

Perseverance on Principles

Regulations and principles play a great role in the lives of societies and nations. The highness of the principles of any nation proves its civilization. Likewise, any feebleness that affects the principles implies the ignorance of that nation. The most favorable principles are those which contribute in normalizing the individuals' lives and protecting their freedoms and dignities. Nevertheless, principles, no matter how great they are, cannot achieve the expectations of a nation unless there are individuals who embrace, protect, and carry them out in the various fields of life. Otherwise, they become of no value. On that account, perseverance on the principles is the holiest inevitable obligation, since it raises the morale, empowers values, and achieves expectations.

All over history, humankind has never known any principles more perfect than the Islamic, which obtained all virtues of mortality. They are the one and only principles befitting the sound natures and achieving the pleasure of this worldly life as well as the life to come. In a period of less than twenty-five years, the Islamic principles could achieve matters that none else could do, through the conquests of faith and miracles of reformation. They also changed the Arab nation that was sinking in ignorance into the best nation ever seen by humankind in civilization, glory, knowledge, and morality.

Perseverance on principles is the only reason beyond the prevalence of the scientific civilization and leadership of the precedent Muslims who exerted all efforts and lost themselves in their principles. Likewise, the present disasters and incessant collapse of Muslims are the result of the negligence and going astray from their principles.

The holy Quran glorifies Muslims who show perseverance on principles and cling to the high values of faith:

"To those who have said, "Allah is our Lord," and who have remained steadfast to their belief, the angels will descend saying, "Do not be afraid or grieved. Receive the glad news of the Paradise which was promised to you. We are your guardians in this world and in the life to come, where you will have whatever you call for, a hospitable welcome from the All-forgiving and All-merciful Allah" (41:30-2).

Giving the best examples of steadfastness for the sake of God, the Prophet Muhammad (S) was facing bravely and overcoming the increasing hurricanes of disasters and powers of unbelief. In this regard, he (S) said:

“If the sun is put in my right hand and the moon in the left so that I may leave this matter (i.e. the divine mission), I will not do it until Allah will give me victory or I will die in this cause.”

Like the Prophet (S), Amirul-Mu'minin (a) was the ideal in the field of perseverance on principles. When the leadership was given to him provided that he would follow the Book of God, the Prophet's Sunna, and the way of the two Sheikhs¹, he ejected because he adhered to his lofty opinion and genuine principle. He said:

“No, I rule on the bases of God's Book, the Prophet's Sunna, and my own elicitation.”

As some of his retinue, on another occasion, suggested to him importunately to ‘give some of these treasures exclusively to the celebrities of the Arabs and the Koreishites as well as every person that you anticipate he will leave you and join the camp of Muawiya,’ Amirul-Mu'minin refused their suggestion out of his perseverance on the principles and said:

“Do you command me that I should seek support by oppressing those over whom I have been placed? By Allah, I will not do so as long as the world goes on, and as long as one star leads another in the sky. Even if it were my property, I would have distributed it equally among them, then why not when the property is that of Allah².”

This unparalleled ideality crept into his choice friends to change them into nonesuch models of perseverance on principles in spite of suffering various sorts of terror and persecution:

One day, al-Hajjaj Ibn Yousuf ath-Thaqafi³ said that he would like to arrest one of the companions of Abu Turab⁴ so that he would seek nearness to God through shedding his blood! The attendants said, ‘As much as we know, Qanbar the servant had spent the longest period with Abu Turab.’ Hence, al-Hajjaj ordered to arrest Qanbar.

When Qanbar was brought before him, al-Hajjaj asked: “Are you Qanbar?”

He answered: “Yes, it is I.”

Al-Hajjaj asked: “Are you called Abu Hamdan?”

He answered: “Yes, I am.”

Al-Hajjaj asked: “Ali Ibn Abi Talib was your master, was he not?”

Qanbar answered: “God is my Master and Ali was my benefactor.”

Al-Hajjaj then asked Qanbar to declare his disavowal of the religion of Imam Ali (a), but Qanbar asked: "If I do, will you find me a religion better than his?"

Out of his anger, al-Hajjaj told Qanbar that he would kill him and that he might choose the kind of killing that he would inevitably encounter. Qanbar said: "I give you this right of choice. You should choose for me."

Al-Hajjaj wondered: "Why is that?"

Qanbar answered: "That is because I will certainly kill you in the same way you are going to kill me. Amirul-Mu'minin foretold me that I will be slain wrongfully."

Hence, al-Hajjaj ordered to slay him⁵.

To Abu al-Aswad ad-Du'ali⁶, Muawiya sent candy as a present so as to make him leave the wing of Amirul-Mu'minin (a) and join his. A little girl of Abu al-Aswad took a bite from that candy and swallowed. His father shouted at her to throw that bite away, and told her that candy was poison sent to them by Muawiya to take them away from their love and support for Ali Ibn Abi Talib and the Ahlul-Bayt (a). The little girl tried her best to vomit that bite until she could. She, then, said: "God may condemn Muawiya. Does he want us to leave the purified master through sending us such saffroned candy?"

Woe to him who sends and who will eat such candy."

She then composed:

Son of Hind⁷, is it by means of saffroned candy You want us to sell our religion and Islam to you? God forbid it! This will never occur so long as our master is Amirul-Mu'minin

Rashid al-Hajari was one of the intimate friends of Imam Ali (a). Ziyad the cursed (the governor of Kufa in the reign of Yazid Ibn Muawiya; the second Umayyad caliph) ordered to arrest him. When he was brought before him, Ziyad asked: "What did your friend (i.e. Amirul-Mu'minin) foretell you regarding our deed to you?"

Rashid answered: "He foretold that you would cut my hands and legs and would crucify me."

Ziyad said: "By God, I will belie this foretelling."

Hence, he ordered them to set Rashid free.

When Rashid was about to leave, Ziyad shouted: "Take him back to me. The best thing that I see as punishment for him is that which was foretold by his friend. This is because he will not stop doing evil to us so long as he is alive."

They took Rashid and cut his legs and hands. However, he did not stop declaring the right of Amirul-Mu'minin (a); hence, Ziyad the cursed ordered to be crucified⁸.

Let us now listen to the magnificent words of the companions of Amirul-Mu'minin (a) that express their great love for him, perseverance on their principles, and losing themselves for his sake.

Addressing to Amirul-Mu'minin (a), Amr Ibn al-Hamq said:

“By God I swear, Amirul-Mu'minin, I have loved you and declared allegiance to you, not because of a family relationship that links me to you, or because of expecting a fortune that you would confer upon me, or because of expecting a leading authority that you would give to me. I have loved you for five traits: you are the cousin of the Messenger of God, the first man who believed in his mission, the husband of the mistress of the women of this umma; namely, Fatima the daughter of the Prophet (S), the successor of the Prophet, the father of the Prophet's progeny that remained among us, the foremost to Islam, and the best mujahid among Muhajirs. Even if I move the unshakable mountains and dry out the oceans so that I may achieve a matter that contributes in strengthening one of your disciples or humiliating one of your enemies, I will not consider myself I have fulfilled my obligations towards you.”

Having listened to these words, Imam Ali (a) supplicated to God: “O Allah, illuminate his heart with piety and guide him to Your straight path. Had I had one hundred soldiers like you⁹!”

It is related that Amirul-Mu'minin (a), one day, asked Hijr Ibn Edi at-Taee: “What will you say if you are ordered to disavow me?”

Hijr answered: “By God I swear, Amirul-Mu'minin, if I am torn to pieces by swords and thrown in flaming fire I will prefer so to declaring disavowal of you.”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) answered: “Allah may lead you to every good matter and reward you on behalf of the Ahlul-Bayt with good¹⁰.”

Hashim al-Mirqal, who was the commander of the left wing of Amirul-Mu'minin's army during the battle of Siffeen¹¹, said:

“By God I swear, I do refuse to have in possession this earth along with all that which is on its surface and the heavens with all that which is under them if this leads me to support one of your enemies or antagonize one of your supporters.”

As an answer, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) supplicated God to bestow upon him with martyrdom for His cause.

It is related that a black man confessed before Amirul-Mu'minin (a) that he had committed larceny.

Imam Ali (a) tried to provide excuses that may exempt him from the punishment of larceny. But, the black man insisted and confessed completely; hence, Amirul-Mu'minin (a) had to subject him to the doctrinal provision, which was cutting of the hand.

In his way back, that black man was murmuring, “My hand has been cut by the commander of the

faithful believers, the leader of the pious, the chief of the white–forheaded honorable, the master of the religion, the head of the prophets’ successors” As al– Hasan and al–Hussein heard these words, they conveyed them to their father, who summoned that black man to ask him about that praise. The black man said:

“Amirul–Mu’minin, you have purified me. Your love has been mixed with my flesh and blood so composedly that it cannot depart my heart even if you cut me into pieces¹².”

In the same field of perseverance on principles, Imam al–Hussein, his noble family members, and his decent companions elevated to the highest peak in spite of the criticality of their situation and the sufferance of the grossest disasters and terrors.

On the day of Ashura¹³, Imam al–Hussein, while was surrounded by thirty thousand warriors intending to humiliate and kill him, stood so bravely and shouted in their faces with that great reverberating cry, declaring his disdain and highness, through these everlasting words that are still rattling in the hearing of time and still adopted as a thriving constitution by the disdainful and free individuals:

“The bastard, son of the bastard, has forced me to choose one of two things either the religion or ignominy. Ignominy is impossible for us. Allah, His Apostle, the (faithful) believers, chaste laps, jealous noses individuals–, and noble souls personalities– refuse for us to prefer the obedience to the mean to the death of the honorable.”

Preferring killing and sacrifice for the sake of the principles to the life of humility, Imam al–Hussein (a) said:

“By Allah I swear, I will not give you with my hand like the humble, and will not submit to you like slaves.”

“In my sight, death is only pleasure, while the life with the wrongdoers is only misery.”

Like their leader, the companions of Imam al–Hussein (a) provided the most ideal examples of steadfastness and perseverance on principles when they sacrificed their souls for their leader.

With a splendid wording of love, admiration, and pity, Imam al–Hussein (a) addressed a speech to his companions:

“So then, I have never known any companions more loyal or favorable than my companions are, and I have never known any family members more regardful and pious than my family members are. Allah may reward you in the best manner on behalf of me. I am sure that we will face these enemies very soon, and I permit you all to leave me and I release you from your obligations towards me. This night has covered you; therefore, you may use it as screen and each of you may put his hand in the hand of one of my household, then you can reach your hometowns until Allah relieves this ordeal. These people want me in particular, and if they can capture me, they will not pursue anyone else.”

Muslim Ibn Awsaja stood up to answer these words of the Imam (a). He said:

“How is it that we leave you alone? What is the excuse that we will provide justifiably before God with regard to the fulfillment of your right that is imposed upon us if we leave you? No, by God, I will not leave you before I stab my spear in the chests of the enemies and strike them with my sword so long as I can catch something in my hand. Even if I have no weapon to fight them with, I will throw stones at them. By God I swear, we will never leave you alone so that God will know that we have respected your representation of the Messenger of God (S). By God I swear, if I am foretold that I will be killed, then revived, then killed, then burnt, then scattered in the wind, then the same thing is redone to me seventy times, I will not leave you before I face death for your sake. I will surely face death for your sake when it is only a single time of death followed by the grandest never-ending honor.”

When it was his turn to speak, Zuhair Ibn al-Qain said:

“By God I swear, I wish I would be killed, then revived, then killed, then the same thing is redone to me thousand times, if it is that God will save you as well as these youths from your household from death.”

All the other companions spoke alike wordings. They said:

“We, by God, will never leave you alone. We sacrifice our souls for you. We will protect you with our necks, foreheads, and hands, so that we, if we are killed, will prove our being loyal to you and will fulfill the rights that are imposed upon us concerning you.”

We, Muslims of today, are in urgent need for learning lessons of jihad from such great personalities and pursuing their examples in the fields of clinging to the religion and perseverance on principles as well as self-denial for the sake of supporting the right, so that we will be able to regain our seized rights and our usurped dignities, and will be able to save ourselves from the humility of the scandalous defeats and frequent losses.

[1.](#) The two Sheikhs, in this regard, are Abu Bakr and Omar ibn al-Khattab.

[2.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 9 page 533.

[3.](#) Al-Hajjaj ibn Yousuf ath-Thaqafi (born in 661 in at-Ta'if and died in June 714, in Iraq), was the most despotic personality all over the history of Islam. In the reign of Abd ul-Melik ibn Marwan, the Umayyad caliph, he was appointed as the governor of Iraq, because this province was known of the frequent movements of rebellion against the Umayyads. He exceeded all the limits in persecuting and mistreating the people of Iraq. Unfortunately, some modern writers honor and regard him as an administrative personality in the history of Islam. As a proof on the excessive criminality of al-Hajjaj, Omar ibn Abd ul-Azeez; the fair Umayyad caliph said about him: “If every nation in this world presents the most criminal person for competition of criminality, we will certainly overcome when we present al-Hajjaj.”

[4.](#) Abu Turab (father of dust) is one of the names of Imam Ali (a). The Prophet (S) used this name for him because, as traditionists said, he found him taking dust from the earth to disperse on his head, out of his fear of God, as he was acting a rite of worship.

[5.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 9 page 630.

[6.](#) Abu al-Aswad ad-Dauali is the originator of the syntax of Arabic. He was famous grammarian, poet, and man of virtue. He was one of the intimate companions of Amir ul-Mu'minin (a).

[7.](#) Hi Hind (the daughter of Utba) was the mother of Muawiya. She was one of the well-known most notorious prostitutes in

Mecca. In the battle of Uhud, she tried to swallow the liver of Hamza ibn Abd ul-Muttalib (a), out of her rage and malice, after she had given a great prize to a slave if he would kill him. (the daughter of Utba) was the mother of Muawiya.

[8.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; vol. 1 page 522.

[9.](#) Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 8 page 475.

[10.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 1 page 226.

[11.](#) When Muawiya, governor of Syria, refused to recognize Imam Ali (a) as the new caliph, calling instead for vengeance for the blood of his murdered kinsman, the third caliph, 'Uthman, Imam Ali (a) responded by invading Syria. The two armies met along the Euphrates River at Siffin (near the Syrian-Iraqi border), where they engaged in an indecisive succession of skirmishes, truces, and battles, culminating in the appearance of Muawiya's troops with copies of the Qur'an impaled on their lances--supposedly a sign to let God's word decide the conflict.

[12.](#) Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; part 2 page 716.

[13.](#) Ashura: The tenth of Muharram, celebrated as a day of mourning (the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Al-Hussein (a).)

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