

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَنِ الرَّجِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ كَمَا هُوَ أَهْلُهُ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِ الْعَالَمِينَ كَمَا يُحِبُّ وَيُرِضِّي بَنْ يُصْلِي عَلَيْهِ

Allah Almighty, in Whose Name we begin, The Most Compassionate,

The Most Merciful

All Praise is due to Allah Almighty, Countless Peace and Blessings be upon
His Beloved Messenger – *may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* – his family & his
companions – *may Allah be pleased with them all*

Qadi of Damascus issues Fatwah

Once in Egypt, a Fatwah was issued which read, “O people, your leaders are your servants. Some of them are not fit to be leaders and it is also not permissible to do business with some of them. They have no power to change anything and nor is it permissible to marry some of them. Whatever they buy and sell, this should be returned to the Baitul Maal.”

This Fatwah was issued by the famous Qadi of Damascus and a Khateeb of the Banu Ummayah, Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam. He was blessed with immense eloquence in the Arabic language and was considered highly intelligent. He was merely displaying the facts when he had issued this Fatwah.

The minute he issued this Fatwah, there was great turmoil among the citizens. People refused to accept the command of their leaders. The common people were also confused and the leaders of each area were even more confused than the common people. In fact, most of the leaders were pulling their hair in frustration thinking what is going to happen.

In this confused state, there was a massive meeting among all the leaders and it was decided to call the Shaikh and ask him what he meant by these words. Azz bin Abdus Salaam was then called and they asked him, “What Fatwah did you issue against us?”

The Shaikh did not display any fear. In fact, he was not worried in the least bit about the group of leaders present. He stood like a firm rock which could not even shake even though there was powerful gust of wind.

Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam then calmly declared, “In my opinion, it had been established that all of you are merely servants. You are actually items which belong to the Baitul Maal. According to Shari'ah, you are not allowed to use this wealth as you wish. The reason is that a slave cannot use something without the permission of the master. At the same time, the slave cannot dictate to the master. This is the reason that I have issued a verdict that all of you should be sold and the money placed in the Baitul Maal. This is necessary upon the 'Ulama who are present.”

The leaders present then asked him how they would be able to release themselves from this burden. The great Shaikh replied, “There should be a Board created who should announce that all of you are to be sold. The monies from this sale should then be kept in the Baitul Maal. After that, according to Shari'ah, you would be considered as free men. Only after this, will you be able to use these funds as you wish. In the same manner, the laws given by you can be followed.”

Obviously, these words created a huge upheaval among the leaders who were present. You must bear in mind that these were people who felt that they had a super status among people.

Obviously all the officials of the government were thinking of ways of coming out of this predicament. At the same time, Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam sat quietly

listening to everyone. In fact, he did not even ask the other members of the government what their opinion was. He had already issued a Fatwah and he felt that it was their responsibility to obey this Fatwah. At the same time, the immense stature of the great Shaikh had also been established in their hearts and minds. The only option they felt was open to them was to complain to the King and seek his protection in this regard. They also wanted to inform him that this Fatwah was something which was to be considered as unfair upon them as government officials.

When the King heard about this, he also agreed with the sentiments of the other government officials. He then called the Shaikh and informed him that he should withdraw this Fatwah. However, again Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam refused to withdraw this decree. He declared that it is the duty of the 'Ulama to present the truth and not to hide the truth for the sake of anyone. At the same time, the 'Ulama were not allowed to be scared of the insults of anyone in this regard.

When the King realised that the Shaikh is not prepared to withdraw his FATWAH even after pleading to him, he decided to be more threatening in his attitude. However, as much as the King forced him, the more he became adamant. Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam made it clear that he was not prepared to live in a city where the King was an oppressor and where the King would agree with the complaints of other government officials simply because he wanted to side with them.

Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam then returned home and packed all of his goods and placed it on his donkey. He had made up his mind that he was going to leave Cairo and return to his native Syria. In other words, he had made up his mind that he will migrate and will be prepared to handle the pressures of migrating and will not be prepared to live in disgrace and ignominy.

In reality, Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam had traded the comfort of this world for the Hereafter. However, as for that nation which is still spiritually and religiously alive, how will they react to this? Such a nation will never allow something of this nature to take place while they sit quietly doing nothing. They also made it clear that they will never allow a Shaikh who had displayed such bravery, sincerity and honesty to leave just like that.

Suddenly, the 'Ulama of this city, the business community and even the females and the children all started to pack their bags to leave. They made it clear that wherever the Shaikh was going, they will be following him and wherever he stayed, they will also stay at the same place. In fact, within a short time, the entire city was emptied. Only a few females and children remained in the city who had already packed their bags to go and stay with other relatives.

There is no doubt that the Kings are able to rule the bodies of people but the true Saint who is also a scholar is able to rule the hearts of people. There is a vast difference between ruling the heart and ruling the body.

The King also heard that the eminent Shaikh was leaving and the entire country is also prepared to leave with him. He was informed that not a single person remained in the city and that everyone was following Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam. If this was the case, he would have no one to rule over. The King was urged to make a decision as quick as possible. Obviously the King was extremely worried and perturbed. In fact, most of his servants had also joined the Shaikh as well.

He then rushed to meet the Shaikh and plead his case. He continued to plead to the Shaikh, however the Shaikh was not prepared to withdraw his initial Fatwah. Finally, the King admitted that he was prepared to accept the Fatwah of Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam and that the officials of the government would be sold and the money attained from this sale would be placed in the Baitul Maal.

The next day, the deputy of the King came to know that the officials of the government would be sold and there would be no change in this decision. The deputy of the King then decided to send one of his special advisers to Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam who had a sweet and convincing tone with the purpose of convincing the Shaikh to please withdraw his Fatwah. However, Sultaanul 'Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam remained adamant and was not prepared to change his view. When this was brought to the attention of the deputy, he flew into a rage.

He said, "This Shaikh will sell us in the bazaar and make us look like ordinary items of trade even though we are the true leaders of the community. We are the true Kings and

the masters of this community. I swear that I will behead this Shaikh and will look at his lifeless body which will be at my feet.”

After uttering these words, he then took a few of his companions and travelled to the house of Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam. There is no doubt that he was in complete rage and anger. He also carried a naked sword in his hand and even those who saw him were awe struck.

As he stood in front of the door of Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam, he banged the door. When the young son of the Shaikh appeared and saw who it was and what he had in his hand, he rushed to his father and informed him, “I swear that death stands at our front door. I would therefore urge you not to go in front of the door.”

However, Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam did not take heed of this advice. He smiled bravely and informed his beloved son, “My dear son, where is your father that lucky that he will be martyred in the Path of Allah Almighty?” He then approached the front door to face this person with the naked sword in his hand.

However, a sudden change appeared in the deputy when he saw Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam. It appeared like the Shaikh had taken control over him. He had no courage to face the Shaikh any longer. All his anger, his temper and his rage suddenly disappeared. He adopted immense humbleness and pleaded to Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam to make Du'a for him. He also pleaded to the Shaikh to make Du'a that his act of disrespect be pardoned in the Divine Court of the Allah Almighty.

He admitted that he was ready to obey the command of the Shaikh and was waiting for his instructions. The Shaikh again informed him that like all the other members of the government, he would be also sold and the money accrued from this sale would be placed in the Baitul Maal.

He also informed the deputy that these monies would be collected by the Clerk of the Treasury and if he was not available, then the Qadi will perform this duty.

The deputy stood awhile listening to this command and all of his power and stature which he was sure about suddenly disappeared into thin air. He realised that there was no changing this decision. He told Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam, “We have

left this decision upon you. Whatever you do, we are satisfied. In Sha Allah, you will also find us displaying patience in this regard. We will also not disobey your command.”

The next day, Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam nominated a special person to go around the market and sell each of the officials. A large amount of money was also acquired and this was placed in the Baitul Maal. These monies were then spent on the poor and needy. The Shaikh then announced that people were now free to nominate whoever they wanted for certain positions. However, such was the effect of this action that the people were happy to nominate the same officials to the same positions which they once held. When all of this was completed, Sultaanul ‘Ulama Azz bin Abdus Salaam announced to the people, “Now it is proper that the officials may spend as they deem fit. At first, they were servants and property of the state, now they have become free. Now, they are free and are at liberty to decide on certain issues affecting the Muslims. Now, in the true meaning of the word, they are the masters and leaders of the community.”

This example clearly proves that these were those blessed individuals who displayed no fear when declaring an Islamic law and decision.