

[Home](#) > [The Ahlul-Bayt; Ethical Role-Models](#) > [Section One: General Ethics](#) > [Injustice](#) > Treatment of Injustice

Injustice

Terminologically, injustice is to put a thing in an inappropriate place. Polytheism, hence, is grave injustice, because it is replaced with monotheism. Conventionally, injustice stands for the seizure of rights, and the words and deeds of hostility against others, such as revilement, backbiting, and confiscation of property, crimes of beating or murder, and the like forms of wrongdoings.

Injustice, however, is one of the bad characteristics that are deep-rooted in most of the mentalities. All over history, humankind suffered various kinds of tragedies that made life seem depressing. It therefore is the comprehensive of sins, source of evils, and incentive of corruption. God says:

“The unjust will certainly have no happiness. (6:21)”

“Allah does not guide the unjust. (6:144)”

“Allah does not love the unjust. (3:57)”

“The unjust will face a painful punishment. (14:22)”

“We destroyed certain generations who lived before you because of their injustice. (10:13)”

“Do not think that Allah is unaware of what the unjust people do. (14:42)”

“(On the Day of Judgment) to redeem oneself of one's injustice, one would gladly spend the wealth of the whole earth if it were possible. On seeing the torment one will try to hide his regret. They will all be judged fairly and no wrong will be done to them. (10:54)”

Amirul-Mu'minin (a) said: “By Allah, even if I am given all the domains of the seven (stars) with all that exists under the skies in order that I may disobey Allah to the extent of snatching one grain of barley from an ant, I would not do it. For me, your world is lighter than the leaf in the mouth of a locust that is chewing it. What has Ali to do with bounties that will pass away and pleasures that will not last?”

Abu Bassir narrated the following:

Two parties of litigation filed their case before Imam as-Sadiq (a). After he had listened to both of them, the Imam spoke: "It is quite true that he who seizes something by wrong means is not seizing goodness. Certainly, the oppressed party seizes from the religion of the wronging party more than that which the wronging party seizes from the oppressed party's property. He who does evil to people should not show loathing towards the evil that is done to him. As a matter of fact, man will harvest nothing but that which he sowed. No one will harvest sweetness from the bitter, and no one will harvest bitterness from the sweet."

These words of the Imam (a) made the two parties settle their litigation before they left him¹.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "He who seizes his brother's property wrongfully will consume a flame of fire on the Day of Resurrection²."

"As for him who wrongs others, Allah will cause him, his descendants, or the descendants of his descendants to be wronged by absolute persons."

When the Imam was asked how it is acceptable for God to cause somebody to wrong the descendants of the wrongdoer, he referred to God's saying:

"Those who are concerned about the welfare of their own children after their death should have fear of Allah and guide them properly. (4:9)"

To punish sons for their fathers' crimes is restricted only to those who accept and welcome their fathers' wrongdoings so that they would inherit such usurped properties. To punish such sons is a reproach that discourages the wrongdoers from aggressions out of their care for their dear sons. It is also a good tidings for the oppressed individuals that their oppressors will be punished eventually.

The Prophet (S) said: "For anyone who begins his day without having the intent to oppress anybody, Allah will forgive his sins that he committed against his Lord-."

Forms of Injustice

(1) Self-Wronging

Self-wronging is the negligence of the obedience to God. Therein, disappointment and humility will be the result:

"(I swear) By the soul and that (Power) which designed it and inspired it with knowledge of evil and piety, those who purify their souls will certainly have everlasting happiness and those who corrupt their souls will certainly be deprived (of happiness) (91: 10)."

(2) Injustice towards the Family

Injustice towards the family occurs when the paterfamilias neglects to apply the true Islamic education to them, overlooks to guide them to virtue, uses excessive severity and violence, and prevents them from having the necessities of good livelihood. Such matters cause material and ethical shortcomings to the family members.

(3) Injustice towards the Relatives

This form of injustice occurs when the relatives are deserted, disappointed in misfortunes, and deprived of feelings of kindness. Such matters bring about enmity and disregard of relations.

(4) Injustice towards the Society

This form of injustice occurs when the individuals of a society are treated proudly, their rights are neglected, dignities are disrespected, and interests are disregarded. Such behaviors cause social corruption. The most hideous forms of social injustice is wronging the weak individuals who lack the ability to defend themselves and have no weapon other than complaining and supplicating to the All-merciful Just Lord.

Imam al-Baqir (a) said: "When my father was dying, he hanged me to his chest and said: son, I command you with the matter that my father said to me that his father had commanded him with when he was dying. I command you to beware of wronging him who has no supporter against you except Allah³."

(5) Injustice of the Rulers

This sort of injustice is the gravest.

Imam as-Sadiq (a) narrated: "Allah ordered, by revelation, one of the prophets to go to the absolute ruler of that kingdom and say to him: I have not appointed you for shedding their blood and seizing their property. I only appointed you for responding to the cries of the oppressed people. Even if they are atheists, I will not neglect the oppressions that the wronged people encounter."

Imam as-Sadiq (a) related on the authority of his fathers that the Prophet (S) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, Hell will speak to three categories of people: the rulers, the reciters, and the wealthy. It will say to the ruler: 'Allah gave you authority, but you did not rule justly.' Hell, then, will swallow him in the same way as birds swallow grains of sesame.

To the reciter, Hell will say: 'You adorned yourself before people but fought against Allah by committing the acts of disobedience to him.' Hell, then, will swallow him.

To the wealthy, Hell will say: 'Allah showered you with abundant worldly wealth, but when He asked you

for a loan, you refused out of your stinginess.’

Hell, then, will swallow him⁴.”

The previous threat is not restricted only to the wrongdoers; it also includes those who join the oppressors, those who accede to their deeds, and those who contribute in their evildoings. All these are partners in the sin and the punishment:

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The wrongdoer, his supporter, and the one who accepts his deed are partners (of the same crime).”

To stand by the oppressed people and protect them from inequity is one of the best acts of obedience to God that leave nice traces and good marks on the spiritual and material existence of humankind.

Imam al-Kadhim (a) said to Ibn Yaqtin⁵: “Guarantee for me one thing and I will guarantee for you three things: guarantee for me that you will settle the need of anyone of our adherents that you meet in the center of caliphate and I guarantee for you that you shall not encounter the strike of swords, you shall not be under the ceiling of any cell, and poverty shall never visit your house⁶.”

Abu al-Hasan (a) said: “There are certain disciples of Allah who accompany the rulers for guarding Allah’s disciples. (According to another report,) Those are the ones whom Allah will save from Hell⁷.”

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: “The expiation of holding governmental authorities is to settle the needs of the friends⁸.”

A man asked Imam as-Sadiq (a) to write a message to an-Nejashi, the treasury official of al-Ahwaz and Persia, to cancel the debts that he owed his office, since an-Nejashi was Shiite. The Imam did, and the man carried that message to an-Nejashi and handed it over to him when they were alone. In that message, the Imam (a) wrote: “In the Name of Allah the Compassionate the Merciful. Please your brother and Allah will please you.”

As he read the message, an-Nejashi kissed and put it between his eyes and asked the man about his need. “I owe your office ten thousand dirhams,” said the man. An-Nejashi asked his secretary to cancel the debt and record ten thousand dirhams that the man would have the next year. He then took out ten thousand dirhams and gave to the man and asked, “Have I pleased you?” “Yes, you have,” answered the man. An-Nejashi took another bag of ten thousand dirhams and gave to the man and asked, “Have I pleased you?” “Yes, you certainly have,” said the man. An-Nejashi went on giving that man everything, including a riding animal, a bond maiden, and a servant, and asking whether he had pleased him until it was the turn of the rug on which he was sitting. He also asked the man to provide all his needs so that he would settle them.

The man came to Imam as-Sadiq (a) and told him of the whole story. The Imam was highly delighted. “Son of God’s Messenger,” asked the man, “Are you pleased by that which an-Nejashi had done to

me?” The Imam answered: “Yes, indeed, by Allah. His deed has also pleased Allah and His Messenger⁹.”

Bad Consequences of Injustice

To deem ugly and deny injustice is a natural quality of humankind. The free spirits refute injustice and exert all efforts for fighting against it. Commonness of injustice is the most dangerous epidemic on societies, since it causes social collapse. To overlook acts of injustice encourages the oppressors to go beyond the limits in aggression and criminality. It also enjoins the oppressed people to revenge themselves upon others. Such being the case, disorder will be common. All this will certainly produce dissolution of nations as well as loss of security and luxury.

Treatment of Injustice

It is very difficult to treat from injustice and pull up its roots. At any rate, it may be possible to ease the sharpness of injustice by:

- Keeping in mind the virtues of justice and nice influence, such as spread of peace, amicability, and comfort,
- Learning lessons from the disadvantages and mental and material damages of injustice,
- Strengthening the religious restraint by means of educating the conscience and the feelings of the values and purposeful concepts of faith, and
- Studying the examples of the despots who suffered the vilest consequences because of their tyranny and injustice.

It is narrated that a Kurdish celebrity, once, was invited to a banquet of a prince. As he noticed two grilled partridges on the banquet, he smiled. The prince asked him for a reason. He narrated: “When I was in the vigor of my youth, I waylaid a merchant. When I was about to kill him, he begged me, but, uselessly. When he despaired, he turned to two partridges that were on a mountain and asked them to be the witnesses on that crime. Now, I remembered that situation when my eyes fell on these two grilled partridges.”

As the man finished, the prince said: “Yes, the two partridges testified on your crime.” He then ordered to behead that man¹⁰.

It is also narrated that, one night, Abdul-Melik Ibn Marwan the Umayyad caliph– could not sleep; therefore, he summoned a storyteller who told the following story:

“An owl in Mosul asked the hand of the daughter of an owl in Basra for her son. The owl of Basra

stipulated that the dowry should be one hundred ruined villages. ‘Well,’ answered the owl of Mosul, ‘I cannot do so now. But if God perpetuates our governor for only one more year, I will easily do it.’”

Abdul-Melik was highly affected by this story. Since early morning, he dedicated all his efforts to repealing the injustice that befell some people, judging justly between individuals, and inspecting his officials’ deeds¹¹.

- ¹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 162 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ². Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 162 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ³. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 162 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ⁴. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 16/209 (as quoted from as- Saduq’s al-Khissal).
- ⁵. Ibn Yaqtin was holding a high position in the center of caliphate.
- ⁶. Quoted from al-Bahaai’s al-Kashkul; 124.
- ⁷. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 28 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ⁸. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 28 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ⁹. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 10 page 28 (as quoted from al- Kafi).
- ¹⁰. Quoted from al-Kashkul: 21. It is also in Hayat ul-Hayawan; THE PARTRIDGE
- ¹¹. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 1/110. It is also recorded in Siraj ul-Mulouk.

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/ahlul-bayt-ethical-role-models-sayyid-mahdi-sadr/injustice#comment-0>