

For a non-Aalim to deliver a Lecture

Q: Imaan-98 : What is the ruling concerning people delivering lectures like Ulema do when they are not Ulema and have not studied Qur'aan and Ahadeeth under a qualified Aalim? Please reply with detailed references.

Answer: Delivering lectures and reminding people (about their duties to Islaam) is an important fundamental of the Deen. A person who does not possess the knowledge of the Qur'aan and the Ahadeeth is unworthy of this duty. Rasulullaah SAW. said, "When responsibilities are entrusted to unworthy people, then wait for Qiyaamah." It is stated in Fataawaa Aalamgeeri that the first of the five qualifications required for Amr bil Ma'roof wan Nohy anil Munkor (enjoining good and forbidding from evil) is that a person possesses knowledge because an ignorant person will not be able to fulfill the responsibility properly.

Durrul Mukhtaal states that the practice of delivering lectures from the pulpit to motivate people is a practice of the Ambiyaa ALY. the responsibility will therefore be passed on to the heirs of the Ambiyaa ALY. who happen to be the Ulema).

Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jaylaani RAH. states, "Shame on you! Come to your senses and do not crowd the ranks of the learned ones with your ignorance. You have just left your books (just completed your studies) and want to ascend the pulpit to tell people about the Deen. You first need to consolidate your inner as well as your outer selves (ensure that your beliefs and actions conform perfectly with the Shari'ah). Thereafter, you will need to be independent of everything (apart from Allaah) . He also stated, "How can you treat people's sight when you are blind? How can you teach people when you are dumb? How can you set aright the religious affairs of people when you are ignorant? How can someone who is not the doorman allow people to the door of the king?"

Hadhrat Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi RAH. has stated that the task of advising people and reminding them about their duties to Allaah is a great pillar of the Deen and the Qur'aan instructs Rasulullaah SAW. saying, "So (O Muhammad ffi give advice (explain the Deen to the people), for you are an advisor". Addressing Hadhrat Moosa ALY. Allaah says, "...and remind them of the days of Allaah (the favours and punishment that Allaah gave various nations)". It is therefore proven from the Qur'aan that this task is indeed a profound one. Hadhrat Shah Wali'ullaah RAH. therefore states, "It is therefore imperative that the person delivering the advice (lecture) be Mukallaf (a sane adult) who is also fair minded, a Muhaddith, a Mufassir and one who is sufficiently proficient in the history of the pious predecessors. By Muhaddith I am referring to a person who is engrossed in studying the books of Ahadeeth (the six most authentic books. which are Bukhaari, Muslim, Abu Dawood, Nasa'ee, Tirmidhi and Ibn Maajah and others), who knows how to differentiate between authentic and other Ahadeeth and who has studied all of this under the tutelage of a qualified Aalim. By Mufassir, I am referring to a person who knows the interpretations of the complex verses of the Qur'aan and the explanations of the verses as rendered by the pious predecessors."

Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. complains about some people whom people take as

their role model even though their character is appalling. The reason he cites for this is that such people have grown up before they have had a chance to be little. He cites a poem to the effect which laments that such people have become fathers before they have been sons, meaning that they have ascended to the mantle of Ulema without first acquiring the necessary knowledge. This leads to a vicious assortment of problems.

He states in another of his works that if a representative of an Islaamic institution is not an Aalim, he should be barred from delivering lectures and may only speak a few words to encourage people to donate. He emphasises that a non-Aalim must never be allowed to deliver because it conflicts with the Hadith that states, "When responsibilities are entrusted to unworthy people, then wait for Qiyaamah." It is an accepted principle that it is regarded to be a sin to commit any voluntary act that has been cited from amongst the signs of Qiyaamah.

In his famous work Bayaanul Qur'aan, Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. states that ignorant and near-ignorant people are guilty of a grave sin when they go about delivering lectures in which they cite unverified narrations and laws that have not been researched. In fact, he adds, it is also not permissible for people to listen to such lectures.

It is in the same regard that Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood RADI. stated, "People will remain in good stated as long as their knowledge comes to them from their senior learned scholars. As soon as it comes to them from the junior unlearned ones, they will be destroyed."

Imaam Maalik RAH. reports that when Imaam Rabee'ah RAH. Was found weeping one day, people asked him the reason for his grief. He replied, "Because people are enquiring Deeni matters from ignorant persons. This is a sign of sure misguidance."

The gist of it all is that when any effort of Deen is carried out, it needs to be done within the confines of the principles of the Shari'ah. Acting in conflict with these principles will only create problems.

In his Malfoozaat Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. has stated that one of the advices that Hadhrat Gangohi RAH. wrote to him was that entrusting the affairs of a Deeni institution (or a lecture) to people who are not worthy of the task constitutes an act of treachery (misappropriation of trust) and those responsible for this will be questionable in the court of Allaah. He stated further, "The primary objective is to attain the pleasure of Allaah not the institution itself. Therefore, if the institution ceases to exist, we will not be held responsible for it, but we will be accountable for any harm we may have caused to the institution." To this, Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. adds, "Every effort needs to conform with the principles of the Shari'ah because the objective is to please Allaah. Every act of a Muslim's should be done solely to please Allaah regardless of whether the Deeni institution remains or not. The principles need to be adhered to regardless of whether the name of the institution is dragged through the mud or elevated to a high pedestal; regardless of whether the institution receives donations or not and regardless of whether the role of the institution increases or diminishes."

The onus is also upon the Ulema to realise that just as they have the responsibility to formally educate people, they also need to correct the beliefs and deeds to the masses through lectures.

What has happened is that whole some Ulema have focussed their efforts only on teaching, others have done the opposite. Hadhrat Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi RAH. speaks about this when he states that because the Ulema have forsaken this great task of the Ambiyaa ALY. there is now an abundance of ignorant lecturers. If this continues, the people will start to regard these ignorant people as their leaders, as prophesied in the Ahadeeth. As a result, they will all be led astray.

The Ulema should therefore fulfill this task of delivering lectures to educate the masses and must not concern themselves with whether their lectures have an effect on the people or not, whether people take heed or not and whether it is a large audience gathered before them or just one person.

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