine the scope of issues such as takfeer (declaring someone non-Muslim or non-believer), khurooj (rebellion), Nahi Anal Munkar (forbidding the wrong) and issuance of fatwas. This should be considered an opinion and we should not assume that we have the right or the authority to represent all religious classes and segments in Pakistan which are required to make a final decision. But we can make these recommendations our milestone to reach an absolute or at least greater consensus on these issues by bringing together religious elites, which have the authority to lead and represent their religious schools of thought. This can give wider acceptability to these recommendations.

I had thought that we would have an explicit debate on what bleeds our country today and would try to find a way to get out of this war [of terrorism]. But as you know it is impossible to confine our religious scholars to a particular subject and they try to grasp the things on a whole. So at the end of the day we have a vast agenda before us. We could not discuss the prime issue of today's Pakistan in a precise and specific way that is required to offer a flicker of hope to our people. I think the problem we face today has penetrated our society equally in all directions. It has become very complex. It is not a



cancer or tumor that can be removed. It is like diabetes, blood pressure and fever which can attack anytime and no part of the body is safe from them. Similarly, no one in Pakistan can assume that he or she is safe. When the institutions meant to defend us and provide us security are not safe from this menace, how can the common people assume that they are safe? This is pervasive and has advanced beyond critical limits.

Causes of this problem can be discussed in two perspectives. One perspective is that in which Dr. Farid Paracha has held the international powers responsible for it. These international powers include Israel, India, the US, Europe, Yahoo-o-Hanood and other imperialist powers. There is no doubt that they are involved and should be discussed as part of the factors that contribute to unrest and turmoil in Pakistan. The assumption that it is their responsibility to pull Pakistan out of this inferno means that it is not we but someone else who has to defend the survival and integrity of Pakistan. I think first we should convince ourselves that it is our responsibility and Europe, the US, or any other country has nothing to do with it. We cannot save our home or rebuild it until we confess our failures and weaknesses, and hold ourselves, and not others, responsible for our problems. I have always held this opinion that if we want to respond to the US and Yahoo-o-Hanood in an effective manner we should do that by making our country united, organized and peaceful. Only then will we be able to say that we have successfully thwarted conspiracies of our enemies. Turkey's recent renaissance is a great example for us. One unit of Turkish currency is equal to 55 Pakistani rupees and it is the 15th or 16th biggest economy in the world. It is peaceful and stable. We should also take up responsibility of national renaissance and stability and initiate practical steps in that regard. If we continue to put the burden of our responsibilities on others' shoulders, we would never come out of this decline.

We should also admit that we face different kinds of pressures and threats on the internal and external fronts. You mention dictation from the US and others, I would say there are many internal pressures as well; each school of thought faces internal pressures. No one should take it as an easy thing. Once we were part of a meeting in Peshawar. In those days there were frequent suicide attacks. Someone in the meeting said that suicide attacks should also be discussed in the meeting but the hosts replied that you can discuss such issues in Islamabad but not in Peshawar. This is the ground reality. I asked a person there if religious scholars talk in Friday sermons about terrorist attacks happening in the bazaars of Peshawar. He said they do not even mention those. Those who do mention the attacks hold the US or India responsible for them. This is also a form of pressure that we face. We would have to fight such pressures. If truth cannot be told in each and every part of the country without fear it is difficult to change the situation.

Stop bridging differences between religious sects. They have existed throughout history and would continue in the future. We cannot remove them. The need of the hour is to extinguish this fire that is burning our homeland. As we are all destined to live in this home, its security is also our responsibility.

People try to hide the facts when they say that the terrorists are agents of CIA, RAW or Mossad or are being funded by these agencies. But it is our people who work for them on the ground. They have established their intelligence networks here using our people. Our continuous denial of ground realities mainly due to indolence to take up our roles has augmented our difficulties.

Some people have made it part of their belief that as the government has become a slave of the US, it is justified to attack and hit state institutions, the people, markets, mosques and shrines. Neither the killer knows why he killed the people nor the victims why they were targeted. It is wrong and religious scholars should come forward to do something about that while standing together. They would have to fulfill this religious obligation of condemning acts of violence and terrorism over and over again. Some religious scholars issue political statements, probably forced by the circumstances, that suicide attacks are haram (forbidden) and this is haram and that is haram but because drone attacks continue, because the US is doing it, and because our rulers are supporting it so they imply that such attacks are haram as well as halal (lawful) at the same time. We would have to talk openly about these things and call a spade a spade. We should not waste a moment to remove such ambiguities and confusions. We can overcome this hurdle hand in hand.

I would also like to say that I was the first person who issued a fatwa against suicide attacks, which is purely based on Islamic Shariah, and was seconded by 18 prominent religious scholars.

As far as our government is concerned, yesterday I heard the President saying that it was our war and we had lost 35,000 precious lives in it. If I fight to protect my own home how can I demand money from someone else for it? But one day we hear our rulers say that this is our war and the next day they say that Pakistan had not received full payment for it. This dichotomy is the real cause of our destruction. If our rulers categorically declare that this is our war and anyone who creates unrest and tumult in Pakistan would be considered an enemy of Pakistan and that we are not concerned with America's war, Europe's war or anyone else's war, action after this declaration would create different results. People would also respond differently.

This is just a glimpse of the situation we are caught in. The crisis is terrible and pervasive, and has penetrated deep into our society. It is the collective responsibility of all segments of society including rulers, political leaders, judiciary and religious scholars to first evolve a common national agenda to address this crisis and then work together to achieve the objectives. We should hand over a peaceful and stable Pakistan to the future generations.

I am told that the President has labeled his political rival Nawaz Sharif as a 'maulvi'. A female political leader of the Pakistan People's Party said that the President should have used the word 'mullah' for Sharif. Maulvi and mullah are honored and respectable words. The use of such words in a satiric manner, to insult or criticize others, would not win our rulers any respect in the religious circles. It is condemnable that they vent out their rage against their rivals by calling them maulvi or mullah. Such behavior from the rulers impacts our society negatively.

I also want to point to the origin of our sectarian-related problems. Religious sects and their fatwas against one another are not a new phenomenon. They had existed in the past as well. But even the most severe form of physical violence then was pushing someone away; and in rare cases clubs were used. The situation we face today is entirely different. Now people do not use logic but firearms to further their viewpoint. This is a road to disaster. If religious sects have any differences or conflict they can have a debate that furnishes each side an opportunity to prove its viewpoint logically. We cannot restore peace in society until we remove weapons from religious circles.

The West and the US think there is something problematic in the madrassa curricula that produce wicked people and terrorists. We have repeatedly told them that madrassas have been teaching this curriculum for 200 years and have not produced any terrorist during that entire period. There was no terrorism during the movement for the establishment of Pakistan nor thereafter.

If we want to secure peace in our country, we would have to purge it of all kinds of weapons and introduce a culture of logical reasoning and debate instead of use of force to convince others. The path we are marching on leads to further destruction. Some segments in our society which have been bearing excesses of others and do not have weapons or other resources have also started to think about adopting violent ways as a last resort.

Our rulers have a major role in weaponization of the country. People follow the culture that is set by the rulers. Peaceful people do not have access to the rulers and their voice

is not heard but those who have weapons and resources have easy access. Our rulers are cowards and cannot protect what people have entrusted to them.

The only way to save the country is to chalk out a long-term national agenda and get the whole nation to back it, irrespective of personal agendas or affiliations. Our survival is linked to the survival of our country. Finally, instead of complaining about the gravity of the situation we should resolve to work for promoting peace and harmony in the country and create awareness among our respective schools of thought about that.

If we present our viewpoint with logic and reasoning the sensible people would listen to us and would be attracted to our message. This is the way to promote peace. It is a gradual process but it can lead us to a point where violent people would not find a place in society.

I beg Almighty Allah to save us from the menace of terrorism as we have already paid a huge price for our misdeeds. May Allah save us from these miseries and spare us further trials.

## **Concluding Remarks**

### **Muhammad Amir Rana**

Respected guests! I think there is nothing more to be said after Mufti Muneebur Rehman's comprehensive address. He has also highlighted those things which could not be discussed in the preceding sessions. We had high hopes of this two-day seminar and I think what we have achieved is quite significant. We have learned a lot and observed an ideal state of harmony and dialogue among the respected religious scholars.

The consensus we have observed among the participants on national and ideological issues encourages us to expand this exercise of dialogue to include in it other segments of society as well. We will continue our efforts to strengthen the tradition of dialogue. I thank you all on behalf of Pak Institute for Peace Studies for sparing your valuable time to be part of this dialogue and look forward to your continued cooperation in the future.

## About Institute

Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) is an independent think-tank committed to provide an in-depth understanding and objective analyses of regional and global issues. PIPS provides international strategic thinkers a forum to play an active role in understanding and researching real and perceived threats to regional and global peace and security. The objective is to engage leading regional and international strategic thinkers, academicians and media persons in pursuance and production of knowledge of national, regional and global security issues and to promote awareness about the importance of peace and democracy. The goal will be achieved through independent policy analysis, and collection, processing, interpretation and dissemination of information and skills/training.

PIPS carries out and disseminates policy analyses and research studies on the regional and global strategic issues such as conflict and development, political violence, religious extremism, ethnic strife, terrorism (including state terrorism), economics, governance and democracy, foreign relations, and cultural learning of policy-making processes.

