



The Customary

Madrasah,
Darul Uloom,
Hifz &
Khaanqah

Jalsahs

Permissible or Not
Permissible?

By:

Mujlisul Ulama of S.A.
PO Box 3393
Port Elizabeth, 6056
Rep. of South Africa

The Customary Madrasah, Darul Uloom, Hifz and Khaanqah Jalsahs – Permissible or Not Permissible?

Time to Reflect in Earnest

The Principal of a Madrasah requested Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaavi (Rahmatullahi alayh) to attend the Madrasah’s Jalsah. Hadhrat Thaavi (Rahmatullahi alayh) responded as follows:

Assalaamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh

In the letter prior to this one I had expressed my reluctance to attending the *jalsah*, and stated the obstacle. This was even witnessed by Respected Maulana ... Sahib with his own eyes. It is possible that by the time it is the *jalsah* this obstacle is overcome.

Now I wish to present some Shar’i obstacles in attending, only by way of *mashwarah*. Although being so brazen in front of Ulama is not free of bad manners, but on the one side I see *Naseehat* being part and parcel of Deen and *Ma’moor Bihi* (A Command of Allah), and on the other side trust in your consideration and courtesy. Then, in my opinion, there is hope of being delivered from error.

These factors have permitted me to freely express my thoughts. If, truly, I am wrong then I sincerely wish that my thoughts be rectified.

The summary of these Shar’i obstacles is that when carefully viewed and evidenced by experience, the major reason for conducting these *jalsahs* is twofold; receiving donations and broadcasting one’s activities.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

We can also describe this as the honour and prestige of the madrasah, which boils down to *hubb-e-maal and hubb-e-jaah* (love for money and love for fame) which have been prohibited in numerous *Nusoos* (Qur'aan and Hadith injunctions).

Although when money and fame are desired for the sake of Deen then this is not condemned, but it is debatable whether on such occasions (jalsahs) the Deen is the objective or the dunya. So, even though *ta-weel* is made (that is, defences are made to justify the *jalsahs*) and it is said to be for the Deen, however, Allah Ta'ala has made a yardstick for every intention whereby the validity or corruption of intention can be gauged.

Now on these occasions (of madrasah jalsahs), if one reflects, the sign of *talab-dunya* (seeking the world) is evident. Let us expand on this. If the Deen was the objective then anything contrary to the Pleasure of Allah Ta'ala would not be adopted. But since such (haraam) things are opted for, it clearly shows that the objective is the dunya. By way of example some of these factors are enumerated hereunder.

1. In asking for donations the Rules of the Shariah are not observed. The Injunction of the Shariah is: “*A man's money is not lawful without his heartfelt consent*”. In collecting funds schemes are devised to apply pressure on the hearts of those addressed, be this pressure in the form of coercion, embarrassment or empathy. People on whom this pressure is applied are targeted. In front of the audience, needs of the madrasah are presented. It is insisted that they attend the *jalsah*. It is known for certainty that a rich man will fear insult and humiliation coming empty-

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

handed. The madrasah authorities broadcast their expenses; the rich guest fears disgrace.

2. *Riya* (ostentation) being haraam is a *Shar'i Hukm*. In most cases in such functions the giver harbours *riya* in his heart. The cause of this *riya* is also sinful. (In other words, the *jalsah* is the occasion of this *riya*, hence the *jalsah* is sinful.)

3. The Ulama frequently go to the doors of the rich and engage in flattering them.

4. If they (the Ulama) get money which they understand not to be halaal, they will never refuse to accept the money. It is possible that a person whose income is predominantly interest or who takes frequent bribes gave something (to the madrasah) and openly or quietly the money was returned this donor.

5. They mostly project the status of their madrasahs much higher than it actually is, either explicitly or by implication. This translates to falsehood and deception.

6. If someone questions something about the madrasah, and he is right, it is never accepted. On the contrary, they will attack the person and labour to refute the question, even though in their hearts they know that it is the truth. This is subversion of the Haqq.

7. If another madrasah is established nearby, then in spite of this new madrasah being in a good state they (the authorities of the older madrasah) will look at it (the new madrasah) as if it is a thorn tree and in their hearts they will

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

wish for its demolition and termination, whereas it is something to be happy about that Deeni work is being carried out at several places. However, for fear of the new madrasah becoming famous and contributions increasing for the new madrasah and diminishing for their madrasah they are unhappy over this new madrasah.

8. They publicise their activities, praise themselves, give preference to their own madrasah, show off their work to be better and more intensive and for this they are at pains to increase the volume of their Ta'leem and introduce kitaabs which are beyond the capacity of the students to show the magnitude of the work being carried out, whether the students understand the work or not.

From the above signs the first four are love for wealth not for the sake of the Deen and the last four are signs of love for fame not for the sake of the Deen. Due to the basis being corrupt the effects produced are just the same.

9. There is *israaf* (wastage) mostly in these *jalsahs*. A lot of money goes into the travelling expenses of those whose attendance is not necessary at all together with their entourages. Sometimes meals, etc. are also arranged at the madrasah's expense. The meals are lavish. Non-guests also eat at these venues and in most cases, in fact with certainty it can be said that the donors' permission was not taken for this. To claim that there is implied permission is not accepted because those who donate themselves criticise such expenditure.

10. In some places these *jalsahs* are conducted in the Musjid. The Musjid is then turned into a lounge with noise and clamour, worldly talk, despicable poems and many

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

other vile acts which are witnessed taking place in the Musjid. When it is forbidden to engage in even such permissible activities in the Musjid for which the Musjid is not meant, then what should be said about these vile acts?

11. With such activities instead of the desired dignity and honour, the Ulama are scorned upon and despised in the eyes of the people of the dunya because actual honour is in self-sufficiency and simplicity. The fruits of this scorn are that they do not prefer *Ilm Deen* for their children thinking that this (disgrace) awaits such people. In this case, the *jalsahs* come within the ambit of *mannaa'iyat lil khair* (preventing good).

12. Incompetent pupils are shown off as competent to swell the number of graduates and students who have passed. And so forth.

If these thoughts are rectifiable then please do rectify them, otherwise I do not compel you to comply and accept. However, at least let these be plausible reasons for my absence, and do forgive me. Was-Salaam (End of Hadhrat *Thaanvi's Response*)

The Muhtamim (Principal) Sahib's Reply

Assalaamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuh

Hadhrat Aqdas's response has been received. Perusing the contents I gained satisfaction and joy. Shukr unto Allah, since the inception of laying the foundation of this madrasah I have abhorred those things which you have written. Here, no one likes pretence. The foundation of the madrasah rests on *Tawakkul*. Donors are not pressurized into contributing. Whoever wishes, joins in the contribution. Whoever wishes not to, is free to refrain.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

We never have in mind those things for work rendered for the sake and pleasure of Allah. Whatever Allah Ta'ala wills, we are pleased with.

It is futile to entreat worldly-minded people. For this reason in this madrasah only those few people contribute who give with sincerity. There is no need to ask them repeatedly. That is not my habit also. Such action is debasing in my opinion.

My only intention in organizing a *madrasah jalsah* is that those people who do contribute are, without understating or overstating, informed of the madrasah's state of affairs, and awarding prizes to the qualified students to please them, so that their hearts are not broken. Also, some Ulama can come together and give *bayaan* and *naseehat* so that people can be guided and people can benefit.

Hitherto funds have been explicitly collected for the purpose of the *jalsah*, for the travelling costs of the Ulama and for those who attend the *jalsah*. This has nothing to do with contributions given to the madrasah. Allah Ta'ala put this in my heart at the very beginning.

We do not entreat anyone to attend the *jalsah* and no one goes to the homes of the rich. We purposefully concentrate on the poor. We have furthermore ascertained that the rich attend not because of shame. Hence they are not even given invitations and no effort is made in this direction. Personally, giving invitations to them is abhorrent to me.

To strive to ruin a madrasah which opens alongside one's madrasah is foolish and stupid. Shukr unto Allah, that there is no competition of madrasahs here. We have no interest in opposing others. In fact, we wish for the progress of other madaaris. Opposition to other madaaris is

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

a felony against Allah and His Rasool. Such a person harbours malice against the Deen.

Since the *dastaar-bandi* (turban-tying) has become a ceremony and an exhibition, and the madaaris have adopted it thinking it to be good, hence I have not formed a good opinion about this. It has therefore been discontinued in this madrasah.

From this brief letter Hadhrat Wala can understand what my purpose is in conducting a *jalsah*; whether it is *hubb-e-dunya* or something else. Without hesitation, do give *naseehat* if you see anything else against the Wish of Allah and against the Shariah. *Wallah!* I will be extremely grateful unto you. I will consider you to be a well-wisher.

Since the madrasah does not have enough area space the courtyard of the Musjid has been proposed for the *jalsah*. But as far as possible I take into consideration all the prohibited factors and emphasise same to the people. This is in view of no other alternate venue.

My intention in the *jalsah* is not at all to collect funds and seek popularity.

In so far as the standard of *Ta'leem* is concerned, through Allah Ta'ala's grace we do not have that problem. In fact, the *Mudarriseen* (Teachers) are urged as far as possible to teach the students comfortably, regardless of the amount covered of a *kitaab* being less.

Furthermore, the number of students is disclosed accurately.

I trust that you will respond in good conscience and grant me the opportunity to thank you.

(End of the Muhtamim Sahib's Letter)

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

Hadhrat Thaanvi's Response

Assalaamu Alaykum Warahmatullah

Your letter has brought me joy. May Allah Ta'ala increase the *barkat* in your noble objectives and sincerity of intention. And may Allah Ta'ala make us needy servants benefit from the *fuyoodh* and *barakaat* of your madrasah and similarly from the *fuyoodh* and *barakaat* of all the Madaaris of Islam.

Your letter has brought contentment that, *Masha-Allah*, your gaze is on such matters and you have concern for same. But, the condition of all the madaaris is merely that in the *jalsah* no evil transpires intentionally. However, the problem remains and continues that the obligation of discarding something is not conditional to intentional evil. In fact, unintentional evil is sufficient.

It is already accepted that many *jalsahs*, in fact all are plagued with the previously stated evils. It is also evident that to stop these is necessary as far as possible. It is prohibited (*manhi anhi*) to popularize such wrongs intentionally and unintentionally. In this scenario, if some muhtamim sahib conducts a *jalsah* with extreme care, then although he may not be directly involved in the wrongs, but there is no doubt that he is a cause for the spreading of the wrongs in other careless *jalsahs*.

In many issues the Fuqaha have strongly debarred some permissible acts simply to close the avenues (*saddan lil baab*) and to uproot corruption (*hasman li maaddatil fasaad*). In this regard the Muhaqqiqeen Ulama in this age debar the customary *maulood*, *faatihah* and *urs* gatherings, regardless of the organizer being cautious in *I'tiqaad* and *Amal*. The reason for this is that others who are careless will have justification. It will lead to these becoming widespread among irresponsible people. This rule applies

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

equally and consistently to gatherings of *da'wat* and gatherings of the madaaris. After observation it suffices to reflect.

The benefits of these *jalsahs* you have stated are not disputed. However, when benefits and wrongs clash then preference is accorded to the effect of the wrongs, when the benefits are not categorized as essential in the Shariah. In what we are discussing it is obvious that there is no *Shar'i Zaroorat*. In fact, even the benefit is not confined to this particular way. Helpers could be informed with a written report. Students could be awarded without any ceremony associated.

In so far as *bayaans* are concerned, firstly it is difficult to openly give *naseehat* to the audience of such gatherings. Consideration for ill feelings prevents that. Then this objective (that is, *hidaayat* and *naseehat*) can be fulfilled independently in good measure. Therefore, I am still unable to attend. Was-Salaam

(End of Hadhrat Thaانvi's Fatwa of Prohibition)

OUR COMMENT

The evils of *jalsahs* enumerated by Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (Rahmatullah alayh) had already plagued these ostentatious, merrymaking functions many decades ago. If Hadhrat Thanvi had to witness the evil *jalsahs* of our era, he would have been absolutely appalled.

All the evils enumerated by Hadhrat Thanvi are to be found in greater degree in the *jalsahs* of today. Every Tom, Dick and Harry institution has clambered on the *jalsah* bandwagon. Wallaah! The aim is nothing but to show off. Ostentation, *riya*, *Takabbur* and *israaf* are the primary factors of moral filth bedevilling these functions of the *nafs*. Trust funds are squandered for *haraam* merrymaking.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

Whilst the Ummah at large is suffering under grinding poverty and gross ignorance which drives people into the traps of kufr, the madrasah and mock khaanqah people abuse and misappropriate public funds to gluttonously eat and feed people who devour luxury and delicious foods thrice a day at their homes to the extent of contracting a host of incurable diseases.

There is no surprise in the sicknesses – physical and spiritual – from which the Ulama are today suffering. Their gluttony, *hub-e-jaah* and *hub-e-maal* have made them obese, extremely lethargic and fearful of proclaiming the Haqq. Their excessive indulgence in the demands of the nafs has induced them to abandon *Amr Bil Ma'roof Nahy Anil Munkar*.

There is no goodness in these jalsahs which should be abandoned in entirety. But, instead, knew brands of jalsahs are being evolved by the miscreant ulama. An unheard of jalsah nowadays on the rise, is the so-called '*islahi jalsah*'. This is indeed a great travesty. It is an illustration of the total lack of understanding of the methodology and objective of Tasawwuf. It is a stupid mockery of the Deen in the name of the Deen.

After Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (Rahmatullah alayh) had explained the numerous evils attendant to jalsahs, the Muhtamim (Principal) of the Darul Uloom in his response pointed out that none of the evils mentioned by Hadhrat Thanvi and which ruined all other jalsahs, would occur in his jalsah. He was fully in agreement with Hadhrat Thanvi's appraisal and the prohibition, but he explained that his particular jalsah would be bereft of all these evils, hence he desired Hadhrat Thanvi to grace his jalsah with his presence.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

Hadhrat Thanvi, in his response, despite accepting the explanation of the Muhtamim and believing that his particular jalsah would be free of the evils, nevertheless, he (Hadhrat Thanvi) declined the invitation and refused to attend. The reason given was that others would justify their haraam jalsahs on the basis of the Muhtamim's jalsah which would be free from the many evils which plague all jalsahs.

Although Hadhrat Thanvi did not further pursue the discussion with the Muhtamim, he (Hadhrat Thanvi) had subtly drawn attention to the tricks of the nafs which the Muhtamim had not understood. Whilst his particular jalsah may have been free from the manifest evils associated with all jalsahs, the malady of *hub-e-jaah* (love for fame) did bedevil even this jalsah which was ostensibly different from other jalsahs.

The issue of doling out prizes to the students is actually motivated by the disease of *hub-e-jaah*. What is the need for handing out prizes to students at a public function which has absolutely no basis in the Sunnah, yet the Book of the Sunnah – the Qur'aan Majeed – which was taught 14 centuries ago is the self-same Qur'aan which is being imparted today to the students. Why are the prizes not given to the students during normal Madrasah time when only students and the class Ustaadh is present?

Firstly, doling out prizes to Darul Uloom students is shaitaaniyat and nafsaaaniyat. Darul Uloom students are pursuing the Knowledge of the Aakhirah. Sincerity has to be cultivated in them. They should not study on the basis of the incentive of prizes. The Qur'aan and all related branches of Knowledge are for the sake of Allah Ta'ala, not for worldly gains and objectives.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

Secondly, it is a custom acquired from the kuffaar. It has no basis in the Sunnah. Thirdly, should an Ustaadh wish to make a gift to a Student for excellent study, it should be in an impromptu basis in class or out of class without a stupid function of *riya* and *israaf* where the name of the student will be announced and the gift doled out in the presence of a stupid crowd of onlookers.

Furthermore, the *bayaans* of functions are simply part of the superfluous paraphernalia of the merrymaking function of *riya* and *israaf*. Such ostentatious *bayaans* have hardly any beneficial impact on the audience whose presence at the function is for the sake of merrymaking – to eat, talk drivel, go to toilet and waste time and money. As Hadhrat Thanvi has pointed out, there are other avenues for delivering *bayaans*.

The evil disease of *jalsahs* has now gripped even females. Girls madrasahs which in the first instance are abnormal aberrations in the community are no longer lagging behind Darul Uloom in conducting these stupid haraam wasteful *jalsahs* which have become real concerts where clowns perform and sing *naa'ts* and *nazams*. Females also attend. It is one dark sin piled on another dark sin.

The Ulama have become blind. They are spiritually blind and morally corrupt, hence they hallucinate so many stupid '*daleels*' to justify what is manifestly haraam. They should for a moment cast aside their emotions and read Hadhrat Thanvi's *naseehat* to the Muhtamim with intelligence and a desire to understand the Haqq. Then, they will not fail to understand the evil of the *jalsahs* in which they are embroiled.

BUKHAARI JALSAHS

QUESTION:

What is the significance of the annual *Bukhaari Jalsah* which the Darul Uloom organize? To me there appears much extravagance and show accompanying these gatherings. Please comment.

ANSWER

It is best for our Headquarters, *Daarul Uloom Deoband* to comment on the customary Bukhaari Jalsahs. We reproduce here the Fatwa of Darul Uloom Deoband on Bukhaari Jalsahs.

QUESTION:

We have heard that no Jalsah on the occasion of the Khatm (completion) of Bukhari Shareef is organized in Darul Uloom Deoband. In view of the practice of the venerable Ulama of Darul Uloom Deoband being based on Shar'i Daleel and worthy of following we deemed it necessary to enquire as to the reason/s for Darul Uloom Deoband not having Jalsah Bukhari Shareef? Kindly elaborate, it will be much appreciated.

ANSWER

We have already responded to this question. Never did Darul Uloom Deoband ever have a Jalsah dubbed "Khatm-e-Bukhari Jalsah". Yes, previously the completion date of Bukhari Shareef was set much in advance. This led to many people from far and near attending. The crowds were swelling year by year to the extent that together with the menfolk, women also

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

started attending. They brought along their children. On account of the crowds of women and children a tumultuous situation arose. Thus, the date for the completion of Bukhari Shareef was withheld and is no more pre-set. Now the Khatm is on any day without prior notification and it is conducted in a serene atmosphere.

Habeebur Rahmaan
Mahmood Hasan Bulandshahri
Waqaar Ali
Fakhrul Islam
(Muftis of Darul Ifta, Darul Uloom Deoband)

QUESTION

I am a student at a Darul Uloom. What do you advise regarding listening to Islahi jalsah programmes and other kinds of jalsah programmes usually organized by Madrasahs?

ANSWER

The time that is wasted listening to these insincere, worldly nafsani motivated and hollow proceedings of jalsahs and islahi jalsahs should be devoted to mutaala-ah of the kutub or to reading stories of the Auliya or to Tilaawat or to some other constructive work. Don't waste time with these bid'ah jalsah issues.

THE FITNAH OF GIRLS JALSAHS

A new craze of *jahl* in the community is the new bid'ah of immoral girls *jalsahs* which madrasahs and schools organize. The participating girls sing songs (nazams) and give speeches of *riya*. The public is invited to waste time

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

observing and listening to this fitnah. Regarding this trend of fitnah, the following question and answer appear in *Fataawa Mahmoodiyah*, authored by Hadhrat Mufti Mahmoodul Hasan (rahmatullah alayh):

QUESTION

“There are Deeni madaaris in our city, Malegoan (in India). Qur’aan recitation, etc. are being taught to the girls. At the end of the year a special *jalsah* (function) is organized with full purdah arrangement. The purpose is to create Deeni enthusiasm in girls and women. At the *jalsah*, girls using loudspeakers, deliver speeches, (sing) nazams, etc.

Furthermore, girls from different madrasahs congregate and Qur’aan Qiraa’t competitions take place. Prizes are awarded. Men also attend these functions. They listen to the speeches (and songs) of the young girls. Most of the participating girls and females are baaligh (adults). Is this kind of *jalsah* permissible according to the Shariah?”

(After mentioning some superficial ‘benefits’ of such jalsahs, Hadhrat Mufti Mahmoodul Hasam – rahmatullah alayh – states:

ANSWER

“...But along with this, there is *fitnah*, especially when even males are invited. They too listen to the speeches over the loudspeakers and derive pleasure therefrom. The girls also sing the nazams with their melodious voices. The congregating of women by itself is a specific fitnah. For this reason there is no permission for women to attend even family functions (e.g. walimahs). If the husband permits

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

(his wife to participate), he too will be apprehended (by Allah Ta'ala).

From a variety of sources we gain the knowledge of fitnah. Letters pour in with questions (pertaining to this type of fitnah). If the girls are small, there is no fitnah (*See comment below*). However, the issue of big girls is different. They should not be educated in this manner nor should they give speeches. It is mentioned in Shaami, Vol. 2, page 665: *“A woman should be prohibited from visiting strangers, from iyaadat (attending the home of a mayyit to condole) and from walimah. If he (the husband) permits her, both are sinners. (She should be prohibited) even if the walimah is held at the place of her mahrams because of the congregation (of all and sundry). Therefore such gatherings are normally not without fasaad (immoral mischief).”*

OUR COMMENT

This type of *jalsah* is not permissible for even little girls. Hadhrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thaanvi (rahmatullah alayh) has emphasized that when a girl is seven years old, she should observe purdah for family mahrams, and when she is six years old, then for non-family mahrams.

The *fitnah*, *fisq* and *fujoor* of the age demand total prohibition. All female *jalsahs* are haraam. Only those devoid of intelligence and foresight see goodness in these functions of *fitnah*.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

QUESTION

Please comment on the newly introduced practices called: ‘Special Ladies’ Programmes”, and Islaahi Jalsas’. Years ago we never heard of such programmes. These Ulama are Deobandis.

ANSWER

The dividing line between Deobandi, Barellwi and Modernists is extremely feint. In fact, in many instances it no longer exists. All have become the Ahl-e-Baatil. These ‘special’ ladies programmes and ‘Islahi’ jalsahs are deceptions of shaitaan. Shaitaan has entrapped the Ulama with ‘deeni’ bait – activities portrayed as Deen when in reality these practices are deviations and motivated by nafsani objectives. Even sincere Ulama are misled by their nafs. They lack the depth of understanding to discern the doors of fitnah they have opened with their public displays of ‘piety’ and programmes of the nafs. You will hardly find them on the platform of Amr Bil Ma’roof Nahy anil Munkar. May Allah Ta’ala save us from the deluge of fitnah which is opening up the Doors of Allah’s Punishment. Instead of discouraging women from issuing into the public domain, these Molvis are doing the exact opposite of the tareeqah of the Sahaabah. They are in fact following hard in the footsteps of the Bid’atis and modernists who have long ago opened the avenues of fitnah with their women’s programmes.

WASTE AMID SUFFERING

*“And, be not wasteful. Verily, the wasters are the brothers of the shayaateen, and shaitaan was to his Rabb ungrateful.”
(Qur’aan)*

WASTE IS THE effect of kufr (ingratitude). Those who waste are ungrateful for the bounties of Allah Ta’ala, hence the Qur’aan describes them as *ikhwaanush shayaateen* (the brothers of the devils). Waste of money and food has degenerated to intolerable levels in the Muslim society. The rich and the poor, the learned and the ignoramuses, are all involved in the sin of massive wastage of the ni’maat (bounties) of Allah Ta’ala. And, all of this waste is the effect of pride and show.

Large scale waste is committed especially of food at functions – wedding functions and madrasah and khaanqah functions (jalsahs) of a variety of kinds which have become evil characteristics of the affluent Muslim society of this era. Simplicity, sacrifice and love for the suffering Muslims of the world no longer are among the attributes of Muslims. Whilst massive waste of food is the style of jalsahs and merrymaking functions, the ta’leem (teaching) of Islam and the practice of our illustrious Akaabireen Auliya and Ulama were always *eethaar* (sacrifice) for the suffering Muslims. This attitude constrained them to practise self-denial.

Although the Madaaris and the khaanqas are vociferous with stories of the Auliya and Ulama and even organize wasteful jalsahs in their names, they have extremely little affinity with these seniors.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

Hadhrat Khwaajah Nizaamuddeen Auliya (rahmatullah alayh) fasted perpetually. His khaadim (servant), Hadhrat Khwaajah Abdur Raheem would bring a meagre meal for Sehri and Iftaar. However, on most occasions, Hadhrat Nizaamuddeen (rahmatullah alayh) would decline and refrain from eating. Once his khaadim pleaded: “Hadhrat, if you refrain from both Sehri and Iftaar, weakness will overwhelm you.” Hadhrat responded: “How can this food go down my throat when there are so many poor and forlorn persons passing the nights in hunger?”

Once a fire ravaged the locality of Ghiyaathpur. It was in the midst of the summer season. Stricken with grief, Hadhrat Nizaamuddeen (Rahmatullah alayh) stood on the roof of his house in the searing heat observing the heart-rending scene of houses being gutted by the raging fire. He remained standing on the roof until finally the fire was extinguished. Then he instructed Khwaajah Iqbaal to make a survey of the number of homes destroyed, and to give every household two silver coins, two loaves of bread and a jug of cold water. When people observed this distribution at the time of their distress, their eyes welled up with tears of gratitude. In that age, two silver coins could purchase a substantial amount of commodities.

These two episodes of Hadhrat Nizaamuddeen Auliya (rahmatullah alayh) are presented as examples for us to reflect. Emulation of his example in exactitude is not the objective. No one is expected to abandon eating the delicious food which can be afforded. But waste is haraam, and sacrifice is Waajib. Sacrifice is a vital tenet of Islam, and it was always a distinguished trait of the Auliya and Ulama. This attribute no longer exists in the Ummah. Therefore, wasting the bounties of Allah Ta’ala selfishly

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

and forgetting the suffering segments of the Ummah do not affect the Muslim's conscience in any way.

All over the world, in the so-called third world countries, Muslims are suffering and living in abject squalor and poverty. Wars and civil wars have reduced millions of Muslims to dire straits of hunger and starvation. In the Syrian refugee camps Muslims struggle to find even some grass to boil in water to provide some kind of solace for their hunger. In Chad, Muslims have been reduced to sub-human levels and are constrained to eat even manure. Literally, their skins cling to their bones. Muslims are suffering – really suffering without homes and food while we are squandering the bounties of Allah Ta'ala in wasteful functions to fill toilets. The net result of the sumptuous foods served at the wasteful jalsahs feeding people who eat delicious food thrice daily, is the manufacture of tons of faeces. There is no goodness in the food served so wastefully to people who are not in need of it.

What has happened to the hearts of the Ulama who organize such jalsahs where hundreds of thousands of rands are squandered to feed affluent people who really find no enjoyment in the food although they derive nafsani pleasure from the outing and wasteful, futile gathering where merrymaking is the hallmark!

Besides the millions of rands wasted by the Madaaris of the country on jalsah-food, many more millions are squandered annually on absolutely haraam wedding functions. All the Deeni institutions – the small and the big – are caught up in this vicious disease of waste, pride and show. This is a time when all functions should be abolished and the focus directed to the suffering Muslim masses all over the world. Lack of Taqwa has blighted our vision.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

Whilst we receive the news of the suffering Muslim masses, it strikes no responsive chord in our hearts – fossilized hearts – hearts in which lies a deadened Imaan – an Imaan stripped of its inherent attributes of sacrifice, altruism and philanthropy. In particular, the Ulama of the Madaaris should do some serious and sincere soul searching (Muraaqabah) to ascertain the degree of the waste, hard-heartedness, lack of vision and spiritual fossilization which has afflicted them. Both the Ulama and the masses should abandon their wasteful and extravagant life style, and channel these resources to where they are most needed, and to ensure success and salvation in the Akhirah.

Remember that doling out some charity and paying your Zakaat are not ample, nor will such crumbs suffice for meaningful relief of the suffering Muslims. It is imperative that all the Madaaris abandon all wasteful functions of merrymaking – functions of riya and takabbur – functions of israaf which are being concocted in the name of the Deen whilst in reality there is no Deeni dimension to such israaf, riya and takabbur. Also, all Muslims should abandon their haraam wasteful wedding functions and gain Allah's Pleasure by contributing towards projects of the Deen. The Ummah is burning and bleeding while you are wallowing in waste and haraam. Brotherly feelings are dead in the hearts of Muslims.

Rasulullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: “Muslims are like a single person. If the eye pains, the whole body is affected, and if the head pains, the whole body is affected.” While such is the inherent attribute of a healthy Imaan, this Hadith and many similar other narrations are meaningless concepts for the spiritually diseased Ummah of this age. When even the Ulama are the victims of satanic waste amid

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

the heart rending suffering of millions of Muslims, then the spiritual corruption of the Ummah is better understandable.

On the Day of Qiyaamah there shall be no escape for the crimes of colossal waste amid suffering which Muslims are perpetrating. An account shall have to be given for the ingratitude and for the imperviousness of the hearts. The Qur'aan Majeed warning us of the Reckoning says: ***“On that Day you will be questioned about the bounties.”*** The bounties are bestowed by Allah Ta'ala for correct use and discharge of all the huqooq (rights) attached to the ni'maat. The bounties are not awarded for abuse and waste.

If Muslims fail to do real soul searching, they will not understand the injustice they are committing towards the suffering millions of the Ummah who are the responsibility of those to whom Allah Ta'ala has awarded opulence.

SOME MALFOOZAAT OF HADHARAT MOULANA ASHRAF ALI THAANVI (RAHMATULLAH ALAYH) REGARDING THE RUNNING OF MADAARIS

❖ WASTING ON FUND-RAISING FUNCTIONS

There was a *jalsah (function)* in Muradabad for raising funds for some Deeni project. My advice is: Close all these functions of waste in which huge sums of money of Muslims are destroyed. Rather contribute this money (which is wasted in organizing the function) to the Deeni project.

❖ DO WHAT YOU ARE ABLE TO DO

(Advising a principal of a Madrasah, Hadhrat Thanvi said): Render service to the extent of your ability. If the funds are depleted and all the mudarriseen (teachers)

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

abandon their posts, then teach a few students at your home. This is within the scope of your ability. Do not fix any target for yourself. The objective of Deeni service is the *Ridha (Pleasure)* of Allah Ta'ala, and this (i.e. the acquisition of Allah's Pleasure) is not reliant on factors beyond one's volitional control. Always remember this principle. Acts which are within your ability should be adopted provided they are not futile. Never contemplate doing what is beyond your ability. If you conduct your life in this manner, both your Deen and dunya will be rectified. Such a person will not be the victim of worry and frustration. His heart will be attached to Allah Ta'ala. Peace of mind is a great treasure. Furthermore, only worry which is self-induced is harmful. Worry which comes of its own accord is not harmful. On the contrary it is beneficial.

❖ **FUND-RASING/COLLECTIONS**

I detest that Ulama even mention the word fund-raising/collection. People slander the Ulama. They labour under the notion that the Ulama have established Madrasahs as a source of livelihood. Never venture at their doorstep for collecting funds. Do service for the Deen within the bounds of your ability. If funds are not forthcoming, let it be so. If our hearts become reformed, we shall be able to render service of the Deen as the Salaf-e-Saaliheen used to do. They were never in need of mansions. An Aalim should impart knowledge (i.e. *dars and tadrees*) from his home (if he lacks the means for operating a conventional Madrasah). While I am not advocating closure of the Madaaris, I emphasize that they (the Madrasah authorities) should not exceed moderation (in building and other Madrasah expenditure). Madrasah are ventures of great virtue. But in every venture moderation must be rigidly observed.

JALSAHS – PERMISSIBLE OR NOT PERMISSIBLE?

❖ CHARITY IS TO GIVE TO ALLAH

Never apply pressure on any one to acquire funds (for charitable works). The work of Allah's activities of the Deen will never be halted. Contributing to any Deeni activity is to contribute to Allah Ta'ala. Allah is not in need of anyone. Therefore never raise funds in conflict with the laws of Allah Ta'ala. The contributors of funds give for their own benefit. Sadqah increases one's treasures in the Akhirah. The projects of Allah are not dependent on anyone's contributions. Whether people give or withhold, Allah's projects will continue to flourish. But those who abstain from contributing, deprive themselves of great virtues.

❖ FUND-RAISING

Nowadays many irregularities accompany fund-raising for the Madaaris. The worst corruption is the erosion of the dignity of the Ulama who collect funds, and this constitutes poison for the generality of the people. Furthermore, those who collect funds are generally not careful. They adopt such methods of fund-raising which embarrass contributors who feel pressurized to give something. This ruins Ikhlaas (sincerity). It is not permissible to even accept such contributions (*which are extracted by the application of indirect pressure*).

It is therefore best not to solicit funds from particular persons. The community in general should be addressed (*and informed of the needs*). It will be permissible to solicit funds from a particular person only if the fund-raiser is one without a high reputation. In this case it is easy for a person to refuse if he is not inclined to contribute.