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PAKISTANI GOVERNMENT'S PLOT TO TRANSFORM THE MADAARIS INTO BOOTLICKING ENTITIES

The following is a bayaan of Hadhrat Maulana Saleemullah Khan (Rahmatullah alayh), the former Head of Wifaaqul Madaaris in Pakistan.

A LEGACY OF RESISTANCE TO THE TREACHERY AND PLOTS OF THE GOVERNMENT

As the Head of Wifaqul Ulama, I have faced the issue of government interference in Madaris for over 30 years, while many others are only now becoming acquainted with it. This challenge dates back to the era of General Ayub Khan, who sought to eliminate the influence of Madaris in Pakistan.

General Ayub consulted with high-ranking officials in Egypt, complaining about the perceived obstacles posed by the Ulama in Pakistan. He said the ulama are creating great problems and have become a barrier. He was advised to transform them into government Molvis – employees (and stooges) by bringing the Madaris under state control. Government employment is a very dangerous thing. The plan was straightforward: make them into government ulama. Once the Ulama are dependent on government salaries, they will no longer question or resist government policies. They will accept every statement of yours. And they will not interfere at all with the government.

The Birth of Wifaqul Madaris

Following this advice, General Ayub began devising a strategy to bring the Madaris under government oversight. It was during this period that Wifaqul Madaris was established. Then came the rule of Bhutto, then Zia-ul Haq, then Benazir Bhutto, then Nawaz Shareef, then Benazir came into power once again, and again Nawaz Shareef and now Parwez Musharraf is ruling. This was the full sequence of rulers.

During this entire period, each leader who came to power, analysed the failures of his predecessor in controlling the Madaris. Now the government that has taken control is seeing that there was a failure right from the beginning. There seems to be no way to control these madaaris. They introduced various strategies, such as setting up model schools and colleges and granting Madaris university status.

Wifaqul Madaris is an independent, unified body representing the majority of Madaris in Pakistan. The madaaris of the Ahlus Sunnah Deobandi school of thought are approximately three-quarters of Wifaq. The remaining Madaris of the other schools of thought, including Barelwi, Maududi, Ghair Muqallid and Shia schools of thought, make up 25%. Now all the different Wifaqs of the different schools of thought became united and took a united stance. The result of this united front resulted in the fact that no scheme of the government was successful. Therefore, they said we should establish model schools and colleges. And give the madaaris the status of universities. What will be the result of all of this?

These initiatives aimed to weaken the influence of Wifaqul Madaris by encouraging individual Madaris to detach themselves from its framework and become susceptible to government control. People would then attach themselves to model schools and model colleges. People will establish universities that will be independent. It will become very easy for the government to lay hands on them. This is the summary of their plan.

The Strategies and Their Consequences

While I do not question the sincerity of those who devised these strategies, their consequences are evident today. Institutions like Bahawalpur University and the International Islamic University of Islamabad stand as examples of the outcomes. The graduates of these universities, despite their academic credentials, often fail to serve the Muslim Ummah effectively.

The Ummah does not need theses, researchers or scholars who focus solely on theoretical studies. Instead, it requires dedicated Ulama—committed individuals willing to sacrifice their lives to protect and uphold Deen and Islam. The strategies aimed at creating modern schools and universities, or dividing Wifaqul Madaris, have persisted since General Ayub's time till today, but have consistently failed. I firmly believe, with full reliance on Allah Ta'ala, that such efforts will continue to fail and even this government will fail. I have no doubt in this.

Nevertheless, Allah does what He intends. At every moment, we submit to whatever decision He makes.

What right does the government have to change our syllabi, especially those in government that have evil intentions. They never build our madaaris.

Independence of the Madaris

Madaris that remain independent of government control owe nothing to the state. The government did not contribute to building these institutions, filling their libraries, or paying their staff. Each madrasah has a budget that goes into the hundreds of thousands. What has the government contributed towards these expenses? Consequently, government officials have no justification for interfering in their operations.

Conversely, Madaris under government supervision should be subject to scrutiny. The condition of these government-controlled institutes is absolutely pathetic. Many of these institutions, along with their government-aligned spokespersons, are plagued by corruption and mismanagement. Universities, for example, have become breeding grounds for murder and numerous other issues. Graduates often struggle to secure jobs, and those who do find employment face challenges in maintaining their positions.

Yet you, the government are grieved by these private madaaris which are booting your financial assistance aside. They do not need your support in the least. They neither require your zakaat nor any other financial assistance. They do not need your computers or your teaching staff. Use that in your schools and colleges.

The government should focus on addressing its own shortcomings rather than targeting independent Madaris, which operate without any financial support, resources, or equipment from the state.

Speaking Out for Justice

As the principal of Jamia Farooqiya, I consider it my moral duty to speak out against these issues. Remaining silent would make me complicit in this injustice. I also speak as the head of Wifaqul Madaris, representing the collective voice of countless Madaaris across Pakistan, for which I am responsible.

It is imperative that we protect the autonomy of our Madaris from ill-intentioned interference, ensuring they continue to serve as bastions of Islamic knowledge and guardians of Deen.