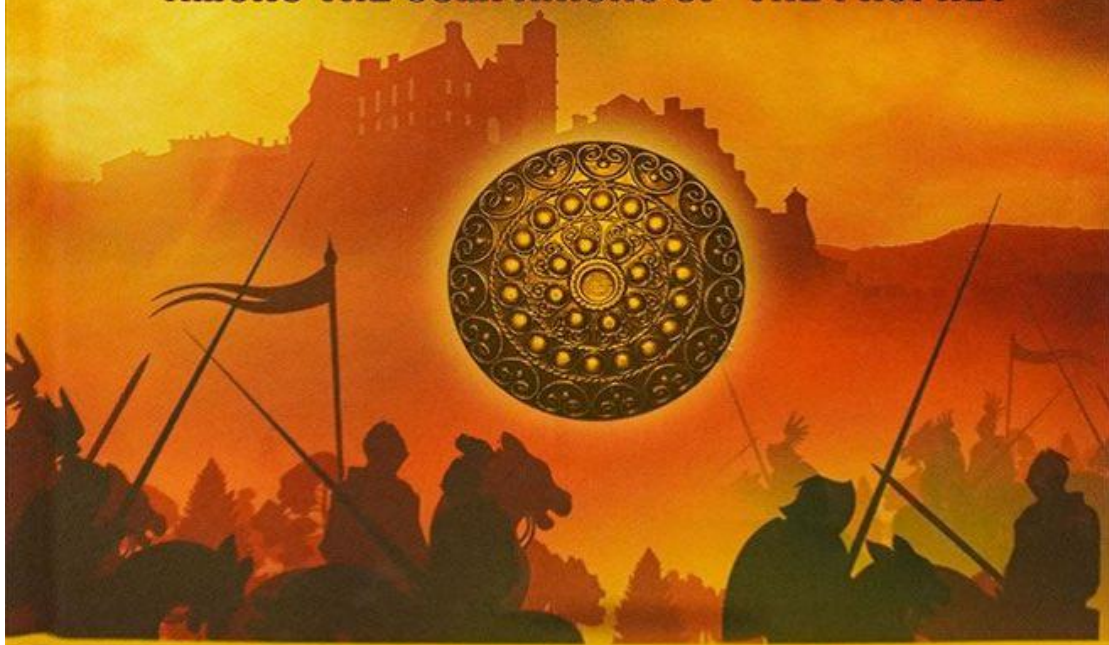


COMMANDERS OF THE MUSLIM ARMY

AMONG THE COMPANIONS OF THE PROPHET



MAHMOOD AHMAD GHADANFAR



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The Qualities of a Muslim Commander

All Praise is for Allâh Almighty. May He Shower Peace and Blessings on His Prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions.

The qualities and excellence essential for a Muslim general in the field of warfare are listed below -

1. True, constant and firm Faith.
2. Dignified personality.
3. Valorous and courageous.
4. Steadfast and resolute of purpose.
5. Strength of will and ability to execute.
6. Charismatic and magnetic personality.
7. Eloquent.
8. Well-equipped.
9. Generosity and liberality.
10. A sense of justice and fair play.

Let us go a little deeper into the meaning, significance and importance of these qualities:

1. True, constant and firm Faith

It is essential for a military man to have true and firm Faith in order to lead in the political and missionary spheres. A strong, firm and solid faith leaves a lasting and deep influence on the personality. This is a

basic virtue that empowers the heart with courage, valour and a total lack of fear and ambition. Whether the army faces victory and glory or obstacles and defeat, intelligence and wisdom are never thrown off balance. In the battlefield whether faced with glorious triumph or humiliating defeat, only that army adopts a balanced viewpoint and mode of operation, which has the right faith and the right perspective. It has often been seen in martial history that a victorious army and its general lose all sense of proportion and display a total loss of sense of proportion. It is intoxicated with its success and goes berserk. Civilians are killed, women are raped and human dignity is insulted and betrayed. The social system of the conquered territory is turned upside down, and social and moral values are eroded and destroyed. But the Muslim generals regard victory with modesty and humility as a blessing and gift of Allāh Almighty. This attitude is solely due to trust, faith and a right sense of values.

When the Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah triumphantly after conquering it, his head was bowed low down on the hump of his horse in gratitude to Allāh Almighty, His Creator. He declared universal amnesty for all the people of Makkah. Similarly, a successful general who in war faces obstacles, problems and adverse conditions, instead of losing heart, turns and moves closer to Allāh ﷻ. He faces all difficulties with courage and bravery. This competence and ability is born of confident reliance on, and perfect and absolute trust in Allāh Almighty.

This is the reason why the Prophet ﷺ, instead of losing hope in the disaster of the battle of Uhud, led his injured *Mujāhideen* right up to Hamra' Al-Asad in hot pursuit of the Quraish without giving them an opportunity to turn around and enter Al-Madinah to celebrate their success. This shows that if the leading general is courageous and ambitious, he can recoup his losses and turn defeat into victory. Misfortunes and defeats fail to overcome his high spirits and, ultimately it is this high morale which lifts up the sagging spirits of his soldiers and leads them to triumph.

One day the Commander-in-Chief of the Muslims, Messenger of Allāh ﷺ, was lying down in the shade of the Ka'bah, resting. One of his most loyal Companion Khabbab bin Aratt, who had suffered deeply from

the *Kuffar*, asked him when Allâh Almighty would help them; the suffering and cruelty had reached its utmost limits. The Prophet ﷺ sat up and said:

"O Khabbab, Are you giving up so easily with just these little problems? Our predecessors who spoke up for the Truth and worshipped the Truth had suffered much more than us. Saws were used to tear them apart, and combs made of iron were used to rake their flesh, but they remained stubbornly adherent to the Truth. The greatest torture and tyranny failed to make them recant or retract an inch from their positions. O Khabbab, be patient and very soon you will see for yourself the gentle and halcyon days of peace everywhere. The land of Arab will become the cradle of loving and serene brotherhood. From San'a' to Hader Al-Moat wayfarers will be able to travel in peace, with no fear of danger."

Calamities, misfortunes and problems have to be faced with patience and fortitude because they prove to be the forerunners of victory and success. And how does one inculcate these qualities? They are born of a deep and abiding faith in Allâh Almighty; many a time, because of these qualities, events which bewilder man's powers of reason and logic occur in the battlefield. One of the greatest generals in the history of Islam, Khâlid bin Waleed رضي الله عنه, right in front of the enemy fearlessly and boldly drank up a bottle of deadly poison. This lethal dose of poison did him no harm! This was because he had absolute faith that Allâh Almighty could negate the effect of the poison. The enemy was simply astounded!

Another great general, Sa'd bin Abu Waqâs رضي الله عنه, led his horse into the deep waters of the River Dajlah, and crossed over, safe and sound to the other side to the utter amazement of the enemy Persian army which was standing there. He thus proved that if Allâh Almighty is the Helper, then nothing can harm or injure people who have pure and absolute faith in Him.

After the resounding victory in the battle of Yarmook, the great General Khâlid bin Waleed رضي الله عنه received a letter dismissing him from service. Very calmly he said:

"I did not fight in the battlefield for Amir-ul-Mo'mineen 'Umar bin Khattâb ؓ; I fought to bring glory to Allâh and Islam. I can continue to perform my duty even as an ordinary soldier. Therefore I do not regret receiving a letter of dismissal."

Such an attitude can only be the result of the deep faith and a righteous viewpoint.

2. Dignified personality

In order to fulfill one's duties in the army military leaders are made to pass through certain stages in the course of their training. Special care is taken to see that they are trained according to a certain manner. This is in order to cultivate an imposing and dignified personality. The army has to have discipline and a sense of order. Therefore men who have to fulfill the duties of military leadership have to possess an impressive personality. This imposing dignity and a certain aura of majesty impresses and overawes the onlooker; and feelings of love, respect and reverence take root in his heart. This blessed quality of dignity is a gift of Allâh Almighty. It can become part of one's personality only if there is true Faith, fear of Allâh Almighty, integrity, and an effort to guard moral and ethical values.

Not one person had the courage to look the Prophet ﷺ in the eye. When he spoke the effect was almost as if the persons addressed had been mesmerized and could not move. There is no parallel in human history of a person evoking such a response. He was respected, revered and inspired awe and love. Amirul-Mo'mineen 'Umar Farooq ؓ had such a dignified bearing and was so awe-inspiring that people felt nervous to speak to him. Some of the companions told 'Abdur-Rahmân bin 'Auf ؓ that they felt scared to talk to the Amirul-Mo'mineen, and that he should adopt a softer attitude. When he came to know of this, he offered this supplication to Allâh ﷻ:

"O Allâh Almighty increase my dignity day by day, so that I may be better able to spread Your true Message."

There are examples in society where a man may appear very strong, but unfortunately lacks a dignified personal presence. Thus he has absolutely no value or merit in the affections of people. It is essential for

a Muslim general to have a very dignified and awe-inspiring personality; otherwise he cannot discharge his duties and responsibilities of leadership to perfection, or even to near-perfection. The Prophet ﷺ had said:

"I have been granted such majesty and dignity that the enemy who is a month away from me (in terms of travelling distance) starts to tremble when he hears my name."

3. Valour and Courage

Only that person can fulfill the responsibilities of a leader in the battlefield who is the personification of bravery, valour, daring and fearlessness. When the conditions in war are extremely unfavourable only a daring and fearless man can overcome and control them. 'Ali ؓ says that whenever matters took a critical turn in a battle they used to look at the bold and confident attitude of the Prophet ﷺ and gain courage. Whenever the fighting was at its most intense he would display extraordinary daring and nerve and move as close as possible to the enemy and try to overwhelm him. All his *Mujāhideen* would then gain courage and aspire to follow his example.

When Khâlid bin Waleed ؓ went into the battlefield to face the Roman General, he realized that his steed was weaker in comparison with the enemy. The Roman of course wanted to take the fullest possible advantage of the situation. Khâlid bin Waleed ؓ guessed his intentions and made a very daring counter move. He leapt down from his horse and struck a powerful blow with his sword at the leg of the Roman's horse. Its leg broke and he fell to the ground; his rider too fell at the feet of Khâlid bin Waleed ؓ, who in a flash cut off his neck. Having got rid of his enemy he calmly sat down and had his meal right there!

4. Steadfast and resolute of purpose

In the arena of war the ordinary soldier in the army keeps up his morale and is bold as long as his Commander displays a steadfast and resolute attitude. As soon as the general shows hesitation or indecisiveness, the army too begins to falter. When the enemy exerts intense pressure it is the primary and most important duty of the

Commander too not only built up, but to keep up the morale of his men. And only that General can fulfill this duty to the best degree who, is consistently resolute, steadfast, intrepid and brave. During the battle of Hunnain when the army was falling apart due to the pressure being exerted by the enemy the Prophet ﷺ stood firm in the battlefield and with great fervour said:

"I am the True Prophet, it is no lie, and I am the son of 'Abdul Mutallib!"

Seeing the resolute stand taken by him, the army which was scattering in fear rallied round him. Thus it is seen that whenever a crisis occurs in battle and the army faces a difficult situation, the commander should display confidence and steadfastness. This is the only way to win lost causes. This is the primary and essential military responsibility of a general.

The Qur'ân gives a golden principle about how to inculcate and develop this invaluable quality of steadfastness and resoluteness. Allâh Almighty says:

"O you who believe! If you will help (in the cause of) Allâh, He will help you, and make your foothold firm." (47:7)

In order to attain and achieve this great quality one must be prepared to sacrifice one's life and possessions to propagate and promote the religion of Allâh Almighty. Whosoever helps to spread the religion of Allâh Almighty, he will find Him to be his Supporter and Protector. And if Allâh Almighty gives him His Support and Protection then he is assured success now and in the Hereafter. Steadfastness is the stepping stone to real success as the Noble Qur'ân has instructed. The Noble Qur'ân says:

"O you who believe! When you meet (an enemy) take a firm stand against them and remember the Name of Allâh much (both with tongue and mind), so that you may be successful." (8:45)

In this *Âyah* of the Noble Qur'ân the glad tidings have been given that when opposing the enemy firmness and determination should be displayed and Allâh Almighty should be remembered and appealed

certainly, Allāh loves those who put their trust (in Him).”
(3:159)

Brave people always practice in every field; with firm and determined action they perform incredible and remarkable deeds. Lack of sturdy resolve makes a person act according to momentary whims and caprices, and he cannot by any means carry out the onerous responsibilities of a successful leader. Thus it is essential for a military commander or a general that strength of will be very much part and parcel of his temperament.

6. Charismatic and magnetic personality

All the qualities mentioned above pertain to the character and capabilities of the ideal commander and not to his physical appearance. But when a leader is selected it should be borne in mind that his physical attributes also have an effect on the development of his personality as a whole; besides they also affect the beholder as well as his subordinates.

In social interaction smartness in dress, good manners and a certain elegance of style play a very positive role in winning over people. In this context if one studies the personal habits of the Prophet ﷺ one sees how particular he was as regards personal hygiene, neatness and cleanliness. People would realize he had passed by a street because he left an aura of perfume behind him. Whenever he met delegations he would make it a point to dress well. Besides being cultured and well-mannered a leader also has to have a fine physique. The Noble Qur’ān says:

“And their Prophet (Samuel عليه السلام) said to them, ‘Indeed Allāh has appointed Tālūt (Saul) as a king over you.’ They said, ‘How can he be a king over us when we are fitter than him for the kingdom, and he has not been given enough wealth.’ He said: ‘Verily, Allāh has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature. And Allāh grants His kingdom to whom He wills. And Allāh is All-Sufficient for His creatures’ needs, All-Knower.” (2:247)

Talut was a handsome tall youth from among the Bani Israeel who

COMMANDARDS OF THE MUSLIM ARMY

This book is about the lives of those noble Companions and Commanders who led the Islamic forces in the violent and strife-torn arenas of conflict against the Kuffar (disbelievers). They struck terror in the hearts of the enemy and the strong forts and palaces of Caesar and Chosroes trembled before their might. However, in this compilation, there are not only the stories of the battlefields but also the stories of bravery and courage, valor and piety, austerity and simplicity. These stories describe the true circumstances that led the Muslims to fight more powerful enemies than they were at that time.



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