

Days with the Imam (2)

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By the Mujahid Sheikh Ayman Al-Zawahiri, May Allah Protect Him

In the name of Allah, and all praise be to Allah, and may prayers and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah, his family, his companions, and those who followed him.

O Muslim brothers everywhere, As-Salaamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakaatuhu:

This is the second episode of my memories with the reforming Mujahid Imam and hero Sheikh Usama bin Laden- may Allah have great mercy upon him and make us join with him virtuously. And as I told you in the previous session, I agreed with the brothers to talk freely such that Allah the Almighty will grant success from my memories of this courageous hero who defended the Ummah of Islam.

Among the beautiful aspects of the character of Sheikh Usama - may Allah have mercy upon him - that is known to those who were close to him is that he was one of the least partisan people towards organizations and groups. I mean, his organizational partisanship was among the least I have seen- only Allah the Almighty is perfect- but Sheikh Usama bin Laden was a role model in this regard. I remember, I went to him in his position with the leading brothers in Jalalabad when the brothers were attacking it and launching campaigns against it in order to liberate it. I found at that location brothers from all the organizations: "The Muslim Brotherhood", "The Islamic Group", "Egyptian Islamic Jihad", Arabs and non-Arabs, and those from the Arabian Peninsula and from Iraq. I swear by Allah, I was happy with Sheikh Usama bin Laden, and I said to him, "With Allah's will, O Usama, you were able to gather the people into a single project, and their behavior is virtuous."

Also, one of the characteristics of Sheikh Usama bin Laden was consulting everyone who had a good opinion, and he wanted to know everyone's opinion, regardless of his organization or affiliation, in order to reach the interests of the Muslims. He was also employing the brothers from different organizations in his work and providing them responsibilities. The Sheikh - may Allah have mercy upon him - was trying to benefit from each competent brother and drive them to work together.

One of the examples about the Sheikh's concern with the worries of Muslims, regardless

of their belonging to organizations, was his concern with the issue of Sheikh Umar Abdul Rahman - may Allah free him - and I bear witness to the extent of the Sheikh's concern with this issue. First, in terms of preaching, he talked about this matter more than once in his interviews. More than that, he held a conference especially for this issue, and more than one brother spoke at it, and this matter is published and known.

The Sheikh was also strongly supporting anyone who sincerely sought to release Sheikh Umar Abdul Rahman, and a number of brothers who participated in this hear these words from me, knew it, and were witnesses to it, to the extent that one time some brothers who were supported by the Sheikh and were participating in serious work in order to release Sheikh Umar Abdul Rahman- may Allah free him- asked me to speak with the Sheikh to motivate and inspire him to give attention to this issue. So I went to him in one of the mountains near Jalalabad. It was in a very beautiful valley between two rocky mountains, and there was fine sand and a beautiful rivulet was flowing in it, where beautiful pennyroyal was growing. The Sheikh resided in this place, and this is where Sheikh Usama gave his speech which included his famous oath: "America will never dream of security until we live securely in Palestine and all the other Muslim countries". I went to him in this place, and I sat with him for a while and spoke with him and with Sheikh Abu Hafs- may Allah have mercy upon them and all Muslim martyrs- about this issue. Then, Sheikh Usama said: "I am doing it. What did the brothers want me to do? Ask them if I delayed them at all"? So I went to the brothers and told them what the Sheikh said. They replied: "That's true, the Sheikh did not delay us at all, but we want to inspire everyone about this issue, may Allah reward them well".

With Allah the Almighty's grace and in order to please Allah, they worked to free the Muslim captives and to free Sheikh Umar Abdul Rahman. Allah the Almighty helped us to capture the Jewish American Warren Weinstein, and we made conditions such as: freeing Sheikh Umar Abdul Rahman and returning him back to his family with dignity and honor. Also to release Aafia Siddiqui and to release Hasna, the wife of Abu Hamza al-Muhajir, and to release Sheikh Usama's family, may Allah release them all, and to release everyone who was arrested on charges of suspicion of being linked to Al-Qaeda or the Taliban, and other conditions you can find in the statement. We ask Allah the Almighty to support us, keep us firm and accurate, to hurry to relieve the anguish of Sheikh Umar Abdul Rahman and all Muslim prisoners.

I would also like to turn to another side of the characteristics of the Sheikh, which is his asceticism in worldly pleasures, and of course the asceticism of Sheikh Usama bin Laden is well known. People knew that this rich billionaire had spent all his money for Allah's sake. This is well known, but we felt it as a real life that we lived with him.

If you entered Sheikh Usama's house- may Allah have mercy upon him -you would be amazed. His house was very ascetic, with some wooden beds, plastic rugs, and simple furniture. If Sheikh Usama invited us to eat at his house, he would present what was found there: bread and vegetables and rice or even without rice. Sheikh Usama - may Allah have mercy upon him- offered whatever was available.

The Sheikh was keen on raising the brothers to be ascetic in worldly pleasures. When he was in Al-Arab village - this blessed village, and we ask Allah the Almighty to return it and to liberate all the occupied Muslim lands Allah willing - the Sheikh inspired the brothers for a long time not to deliver electricity to their homes. Of course, the village was two sections, an outer general section where there are the youth, guest homes, departments, and offices, and an interior section, where there are the families. Electricity was available to the outer section in order to work and produce and so on, while the Sheikh was inspiring the brothers not to deliver electricity to the interior section where their homes were, in order to get used to living without electricity. He insisted on that. Once, I was discussing that issue with him, and I said: "Why"? He replied: "Luxury is the enemy of Jihad. If the brothers were raised in austerity, they could bear the hardships". I said: "But what could the brother obtain from the pleasures of this world of luxury. I mean if he wants to enjoy, he could buy an electric mixer from the market". He said to me: "No, luxury crawls in to the soul little by little, so if you familiarize yourself with austerity and asceticism then you do not care if any situation passes after that". He took a deep educational view of this.

Also, one of his views - may Allah have mercy upon him - concerning the issue of spending is that despite his asceticism and austerity - of course I forget to mention a point. Despite the asceticism of the Sheikh he was generous and well known for his generosity with guests. He slaughtered the animals and offered good food to them. And because of the great number of Sheikh Usama's guests during the time in Kandahar... with Allah's will, there was delegation after delegation every day or two. Delegations of ten, twenty, thirty would arrive successively. And because of the large number of guests, Sheikh Usama bought a herd of sheep to be ready in order not to be late in preparing food and animals for the guests.

After that, when the Sheikh moved from the village and there were more guests, he established a special guest house which was known as "Dar As-Salam" in Kandahar. We ask Allah to return it liberated and soon, Allah willing.

The Sheikh, with his generosity....! forget to mention an anecdote. The young brothers who were living in the public section of the villages were eating from the general kitchen of the village. This kitchen was providing lentils and bread and the like, and when the guests came, the brothers regarded it as auspicious, they said, "Praise be to Allah, we will have a great lunch or dinner. Allah willing, it will include meat and good food".

Despite the austerity and abstinence of Sheikh Usama, he sometimes spent abundantly on his brother guards. When he was traveling for Jihadi missions - and I didn't know that he travelled for anything except Jihad, and we ask Allah the Almighty to accept it from him. Once I was traveling with him, and I found him spending unusually, and I said: "O Sheikh, isn't that increasing in spending somehow"? He replied: "Leave those brothers, they are suffering with me severely, and they have no private life. None of them may find time to pay attention to his own affairs. They are always on alert. The Sheikh left, the Sheikh entered, the Sheikh travelled, the Sheikh came. They are on alert with me". He continued: "Leave them, this is the least thing that can be done for them". That was

one of his educational views, may Allah have mercy upon him.

The relationship between Sheikh Usama and his guards was an amazing relationship. That relationship was for the sake and countenance of Allah. Those brothers were exerting all this effort in order to please Allah the Almighty, because no one can reward them for this, because they are defending the Sheikh with their lives, and what can be beyond life? Sacrificing life is the highest form of generosity. They considered guarding Sheikh Usama bin Laden as a good deed for which Allah the Almighty would reward them.

I remember a noble situation with them from several situations concerning defending Sheikh Usama bin Laden. When the Crusader war on Afghanistan began, the Sheikh took a tour of Jihadi locations, and I was with him. We went to Jalalabad, where we resided in one of the houses of Jalalabad city. During that time, heavy shelling started on Afghanistan, and one night Jalalabad was heavily shelled, and the shelling was spreading around us, and we doubted that it was a sweeping bombing, and we thought that our turn would come sooner, so we decided quickly to disperse. In front of the house that we were in, there was a front garden and there were back rooms. My mind guided me to enter one of these rooms. I thought that the collapse of a single room would be better than the collapse of an entire house. On the other hand, the Sheikh's guards took him and rushed him to the front, to the park, but when they found nowhere to take refuge in the park, they immediately pushed him to the corner of the wall and formed a human wall with their bodies to protect him from the missile fragments, even if they were injured, may Allah have mercy upon him. That was one of the memories of the Sheikh and his close relationship with his brothers and guards.

One of the great characteristics concerning the issue of Sheikh Usama's spending is that he was generous in spending on Jihad for the sake of Allah. He spent all his money on Jihad for Allah's sake. I think that this is one of the reasons that Allah has raised his degree in this world and in the afterworld, Allah willing.

I remember that I once discussed that issue with Sheikh Abu Hafs - may Allah have mercy upon him. I asked him: "O Abu Hafs, in your opinion, what is the reason that Allah the Almighty has been generous to him and granted him the acceptance among people and that love of people to him, and this popularity and this good reputation among the Muslim masses? O Abu Hafs what did he do in your view"? Abu Hafs replied: "I think that it is spending all his money for Allah's sake". I said: "By Allah, that's right".

The Sheikh was very generous in spending on Jihad missions, and he relied on Allah, spending his money and waiting for provision from Allah, and Allah provided it to him. People thought that Usama bin Laden was raised a billionaire, lived as a billionaire, and remained a billionaire. Sheikh Usama lost a lot of money after he left Sudan. We ask Allah the Almighty to guide the Sudanese government, who denied the charity that he had done for them and his support for them in the most severe conditions. And it expelled him, but Allah the Almighty gave him Afghanistan and the Mujahideen in Afghanistan and the Taliban, and we ask Allah to guide them. The

story of Sudan we will recollect another time, Allah willing. In short, when Sheikh Usama went out of Sudan, he was not as wealthy as people thought he was. They believe that Usama bin Laden was a rich man so he was still rich, but really his budget began to weaken. Yet, he was spending generously on Jihad, and one of the prominent examples his spending on the 9/11 attacks in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

I want to mention a point here concerning the issue of 9/11. Among the maliciousness of the American media and the Arab and Western media who cooperate with it is that when

9/11 is mentioned, they only mention the Twin Towers in New York. They do not mention the Pentagon, nor do they mention the fourth plane which crashed or was shot down - nobody knows- in Pennsylvania and was headed to the White House or to Congress. They only mention the Twin Towers and do not mention the target of the leadership of America's military, the leadership of the world's military, the leadership of the most powerful military power in human history: The Pentagon, which was collapsed over the heads of its owners by our brothers. They do not mention this. Even if it is the anniversary of 9/11, the president goes to the location of the Twin Towers there, where he pretends to be sad and to say that the Mujahideen are murderers, monsters, and bloodthirsty. And all that repeated speech that you hear about as if the Americans are innocent in their history who have not committed any crime, who have destroyed Japan by atomic bombs, but did not commit any crime in their history! And those who exterminated the American Indians, an entire nation, are innocent, and they never abused anyone! Glory be to Allah the Almighty!

The Sheikh was spending generously on the issue of the 9/11 assaults. He even told us one time that he had no money except the salaries of the families for the next month. One of the brothers who was responsible for training and preparing the martyr lions - may Allah have mercy upon them- he said to him: "I want from you a sum of money that is necessary to complete our training and preparation program". So, the Sheikh replied: "I have no money except the salaries of the brothers for the next month. Take it, and Allah will provide for us, Allah willing", and Allah provided for him.

One of the brothers told me a story he saw from the Sheikh – may Allah have mercy on him. One of the brothers responsible for striking the American embassies in Nairobi and Dares Salaam came to him and said: "I want from you immediately 50,000 dollars". The Sheikh had 55,000 dollars and gave him 50,000 dollars, and the Sheikh said: "I have never been so happy in my whole life to have this 5,000 dollars left". He was happy because he had given most of his wealth for Jihad for the sake of Allah.

Of course, the spending of the Sheikh on Jihad for the sake of Allah is so famous that we need not mention it, and we only mention a few glimpses such as this.

Another aspect to be mentioned about the Sheikh's spending for the sake of Allah is: People know Usama bin Laden as tolerant and generous, but he was very thrifty with the money for Jihad. Perhaps the people do not pay attention to this aspect. I mean, in order to

to please Allah and to support Jihad, the Sheikh was very thrifty with the money for Jihad for the sake of Allah.

How much time is left? [The Sheikh jokes] The director is a little bit serious with us. He was very thrifty in spending money on anything except Jihad for the sake of Allah. I remember a funny story in this regard, when we were in Peshawar at the time of the Afghan Jihad against the Russians. One of our brothers and friends – I think well of him - visited Peshawar. This brother was a close friend to me and to Sheikh Abu Ubaidah al- Bانشري , may Allah have mercy upon him. This brother was interested in education and teaching and so forth, and he had a project to build a school on the pure, faultless creed which included a good curriculum. The graduates would include people who would work for Jihad for the sake of Allah and other charitable deeds. The brother was very convinced with this idea, and it was preoccupying his mind completely. So he came to me, and spoke with me and with Sheikh Abu Ubaidah and said: "You must join me with Sheikh Usama bin Laden to help and support me in this project". I said: "Really, I have not tried something like this before with Sheikh Usama bin Laden. It has never happened that I took a person to him and said to him, pay for this or support that. This is something I am not used to doing". He said: "Why, do not give up on me", and he continue to pressure us and said: "Let me speak with the Sheikh. Why do you prevent me from speaking with the Sheikh"? I said to him: "We will, Allah willing, arrange a meeting". So we arranged a meeting for him with Sheikh Usama bin Laden. Then, this dear brother sat with Sheikh Usama bin Laden and started to explain his project and idea to him. The Sheikh, with Allah's will, listened. Of course, it is well known that Sheikh Usama was gentle, had good morals, and was a good listener. He listened without interrupting him until the brother finished showing his project. He said to him: "I want you to support this project". So Sheikh Usama- may Allah have mercy on him- said to him: "No, I will not support you in this project". [The Sheikh laughs] Then, confusion overcame the brother, and he said: "How are you not supporting me when this good work is for the benefit of the Muslims and the Mujahideen"?

So the Sheikh replied: "O my brother, no one cries about Jihad. People are now spending on many kinds of charity. They spend money on orphans, schools, and buying food. All these things would be lost without Jihad. If the Jihad conquers, then all these interests will be preserved for 'the Ummah. People are afraid to spend money on Jihad for the sake of Allah, while they spend here and there. Few are the people who dare to spend money on Jihad for the sake of Allah. No one cries about Jihad. And after all of this, I should take from the money for Jihad and give it to you! I will not give it to you". The brother was shocked. The idea captivated his thoughts, so he continued arguing with the Sheikh and telling him that this is in the favor of Jihad and in the interests of the Muslims and so on.

The Sheikh was listening, but he was adhering to his opinion. Then, I feared that the Sheikh would think that Sheikh Abu Ubaidah and I were of the same opinion of this brother. So I spoke fairly and told him: "O my brother, the Sheikh is right. Jihad for the sake of Allah means fighting for the sake of Allah is the most deserving aspect to spend on. If the Jihad is satisfied, then one can spend on the other charitable aspects".

The brother was confused, and then he said to him: "Alright, you do not want to support me, then vouch for me to those who would support me. The Sheikh said to him: "And not this". He said: "Glory be to Allah, why"? He said: "How can I appeal to people to leave spending on charitable fields and spend on Jihad until it is satisfied, and then I vouch for you to these people? This is a contradiction between my speech and my actions. How can this be"? The brother was confused, and then he said to him: "Alright, at least vouch for me to those who would vouch for me to the philanthropists". He said: "This is unobjectionable, Allah willing". Then, the brother left the Sheikh and did not take any contribution for his project.

Also concerning the Sheikh's spending for the sake of Allah, in matters of wealth, the Sheikh was disdainful towards this world and the nonsense of this world. He was forgiving - many times- to those who rightly took from him.

I recall a story about this in which I witnessed its many chapters. One of the brothers who were participating in the Jihad against the Russians and migrated after that to Afghanistan at the time of Taliban and was martyred - may Allah have mercy upon him - in the Crusader campaign on Afghanistan. At the time of the Sheikh's move to the Sudan and his beginning the investment projects in the Sudan, this brother came to the Sheikh. This brother collected money from some of the Muslims in order to invest it and its benefit would reach Muslims and benefit Halal things.

So he went to the Sheikh, and there was a strong relationship between them, and they trusted each other. So he said to him: "O Sheikh Usama, I have collected money, and I want to invest it and to help and benefit from Halal things". He said: "That is unobjectionable, alright, Allah willing". He said: "I want you to help me in this. I have an amount of money, and I want you to help me".

He said: "Alright, I can help you Allah willing, but on one condition". He said: "What is this condition"? He said: "These things that I will give to you, you are not allowed to act freely without consulting with me". He said: "I agree to this condition". So the Sheikh gave him permission to take from warehouses a large amount of sugar.

At that time, the Sheikh was trading in some things including sugar. He was taking large quantities of sugar from the factories of Sudan and was trading in the domestic market and the foreign market. So he wrote for him a statement that permitted him to take a large amount of sugar from the warehouses that was estimated to be tens of thousands of dollars.

He said: "Take this as a loan. Sell it, and profit from it in Halal things, just as Allah the Almighty helps you. Then, when you collect its value, give it back to me, but with this condition". The brother said: "I agree, alright, Allah willing". Then, he took the sugar and began to display it in the market. This brother was not experienced in understanding the nature of people. Then, a group of dishonest scammers with beards and a good appearance and tricks like this came to him, led by the scammer and swindler traitor Jamal al-Fadl, who surrendered himself to the Americans after he worked as a director in the Sheikh's companies. Then, he defrauded and took money from the Sheikh, and then he defrauded and took money from others and others. Then, when his fake

trade went bankrupt, he found that he could invest his information about the Sheikh to the American, so he surrendered himself to the Americans. The Americans put him under the witness protection program, and they still keep him there, and they bring him in for every Islamic case, such that one time in a case, they brought him to be a witness, and the defendant's lawyer said: "This is a traitor. This is a bribed person. How can his testimony be accepted?! He admits that he is receiving money from the Americans, how can his testimony can be accepted"?! In short, this international thief was at the head of this gang.

Jamal al-Fadl was performing Jihad in Afghanistan at the time of the Russians. He was with the Sheikh and so on. So, the brothers trusted him, and also this brother trusted him. He said to him: "I can bring good dealers who can give you good prices, and they are trusted brothers", and so on. The brother found reassurance in them, trusted them and they agreed. They said we can take the sugar and give you so and so. The brother said: "That's good". He gave them the sugar, and they gave him checks which were soon discovered to be worthless, while they had taken the sugar.

The brother was confused. He began pressuring them while they were escaping from him, and long stories happened between them. Then, the brother went to the Sheikh and said to him: "O Sheikh, this and that happened". He said: "I stipulated a condition, but you broke the condition". The brother said: "Yes, I set aside the condition, I admit. And I ask you, please give me an extension till I can repay my debt to you". He said: "Try hard". This brother was striving for a very long time, and he managed to repay about half of the debt, while the other half remained. After that, this brother was forced to leave the country and so on, and his circumstances changed. In the end, Allah the Almighty helped him to immigrate to Afghanistan at the time of Taliban. There was a good relationship with brotherhood between the Sheikh and him.

In short, this brother was martyred in the Crusader bombing on Afghanistan. After he was martyred, I spoke with the Sheikh and said to him: "O Sheikh Usama, you know that the martyr is forgiven for everything except debt, and this man owes you a debt. Could you forgive him, and you will have the reward of Allah the Almighty"? He said: "I have forgiven him, and the matter is settled".

That's enough for today, and until another meeting, I entrust you to in the care of Allah the Almighty.

Was-Salaamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi, and may Allah's prayers and peace be upon our master Muhammad and all of his family and companions.

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