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Chapter 3: Islamic Clemency and Mercy in Narration

Islamic clemency and mercy has been reflected in the various and numerous narrations, to some of which we refer hereunder:

Affection is the Basis of Religion

Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Is religion anything save affection and mercy?! (Then he reasons: because) The Almighty God says: "If you love God, obey my instructions (Prophet (S) to be loved by God." 1

That is to say, the motive for obeying divine instructions is love and affection towards God.

We read in another narration from Imam Bagir (as):

"Religion is affection, and affection is religion." 2

Sometimes intellectual reasoning is man's motive for doing something, and sometimes his love and affection make him do something. Are these two motives similar?

God sets love between the spouses for continuation of human generation. If logic and intellectual reasoning served to be man's motive for survival of its generation, and for instance if he thinks:

"One shall marry for survival of its generation to have offspring and bear all the related troubles and difficulties "or "Since I need help for when I become old and weak, and need someone to help and support me, then, I shall marry to have children".

If one's motive for marriage is any of above intellectual reasoning, only one per hundred would undertake to marry and bear the numerous hardships, problems and failures of matrimony and breeding.

However, the sexual attraction and love leads humans towards marriage despite of all its problems so that they accept and bear all hardships voluntarily, and rather, spend their entire life for their children to raise them and help them to learn to walk and talk. Right! The motive of love and affection causes such strange and amazing power.

It is applicable to the religious programs too, and for this reason the above narrations have stressed on love and affection. If you are a lover, you will be led to divine obedience and will undertake its hardships. If you are a lover of Imam of the Time (as), it will be easy for you to obey his orders and fight with vices and evils. Right!

Love and affection facilitates tasks. Is the religious doctrine which promotes the motive of its followers to be affection and love and introduces a religion equal to love and affection, be the religion of violence?

Islamic Mercy in the Battlefield

Islamic clemency and mercy is so extensive that it appears in the battlefield too. In other words, Islam renders such importance to affection, benevolence and clemency that it recommends it to its followers even in the center of violence and harshness! On this account, we find remarkable points in this respect in the narrations concerned with manners and rules of warfare, one of which is referred to hereunder:

Imam Sadiq (as) says: When Islam's Prophet (S) decided to send soldiers to the battlefield; he called and reminded them the rules3, (so that if a soldier disregarded the rules, he was reproached):

"Depart towards the battlefield (but not for sensual desires; rather), in the name of God and for His consent, and with a pure intention for Him free from any non-godly motive and act as per the Islamic programs (which will be explained later)."

"Do not betray (

)"

: What is meant by this phrase? Three possible concepts could be understood:

First: Do not betray when distributing war spoils. It has also been mentioned in some other Qur'anic verses to divide what belongs to the government and leadership, and what for the warriors shall be distributed among them fairly.

Second: The previous warriors may have betrayed each other in some affairs others than spoils.

Third: Not only must you not betray your mate warriors, but also do not betray your enemies, and fight with them chivalrously.

"Do not mutilate ("(

و لا تمثلوا

: Do not mutilate the corpse of your enemy after killing him.

It has been narrated from Islam Prophet (S): Even if a wild dog attacked you, and you killed it. You are not authorised to mutilate it.4

"Do not deceive": If you agreed for peace with your enemy, and signed cease fire with him, respect your promise and contract, and do not violate it. Muslim is one who is faithful even to the promise and contract he binds with his enemies. Hazrat 'Ali (as) writes to his brave commander, Malik al-Ashtar:

If a contract and promise is concluded between you and your enemy, or you gave refuge to him, be faithful to your promise, and trustful to what you have undertaken, and do not spare your life for your promise, because none of divine obligations is similar to fulfillment of promise, in which all people in the world agree despite of all different thoughts and desires they may have.5

"Do not attack the weak and unable people who do not participate in the war, and do not kill the feeble old men, children and ladies."

"Do not cut trees, unless you have to!"

Studying these high rules and prudent and advanced instructions, one finds and is surprised with magnificence of Islam and scope of Islamic mercy. The Islamic clemency is even extended to the center of violence, and it includes even the trees. Prophet (S) orders his soldiers not to cut any tree at the time of war and battle, and not to hurt nature, unless the trees impede progress of Muslim soldiers and host of Qur'an. In this case, there is no problem for cutting them as much as necessary.

The further instructions of Prophet (S) clearly indicate Islamic clemency, benevolence and mercy in the battle field. Pay attention:

"When one from the Muslim host, either the highest or the lowest in rank, gives refuge to one of the polytheists, he shall be secure, and he shall be transferred to the rear. The Islamic knowledge, instructions and rulings shall be explained for him gently and patiently. If he converted to Islam, he would be a Muslim like you, and would have the same rights Muslim have. If he did not accept Islam, or asked a respite for thinking about the Islamic instructions, he shall be returned to his country safely, and he shall never be annoyed and bothered."

Of course, it is not easy to follow these instructions. It calls for a strong faith and charity. This is the reason why at the end of his lecture, Prophet (S) orders his soldiers to seek help from God for observance of these rules. Does the world claiming for observance of human rights and philanthropic mottos observe any of such rules? In the conflict between Israel and Palestine, these rules are never observed. Rather, these barbarian and savage felons ruin the houses of Palestinians and burn their farms, and destroy the trees. They show no pity to the small and old men and women. At the meantime, those claiming for human rights defend them and accuse us of violence.

Islamic Clemency and other Creatures

Islamic clemency and benevolence includes not only all humans (regardless of their religion), but also all creatures and beings.

On this basis, there are narrations among Islamic instructions talking about animals' rights₆. Hereunder, we refer to one sample for familiarity with scope of Islamic clemency and affection.

Islam's Prophet Muhammad (S) has numerated six rights for the beast which shall be observed by their owners:

"When he reaches a place of rest, first he shall provide water and food for the animal. Then, he may think of his own food."

"During journey and course, when he finds water, he shall lead the animal there to drink."

"(If he wants the animal to move faster) He shall not lash the animal's face and head because the animals too glorify God, and it is not right to lash the head and face of animal which glorifies God."7

"He shall not ride on the standing animal unless in the path of God (for instance, in the battle field, where there is no problem for riding on the standing animal, because there is the possibility of raid by the enemy)."

"The animals too have a limited power and ability. One shall consider the beast's ability, and do not make it carry more than what he can."

"In addition to drafting, the beasts shall be also cared for long journeys and distances, and one shall ride on them as much as their ability and bearing."

These are subtle instructions which are not observed in the present world, and no one cares about them. Rather, many do not even understand it. However, the merciful religion of Islam takes care all of these subtle points and bids its followers to observe them. Is such religion the religion of violence?

Dua (invocation) of Muslims for all Human Beings!

Dua and blessings recited in the blessed month of Ramadan after the obligatory daily prayers in all mosques and worship centers throughout the world are another indication of Islamic mercy and benevolence. Thereby, Muslims invoke God for solving problems of all human beings (not only Muslims). We study hereunder some of these invocations:

"O Allah! Let all the dead to be cheerful!"

"O Allah! Let all the needy to be rich!"

"O Allah! Let all the hungry to be fed!"

"O Allah! Let all the naked to be clothed!"

"O Allah! Let all the indebted to get their debts paid!"

"O Allah! Let the affairs of all the worried untangled!"

"O Allah! Let all the expatriates be repatriated!"

"O Allah! Let all the captives to be liberated!"

"O Allah! Let all the sick people to be healed!"

One really enjoys the extensive Islamic mercy and extols Muslims' charity, because most invocations by Muslims are general and universal and embrace all human beings from any race and mental attitude.

Are these interesting and extensive invocations not the signs of Islamic mercy and benevolence?

Does any fair and impartial man let himself introduce such a religion as the religion of violence?

- 1. Mizan ul-Hikmah, chapter 658, narration 3097 (Vol. II, p. 215)
- 2. Nur'uth-Thaqalayn, Vol. 5, p. 285, narration 49
- 3. Wasa'il ush-Shi'a, Vol. 11, p. 43
- 4. Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 42, p. 246 & 257
- 5. Nahjul Balaghah, letter 53
- <u>6.</u> There are numerous narrations in this regard so that in Wasa'il ush-Shi'a, vol. 8, there are more than fifty rules in chapter "Rules for the Beast".
- 7. According to the Holy Qur'an, we believe that the entire world is glorifying the Lord of World.

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