

### Fast 18: Justice

- Treatment of others brings us to the topic of justice in Islam. The individual, society, any organization and the state are all required by Islam to adhere to justice as a fundamental principle. In fact, exhortations to do justice are so widespread in the Quran that it is only possible to quote some of them here.

“Surely Allah commands you to make over trusts to those worthy of them, and that **when you judge between people, you judge with justice**. Surely Allah instructs you with what is excellent.” (4:58)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا  
وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا  
بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۗ

The handing over of “trusts to those worthy of them” refers to the election of the rulers by the people, as the latter are entrusting them with the authority to rule. And the basic principle that the rulers must adhere to is that of doing justice between the citizens of the state. That is described here as the most “excellent” teaching.

- The Quran tells us that the same principle was revealed to earlier prophets who held rule in the land. About David, King of the Israelites, it is stated:

“O David, surely We have made you a ruler in the land; **so judge between people justly**, and do not follow desire that it should lead you astray from the path of Allah. Those who go astray from the path of Allah, for them is surely a severe punishment because they forgot the day of Reckoning.” (38:26)

يَا دَاوُدُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ  
فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ  
فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ  
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا نَسُوا  
يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ۗ

By prohibiting the following of “desire”, what is clearly meant is that judgments must **not** be based on: (1) bias, prejudice, animosity towards someone because of their race or religion, (2) partiality towards one’s own people, (3) trying to gain someone’s favour, (4) fear of consequences of giving a just judgment, etc. The word translated above as “justly” is in Arabic *bi-l-haqq*, which means “with the truth”. So judgments must be based **only and purely on facts that can be established as being true**. So important is this that it is stated in this verse that judgments based on “desire” lead one away from the path taught by God, and makes one liable to the most severe punishment by Him.

What is also to be noted is that the Quran says that this was taught to David. Islam teaches that true principles were revealed to earlier prophets as well, even to those great religious figures whose followers were opposing the Holy Prophet.

- To do justice is a simple, basic and short command of the Quran:

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

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ

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

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ

- The concept of doing justice is not limited to dealing with legal cases between contending parties or the treatment of people with justice. The Holy Prophet is instructed 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 فَادُعْ ۖ وَاسْتَقِمْ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ

أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ۖ وَقُلْ آمَنْتُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ

كِتَابٍ ۖ وَأُمِرْتُ لِأَعْدِلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۖ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَ

رَبُّكُمْ ۖ لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ۖ لَا

حُجَّةَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۖ اللَّهُ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا ۖ وَ

إِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ۗ

Here the subject is how to preach Islam. It is to be done with justice. “Low desires” are, for example, the desires to have your evil deeds justified through some religious doctrine, such as the belief that you belong to a favoured nation and God will forgive you your wrongs but will punish other people for similar wrongs. Another example is the doctrine that merely your beliefs will save you, even without doing good deeds. Islam does not offer such ideas, or bribes and inducements. The verdict of justice is that **God is our Lord as well as Lord of the non-Muslims.** He looks at people’s deeds, and He rewards, punishes or forgives them accordingly — not by who they are but by what they do. As this verse says, there need be “no contention”, no dispute, no argumentation, between us about our beliefs. Let everyone’s deeds prove their beliefs! Ultimately, all will be gathered before God for judgment.