



Round Table Discussion

Role of Spirituality in Curbing Prejudism

Organised By
MUSLIM Institute (UK Chapter)

MUSLIM Institute UK Chapter organised a Round Table Discussion “Role of Spirituality in Curbing Prejudism” on Wednesday May 30, 2018 at The Record Hall, London. Professor Ronald Allen Geaves (Honorary Visiting Professor, School of History, Archaeology and Religion, Cardiff University UK) and Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali (Chairman MUSLIM Institute) shared their views on the occasion. Dr. Iqbal Hussain (President MUSLIM Institute - UK Chapter) gave the welcoming remarks and Mr. Rao Ali Khan (Senior Research Associate MUSLIM Institute) presented vote of thanks. M. Ali Iftikhar (Programme Manager, The Muslim Debate) moderated the proceedings of discussion.

Brief summary of remarks shared by the speakers is as following:



Sahibzada Sultan Ahmad Ali (Chairman MUSLIM Institute) sharing his views (via video link).

Prejudice cannot exist in the presence of spirituality, because prejudice is based on establishing one sect, one nation, one tribe and one cast with a sense of superiority. Spirituality is based on oneness of God, human equality and the relationship between God and His creation. All the religions trace their connection with Divine wisdom, they are parted or taught to human beings through a teacher. Religion of any social organization creating environment in one part of humanity is seen as a benefit in another part where one part of humanity is being promoted as superior to another part. So, where then we are wrong? The spirituality shares humanity coming from people who may not be educated, not theologians or intellectuals. But in their hearts, they are prepared to do those simple little acts of generosity through which they are trying to form something within other that was much more than mere food or other needs. Spirituality belongs to those elements of life which transcend our differences and reach to our common humanity from different sects. Richness of humanity is that we have different clothing, different faith, different background, different experiences and languages but we come to know each other and a common element is that we are humans and sharing that humanity with each other. It is pertinent to mention that 'I' cannot change the world or even my own child if I am not ready to change myself first which is not going to happen in one day or in one week. Changing yourself in Sufi tradition or Tasawuff is the spiritual discipline of challenging and establishing heart over the ego. If I am selfish to my son then why should he obey me and why did he do that?

Sense of own superiority and contempt for others will always have disastrous consequences. Role of Spirituality in Curbing Prejudice is extremely relevant in today's multicultural environment, especially in Western countries like the United Kingdom. In this day and age, chaos and disorder surround us. When we try to hear our inner self, all we can hear are the screams coming from our heart which is constantly at unease. In current times, our beautiful Earth is being given a shape of godforsaken land where individualism and anarchy prevails. We have made this planet an inferno through our own hands, even before the hell fire that is promised by Allah (SWT). Nonetheless, we are extremely fortunate that Allah (SWT) has given us the way to transform this Earth and our lives from an inferno to a Heaven on Earth, this is spirituality.

Wherever you go, whichever organization or office you enter, you will be taught about the dignity and values of the department according to the rules of that place. You will be taught about the dignity of a teacher when you go to any school, college, institution, mosque, or university. Similarly, you will be taught about the dignity of a mentor and mystic when you sit beside a Spiritual Mentor or Sufi or visit any shrine. Going to court, you will be taught about the dignity of a judge and a court room according to law and maintain values of your established system. Hence, you are told and taught about the dignity at any place, whose values are established, to which you pay visit.



Professor Ronald Allen Geaves (Honorary Visiting Professor, School of History, Archeology and Religion, Cardiff University) sharing his views.

There is scarcity of institutions or teachers that can educate us the dignity of human, that no matter if one is poet, writer, researcher, a President, or an Ambassador, a scholar, teacher, mentor or parent, they all belong to the same mankind. The basic respect is of a human, not its constructed identity.

It is unfortunate that the institutions teaching dignity of mankind are rare now. Dignity of an ambassador or a researcher has its own worth but on the basis of a common trait among all of them is the dignity of a Human being.

By reflecting back on the history, we can observe a rich and tremendous past of Muslim Sufi tradition of bringing people together and closer to one another based on their spiritual relationship. It is very important to explore that history as it has the potential to construct the future as per the requirements of the modern world. Historically, one of the leading Sufi orders the Qadiriyya order was initiated in Baghdad and the Naqshbandi Sufi order in Central Asia. However, both of these orders spread across the world and have a large number of following since centuries. Training of the ambassadors of these Sufi orders was based on spirituality and they were able to present the core message and spirit of Islam. On the basis of humanity, they spread the legacy of Sufi orders among Muslim and non-Muslim masses alike. Their fundamental goal is to establish the culture of patience, interfaith harmony and brotherhood among people of different colours, castes and creeds by virtue of their tolerant, human loving and universal message of Sufism which is no doubt unmatched in recorded history. It was the process of spreading the spiritual teachings as well as bridging the gap among different cultures and civilizations.



Participants In the Round Table Discussion "Role of Spirituality in Curbing Predjudism".

In today's world and society, we need to revive the spiritual thought and teachings in order to overcome the social unrest, hatred, racism and intolerance. Spiritual activism is as much needed as political activism. Social events of the current era need to be dealt with upfront spiritual power.



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