

Talk 9

THE NETHERLANDS

Guidance for Islamic Education in the Absence of the Khilafah

Assalamu Alaikum my dear sisters,

I would like to start my talk with the following two hadiths:

«لَا حَسَدَ إِلَّا فِي اثْنَتَيْنِ: رَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ مَالًا، فَسَلَّطَهُ عَلَىٰ هَلْكَتِهِ فِي الْحَقِّ، وَرَجُلٌ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ حِكْمَةً، فَهُوَ يَفْضِي بِهَا وَيُعَلِّمُهَا»

The Prophet (saw) said, “Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. (The first is) A person, whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously; (the second is) the one whom Allah has given wisdom and he acts according to it and teaches it to others.” (Related by Muslim)

Anas (RAA) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to say,

«اللَّهُمَّ أَنْفَعْنِي بِمَا عَلَّمْتَنِي، وَعَلِّمْنِي مَا يَنْفَعُنِي، وَارزُقْنِي عِلْمًا تَنْفَعُنِي بِهِ»

“O Allah! Grant me benefit in what you have taught me, and teach me useful knowledge and provide me with knowledge that will benefit me.” (Related by An-Nasa’i and Al-Hakim)

Alhamdulillah sisters there are a few things that I would like to point out regarding these hadiths. First of all, your presence here today is an actual testimony of the above hadiths. In attending this important conference, you sisters have understood the importance that Islam has placed on seeking knowledge and the high-status Islam places on the one teaching this knowledge to others. Alhamdulillah this understanding we see is also very much alive within the Ummah. When observing the many teachers working in the madrassas, Islamic schools and institutions which have often been set up by hard working members of the Ummah we see that many Muslims want to fulfil this noble duty and to be like those described in the first hadith.

The next point I would like to raise, concerning the second hadith and why I also believe so many of you are present here today are the words «وَارزُقْنِي عِلْمًا تَنْفَعُنِي بِهِ» “**And provide me with knowledge that will benefit me.**” This hadith tells us that knowledge is connected to action. And that the objective of knowledge is to influence our actions. So in other words ***the teaching of Islam should be in such a way that makes it possible for us to apply it to our daily lives.***

Returning to the subject of this lecture, we see that many of us are concerned about whether the way we are providing Islamic education makes it possible for our youth to apply the knowledge “**to their daily lives**”. To be able to answer this question we must look at two aspects, firstly the reality of their daily lives, secondly the way we are educating them.

First of all “**their daily lives**” sisters, isn’t anything like the daily lives of our parents or their parents. Their daily lives aren’t even anything like the times we ourselves grew up. The pressures and influences our youth are facing today have the potential to cause severe damaging effects on their adherence to their Deen. We must understand that corrupting ideas and anti-Islamic propaganda surrounds our youth from every direction wherever they live in the world and that it is often only a button away through the internet. And this, sisters, is a great danger and could cause as I have mentioned doubt in the minds of our youth

regarding their Deen if we don't make sure that the Islamic education that we are providing is actually dealing with the issues our youth are facing.

So sisters, we need to consider whether our way of delivering Islamic education is enough to achieve what we want for our children. Looking at the current methods used in Islamic schools, madrassahs and institutions we need to ask ourselves the following questions:

Is it sufficient to only teach our children how to perform *salaat*, to make the ablution, to read the Quran and a few other Islamic rituals, morals and rules? Will this be enough for them to be able to counter-attack the immense anti-Islamic rhetoric and other corrupting ideas they face?

Should we maintain the method of teaching Islam as just a subject on par with other school subjects, simply conveying Islamic information rather than creating a deep understanding of the application of the Deen to every field of life and every problem we face as individuals, communities and on a state level, and consequently failing to make a connection between Islam and their daily lives such that they see it as irrelevant to the modern world?

And should we give in to the pressures governments are placing on Islamic institutions to secularize the teachings of Islam all under the pretence of modernization and countering extremism? – Agendas such as we see in Britain, where madrassahs for example are being put under pressure to teach a “British version of Islam”. A version which will place Islam in the same category as any other religion or where gender segregation is rejected and homosexuality will be seen as permissible.

Our answers to all the above questions must surely be: **“certainly NOT!”**

So sisters if we can all agree that the answer to the above questions is NO, then the next step should be that we think deeply about what the aim of Islamic education should be.

Islamic education as we have concluded was never intended to just provide information on Islamic morals and instilling a few Islamic values but to form the Islamic personality in thought and behaviour and to build strong individuals who are equipped with all the tools necessary to be able to apply Islam in every part of their daily lives no matter how many difficulties they face. This means on the one hand that they are able to stay strong and be proud of their Islam even at times that Islam is under constant attack by the anti-Islamic rhetoric which presents it as backward, oppressive, uncivilized and the path that will lead to misery and discontent. It also means on the other hand that our youth should be able to see through and dismantle the deceptive narratives regarding secular values, and so the Muslim youth won't believe the rhetoric that the western liberal values are the most just and civilized, and the path to happiness, prosperity and success.

What our aim should be is to produce youth who have internalized the following verse:

﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ﴾

“You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah.” [3:110]

With the right Islamic education, this verse will change the way they perceive the world around them in such a way that we may be a witness of this when observing their thoughts, behaviour and aspirations and not just their Islamic qualifications. With Islamic education, we should therefore seek to build Muslim youth who hold onto Islam, defend Islam, and carry

Islam to the world, and work for its comprehensive implementation through the establishment of the Khilafah – youth who understand the relevance of Islam to all issues of life and problems that humanity faces, and have a great sense of responsibility to their Ummah and mankind to lift them from their state of oppression and bring them goodness and justice through the Deen of Islam.

So sisters I want to now present six important concepts which need to be addressed when educating our youth so that we are able to provide them the tools to achieve the above aim.

A) Building critical thinking:

The first concept is ‘Building Critical Thinking’. Critical thinking is the ability to examine the world around us and through deep study and clear proofs make correct judgements about it. The Qur’an repeatedly directs the believer to think deeply about issues in order that they establish correct conclusions on them. This includes reflecting on the proofs for the existence of Allah (swt) and the truth of Islam. Allah (swt) says,

﴿وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ آيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ﴾

“And [in] the alternation of night and day and [in] what Allah sends down from the sky of provision and gives life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness and [in His] directing of the winds are signs for a people who reason.” [Al-Jathiyah: 5]

It is important that we build critical thinking within our youth so that they will be able to make sense of all the information around them and be able to separate the truth from the lies. This way of thinking will be developed when we consistently encourage our youth to question and think deeply about everything around them. The ideas, claims and viewpoints that are presented to them should be pondered over and then decided whether to accept or reject them, through carefully evaluating the soundness of the evidence that those ideas, claims and viewpoints are based upon. Furthermore, depending on the age and level of understanding of the child, different sides of the argument should be presented to them and then they should be guided and directed in reflecting on the validity of each in order to come to the truth of the matter. This way of thinking will not only help the youth to reassure themselves, it will enable them to defend Islam. So for instance, when hearing the usual slander that Islam supposedly oppresses women, they will be aware of the noble rules set by Islam that prohibits the objectification and exploitation of women. And they will be aware that it is the liberal way of life that offers no protection to women and has opened the path to exploit her in every way possible. Nurturing the critical way of thinking in young Muslims is a fundamental step in building conviction in Islamic thoughts and opinions and establishing the Islamic mentality which along with the Islamic disposition forms the Islamic personality.

B) Establishing Conviction in the Existence of Allah and Truth of the Qur’an

The second concept is establishing with absolute conviction in our youth, the Existence of Allah and the fact that the Qur’an is His Word, so that they do not have a shadow of doubt about the truth of Islam. Indeed, this is a must for every believer as Allah tells us:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا﴾

“Only those are the believers who have believed in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward doubt not...” [Al-Hujraat: 15]

In today’s secularism dominated world, religion has become a subject of ridicule for many and we must protect our Muslim children from falling for these claims. They must be able to counter the attacks which are out to disprove Islam, and they must do this without fear and stay firm on their Deen. We need to provide our children with the concrete rational proofs that demonstrate with 100% certainty, the existence of a Creator and that the Qur’an is His Speech. By establishing absolute conviction in the truth of the Islamic Aqeedah within our young Muslims, we will transform Islam from something that many view as just a religion handed down from their parents, to that which they are intellectually convinced by and know for sure has the correct answers to life and hence should define all their thoughts and actions.

When we educate in such a way to achieve certainty in belief it will Insha Allah lead to all other concepts of Islam being taken and internalized. These concepts such as belief in Jannah (Paradise) and Jahannum (the Hell-Fire), understanding the true purpose in life and accountability to Allah (swt) for every deed, Rizq and Ajal (Provision and Life-span being set by Allah (swt)), and others will also become clear realities in their minds. But we need to ensure that the Islamic concepts are delivered in a way that will shape their thoughts, emotions and actions so that Islam becomes the criteria to judge all matters in their life. The aim is to create Muslim youth with the Islamic personality who are confident about their Islamic faith and whose thinking and behaviour will be based purely on Islam.

C) Nurturing a Yearning for Jannah

The third point is nurturing a yearning for Jannah within our Muslim children and an understanding of how little the pleasures of this life are compared to the next, as well as creating an awareness of the temporary nature of this world. The Prophet (saw) said,

«مَا الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا كَمَثَلِ مَا يَجْعَلُ أَحَدُكُمْ إِصْبَعَهُ فِي الْيَمِّ ، فَلْيَنْظُرْ بِمِ تَرَجُّعِ»

“What is the example of this worldly life in comparison to the Hereafter other than one of you dipping his finger in the sea? Let him see what he brings forth.”

We are living in a world in which success and happiness is linked with materialism. The more possessions we collect the happier we are supposed to feel. Our youth must be able to see through this corrupting message. It requires us to consistently and repeatedly discuss with them the abundant evidences in the Qur’an and Sunnah that describe the amazing delights of Jannah, when trying to motivate them to do the Islamic obligations and keep away from its prohibitions without faltering. This is especially important when they find certain Islamic actions difficult to do, or lapse in adhering to them as all of us do at times. We need to make them aware that they will be given everything that their heart could ever wish for, and their minds could ever imagine, and more! With teaching this concept we will inshallah guard our youth from surrendering to the temptations of this life which could compromise their Deen. And it will help them in abiding with the rules of Islam and staying steadfast to their Islamic duties regardless of the difficulties or pressures they might face.

D) Understanding Islam as a Deen and understanding the significance of its Culture and History

The fourth concept is building an understanding within our youth of Islam as a comprehensive Deen with principles, laws and solutions to modern day problems in every field of life – spiritual, moral, social, political, judicial, educational, in economics, and beyond. Allah (swt) says,

﴿مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ﴾

“We have neglected nothing in the Book...” [Al-Anam: 38]

We need them to be able to visualize this idea by learning about the Islamic solutions to the multitude of problems that mankind faces today – such as poverty, injustice, political corruption, racism, occupation, genocide, persecution of minorities, violence against women, crime, the refugee crisis and beyond, as well as instilling pride within them for their great Islamic history by understanding how such problems were solved under the Islamic rule of the Khilafah in the past. When Islam in the secular world is seen as something that needs to be eradicated it is absolutely vital that we build our youth to have confidence in their Deen and see it as something that is needed more than ever in today's world. We need to therefore provide our youth with the knowledge about the different systems of Islam and connect them to the problems of their current reality. For instance, make them understand that Islam has an economic system which will eradicate poverty through its just economic principles and laws – for example obliging effective distribution of wealth; implementing a low and just tax system that encourages investment, job creation and prosperity in a state; and forbidding interest, the hoarding and monopolisation of wealth, and the privatisation of valuable natural resources which all concentrate wealth in the hands of the few while impoverishing the masses. Alongside this, we can give the example of how when this system was implemented under the Khilafah it eradicated poverty in places like North Africa and Iraq.

E) Dismantling the Lure of the Secular Liberal Way of Life

The fifth point is dismantling the lure of the secular liberal way of life in the eyes of our youth and enabling them to see through the anti-Islamic rhetoric. We need to make our youth understand that the problems we are facing in the world aren't the result of Islam but the result of the man-made capitalist secular system and its values such as liberalism, nationalism, and democracy. We need to dissect the problems and show them that problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, sexual abuse against woman, crime in general, selfishness and egoism are a direct result of the secular way of life. We need to breakdown the concept of terrorism and explain that this is not a result of some perverse Islamic Ideology but due to the anger resulting from Western interference and ongoing colonial wars in the Muslim world. Or we could discuss the concept of racism and that it is a consequence of nationalism, a concept alien to the teachings of Islam, and described as rotten by our beloved Prophet (saw).

F) Building a sense of responsibility for their Deen, their Ummah and Mankind

And finally sisters, we need to build a sense of responsibility within our youth for their Deen, their Ummah and for Mankind. We must make our youth truly understand the responsibility which comes with the words:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ﴾

“O you who believe! answer (the call of) Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life.” [Al-Anfal:24]

Allah (swt) has labelled the believers as the “Shuhada An-Naas”, “Witnesses to mankind”. We need our youth to embody this concept by challenging and exposing the falsehood of the non-Islamic values and laws in their environment as well as present Islam as the alternative way of life that can effectively and justly organise the affairs of mankind. We need to also instill within them the great responsibility of speaking out against the oppression facing their Ummah across the world today and to shun the individualistic approach to life that capitalism breeds of just being concerned with their own problems and needs. And we need to create an understanding within our youth of their important duty to protect the Deen whenever it is insulted or attacked, and to also work to re-establish the system of Allah, the Khilafah, upon this earth with every means that they have – to create a state that will carry the dawah to mankind, lifting them from the state of oppression they currently live under man-made systems and laws. Our aim therefore is to generate Muslim youth who appreciate that the call for Islam is one of the highest of the obligations of this Deen. This means that Islam won’t only be a part of their lives it will become the centre of their lives, just as our Prophet (saw) said to Khadija (r.a.), « لا راحة بعد اليوم يا خديجة » **“From this day onwards, there is no rest.”**

Sisters, incorporating these six points I’ve discussed into the content of curricula for Islamic education will Insha Allah help in building and protecting the Islamic identity of our young and generate Muslim youth who are equipped to deal with all the huge challenges they face against their Deen today in a confident and wise manner. However, it is important for us to always remember that building Islamic schools and institutes is not the way to bring this Ummah back to its former glory and this Deen to the position of authority it should have in this world. Nor is it the means to build Islamic personalities within our children on mass in our communities and lands. Surely we all recognise the constant uphill struggle and all the obstacles and difficulties we face in trying to preserve the Islamic identity in our young while they are surrounded and governed by the corrupt non-Islamic capitalist liberal values and lifestyle and exposed to the intrusive political agendas of secular governments and corrupt ideas of the liberal media. We even recognise the many practical challenges we face in effectively funding and running these Islamic institutes today. The only way therefore to achieve the noble Islamic vision for our youth that I described at the beginning of my talk is to establish a state that nurtures, facilitates, and protects the Islamic identity of this Ummah and its children on mass within its society using all arms of its rule, including the education curriculum, educational institutions and media. This is nothing other than the Khilafah State upon the methodology of the Prophethood. So sisters, in addition to all the efforts you are investing in the Islamic education of our Muslim youth today, we also call you to put your full efforts and prioritise the noble work to return this glorious state to our lands once again. I end with the beautiful words of Allah (swt)

﴿وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللّٰهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ اِلَىٰ عَالَمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

“And say: work, for your work will be seen by Allah, His Messenger and the believers and fear Allah so that you may prosper.” [At-Tauba 9: 105]

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