

Islam The Best Motivator

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In a world ruled by material needs here comes this book to remind us about the true principles of Islam, how they should be observed and how they affect our lives. The author does this using as example the life of our Prophet (S) and the life of Imam Ali (as).

Islam, the Best Motivator for Doing Good and the Best Obstructor for Doing Evil

Along with the advancement of materialism which has confronted with the spirituality and religions, the materialists introduced religion as a stupefying and stagnating factor that would stop the scientific and industrial advancement. But by studying the history and social and political conditions of the Middle Ages, one will find that the main reason for this accusation was the feeling of frustration about Christianity; because they had seen or heard that thousands of scientists and intellectuals had been put to death by the order of the church.

About five million people were killed in the Middle Ages by the order of the church. From 1481 – 1499 (in only 18 years) 10220 persons were burned alive, 6860 persons were split in two halves and 97023 persons were tortured to death.

The materialists perceived that the church was patronizing the interests of imperialists and colonialists, and they knew that any country a churchman went, the inauspicious steps of colonialists also followed to plunder the national, intellectual and laboring treasures and wealth. This was so apparent that it was said, “Missioners present people the Bible with one hand, and give them the western colonialism with the other.”

Hence, the intellectuals revolted against religions, their revolution set a fire that burned the good with the

bad, and the right with the wrong.

It is obvious that the life-giving and revolutionary religion of Islam was not exempted from this unfair accusation. And those who were not familiar with the real nature and precious teachings of Islam thought it -- like Christianity -- encouraged people to silence and submission against injustice, tyranny and colonialism.

Certainly, they had not understood the spirit of Islam, otherwise by giving attention to Islamic commandments, and studying the related issues and documents, they would have perceived the Islam has planned to prevent corruption, stagnation and suppression, by enacting the law of encouragement to the good and discouragement from evil, and by giving individual and collective responsibilities in national affairs.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) said, "Everyone of you is a leader, and everyone of you is responsible for his subjects."¹

Just like the law of praying and fasting, Islam has made the law of encouragement to the good, discouragement from evil, and the holy war (*jihad*) obligatory. The Holy Quran decisively says,

***"And if two parties of believers quarrel, make peace between them, but if one of them acts wrongfully towards the other fight that acts wrongfully until it returns to Allah's command; then if it returns, make peace between them with justice and act equitably; surely Allah loves those who act equitably."* (The Quran, 49: 9)**

This verse is an example of many verses and traditions that invite Muslims to campaign against corruption and injustice.

The adventurous lives of the glorious messenger of Islam and his pure descendants are our historical evidence. The Prophet (S) -- alone and with empty hands -- rose against unfairness, idolatry, exploitation, usury, oppression, assault, and all the evils of Mecca where he was harmed and even threatened to death many times.

Once, his house was exposed to a night attack by the swordsmen of heads of Quraish whose illegitimate interests had been endangered. And once he and his followers were blockaded in a valley named Shi'b Abi Talib for long time, during which living in Arabia became so difficult for Muslims that many of them emigrated from the country. But these and many other hardships did not dissuade him from his holy mission which was the liberation of the masses from slavery and exploitation and the freedom of human minds from illusions and superstitions.

After the unbelievers realized that their threats and harms did not work, they decided to use temptations and promises. Therefore, the heads of Quraish offered him great wealth, marriage with the best girls, authority and leadership. But he said to them, "If you give sun to my right hand and moon to my left, I

will not quit my mission.”²

In the battle of Uhud, only the Prophet (S), Ali (as) and few others – in spite of being wounded -- fought bravely and continued the battle to final victory.

The story of Hanzala in this battle is interesting: Hanzala was waiting for the night, the wedding night, the night he was supposed to step in the bridal chamber; but Medina was generally in a different mood.

On the same day the fighting Muslim men were getting ready to go to Uhud. A public summon was issued by the order of Prophet (S). Every man who had the ability of taking arms and could fight, according to the Islamic law, had to prepare himself for the battle. The city was active and moving, and everything seemed exciting. Women and children were anxious. The received news reported that the crowd of enemy was huge, in comparison with the number of Muslim forces which was few. The fighting men were polishing their war equipments hurriedly.

People had heard the commandment of the Prophet (S) inviting them to go out of the city to confront with the hostile enemy; and in every house, the main conversation was about the next day's battle, its results, hopes and worries. Hanzala, his bride and their families had done all the preparations for the wedding before the news of the war was received. On one hand, he was thinking about the wedding and its joy, on the other, he was contemplating on the commandment of faith which was calling to him to wear his suit of armour instead of his suit of wedding.

So, he hurried to visit the Prophet (S); and as his soul was filled with the light of faith, he said, “O, Messenger of Allah! Tonight is my wedding night; if you allow me to stay in Medina tonight so that the wedding can take place, you will see me in the morning with other Muslim brothers fighting in the battlefield.”

The Prophet (S) allowed him to stay in Medina for the night.

He went home. Although the city was feverishly going to war, but the joy of wedding was dominating over Hanzala's house temporarily.

The night ended; and by the dawn, Hanzala became ready to leave the city. The bride asked four persons to witness that if she brought a child, it would be of Hanzala. Hanzala confirmed their witness and set out quickly to Uhud.

The believers were involved in the battle as the “bridegroom” arrived. He joined his Muslim brothers and fought bravely against their enemy until he was martyred.³

In a very adverse and severe situation, Imam Husain (.s) and his men opposed injustice, tyranny, crime and corruption – all of which was symbolized in Yazid and his men – and fought to their last drop of blood. Some of the Imams were forced to spend a good portion of their lives in the prisons of tyrants; and all of the eleven were martyred either by sword or by poison.

Indeed, history has interesting repetitions: The Islamic revolution in Iran is our contemporary evidence; the glorious leader of the Islamic movement, who was a follower of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) stood against a dictatorial government and faced the kind of troubles which the Holy Prophet (S) had faced.

He also, alone and with empty hands, rose against inequality, corruption, exploitation, oppression and assault; and no hardship could deviate him from his Islamic campaign.

They attacked his house by night, they imprisoned him, they exiled him from his country, they conspired against him, and even the deposed Shah tried to allure him; but he never changed, and doubtlessly continued pounding at the tyrannical regime until the Muslim nation rose and, as we saw, destroyed the whole government, and surprised the whole world.

Truly, what made these devotions, of which the Islamic history is full, happen? By which foreign or domestic power did these dedications occur? Were these people not interested in life, family, wealth and position? Then how did they sacrifice them all for their belief and religion and for struggling against the oppression of treacherous rulers?

They did all these only by faith in Allah and trust in His power, and belief in the divine religion of Islam; because they are the same friends of Allah for whom there is no fear or grief,

“Now surely the friends of Allah – they shall have no fear and nor shall they grieve” (The Quran, 10: 62)

Here is what Imam Ali (as) said about the holy war and struggling for the religion, “Even if the whole Arab nation unite and come to kill me, I will fight alone; I will never escape.⁴”

By making a covenant with Allah, the Prophet (S) and the believers, a true Muslim relates himself only to the party of Allah (*hizbullah*). And if he is bound up with the principles and he practices the commandments, he will always be victorious.

“Surely the parties of Allah are the successful ones.” (The Quran, 5:56)

This is why the early believers of Islam and other true Muslims embraced the bloody and honourable death and were martyred in the way of Allah, but they did not submit to force and tyranny and did not accept disgrace and abjectness. They said, “Being killed is better than feeling ashamed, and feeling ashamed is better than going to hell.⁵”

Don't these all indicate that Islam opposes pressure, plundering and injustice?

Then Why Being Patient?

Events and situations are of two types: they are either changeable and controllable, or they are unchangeable and inevitable. Most events that cause anxiety are created – consciously or unconsciously – by ourselves and are controllable. By useful instructions, we can change them to our best interest and have a better life. For example, imagine the following persons:

1. Someone to whom God gives wealth, but he doesn't spend it wisely and wastes it; and then he prays for some more.
2. Someone who has selected a cruel and incompatible wife, and prays to be relieved.
3. Someone who doesn't go to work, but prays for sustenance.

According to the Islamic traditions, the supplication of these people will not be accepted⁶; because the factors of solving their problems have been in their control, and still are.

Now think of some people who have lost their dear ones, some people who have chronic diseases, and some people who are crippled or disabled. These persons have to be patient, and adjust themselves to the situations as they are.

Imam Ja'far Sadiq (as) had a son named Isma'il. This boy whose civility, superiority, morality and beauty had interested everybody, became badly sick. His father worried himself about him and did the best for his treatment; but the boy died. Then, Imam no longer worried or complained. People asked him the reason; he said, "We, the descendants of Prophet supplicate that a disaster or an unfortunate event not to happen; but after it did, we tolerate it."⁷

In his litany during the nights of Ramadhan, Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husain (as) says, "O Allah, I beg you a faith that will be in harmony with my heart, a certainty which makes me believe that nothing happens to me but what you have prescribed, and satisfy me in life with what you have apportioned me."⁸

Patience, tolerance, and flexibility against inevitable events are necessary for man to survive the adventures of life. Trees and branches bend and with their flexibility drive the storms and whirlwinds away; and if they don't they will break. Plants and bushes also bend down under heavy snow; and after the snow melts, they rise gradually and continue their lives.

Imam Ali (as) said, "one who is not saved by patience will die by impatience."⁹ He also advised his sons, "Fend off the hard blows of anxiety by tolerance and stability. Habituate yourself to patience; as it is a good practice. And by that, make the fears, worries and cares of the world easy for yourself."¹⁰

Of course, patience does not mean to surrender to oppression, treachery and force; it does not mean to accept any situation that exploiters and colonialists create; and it does not mean to assimilate and

passively wait for destiny. Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (as) said, "The tyrant and one who assists him and one who approves his action are all three partners in tyranny."¹¹

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1. al-Tabataba'i, al- Mizan V111. 12.
 2. Ibn Hisham, al Sirah, I 266
 3. al Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, XX 57
 4. al-Radhi, Nahj al-Balagha, II, 45
 5. al Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, XLV 50
 6. al- Amili, Vasa'il al Shi'ah, XII, 15
 7. al Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar, XLVII 249
 8. Ibid, ICVIII, 93
 9. al-Amili, Wasa'il, al- Shi'ah XI, 209
 10. Ibid, 208
 11. al-Kulaini, al-Kafi, II, 333

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