

## Do not Judge the Ruler of Syria by Criteria that do not Suit him

### News:

Asked whether alcohol would be allowed in Syria, Ahmad al-Sharaa replied: "There are many things that I simply cannot talk about because they are legal issues."

He added that a committee of legal experts would be created in Syria to draft a new constitution: "They will decide. And any ruler or president will have to abide by the law." (<https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/cdxz2y7dpq9o>)

During the visit of the foreign ministers of Germany and France in Damascus on Friday, January 3, he did not shake the hand of the head of the German department because she is a woman. (<https://nv.ua/world/geopolitics/lider-sirii-ne-pozhal-ruki-glave-mid-germanii-pokazali-video-50478989.html>)

### Comment:

The above two news items have sparked discussions among Muslims in Syria, as well as Muslims around the world.

On the one hand, Muslims condemned the question of BBC correspondent Jeremy Bowen, who travelled thousands of kilometres to ask a trivial question about the fate of alcohol.

Many criticized J. Bowen for the fact that, against the backdrop of the difficulties and devastation that the new Syrian authorities were facing, as well as against the backdrop of the unimaginable scale of the crimes of the previous Assad regime, which were revealed in the example of the Sednaya prison, a correspondent for a Western media outlet was interested in the question of the future of alcohol in Syria.

On the other hand, among Muslims there is discussion about Ahmad al-Sharaa's refusal to shake hands with German Foreign Minister Annalene Baerbock because she is a woman.

Many considered this step by Ahmad al-Sharaa as a previously unthinkable manifestation of Islam in international relations. And they considered this act of the main representative of the current Syrian authorities as a victory for Islam.

With regard to these two pieces of news, the Islamic Ummah must clearly understand the following:

The Western correspondent's question about the fate of alcohol is not stupid or inappropriate. On the contrary, it is necessary to evaluate this question as a kind of litmus test with which the Western world tests the new Syrian authorities.

This is similar to how, for example, European countries almost always condition the issue of European integration and economic assistance to candidate countries for EU membership on the need to carry out reforms, where the most important issue is the protection of LGBT rights. For the Western world, promoting such issues is a matter of life and death, because if the side on which they impose their will agrees to the implementation of Western standards in the LGBT sphere, then it will agree to everything else, to more significant reforms and concessions.

Similarly, in relation to Syria, the status of alcohol is the most important test, the most important indicator of concessions from the new Syrian government. Therefore, this is not another stupid and insignificant question that the Muslims of Syria should consider insignificant.

Unfortunately, al-Sharaa did not give a clear and precise answer to this question, stating that this was a question that he simply had no right to talk about, and that the fate of this question would be decided by a special committee that would draw up a new constitution.

In fact, the prohibition of alcohol is confirmed by the categorical text of the Quran, which does not imply any interpretation or disagreement. Therefore, any Muslim not only has the right, but is obliged to declare its categorical prohibition.

Regarding the refusal to shake hands, it is worth noting that Ahmad ash-Sharaa is not an ordinary Muslim, whose actions can be assessed by paying attention to such issues as performing the five-time prayer, fasting in the month of Ramadan, refusing to swear, refusing to drink alcohol, or, as we are dealing with in this case, refusing to shake hands with a woman, according to the well-known Sharia opinion on this issue.

Undoubtedly, the demand of the Most High Allah from a person who has just become a mukallaf and is supported by his father is different from the demand from the head of the clan, who, having a certain influence given to him by Allah, can encourage his entire clan to adhere to Islam.

Likewise, the demand from a person who is in fact the ruler of the Muslims will be different from the demand from the aforementioned person or the head of the clan.

Undoubtedly, if for the former, it will be sufficient to fulfill the individual duties of Islam, then for the rulers it will also be obligatory, in addition to individual duties, to implement Islam at the level of the entire society entrusted to him.

Therefore, performing five times a day prayer, having a beard, beautifully reading the Quran, performing the Hajj cannot be criteria for assessing the ruler of a Muslim country. Undoubtedly, the criteria here should be how fully and correctly he implements the laws of Sharia over society.

Since the collapse of the Caliphate, there have been tyrants in the history of this Ummah who even performed the Hajj like the past presidents of Egypt (Jamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat or Hosni Mubarak), or the current ruler of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov.

Undoubtedly, the reward for the individual manifestations of Islam of Ahmad ash-Sharaa is with the Most High Allah. However, today he is the actual ruler of Syria and the criteria for his evaluation must correspond to the status of the position he occupies.

Allah, the Most High, criticized the Quraysh for putting the care of pilgrims and the sacred mosque on the same level with faith in Allah, the Day of Judgment and fighting in His path: **﴿أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾** **“Do you compare the maintenance of the pilgrim’s thirst and the upkeep of the Sacred Mosque with the deeds of those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and strive in His cause? They are not equal in the sight of Allah, and Allah does not guide the wrongdoers.”** [Al-Tawba:19].

Similarly, to put a weak individual and the ruler of a Muslim country on the same level and to judge them by the same criteria is an unfair omission that is condemned by the Quran and Sunnah.

In conclusion, it should be noted that this confusion in the criteria for assessing the above-mentioned two news items is connected with the ideas of secularism that have taken root in the minds of many Muslims, which prompt them to see the issue of alcohol as a manifestation of stupidity, and also to see in Muslim rulers only individual manifestations of Islam, turning a blind eye to the absence of Islamic deeds in their actions that would correspond to the status of the position they hold.

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