

37) Justice And Fairness

One of the issues that a Muslim has to observe is justice and fairness, whether reasonable justice, like the approval of benevolence and the disapproval of oppression, or it is legal, like retribution or discretionary punishments. If justice is done in a society and people observe it, then social piety will be realized fully. In this connection, the Lord of the universe has said: ***“...and let not hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably; act equitably, that is nearer to piety, and be careful of (your duty to) Allah; surely Allah is Aware of what you do.”***^{[1](#)}

The Lord of the universe has sent messengers for the people to keep to rights and to keep away from injustice. God has said: ***“Certainly We sent Our apostles with clear arguments and sent down with them the Books and the balance that people may conduct themselves with equity.”***^{[2](#)}

Imam Baqir and Imam Sadiq (AS) have been reported as saying: “God Almighty revealed to Adam: ‘O Adam! I have summed up all the good words for you in four words.’ Adam asked: ‘O my Lord! What are they?’ God said: ‘One is for Myself, one is for you, one is between Me and you, and one is between you and people. As for the first one, you should obey Me and not associate anything with Me. As for the second one, I will reward you for your deeds more than you need. As for the third one, it is incumbent on you to pray and incumbent on Me to answer your prayer. As for the fourth one, it is social justice and fairness, that is, you should wish for yourself what you wish for others and do not wish for others what you do not wish for yourself.’”^{[3](#)}

God has spoken of full justice and the infallible Imams too have said the same.

Imam Sadiq (AS) has reported the Messenger of Allah (SAW) as saying: “The most just one among people is one who wishes for others what he wishes for himself, and does not wish for others what he does not wish for himself.”^{[4](#)}

Imam Ali (AS) has been reported as having said to an old man from Sham: “O Sheikh! Wish for others what you wish for yourself and treat people as you wish to be treated.”^{[5](#)}

An advice by Imam Ali (AS) at his deathbed was this: “I advise you to keep to justice both in

contentment and in anger.”[6](#) In these two states, man is in need of justice.

In a letter to Mohammad ibn Abi Bakr, Imam Ali (AS) wrote: “Wish for those under you what you wish for yourself and for your household, and do not wish for them what you do not wish for yourself and your household, for this is worthier for a leader than for those under you.”[7](#)

In a letter to Imam Hassan (AS), Imam Ali (AS) writes: “O my son, make yourself the measure (for dealings) between yourself and others. Thus, you should desire for others what you desire for yourself. Do not oppress, as you do not like to be oppressed. Do good to others as you like good to be done to you. Regard bad for yourself whatever you regard as bad for others. Accept that (treatment) from others which you like others to accept from you. Do not talk about what you do not know, even though what you know be very little. Do not say to others what you do not like to be said to you.”[8](#)

Like piety, justice has been described in traditions as the best of deeds.

Jarood ibn Abi Monthir reports: “I heard from Imam Sadiq (AS) his saying: “The best deeds are three; (you should) treat people justly in a way you do not desire for them what you do not desire for yourself, treat your brother equitably concerning property, and always remember God. By remembering God, I do not mean to say only: ‘glory be to Allah, praise be to Allah, and there is no god but Allah’. Rather, I mean to obey what God has ordered and to leave what he has forbidden.”[9](#)

From this tradition, it is inferred that the remembering of Allah is in two kinds: 1–verbal, which includes the reciting of ‘there is no god but Allah’, recitation of the Holy Quran, supplications, Allah’s Attributes, believing in one God, prophethood, Imamate, justice, the day of judgment, and mentioning the virtues and merits of the Imams. It has been narrated that “when we (the Imams) are remembered, Allah is remembered and when our enemies are remembered, Satan is remembered.” 2– The heart–felt remembrance of Allah is to ponder on God’s blessings, the transience of this world, punishment and rewards in the hereafter as well as the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil, which mean the observance of piety.

The latter is better than the former, for in the former, there is the possibility of committing sin whereas in the latter, deviation and committing sins are impossible.

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported as saying: “Justice is sweeter than honey is.”

In another narration, Imam Sadiq (AS) says: “Justice is more wholesome than the water given to a thirsty person. How extensive justice is even if a little of it is administered in an affair.”[10](#)

Imam Sadiq (AS) has also been reported as saying: “Fear Allah and do justice, for you blame those who do not do justice.”[11](#)

In Ershad al–Gholoob, it is quoted from Mudhaffari in his book of *History* his saying: “Mansoor, the Abbasid Caliph, went to perform the Hajj in the year 144 AH. He went to the Dar al–Nadwah. One night,

he was performing circumambulation when he heard a man saying: ‘O Allah! I am complaining to you from injustice and corruption in the earth and the gap created between truth and people of truth because of oppression.’ Mansoor listened very carefully, and then called the man, asking him: ‘What did you say?’ The man said: ‘If you grant me safety, I will tell you.’

Mansoor said: ‘you are granted safety.’ The man said: ‘I am complaining from you because God Almighty has entrusted the Muslims’ affairs to you, but you have placed walls, veils, and guards between you and Muslims and have chosen oppressing viziers and companions for yourself, and hence, the Islamic cities are affected with corruption.’ He further said: ‘I made a journey to China whose king had become deaf. He kept on weeping. His Viziers asked him why he was weeping, and he said: ‘I am weeping because I cannot hear the complaints of an oppressed one. Although I have lost my hearing, I still have my vision.’

The king had asked people who were oppressed to wear red garments to be distinguished from other people. Every day, he would ride an elephant and go among people to see who was oppressed, but he did not see anyone. He did not believe in God, but he was kind to his people; whereas you believe in God, you are the cousin of the Messenger of Allah (SAW), but your kindness does not cover all Muslims.’

Then, he gave advice to Mansoor in a way that Mansoor began weeping, and then said: ‘I wish I had not been created and had this position.’

Mansoor asked: ‘What is the solution?’ The man said: ‘You should invite the rightly guided scholars.’ Mansoor said: ‘But they are running away from us.’ The man said: ‘They are running away for a certain reason. Open the doors to people, reduce the number of your guards, advise them to respect people, do justice, take the right of the oppressed from the oppressors, and I will ensure you that those who have run away will come back.’

Mansoor said: ‘O Allah, make me successful to follow what this man says.’

After the Azan and the Eqamah (the call to prayer), Mansoor sent for that man, but there was no sign of him. He was said that the man was but al-Khidhr (AS).”[12](#)

Therefore, we should follow such models of justice and fairness as the prophet, the Imams and the friends of Allah followed. We should behave in society in a way that we are known for justice.

Abdul Wahid ibn Zayd has been reported by Ibn Shahr Ashoob as saying: “I was performing circumambulation in the House of God (the Kaaba) when I saw a girl who denied something and swore with the following words: ‘No, (I swear) by the one exalted with the guardianship, who ruled with justice, who was fair in judgment, whose proofs were clear, the husband of pleased Fatima, it was not so-and-so.’

Being surprised, I asked the girl: ‘Do you know Ali whom you praise in this way?’ She said: ‘How do I not know him while my father was martyred in the battle of Siffeen supporting him?! When we became orphans, Ali used to come to our house, saying to my mother: ‘How are you, mother of orphans?’ My mother would say: ‘I am well.’ She introduced my sister and me to Ali. Smallpox had made me blind. Looking at me, he heaved a sigh and recited this poem: “I will not heave a sigh for my calamity, but for orphans whose breadwinning father is dead.”

He rubbed my face with the palm of his hand, and thanks to this miraculous act, my vision was restored to a degree that I could see a scared-away camel far off in a dark night.”¹³

Ali’s justice has been related not only by the Shiite and Sunni scholars, but also by Christian scholars who have written many book on the subject, and as an example is the book entitled: *The voice of Justice*.

Ali’s justice can be seen in relation to his killer, the cursed Ibn Moljam. In his will, Imam Ali (a.s.) said: “If you want to revenge, strike him once. Do not maim him!”

Imam Mahdi (AS) will reappear for the same purpose that God will spread justice in the world through him. When the earth is filled with oppression and injustice, God will fill it with justice and fairness through him.

Since there is no justice in the world, we witness wars and bloodletting afflicting every country.

- ^{1.} Qur’an, 5:8.
- ^{2.} Qur’an, 57:25.
- ^{3.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, pp. 26–38
- ^{4.} Ibid., p. 25.
- ^{5.} Ibid.
- ^{6.} Ibid., p. 27.
- ^{7.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 27
- ^{8.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 29
- ^{9.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 31
- ^{10.} Al-Kafi, vol. 2, p. 146.
- ^{11.} Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, p. 38.
- ^{12.} Safeenat al-Bihar, vol. 2, p. 166
- ^{13.} Montaha al-Aamaal, vol. 1, p. 166.

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