Believers’ Stance at Struggling against Evils

[*Kötülüklerle Mücadelede Mü’mince Tavır*](http://www.herkul.org/kirik-testi/kotuluklerle-mucadelede-mumince-tavir/)

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**Question:** **What is the right way for believers to struggle in order to prevent wrongdoings and injustice?**
**Answer:** Islam came with a message of balance and justice to establish universal harmony against all kinds of extremism. With respect to struggling against evils, it neither counsels a passive and submissive attitude to tolerate wrongdoing and bow before it, nor does it allow violence and extremism with claims of struggling against oppressors, which results in a different form of wrongdoing and injustice. When the time comes, a believer stands upright in the face of oppression as an unshakable fortress and an unyielding wrist, without any fear or stepping back for the sake of establishing justice and does one’s best. But in the general sense, he or she is a person of extraordinary modesty and humility. Treating everybody with affection, compassion, and leniency is a believer’s general attitude. For example, when believers face enemies that attack their chastity, families, honor, land, country, independence, and state, then what falls to them is to give their task its due by fighting heart and soul with utter resolution. However, when a demand for making peace comes, they choose peace, revealing their lenient character. They try to practice and let practice the beauties of Islam in the atmosphere of peace because God commands us to do so: “*And if they (the enemies) incline to peace, incline to it also, and put your trust in God*” (al-Anfal 8:61). In another verse, this quality of believers is related from a different aspect: “*O you who believe! Whoever of you turns away from his Religion, (know that) in time, God will raise up a people whom He loves, and who love Him, most humble towards the believers, dignified in the face of the unbelievers*” (al-Maedah 5:54). That is to say, they lower their wings of modesty to the ground before believers, treating their brothers and sisters humbly and leniently, even to the degree of humiliation. However, they have a dignified stance against those who rebel against God. They never bow before such people. The poet Mehmed Akif expresses it well, “Who told you I were a docile sheep? I am only a lenient one; my neck can be cut off perhaps, but it is not likely to bow down!” So this is a prototypical person with respect to a dignified stance, but to reiterate, it is necessary to determine the proper place to present this attitude.

**Did You Cleave His Heart Open?**
Heroism is a good virtue. Everybody admires the heroism of the great commander Khalid ibn al-Walid. The heroism he displayed on the third day of his accepting Islam astonished everyone. However, at his early days as a Muslim, he killed some of the people who said by mistake, “We have become Sabaeans,” instead of “Muslims,” and took some of them as captives. When God’s Messenger, blessings and peace be upon him, was informed of the situation, he raised his blessed hands in supplication and said, “My God, I seek refuge in you against what Khalid did,”1 feeling very sad about this incident. In a similar case, the Messenger of God, peace and blessings be upon him, made a very serious warning to Usama ibn Zayd, who had killed an enemy in spite of his saying the proclamation of faith; the noble Prophet said, “Did you split open his heart?”2 So from these words of God’s Messenger we understand the fact that even during an ongoing battle, Muslims must absolutely act with the principle of justice.

**Reason and Diplomacy instead of Brute Force**
Believers must take into consideration that issues cannot always be settled with weapons, even when struggling against an enemy. In some cases, the more you resort to brutal force, the more you provoke grudge and hatred, putting your enemies in a position of sufferers and helping them to gain many supporters. In consequence, the present problem grows greater and becomes impossible to address. However, when the issue is approached with diplomacy instead of brutal force, it is always possible to obtain much better results.
I personally love Sultan Selim I very much. He has a priority over the rest of the Ottoman sultans in my opinion, with the exception of one or two. But I cannot help but question some of his military strategies with my simple mind. As he was a robust person himself, he really had powerful soldiers under his command. He had an army of men who would obey his orders unhesitatingly, even if he gave the order to march toward death. Before him was a state formed with Persian ambitions, which had become a source of troubles for the Islamic world. So he marched upon them wanting to maintain unity in the Islamic world and world order and was victorious. But I wonder, instead of resorting to brutal force, if he had used every possible way of reason, sensibility, and diplomacy, could it have been possible to prevent some components of sedition whose roots have extended until our time? These statements reflect my hesitations in this issue. If I am mistaken in this opinion, then I apologize to that great soul. If I am committing a sin by saying this, I ask, “May God forgive me.” However, I see it necessary on my part to emphasize the significance of sensibility, judgment, and diplomacy.
For many years they have not been able to solve the issue of terrorism in Turkey. The problem exists in spite of the violent and brutal efforts to address it. I wonder if there could be another way of bringing this issue to an end? If we could gain the hearts of those people by means of teachers, policemen, chaplains, doctors, and local governors, if we could find a way to their inner world, if we could show them the roads leading to high schools and universities, instead of the pathways on mountains, and if we could give them opportunities in a way to make them not give into the money some circles pour before them at every opportunity, could we not solve the problem? This means using the language of diplomacy. Most of the time brutal force is a hindrance to proper functioning of reason and logic. The consideration of “I can bring them in line by using force anyway” often becomes a barrier to following an alternative policy and strategy.

**Abasement in Expectation of Benefit Is Not Modesty**
If sensibility, judgment, diplomacy, lenient discourse, and lenient manners constitute one side of the issue, never bowing before power and brutal force and always presenting an upright stance constitute the other side of it. In this respect, adopting an abased attitude towards those who commit oppression and injustice with a concern for obtaining benefit from them should not be confused with humbleness and modesty. It is a completely different situation. Unfortunately, gentle words, manners, and attitude, which are very important dynamics at calling others to Truth, are in some cases used as a mask with the aim of looking nice to representatives of brutal power. What some weak characters understand from presenting gentle words and attitudes is to raise their own esteem and credit, to be favored, or to obtain a good position they aspire for. Surely, we cannot accuse anyone of pretense or hypocrisy by negative thinking. Even if some sagacious persons sense the true intention behind those weak characters’ attitude and behaviors, they do not reveal it as if it were objective judgment. Otherwise, they commit a sin for which God will bring the person to account. However, everybody must weigh in their consciences the behaviors they present and evaluate themselves accordingly.
It is a doubtless fact that all efforts made for the sake of consensus, reconciliation, and sharing will be recorded as good deeds for a person. However, if people lower themselves for the sake of some worldly benefits, this is nothing but abasement.

**Compliance for the Good of the Society**
The way and manner we call compliance and peaceful management should not be confused with abasement. These are attitudes adopted in order to generate peace rather than starting a fight with the enemy. Hafiz al-Shirazi says in his *Diwan* that two phrases summarize the way to maintain law and order in both worlds. One of them is treating friends with magnanimous kindness, and the other is apt management with enemies. According to this perspective, being dignified against enemies does not mean engaging them in combat at every opportunity. Particularly, plunging into such a venture when no balance of power exists between the two sides means that the weak side exposes itself to peril with its own hands. For this reason, moderate conduct and managing the enemies ingeniously do not only serve to maintain peace, but also are a wiser course of action to protect the rights of an entire society where no balance of power exists. Nothing beneficial comes from provoking envy, grudge, and animosity, which can bring numerous kinds of harm. If we view the issue with the approach of Bediüzzaman, wise people, who have ninety-nine enemies, do not wish to make it a hundred. Indeed, they seek ways of reducing the number of their enemies. All of these can be considered within the meaning of managing a situation.

1. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Maghazi, 58.
2. *Sahih al-Bukhari*, Maghazi, 45.

*This text is the translation of “[Kötülüklerle Mücadelede Mü’mince Tavır](http://www.herkul.org/kirik-testi/kotuluklerle-mucadelede-mumince-tavir/).”*