

Response to Mr Shaheer Khan's query

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Salam dear Bhai Shaheer Khan Sahab !

Thank you for kindly passing over to me pdf of a recent facebook post and seeking my comments thereabout. It is reassuring that still there are persons of integrity caring to cherish the *Ummah* cause.

You'd have heard the anecdote that a man flying in a hot-air balloon lost his way and abruptly landed in the midst of a paddy field. He was nonplussed ... in the wilderness. Luckily he noticed a passerby and asked, "Sir, can you please tell me as to where am I now?" Pat came the response, 'You're inside a hot-air balloon in the midst of a paddy field'. The answer was factually correct but did not address the question's essence.

At times, one may technically answer a question well but may fall short of aptly relating it with the larger issue at hand. On his part, the balloon-man didn't specify the information that he needed and yet put the onus on the passerby to go deeper into the query.

There are other important aspects of the matter. While making a statement of facts it is imperative to keep in mind the ongoing situational and emotional context.

Yet, we also need to appreciate that there are occasions when a mentor takes a position that may apparently look as if it is begging the question. Yet, in the long run, it could immensely benefit the larger cause. Here, one is reminded of the joint voyage of *Hazrat Khizr (As)* and *Hazrat Moosa (As)* as referred to in *Quran Karim*. During the odyssey, the former did not feel comfortable with the latter's misgivings even though his questions were fully justified. Later, in comparative peace, *Hazrat Khizr* explained the rationale latent behind what all he did that had perplexed *Hazrat Moosa*.

During 1981-84, as part of the Government of India, I was heading the Income-tax Office in Aligarh. At Marris Road, there was sprawling 11,000 sq yard bungalow housing my office-cum-residence. Outside, on the road, the enamel plate displayed my name as usual in Hindi & English. A close AMU friend visited me and pointed out that I did not get my name written in Urdu. I told him that I could use my official clout to get that done but, in that case, I might not be able to do some other stuff which my friend would like me to continue doing. He immediately said that there is no

need to add another language outside and I should continue my forays.

It's all a matter of intention (Niyat). The famous *Hadis* goes, *Innamal a'maala bin niyyati*: Motive determines the value of all conduct.

You might be aware that since 2007 at Sir Syed Coaching & Guidance Centre for Competitive Examinations (a unit of Zakat Foundation of India zakatindia.org) we have been doing the project of empowering the *Ummah* by identifying the potential youth and providing them professional coaching. The results are, *alhamdulillah*, continuously quite satisfying. In this context, sometimes, some persons ask us in good faith whether such successful candidates are serving the basic cause. Our usual answer to them is two-fold. One, yes, sure, they do. Two, I shouldn't presume that I am closer to Allah than the other fellow; only He knows who'd be standing where in the judgement-day queue.

Nonetheless, the benevolent habit of raising doubts and asking questions must continue ... serving well the purpose of enriching the discourse and strengthening its fruitfulness.
