



Condemnation for Attack on Malmesbury Worshippers

It is with deep sadness that we at the Claremont Main Road Masjid (CMRM) received the tragic news of the brutal killing of two worshippers who were completing their month long fast of Ramadan while in a spiritual retreat (itikaf) at the Malmesbury masjid outside Cape Town yesterday morning. Police reports indicate that a suspect who attacked them with a knife was subsequently shot and killed.

We extend our sincere condolences to the families and community of Malmesbury and pray that God, Lord of Compassion, grants the deceased salvation in the life hereafter. We also pray for a speedy recovery to the persons who were maimed in the attack.

We note with concern that this Ramadan started shortly after the heinous attack on the Imam Husseini Mosque in Verulam, and the perpetrators are still at large. At this tragic time, we reiterate the qur'anic injunction that the sanctity of human life is a supreme value in Islam and nothing is worth the cost of a human life.

We call for calm while the investigation is underway. We call for caution with speculations about the motive for the attack. We call on our community to cooperate with the South African police in their investigation into the motives for the attack. We also call on all conscientious Muslims to redouble our efforts at promoting intra-faith harmony and to foster a local environment of adab al-ikhtilaf and ta'awun - an ethics of disagreement and cooperation in the promotion of goodness.

Imam Dr. Rashied Omar - OBO CMRM Board



The Members of the Islamic Forum together with all concerned Muslims condemn this vicious attack which follows closely follows that at the Ottawa Masjid, a few weeks ago, which left one person dead. Our sympathies go out to all the deceased and our prayers for those who were injured for their speedy recovery. We pray that these two incidents will be thoroughly investigated by the authorities and this senseless killing, especially in the Holy month of Ramadaan and in the house of worship is roundly condemned by all peace loving Muslims and South Africans.

TIP's Fourteenth Family Eid Gah now bigger than ever

This years TIP Family Eid Gah now in its fourteenth year was even bigger than previous years. The keynote talk was given by Sister Tshegofatso Masibi, also a regular TIP congregant. She is an entrepreneur and owner of Ditiro Media and is a convener of Beyond August Project, an initiative that focusses on critical dialogue and economic initiatives amongst women. This year's theme for Eid ul Fitr, being on the eve of youth day, is "Soweto 76: reclaiming our history, envisioning the future".

The program director was Sister Sakina Goodwin, second year law student. This years Eid prayer and khutbah was delivered by Sheikh Nurdeen Auiba Dawood of Mozambique an accomplished qari who has been placed successfully in Qiraat competitions in several countries. He delivered an emotional khutbah and as usual Sheikh Salim Banda concluded the prayer with a moving Dua.

Our female speaker was Sister Tshegofatso Masibi, also a regular TIP congregant. She is an entrepreneur and owner of Ditiro Media and is a convener of Beyond August

Project, an initiative that focusses on critical dialogue and economic initiatives amongst women.

The youth speaker was Zuhayr Mahomed, a TIP member since inception when he was just 5 years old. Zuhayr is a 3rd year BCom Politics, Philosophy & Economics student at UCT. He is the former Deputy Chair of the MYM UCT, he currently serves on the Executive committee of the UCT Palestine Solidarity Forum (UCT PSF), and holds membership in the Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA). Zuhayr identifies himself as a Fallist and is particularly passionate about the Decolonisation movement.

Sister Asiya Essop, a teacher, at Fulton school for the deaf, offered her services to sign the talks and dua for the benefit of the deaf Muslim Community so that they could join and experience full inclusion, possibly for the first time at an Eid prayer. Zohra Moosa who is deaf and teaches at Ethembeni school has guided TIP through the process of starting this initiative.



Sheikh Nurdeen Auiba Dawood & TIP member Dawood Motala



Sheikh Salim Banda of WAMY who delivered the closing dua



Sister Tshegofatso Masibi delivering the Eid Lecture

For the benefit of deaf musalees Sister Asiya Essop rendered the talks in sign language. Students from As-Salaam Educational Institute were on hand to direct the traffic. An additional feature of this years event saw for the first time a nikah ceremony at the Eid Gah. Br Yahya Campbell married Sister Shaheena Meer after the prayer and AK (Jingles) Mahomed, after some persuasion,

rendered his famous wedding naat. The event was organized by TIP – Taking Islam to the People and they expressed their gratitude to the George Cambell School of Technology for once again making their sport field available for the Family Eid Gah. Family Eid Gah seem to be growing with one held at Essenwood Park organized by ILM-SA, at Tongaat and for the second year in Pietermaritzburg.



Sister Asiya Essop rendering the talks in sign language



Sister Sakina Goodwin - Program Director



Nikah of Sister Shaheena Meer to Brother Yahya Campbell

Soweto '76 - Reclaiming our heritage, envisioning our Future!

Tomorrow, 16th June, South Africa will be commemorating the revolutionary sacrifices and gains made by the generation of 1976, when young school students rose up and took a stand against an oppressive government and an exclusionary education system. Their resistance was rooted in their pursuit of liberation through Education and governed by Black Consciousness.

However, post 1994 we have been fed the narrative of the 'Rainbow Nation' which was founded on principles of multi-racialism, forgiveness and reconciliation. This Rainbow Nation however, maintains/harbours majority of the power dynamics of pre-94 and, furthermore, it seeks to delegitimise and undermine the daily struggles of the majority. Today, to be Black is still to be landless. To not be male is to be inferior. Should you not be able-bodied, there's no room for you.

Challenging the status quo leads to accusations of being stuck in the past, of seeking excuses to validate one's laziness or, further still, of causing disunity. I am constantly left wondering - have we forgotten the nature of our past; and are we blind to the realities of the present? Or perhaps we are only allowed to remember and see certain distorted aspects of them. We have a history of struggle and the only way to challenge the current power dynamics in society is to reclaim our heritage of struggle, our heritage of true unity and our loyalty to the ideology that "There is no compromising on justice".

As Muslims we should be at the forefront of the struggle for an inclusive and accessible education. An education that speaks to our material conditions living in this society. It is ironic that whilst we find ourselves celebrating and romanticising 1976 the doors to education still remain firmly shut and inaccessible to the larger majority. We have been led to believe that the struggle for education ended with the Soweto uprisings and the end of the Bantu Education system in the 80s. Yet our current education system continues to fail us.

An education system built upon neo-colonial, neo-liberal, capitalist foundations will always sharply contradict the lived experiences of the colonised and it should then come as no surprise that we find ourselves faced with such high levels of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Surely within this context we ought to question our so-called freedom and the validity of the label 'Born-Free' that has been given to the youth born post '94.

How is it that in this day and age Black girls are forced to chemically straighten their hair to comply with the White conceptualisation of what a female student must look like and, furthermore, they are only given a platform to be heard after being driven to protest at their schools. At this very school, in these very classrooms, black students were repeatedly called 'monkeys', by their White teachers and they too were left with no choice but to bring classes to a stop so that their



concerns of institutionalised racism were given attention.

The Fallist Movement, which reached its zenith between 2015 and 2016 in the form of RhodesMustFall and FeesMustFall, has re-introduced the concept of decolonisation as a tool of liberation. University students took to the streets at a certain point bringing the country to a standstill in their call for a Free Decolonised Afro-centric Socialist Education. Yet these students, who were following in the footsteps of the Generation of 1976, were painted as lazy, violent hooligans. The Fallist Movement identified Pan Africanism, Black Consciousness, Black Radical Feminism and Intersectionality as the core principles in their struggle. Special attention was given to the BC theory of mental emancipation and the key to this was self-identification. Drawing from Biko's teachings that in order for you to self-identify as black you would need not only to be a member of the colonised BUT also adopt a political commitment to end white supremacy. And it is in the latter that we have continuously fallen short. Whilst many might dismiss this as petty identity politics, Identity Politics remains crucial more so because of the context in which we find ourselves where race was been the primary determinant of personhood in this country. In many cases the move to dismiss Identity Politics is due to people trying to avoid and hide from pertinent issues. We often forget the history of Intersectionality in our struggles. There is the famous saying "Student Wars are labour Wars, and Labour Wars are Land Wars". The Student uprisings of '76 cannot be viewed in isolation to the broader liberation movement. In the same way, the call for Free Decolonised Education cannot be separated from the call to end the outsourcing of workers. It is vital that we are able to find the intersections of the different struggles and be in solidarity with one another for a more inclusive and complete liberation.

It is clear that we need to reclaim our heritage of struggle to further the fight for a decolonial education system and the broader decolonisation of society. For the struggle to move and grow beyond the ivory towers of the university space, mass community participation is needed. It requires us to start having these difficult conversations in our social gatherings and becoming more politically aware.

There is also a need to understand how we become complicit in the actions of others - by maintaining certain relationships. For example, by having any political ties with Israel we are complicit in the sufferings of the Palestinians or by continuing to give a space to those with a proven track record of spewing hate and inciting violence upon the innocent we become complicit in their ramblings. We need to urgently move away from a very individualised social

outlook and show the next generation of youth that our purpose in life should not be the accumulation of wealth for the benefit of individuals. We need to interrogate our own internal conflicts as well as become more observant to the external micro-aggressions playing out around us.

It becomes the responsibility of the elders in the community to expose the youth to the realities of this society. The forming of Consciousness starts from the early childhood developmental stage where children are most receptive and pick up the subtle queues from the adults around them. Therefore, in order for the next generation of Youth to lead us into a brighter future, we have to clean up our act

'Id al-Fitr Khutbah at TIP Family Eid Gah - Durban, 15th June 2018 - Sister Tshgefotso Masibi

Our People First: Reclaiming the Spirit of 16 June 1976

Greetings of peace to you beloved elders, leaders, activists; brothers and sisters in Islam! Assalaam Alaikum. It is the Grace and Mercy of Allah this year, 2018; Eid-ul-fitr falls on the eve of the commemoration of the National Students Uprisings of 1976, which began in Soweto on June 16. You may ask yourself: What does Ramadaan got to do with the 1976 Students uprising?

The symbolic connection between Eid-ul-fitr and the Commemoration of the National Students uprising of 1976 is that they are both ruminations on, and celebrations of the ability of human beings to individually and collectively, metaphorically and literally exert themselves above the comfort zones of unquestioning conformity and acquiescence to established and entrenched social routines. They both point to the significance and power of self-mastery and selflessness as weapons of resistance to the dictates of the environment and tradition

The Ramadaan reawakening evoked by the spirit of Allah Consciousness takes the form of subduing normalized human resignation to the craving of the flesh and carnal desires. The 1976 reawakening sparked by the wave of Black Consciousness took the form of subduing the fear, self-doubt and inferiority complex and declaring, with Biko and Cesaire:

"No race possesses the monopoly of beauty, intelligence and force... There is room for all humanity at the rendezvous of victory"

The selflessness spirit that moved the 70s activists, finds expression in the words of one of the heroic Black Consciousness student leaders of the time, who became the face and voice of the uprising, Tsietsi Mashinini: My People First.

The key question and challenge, which is also an opportunity, is: How to internalize, rekindle and live the resilient human spirit of Ramadaan and June 16, 1976 every day of our life in all facets of life? How do we ensure that our personal, social, political and economic conduct is characterised by the virtues of selflessness and human agency against forces that subdue and denigrate human dignity?

Perhaps the best start to answering that question is, how do we celebrate these days? To do justice to this question it is important to reflect on how just after they have buried their beloved brothers and sisters and fellow comrades, while still trying to recover from the emotional trauma, while still nursing psychological and physical wounds, the children of 1976 marked this day and how they believe it should be remembered? In this regard, it is worthwhile to listen to the voice of the students in the form of the pamphlet released by the Soweto Students Representative Council (SSRC) in 1976, calling for Black Christmas, which stated:

The year 1976 is the year of sorrow and blood and sweating for the freedom of Africans. We will then show this by cooperating in this fight by not having a wonderful thing for Christmas.

- No clothes.
- No furniture.
- No liquor.
- No toys.

The sentiments expressed in this pamphlet resonate with views expressed in a 1977 pamphlet of the SSRC which declared June 16, "Students day, which asserted:

- We shall share sufferance and joyous moments.
- Anniversary to mark boycott of Bantu Education

first and ensure that the foundations are in place. We cannot fall into the trap of sitting back and putting the burden of progression solely on the shoulders of the next generation. We need to realise that in order for us to truly progress there needs to be a constant agitation for change, and that each generation will have its role to play throughout its lifetime.

I conclude with a final quote by Robert Sobukwe emphasising the importance of Education in the struggle for Liberation. "A word to those who are remaining behind. You have seen by now what education means to us: the identification of ourselves with the masses. Education to us means service to Africa." **Zuhayr Mahomed**



- Procedure on before and after June 16:

June shall go down the annals of history as "The Students' Day" It shall stand known to all Blacks throughout South Africa who identified themselves with the students struggle as a holiday, namely, Students Day. On this day prayer meeting shall be arranged and attended by both parents and students. On this day we plead for a complete moment of silence from the early of the morning till 9am when vehicles taking people to prayer meeting centres and hospitals only shall be allowed to move. At 10am three hours of prayer shall be held....

It is important to note that children of the 70s spelt out prayer meetings or what in the 80s were referred to as commemoration services as the method and platforms to be used to mark their day. It is also important to note that the students released pamphlets clearly spelling out what is expected to happen on June 16 and spelling out the time frames for the moments of silence and the duration of the prayer meetings.

This suggests that the student recognised the importance of notifying broader community about their actions and of getting buy-in and participation from the community through presenting rationale arguments rather than coercion and that they did not subscribe to the culture of infinite boycotts and protest action which had no clear and reasonable time-frame.

This is a far cry from a situation that emerged in the late 80s where you would wake up in the morning going to work and find yourself in the middle of a consumer boycott, bus boycott or strike action you were not informed of and could find yourself at best being made to drink bleach, or at worse being necklaced, for breaching a consumer boycott you did not know existed.

This is not to suggest that there were no excesses committed in the cause of struggle in the 70s but to highlight how the activists of that time generally understood the importance of maintaining dignity and integrity of the struggle, the integrity of the agents of the struggle and the dignity and integrity of the people in whose name the struggle is waged. Allowing cars taking people to hospitals to move freely indicates the students' respect for life even in the middle of hardships and struggles.

What we learn from this and is worth reclaiming is that when we struggle, we should strike hard at the system but should never lose our humanity and the centrality of respect for human life and human dignity in our struggle. The tradition of keeping the sobriety of the day continued in 1978, with the Soweto Action Committee and the Soweto Students League making the call:

- All shops and business centres shall be closed on the 16 and opened on the 17th for half a day.
- All shebeens should be closed on the 13th of June to 19th on Sunday.
- The NPSL together with its multi-racial Football League should suspend games.
- Disco and cinemas shall not operate too during this period 16th June to the 19th Sunday

It is very clear that the 70s generation of student and youth activists subscribed to the idea of using days of this nature not just as moments of mourning but as moments of reflection and consciousness-raising. Even the funerals and night vigils of the victims of police shootings became schools of social consciousness, political consciousness, and

community organizing and mass mobilization. This is aptly captured in the recollections of one of the activists, who was only 19 years old when the uprisings burst out, who recalls:

The night vigils were very significant. You will remember that after June 16 until 1978, virtually every weekend there was a political funeral. And at that time we did not only attend political funerals, we also went to night vigils. Night vigils were a place where we met leaders of the Black Consciousness Movement who knew about these particular things. And they would come to give a perspective to us.

What we can learn from this and should be able to reclaim today is the creative, innovative and imaginative use of spaces to create a new language and a new culture of liberation, of human solidarity and resistance against the odds, based on a keen awareness of our own humanity and the humanity of others, refusing to be either silenced or to be parrots that unquestioningly mimic what the academia, the media, the government, the priest, the imam and the Moulana tell us.

This is about listening to the inner voice that tell us that we are more than what the environment, the society or our carnal desires tell us we are. It is about that spirit of Black Consciousness that refutes the

'Id al-Fitr Khutbah Imam Dr. A. Rashied Omar

Celebrating and Embracing Youth Activism

'Id al-Fitr is truly a day of great joy and celebration, but it is also a day of reflection and introspection. It is, therefore, fortuitous that this year our 'Id al-Fitr celebration takes place on the eve of National Youth Day celebrations and reflections. The 16th of June 1976 represents a watershed moment in the history of the struggle against the racist and unjust system of apartheid and left an indelible impact on the lives of those who experienced and lived through it.

In this 'Id al-Fitr khutbah, I would like to challenge the often-repeated lament of elders, which is that most of our contemporary youth, who were reared in post-apartheid South Africa, lack the spirit of activism that animated and energized their parents and are therefore not as committed to social justice struggles as their parents were during the anti-apartheid struggle. My contention is that there are scores of talented, innovative and committed young social justice activists emerging in our country who provide us with great hope for a more humane, just and compassionate future.

It might be expedient to begin by briefly mining our Islamic sources for inspiration on the role of youth in engendering social change.

Islam, Youth and Social Change

I have proposed in some of my previous khutbahs and writing that student and youth led movements for social change is not alien, strange or incompatible with Islam but is in fact celebrated by the Glorious Qur'an (See: Al-Mizan, 2014, Volume 3 Number 4, newsletter of the Claremont Main Road Masjid). In Surah al-Kahf, Chapter 18, verses 13 and 14, Allah, the Sublime, edifies us by not only apprising us of the legendary story of the Companions of the Cave (Ashab al-Kahf), but more significantly revealing their identity, namely that they were youth.

We shall narrate to you their story:

Behold they were youth who believed in their Lord:

And so we deepened their consciousness of the Right Way.

And We strengthened their hearts so that they stood up and proclaimed:

"Our Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

We shall invoke no god beside Him,

for (if we do so) we shall have uttered a blasphemy.

(Q18:13-14)

It is my considered view that through these verses the Qur'an is exhorting its readers to be attentive to the fact that young people are more likely to challenge the status quo and become the drivers and levers for social change as they live at the cutting-edge of the real and rapidly changing world. Surah al-Kahf's unequivocal message acknowledges youth led social movements for change within our communities.

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's everlasting peace and blessings be upon him) also offers great inspiration and guidance for recognizing youth. It is instructive to note that the condescending attitude towards younger people also afflicted the first generation of Muslims. When the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) appointed a young seventeen-year-old by the name of Usama ibn

lie that we are just bodies and fights the false idea that we are all interior and lack interiority. In reclaiming the spirit of Black Consciousness that propelled the 70s activists forward and in keeping with the spirit of Ramadaan, we should fight for the right to call our souls our own rather than be content with souls constructed by pop culture or so-called mass culture, which is effectively a false consciousness imposed on the people by the media with its culture of consumerism, crass materialism, greed and individualism. Like the June 16 generation we should not be cajoled by the White Christmas of new deals and renewals that promises us a better life that depends of Foreign Direct Income, bail outs of big corporates in many disguises, tax cuts for the rich and vat increases for the poor. In that spirit of Solidarity evoked by the students we should be able to loudly and actively demonstrate our solidarity with Palestine and all the oppressed and poors of the world. With these words, may every day be Ramadaan, a moment of reflection, self-realization, selflessness and self-mastery. May every day be June 16, 1976, a moment of reawakening, self-realization, selflessness and self-mastery!

May our motto be My people first! Our people First!



Zayd to lead a major expedition to Syria, which included some of the most illustrious companions, such as Abubakr and 'Umar, many raised their objections due to Usama ibn Zayd's age. The Prophet (pbuh) rebuked them and Usama's mission was successful. Still not convinced by the prophetic foresight and wisdom of youth empowerment, and stubbornly persisting in their patronizing attitudes, immediately after the Prophet's passing, some of the companions tried to persuade the newly appointed Caliph Abubakr to replace the young Usama ibn Zayd as leader of the army with 'Umar ibn al-Khattab. Abubakr, however, did not relent to their pressure, since he understood the Prophet's foresight, wisdom, and confidence in the promise of youth leadership.

The Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) example in appointing a young seventeen-year-old, Usama ibn Zayd as a leader over the elders such as Abubakr and 'Umar is yet another eminent source of inspiration from our Islamic tradition. If all of these encouraging messages remain unheeded then we squander our greatest potential for social progress. Ultimately, the verses from Surah al-Kahf of the Glorious Qur'an as well as the Prophet's (pbuh) example is advising us that our hope for social progress and our future lies in the youth.

Youth and Social Change in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Over the past four years in South Africa we have witnessed a number of key moments that were inspired by young people who have called for radical social change. In March 2015, the #RhodesMustFall campaign which began at the University of Cape Town (UCT), called for the decolonisation of South African university spaces by showing us the ugly faces of institutional racism, capitalist greed and patriarchal attitudes within places of higher education, as a microcosm of our societies. The #RhodesMustFall protest reverberated across the country and even made links to student movements across the world, but with particular links to students in the Global South. This was followed by the #FeesMustFall

student movement which began in October 2015 at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits). The #FeesMustFall movement connected the struggle for free decolonised education with that of outsourced workers and strategically allowed for links to be created at universities across the nation. This was an unprecedented move not seen since the days of the anti-apartheid struggle. The #FeesMustFall movement shook many out of their comfort zones and complacency towards neo-liberal policies that have seen the commodification of education and the widening of inequality in our country. It is through the pressure created by these young students that the State continues to be challenged to accede to all of its demands of free decolonised education within our lifetime. The #FeesMustFall movement has left an indelible mark on the terrain of Higher Education in South Africa where institutions are now being forced to grapple more meaningfully with issues of transformation and decolonisation. (For a useful perspective on student protests in South Africa, both past and present See: *Students Must Rise: Youth Struggle in South Africa Before and Beyond Soweto '76*, by Noor Nieftagodien and Anne Heffemen. Wits University Press, 2016).

Even more recently, during this past Ramadan, the #BoKaapRise movement inspired by Bo-Kaap youth have been playing a leading role in protests against gentrification. Starting on Friday 25 May 2018, Bo-Kaap residents held innovative "boeka protests" in Wale Street, Cape Town. The protest action saw hundreds of residents and their supporters break their fast with a shared meal in the middle of Cape Town. The "boeka protest" was the culmination of weeks of protest action intended to raise concerns about the virulent nature of gentrification of the Bo-Kaap area. Through exorbitant property rates that the City of Cape Town is imposing on Bo-Kaap residents, they are forcing many working-class residents and pensioners to sell their ancestral homes to greedy Capitalist developers who plan to replace these homes with high rise buildings for foreign direct investment. After years of seeing their parents and neighbours

struggling against the creep of gentrification, it is the youth of Bo-Kaap who are now raising their voices and galvanizing their community to take back their streets and say, 'Enough is Enough'. (For my views on the Bo-Kaap protests See: "The Battle, the Bo-Kaap Protests and Affordable Housing", Khutbah delivered at Masjid al-Quds, Gatesville, 1 June 2018).

Conclusion

In conclusion, as we celebrate National Youth Day it is critical that we remain attentive to the potential role of our youth in driving social change. However, we need to liberate ourselves from attitudes of paternalism and begin to listen more carefully to our youth so that we may be able to appreciate and learn new and creative ways of advancing our common struggle for social justice and human dignity.

On this great day of 'Id al-Fitr which coincides with National Youth Day, we celebrate all those who purposefully live their lives in the cause of social justice and lovingly spend of their time and resources in helping to make the world a more just and humane place. We call to mind and pray for the liberation of all people who are oppressed and exploited wherever they may find themselves and from whatever creed, ethnicity or nationality they come from. We pray that Allah, the Lord of Compassionate Justice assist us in understanding and being patient with our youth and we pray that Allah, the Lord of Wisdom, will guide those in our country and the world's leadership to fashion a more compassionate, just and peaceful world. Let us use June 16th as the starting point for a new consciousness and appreciation of the role of young people in securing the future of our community and our country.

May you all have a festive 'Id and may you live well in the Grace and Mercy of the Lord of Compassionate Justice. May your entire year be filled with Goodness, Peace and Health

Dr. A. Rashied Omar is the Imam of the Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town and Research Scholar of Islamic Studies and Peacebuilding at the University of Notre Dame in the United States of America.

Our duas and hope go out to Tasmi Quazi for her quick recovery

My sister Tasmi - known to be a wushinite - a spirited martial arts warrior - perpetually engaged in self mastery - on a trajectory of growth and virtue - with a heart of gold - radiating love and joy to everyone around her - a natural affinity of kaleidoscopic bonds with children - a super Ammu to her Tweenies/ bonding with 'nephsters' as she would say and in general bringing a smile to children everywhere.

More than just a special friend to the poor and down trodden - from humble recyclers to morning market workers - I have personally been with Tasmi to homes in Inanda - sharing a meal from the same plate - she has a natural charisma to make everyone feel comfortable and honoured-beautiful emulating the sunnah of our Habib SAWA.

Her caring altruistic nature for all of humanity cut across every divide - one of the first people to respond to the recent Shia mosque tragedy - extending a warm helping hand, wiping away tears of the children .

I have seen her roll up her sleeves and work hard collecting cardboard for a recycler who was too ill to be at work just so Mama Maria didn't miss out on a day's pay. On yet another occasion when Baba Afrika was ill, she was at his side close and comforting. The stories are too numerous to mention - her legacy of caring knows no bounds.

In a world of rapid growing individualism - itself an aspect of reductive materialism - our sister Tasmi stands out as a beacon of Noor - a shining example of actively participating in building an egalitarian- pluralistic community. She lives with a graceful open attitude to life and people from all walks



Tasmi seen here with her twins Muntaha on her lap and Mahfuz on baby seat. The twins turned two last week.

- always willing to engage with diversity and alterity - to sacramentally reconnect with creation - she teaches us to stand in the place of the 'other' to walk in their shoes - her beautiful way of understanding and empathy - she teaches us to participate intrinsically in the wholeness around us - together with the love of her life - Shamim our systems thinking genius who truly live by this principle ..he himself a beautiful example of ihsaan - a sincere brother who will mountains to help someone in need.

The hundreds of phone calls and messages from all who love Tasmi are a testament of her compassionate nature to all- her special way of engagement to accommodate our differences through an affirmation of our inherent dignity and to transcend beyond circumstance by fulfilling our accountability to respect, preserve and nourish the sacred web of life around us.

Now in her honour - along with the fervent Duas and messages of hope - let us ontologically participate in her road to recovery - let us reflect our love for Tasmi in a tangible, palpable sense — generate love and positive waves of healing - engage in creative acts of sadaqah / good will / altruism - open up portals of hasanah wherever you are - sending the 'ajr to her - be part of making a child smile today in the name of our sister Tasmi - who will no doubt from her heart, feel these incremental surges of hope and love.

We are waiting for you our dear Tasmi - to see that warm, sincere beautiful radiant smile again. Hasbunallahu wa ni'mal wakeelough out of it. I think it is more encompassing than anything that I can come up with. As you predicted, Shamim wasn't in the right frame of mind to say he could put any words down, now at least.

Maseeha (Sister-in-Law)

Tasmi Quazi was involved in a vehicle accident on Sunday 3 June 2018 on her way back from her parents home in Pietermaritzburg to Durban. She is currently in the ICU at Etebeni Hospital. Members of TIP and Islamic Forum send their duas and best wishes for her a speedy recovery and may the Almighty Allah grant her parents, family and especially her husband Shamim Bodhanya, an active member of TIP, the strength to bear this challenge.

An open letter to the Jamiatul Ulama KZN

I trust this reaches you and yours in the best of states, insha Allah. I write this sorely heartbroken, let down and despondent. As a young Muslim living in South Africa, I have always looked up to the Ulemah for guidance. I have great respect for the scholars of our community, their role in preserving our deen, and their work has inspired me on my own path of the study of deen. It's been a beautiful journey that edifies my Iman. Alhamdulillah.

This week, however, I received a newsletter from your organization in my inbox that left me shattered. The email entitled "Should Women attend the Eid prayer?" correctly notes that women in our community are being encouraged to attend the Eid Prayer, as well as other prayers in the Masjid.

It goes on to explain that women in the time of the beloved Messenger (SAW) attended prayers at the mosque as well as the Eid prayer. However, it cites that this allowance was unique to that time as the sahabiyah (May Allah be pleased with them all) were praying behind the Prophet (SAW) and were dressed appropriately but that in today's time it is considered makruh. Having studied Usul-ul-fiqh I'm surprised at this position as it contradicts a foundational principle of Usul. I'm sure that you are well-versed in Usul yourself and will know that there is no abrogation of Qur'an or Sunnah after the demise of the Prophet (SAW). Anything that was considered mubah or mustahab in the time of the Prophet (SAW) will remain mubah or mustahab, forever. As the divinely-guided legislator, the actions, sayings and tacit approval of the Nabi (SAW) hold the status of immutable law. Umar (RA) demonstrated his understanding of this when he refrained from preventing his wife from going to the mosque despite having a personal preference for her praying at home. In an authentic narration it is narrated that Umar's wife, Atikah bin Zayd (RA) used to pray both Fajr and Isha at the Prophet's mosque even though Umar (RA) did not like it. Umar (RA) could not prevent her due to the statement of the Prophet (SAW) "Do not prevent women from going to Allah's mosques" [Bukhari, Ibn Hibban]. In fact, when Umar (RA) was stabbed in the mosque Atikah bin Zayd (RA) was present in the congregation [Fath Al-Bary]. It's puzzling that the Jamiat would put out a newsletter to the contrary.

The newsletter further goes on to say that despite women's mosque attendance, "the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi wasallam) still advised and encouraged them to pray in their homes". This is problematic from two perspectives: it uses, as it's foundational text a solitary hadith wherein the Prophet (SAW) advises a female companion, Umm Humaid (RA), that "your prayer at home is better than your prayer in congregation". Looking at the full context of this hadith one will uncover that this recommendation to Umm Humaid was not a general one but one specific to her circumstances. Umm Humaid's husband, Abu Humaid Al-Saedi, was from the family of Bani Saedah, a branch of the Al-Khazraj tribe of Madina. They lived outside the borders of Madina at that time and far from the Prophet's mosque. They had their own mosque and council [Al-Tabarani, Al-Baihaqi and others]. Therefore the Prophet (SAW) only intended to resolve a marital disagreement between Umm Humaid and Abu Humaid (May Allah be pleased with them) - where he was unhappy with the long distance she had to walk to pray five times a day at the (SAW) mosque. The Prophet's (SAW) advice was therefore that she accommodates her husband's request and prays at home or at her tribe's mosque. There is no evidence in the hadith literature that the Prophet (SAW) meant to change the general permissibility or commendation of women praying at the mosque/ in congregation. Secondly, it contradicts the practice of the women of Madina and other authentic hadith. It is clear from Usul ul Fiqh that some statements of the Prophet held a general (aam) application while others pertained to specific cases (khaas) - the case of Umm Humaid is one such case. Furthermore, when the Prophet (SAW) made the statement "One prayer in this mosque of mine is better than one thousand prayers elsewhere, except for the sacred Mosque in Makkah" [Bukhari, Muslim] he (SAW) made no distinction between men and women, and it therefore had a general applicability, for both genders. According to Ibn Hazm, all other ahadith saying that a woman's prayer is better at home are considered weak (da'if) and will therefore not be discussed here. It should be noted that Muslim women have been praying for more than 1400 years in mosques around the world, including Islam's holiest mosques - Masjid Al-haram, Masjid An-Nabawi and Masjid Al-Aqsa.

The newsletter goes on to cite a well-known statement where Aisha (RA), the beloved wife of the Prophet (SAW) said: "If the Messenger of

Allah (Sallallahu alaihi wasallam) was alive to see what women are doing now (in that period of time), he would surely have prevented them from attending the prayers in the Masjid just as the women of Banu Isra'il were prevented." [Bukhari, Muslim]. While this narration is authentic, it has no general applicability and only applies to that specific context. With regards to this statement the classical jurists, including Ibn Hajar and Ibn Qudamah, conclude that it only applied within a specific context and that it in no way abrogates the teachings of the Prophet (SAW). Imam Malik, who lived in Madinah soon after the era of the sahabah, is recorded to have said, "Women should never be prevented from going out to the mosques." Ibn Hajar said that Aisha's (RA) opinion is not universal as she made it contingent on a particular condition. While Ibn Qudamah said "The Prophet's Sunnah is more worthy of being followed and Aisha's (RA) statement is limited only to those who introduce unlawful innovations." As discussed earlier, according to Usul ul Fiqh, after the demise of the Prophet (SAW), no abrogation can take place. Aisha (RA) is not considered to have legislative power and her statement is opinion rather than law. Furthermore, women continued to attend the mosque while Aisha (RA) was alive, indicating that her statement was an attempt to rebuke them - in hyperbole, and not a ruling. An important principle in Islam is that authorities cannot punish someone for the actions of others. Allah says in the Qur'an, "No soul is responsible for another soul" [Surah Al-An'am Verse 164]. Thus, even if a few men or women did something wrong, others are not allowed to be punished for their mistakes.

With regards to Aisha's (RA) statement, the newsletter further says that women should not attend the Salaah, neither at the Masjid nor at the Eid Gaah because of the "fitna" that is prevalent today. We are often presented with this kind of argument - that women are a fitna and may cause a distraction for men at the mosque. It is imperative that we deal with such instances in a way that conforms to the Sunnah. So what did the Prophet (SAW) do when he received a complaint that men in the back rows were looking at women? He (SAW) advised the males not to look at the women; he did not change the layout of the mosque. He (SAW) did not add a curtain or wall or prevent the women from coming to the mosque. On another occasion, an authentic narration records an incident where a sahabi, Al-Fadl bin Abbas (RA), stared at a beautiful woman. The Prophet (SAW) responded by turning the face of Al-Fadl such that he could not gaze at her. What we learn is that the Prophet (SAW) deals with Al-Fadl with gentleness and does not condemn him. More importantly, he (SAW) does not utter words that would make Al-Fadl believe that the source of the problem was the presence of the woman, and that Al-Fadl had no responsibility in staring at her. On the contrary, he (SAW) gently turns Al-Fadl's face away, teaching him that he is the one who needs to be responsible for his actions.

As a community looking to the Ulemah for guidance, the Ulemah are obliged to share the full spectrum of opinions and views on a matter where there is clear and legitimate ikhtilaaf (difference of opinion) among the scholars, rather than present a singular opinion, as binding and the only opinion.

I conclude with a narration that specifically pertains to women attending the Eid Salaah. It seems odd that it was omitted from the Jamiat newsletter. The Prophet (SAW) not only permits women to attend the prayer but ordered them to attend, saying that if they did not have an outer garment (jilbaab) to wear; they should borrow one from another woman.

Umm Atiyah narrated: "Allah's Messenger would order the virgins, the mature women, the secluded and the menstruating to go out for the two Eids. As for the menstruating women, they were to stay away from the Musalla and participate in the Muslims supplications." One of them said: 'O Messenger of Allah! What if she does not have a Jilbab? He said: 'Then let her sister lend her a Jilbab.'" [Jami' at-Tirmidhi]

I hope that the above discussion will encourage the Jamiat and other Ulemah bodies to be more circumspect in their presentation of Islamic teachings in the future, insha Allah. Good scholarship requires honesty - where all sides of the argument are presented, where the views of all the madhabib are stated, where legitimate scholarly difference of opinion is acknowledged rather than ignored, and where the rules of Usul ul Fiqh are adhered to consistently and accurately. May Allah's peace, blessings and guidance be upon us all. Aameen.

Sincerely,

Tazkiyyah Amra

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