

Our Devotion to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) Comes Before Our Devotion to Family and Career

In our era, devotion to family affairs, parenting, studies, career, business or trade comes before devotion to our Islamic duties towards the Islamic community (jamaa'ah) and the Deen. Such shortcoming is costly at a time that the oppression upon the Islamic Ummah has reached an all-time high. It seems as if the rulers of the Muslims are undertaking oppressive initiatives on behalf of the colonialists, without even trying to justify their stances. Major initiatives taken against the Ummah, its resources, its Deen and its lands no longer occur one after another. Several initiatives are underway in parallel at any given time. Indeed, it is upon every single Muslim to give their full share to the work for the restoration of the Khilafah (Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood. So it must not be that the civilian, upon whom it is a duty to carry the call for Islam, neglects his duty, giving family responsibilities as an excuse. It must not be that the army officer, upon whom it is a duty to grant the Nussrah to re-establish Islam as a state, fails in his responsibility on the grounds that he is committed to his demanding profession.

Indeed, man is inclined to his family and career by his nature. Such inclinations come from the instinctive constitution of man that Allah (swt) has created. Man has the instinct of procreation, so he feels mercy towards his offspring and compassion towards his parents. Man has the survival instinct, so he feels a sense of responsibility towards his studies, career or business. He has a drive to excel and honor his commitments. This is the origin of the conflict that man feels whenever he is asked to commit to a cause beyond his individualistic needs. In the Western world, devoid of guidance, there is much talk of work-life balance, quality time and sparing time for the community at large. The conflict cannot be resolved as the Western way of life is man-made, flawed and deficient. The man-made solutions do not resolve the conflict properly, providing tranquility. So, people are widely afflicted by guilt, regret, anxiety, stress and depression, as they juggle demands upon them, failing to strike a balance.

However, the Muslims are blessed with guidance from Allah (swt), Who created both man and his instincts. His (swt) Knowledge and Wisdom has no limitations whatsoever. Alhamdulillah for Islam that is the complete guidance. It is Islam that determines the balance in life and the priority in duties. It is the one Deen that firmly connects what came before and what came after, with this life. By doing so, it provides the elusive enlightenment that those afflicted by secularism seek. The enlightened one is the one who connects this life with what came before and what comes after life. Beyond this, Islam did not leave the inclination towards family affairs, trade and business to the instinctive desire alone. Instead, Islam shaped the inclination according to a clear conception of its proper place in life, with respect to Islam and Jihad. Allah (swt) said, **قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ** **سَيُؤْتِيهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَمَتَّبِعُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ** **“Say: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your kindred, the wealth that you have gained, the commerce in which you fear a decline, and the dwellings in which you delight are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger, and striving hard and fighting in His cause, then wait until Allah brings about His decision (torment). And Allah guides not the people who are doers of evil.”** [Surah At-Tawbah 9:24]. So according to the noble ayah, the love for fathers, sons, brothers, spouses, kindred, houses, trade and business must not come before the love for Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). This love for Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) is Obligatory (Fard). Love is an inclination (*mayl*) which shapes the behavioral disposition (*nafsiyyah*) of man. The love of Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw) is the type Allah (swt) has linked to a Sharee'ah concept, thereby making it Obligatory. Al-Azhari said, “A servant's love for Allah and His Messenger means obeying them and following their command.” Al-Baydaawi said, “Love is the will to obey.” Ibn 'Arafah said, “Love in the language of Arabs means willing a thing uprightly.” Az-Zajjaaj said, “Man's love for Allah and His Messenger is to obey them and to accept what Allah (swt) has commanded and the Messenger of Allah (saw) has brought.” So this

inclination is molded by Islam. The instinctive desire for family and career is overwhelmed by the desire to worship Allah (swt) and fulfill the duties in Islam.

Islam did mandate Obligations (faraa'id) towards parents, children, family, trade and business. Islam did praise the one who is devoted to maintaining the relations with the family. Islam does commend working conscientiously to fulfill the contracts of hiring and business as much as he can. However, the Islamic Ummah is not charged with these matters alone. It is a unique Islamic Ummah that has been charged with guiding all of humankind to the light of Islam. There is no Prophet after RasulAllah (saw), so it is upon the Ummah to carry the call of Islam. The Islamic Ummah is the best Ummah brought forwards to humankind, because it enjoins the good and forbids the evil. It is the Islamic Ummah that establishes Islam as a way of life as an example for all of humankind. It is the Islamic Ummah that calls the world to embrace Islam through a powerful Dawah. Moreover, when a people are inclined to Islam after receiving the Dawah, it is the Islamic Ummah that removes their rulers by Jihad of its armed forces. This is so that Islam can be practically implemented over them. The Muslim is not limited to the affairs of family and trade alone. His vision extends far beyond these matters, widened by the desire for the implementation of Islam, Dawah and Jihad. It is this powerful vision that allows him to sacrifice time from his family and trade, so that the prime of his time and the peak of his efforts is devoted for Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw). The Muslim prioritizes the work for the resumption of Islam as a way of life, the establishment of the Dawah and the restoration of Jihad as an organized and global initiative.

Throughout its centuries, the Islamic civilization brought forth personalities that were vehicles for change in society and the world. It made each and every Muslim care for the Islamic community and his Deen, compelling him to put asides personal ambitions and aspirations for the sake of Allah (saw). Thus, within the glorious age of the Sahaba (ra) and beyond it, Islam brought forth those who achieved extraordinary works to further the cause of Islam. Islam brought forth the civilian businessmen who enjoin the good and forbid the evil, transforming their era and the era of those to come. It brings forth that the military general who is aware that his duty is not just fighting the enemies, but also carrying the Dawah to Islam to them, before the fighting. Let us consider and reflect both cases, so that we benefit in our age.

Let the civilians consider the example of the businessman and Aalim, Imam Abu Hanifah (rh). Abu Hanifa (rh) was a skilled trader and had a profitable business. His Rizq was such that he personally granted his students what is now called "scholarship," taking care of their financial maintenance, so they could devote themselves to learning Deen from him. Beyond his business, however, Imam Abu Hanifah excelled in the field of knowledge of Islam and its teaching. Imam Abu Hanifah was extremely devoted in the noble pursuit of seeking knowledge. It is mentioned in "Introduction to Marginalia of Ibn Abidin" (مقدمة حاشية ابن عابدين), فقال له: "يا غلام، إياك والسقوط في الطين، فقال الغلام للإمام إياك أنت من السقوط، لأن سقوط العالم سقوط العالم saw a boy playing with mud, so he said to him: O boy, beware of falling into the mud. So the boy said to the Imam: Beware from falling, because the fall of an Aalim is the fall of the world." Ibn Abideen then narrated, "فكان أبو حنيفة لا يفتي بعد سماع هذه الكلمة إلا بعد مدارس المسألة شهراً كاملاً مع تلامذته،" "Imam Abu Hanifah did not issue a fatwa after hearing these words, except after studying the issue for a full month with his students."

Asides from teaching his students, Imam Abu Hanifah (rh) was mindful of his duty to enjoin the good and forbid the evil, ensuring the rulers did not deviate from Islam. Imam Abu Hanifah warned his student, Abu Yusuf, "كن من السلطان كما أنت من النار، تنتفع بها وتتباع عنها، ولا تدن منها؛ فإنك تحترق" "Beware of the Sultan as you are with Fire, you benefit when you are from it and you will not draw near to it without being burnt and be harmed by it, for the Sultan sees for none what he sees for himself." Imam Abu Hanifa stated, "إذا رأيتم العالم يرتاد أبواب السلطان، فإياكم وأبواب السلطان، فإنه قد أصبَحَ" "If you see the Aalim going to the gates of the rulers, accuse him in his Deen."

Indeed the wise stance of Imam Abu Hanifah to avoid being close to the rulers is consistent with a hadith narrated by Tabaraani, where RasulAllah (saw) said, «إِيَّاكُمْ وَأَبْوَابَ السُّلْطَانِ، فَإِنَّهُ قَدْ أَصْبَحَ» "Beware of the gates of the rulers, for they herald severe downfall." Moreover, the ruler at the time of Imam Abu Hanifah was subject to his severe accounting, at a time that the Khilafah existed and ruling was by Islam. So what of now when the Khilafah is abolished and the

ruling by kufr dominates the Muslim Lands? How must those who are zealous to follow the Fiqh of the great Imam Abu Hanifah be today? How can they be silent as the rulers destroy the economy through interest (riba), inviting war from Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw)? How can they be silent as Occupied Kashmir cries for help, but there is no mobilization of the armed forces to ensure its liberation by Jihad? How will preservation of masjid ever be compensation for the preservation of the Deen as a way of life?

Let the Muslim military officer of today consider Khalid ibn al-Walid (ra), who is respected by generals the world over for his brilliance and creativity in military strategy and tactics. As well as his commitment to fighting in the Path of Allah (swt), he was skilled in the Dawah to Islam. During the Battle of Yarmuk, one of the Roman commanders by the name of Georgius stepped forward from the line of soldiers, asking to meet Khalid ibn al-Walid (ra). Khalid (ra) went to meet him and they drew so close that the necks of their horses met. Georgius asked, "O Khalid! Towards what do you call?" Khalid (ra) replied, "To the testifying that there is none worthy of worship but Allah and that Muhammad (saw) is His servant and Messenger, and the acceptance of everything that he has brought from Allah." Georgius then asked, "What about those who do not accept this?" Khalid (ra) replied, "Then they will pay the Jizyah and we will protect them." Georgius then asked, "What if they do not give it?" Khalid (ra) replied, "Then we will declare war against them and fight them."

The great military general, Khalid (ra) made clear his awareness of the duty on the Muslim general regarding Dawah and Jihad. If the people of a land embrace Islam, Islam is implemented upon them. If the people of a land accept to pay Jizyah, Islam is implemented upon them whilst they remain as non-Muslim citizens, protected by the state. If they refuse, the army of the Khilafah fights their army until the Khilafah is able to implement Islam upon them, facilitating their entry into Islam by seeing its practical implementation. As a product of the Islamic military culturing, Khalid's (ra) knowledge extended beyond the rulings on Jihad alone. He (ra) then engaged in a detailed conversation with Georgius about Islam itself, after which Georgius embraced Islam and then asked Khalid, "Teach me Islam." So, Khalid (ra) took him to his tent, poured a waterbag of water over him and then led him in performing two rak'ahs of prayer. Khalid (ra) and Georgius continuously fought the Romans until Georgius received martyrdom. So here we see that Khalid (ra) was not just the Sword of Allah (swt), he was a knowledgeable Da'i towards Islam. He (ra) did not need to refer Georgius to an Alim regarding the rulings of Jihad, the Aqeedah of Islam or the practice of Islam. Khalid (ra) himself possessed the necessary knowledge in these essential matters.

So let the proud sons of Khalid (ra) consider the example of Khalid (ra) as it must be considered. Let them consider at a time when Masjid Al-Aqsa and Occupied Kashmir are under occupation, whilst the Dawah and Jihad are suspended. Let them consider at a time that the relation with the Western generals is not of inviting them to Islam or facing them on the battlefield, but of co-operation, alliance and joint action. How will professionalism in fighting ever compensate for such sin and neglect? How?! Imam Ahmad and Abu Dawud (this is the version of Abu Dawud) recorded that Ibn `Umar said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah saying, «إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ بِالْعِينَةِ وَأَخَذْتُمْ بِالْأَنْبَابِ الْبَقَرِ وَرَضَيْتُمْ بِالزَّرْعِ، وَتَرَكْتُمُ الْجِهَادَ سَلَطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ ذُلًّا لَا يَنْزِعُهُ حَتَّى تَرْجِعُوا إِلَى دِينِكُمْ» **"If you transact in `lynah (a type of Riba), follow the tails of cows (tilling the land), become content with agriculture and abandoned Jihad, Allah will send on you disgrace that He will not remove until, you return to your Deen."**

Thus, let each and every one of us consider, whether we are the businessman, military officer, corporate worker, Aalim, journalist or student, the balance between family and trade, on the one hand, and striving to restore Islam as a way of life, carrying the Dawah to all humankind and Jihad on the other hand. Let us be true in our love for Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saw), dedicating ourselves to our Deen. Indeed, the dawn of Islam is visible, so let us strive for the pleasure of Allah (swt).

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