### 12/00/1995

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# Shuraa Baynahum and the Role of the Imam

### By Imam W. Deen Mohammed

IWDM: As Salaam Alaikum.

Audience: Wa Alaikum Salam.

IWDM: Bismillah Ar-Rahmaan Ar-Raheem. Alhamdulillah. La ilaaha illallahu, wahdahu la shareeka lahu, wa ash hadu anna Muhammadan 'abduhu wa rasooluhu, sallallaahu alayhi wasallam. Wa ba'd. With God's name, the Merciful Benefactor, the Merciful Redeemer. We praise God and witness that He is one, and we witness that Muhammad is the messenger, servant and messenger of God.

 ... I should first say that I'm impressed to hear of the growth of the facility here, the businesses, and also to see so many of you all present here this evening, tonight, tonight. I know most of you, I do believe, are imams. The great majority of you. I see a couple that used to be imams, I don't know whether they're still imams or not, but I imagine they are. I guess once you're an imam, you're always an imam. ... Anyway, those two I'm referring to are people I admire. Truly, I admire them for their work in the community. It's a great pleasure to see you here.

 Now, for a word on the shura. The shura is something that we've been talking about, and we haven't realized it yet. We've been talking about it for years. We're not pleased. Personally, I'm not pleased, and I know others are not pleased, because we're talking to each other. We're not pleased with the shura that we have in the community yet. I don't know how well you're doing in the Chicago area, but I do know the national shura has not functioned as a shura. To function as a shura, we have to not permit each other to speak and have ... something to say ... or advice to give or something to contribute to a decision. We have to insist upon that, because without that, there is no shura. There's no shura if the participants are not participating. We can't have a shura, and people are just sitting there, and one person or 2-3 people having everything to say. The shura only works when the persons who are members of the shura have their say. If your say is no more than 'yes', you should say that. You have to have a say to be members of a shura.

 "Shura baynahum", that's the expression. "Shura baynahum". "Shura baynahum" means consultation among themselves or between themselves. Consultation between themselves, it mean each member is being consulted. Each member is a person to be consulted, and that's what make the shura. When the discussion is going backwards and forward; I'm having something to say, you're having something to say back to me, that's shura. Without that, there's no shura. One-way talk is no shura, you see. We haven't had that. We want that, but we haven't had that. I know some local areas that's pretty good, but they're not really having a Islamic shura for the whole community. They're having a local shura, and usually the interest is not directly da'wah. The interest is politics, or the interest is business. It seem that they can meet and have a better shura discussing business or politics than we can representing Islam and representing a religion. That means that either we are ignorant of what our role and participation should be, or we are shy and we just sit back and let others just take, take, take, take them all and just run with it, and we don't have any role on the field at all. That's no good.

 "Shura baynahum." "Shura baynahum." Shura, more and more, is becoming for nations, like Saudi Arabia that I just visited, it's becoming for nations what we have in this country as the ... congress. The congress. The shura is functioning very much for some of these nations the way our congress functions for us. The senators and the congressmen, the representatives, they work together with the president ... and with other branches of government to make the government work as it was designed to work. We don't have exactly the same idea of government in Islam that we find in America. It's just different, but there is a lot of similarities.

 The main point is that we don't have a one-man rule in Islam. There's no such thing as one-man rule in Islam. There's never been one-man rule in Islam. The Prophet himself was the prophet and messenger of God receiving word, direction directly from God Almighty, but he invited his companions and the learned people, the experienced people to participate in decision making, to have something to say. He insisted that they have that, that they say. "What do you say about this?" he would say. "Well, what do you say about this, so and so and so?" This was his way, peace be upon him. Though he was a prophet of God with authority to tell us what God said, he invited his associates who had experience and knowledge to have something to say and a role in the decisions. This is what we want, and insha Allah, one day we will have it. That's all I wanted to say for the shura.

 We'll be reading the Qur'an in the month of Ramadan and you will come upon the word shura. Definitely so if you read the Quran, the whole of it in the month of Ramadan. I plan to spend the month of Ramadan in Makkah and Madinah, mostly in Madinah, insha Allah. I made a plan to go for personal interest. When I say personal interest, I mean my own personal knowledge, expanding my mind, increasing my knowledge, strengthening my spirit, etc. by meeting with the top people in Islam. I have been granted that I met with them in Saudi Arabia. I met with the top people in Islam, the most learned leaders in Islam in Saudi Arabia. I met with them, and we had good conversation. We formed a friendship. They're very friendly. They have some very good friends in the top leadership there in Saudi Arabia. Praise be to Allah. Yes, it is wonderful. I'm going back, insha Allah, maybe about 10 days before Ramadan starts. I'll stay until Ramadan is over, and then I'll return, insha Allah. Masjid, I thought I should tell you that, because I owe you a lot. I do! I sure owe it to you to tell you where I'm going, especially when I'm going out of the country, because we are one. We should see ourselves as one.

 Yes. Now, I would like to speak to you a little bit on your job, your work, your imam. Your work is the work of an imam. I'm looking at enough of you right now to really change the spirit of this whole area. That's right. If all of us was dedicated to the same thing ... and went out and worked for it. Right. We could change this whole area, make the spirit great. When the spirit great great, then the work becomes great. People don't work when they don't have a spirit to work. It's very difficult to work when you don't have a spirit to work. We can do it! It's very easy, very easy, but you have to be serious, you have to have your eyes open, you have to be looking at something, you have to know what you're looking at, and you have to be interested in making it better and better all the time. That's your work. You should know your work, you should have your eyes on your work, you should be interested in making your work better and better all the time. Never be satisfied not being more productive next week than you were last week. We should always be striving to be more productive, and we should be competing with each other in the spirit of the desire to see good grow and increase, you see. Generally, all good, overall good grow and increase.

 Allah says to us in the Qur'an, "Go as in a race toward all that is good." Yes. That means we are to compete with each other. That was encouraged in the time of the honorable Elijah Muhammad. The east coast, it developed with about the same number of imams we have here. It had about this number of very serious hardworking imams. They were called ministers. They weren't imams like us, and they were encouraged to compete with each other. Say, "Brother, how many, how many buses will you have?" or "How many, uh, um, will you bring to the, to the monthly meeting?" Once a month, they have a regional meeting, all come together. "How many did you have last Sunday?" "Well brother, you, this brother had more than you, brother, you know!" It was a friendly competition, and that's we need now, a friendly competition. We need to embarrass each other in a friendly way. Say, "Brother, how long have you been doing this?" Right?

Speaker 3: Right.

IWDM: So much for that.

 Now, let's look at some, I would say, statements from God in the Qur'an and the Prophet that give form, shape, picture, identity to our work. God says in the Qur'an, "Wa'mil bil ma'roof," "Wa'mil bil ma'roof." "Order, command, instruct by what is the good standard and the known standard." Ma'roof, meaning what is known to be the standard of excellence or goodness. Ma'roof, from 'arafa, from the verb 'arafa. 'Arafa means to know, to be informed, to know about this. "Wa'mil bil ma'roof," order, command and instruct upon what has been established as the known principle, known guideline, known rule. Known, it's acknowledged. What is acknowledged? La ilaaha illallah. There is no God but one God. That's acknowledged. Everybody knows that who's a Muslim. He should, yeah. Muhammad rasoolullah. This is ma'roof, isn't it?

Speaker 3: Yes, it is.

IWDM: It's known, well-known and established, and ma'roof means well-known and established. "Wa'mil bil ma'roof", command, order, instruct by that that is known, well-known and established as a standard. It's the standard. It's the standard. Standard rule, standard principle, standard guideline, standard knowledge, standard. "Wa'mil bil ma'roof".

 Now, "Wenha 'anil munkar." "And forbid, resist, push back the munkar." Munkar, they give many different translations: that that is bad, that that is harmful, that that is unjust, not fair, etc. The word munkar comes from a word which means void, empty, nothing is there. What will make void our religion? Keep away from it! What will nullify our religion? Keep away from it! What will decrease our religion in its value or in its beauty or in its strength? If you see it coming, you're supposed to resist it. You're supposed to prohibit that thing. "Wenha" means prohibit, forbid it, keep it away. That tells us that God has commanded us, he has given us a command to uphold the high standards of Islam that are well-known and established, and to fight against, protect this religion and our lives against anything that will come to discredit this religion, to weaken this religion, to corrupt this religion, etc. or to make void this religion. Because after you have so much wrong in a religion, then the religion like that is void. The religion is void. It's no more the same religion. It's void.

 We know good deeds erase bad deeds, right?

Speaker 3: That's right. Yes.

IWDM: If good deeds erase bad deeds, bad deeds erase good deeds, right?

Speaker 3: That's right.

IWDM: Yes! If good deeds erase bad deeds, bad deeds erase good deeds! Because you need so many good deeds to erase the bad deeds, right?

Speaker 3: Right. That's right.

IWDM: If you're not erasing with the good pencil, then the bad pencil is writing, right?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

IWDM: It's just piling up, piling up, piling up, piling up, a lot to deal with later on, right? I repeat, If good deeds erase bad deeds, then bad deeds also erase good deeds. Enough bad deeds will cancel out your good, right?

Speaker 3: That's right.

IWDM: Yes. Well, that's the "wenha 'anil munkar." To wenha, wenha 'anil munkar. Keep away, prevent, prohibit those things that will cancel out the good, that will make void the good, that will weaken the religion, that will corrupt the ideas. You have to be on guard for that.

 This is the duty of every imam, the duty of every preacher of this religion. We're not just imams, we're also daa'ees. Daa'ees mean those that call to the way of God. "Id'oo ila sabeelillaahi bil hikmah wal maw'ithatil hasanah." "Call to the way of God with wisdom and with kind and excellent preaching," right? This is the instructions of God to us, you see. We are daa'ees also, and the Prophet was a daa'ee. The Prophet himself was a daa'ee, peace be upon him. He said, "We have heard a caller calling to faith, a caller saying, "Come to faith!" and we have responded saying, "We believe."" This is the Qur'an. This is in the Qur'an. The Prophet himself is a daa'ee, and a preacher is a different word. It's from waa'ith. Waa'ith means to preach. It'd be not common for the Muslim leaders to be called preachers. That's not common expression for Muslim leaders. The most common expressions for Muslim leaders, Islamic leaders is imam and daa'ee. The work of the imam or the daa'ee is da'wah. Da'wah, da'wah, that's the da'wah. From the same word, which means to call, to invite. It's not just any call, it's an invitation. It's an invitation. It's a call that is an invitation, an invitation to respond to God.

 Now, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, he has also given us from himself and also from his mouth help for us to understand our job, what our job is. The Prophet said to us through his companions and also directly, that is by his words that we have, we read them, they are preserved, that ... we should not ... do anything ... that requires more than one person to do it without assigning somebody the position or responsibility, and the others answer to that person. This tells us that the Prophet came to show us that we need leadership.

 We need leadership! Right now, when you get ready to leave here, I don't think you want to leave everything just as it is. You brothers should volunteer and say, "Brothers, you've been so nice to accommodate us here. What can we do to help you get the place in order?" Right?

Speaker 3: Right.

IWDM: Now, if you do that, you all shouldn't say to me ... It just naturally happened that one brother will say, "Brother, brother, brothers, here. Let's get the chairs over here." Right?

Speaker 3: Right.

IWDM: "Let's put the chairs over here," or "Brother so and so, where do you want us to put these chairs?" Somebody will just volunteer, the leader just pops up. It's natural for him, but if he doesn't pop up, you all should say, "Well, who's going to be the team leader for this job here?" Who's going to be the team leader? Get a team leader! This is the way of the Prophet. This is Islam. This is the way of the Prophet, and this is Islam.

 We need leadership. If you come and organize to propagate in any city or any town, you should also have shura and also, while you're having shura, decide on who is your leader. Make somebody a leader, somebody should be your leader. When you're dissatisfied with him, then change him, and get another leader, but have a leader. Make somebody a leader. Even if it's in this very small town, maybe it's in ... Whiting ... What's this town? ... Hammond, Hammond, little small town over there, over east. Hammond, little small town. No matter how small the town, if you're there as Muslims, organize, discuss your plans for the area, discuss your needs in the area, and decide upon who is going to represent you as your leader. This is Islam. This is the way of the Prophet.

 The Prophet also insisted that we get advice from those who are best qualified to give it. You're not supposed to seek advice from a fool! Everybody know he's a known fool. He's a well-known fool, everybody know he's a fool. Then, why you always get his advice? Why you going to ask him his advice? If he offers it, you should tell him, "Brother, brother, just, just ... Please! Not, not, not here!" Yeah, yes. You should look for advice from those who are best qualified to give it. They should be knowledgeable first of all in Islam, and they should be intelligent. They should be rational, and they should respect knowledge, all knowledge. They should respect all knowledge. Some of us are so crazy in the religion that if two and two is not in the Qur'an, "Brother, I'm not interested in that, brother. As far as I'm concerned, two and two could be eight! The only thing I'm interested in is this Qur'an, brother." Well, when you get like that, you're crazy!

 Let's not let the wrong people take charge of things, right? Help them, but don't let them take charge of things, right? We should seek the best. ... To get up out of the bed and go to work, don't you use the best that's in you?

Speaker 3: Yes. That's right.

IWDM: Well, a collective body is the same way. You got some job to get up and do, you're supposed to use the best in that collective body. That makes all the sense, that's right. Yes. Praise be to Allah. One more point, and then I'm going to conclude.

 Now, [inaudible 23:46] "Wa'mil bil ma'roof wenha 'anil munkar." These are two very general statements. "Wa'mil bil ma'roof," "order or command by what is well-known and established", bil ma'roof. Very general, right?

Speaker 3: Right.

IWDM: "Wenha 'anil munkar". Again, very general. "And prohibit that that is bad." Very general statements. Now, if ... there is a problem in the town that we live in, ... the problem is drugs, or the problem is child abuse, or the problem is break-ins, or purse snatching. No matter what it is, Muslims are supposed to be on the side of those people that's against that. You're not supposed to be neutral!

 "Wa'mil bil ma'roof," it's known, well-known that we should be against those things, you see. That's ma'roof that we should be against those thing! Don't say, "Well, that's their business, you know. Our thing is here, you know. We do our thing." No, no. You're supposed to let it be known that you're against that even if you don't join the people. Even if you don't join them in an organized effort to address those things, you should have a separate effort of your own, and your voice though should be with them. Though you have a separate effort, your voice should be with them. It should be known that your voice is with them. We're against this in this neighborhood, we're against this in this town. Whatever, you see. That's what I'd like to see the imams do too.

 I would like to see the imams stand up for whatever is just, stand up for whatever is right. No matter whether it be Christian or Muslim or anybody else. Stand up for what is right. When you stand up for what is right, then you begin to convince people that you're serious, and you're sincere. If they see you talk a lot of good talk, but they never see you stand up for what is right, then they wonder about you, and they have right to wonder about you.

 Thank you very much. I wish I could talk to you longer. May God guide us always, forgive us our errors and our sins, grant us mercy. Ameen. As Salaam Alaikum.