

Qhutbah, Insha Allah, Friday, Dec 23, 2011

Alhamdu lillah, wa ash hadu ala ila ha ill lallah

Bismillah hir Rahman nir Rahim

A colossal dilemma we face today is the rejection of basic human rights and the abandonment for unprejudiced justice. Islam is the outstanding religion which renders the most suitable and efficient guidance for suppressing these predicaments. It exhibits an appealing way of life which meets the demands of any intellectual and political background of the world. From time to time, God sent Scriptures, Prophets, Messengers and Saints to guide humanity and to establish justice. The individual who does good should be rewarded and who does evil must be punished. If there was no justice at all in the world there would be even more anarchy, brutality and oppression than we already witness today.

In Islam, we have a consciousness of justice which is more inclusive, crucial and sacrosanct than in any other system of life. No one is above the law; none can claim immunity from the law. No agency can benefit from unique advantages or protection from the function of the law. We cannot make any discrimination on the base of belief or relationship. In this, all are equal – high or low, prince or pauper, black or white. No opinion, resolution and verdict of any authority however elevated it may be can be applicable and legitimate in effect except to the scope that they are in conformity with the law. There cannot be one rule for the sovereign and another for the masses, one for the influential and another for the feeble, one for the affluent and the other for the deprived.

Islam disapproved of human suppression of the time in all its varieties and appearances. It intended at reducing and eradicating this affliction from the face of the earth. It educated humanity with the message of liberty. When you are granted freedom you can use your potential and talents to satisfaction. Islam endorsed fair dealing and evenhandedness against unfairness, abuse and all sorts of cruelty. It established stability between privileges and obligations, between individuals and cultures, between society and country. The Muslims in our day have lost the idealistic directives of justice and equity and have implemented *zulm* (prejudice and tyranny) in all its types.

One of the most important things we learn from the Quran is being just. It is related to devotion. [5:8] *O you who believe, you shall be absolutely equitable, and observe GOD, when you serve as witnesses. Do not be provoked by your conflicts with some people into committing injustice. You shall be absolutely equitable, for it is more righteous. You shall observe GOD. GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do. [5:2]Do not be provoked into aggression by your hatred of people who once prevented you from going to the Sacred Masjid. You shall cooperate in matters of righteousness and piety; do not cooperate in matters that are sinful and evil. You shall observe GOD. GOD is strict in enforcing retribution.*

We have to be so dedicated in advocating justice that our enmity with some does not even turn them away from the path of justice. We are told to be just and refrain from doing injustice [16:90] *GOD advocates justice, charity, and regarding the relatives. And He forbids evil, vice, and transgression. He enlightens you, that you may take heed.*

[57:25] *We sent our messengers supported by clear proofs, and we sent down to them the scripture and the law, that the people may uphold justice. And we sent down the iron, wherein there is strength, and many benefits for the people. All this in order for GOD to distinguish those who would support Him and His messengers, on faith. GOD is Powerful, Almighty.* This verse tells us that God sent His messengers and Scriptures to enlighten the people so they know the law and learn how to do justice.

The Quran says that God loves those who do justice. [49:9] *If two groups of believers fought with each other, you shall reconcile them. If one group aggresses against the other, you shall fight the aggressing group until they submit to GOD's command. Once they submit, you shall reconcile the two groups equitably. You shall maintain justice; GOD loves those who are just.*

[4:135] *O you who believe, you shall be absolutely equitable, and observe GOD, when you serve as witnesses, even against yourselves, or your parents, or your relatives. Whether the accused is rich or poor, GOD takes care of both. Therefore, do not be biased by your personal wishes. If you deviate or disregard (this commandment), then GOD is fully Cognizant of everything you do.* This makes it evident that we have to be just not only with regular people but also our enemies. The bottom line is that we have to be just even with our adversaries.

[5:42] *They are upholders of lies, and eaters of illicit earnings. If they come to you to judge among them, you may judge among them, or you may disregard them. If you choose to disregard them, they cannot harm you in the least. But if you judge among them, you shall judge equitably. GOD loves those who are equitable.* It cautions those who do injustice that they will have no aid. [20:111] *All faces will submit to the Living, the Eternal, and those who are burdened by their transgressions will fail.*

There are three reasons which usually take people away from the path of justice, one is envy, the other hostility and the third is association. We are expressly exhorted by the Quran not to be influenced by these factors. [38:26] *O David, we have made you a ruler on earth. Therefore, you shall judge among the people equitably, and do not follow your personal opinion, lest it diverts you from the way of GOD. Surely, those who stray off the way of GOD incur severe retribution for forgetting the Day of Reckoning.* Usually whatever we do, we do for the sake of ourselves or our families but via this verse we are ordered that as believers we have to do justice for the sake of God who highlights its significance. Justice is to be uninfluenced by self interest, objective or any other involvement.

Equality does not mean that each and every individual is equal in all respects. The sole criterion for giving preference is piety. [49:13] *O people, we created you from the same*

male and female, and rendered you distinct peoples and tribes, that you may recognize one another. The best among you in the sight of GOD is the most righteous. GOD is Omniscient, Cognizant. We have to determine an issue on the basis of equity, impartiality, justice and honest evidence. We have to stand unyielding for justice even though it may be disadvantageous to our own welfare. [16:90] GOD advocates justice, charity, and regarding the relatives. And He forbids evil, vice, and transgression. He enlightens you, that you may take heed.

[4:105] We have sent down to you the scripture, truthfully, in order to judge among the people in accordance with what GOD has shown you. You shall not side with the betrayers. Justice is the core, justice is the foundation. We have to be fair with all, Muslims, non Muslims, relatives, orphans, the poor and the needy.

Justice and equitable conduct is prescribed for all believers particularly on those who are in authority who should advance and enhance the cause of justice in their particular scopes. *[22:41] They are those who, if we appointed them as rulers on earth, they would establish the Contact Prayers (Salat) and the obligatory charity (Zakat), and would advocate righteousness and forbid evil. GOD is the ultimate ruler.* A judge should always be higher than the executive and nobody ought to be permitted to manipulate the route of justice with his skill, affluence or authority.

The holy Quran is our system for the recognition of justice in our existence. It deposits tremendous accountability on us and orders us to support the rationale for justice. The notion certifies smooth and reasonable opportunities of synchronised progress for us as well as for all. Communism failed miserably, socialism intends for equality but leaves less personal freedom whereas capitalism emphasises on the principles of liberty but increases the gap between the haves and the have-nots.

[2:213] The people used to be one community when GOD sent the prophets as bearers of good news, as well as warners. He sent down with them the scripture, bearing the truth, to judge among the people in their disputes. Ironically, those who received the scripture were the ones who rejected any new scripture, despite clear proofs given to them. This is due to jealousy on their part. GOD guides those who believe to the truth that is disputed by all others, in accordance with His will. GOD guides whoever wills in a straight path.

It is therefore necessary for every Muslim to ascertain all transgressions and to spare no effort in eliminating the source of injustice and oppression in whatever *avatar* it takes so that the world could be rid of oppression and the humanity may benefit from the outcome of justice without ethnic bias, bigotry, class or caste.

Our conduct should be to the extent that none should ever anticipate or apprehend injustice from us because we deal with fairness and justice for everybody. *[7:29] Say, "My Lord advocates justice, and to stand devoted to Him alone at every place of worship. You shall devote your worship absolutely to Him alone. Just as He initiated you, you will ultimately go back to Him."* Representing justice entails return of the

rights of the person who it is intended for and denying what is not obligatory to be received. What is envisioned is for a believer to live an ethical existence and carry out his commitments in harmony with the preference set by God. It is inbuilt in Islam that its adherents should be a community supported by justice as enshrined in the Quran.

Thus the impression of justice steers humankind to the conduit of worldwide hope, happiness and success both now and in the all important Hereafter. Justice and to be just is within the greatest wisdom of Islam. God has predestined that there be no variation in this. We have so called Western concepts such as dominance of law, equality before law, judicial sovereignty and neutrality, legal support, arbitration, assumption of blamelessness etc. None of this is unknown to Islam. We can be justifiably proud in the fact that from the very beginning our legal structure is within the ambit that in essence is similar to the best arrangement today.

The Quran also spells out unambiguous standards of justice in assorted matters. Intention is the beginning of action. There can be no sin, crime or offence without decided intent. [2:225] *GOD does not hold you responsible for the mere utterance of oaths; He holds you responsible for your innermost intentions. GOD is Forgiver, Clement. [33:5] You do not commit a sin if you make a mistake in this respect; you are responsible for your purposeful intentions. GOD is Forgiver, Most Merciful.* This principle is universally accepted now but believers had it over 1,400 years ago. I am confident, praise God, that in earlier intact Scriptures too; God would have revealed the same codes.

In general matters, the Quran imparts precise doctrines of primary significance as to the manner of providing justice. We have: - [4:32] *You shall not covet the qualities bestowed upon each other by GOD; the men enjoy certain qualities, and the women enjoy certain qualities. You may implore GOD to shower you with His grace. GOD is fully aware of all things. [2:188] You shall not take each others' money illicitly, nor shall you bribe the officials to deprive others of some of their rights illicitly, while you know. [11:85] "O my people, you shall give full measure and full weight, equitably. Do not cheat the people out of their rights, and do not roam the earth corruptingly. [17:35] You shall give full measure when you trade, and weigh equitably. This is better and more righteous. [8:27] O you who believe, do not betray GOD and the messenger, and do not betray those who trust you, now that you know. [2:283] If you are traveling, and no scribe is available, a bond shall be posted to guarantee repayment. If one is trusted in this manner, he shall return the bond when due, and he shall observe GOD his Lord. Do not withhold any testimony by concealing what you had witnessed. Anyone who withholds a testimony is sinful at heart. GOD is fully aware of everything you do. [17:34] You shall not touch the orphans' money except for their own good, until they reach maturity. You shall fulfill your covenants, for a covenant is a great responsibility. [83:1] Woe to the cheaters. [5:87] O you who believe, do not prohibit good things that are made lawful by GOD, and do not aggress; GOD dislikes the aggressors.*

In all so called “progressive” countries these logical philosophies have been built-in into their rules or they provide the basis of verdicts in correlated events. We too have all this

ready made, praise God. With reference to agreements of future commitments, the requisite is to have it written down in the attendance of two or three witnesses. God wants us to care for the legitimate concern of all and in particular the individual who is more liable to acquire a burden.

Also, in respect to punishment the Quran says [42:40] *Although the just requital for an injustice is an equivalent retribution, those who pardon and maintain righteousness are rewarded by GOD. He does not love the unjust.* This means that the penalty should be proportionate to the violation perpetrated. However, the act of pardoning and making a settlement is ideal if the wronged or offended person so desires. [42:42-43] *The wrong ones are those who treat the people unjustly, and resort to aggression without provocation. These have incurred a painful retribution. Resorting to patience and forgiveness reflects a true strength of character.*

At the same time, the Quran acknowledges the merit of self defence. [26:227] *Exempted are those who believe, lead a righteous life, commemorate GOD frequently, and stand up for their rights. Surely, the transgressors will find out what their ultimate destiny is.*

Knowing a person's prerogatives and duties and the subsequent administering of justice on whether a person is blameless or at fault mainly reckons on evidence. This has challenging repercussion and hence, the Quran sets exceptional prominence on obtaining accurate and applicable evidence. [2:42] *Do not confound the truth with falsehood, nor shall you conceal the truth, knowingly.*

In conclusion, justice in Islam is more all-inclusive and essential than in any other way of life. A genuine Islamic state should have its primary purpose as the dispensation of justice. Justice is not only understood to be a belief but it is a sacred conscientiousness which is to be carried out in accordance within the limits of the Quran. The allocation too would symbolise an honest act of dedication to God alone.

Thus, all citizens have the right of justice and total equality in the view of the law. Their responsibilities are equal. [49:10] *The believers are members of one family; you shall keep the peace within your family and reverence GOD, that you may attain mercy.*

God be glorified!