

Muslims Engaging With Their Own Affairs Is Both a Shariah Obligation and An Honor

(Translated)

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The history of Muslims is distinguished by the great and honorable stances taken by the men of the Ummah. These stances, adopted in defense of the Ummah and the Islamic belief, made them shining stars in their Ummah's history and paragons of pride and honor. In every crisis that befell the Ummah throughout its various eras, the Ummah was distinguished by the readiness of a select group of its sons to embrace these issues, confront them, take the necessary measures to resolve and address them, offer great sacrifices and exert the necessary efforts to resolve these issues, alleviate their harm from the Ummah, and do what the Ummah must do to attain the pleasure of Allah (swt).

The history of Muslims is marked by the great and honorable stances taken by the men of the Ummah in defense of the Ummah and the Islamic belief. For example, decades after the passing of the Messenger of Allah (saw), and he had forbidden the recording of his noble Sunnah during his lifetime so that it would not be mixed with the Noble Quran, and the Khilafah (Caliphate) had expanded in the Umayyad era and the entry of non-Arabs into Islam had increased, the need arose to record the noble Prophetic Sunnah to preserve it, especially after the emergence of fabricators of hadith. So, the Khaleefah of the Muslims, Umar bin Abdul Aziz (ra), took a serious stance by sending a request to Imam Ibn Shihab Al-Zuhri and others with him to collect and record the hadiths. So, the Muslim muhadithoon began the journey of collecting and recording hadiths starting from the beginning of the Second Century AH, and the efforts of thousands of them continued for nearly four centuries of collection and recording, then the preoccupation with the compilations and Musnads and other branches of the discipline of hadith.

Similarly, as the conquests expanded and non-Arabs embraced Islam, the concern arose regarding the potential corruption of the Arabic language, given its necessity for the proper recitation and understanding of the Noble Quran and Prophetic Sunnah. A group of 'ulema then established the foundations of the language, including grammar, morphology, rhetoric, and figures of speech, among others. It is narrated that Abu al-Aswad al-Du'ali was the first to undertake this task at the request of the Khaleefah Rashid, Ali ibn Abi Talib (ra).

When Islamic jurisprudence flourished and schools of thought began to emerge in the Muslim World, debates arose among the adherents of these schools and the jurists on various issues related to jurisprudence and its evidence. Imam al-Shafi'i (ra) then began to lay the foundations for the discipline of Usul al-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), which established the rulings and principles for mujtahids (jurists qualified to deduce Shariah rulings). Later 'ulema further developed and refined this crucial field of knowledge.

When the Khilafah was subjected to foreign invasion at several points in history, and was defeated in battles, and parts of the lands of Islam fell under foreign control, and despite the long duration and dark nights these issues cast over the Islamic Ummah, the concern for resolving them remained constant throughout the Khilafah. The Ummah never ceased preparing to liberate itself from the clutches of this invasion. The sincere men continued to strive tirelessly, day and night, and the banner of action and achievement was passed from one group to another, until history recorded great battles such as Hattin and Ain Jalut, among others. This preoccupation with such issues unified rulers, 'ulema, and mujahideen, each on their respective front, so that Islam would not be harmed from their direction, until Allah (swt) fulfilled His Promise to His sincere servants, and victory and liberation were achieved.

In general, when looking at the history of Islam that extends over many centuries, we find that for every issue that this Deen and its Ummah faced, whether in the existence of the Khilafah or before its establishment in the Meccan era of the Dawah or after its fall in the year 1342 AH, we find that every issue that afflicted the Islamic Ummah had heroic men who confronted it and strived to deal with it until it ended, and great stances shine in history and in the present and confirm this matter.

For example, in Makkah, when the Quraysh launched a campaign of persecution against those of their own people who had embraced Islam, inflicting upon them the most severe forms of torture, the Companions (ra) displayed remarkable patience and steadfastness. This was exemplified by figures like the family of Yasir (ra), Bilal ibn Rabah (ra), Khabbab ibn al-Aratt (ra), and many others. The role of Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (ra) in freeing the slaves from among the noble Companions (ra) is also noteworthy.

Furthermore, after the destruction of the Khilafah, and despite the decline of the Islamic Ummah and its subjugation to colonialism, some of its sons and daughters rose up to fulfill their mission of reviving it, restoring its glory and honor, and establishing Allah's religion on earth. The heroic stances of the Ummah's champions on this path of revival are numerous and significant, and will continue, by the will of Allah (swt), until He, the Exalted, grants a glorious victory to His Deen and the Ummah of His Prophet (saw).

Furthermore, examining the issues of Muslims throughout the history of Islam reveals the great energies and capabilities of the entire Islamic Ummah, which make its readiness and preparedness available in all aspects. This readiness is attributed to several things:

The first of these is the grace and support of Allah (swt) for His servants, and His provision of the means necessary to achieve the desired goal. The Muslims take a stance towards the issues of their Ummah in response to Allah (swt) and in hope of His pleasure. If they rely on Allah (swt) in this action and makes it purely for the sake of Allah (swt), He (swt) will grant them from Himself a supporting authority and prepare the means for them. The Muslims' taking a stance towards an issue, their determination to engage with it, their effort in preparing and equipping themselves, and their patience with the obstacles they face, are all efforts that the Muslims are obligated to make. They are with Allah (swt) at the beginning and end of their matters, and He is the One who manages the matter for them and brings about good for them as He wills. When we return to history and what it narrates of the stances and heroism of the sons and daughters of Islam, we see the embodiment of this matter in the people of stances and achievements.

Furthermore, Allah (swt) ordains the means for the elevation of this Deen and its followers. No issue or event befalls the Ummah without Him providing those capable of addressing it, preparing them for the means to achieve results, and providing them with the necessary preparations. This is from Allah's grace towards His servants. If one were to examine every group that rises to resolve a particular issue, one would see a remarkable number of qualities required for the individual to accomplish what they have undertaken, such as the exceptional memory of the Companions (ra) and muhadithoon who narrated hadith, and the high capacity for planning and strategy possessed by military commanders. All of this is from Allah's provision of the means for His servants.

Moreover, the Khilafah's care and attention to the issues that befall it and the Ummah, and its initiative in taking the necessary measures and decisions, are at the core of its function and are its responsibility. The Khulafaa' (Caliphs) viewed their Deen, their state, and their Ummah with a sense of care that encompasses preserving the integrity of each. Therefore, many significant stances were taken at the request and under the guidance of the Khaleefah. Indeed, in many cases, the Khaleefah and other rulers of the state were the ones who took these stances. What could be greater than the Shariah political stances taken to support and propagate the Deen, to repel the aggression of the disbelievers, to defend the lands of the Muslims, and to preserve Deen, life, and security for the people, stances that can only be achieved through a Khilafah?

The Khilafah also oversaw the preparations of the Muslims and took the necessary measures to train soldiers in every field. Thus, the Muslim World flourished under its rule, producing politicians, statesmen, military leaders, and ulema in all branches of knowledge. It also fostered the development and advancement of methods, making it a pioneer in every field and superior to other states. Indeed, it was a beacon for the world in every matter.

As for individual Muslims, what motivates them to take stances on the issues of their Ummah and Deen?

A Muslim's stance on the issues of their Ummah is a Shariah obligation, not a matter of personal whims, desires, or choices. It is not a matter of personal choice to attend to the affairs of their Ummah and engage with its issues, or to neglect them and ignore them. Instead, Islamic Shariah Law obligates that Muslims engage with the issues of their Ummah and Deen by adopting stances that please Allah (swt). This is the fundamental principle for a Muslim, the state they should be in, and the way Islam cultivates them. This engagement with the issues of the Ummah and Deen is achieved to varying degrees among Muslims, each according to their ability. It is also achieved through individuals, groups, and the state.

Islam makes the Ummah's engagement with events and issues a general characteristic of Islamic society through several Shariah rulings, ideas, and concepts, the most important of which are:

Firstly: Islam begins by instilling in the Muslim a sense of concern for his fellow Muslims in his Ummah and surroundings, and by establishing within him a sense of responsibility for others. Islam makes the Muslim a member of the Ummah, and establishes between him and the members of his Ummah the bond of Islamic belief. It makes his belonging, which is an innate need for him, to his religion and his Ummah. Many Shariah texts urge solidarity and mutual support among Muslims, consideration for the affairs of others, and bearing the responsibility of fulfilling the needs of those in need. This obligates the Muslim to engage with people's issues on an individual level.

Examples from the Noble Quran and Prophetic Sunnah that urge affection and compassion among Muslims are numerous. This is achieved by building bridges of communication and fostering good relationships among them. The result achieved in society through the application of these rulings is that an atmosphere of brotherhood, cohesion, and mutual support prevails among Muslims. Among these proofs is the following:

Muslim and Bukhari narrated on the authority of Nu'man ibn Bashir (rh), on the authority of the Messenger of Allah (saw), who said, **«مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادُّهِمْ، وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ، وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ، مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عَضْوٌ نَدَّاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَى»** **“The believers, in their mutual love, compassion, and empathy, are like a single body; if one part of it suffers, the whole body responds with sleeplessness and fever.”**

Al-Tirmidhi narrated on the authority of Anas bin Malik (ra), on the authority of the Messenger of Allah (saw), who said, **«لَا تَقَاطَعُوا وَلَا تَدَابِرُوا وَلَا تَبَاغَضُوا وَلَا تَحَاسَدُوا وَكُونُوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ إِخْوَانًا، وَلَا يَحِلُّ لِمُسْلِمٍ أَنْ يَهْجَرَ أَخَاهُ فَوْقَ ثَلَاثٍ»** **“Do not cut ties, do not turn your backs on one another, do not hate one another, do not envy one another, and be, O servants of Allah, brothers. It is not permissible for a Muslim to forsake his brother for more than three days.”**

Abu Ya'la (ra) narrated, on the authority of Abdullah bin Abbas (ra) on the authority of the Messenger of Allah (saw), who said, **«لَيْسَ بِمُؤْمِنٍ مَنْ بَاتَ شَبَعَانِ وَجَارُهُ إِلَى جَنْبِهِ جَائِعٌ وَهُوَ يَعْلَمُ»** **“He is not a believer who sleeps with a full stomach while his neighbor beside him is hungry, and he knows it.”**

These and other responsibilities are a Shariah obligation upon the individual Muslim towards his fellow Muslim, and upon the Ummah towards a single individual or a group of people, such as freeing a captive, for example. Al-Bukhari narrated in his Sahih on the authority of Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (ra) on the authority of the Messenger of Allah (saw) who said, **«فُكُّوا الْعَانِي، يَعْني: الْأَسِيرَ، وَأَطْعِمُوا الْجَائِعَ، وَعُودُوا الْمَرِيضَ»** **“Free the captive, feed the hungry, and visit the sick.”**

Therefore, Muslims must take care of each other's affairs and be preoccupied with fulfilling their needs, as an act of kindness. Allah (swt) says, ﴿وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ﴾ “**And do good, for Allah certainly loves the good-doers**” [TMQ Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:195].

This reinforces the concept that a Muslim belongs to an Ummah and must be concerned with the affairs of his fellow Muslims and their circumstances in his Ummah. This, in turn, teaches him to engage with the larger issues facing Muslims, which he is also obligated in Shariah to address. This cultivates a sense of responsibility towards his Ummah. If his Deen requires him to care for a needy neighbor or relative, how much more so when he sees millions of Muslims in their vast lands starving, displaced, and homeless, victims of wars waged by the disbelieving colonialist to seize their authority and resources, suffering death, destruction, poverty, and disease for years with no one to help them? How much more so when he sees Muslims imprisoned, detained, and tortured in the prisons of oppressors with no one to rescue them? How much more so when he sees his brothers in belief divided by artificial nationalistic borders and placed in conflicting entities? The concepts of mutual support and solidarity that the Shariah instills in the Muslim with his fellow Muslims in his environment and society, obligate him to look into their issues in all Islamic countries. It is not right for Islam to require the Muslim to be concerned about the hunger of his neighbor while he is full and not care about, for example, being concerned about the issues of displacement, migration, and starvation that have become a phenomenon in Muslim countries, from which millions of his fellow Muslims suffer, even though what is required of him in terms of a Shariah obligation towards the two cases is different.

Secondly: Islam obligates Muslims to carry the Risaalah message of Islam, and carrying the Dawah is a political act. Its core focus is engaging in politics, that is, guardianship of the people's affairs. Islam, in its essence, is a political Deen: Muslims establish it on earth by building a state that implements its Shariah rulings, and convey it to the world through Dawah, and Jihad to remove the physical obstacles that hinder its dissemination. All these stages of Dawah require and necessitate engagement with political events and issues, not only those concerning the Muslim World but the entire world, due to their interconnectedness. Carrying the Risaalah message of Islam is a political act, and one of the most important requirements of politics is engaging with events and issues. This necessitates that the entire Islamic Ummah considers and address its own issues.

Thirdly: the Shariah obligations that the Khilafah applies are essentially obligations for the Ummah. The Ummah is responsible for implementing the Shariah Law of Allah (swt) and for Jihad, and it appoints a Khaleefah (Caliph) to implement the Shariah rulings on its behalf. It is responsible for preserving the Khilafah. Therefore, it is not permissible for it to be unaware of the events, issues, and developments inside and outside the Khilafah. Instead, the entire Ummah must engage in politics to carry out what they have been charged with in terms of individual and collective Shariah obligations, to preserve their Deen, their Ummah, and their Khilafah, to fulfill the obligations imposed upon them, and to attain the pleasure of Allah (swt).

Fourthly: Islam rejects individualism, a cornerstone of capitalist thought, which reduces individuals to self-absorption, preoccupied with their own lives and personal concerns, disregarding others, their Ummah, and their Khilafah. In this view, the individual is valued above all others, even the Ummah and the Khilafah. Individualism fosters selfishness and a lack of responsibility, and this ideology has no place in Islam. Indeed, it is fundamentally at odds with it. Islam places great emphasis on the importance of the Khilafah and society, prioritizing them in people's lives. It stresses the need for society to be governed by Islamic principles and upholds the rights of the public and the Islamic Ummah. Therefore, it mandates that individuals live within a jama'ah (جماعة community), care for its well-being, and fulfill their Shariah obligations towards it, rather than living solely for themselves and their own interests.

Fifthly: There are Shariah rulings that obligate Muslims to directly engage with the issues of the Islamic Ummah, such as preserving the belief and Deen, establishing the

Khilafah, appointing a Khaleefah for the Muslims, holding rulers accountable, liberating Muslim lands from all forms of colonialism, and the obligation to enjoin all goodness and forbid all evil, which compels Muslims to be involved in public affairs because they are obligated to eliminate wrongdoing to the best of their ability. There are many other rulings that demonstrate the obligation for Muslims to be engaged with the issues of their Ummah, for which there is reward and recompense or sin and punishment.

These are some of the thoughts that Islam introduced to instill in Muslims a concern for and engagement with the affairs and issues of the Islamic Ummah.

Islam, therefore, obligates the Islamic Ummah to engage with its issues and related matters in order to address them. The fundamental principle of Islam is to address issues and resolve problems, and it is unacceptable for the Ummah to leave its issues unresolved. Furthermore, these issues must be viewed from the perspective of Islamic belief, and attention must be given to them first because they concern the Islamic Ummah. One's perspective on the issue should be based on the standards of Shariah Law. As for permissible intellectual matters related to the issue, one should strive to arrive at the correct opinion and then consider the solution from the standpoint of Shariah rulings.

Moreover, the fundamental principle is that when a Muslim considers the political issues of his jama'ah (جماعة community) and takes a stance on them, it is with the intention of influencing and bringing about change. If he adopts a viewpoint or opinion on an issue, event, or matter, he must express it to the public, or to influential circles concerned with its affairs, demonstrating his support or rejection. This is done to influence people and the event itself. This principle, despite its inherent difficulty, is generally implemented through a collective approach. Shariah Law obligates that Muslims establish political parties to uphold the Deen and hold rulers accountable. It is evident that the impact of an individual's work within a group is stronger and more significant than their individual efforts; indeed, sometimes an individual is incapable of exerting such influence.

Muslims today, since the destruction of their Khilafah, have been facing momentous events and numerous, ever-evolving challenges. Despite this, a large segment of the Muslim population distances itself from these issues, neither engaging with them nor taking a stance on them, instead focusing solely on their own individual affairs. There is, however, a group among Muslims who do engage with these issues, take stances regarding them, and strive to influence people. Yet, there are also those whose stances displease Allah (swt), as they align themselves with and support falsehood, misleading Muslims by claiming that their positions and solutions represent the Shariah rulings, when in reality they are liars and deceivers.

Some believe that abstaining from the issues of the Ummah in our time and not engaging in them is legitimate and is the right thing to do because of the tribulations of this time. Some of them cite hadiths that spoke about isolation, such as what was narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim on the authority of Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman (ra), «كَانَ النَّاسُ يَسْأَلُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ عَنِ الْخَيْرِ، وَكُنْتُ أَسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الشَّرِّ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ يُدْرِكَنِي، فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، إِنَّا كُنَّا فِي جَاهِلِيَّةٍ وَشَرٍّ، فَجَاءَنَا اللَّهُ بِهَذَا الْخَيْرِ، فَهَلْ بَعْدَ هَذَا الْخَيْرِ شَرٌّ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، فَقُلْتُ: هَلْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الشَّرِّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، وَفِيهِ دَخْنٌ، قُلْتُ: وَمَا دَخْنُهُ؟ قَالَ: قَوْمٌ يَسْتَنْوْنَ بِغَيْرِ سُنَّتِي، وَيَهْدُونَ بِغَيْرِ هُدْيِي، تَعْرِفُ مِنْهُمْ وَتُنَكِّرُ، فَقُلْتُ: هَلْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ الْخَيْرِ مِنْ شَرٍّ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، دُعَاةٌ عَلَى أَبْوَابِ جَهَنَّمَ مَنْ أَجَابَهُمْ إِلَيْهَا قَذَفُوهُ فِيهَا، فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، صَفِّهِمْ لَنَا، قَالَ: نَعَمْ، قَوْمٌ مِنْ جِلْدَتِنَا، وَيَتَكَلَّمُونَ بِالسُّنَّتِنَا، قُلْتُ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، فَمَا تَرَى إِنْ أَدْرَكَنِي ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَ: تَلَزَمُ جَمَاعَةُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَإِمَامَهُمْ، فَقُلْتُ: فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُمْ جَمَاعَةً وَلَا إِمَامًا؟ قَالَ: فَاعْتَزَلْ تِلْكَ الْفُرْقَ كُلَّهَا، وَلَوْ أَنْ «**People used to ask the Messenger of Allah (saw) about good, but I used to ask him about evil, fearing that it would overtake me. So I said: O Messenger of Allah, we were in ignorance and evil, then Allah brought us this good. Is there evil after this good? He said: Yes. So I said: Is there good after that evil? He said: Yes, but it will be tainted. I said: What is its taint? He said: People who follow a path other than my Sunnah and are guided by something other than my guidance. You will recognize some of their actions and disapprove of others. So I said: Is there evil after that good? He said: Yes, there are callers at the gates of Hell. Whoever answers their call, they will throw him into it. I said: O Messenger of Allah,**

describe them to us. He said: Yes, they are people from our own kind, and they speak our language. I said: O Messenger of Allah, what do you advise me to do if I live to see that time? He said: Adhere to the jama'ah of Muslims and their leader. I said: What if there is no jama'ah or leader? He said: Then keep away from all those sects, even if you have to cling to the root of a tree until death overtakes you while you are in that state."

The hadith, in its essence, calls for distancing oneself from misguided preachers whom the Messenger (saw) described as callers to the gates of Hell. It also calls for avoiding strife, meaning not falling into it. It does not call for abandoning Muslims and their affairs. For who will care for Muslims and the Deen if the righteous and ulema withdraw from the public domain? Instead, Shariah calls upon Muslims to engage with their affairs, especially the ulema among them.

Some consider politics a stain, engaging in it a corruption, and believe that Muslims are better off without it. However, the intensification of events and calamities afflicting Muslims has compelled them to pay attention to and engage with these events and issues to a greater extent than in previous periods experienced by the Muslim Ummah.

The Islamic Ummah today is facing many serious issues, the most important of which is establishing its Deen on earth by establishing the Khilafah. The efforts that the Ummah needs to exert today are to direct the armies of the Ummah to give their military support (نصرة nussrah) to Islam and the Muslims, and to overthrow the thrones of the oppressive tyrants in the lands of Islam. As for the individual efforts exerted by the ulema and thinkers of the Ummah in the fields of science and politics, far from this direction, while they are good and have an effect on the Ummah, they are not the desired effect. If even the great imams and ulema of our history, such as Al-Shafi'i, Ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah and others, were to gather in our time and occupy themselves with knowledge alone, collecting and teaching it in circles and neglecting to address the armies, the Ummah would not benefit from them as it needs. Engaging in establishing the Deen on earth is a great Shariah obligation, and the Muslims have not been humiliated and subjugated on earth except by abandoning the implementation of the Deen, and turning away from it. So the Muslims must turn to establishing the Deen, so that all their issues will be resolved one after another, and so that they may attain the pleasure of Allah (swt) and His Paradise, and attain the honor of this world and the Hereafter.