

Fast 19: Truthful evidence

- The doing of justice between people has been described by the Holy Prophet as an act of charity or goodness. This, of course, applies not only to legal and formal justice in courts but also to settling disputes and arguments between people, and bringing about reconciliation. The Holy Prophet said:

“On every limb of people is due an act of charity (*sadaqah*) every day in which the sun rises. To do justice between people is also an act of charity (*sadaqah*).” (Bukhari, book ‘Reconciliation’, h. 2707)

كُلُّ سُلَامَى مِنَ النَّاسِ عَلَيْهِ صَدَقَةٌ، كُلَّ يَوْمٍ
تَطْلُعُ فِيهِ الشَّمْسُ يَعْدِلُ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
صَدَقَةٌ

- The Quran directly commands Muslims to do absolutely fair justice and to make sure that they give truthful evidence, which is essential for giving a true judgment:

“O you who believe, be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness for Allah, even if it is against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives — whether he is rich or poor, Allah has a better right over them both. So do not follow (your) low desires, that you deviate. And if you distort (the truth) or turn away (from it), surely Allah is ever Aware of what you do.” (4:135)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ
شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَ
الْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ
بِهِمَا فَلا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن
تَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

How fundamental an instruction this is, is shown by the fact that the next verse mentions what makes a person a Muslim: “O you who believe, believe in Allah and His Messenger and the Book which He has revealed to His Messenger and the Book which He revealed before. And whoever disbelieves in Allah and His angels and His Books and His messengers and the Last Day, he indeed strays far away.” This means that the command to be maintainers of justice is next to the command to believe in Allah, His Messenger and His Book, which shows its importance.

In order to maintain justice, a Muslim must be prepared to give truthful evidence, regardless of whether it goes against himself or his relatives, as stated here. Otherwise, justice cannot be done since the evidence given is not true. Fear of a rich

person, or compassion for a poor person, must not lead a Muslim to give false evidence.

- In another verse which states that a Muslim must be honest in dealings with others and “give full measure and weigh with equity”, it is added:

“And when you speak, do justice, even (against) a relative. And fulfil Allah’s covenant.” (6:152)

وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ ۗ وَبِعَهْدِ
اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ط

If the injunctions in the last two verses quoted above were followed, all traces of nepotism, and unfairly favouring your own kith and kin over other better people, would disappear and most of the social, economic and political problems faced by the Muslim world would vanish.

- In a list of qualities of believers, it is stated at the end:

“And those who are faithful to their trusts and their covenant, and **those who are upright in their testimonies**, and those who keep a guard on their prayer. These are in Gardens, honoured.” (70:32–35)

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ
رُءُوفٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ
قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ
صَلَاتِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي
جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Whatever promise they make to another person, whatever contract they enter into with anyone, they observe it faithfully, and when giving any testimony, they are “upright”, which means truthful and honest. Their first quality, which is mentioned earlier in 70:23, is that they are “constant at their prayer” and the last quality, as quoted above, is that they keep a guard on their prayer, i.e., that they are careful to perform them properly, both spiritually and physically. This indicates that those who pray must also display these qualities in their dealings with others. To pray, but yet to cheat and deceive people, and give false evidence, cannot and does not lead anyone to be an honoured person in Gardens of the next life.

- Not just the truth but the whole truth must be told, without concealing anything:

“And do not conceal testimony. And whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful. And Allah is Knower of what you do.” (2:283)

وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ ۗ وَمَنْ
يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾