

Human-Islamic Values and Ramadan: How Muslims Endure the COVID-19 Pandemic during the Period of Quarantine

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Abstract— Muslims believe that Islam deals with different aspects of life among which are psychological issues. Since people live nowadays in a very hard time which may cause psychological problems, we will shed light on crucial Islamic values which are inferred from the positions of fasting Ramadan. These values may help people get rid of the negative impacts of these circumstances and endure quarantine during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown. This article will discuss these Islamic values in the light of the COVID19 pandemic, which has major implications, especially psychological-effects. It is also will examine the relationship between the Islamic spiritual and social-ethical values on one hand and the influence of fasting of the month of Ramadan on the psychological of a person on the other hand.

Index Terms— Islamic Values, Ramadan, Coronavirus Pandemic, Quarantine, Spiritual Values, Social Values, Moral Values

1 INTRODUCTION

IT is no exaggeration to say that the COVID19 pandemic proves that religion is an essential component in the development of communities. It also indicates that belonging to a religion is indispensable, as a way to achieve psychological and spiritual reassurance and stability, because, just, as the body needs to entertain and relax, it is also for oneself and soul must feel reassuring, stable and calmness. In his definition to religion, W. Robertson, "religion is not a vague fear of unknown power, not the child of terror, but rather a relation of all the members of a community to a power that has the good of the community at heart, and protects its laws and moral order."^[1] According to this definition, "religion is one of the most influential social institutions that are significantly associated with people's attitudes, values and behaviors."^[2] Therefore, there was a strong return to the religious belief of people during this COVID 19 pandemic. We strongly say: this return is normal, as it is based on the belief that there is a supernaturally divine power to which human turns are considered by the reality of humans as a weak being, regardless of his position in the universe.

Additionally, the COVID19 pandemic shows that people had been overly involved in material life. As a result, many claims have begun to neutralize religion from the aspects of life, claiming that it has not provided anything to humanity. So, this means staying away from religious values including human, spiritual, and moral values, and preferring the material-

istic values that concern the economy and industry over human. Once this Coronavirus disease spreads, people seemed too weak to endure this pandemic or to fight it. They were in need of a superpower to protect them, and that power, of course, will only be the divine power. It is also was revealed the illusion of material civilization, the military power, and the economic superiority that are seen as the true civilization. This misconception is what motivated people to embrace it in the return for wasting moral and spiritual aspects. Many philosophers like the French philosopher René Guénon who has the Crisis of the Modern World (La crise du monde moderne, 1927) as one of his several writings, and the French philosopher Michel Onfray, to name a few, warn of the danger of the impending fall of Western civilization that pays more attention to economic and material strength, while ignoring aspects of spirit and morals. Similarly, Muslims were not much different from that. They also started praying and asking God for His mercy and salvation to get rid of this coronavirus disease. In contrast, the COVID19 pandemic reveals that Islamic religion has an integrated system of cultural and civilizational values that reflects the manifestations of mercy, cooperation, responsibility, social solidarity, spirituality and the relationship with God. This Islamic model of values is based on ethics and compassion. It is also based on that the entire universe belongs to God Almighty and that He is the above all, and human beings cannot do anything without His will as stated in the Qur'an: **(He is the irresistible, (watching) from above over His worshippers)**.^[3] Besides, the core of Islamic teachings is "the purpose of the creation of mankind and Man's role as stated in the Quran is that human beings have placed on the earth as a representative of God or 'Khalifah'. The Quranic doctrine of vice-regent or 'Khālifah' placed Man in the role of Amāna or trustee and custodian of the earth, thus responsible for building the earth and utilizing its resources with a sense of justice to oneself and fellow mankind."^[4] Moreover, for

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Muslims, Islam is “a comprehensive religion that governs all aspects of life as an integrated system that stressed the importance of its values and practices to seek Allah’s blessing and satisfaction (rida).”^[5] In another meaning, “Islam is not just a way of life but a civilization, in which the way of life may vary from one Muslim country to another, but is animated by a common spirit far more humane than most Westerners realize.”^[6]

Furthermore, the COVID19 pandemic reveals that Islam is a major religion in the world that looks at all aspects of life, especially psycho-social and spiritual aspects.^[7]

In the context of this unprecedented situation in the history of mankind in terms of the size of the health, psychological and economic impact on people, it was confirmed the importance of solidarity and the consolidation of religious, spiritual, social and moral values in a person’s life, especially in times of adversity. Ball and Haque (2003, p. 315) argue that “Islam is tantamount to accepting a way of life – spiritually, politically, and socially, about how to behave in family and public life”, Islamic values impact on all areas of society. Monotheistic in nature, Islam claims that human beings believe in the “same God, have similar needs, wants, and experiences, and can relate to a set of universal moral principles.”^[8] Thus, the Islamic set of spiritual, social, and moral values is helpful for all humans, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or origin.” The article is an attempt to discuss these Islamic values in the light of the COVID19 pandemic, which has major implications, especially psychological-effects. It will examine the role of these values in helping people get rid of negative impacts and endure quarantine during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown. It is also will indicate the relationship between the Islamic spiritual and Social-ethics values on one hand and the blessed month of Ramadan and its influence on the psychological of a person on the other.

1.1 The Definition of Values (Qiyam)

Firstly, let us demonstrate the definition of ‘values’. If we review the meaning of the word in Arabic dictionary, “it is the plural of qimah (“value”) which refers to what makes something valuable or useful. An Arabic maxim says: “The value of a person is what they are excelled in.”^[9] According to Sheikh Abdullah Bin Bayyah, “the word value means a praiseworthy and noble character which prompts man to acquire it, just as precious things. Also, it refers to the price of a value. The word qiyam may be mentioned to refer to a singular infinitive as in the Quran: (Truly, my Lord has guided me to ‘Din-an Qiyam-an’ (a Straight Path, a right religion).”^[10] Moreover, it is mentioned in Allah’s Words: “and give not unto the foolish your property which Allah has made ‘Qiyam-an’ (a means of support for you).”^[11] If something is qayyim, it has a precious value. Another recitation of the aforementioned verse says, “Din-an Qiyam-an” with the meaning of a straight religion or a religion sufficient for the interests of people and considers them.”^[12] Accordingly, we can conclude that these values are the essence of the Islamic religion because they are mentioned in the Quran and the practice of the Prophet of Islam Mu-

hammad . In Islam, there are many occasions, which Muslims can enhance these values. Among them are the blessed month of Ramadan. Ramadan is a great opportunity to practice these values. Very briefly these values are considered, in the following section.

2 RMADANA and ISLAMIC VALUES

Muslims believe that Islam deals with different aspects of life including psychological issues. Since we live nowadays in a very hard time which may cause psychological problems, we will shed light on crucial Islamic values which are inferred from positions of fasting Ramadan. These values may help people to get rid of negative impacts of these circumstances. Ramadan is a Month for developing numerous important values such as *taqwa*, patience, solidarity. All These virtues, as it has been noticed, guide Muslims to deal with difficulties that are passed through. For Muslims, the blessed month of Ramadan is not only for fasting, but it is also a great opportunity for Muslims to purify their heart, soul, mind, and body. It guides people to avoid evil thoughts and sinful behavior such as cursing and lying and other bad deeds. In addition, Ramadan teaches people a sort of human values which develop the level of humanity in Muslim communities. Backing to the main Islamic sources, it can be found a number of values that people can take advantage of during Ramadan; it is an occasion to get positive energy for entire lives. In the following, we are going to explain several significant values that we should develop in Ramadan so that we can relax and achieve stability in our lives. We will classify the chosen values in three categories; spiritual values, social values, and moral values.

2.1 Spiritual Values

There are many spiritual values, but the highest one is *Taqwa* (piety).

2.1.1 The Value of *Taqwa* (piety)

The main aim of fasting Ramadan is not to make us hangry or thirsty, but the real goal of fasting is learning how to be able to control our desires and spend time in doing useful things such as reciting the holy Qur’an, praying, and meditation. As well as, we should all seek salvation and forgiveness in Ramadan and learn its blessing. The best way to do that is to learn *Taqwa*. The Holy Quran mentions that “O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that ye may (learn) self-restraint (*Taqwa*).”^[13] According to this verse, the purpose of fasting is to achieve the value of *taqwa*. “*Taqwa* is Islam itself. It is the sum total of all Islamic values and virtues. If one has *taqwa* one has achieved everything.”^[14] *Taqwa* in Islamic teaching means consciousness, fear, worship of Allah, sincerity in faith, and avoidance of disobedience to Allah.^[15] If a person achieves a spirit of *taqwa* (piety), he cannot harm his community, because this crucial will prevent him from doing wrong things. For example, the pious person cannot lie, cheat, or deceive people.^[16] In other words, *taqwa* helps people control themselves from doing prohibitions and live by the principles of their faith. It

means observing the rules of God when a person wants to do anything; in his or her relationship between him or her and God or in his or her relationship between human and him or her. It makes people caring for others who always suffer from poverty and illness like people who are attacked by Coronavirus disease.

2.1.2 HOW DOES FASTING INCREASE TAQWA?

To improve the level of *taqwa* or faith, Allah order Muslims to fast in this blessed month. In this regard, we have to cite the story of the prophet Moses after the largest journey escaping from Pharaoh. Moses and his followers arrived to Mount Sinai. In a place there, Allah ordered Moses to go to that place for talking to Him. At that place, Allah commanded Moses to fast for thirty days. After that Allah told him to do ten more days to continue his prayer and fasting. So, Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai worshipping, fasting and praying in order to develop his *taqwa* and faith levels. Just like the Prophet Moses who spent forty days fastings, Muslims do the same thing during the month of Ramadan in order to develop their *taqwa*.^[17] In addition, people, especially the young ones can increase their *taqwa* by spending time reading the Holy *Qur'an* to be rewarded by Allah, as well as memorizing some Surat and some important Qur'anic supplications. Also, people can read some Islamic books to get more knowledge about Islam. Along with memorizing, in order to increase their *taqwa* they also go to mosque for prayer. But if they cannot go -like these days of Covid-19, they should pray at home with their children, parents or brothers and sisters or even alone.

2.2 MORAL VALUES

Another purpose of fasting which Muslims learn from Ramadan is the Patience.

2.2.1 THE DEFINITION OF PATIENCE

In reality, patience is very hard to define because it is an emotional and something you cannot touch, it is embedded in us. Whenever we encounter with any hardship, any difficult time, we should please Allah; not blaming ourselves. When people fast, they definitely learn how to deal with difficulties and unpleasant situations like we are living nowadays because of Coronavirus. So, in Ramadan people pass good training for patience because it is a month of patience. As it is narrated by Abu Hurayrah, the Prophet Muhammad said: "Whoever fasts the month of Patience, and the three days of every month, he is as if he fasted for an entire year". An-Nasa'i (4/218). no. 2408/Musnad, 5:363). In this hadith, the month of patience refers to Ramadan. According to Muslim scholars, "what is meant by the month of Patience is the month of Ramadhan ... So, fasting is called patience because it restrains the soul from eating, drinking, conjugal relations and sexual desires".^[18] In another hadith, the prophet Muhammad says: "fasting is the half of patience". There may be no better way to enhance oneself than to exercise patience. Ibn 'Umar reported that the Prophet Muhammad said "the believer who gets in touch with people and endures their injury is better than the

person who does not get in touch with people nor endure their injury."^[19]

In the Qur'an, Allah Almighty mentions the virtue of patience in several verses at various contexts. One of them is when Allah says, "O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salat (the prayer). Truly! Allah with As-Sabirin (the patient)."^[20] In the same Chapter (Surat), Allah mentions the reward of the patience when He says, "but give glad tidings to As-Sabirin (the patients). Who, when afflicted with calamity (musibah), says: Truly! To Allah we belong and truly to Him we return."^[21] So, the patience that we experienced in Ramadan is considered by Allah as gift and glad tiding (*bisharah*) to his servants (*Ibad Allah*). In addition, Abu Yahya Suhaib Ibn Sinan reported that the Messenger of Allah said, "How wonderful is the case of a believer; there is a good for him in everything and this applies only to the believer. If prosperity (good thing) attends him, he expresses gratitude to Allah and there is a good for him; and if adversity (harmful thing) befalls him, he endures it patiently and that is better for him"^[22]

If we apply the wisdom of this great *hadith* (prophetic tradition) to our circumstance, we can conclude the fact that the patience is a good way to confront trouble and show resignation and submission to Allah (and endures it patiently. So, the lesson of patience that we get from fasting Ramadan is very helpful, especially in the Covid-19 days, since people can use it as a method to get rid of negative impact of the quarantine which some people may find it very difficult to live in. When you believe in the Fate and Destiny (*al-Qadae wa al-Qadar*), you believe that everything is in the hand of Allah. At the end of the day, whatever happens to you; it is not in your hand, but it is in the hand of Allah because the whole power belongs to Allah. This value is a very common advice (in Muslims culture) that we often quite hear from others, whenever we are confronted with challenges in our life, whenever we have a problem, whenever we have a challenge. So, we cannot talk about Ramadan without talking about patience because the patience and Ramadan are very related and connected. You cannot fast unless you have a patience; this why there is a *hadith* states that "a half of Iman is patience."^[23] You cannot worship Allah unless you have patience. This virtue of patience is very important not only for performing fasting of Ramadan; but also, for performing other kinds of worship like praying five times a day, making *hajj* (a pilgrimage to mecca), and alms-giving (*zakat*).

2.2.2 How to Develop the Patience?

There are many ways to develop patience. The first one is the faith (Iman) which is connected to the quality of Fate and Destiny. Believing in *al-Qadae wa al-Qadar* helps people whenever they are befallen by adversity. The second one is understanding the reward that Allah gives to the patient because at the end of performing any religious task, there is reward from Allah. The third one is understanding the real meaning of the patience. When one understands what the patience does mean in the religious life, then h/he starts implementing the patience in his/her life. The fourth one is worshipping Allah. When you fast, when you recite the Holy Qur'an, when you

do abolition, when you perform *hajj*, when you pay *zakat*, you are doing a patient training exercise. Fasting Ramadan is one of the greatest exercises to develop patience in ourselves. The fifth one is trusting Allah. You cannot be patient with Allah, unless you trust Him. You cannot be patient with how things are going in your life, unless you recognize that someone else is in control of that life of yours. This one is Allah.

2.3 Social Values

We mean by social values the Islamic virtues which are directed to serve societies. Here, we would like to shed light on two values which are solidarity and mercy.

2.3.1 Solidarity in Ramadan

Among the values that we can learn from Ramadan is solidarity, which means that wealthy Muslims should help poor people who are in desire need in order to create, to some extent, an equal society. Islam gives a special attention to the problem of poverty; this is obviously reflected either in the Qur'anic or in prophetic teachings. In this context, the Qur'an repeatedly promotes Muslims to give in a charity. In this context, Allah says, "those who spend their wealth (in God's way) by night and by day, secretly and publicly they will have their reward with their Lord. And no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve." [24]

Similarly, the Prophet Muhammad provides the best example of giving charity, especially in Ramadan. As a matter of fact, Abdullah Ibn Abbas narrated that "the Prophet was described as more generous than the fast wind during Ramadan." [25] It is obvious that the charity which was practiced by the Prophet Muhammad during Ramadan is the unfixed optional one. Based on that, we can infer that each Muslim is recommended to give a voluntary charity to his/her poor brothers or sisters.

As a result, Islam has prescribed effective and practical measures for eradicating poverty and alleviating its effect on people. It is a part of Muslim creed to engage in every possible means to alleviate the bad conditions of his Muslim brothers. Ibn 'Abbas narrated that the Prophet (may PBUH) said, "he is not a believer whose stomach is filled while the neighbor to his side goes hungry." [26] Since Islam is a realistic and practical religion, it urges its followers to contribute to ending the poverty, establishing the solidarity, achieving shared prosperity, and fostering a life of dignity for all. It is quite observable that solidarity with one's follow brothers is not less important than nothing but one's relationship with God and His Prophet Muhammad.

According to the previous Islamic teachings, people should be very kind and generous, especially in Ramadan dates in order to help those who lose their work because of the quarantine, like Morocco and many others countries the March 2020. Since Ramadan is a month of charity, it is our duty to assist our brothers and sisters who have no money, no food, no health care and social insurances. The best thing that we learn from solidarity in Ramadan is that we should be more sympathy and emotionally engaging in social solidarity. Such Islamic behaviour takes away some of our selfishness and self-centeredness.

2.3.2 How to Increase the Value of Solidarity?

We have to take into consideration the fact that we cannot share our wealth with others who are in desire need unless we are faithful, pious, and generous. So, the three values are fully connected, which means we have to develop the three values (piety, patience, and solidarity) altogether at the same time.

2.4 The Value of Mercy

Mercy (*rahmah*) is considered one of the most important values that Islam teaches people during the fasting of the month of Ramadan. In this month, we experience hunger, thirst, hardship, and all these emotions, Allah wants us our heart to be filled with the mercy. It is one of the good Islamic values that the Islamic religion cares about, and it urges people to adhere to it and its principles.

2.4.1 The Definition of Mercy

Mercy has "a very wide meaning that includes kindness, compassion, love, tolerance, patience with people, and to treat others the way we would love to be treated." [27] Mercy encourages people to act in a good behaviour towards those who are in a bad situation and help them with charity and nice words. In Islam, a nice word and smile are the last levels of charity which every Muslim has to deliver to all people. Here, we infer that Islamic teachings emphasize kind heartedness, sympathy, forgiveness, sacrifice, love and care.

2.4.2 Mercy's Manifestations

One of the most important values that fasting teaches us is the value of mercy. It is well-known that the Islamic teachings encourage people to be merciful to the whole creation, to Muslims and non-Muslims, to friends and enemies and even to the animals. There are many verses and *hadiths* that reflect the manifestations of mercy. One of these *hadiths* is that Nu'man bin Bashir reported that the prophet said, "the believers in their mutual kindness, compassion and sympathy are just like one body. When one of the limbs suffers, the whole body responds to it with wakefulness and fever". [28] God admired this attribute of mercy in the Prophet of Islam. Allah Alimightly says telling his Prophet Muhammad in Qur'an, "We have sent you as a mercy for all the worlds". [29] Islam affirms that Mercy is for everyone, not only for Muslims, but we understand from many *hadiths* that mercy is for the entire world. In a *hadith* reported by Abdullah ibn 'Umar that the Prophet said, "those who are merciful will be shown mercy by the Merciful Allah. Be merciful to those on the earth, and the One (Allah), who is above the heavens, will have mercy upon you". [30] In another *hadith* reported by Osama, the Prophet Muhammad said, "Allah is only merciful to his servants who are merciful". [31]

3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, relying on the previous values which we infer from rite of Ramadan we can build a cohesive society, in par-

ticular during the quarantine time in order to fight Corona-virus pandemic. Islamic values are promoted in the Muslim societies by both individuals and institutions. Even though the mosques, as Islamic institutions, have been closed, their religious activities were deleivered online. During the Covid-19, all the above-mentioend Islamic values can be felt in in e-platforms where Quranic recitations, Islamic advices, call for charity are broadcasted. In order to encourage coherence and solidarity, Muslim scholars in Morocco issued a *fatwa* (an Islamic opinion) advising wealthy people to deliver alms-giving before its time because people are in need for that kind of charity. All in all, Islam, as other Abrahamic religions, is full of human ethics and values that need to be practicale and shown in the society. As it is said, actions speak louder than words.

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