

Justice in All Islamic Laws

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After we have dealt with the Justice of Allah we now switch over to social justice. Since the subject of social justice has a wider range we confine ourselves to quoting relevant matters from the Holy Qur'an, the traditions, and Nahjul Balaghah, and have at the same time given explanation of every verse and tradition because these will help project our view-point on relevant matters and their knowledge will be beneficial to the people in general.

The purpose of our discussion on social justice is to mention those verses of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions through which the Holy Qur'an and our infallible Imams have given lessons of equality of mankind in the eyes of the law and of preservation of their rights. They have also forbidden undue discrimination, cruelties and exploitation. Apart from this we have cited the examples of just distribution of wealth, Islamic brotherhood and fraternity set by the Holy Prophet of Islam and his Holy Ahlul Bayt (peace be on them).

Islam is an institution of justice and moderation. It is a straight path and the Muslim fraternity is the nation which practices moderation and justice. The Islamic system is based on justice. If there are tears for the oppressed then there are swords for the oppressors. If it gives importance to preservation of physical health, it also stresses on our spiritual enlightenment and moral upliftment. If it ordains the offering of prayers, it also orders paying zakat (religious tax). If it asks us to love and respect the pious people, it also insists on hatred against the enemies of Allah. If it lays stress on acquiring knowledge it also considers the performance of noble deeds as compulsory. If it commands us to have faith and trust in Allah, it also advises us to make efforts to achieve our objects. If it allows acquisition of personal wealth and property, it also forbids taking undue advantage of ownership and damaging the interest of other people. If it recommends excluding an offender it also insists on enforcement of punitive laws and making no remissions in punishments.

When Imam Ali was told by the people about the piety and devotion of a person offering his prayers, he asked about the intention and the character of a person. Hence it means that if a person is a devout worshipper of Allah, we should judge him by his views and behavior.

Social Justice and Divine Outlook on the Universe

In a society unless the high sounding slogans take strength from their roots they do not go

ahead of slogan mongering. The slogan of social justice is raised by every government but you will not find even a slight tinge of social justice there. The reason is that such slogans are not based on sincerity.

In Islam equality and freedom have a solid base, for example,

(i) The entire universe is under the care of the All Wise Allah and there is no irregularity in it.

Being a part of this world, I cannot do what I like and that too with selfish motives.

(ii) Our ways of doing things and deeds and even our mode of thinking are under surveillance of our Lord, who knows everything about us without our awareness. After all we shall have to present ourselves before Him for the accountability of our deeds.

(iii) All of us have been raised from dust and we shall be reduced to dust. There is no difference among the particles of dust; hence why should there be any difference between some body else and me?

(iv) Everybody is the servant of Allah and to treat everyone with love and affection becomes the source of Allah's pleasure and the best man is he who is the best well-wisher of others.

(v) Allah's creatures cannot exceed the limits and the unlawful rights which the Creator has set for them.

(vi) We are all the offspring of the same parents.

This description and outlook on the world and man is the most potent basis of accepting the principles of justice and equity, but corrupt environment and avarice pull down its foundation

Seeking Justice is a Natural Thing

Allah has endowed man with the knowledge of right and wrong things and their resultant results. The Holy Qur'an says: And We inspired the soul with knowledge of evil and piety. Those who purify their souls will certainly have ever lasting happiness and those who corrupt their soul will certainly be deprived of happiness. (Surah ash-Shams, 91:8-10)

Take an example of a child who kept his apple with you. After a while he comes back and he finds that you have eaten a small portion of it. He becomes displeased and looks at you with an accusing eye as if he is saying that you are guilty of a breach of trust. This is certain that even a child knows about injustice even though he may not tell you so with his tongue. Therefore, misappropriation is an evil which is teacher need not teach a child. It is but natural that man considers misappropriation as a bad thing.

Similarly justice is a thing which man considers by himself considers it a good thing and its proof is that the oppressor himself justifies his action by saying that he has not been unjust! Sometimes several people commit theft jointly but when the question of distribution of the booty comes they talk of making a just and equitable distribution. Such a thing does happen

and the fact that consciously or subconsciously they mean equitable distribution. And if anyone of the group wants to take the lion's share, the other partners become annoyed. It has been a general rule that whenever a person is killed while safeguarding his rights and upholding the cause of social justice or takes a firm stand against the tyrants he is praised by the people in general. It is in human nature that man supports the cause of injustice and wages war against injustice.

Just Laws Originate From Holy Prophet's Conduct

There is hardly any society which does not talk of truthfulness, justice and rational laws. Nor there is any regime which does not claim to uphold the people's rights and welfare. In this connection we deal with the following pertinent questions:

- (i) Is there any law which can claim to be hundred per cent just, so that nobody is deprived of his rights?
- (ii) Is there any law maker who has never been impartial and who has not been influenced by personal prejudices?
- (iii) On what standard can a certain law be determined as just?
- (iv) What stratum do the law makers come from and for which group of society do they want to protect the rights?
- (v) If the law-makers are free from any political, tribal, zonal or racial bias, then on what standard will they enact just and fair laws for all the people and for all the time to come?

From the above-mentioned questions we arrive at the conclusion that social justice and just laws are only possible through Divine Laws conveyed to the mankind by the Prophets of Allah.

Justice is the Basic Condition

In Islam all important establishments and installations remain under the control of just people, whose reputation has been good and who are able and pious. In the matter of administration of justice, right from the qazi (magistrate) to the ordinary clerk and the witnesses, all should be particular in upholding justice. In all congregational prayers including Friday prayers the man who leads the prayers must be just and honest. It is necessary that the mujtahid (jurist) whom we follow, the President, the Prime Minister, the Finance Minister and the man pronouncing the formula of divorce are all just and honest. In the matter of giving news only the just and honest men should be relied upon. In short Islam has laid great emphasis on justice and it is the basis on which all problems of the society, be it personal, social or economical are decided.

The Importance of Justice in Traditions

The Holy Prophet of Islam said: "A moment of justice is better than seventy years of worship in which you keep fasts and pass the nights in offering prayers and worship to Allah". (Jami'us Sa'adat, vol. II, p. 223) The Holy Prophet further said: "The deed of justice performed by a leader for one day for his people is better than the deeds of the man who spends fifty or hundred years amongst his family members in the worship of Allah". Imam Ja'far Sadiq said: "The supplication of a just leader is never refused". (Nizamul Islam as-Siyasi, p. 71) Imam Ali said: "Justice is the essence of the people's welfare as well as the adherence to the Divine path". He further said: "Justice is life and cruelty is the death of society". (Qisarul Jumal).

.Hence, those who submit themselves before oppression are in fact as good as dead bodies

Importance of Justice

Imam Musa Kazim in the commentary of the verse: He sends down water from the sky and enlivens the earth that was dead(Surah ar-Rum, 30:24) says: "The earth comes back to life (by administering justice and enforcing divine laws of punishment". (Qisarul Jumal

Establishment of Justice is the Object of the Prophets

One of the duties and responsibilities of the Prophets of Allah that the Holy Qur'an has mentioned is the instituting of social justice. We, therefore, give below a short list of the achievements and accomplishments of the Holy Prophets:

(i) Inviting the People Towards Allah Inviting the people to worship Allah and preventing them from obeying the despots and tyrants and to remain aloof from them. The Holy Qur'an says: To every nation We sent a Messenger (saying): 'Worship Allah and shun the Devil'. (Surah an-Nahl, 16:36)

(ii) Giving Warnings and Bearing Good News The Holy Qur'an says: We have sent you (Muhammad) for a genuine purpose to proclaim glad tidings and warnings. You will not be blamed for the dwellers of blazing Hell. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:119)

(iii) Teaching and Imparting Instructions The Almighty Allah sent the Prophets towards the people so that they might give them training and tell them those things which they needed. The Holy Qur'an says:

It is He who has sent to the illiterates a Messenger from among their own people who recites to them His revelations, and purifies them. He will teach the Book to them and others who have not yet joined, and He will give them wisdom. Before this they had been in plain error. (Surah al-Jumu'ah, 62:2)

(iv) Opposing Oppressive Laws To eradicate all sorts of social taboos and customs as well as

tribal prejudices and savagery based on superstitious ideas. The Holy Qur'an says: He (the Messenger) enjoins them to do good and forbids them to do all that is unlawful, makes lawful for them all that is pure and unlawful that is filthy, removes their burdens and entanglements in which they are involved. (Surah al-A'raf, 7:157)

(v) Exposing the Futility of False and Evil Things To expose the wrong ways of the false gods and despotic rulers and disgrace them. The Holy Qur'an says: Thus, do We explain our revelations so that the sinful ways can be plainly discerned. (Surah al-An'am, 6:55)

(vi) Establishing a Society Based on Justice The Prophets founded a society in which the people should establish justice and treat others without any consideration of caste, creed, political or economic differences. The Prophets' main function was to inculcate in the people's heart a firm belief in Allah and the Day of Judgement and to create in the individual and the society such moral standard and Divine thinking as would arouse in them the spirit of justice and equity towards their fellow beings. The Holy Qur'an says: We sent Our Messengers with clear evidence (to support their truthfulness), and sent with them the Book and the Balance (criteria of right and wrong) so that people would maintain justice. We sent down iron, in which is a vital war material and which benefits the people, so that Allah would know who would help Him though unseen, and His Messengers. (Surah al-Hadid, 57:25)

Since a just society depends on spiritual as well as material power, the above-mentioned verse points out to both the powers that is the Book and the Balance. And each one of them is necessary for establishing justice. The mentioning of iron in the verse points to material strength so that the transgressor may note that if they violate justice they will be crushed with an iron hand. Thus, one of the main duties of the Holy Prophets was to establish social justice

Imam Ali's Argument on Equity

When the people objected to Imam Ali's equitable distribution of wealth he replied:

(i) If the wealth had belonged to me even then I would have distributed it equally among the people but this wealth belongs to Allah and is meant for distribution among the people and therefore everybody has his right in it. (ii) To distribute wealth among those who do not deserve it amounts to squandering the wealth. The Holy Qur'an also says. Do not squander your wealth wastefully. The squanderers are indeed Satan's brothers and Satan is ungrateful to his Lord. (Surah Bani Isra'il, 17:27) (iii) The inequitable and unjust distribution of wealth results in the formation of a group of greedy persons who surround the people and extract money from them through flattery and undue praise and thus makes them

ashamed in the eyes of the law of Divine Justice.

Furthermore, Imam Ali says: "Unjustifiable and undeserving donations may enhance the status of a man among his worldly surroundings but he is sadly humiliated in the eyes of Allah. One who spends his wealth in evil ways and on wrong persons, is deprived, by the Lord, of the gratitude of those over whom he had spent; these undeserving beneficiaries usually turn against him and at the time of distress and need he finds them as his worst enemies, censuring his actions and blaming him for his lavish grants". (Sermon—129, p. 322, Peak of Eloquence)

Confiscation of Property

As and when the days passed by after the time of the Holy Prophet, people started drifting away from Islamic social justice to the extent that Caliph Uthman lavishly gave his kith and kin wealth from the public property. It was this discrimination and favouritism that aroused the anger of the people who put him to death, and thereafter swore allegiance to Imam Ali. When the regime of the Commander of the Faithful Imam Ali commenced, he revolutionized the entire system, eradicated all irregularities so as to bring the affairs of the State on an even keel. As such the properties unlawfully acquired were confiscated and unjust appointments and dismissals were cancelled. Imam Ali declared: "By Allah! If I had known of this sort of public wealth, even if it was spent in paying the dower of the women or for purchasing slave girls, I (would have confiscated it too". (Vide: Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984)

No Distinction Between an Arab and a Non-Arab

Two women came to take their shares from Baytul Mal (Public Treasury). One of them was an Arab and the other one was a non-Arab. Imam Ali gave them equal share as usual. Those people who had not as yet comprehended the essence of Islam did not tolerate this justice and raised an objection against the Imam's action. They complained of treating an Arab and a non-Arab on equal footing. At this the Holy Imam said: "I did not find any difference between the two". (Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, vol. XI, p. 81)

Owing to his strict observance of equity and his treatment of people of various classes of society without any distinction, selfish people and transgressors became critical of the policies and the administration of justice initiated by Imam Ali but all their crooked tactics and criticisms could not deviate him from the path of monotheism and Divine Justice. He was one of those few blessed souls who did not mind in the least such baseless criticisms. The Holy

Qur'an says:

Believers, any one of you turns back on his faith (should remember) that Allah could verily bring

(in your place) another people whom He would love as they would love Him, gentle with believers, unbending with infidels, who would strive in the way of Allah unafraid of blame by (any slanderer. (Surah al-Ma'ida, 5:54

Counting the Dead

In the Age of Ignorance the larger the tribe was the greater was its dignity among the people. Once a dispute on the counting of the members of a tribe became so serious that they insisted on counting their dead ones also so that they could prove the largeness of their tribe. Hence, the following verse of the Holy Qur'an was revealed. The avarice of plenitude keeps you occupied till you reach the grave. (Surah at-Takathur, 102-1–2) From this it is meant that the abundance of wealth and manpower has blinded you to the extent that you are going to count the dead ones by going to their graves and are feeling proud of it.

Imam Ali after reciting the above surah condemned that sort of attitude. (See: Sermon—225, Peak of Eloquence) In another similar gathering where every one was bragging of his own tribe, race and pedigree, the turn of Salman Farsi came. People thought that since he had not come from a noteworthy tribe he would feel some humiliation but Salman Farsi had received the training from the Holy Prophet of Islam. Without undergoing any feeling of inferiority he boldly declared "You people should have no concern with my family background. What I know about myself is that I was far away from the right guidance, but under the auspices of the Holy Prophet I sought guidance and this is the only praiseworthy thing for me and nothing else". (Safinatul Bihar, vol. II, p. 348). By giving this ideological reply he quietened them and proved to them that according to Islamic ideology and in the eyes of Allah all are equal and such boastful claims have no worth.

Advice to Buy the People for Gaining Their Favour

Some well-wishers of Imam Ali approached him and suggested to him to show special favours to the leading heads of the tribe of Quraysh and other influential people by granting them higher share for unless he gave preferential treatment to them as against the slaves and the non-Arabs he would not be able to gain their support and they would rebel against him and would go towards Mu'awiya's side.

Imam Ali said: "Should I spend the wealth and property of the Public Treasury in bribing the people in return for gaining their support? The fact is that if I gain the support of someone through money he will turn against me if he is offered a higher amount from the other party. Therefore, we should always safeguard the principle of justice and never think of attracting the people either through money or intimidation and threats. I shall never do that no matter if

someone remains with me or goes against me". This was the method adopted by the Holy Imam. He was not prepared to gain the favor of the people by doing the least injustice. (Biharul Anwar, vol. XVI, p. 108)139

Example of the Feeling of Fraternity

A citizen of Balkh says: "I was present before Imam Ali Riza. The time for dinner came. The dining-cloth was spread and meals were served. The Holy Imam invited all his white and black-skinned servants and without any hesitation seated himself amongst them. Some people suggested a separate dining-cloth for the servants. At this the Holy Imam said: "We all have One Lord. We all belong to common parents. On the Day of Judgement we all shall be treated equally for our virtues and sins. Then why should there be discrimination here?"

The day when I see that everybody in whatever condition he may be, associates with other people without any consideration of superiority will be the day of attaining our cultural revolution. In the same way if every Muslim without considering himself superior to others, mingles with common people rekindles in himself the spirit of Islamic instructions, then whoever associates with us will ultimately join us and become our co-religionist. (al-Kafi, vol. (VIII, p. 230

Brotherhood in Islam

It is for centuries that the black people have been undergoing hardships and oppressions. Their bath-rooms, coffeehouses, hospitals, schools and cemeteries are all separate. Islam has very strongly censured this sort of discrimination among various classes of people. The Holy Qur'an says: Men, We have created you all male and female and have made you nations and tribes so that you would recognize each other. The most honorable among you in the sight of Allah is the most pious of you. (Surah al-Hujurat, 49:13) Among the signs of His existence is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the differences of languages and complexions. (Surah ar-Rum, 30:22)

The Holy Prophet on the occasion of his farewell pilgrimage (hujjatul wida) said to a large gathering: "You Muslims are equal to one another no matter if you belong to one or the other tribe, race or language". (Safinatul Bihar, vol. II, p. 348) The Holy Prophet used to award positions of dignity to the slaves and solemnized intermarriages between the whiteskinned and the black-skinned couples so much so that he wedded his first cousin, Zaynab, the daughter of his father's sister to a black-skinned slave so that the evil of superiority amongst the believers might be nipped in the bud.

False Criticism: The Almighty Allah has rejected the superiority of the Quraysh who considered

themselves superior to all others. The Holy Qur'an says:
Then move onward from the place (Arafat) when all the People go. (Surah al-Baqarah, 2:199)
The above verse was revealed when on the occasion of the Hajj, the people of Quraysh considered themselves superior to others by being the custodian of the Holy Ka'ba and for this reason, while performing the rites of the Hajj, they did not go to 'Arafat and instead went to Muzdalifa. They said that since they belonged to the Holy House of Allah (Ka'ba) they would not go to another place. Then they were asked to give up their feeling of superiority, and that
.they should go to the same place where others were going

There is a Difference between Adopting a Principle and Trading

The influential people looked down upon the followers of Prophet Nuh and insulted them. They made a proposal to him that if he abandoned associating with poor people they would keep his company. But since Prophet Nuh always upheld the cause of the poor and the downtrodden people he turned down their proposal. According to the Holy Qur'an, he said to them:
No one except Allah has to give me my reward. I do not drive away those who have faith (in my teachings), they will all receive mercy from their Lord. (Surah Hud, 11:29)
The matter which is of paramount importance to us is to uphold social justice and protect our ideology. We should only invite people to this concept and not that we should ignore one aspect of it and give up justice and equity so as to build up the strength of our supporters. This sort of thinking is like business and blind-following and does not mean protection of ideology
.and worship of Allah

Even a Single Loaf is Equally Distributed

"Some commodities were brought before Imam Ali and people came to take their share. In order that people should maintain discipline he kept the people at a distance by means of ropes and himself distributed the whole of it to the representatives of the various tribes. Afterwards, he found one loaf that was left in a container. He then ordered it to be divided into seven equal parts and like the other property gave one piece to each of the tribes". (Biharul
(Anwar, vol. XLI, p. 136

Do Not Compromise on Principle

A theft occurred in the house of a Muslim in Madina. Two persons were charged with theft. One was a Muslim and the other a Jew. Both of them were brought before the Holy Prophet. The Muslims became worried that if the Muslim was proved guilty of the charge they will be humiliated before the neighboring Jews. Thus the people came to the Holy Prophet that the

honor of the Muslims was at stake and hence it was desirable that the Muslim might be acquitted of the charge. But the Holy Prophet considered an unjust decision a disgrace for Islam. The people further argued that since the Jews had perpetrated cruelties on them, it was of no significance if one of their men was unjustly punished for the crime. The Holy Prophet said: "Justice and honest decision have nothing to do with past sufferings". At last the Holy Prophet examined the case impartially and against the wishes of the Muslims set the Jew free. This example of justice humiliated the Muslims of that time but in reality it immortalized the justice and high ideals of Islam. We should therefore, adhere to our principles and should not .make innovations in them for the sake of pleasing others

An Unjust Hope

A group of people passing by the assembly of the Holy Prophet saw with him some indigent persons like Ammar and Bilal. They said to the Holy Prophet: "Have you contented yourself on such unknown persons? If you only get rid of them we will soon join you and keep your company". The author of Tafsirul Manar after narrating this event says that caliph Umar showed his inclination towards the proposal of the proud people of Quraysh and said to the Holy Prophet: "You may remove these poor people from you for a few days just to test these proud people and to know if there is any sincerity in their suggestions. Then the following verse was revealed warning the Holy Prophet". Do not turn away those who implore their Lord morning and evening, seeking His countenance. (Surah al-An'am, 6:52) At the end of this verse, the Almighty Allah further says:

"If you drive them away you will only be unjust

Do Not Underestimate the Judicial Decision

Two young boys wrote two different writings and came to Imam Hasan for a decision. An ordinary man will take such a simple problem very lightly, because firstly the point at issue is the piece of writing and secondly the dispute is between two boys but in any case the matter had to be decided. Therefore, Imam Ali advised his son Imam Hasan to pay attention to the decision as whatever decision you make you will be answerable before the Divine Justice on (the Day of Judgement. (Majma'ul Bayan, vol. III, p. 64

When the Guest is Removed

A man happened to be the guest of Imam Ali. After a time he put before the Holy Imam the ease of his dispute with another person. The Holy Imam told the man, "Up till now you were my guest, but since you have become a party in a dispute with another man you should leave this

place, because the Holy Prophet advised me not to make any one of the disputants as your guest unless the other one is also with you because hospitality is one thing and making a just and impartial decision is another thing. Hospitality is based on sympathy and decision of a case is based on Divine law. " Therefore, in principle one should not involve himself in sentimental and psychological matters so that there may not be the least doubt that he would be influenced by them in the administration of justice. (Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, vol. XVIII, p. 158)

Imam Ali used to instruct the tax-collector thus: "In whatever zone you go, you should arrange your stay near the bank of a river but do not stay with anyone in any event because your becoming his guest will influence your official duty to collect the tax". (See. Letter—25, Peak of Eloquence, ISP 1984)

The Holy Qur'an Condemns Partiality

As and when the Qur'anic verses were revealed people gradually got attracted to them. The Holy Prophet himself and some other followers used to preach Islam and invite the people towards Islam. Once a preaching function was held in which many famous people participated. When a preacher was addressing the people to the call of Allah and to embrace Islam a blind man appeared and started talking continuously. This interrupted the preaching work, on account of which the speaker got much annoyed. He did not want that the blind man coming over there and if he had come at all, he should have at least kept quiet, though the speaker's friendly or unfriendly gestures of the face could not affect the blind man owing to his blindness. Surah 'Abasa refers to this very incident and warns the speaker who had knit his brows, because possibly the blind man had a better understanding and sense of accepting the truth than other wellknown people. The Holy Qur'an says:

He frowned and turned away, because a blind man came to him. And what made you think that (he will not grow in virtue. (Surah 'Abasa, 80.1—3

Another Example of Imam Ali's Justice

'Aqil, the brother of Imam Ali, with his children came to the Imam. Their faces were pale due to starvation. He, therefore, demanded a larger share for him from the Public Treasury. It is a natural thing that a man gets affected by seeing the plight of his brother's children. But Imam Ali rejected his brother's request and by bringing a red-hot iron near him said: "Just as you are afraid of the torment of this hot iron, similarly I am afraid of the torment of the Day of Judgement". (Sermon—221, Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984)148

Nobody Does That Sort of Thing

Normally the well-known people themselves go to buy their requirement from the market or send somebody else to buy for them. Such a person tells the shopkeeper that the thing is required for a man of distinction so that he may give him a better quality goods at a lower price. It is just possible that bribe is given or wrong advantage of one's official position is taken in this regard. By this a situation is created that all wellto-do people take the best of stuff from the market at a cheaper rate and leave a low quality goods for the common people to buy at a higher price. It was only Imam Ali who took care to buy his requirements from a shopkeeper who did not know him or if he sent somebody else to make purchases nobody knew for whom .the goods were being purchased

Another Example of Taking Precaution

Once Imam Ali was distributing shares from the Public Treasury when his grandson happened to come and took away a thing. On such an occasion a father would normally ignore such a thing but it was Imam Ali who got perturbed and chased the child and took back the thing from him. The people told him that after all the child also had his share in it. At this the Holy Imam replied, "No, not his, only his father's share is there and that too equal to that of any other man. It is up to him to give his son whatever share he deemed fit to give". (Hayat Imam Hasan, Baqir Sharif Qarashi, vol. I. p. 388)

Surely such a strict precaution was concerned with the Public Treasury only, but the Holy Imam was so generous in giving away his personal wealth that even Mu'awiya once said that if Ali had two rooms, one full of haystack and the other of gold it makes no difference to him to give .away any of the two

Undue Criticism against Imam Ali

Talha and Zubayr believed in giving special treatment to the companions of the Holy Prophet. Therefore, they used to criticize Imam Ali for his dealing with the Public Treasury as well as other matters. Once they objected to the Holy Imam saying: "Why do you not consult us? ' Imam Ali after telling his promptness, ability, justice and modus operandi said: "By Allah, I never craved for rulership or caliphate for its sake only. All of you invited me to accept it and I accepted. And when I accepted it and became a ruler I started to rule according to the dictates of the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah (traditions) of the Holy Prophet. In following the commandments of the Holy Qur'an and the Holy Prophet, I never needed either your help nor that of anybody's else. If I feel ever in need of advice, I shall most certainly consult you as well as other Muslim brethren.

So far as your complaints about equal distribution of wealth are concerned, I want to tell you

that here too I am strictly following the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. This theory of equal distribution of the wealth was revealed to the Holy Prophet by the Merciful Allah and he had taught us, you know this and so do I. So, what Allah had commanded should be accepted by you and as well as by me. Therefore, you and your friends are not justified in blaming me for this". (Sermon—210, Peak of Eloquence, ISP, 1984)149

Settling Dispute with Justice

"Treat the people with respect. Be kind and considerate with them. Meet them cheerfully. Be fair, just and impartial in your dealings so that even the influential persons may not dare take undue advantage of your leniency and the commoners and the poor people may not be disappointed in your justice and fair dealings". (Letter—27, Peak of Eloquence) It is narrated that whenever the Holy Prophet talked with his companions he used to glance over to them equally in a just manner without ignoring anyone of them. (Wasa'ilush Shi'ah, vol. VIII, p 499) In this regard Islam takes special care so much so that it emphasizes that if in a feast the host starts the washing of the hands of his guest from the right side before the meals begin the reverse process should be adopted i.e. washing should be done from the left side after the meals have been taken so that the man, who washed his hands first before the meals, should be the last one after finishing his meals. Such a great care and attention would never be found .in any other code of ethics

Using the Paper Economically

Imam Ali in one of his circulars to his officials wrote as follows: "Sharpen the tip of your pen. Do not leave much space between the lines. Avoid writing in an ornamental style and observe brevity so as to save paper. The paper belongs to the Public Treasury and the Public Treasury cannot afford any wasteful expenditure". (Biharul Anwar, vol. XLI, p. 105) The pronouncement of Imam Ali on the importance of administering justice and of avoiding oppressive actions is very interesting. (Vide. Sermon—228, Peak of Eloquence). In this very sermon the Holy Imam further says. "I bear Allah as my witness that I prefer to pass sleepless nights over the sharp thorns of prickly plants or to suffer from the worst form of injury and insult than to meet my Lord and the Holy Prophet on the Day of Judgement as a tyrant who has persecuted any person or as a usurper who has wrongfully seized the property of somebody else. Why should I tyrannize or exploit somebody to provide comfort and ease for my body which will shortly be destroyed and decayed and which will lie in the grave for a long period. By Allah, if all the seven continents with all that they contain are offered to me as a remuneration or bribe for depriving an ant of the husk of a grain of barley carried by it, I will

never do it. This world to me is even more worthless than the small bit of a leaf chewed by a locust. Ali has no interest with mortal luxuries, wealth, ease and comforts of this world. I seek . "His Protection and Help from negligence of my duty and from being wicked and vicious