



جامعة علماء سريلانكا

ALL CEYLON JAMIYYATHUL ULAMA

(Incorporated by Act of Parliament No.: 51 of 2000)

DECLARATION OF UNITY



In the Name of Allah, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

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by

All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama

It is a known fact that the Muslims who have been living for over a thousand years in Sri Lanka carry out their religious rituals and obligations cohesively and without any obstacles, according to the views of 'Ahlus SunnathWal Jama'ath'.

Moreover, the branches of various Thareekas as well as Da'wah organizations have been striving for the spiritual fortification of the community throughout its long history here. Although few minor disagreements do exist over different views and interpretations among these factions, their overall objectives had been identical and hitherto, there were no serious conflicts among them that could impede the general accord of the Muslim community.

However, upon observing certain recent unpleasant incidents that occurred in the name of the religion, it gives grave concerns about the core unity of the community.

The All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama strongly believes that it is the urgent call of the hour and is an irrefutable religious obligation to act at once for the restoration of the accord among the entire Muslim community. Consequently, the ACJU has been active, since August 2009, to plan and initiate various actions.

Accordingly, one of the noteworthy initiations it has taken is establishing a body consisting of renowned Islamic religious scholars who represent various accepted Islamic schools of thoughts and Da'wah organizations present in this country. This body which will be functioning under the designation Council of Cooperation and Coordination. Prominent Ulama who represent Tharikas, All Ceylon Thableegh Jama'ath, Jama'athe Islami along with the other Thowheed Institutions will be the members of this Council.

During several sittings, an array of important issues were thoroughly analyzed by the gathered Islamic intellects and it was unanimously agreed upon that it is of paramount importance to re-establish the unity in the Ummah. Furthermore, certain guidelines also were established upon the unanimous consent ensuring to see that no similar unpleasant incidents ever occur in the name of the religion in this country. Our Imams as well as Islamic scholars have given us ample guidance on how to act during disagreements. By following these guidelines we will be able to continue our spiritual life while tolerating the different views.

Islam is a religion that prescribes comprehensive guidance to successfully conduct the life of the humankind. All its directives are derived from the light of the Holy Qur'an and from the Sunnah. The guidance needed for the mankind is enjoined in the Holy Qur'an and they are further explained in the Traditions of the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihiwasallam) Moreover, he granted the right to the Ulama to derive legislations for novel situation from the above two noble sources. Directives of Fikh are a compilation of these elements of Islamic legislation.

Everyone of us know that during several occasions more than one opinion had been put forth for a given issue by the Sahabah as well as by the Imams who came in the succeeding eras. There are four main reasons for this kind of varying stances. One is the different views prevailed among our peers over authenticating Hadeeth narrations. Another is the apparent difference among the very Hadeeth narrations that are established as indisputably Authentic. The other two reasons are the linguistic ambiguity and fourthly the different criteria existed for establishing legislations. However, it should be understood that all different views of the Shari'ah were intended for the wellbeing of the mankind. In their overall objective, all the differing scholars were equal. Therefore, these differences should be treated as blessings of the Almighty and it should be further understood that each of them are just, practical, logical, natural as well as unavoidable in their own rights.

This kind of situations had prevailed since the time of the noble Companions of the Holy Prophet (Sallallhu Alaihiwasallam).

Moreover, without doubt it would remain to be so as long as man is capable of evaluating things. The evidence that disagreements did rise among the Sahabah can be seen in the Authentic Books of Traditions such as Shaheeh Buhary, Shaheeh Muslim, etc.

Abdullah Ibnu Umar (Raliyallahu Anhu) reports: During the days of Ahzab, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihiwasallam) announced 'No one should perform Asar except in the Banu Kuraila.' Subsequently, a group of Sahabah reached the time of Asar while they were advancing towards Banu Kuraila. Some of them said that they would not perform Asar until they reached it (Banu Kurailas). Yet some others said, 'We will perform Salath and it is not (what exactly) expected from us' When it was reported to the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihiwasallam) he did not reprove anyone.

(Book: Shaheehul Bukhary, Hadeeth.No. 4119)

There were over a hundred disagreements over religious matters between Abdullah Ibnu Masood and Umar (Raliyallahu Anhum). Yet, their love for each other did not ebb because of those disagreements. The following incident is a good example for this attitude:

Two persons came to meet Abdullah Ibnu Masood (Raliyallahu Anhu). One of them had been a student of Umar (Raliyallahu Anhu) and the other was a student of another Companion of the Prophet. When the student of Umar (Raliyallahu Anhu) said that he learned from Umar (Raliyallahu Anhu), Ibnu Masood (Raliyallahu Anhu) started to weep so profoundly, gravel stones became wet with his tears. He requested the person to recite as Umar (Raliyallahu Anhu) would recite and further said 'Umar had been a fortress that protected Islam'

(Book: Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaibah)

Similarly, when disagreements over certain issues erupted among other Sahabah as well as among the Thabi'een and Imams they followed the noble examples and invariably respected their brethren who held different views. This gracious attitude helps assuage discord and clashes among the Ummah.

If religious scholars differ in a certain matter they do so only upon the authentic facts they had in their possession. Mazhabs are too viewed from this standpoint.

Therefore, if there are different kinds of views for a given matter, anyone can choose to follow one of the views and it is not against the religion.

We should be attentive of the fact that though we are a minority living in this country we do have the responsibility of illustrating the Islamic life to others in an exemplary way. It is not going to serve any purpose if we start to quarrel among us upon trivial matters, ignoring our paramount obligation of demonstrating the gracious characteristics of Islam to our fellow countrymen.

The following report of Abdullah Ibnu Amr (Raliyallahu Anhu) stresses how sternly the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihiwasallam) shunned the bickering attitude within the believers:

'I came towards the Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihiwasallam) during noon time. We sat on the doorway The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihiwasallam) heard the commotion of two men who were disputing over two Verses. Their uproar (gradually) increased. Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihiwasallam) came out with resentment on his countenance said 'People who came before you perished because they quarreled over their religion'.
(Book: *Al Ibanah Al Qubra*)

Imam Sufiyan Ath-Thawree (Rahmathullahi Alahi) advices on how to act during a disagreement as follows:

If you see a person performing a deed which has disagreements over it. Even if you have a different standpoint in that deed, do not obstruct that person.
(Book: *Hilyath Al Awliya'*)

Imam Navavi (Rahmathullahi Alahi) says this, in this regard: 'Only the deeds that have been unanimously consented to be forbidden should be stopped by the Ulama. Not the deeds that have

disagreements. Every Mujtahid (person who strives to derive religious legislation from authentic sources) is correct. We would not know them. There is no blame on the ones that erred' (Book: Rawlath Al Thaalibeen)

Therefore, the opinion of CCC is, if we Muslims adhere to the following disciplines, we can preserve the dignity of Islam as well as the concord of the Muslims:

- Identifying the fact that the conflicts in opinions the Islamic scholars raise are ultimately beneficial to the community in many ways and ascertaining that those were not proclaimed to create discord among the Muslims.
- Accepting the fact that difference in opinions in reality helps to fortify assumptions, diversify thinking and it also encourages enriching perspectives and further helps to see issues in a broader light.
- Acting with mutual respect during times of disagreements.
- Avoiding insisting a given view of a person is flawless and attempting to force it on others. Also refraining from opposing the person/s that decline to accept our view.
- Apart from the differences of opinions, being friendly with those differ from one's own opinion or in support of someone's opinion.
- Radiating adoration to persons who hold rival notions, by placing ourselves beyond the realm of ongoing conflicts. Accepting that others too have the right and the freedom to act upon their convictions as we possess the right and the freedom to do so. Also not attempting to impede, manipulate, hinder or disdain the views of others which we do not agree upon.
- Not employing the differences in opinions as criterion to evaluate, assess, accept or reject others.
- Determining one's own stand only upon clearly understanding all the arguments and counter-arguments of an issue that had been submitted for the issue with different views.
- Never manipulating the difference of opinions as tools that would jeopardize the very brotherhood and peace of the community.

- Refraining from unduly unveiling to the general masses the issues subjected to debates within the council that are related to orators, writers, Da'ees and reform activists, as much as possible.
- Reminding and asserting to the communes attached to Thareekas, Islamic organizations, movements, and Da'wah institutions constantly to firmly adhere to the guidelines prescribed.
- Ensuring that the Muslim media institutions do not unduly expose controversial issues to the general public.
- Every Thareeka and Da'wah organization should refrain from rebuking each other. Also should act with mutual understanding when they are engaged in their chosen concourses.
- All the organizations should observe oratory discipline especially when using loudspeakers.
- Not transforming Masjids, Da'wah Institutes and public stages into rings of squabble.
- Cooperating with one another when the opinions agree, while giving up when the opinions disagree with one another.

It should be asserted to everyone that establishing brotherhood and unity among the community is an irrefutable obligation of everyone. Islam never permits any matter whatsoever, to anyone whomsoever, that is detrimental to the preservation of brotherhood and harmony.

Since we have almost abandoned the gracious practices illustrated by the noble Sahabah during controversies and as we have discarded the examples of the Thabi'eens and those who came after their period and the Imams, the present day Muslims are being burdened with various anxieties as well as formidable complexities. Also they are gradually losing their peace of mind not to mention their physical health and they live constantly fearing for the unseen worse.

Upon observing this situation, the CCC, operating under ACJU, wishes to stress it's above laid down guidelines.

Therefore, the ACJU invites everyone to be attentive to above matters and remodel their behaviors accordingly. It further appeals to all its branches, mosques, Madrasas, schools, universities, and other relevant institutions to take an organized effort to educate the masses on the above principles in this time of need and launch them in this strife of making these instructions prevalent among everyone.

Some Special Notes:

- It is expected that the Imams in their Masjids, Ostaads in their Madrasas, Principals and Teachers in their schools, office employees in their offices, Muslim brothers and sisters at their home levels make an effort for a wide awareness of this Declaration of Unity.
- This Declaration of Unity is prepared by the Council of Coordination and Cooperation operating under the guidance of All Ceylon Jamiyyathul Ulama. The Council requests all Muslim brothers to avoid using this document for creating controversial issues in your area/s or use this document for legal actions.

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Note: The above text is translated into English from the original Tamil text. In the event of any inconsistency between the Tamil and English text, the Tamil text shall prevail.
