

SPEECH DELIVERED BY MOULANA ABUL HASAN ALI NADWI IN 1981

I am filled with happiness by your reception. I would be most ungrateful if I do not respect your wishes and share my inner feelings. If I desire I could shower you with praises, for Almighty Allah has bestowed me with an abundance of vocabulary, but I would not be fulfilling the right of friendship.

DA'WAH IN THE SEERAH

As you are aware, the Prophet (sallallahu-alayhi-wasallam), had a burning desire to invite humanity towards Islam. Despite 13 years of untiring effort in Makkatul-Mukarramah and 7 years in Madinatul-Munawwarah, there was no large scale movement of non-Muslims into Islam. Between 7 AH and 10 AH, which is the period after Fath-Makkah until the Prophet's demise, there was such an influx of people entering the ranks of Islam that was not witnessed in the preceding 20 years.

Imam Zuhri (rahmatullahi-alayh), an eminent Muhaddith and Tabii, expressed surprise on this sea change, with so many people embracing Islam in a matter of just 3 years. Along with other distinguished Muhaddith he has commented that this was due to non-Muslims having had an opportunity for the first time, to observe and intermingle with Muslims, witness their honesty, fair dealing, compassion and sole reliance on Almighty Allah. This left such a deep and profound impression on non-Muslims that thousands entered into the fold of Islam within a relatively short period of time.

APPLYING THE LESSONS OF SEERAH HERE AND NOW

This incident also contains abundant lessons on how Muslims should live in this country. Their conduct should be sublime and captivating. Whosoever should see us should accept Islam. Whosoever sits with us should be inclined towards Islam. There should be no need to convince anyone to accept the Truth.

Therefore, in this country if you wish to live peacefully and have an opportunity to present Islam to the host community, you will need to inculcate and manifest sterling qualities, not just inside the Mosques but also outside in the streets, in the markets, in your daily activities, and at home. A life of Taqwa will immediately attract non-Muslims towards Islam.

DANGERS OF LIVING ISOLATED AND INSULATED

As an ordinary student of Islam it is my religious responsibility to warn you. If you do not lead an upright life, if you continue to live an insular lifestyle, and if you fail to manifest the beauty of Islam to non-Muslims, then you face some real dangers. In such a case, there is no reason for you to feel content and secure in this country.

If ever the fire of race, religion or nationalism rages here you will not be saved. In Spain there were Mosques a hundred times more beautiful than yours. So do not feel content and self-satisfied. As an ordinary student of religion I would wish to express my joy and happiness at this wonderful new Mosque. But what words shall I use to congratulate you?

LESSONS FROM SPAIN

Others may not speak to you as plainly, but remember the glorious Masjid-e-Cordova. It still stands in Spain. Iqbal, Poet of the East, so eloquently reminisces the great legacy of Islamic Spain in his famous poem Masjid-e-Qurtaba. In Islamic Spain, there were such brilliant Mosques, celebrated Madrasahs, famous scholars like Shaykh-ul-Akbar, Ibnu-Hazm, Qurtubi, Shatbi - and how many others shall I mention? However, when the flames of religious sectarianism raged then the Mosques and Madrasahs became deserted. Once, Islamic Spain boasted such magnificent structures, distinguished educational centres, refined culture and society. Regrettably, the Muslims, despite such a high standard of living, did not draw the non-Muslims of that country to see the Truth of Islam, to warn them of the dangers of disbelief, with the result that ensuing religious violence subsequently consumed them like a morsel. The Arabs with their glowing history, architectural splendour and vast oceans of knowledge, were displaced from the country. Today, unfortunately, the ears eagerly wait to hear the Azaan and the empty Mosques thirst for the Salah.

EARN YOUR PLACE IN YOUR COUNTRY

My dear brothers, you must earn your recognition in this country. You should earn your place and leave an imprint on the host community of your value and significance. You must show your exemplary conduct is far nobler than that of other people. You must impart on them the lessons of humanity. You should demonstrate such commitment and noble virtues that impress on people that there cannot be found more upright humans elsewhere besides you. You need to establish your worth, showing what blessing and mercy you are for the country.

If however you decide to live in an enclosed environment simply content with your Prayers and Fasting, apathetic to the people and society you live in, never introducing them to the high Islamic values and your own personal qualities, then beware lest any religious or

sectarian violence flares up. In such a situation, you will not find safety or protection.

I pray to Almighty Allah my prediction is totally unfounded. But remember, you are guests here. Your Tabligh, Mosques, Madrasahs, Ibadah and religious sacrifices are all worthy of commendation. May Almighty Allah grant you Barakah. But do not forget to earn your place in this country. Gain proficiency of the national language and use it to effectively propagate Islam. Prepare writers and orators to convey the message of Islam. Although you will distance yourself from their religion, do not distance yourself from them. Establish your credibility to the extent that if you are entrusted with onerous responsibilities, as was Prophet Yusuf (alayhis-salam), you do not shirk but embrace all challenges wholeheartedly.

YOUR PRIORITY SHOULD NOT BE WEALTH AND LUXURY

You will have to present a new pattern of life to this country. You will not earn recognition by exerting yourselves in the workplace. If you overwork you will be looked upon disparagingly and be likened to horses and bulls. In fact, you will be labelled as money-making machines. However, if you can show to the people here that you are worshippers of Almighty Allah and not wealth, you do not bow before power but only before virtue, you are humans and think like humans, you are concerned not only about yourselves but also about others; and you are compassionate about your own children as well as theirs, that you are earnestly concerned about the path of destruction they have chosen for themselves, you will then earn their respect. They will begin to respect Islam and become desirous of studying it. They will ask you for literature concerning Islamic beliefs and practices and an opportunity will arise here for you to promote Islam.

On the other hand, if you remain preoccupied in eating and working, engaged in Prayers, remaining indifferent to what is happening in the country, insulated within the Muslim community, totally apathetic to what is happening outside, which direction the country is taking - in such a situation if there is trouble you will not be able to save yourselves.

STRENGTHEN YOUR POSITION

I have been meaning to convey and accentuate this message to you as I do not know whether I will be able to visit you again in the future. You gathered here with love and affection and therefore it was easy for me to convey. As a student of religion it would have been convenient for

me to recommend the virtues of reciting various Zikr or prescribe certain Wazifahs but you may not have had an opportunity of listening to the message I have just conveyed from anyone else.

Please strengthen your position in this country. Earn your recognition. Do not be like a straw or crop that is uprooted by a mere breeze. You should be so firm that not even a hurricane is able to displace you. Display such noble character that you attract the hearts of the people. See then how these people will stand up to defend you. If there is the slightest hostility towards you, they will be the first ones to argue on your behalf and argue what a blessing you are for them.

May Almighty Allah grant us the ability to understand what is right; may He bless and protect you. Aameen