

Maulana Syed Muhammad Zaki Baqri

By: Hasina H. Sajun

Maulana Syed Zaki Baqri addressed mammoth crowds last year at Defence and the Islamic Research Center, Gulshan, every night. Invited from Toronto to speak in Mohurrum at Karachi for the second consecutive year, his Vaiz were clear, lucid and interesting.

It is said that Islam gets rejuvenated with the annual observance of the Martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his loyal companions at Karbala. As a moral rearmament is the need of the hour ... when people are indulging in un-islamic behaviour, when dishonesty, bribery, corruption and greed are rampant in Society, at a time when enlightened parents are at wits end on how to preserve and impart to their off spring the great Islamic values and principles, Maulana Baqri's vaiz were like a breath of fresh air – both reviving and sustaining.

Modest, unassuming, and gentle Maulana spoke on Tauheed and Ahlul Bait – stressing the point that each of us the young and old must work and do our share without a thought to win worldly laurels and positions. To act and perform our duties in the best way ... this is the nucleus – not for name, wealth or status.

In an informal meeting with the Maulana, he explained that the themes of his lectures are not to attack the deeds of a person but to encourage the correction of their thinking. Do not attack any ones actions, Islam says to speak in a good manner. Islam teaches us to do so. When you say don't this don't that, people will run away from you. When the thinking is corrected the actions get corrected themselves. Maulana Baqri (seems to tend the roots while others only trim the foliage).

Having spent more than eighteen years in Capada, Maulana Baqri has made a wide contribution to the Islamic community there. In 1984, Maulana Baqri established 'The Council of Islamic Guidance' and in 1995, he opened the "The Al-Mahdi Islamic Center". He started the Al-Baqri Association, which helps young people to find life partners without moving away from Islamic principles.

Many of our young people are moving away to the west and we are concerned for their moving away from Islamic principles. Baqri Saheb said that he was confident that the young Muslims in Canada and the USA were very deeply committed to Islam. He said they can see for themselves the two completely different cultures there. There is no Grey area. In fact when he compares the Muslim kids in the West to those in the East, he finds the western kids better informed, more knowledgeable, they learn from the challenge they are facing in the modern society and this helping them to hold fast to their own beliefs.

Maulana Baqri said that children are learning to think for themselves, they study then evaluate and have arrived at their beliefs and conclusions. What appeals to the young people there is that Islam is presented to them in a logical manner? They compare the

Islamic values and the Western to which they are exposed and they make their choice. He firmly believes that Guidance and Inspiration come from Allah ... as the Quran says those who are guided by Allah no one can misguide.

In answer to the Pakistanis who voiced their concern at the conditions here, the Maulana said that looking at Pakistan from far one cannot make out what is the vision that you hold for a Pakistani society, Eastern, Western or Islamic, what is the behaviour you want from your society... you cannot blend these three ... Islamic of course we think, why do we take that is most undesirable from the West ... why don't we not take their example of justice and accountability? Why not their example of honesty, integrity? He says he often quotes the words of Jamaluddin Afghani who on return from his travels said that, "I found Islam there but no Muslims, and here I find Muslims but no Islam", if we had noticed that the many Muslims who have migrated to the West became good Muslims immediately? Explaining this phenomena he said there are three securities which are the basic rights of a Citizen.

Firstly physical or bodily security secondly honour, and thirdly security of wealth. The Muslims who went to the West upliftment here and the distribution of wealth is very unequal. Poverty leaves no inclination towards beliefs but when this aspect of life is taken care of then one can think of God, morals etc. In the West, one can see clearly the practise of Justice and the fulfilling of the citizens basic rights.

Conversation came round to the fact that the basic responsibility to instill and nurture the correct values in our children rests upon us - parents. Maulana Baqri said that the time we used to spend with our children in reading to them and discussing and chatting with them has now been taken over by Television. The largest single INVASION in our homes has been the media invasion of our lives.

Static show that if a child has been watching TV from the age of five upto twenty one, he is likely to have witnessed; thirty five thousand murders and seventy five thousand crimes ... so a person gets desensitized! Television is power and power can be misused. It is upto the parents to ration the TV time and to lockup certain web-sites surfing on the Internet.

There is violence in every program, whether it be the News, a documentary or a Cartoon film. People who air the programs also should have some moral responsibilities and there must be a law concerning violence and its display in the programs was the opinion of an observer present.

The 1979 revolution of Iran was time when he felt that a current passed through the world a current that shook up the dead body as if someone had awakened and revived religion. The revival of interest was not only confined to the Muslim world but he felt that every religion felt it, the Sikhs, the Hindus the Afrikaans all of them they felt that there was something in their religion, they gave a lot of inspiration, it was a revival of all religious. Everyone back to their roots in Religious. Even in America, there has been a revival in

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religion. Studies started being conducted on how much prayer helps in curing illness. What was the difference in recovery rate between church goers and non-churchgoers etc?

Baqri Saheb says that Islam is the fastest growing religion today. Islam is self growing without much help or effort of the Muslims but he said that just as the Computer is one thing but the turbo a separate thing but the force so to say he said if we Muslims would become the turbo then we would see fantastic results.

On asking Maulana Baqri for a message for us. He said the first message is ... go back to the main teaching of Islam. Islam means peace - it never teaches violence - this violence is not coming from Islam it is coming from outside Islam.

It is the duty of all Muslims first of all the have a brotherly feeling, the Quran says momins are brothers of one another so what happened to that brotherhood. Even with non-Muslims, you are supposed to have good relations. If we practise this, the new generation will practise this too.

Instructions for Life:

Contributed by Aymen Mohammed Fazel

- 1) *Talk slowly but think quickly.*
- 2) *When you lose, don't lose the lesson.*
- 3) *Remember the three R's; respect for self, respect for others and responsibility for all your actions.*
- 4) *Read more books and watch less TV.*
- 5) *Share your knowledge. It's a way to achieve immortality.*
- 6) *Be gentle with the earth.*
- 7) *Don't let a little dispute injure a great friendship.*

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