

Counsel

Electricity is generated by the contact of positive and negative wires. Similarly progress too is achieved with the confluence of two streams of thoughts. Sometimes consultation lights up the future path for man and sometimes it brightens up a vast horizon.

Of course, consultation never means that man should submit himself totally to others because it would also result in a loss like blind following which is a kind of suicide as it would only mean the assassination of one's intelligence and noble feelings.

Consultation means that man may ask for the solution of his problems from others and may follow their advice or counsel after giving it full thought.

At the time of the battle of Khandaq (Trench) the huge army of the Arab polytheists advanced toward Medina to attack the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) constituted a consultative committee of some experts in warfare. An experienced Persian companion, Salman Farsi suggested digging of a three meter wide and two meter deep ditch on the outskirts of the town and a trough at a distance of every hundred feet and posting strong warriors entrusted with the responsibility of defending the ditch front to prevent the enemy from approaching it and to drive them away, if necessary, by raining arrows and even stones on them.

The advice of Salman was liked by the Holy Prophet as well as by his companions and the work of ditch digging was completed in 25 days. The enemy soldiers were astonished to see this innovative military strategy. They had to camp for about a month and return empty handed after suffering the loss of some soldiers.

In the modern world states are governed by consultative councils and senates. Most unfortunate and extremely mean is the nation, which remains under the influence of a big oppressive power and entrusts the reins of its destiny to an individual.

Seeking counsel is one of the basic teachings of Islam. Allah Almighty ordains His Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.):

(O Muhammad!) Consult your friends in social and political affairs.

The Holy Prophet was in the heat of the battle of Badr. The enemies far exceeded in numbers and also had modern and devastating arms and were bent upon wiping out Islam altogether. The Holy Prophet arranged a high level meeting of war experts, then he turned towards the people and said, “Let me have your opinion in the matter of fighting with the Quraish in this desert land. Is it advisable to go ahead to confront the enemy or should we return to Medina from here only?”

A companion named ‘Miqdad’ stood up and said, “Our hearts are with you. We will never tell you what Bani Israel had told to Musa (a.s.). When he had invited them to wage jihad the Bani Israel had replied: O Musa! You and your God may go ahead and fight. We will sit here. But we say: O Muhammad (s.a.w.a.)! You and your Allah may proceed further for war. We are also with you.”

Another companion from the Ansars, Saad bin Maaz, got up and pointing toward the Red Sea said: “O great leader! If you fling into this sea, we also will jump into it following you faithfully. None of us will ever turn his face from your honor. We are not at all afraid of the enemy. Perhaps we may, in this path, render services which might please you.”

Other companions also liked the opinions of these two companions. The Islamic army got motivated. Thus the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.a.) made up his mind to move and march forward. Through such consultation he created a fresh feeling in his army and ordered to march forward.

The Holy Prophet took such advice not only in this holy war but he did similarly on other occasions also like the battle of Uhad and the war at Khaibar and obtained good results.

Young people should gain from the experience of the seniors as they have seen the ups and downs of life. It is likely that, due to inexperience, we may look only at the apparent aspects and remain unaware of the consequences.

The reason of great victories achieved during the days of the second caliph was ‘Consultation’.

The caliph of the time used to put his problems before Amirul Mo–mineen Ali (a.s.) who, in the light of his intelligence, used to tell the secrets of success in battles.

When the caliph of the time asked the opinion of Ali (a.s.) in the matter of fighting against the Sasanids and said, “If you so advise, I may participate in this battle myself.”

Amirul Mo–mineen replied, “In case the Muslims are defeated they will not have any shelter if you also go to war with the army. But if you remain in the Islamic capital, you will be able to send help if needed. Thus the people will have a refuge.”