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Answer 5

The Book I of Homer's Iliad focuses on Achilles' wrath or the anger and its consequence. Looking at Book I alone, Achilles' decision seems more in harmony with his personality and occupation. Achilles was neither a God nor a king, rather a mighty soldier. He was the best warrior of the Achaean army and everybody's preference in wars and battles of importance. In his own words, "The major share of war's fury rests on me" (Page 5, Paragraph 180). Having emerged victorious in overtaking many cities via raid by the Achaean army, he had emerged as a warrior capable of wins. In that era, with such mighty skills and supremacy, honor and pride were very critically bonded. A soldier's honor was dearer to him than life.

What Achilles decided and all his actions emanated from rage or anger on having suffered from a punctured pride. Considering self to be over and above others and exercising his executive powers against events that could restore the essence of lost honor and pride were justifiable to him.

Not to forget that rage is a human quality and a reaction to events that hurts one's feeling or principles. Achilles' action was a result of Agamemnon's rage on being forced to give up a war price. However, what is more in favor of Agamemnon is that he decided to return his war price Chryseis to her father, Chryse, so that Chryse may save his army from Apollo's plague curse.

Agamemnon spoke, "Still, I'm prepared to give her back, if that's best. I want the people safe, not all killed off." (Page 4, Paragraph 120). Considering that he was the commander and a king, his pride was hurt, and, to avenge the same, he asked to be given Briseis, Achilles' booty from the win. Achilles was stunned and disgraced by being publicly demanded to hand over his girl

to another man. To be coerced into a deed against will was indeed an insult so strong that it created raw wounds, thirsting revenge.

Although Achilles surrendered the girl, he decided to withdraw his troop from the army and to not fight for Agamemnon anymore. To take this further, he asked his mother, Thetis, the sea-goddess, to use her influence with Zeus and ensure that the Trojan armies defeat his fellow Achaean soldiers. He believed that it would sufficiently compensate his disgrace and repay the wrong that the King did.

Achilles' anger appears to be a realistic response to the egotism of Agamemnon considering the plot. However, it cannot be ignored that anger, regardless of whether it is justified or not, can transform into hatred and spiral into uncontrollable fury. It was important to have retained rationale and reasonable control over rage and emotions to contain the destruction that followed.

Glory, honor and pride were crucial values in the Greek culture, specifically because these virtues affected public image. Achilles' perspective was that Agamemnon's resolution to seize Briseis as a substitution for Chryseis was an outrage to his pride, a public display of insolence by the Achaean chief. Personal perceptions of glory, honor and pride in this case prevent both these warriors from choosing the higher purpose and greater good, their pride made them take foolish decisions. Also, Achilles' action clearly shows how a righteous human characteristic can be undermined by emotional play into trivial-mindedness and absurdity or even a destructive overreaction.

Achilles publicly declared that Agamemnon was not worthy of being a King

nor had any significant contributions that would have earned him respect from the troops. The rage Achilles expressed was his response to his feeling of being publicly shamed by Agamemnon. His rage was extreme, as was the arrogance of Agamemnon. This extremity of his feelings of shame and rage can be understood as justifiable and correct.

Achilles' decision is also justified by his extreme consciousness of his short life and early death. Achilles' brief mortality weighed on him and his actions throughout the epic, giving his purpose poignancy.

However, when Achilles asked Thetis to go to Zeus and ask for his aid for the Trojans against the Achaeans, he was being irrational and not thinking of the probable consequences. The events then on were dynamic in the epic.

Achilles was no longer the injured party, he was now partially responsible for an unnecessary war. What's more, his decision and wish also lead to the death of his dear friend Patroclus, causing him regrets later.

What is noteworthy is that Achilles' decision and actions were not completely controlled by him. His actions were a result of somebody's rage, arrogance, and unreasonable demand as well as interventions by gods.

Apollo descends to ravage the Achaeans with his curse of plague.

Subsequently, enraged by Agamemnon, when Achilles begins to ready his sword in order to slay the Achaean leader, Athena intervened and asked him to reason and control his will. Lastly, Thetis, Achilles' goddess mother, asked Zeus to punish Agamemnon and his army for hurting her son's feelings.

Zeus's decision to grant the Trojan triumphs led to squabble between the gods. All this intervention and unreasonable action by gods overshadow the action by a mere human, Achilles. Gods played a crucial part in events

related to Achilles' actions, they mete out justice, which was always more harsh than what the transgression called for. Moreover, these gods destined the fate that Achilles met. Only occasionally was Achilles using his free will. He took decisions for himself, the rest that happened were an indirect result and owed as much to other's faults and actions.

What can be another perspective of Achilles action would be the bicameral mind earlier men had, wherein both chambers counseled before taking any thoughtful decisions. The thoughts of consequences would have been actively meted out by one chamber, only to be countered by the other. Achilles' brain overruled his heart and hence the decision seems out of character and thoughtless.

Overall, it is difficult to judge Achilles action or generalize his behavior in the event that unfolded in the Book 1 of Iliad. However, what is definitely clear is that Achilles was selfish. Knowing that his decision, which was to amplify self-importance and avenge his personal fall of pride, would cause much destruction and death, especially that of his own men, should have made him reconsider his decisions. Although a great warrior, a mortal, and someone who had gained his troop many victories, he was not a good leader. A good leader cares for his men and leads them to victory and not to death for a petty cause. Achilles would have needed more control over his will and rage, to understand that good thing comes to those who are patient and compassionate of others as well as who take ownership of their actions.