

Fast 10: Justice towards all (1)

- In the last Study we dealt with the fundamental teaching of Islam that God will judge the deeds of all people with justice and equity. Similarly, Muslims are required to do justice to all as well in the material and religious affairs of human life.
- In religious affairs, the Holy Prophet is directed as follows:

“To this then go on inviting, and be steadfast as you are commanded, and do not follow their low desires, and say: I believe in what Allah has revealed of the Book, and **I am commanded to do justice between you.** Allah is our Lord and your Lord. For us are our deeds, and for you your deeds. There is no contention between us and you. Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the eventual coming.” (42:15)

فَلِذَلِكَ فَادُمْ^ع وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ^ع وَلَا
تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ^ع وَقُلْ أَمِنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ مِنْ كِتَابٍ^ع وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ^ط
اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ^ط لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلكُمْ
أَعْمَالُكُمْ^ط لَا حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ^ط
اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا^ع وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ^ط

Here, in the very manner of preaching of Islam, justice is to be strictly observed. “Low desires” include the desire to prove your superiority over others, to belittle and run them down in argument, to claim that all good is to be found in your community or in people of your religion and no good is found in others.

It is said here that justice requires us to say to others: “Allah is our Lord and your Lord”. It means Allah is as much concerned about Muslims as about those who have not accepted the message of Islam. Allah is not, as commonly thought, “the God of the Muslims”, a Being worshipped by Muslims only. The Supreme Being worshipped by followers of any other religion is the same one whom we call Allah, although we may differ in our conception of Him and what He does. People will be judged by Him according to their deeds. That is what justice requires, not that a group is favoured or rejected because of who they are. The final words, “Allah will gather us together, and to Him is the eventual coming”, may not only refer to the life after death but also indicate that a time will come when all humanity will unite under the One God.

“There is no contention between us and you” is what Muslims ought to say to others, no wrangling, squabbling or bickering, because we will be judged for our deeds by One Who is equally the Lord of all. No amount of trying to prove by words that “I am right and you are wrong” is necessary.

- In material matters, the Holy Prophet is directed as follows:

“Surely We have revealed the Book to you with truth that you may judge between people by means of what Allah has taught you. And do not be one pleading the cause of the dishonest, and ask the forgiveness of Allah. Surely Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful. And do not contend (i.e., plead) on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls. Surely Allah does not love him who is treacherous, sinful.” (4:105–107)

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَبَكَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَكُنْ
لِلْغَافِلِينَ حَصِيماً ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَا تَجَادِلْ
عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيمًا ﴿١٠٧﴾

And what is judging between people “by means of what Allah taught you”? It is as follows:

“Surely Allah commands you (O Muslims) ... that when you judge between people, you judge with justice.” (4:58)

“Say: My Lord commands (the doing of) justice.” (7:29)

“Surely Allah commands (the doing of) justice.” (16:90)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَوَدُّوا الْأَمْنَةَ إِلَىٰ
أَهْلِهَا ۗ وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ
تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ
قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ

- The occasion of the revelation of the passage 4:105–107 quoted above was a dispute between a Muslim and a Jew, in which judgment was given by the Holy Prophet Muhammad against the Muslim. A Muslim had stolen something, and having hidden it at a Jew’s, afterwards accused the Jew of the theft, while the Muslim’s tribe supported him. The Prophet, despite the open enmity of the Jews, cleared the Jew of the charge. It was a time when every Muslim hand was sorely needed for the defence of Islam, and a verdict against a man supported by his whole tribe meant the loss of that tribe. But such considerations did not carry any weight with the Prophet.
- Thus these verses lay down the broad principle that dishonesty must be punished, whosoever may be the guilty party, and the balance of justice must be held equal between Muslims and non-Muslims, and between friends and foes.