

# Our Responsibilities Towards Our Scholars

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The Friday Prayer: III

Allaah says in the Qur'aan

"The believers are nothing else but brothers" (al-Hujuraat, 10)

The Prophet (saw) said, *"The believers are like one body. If its head is aching, the rest of the body is afflicted with fever and sleeplessness"*. (Muslim)

The Prophet (saw) said, *"A believer with respect to another believer is like one building: one part strengthens the other."* (al-Bukhaari and Muslim).

The verse and hadith just quoted demonstrate the relationship that every single believer must have towards other members of the Muslim community. Regardless of who that believer is or where he might be from, he is part of this Muslim community. As long as he is part of this community, he has certain rights upon us. He is deserving of our help, support, love, assistance and so forth.

As we all know, oppression is forbidden. In a hadith qudsi, the Prophet (saw) reported that Allaah stated, **"O My Slaves, I have made oppression forbidden for myself and I have decreed it to be forbidden among you. So do not commit oppression"**. (Muslim)

In another hadith, the Prophet (saw) said, ***"Help your brother where he is the oppressor or the oppressed"***. The Companions stated that they knew how to help him if he was the oppressed, so they asked the Prophet (saw) how they shall help him if he is the oppressor. The Prophet (saw) replied, ***"Prevent him from committing oppression. That is helping him"***. (al-Bukhaari)

If a Muslim is oppressing another Muslim, it is your obligation to help him. How do you help him? Do you help by letting him continue his oppression? Do you help him by trying to rationalize or justify the wrong that he is doing and defending him in front of others? This will not help him whatsoever as it may lead to his punishment in there Hereafter and it may also lead to a great deal of harm for him in this life. Instead, as the Prophet (saw) described, you help him by trying to stop him from committing oppression. This will be best for him -- it will be a help for him -- and, at the same time, as the hadith states, you are also helping your brother who is being oppressed. After all, you do have both obligations to help the oppressor and the oppressed.

This is an important characteristic of the true believers - the real members of this brotherhood.

However, usually the oppressed needs more help because he is usually in the position wherein he cannot help himself. He therefore needs -- after Allaah's help -- the help of his brethren. He needs the help of those people who are supposed to love for him what they love for themselves. Obviously, nobody likes to be oppressed. Therefore, when a Muslim sees his brother being oppressed, he must hate that for his brother. That hatred in the heart should also lead to action...

The above is true with respect to all Muslims. However there are some Muslims who have even more rights upon us to come to their defence and aid. They have more rights upon us to defend and support them. These are the scholars. Those people who sacrificed their time, wealth and lives to guide us to the truth. They are the heirs of the Prophet (saw). They take the knowledge from the source of the Prophet (saw) and pass it on to us. They stand up for the truth and they are the main forces in spreading the message of Islaam.

When these people are oppressed, when these people are not allowed to speak, when these people are imprisoned, when these people are killed, then we are not simply talking about the rights of other individual Muslims being violated, but we are talking about the Muslim community, as a whole and Islaam itself being endangered. When these people are taken away, who will replace them? Are there other scholars already out there to take their place or are their places going to be taken over by the ignorant, by the secularists, by the Western-minded and so forth.

No, when a scholar is imprisoned or stopped from speaking, we are talking about restricting the spreading of the Word of Allaah and its correct understanding. All of us, therefore, must be concerned when any scholar is oppressed, imprisoned or killed.

Do you realise, what has led to the imprisonment of many Muslim scholars? It is not because they have committed murder or any major crimes. Instead, it is because they are calling the Muslim masses and the Muslim leaders to apply Islaam in their lives. They are imprisoned because they say that *riba* (interest) is forbidden and it should not be allowed in the Muslim society. They are being imprisoned because they say that the satellite dishes bring pornography and other evils into the Muslim countries and should be stopped. They are imprisoned because they say that the disbelievers are the enemies of Islaam and it is not allowed to become allies with them or to support them against other Muslims. They are imprisoned because they say that the *shar'iah* must be the law of the land. They are imprisoned because they say that no one has the right to make legislature that goes against the *Qur'aan* and *Sunnah*. These are some of the reasons for which many of our scholars are put in prison. When you study these reasons you will see that the reason that they are being imprisoned is one: Because they are calling for the true application of Islaam.

And who do you think is going to come to the defence of these scholars? Do you think the United Nations commissions or civil rights organisations are going to go out of their way to defend and support these Muslim scholars? Do you expect the disbelievers to come to their aid? Isn't it true that it is the disbelievers who are very pleased whenever Islaam is being harmed. Do you believe that they will

come to the rescue or aid of our scholars while Allaah has told the Prophet (saw) in the Qur'aan:

**"Never will the Jews or the Christians be pleased with you until you follow their religion" (2:120)**

We should realise that Allaah shall test the scholars and He shall test us through them. The Prophet (saw) explained that the most difficult trials are for the prophets and then those who are next in rank or stature and so forth. This is a great test for them. However, Allaah willing, they have the knowledge and the yaqeen that it takes to make it through that test. Therefore, Allaah willing, for them it is simply a means to get more of Allaah's pleasure.

However it is also a test for their followers. For example, when the prophets were tested, this was a great trial for their followers. How many of them would stick with the Prophet (saw) and not revert to kufr? How many of them would be willing to give up all that they have of this world for the sake of the message of Allaah? That is a great test. When the scholars are tested by oppression and harm, it becomes a test for us too, to see which of us will be willing to defend their honour and support them in the way in which it is their right upon us.

Historically speaking, the rulers have always feared the scholars the most. They viewed them as the greatest threat to their power and desires. They knew that the hearts of the people were always more inclined to the scholars and a word from a certain scholar could even bring down a government. The rulers knew that the scholars were speaking from the Qur'aan and sunnah and that the people would listen to them and follow their guidance.

Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyab, Abu Hanifah, Maalik, Ahmad, ash-Shaf'i, al-Izz ibn Abdul Salaam, Ibn Taymiyyah - all of these great scholars had to face the enmity and wrath of their rulers. They had to face their wrath for different reasons. Many times it was because of fatwas that they issued. They saw the wrong that was going on and they realised their responsibility to speak out against the wrong. In fact, it is their responsibility to speak - in one way or another - when the rulers are taking the people down the wrong path. The Prophet (saw) said, ***"Whoever of you sees an evil must change it by his hand. If he cannot, then he must change it by his tongue, and if he cannot, then he must change it by his heart - and that is the weakest manifestation of faith"*** (Muslim).

They have the ability to change things by their speech. Therefore if they don't speak, they will be sinful. They have knowledge that they have to give and spread, and they are not allowed to conceal it. The Prophet (saw) said, ***"When Allaah gives knowledge to any man and he conceals it, then he will be bridled with a bridle of fire on the day of Resurrection"***. (With this wording it was recorded by at-Tabaraani. A similar hadith with very similar meaning have been recorded by other collectors of hadith. al-Albaani has graded this hadith sahih, see Sahih al-Jaami' as-Sagheer no. 2714)

If they are kept from speaking, then the truth and guidance will be hidden from the people and the people will suffer by following something wrong in this life.

In modern times, the trend has continued - imprisonment, torture, execution, silencing, expulsion. It has happened in numerous countries throughout the world.

What must or can we do? The first - or perhaps the least - that we must do is to make du'aa for them. Allaah has allowed them to be put in their situation and if Allaah wishes to remove them from their situation and to give them victory, no ruler will be able to do anything about it. So the first step is to turn to Allaah and remember that all things are under his power. Nothing will occur unless He wills it and allows it to happen.

Secondly, we must also make da'wah for them. We must make the people realise their rights upon us. We must make the people realise that when the scholars are taken it is something even greater than common Muslims because Islaam itself may be harmed. We must make people realise the extent of the oppression that they are facing. Nowadays media and governments are very good at trying to put all of the blame of the scholars and make it seem like everything that happens to them is just the result of their own actions. Many people are fooled by such tricks and begin to believe evil about our scholars. We must prove to them that such claims against our scholars are false and are simply tricks that are being done.

Finally, we must be willing to do whatever is in our power, according to our ijtihaad and within the confines of the shariaah. We must always keep in mind the principle that we cannot remove one munkar by an action that will produce a greater munkar. We must be patient when necessary and not be over-energetic, immature fools in our action. When we do that, we are not helping our cause whatsoever but we are hurting it. However, we must always remember that it is our obligation to stand up for the truth. It is our obligation and as individuals and as a community - to stop oppression and injustice. It is our duty to advise all who have influence and power to put an end to the wrongs that they are committing. The Prophet (saw) said, ***"If the people see an oppressor and they do not take him by his hand [to stop him] then they will soon all receive a punishment from Allaah"*** (Abu Dawood, al-Albaani grades it sahih, see Sahih al-Jaami' as-Sagheer, vol.1, p. 398 no. 1973)

This is what we must do to fulfill some of the rights of these scholars - through whose efforts many of us have been able to see and understand the light and guidance of the Qur'aan and Sunnah. We should do these things for every Muslim but when it comes to the scholars, then the situation and the responsibility becomes even greater.

We pray that Allaah removes all the hardship that all of our scholars are facing. We pray that Allaah gives them the freedom and the ability to be able to speak and guide us all to the Straight Path. We pray that we will have the ability to listen to them and to be guided by their knowledge.

