

Suicide Bombing

Thursday Reflections (Dec 10-2015)

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Every Muslim knows very well that suicide in general is not permissible in Islam and it is considered as one of the major sins since the Islamic tradition - through the Qur'an and the Sunnah - has clearly forbidden it. How about those who commit suicide bombing intending to sacrifice themselves for the "bigger good"? Why would someone do that while knowing that Islam does not allow suicide? Are these people considered martyrs?

First, let us examine a few texts on the issue of suicide. In the Qur'an, we read Allah (swt) saying, **[Do not kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily Allah has been to you Most Merciful. If any (one) does that in rancor and injustice, – soon shall We cast him into the Fire: and easy it is for Allah.]** (Qur'an 4-29-30)

Allah (swt) also says, **[and make not your own hands contribute to (your) destruction; but do good; for Allah loves those who do good.]** (Qur'an 2:195)

The Prophet (S) said, **"Whoever kills himself with something will be punished with it on the Day of Resurrection."** Bukhari & Muslim

He also said, **"Whoever throws himself down from a mountain and kills himself will be throwing himself down in the Fire of Hell for ever and ever. Whoever drinks poison and kills himself will be sipping it in the Fire of Hell forever and ever. Whoever kills himself with a piece of iron will have that iron in his hand, thrusting it into his belly in the Fire of Hell for ever and ever."** Bukhari & Muslim

In another tradition, the Prophet (S) said, **"A man among those who came before you was wounded. He panicked and took a knife and cut his hand, and the bleeding did not stop until he died. Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, said: 'my servant hastened his death; I have forbidden Paradise to him.'"**

Bukhari & Muslim

No matter what the reasons are, a Muslim should endure all the challenges and struggles of life with patience and remember that everything that happens to them is at the end good for them. The Prophet (S) said, **“How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his/her affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him/her, he/she is thankful for it and that is good for him/her. If something bad happens to him/her, he/she bears it with patience and that is good for him/her.”** Muslim

He also says, **“No pain, hardship, sickness or grief befalls a believer, not even worry that befalls him/her, but some of his bad deeds will be expiated.”** Bukhari & Muslim

The Islamic tradition has many of these beautiful teachings of patience and positive thinking directing the faithful to always see good even in the worse times, places and situations. Life is filled with tests and trials and only those who act patiently will be the successful ones in this world and the hereafter.

Allah says, **[By (the Token of) time (through the Ages), Verily Man is in loss, except such as have Faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of Truth, and of Patience and Constancy.]** (Chap. 103)

This is exactly what Islam is all about as Imam Shafi'i stated: **“If Muslims apply the principles of this chapter/surah it will be enough for them.”** It basically includes all what is needed to ensure success in this life and in the Hereafter and also at the material, social, intellectual and spiritual levels.

As for suicide bombing, I personally add my voice to the reasonable voices of many students and scholars of Islam who believe that it is not permissible for many reasons including the following:

(a) It is a suicide and as mentioned above all kinds of suicide are not allowed in Islam.

(b) Killing innocent people is unconditionally unaccepted and was never the practice of neither Prophet Muhammad (S) nor his successors. All the four Imams of

Ahlu-Sunnah do not allow it and consider it a grave injustice and transgression of the boundaries of Allah.

(c) The human body belongs solely to the Creator and it is the responsibility of each and every individual to take care of it, seek cure for it when it is sick and constantly protect it from all harms.

(d) Life is given by God Almighty and cannot be taken away except by God alone.

(e) Those who justify suicide attacks use analogy with some stories like the story of the young boy (story of As-'hab al-Ukhdu) who asked the king to shoot him using the name of Allah to prove the point that nothing happens except by His leave. He did not kill himself but rather it was the king who killed him. As for the story of al-Baraa and others who went in the battle as individuals facing large numbers of soldiers, their intention was not to kill themselves but rather they were brave to face the assailants in spite of their small numbers hoping for victory. If a brave soldier pushes himself at a battle to fight a large number of enemies he should still not intend to die but do his best to live and be victorious and if death comes then he is considered a martyr so long as he is fighting for a good and just cause such as defending his country or all the other necessities of life.

(f) Martyrdom according to the Qur'an and the Sunnah is for those who fight for a good and just cause – defending themselves - but do not kill innocent people and terrorize civilians and only use legitimate means. Allah (swt) says, **[To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged— and verily, Allah is Most powerful for their aid. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right— (for no cause) except that they say "Our Lord is Allah." Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure. Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause); for verily Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might, (Able to enforce His Will)].** (Qur'an 22:39-40)

(g) Mutilation is not allowed in Islam and bombs do worse than that. They not only bring death at its vilest forms, they destroy properties, they traumatize people including children and they cause all kinds of damage and destruction.

It very sad to see or hear that young children are strapped with bombs under their clothes and sent to markets and crowded public places and then exploded by remote controls. They may not even know what is happening or they may be told that they are doing something good and that they are going to heaven.

Just take a moment to think! Would anyone with a sane mind do this to their own children? Would anyone who believes in the Mercy of Allah and believes that Prophet Muhammad (S) was sent as a Mercy to the world accept such ideology? Where is Mercy? Where is love for Humanity? And where is common sense?

Unfortunately, there is a lot of pain, injustice and despair in this world that cause people to do all kinds of crazy things and lose their passion and love for life when they see the latter worse than death. All the people of the world from all faiths and nations should work together for Peace, Justice, human dignity, freedom and welfare of all the human family without discrimination or favoritism by sitting down and discussing all the root causes behind this insanity. The only way to defy terrorism and crime is to unite our efforts in enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil and upholding justice for the latter is the bedrock of Peace.

We pray for His guidance!