

Respect for Others

The prayer time was drawing near. The Holy Prophet was sitting in the Masjid in Madina with some of his followers and was speaking to them. By and by, other people also began entering the Masjid to pray with him, and also to benefit from his valuable sayings.

One of the entrants was a rich man wearing a very costly garment. He came and sat just in front of the Holy Prophet. In the meantime, another man also came in and sat by the side of the rich man. The garments and appearance of the new-comer betrayed his weak financial position. The rich man disliked his sitting by his side in an unconcerned manner and pulled his clothes away from him.

This action on the part of the rich man was strongly disapproved by the Holy Prophet – the greatest benefactor of humanity, the torch-bearer of equality, fraternity and justice. He addressed him in these words:

“I have noticed that you have pulled away your clothes from this man, what is the reason for this? Is it because you were afraid that some of your wealth might go to him, or that his poverty might penetrate into you?”

The rich man was noble-minded by nature. He at once realized his mistake and said:

“O' Prophet of Allah! I admit that I have made a great error. To atone for this, I am prepared to give half of my wealth to this brother of mine”.

The Holy Prophet then asked the other person, “What do you say about it?” To this he replied:

“O' Prophet of Allah! I accept the apology of my brother and forgive him. His wealth is not, however, acceptable to me, because I am content with the living earned by hard-work. I do not want to become rich without doing any work.

To err is human, to forgive divine.

Questions

1. Why did the rich man pull away his clothes?
2. Did the Prophet approve of the action of the rich man?
3. Why did the poor decline to share the wealth of the rich?

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