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Observing the Rights of Others

The Most Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) was the manifestation of the implementation of truth and justice and God dispatched him to establish equity and justice. For these reasons, he placed great importance on safeguarding the rights of others and protecting the public treasury. This principle was made manifest in all of his social interactions, including:

1. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) owed a Jewish man some money. One day, the man came to collect his money. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) said, "I do not have the money." The man did not accept this. He declared: "Then I will sit right here." The Jewish man sat until the noon, afternoon, evening, night and morning prayers were performed. The companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) threatened him for behaving in such a manner towards the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family). The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) prevented them from harming him and said, "God did not dispatch me that I may do injustice towards those who are protected or towards those who are not protected."

When morning set in and the sun had risen slightly, suddenly the Jewish man said, "I bear witness that there is no god but (the One, True) God (Allah) and I bear witness that Muhammad is the slave and apostle of God." At that point, he gave half of his money in the way of God and said, "I wanted to see if the attributes of the Prophet of the end of time stated in the Torah were present in you. (Those attributes are) that he will be born in Mecca, his place of migration is Madinah, he is not ill-tempered, he does not raise his voice and he does not curse. I have seen that those attributes are present in you and for this reason, I am placing half of my money in your hands."[1]

2. The Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family), being the administrator of Islam, was entrusted with the great responsibility of protecting the public treasury. His actions in this matter are indeed educational:

"In the ninth year after the Prophet's migration to Madinah, a man by the name of Ibn al-Laythiyyah was sent by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) to gather *zakat* (an Islamic tax) from a particular group of Muslims. After he gathered the *zakat*, he went to the Prophet (peace and

blessings be upon him and his family) and said, "This money is *zakat*, and this is a gift which they gave to me."

After hearing this, the Most Noble Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) went to the pulpit and said, "I sent a group to carry out a certain task, that which God has made me the administrator of, but one comes and says, 'This is *zakat*, and this is a gift they gave to me.' Why do you not sit in your parents' home and see that they do not bring you any gift (in other words, those who gave you this gift did not have pure intentions and it was not a random act of charity. Rather, they bribed you). I swear by God who has power over my life, no one removes *zakat* from his property without it being removed from his neck on the Day of Judgment: if it (the *zakat*) is a camel, then a camel (will be removed from his neck), if it is a cow and a sheep, then a cow and a sheep." Then he said, "O God, I have conveyed the message."[2]

His practice of observing the rights of others was also evident in issues related to fulfilling trusts. The slightest infraction or betrayal was never seen in any of his deeds, whether in private or public, in financial affairs or matters unrelated to money. He was so careful in observing the rights of others and fulfilling that with which he was entrusted that in his youth he was known as "Muhammad the Trustworthy" [Muhammad al-Amin]. The people of Mecca gave him this honorable title and whenever they saw him, they would say to one another, “The Trustworthy One has arrived.”

1. Hayat al-Qulub, vol. 2, p. 117.
2. Nasikh at-Tawarikh, vol. 2, p. 159.

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