



“This car is too slow!” complained one person. “This food is too salty!” moaned another. “This house is too dark!” muttered a third. “This water is too cold!” exclaimed a fourth. “This clothing is too hot!” groaned a fifth.

Show the first person a child in a rural area who has to walk 20km a day merely to attend school. His complaint will cease. Show the second person people living in utter starvation. He will forget about his complaint. Show the third person people sleeping on the streets. Let alone complaining, he will become very grateful. Show the fourth person people without water in drought stricken areas. He will never complain about cold water again. Show the fifth person people covering their bodies with torn and tattered clothing. His complaint will be no more.

South Africa is admittedly a country with its fair share of challenges. From a currency dropping lower than a sunken submarine to a crime level constantly skyrocketing, many people live in doom and gloom, depressed over the sad state of affairs. However, if we reflect over the plight of those less fortunate than ourselves, we will realize that we still enjoy innumerable blessings and favours of Allah Ta‘ala. In fact, blessings in dunya aside, Allah Ta‘ala has blessed us immensely in Deen.

How many countries in the world enjoy our religious freedom, where we are allowed to build masaajid, madaaris, call out the azaan, dress as Muslims and uphold all other branches of Islamic life? Going a step further – despite our Muslim community of South Africa being relatively young and a minority, forming approximately only 2% of the population, Allah Ta‘ala has granted us productive and progressive structures of Deen, the fruits of which are even enjoyed by other countries around the globe.

Among the greatest of Deeni blessings that the South African Muslims enjoy is that of the makaatib (primary madrasahs). After the home, these madrasahs are the first step to acquiring the basic knowledge of Islam which forms the foundation of one’s Deen. Hence, it is commonly witnessed that those who are deprived of the basic maktab education are

often bereft of even the primary teachings of Islam.

The maktab system is so advanced in South Africa that we have multiple curriculums specifically formulated for the needs of our children. The network of makatib is so extensive that there is barely a town – nay a suburb – in which a maktab cannot be found. Our maktab system has been granted such success by Allah Ta'ala that many other countries have sent teams to South Africa with the goal of studying and replicating our system in their own areas.

A community without an 'aalim is a flock without a shepherd. In this regard, Allah Ta'ala has blessed us with many 'Ulama who are embodiments of piety, knowledge and sincerity. Whether in the role of imaams, asaaticah, spiritual guides, qaris, muftis, orators or all of these and more, the 'Ulama selflessly dedicate their lives to the service of the Muslims and upliftment of Deen.

Whereas the first 'Ulama of South Africa had either come from abroad or had studied abroad, Allah Ta'ala accepted our country to be the home of multiple Darul 'Ulooms. These centers of imparting Deen have produced 'Ulama that now serve locally and even internationally. Forty years ago, a locality would have to 'import' a haafiz to perform Taraaweeh Salaah in Ramadhaan. Now, we have such an abundance of huffaaz and 'Ulama that we 'export' to other countries. Furthermore, Allah Ta'ala has made our Darul 'Ulooms the center of attraction for students of all countries. From Muslim majority countries such as Malaysia to even Arab countries such as Palestine and Jordan, multitudes of students arrive on our shores to quench their thirst for Deen.

There are many countries, such as America, that enjoy highly advanced infrastructures, technologies and economies, yet lack the structures of Deen with which we have been blessed. While we have 'Ulama bodies for every province, attending to marriage counselling, Deeni education, issuing fatwa, social welfare and other projects, most areas in America lack sufficient 'Ulama to form bodies that can serve their needs.

On the subject of social welfare – Allah Ta'ala has assisted the humanitarian aid organizations of South Africa to take the lead in their field. They have progressed to the point where they have teams on standby around the globe, ever ready to respond to a crisis or emergency, and are often the first on the scene of a crisis or disaster.

Muslims prison boards seeing to the needs of Muslim inmates... The Tableegh Jamaat striving to rekindle the flames of imaan... Orphanages providing housing and care for the young whose parents have passed on... Easily available and abundant supply of halaal food... Pertinent and relevant Islamic programs to educate and inspire men and women... Burial and funeral organizations, ready to assist in even the dead of night... And the list of blessings that we enjoy goes on.

In the light of the abundant blessings that we enjoy, there are two things required from us. Firstly, we should avail of these structures and benefit from them. When these facilities are available, what prevents us from utilizing them and progressing in Deen?

Secondly, we need to appreciate and support these structures in their efforts, whether physically, financially or through du'aas. By doing so, we will avoid falling into ingratitude, Allah Ta'ala will grant us a share in the reward of their work, and He will also increase His favours upon us, paving the path for further progress.