

Spectators and Participants

Those who have been in contact with man and nature from close-up and have not been mere spectators, have never doubted the justice of God. Socrates, in the time of his prosecution, takes the cup of poison from the guard and drinks it. Since he had a great message for all men of all times, he drank the poison with no fear.

If we look at the life of `Ali ibn Abi Talib, Prophet Muhammad's miracle¹ and most beloved companion, we find it filled with suffering and pain. One out of many, is that he was the best in knowledge and action among his society, yet he remained silent for twenty nine years for the sake of the people's ideological unity at that time. Although he had the power to revolt and seize power, he did not and saw others rule.

He accepted this psychological suffering for twenty-nine years.

Later, when the people realized who he was and came to him and chose him as their leader, he ruled the society with utmost justice. A kind of justice which has made, an eastern materialist Shibli Shumayyil say about him: "The leader `Ali ibn Abi Talib, greatest of all, is the man who neither the West nor East, neither yesterday nor today, have seen his example".²

`Ali himself has said: "If you give me all the world with everything in it, in condition that I take a husk of barley from an ant's mouth, I will not do so!"³

For the just⁴, this world is most painful, but nevertheless, `Ali never said that this world is evil. He always said that it is the world of suffering, be ready, be careful. He also said: "This world is the best place for one who understands it well."

You might say that very well, but it does not follow that since some men like `Ali or Socrates have said and done so the problem of evil does not exist. Very well, but where did the problem of evil come from anyway? From the minds of some other people whose lives were quite more comfortable than Socrates' or `Ali's? Like Epicurus, Hume or Mill or even me and you.

Looking at their biographies, none have suffered as much as the first group. The latter in comparison with the former, are really spectators of life rather than participants. So you can see how subjective and

relative the problem of evil (suffering) is.

- [1.](#) According to Avicenna (Ibn Sina), Persian philosopher, physician and scientist of the Middle Ages, "Prophet Muhammad had two miracles: The Qur'an and `Ali," because `Ali was educated wholly by the Prophet.
- [2.](#) George Jordagh, Imam Ali, The voice of Human Justice.
- [3.](#) `Ali ibn Abi Talib, Nahj al-balaghah.
- [4.](#) In fact when we believe in the justice of God, we will try to see the same justice in society. Because any injustice will be against the will of God and against the music of the universe. And this is why the belief in the justice of God was always a threat to the ruling powers.

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