

57. Justice

Allah, the Wise, has said:

إِعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى

*“Act equitably, that is nearer to piety.”*¹

Imam ‘Ali (a.s) has said:

الْعَدْلُ يَضَعُ الْأُمُورَ مَوَاضِعَهَا.

*“By means of justice, every issue is placed in its appropriate position.”*²

Short Explanation

Justice means to act with equality and fairness to the maximum extent possible for a person. Fulfilment of mutual rights, payment of that which is due to a person – whatever be its measure, fairness and even-handedness with respect to the partners ... are all examples of justice. A person's esteem is reliant upon his justice and fairness. If a king is just, his subjects shall be the beneficiaries of divine grace and blessings.

Allah sent the Prophets with manifest proofs in order to establish justice within the society and to prevent it from being led towards decadence.

Dependence of people with respect to one another necessitates that moderateness and fairness is taken into regard with respect to discipline, morals, covenants and even children.

Deviating from moderation and going towards the extremes weaken the foundations of justice and serve

to inflame discords amongst the people.

1) Shadeed's Governance

After the death of 'ad, his two sons – Shaddad and Shadeed became kings. But since the latter died earlier, Shaddad became the absolute monarch during the time of Hadhrat Hud (a.s).

Although a polytheist, Shadeed exhibited justice to such an extent that it became well-known that during his reign neither would a wolf attack a sheep nor would an eagle attack a pigeon.

With the objective of resolving the disputes of his subjects, Shadeed nominated a judge in his kingdom and provided him with a monthly allowance. However, despite sitting in the court for a period of one year, no one came with a dispute for him to resolve!!

Therefore he said to Shadeed: "It is unbecoming for me to take my monthly allowance for I have not resolved any dispute!" However Shadeed ordered: "You must take your allowance and continue to fulfil the responsibilities entrusted unto you."

After a period two persons approached the judge and one of them said to him: "I had purchased a piece of land from this person and have stumbled across a treasure in it. Despite my repeated requests, this seller is unwilling to accept it."

On his part, the seller said: "(I cannot do so for) I had sold the land to the purchaser together with everything that existed within it."

Conducting his investigations, the judge came to realize that the seller had a son while the purchaser had a daughter and so he ruled: "The purchaser's daughter should be married to the seller's son and the treasure should be given to them, and in this manner, put an end to their dispute."³

2) Impartiality Between Children

Once, a lady entered the house of Aishah, the wife of the Noble Prophet (s.a.w), with her two children. 'aishah presented three dates to the lady, who gave one date to each of her two children and taking the third date she halved it and once again distributed it evenly amongst them.

When the Noble Prophet (s.a.w) returned, 'aishah narrated the episode to him whereupon he (s.a.w) said: "Did the lady's act leave you astonished? Due to her fairness and even-handedness, Allah shall place her in Paradise."

It has also been reported that once, a father arrived in the presence of the Noble Prophet (s.a.w) accompanied by his two children. In his (s.a.w) presence he kissed one child and ignored the other. Noticing this incorrect act the Noble Prophet (s.a.w) commented: "Why do you not treat your children equally?"⁴

3) The Red Apparel

Once, a pious and abstemious person came to Mansur Dawaniqui, the second Abbasid Caliph, and began preaching and advising him. In the course of his dialogue, he said: “In the course of my travels I had gone to China, which was ruled by a just ruler. One day he was afflicted by sickness which weakened his faculty of hearing.

He called his ministers and said: “I have fallen sick and have lost my hearing, and then began weeping profusely.”

They consoled him saying: “Although your hearing has weakened, Allah shall grant you a long life due to your justice and equity.”

The king said: “You are in error and you reflect on something which is away from reality. I do not weep for my hearing, for a learned one knows that all the limbs and organs shall eventually perish. I weep because if an oppressed one were to seek justice and clamour for help, I would not hear him and thus would not be able to strive towards providing him with justice.”

He then issued instructions that it should be announced in all cities that whoever happens to suffer oppression should wear a red apparel so that the king's soldiers recognize him from afar and endeavour to provide justice to him.”⁵

4) Equality in the Spoils of War

When the battle of Hunain concluded and the spoils of war were about to be distributed, some of the Bedouins, who had participated in the war approached the Noble Prophet (s.a.w) and said: “O' Prophet of Allah! Grant us a share too.”

They created such a commotion that he (s.a.w) had to retreat towards a tree and in the tumult, his cloak was pulled off his shoulders. He (s.a.w) said: “Hand me back my cloak. By the Allah, in whose power lies my soul! Had there been camels, cows and sheep equivalent to the number of trees on the face of the earth, I would have surely distributed them amongst you.”

As he said this, he (s.a.w) plucked out a hair from the hump of a camel and said: “By Allah! From the spoils of war, I shall not take anything more than the khums, even in the measure of this hair, and that too, I shall gift to you. You too, with respect to the spoils of war, should not be unfaithful – not even in the measure of a needle or a yarn, for theft with regards to it only merits ignominy and the fire of Hell.”

A person from amongst the Ansar (The Helpers) stood up, brought out a woven yarn and said: “I had taken this to weave a saddle for my camel!”

The Noble Prophet (s.a.w) said: “I gift to you my share that exists in this yarn.” Hearing this, the man

said: “If the accounting and distribution has to be so accurate and severe, then I do not need this yarn.”
Saying this, he dropped the yarn onto the ground.⁶

5) The Name of ‘Ali is Synonymous with Justice!

On one of the occasions when Muawiyah had gone for Hajj, he made inquiries about a woman, by the name of Darmiyah Hajuniyah, who was well-known for her long standing support for ‘Ali (a.s) and her enmity towards Muawiyah. Having been informed that she was alive, he ordered her to be brought before him. When she had arrived, he asked her: “Do you have any idea as to why I have summoned you before me? I have brought you here to know why you love ‘Ali (a.s) and harbour animosity towards me.”

The woman said: “It is better if you refrain from such talks.”

Muawiyah insisted: “You must answer me.”

She said: “or the simple reason that ‘Ali (a.s) was a just person and supported equality whereas you needlessly fought him. I approve of ‘Ali (a.s) because he loved the poor whereas I detest you because you shed unwarranted blood, spread dissensions and discords amongst the Muslims, adjudicate oppressively and unfairly, and act in accordance to your carnal desires!”

Muawiyah was infuriated and an impolite dialogue ensued between the two, but eventually Muawiyah stifled his anger and as per his habit, exhibiting gentleness, he asked: “Did you see ‘Ali (a.s) with your own eyes?” She replied: “Yes.” He then asked: “How?” She said: “By Allah! I had seen him in a state such that this kingdom and sultanate, which has deceived you and made you heedless had neither deceived him nor made him heedless.”

Muawiyah said: “Have you heard his voice?” She replied: “Yes. A voice that would burnish the heart and clear the turbidity from it just as olive oil clears away the rust.”

Muawiyah said: “Do you desire anything?” She said: “Shall you give me whatever I ask for?” When he had replied in the affirmative, she said: “Give me one hundred red-haired camels.”

Muawiyah said: “If I give them to you, would you look upon me as you look upon ‘Ali (a.s)?” Defiantly, she said: “Never.”

However, Muawiyah ordered one hundred red-haired camels to be given to her and then commented: “Had ‘Ali (a.s) been alive, he would not have given you even one of these.”

Hearing this, the woman retorted: “By Allah! He would not have given me even one single hair of these camels, for he considered them to be the property of all the Muslims.”⁷

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1. Suratul Ma'idah (5), Verse 8
 2. Shaytan, vol. 2, pg. 166
 3. Rahnama-e-Sa'adat, vol. 2, pg. 451; Raudhah al-Safa, vol. 1, pg. 791
 4. Riwayat-ha Wa Hikayat-ha, pg. 73; al-Hadith, vol. 2, pg. 267
 5. Jawame' al-Hikayat, pg. 73
 6. Dastan-ha Wa Pand-ha, vol. 2, pg. 40; Nasikh al-Tawarikh (Hadhrrat Rasool), vol. 3, pg. 150
 7. Dastan-ha-e-Ustad, vol. 2, pg. 97; Bist Guftar, pg. 67

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