

Islam Is Valid For All Times And Places

The message of Islam is valid for all times and places. It is not, and never was for a specific time, place, or group of people. This message is constituted of two parts. One is the belief, and the other is the systems of life (i.e., rules and regulations). In this article, I would like to address the secret behind the later part of the message as being good for all times, places, and people.

Looking at the collective rules of Islam, we find two main points behind the rules that make them good for all humans in any place and any time.

The first point is that these rules deal with humans as humans; and deal with problems as being problems of humans, not as being economic, social, political,...etc problems. Looking at humans, we see that they do not change. The first human who was created by Allah had the same needs and abilities as the rest of the humans. A human being has certain biological and instinctive characteristics, which are the same in all humans. And the behavior of human beings is but actions to satisfy these biological and instinctive needs. So, the human being as a human being does not change, and his needs do not change either; though some manifestations of satisfying these needs change.

When Islam approved inheritance, for example, and regulated the matter of inheritance, it did not look at it as an economical problem, did not say that the wealth should be distributed among some inheritors, might lead to less productivity and that wealth might lose some of its values, instead Islam looked at it as a matter concerning the human, and accordingly treated it. Reading the first Ayah of Surah Nisa

"O mankind reverence your Guardian-Lord, Who created you from a single person, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered countless men and women-fear Allah..."

one realizes that Allah treated this matter as human problem. For in this Ayah Allah describes different situations of kinship, and how to distribute inheritance amongst relatives. We do not read in this Ayah the effect of these values on the economy, but we read the way that the inheritance must be dealt with.

The question of inheritance can be included as part of the details of the economic system. However, the point I am making is that Islam did not solve it as an economical problem, nor did Islam view it as one. And when we look at the details of the economical system in Islam we included it as part of that system. Mainly because it is a matter of wealth.

There are other examples that one could give, but I would rather leave it to the reader to study the Quran and find out for him/herself that Islam looked at the problems as being of humans and treated them accordingly.

The second point deals with the way the Quran and the Sunnah expressed the rules of Islam. Quran and Sunnah expressed the Islamic rules in their general form. Such forms include many things, cases, or situations. Also, some of these rules have exceptions. Those exceptions,

too, include within them many things.

As an example, in Suratul Baqrah the Creator says,

"And Allah has made selling (Baya') lawful and forbidden usury."

The word Baya' in this ayah means selling; also it means buying. In this Ayah Allah tells us that He has made buying and selling lawful. And since the word Baya' did not specify what to sell or what to buy, we are allowed to buy and sell anything and everything. We are allowed to sell cows, tables, slaves, shoes, food, fruits, tanks, weapons, space crafts, houses,... etc. From that we see how powerful form has been used to tell us that Allah made buying and selling lawful. A word of caution though, this ayah has some exceptions as selling and buying pork, liquor, stocks and bonds etc.

Let us look at another example, namely the saying of the Prophet (saaws),

"Whoever of you sees a Munkar, he has to change it by his hand. If he cannot, then by his tongue; if he cannot, then by his heart and that is the lowest level of Iman (belief)."

The Prophet of Allah (saaws) is obligating us to correct and straighten that is not in accordance to Allah's specification. And if we can change or straighten this matter by hand and force, then we must do so. However, if we cannot, then we must change it by saying that this is against what Allah wants it to be. The final part of the Hadeeth tells us that if we can not do that, then the least we can do is to hate that action or thing by our hearts and disapprove of it, and this case is the lowest degree of belief.

This Hadeeth orders us to join the good and forbid the bad. The terms "Ma'aruf" and "Munkar" are in general forms such as to include all kinds of Ma'aruf and Munkar. By that, Islam makes each and every muslim a guard to protect Islam and keeps the orders of Allah protected and applied, as they should be.

A final example to look at is one that deals with the forms that have no linguistic restrictions. For example, when Allah ordered us to free a slave as a part of the Deyah, when someone kills a muslim by mistake, Allah put a restriction regarding that slave to be a muslim slave. Regarding this rule, Allah says,

"And who killed believer by mistake, then freeing a believer slave and a Deyah given to his-i.e., killed one's-kin."

Allah has put a restriction on the kind of slave-in this case-to be freed. This slave has to be a muslim. But no other restrictions are attached. So, that slave-other than being a muslim-could be old, young, tall, short, white, black, strong, weak, etc.

On the other hand, as one of the eight destinations the zakah goes to, is freeing slaves. Allah (swt) says,

"Charity (Zakah) is only for the poor...and in freeing slaves."

Surat at-Tawba 60.

In this ayah, Allah put no condition on the kind of slave. So part of the zakah would be spent in buying slaves and freeing them. Those slaves could be muslims, non-muslims, young, old, strong, white, black, etc.

From all that, we see how the rules of Islam are expressed. And we see how the Islamic rules truly can include within them any incident that might occur for the human being regardless of the time and place he lives in. This also shows us how important the Arabic language is to understand Islamic rules. We must take this as an encouragement for all of us to study Islam and the Arabic language. This also should make us certain that Islam is and will always be valid for all times and places.

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