



Sayyid Ja'far Raza said, "If I am asked asked to summarize the principles of Islam and the essence of Islam, I would say it is justice. Islam is synonymous with justice. Justice to the Creator by worshiping Him and obeying his injunctions and mandate. He is Justice. Justice to the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) by following him as he represents the authority of God on earth. Justice to one's self by keeping it secure from sinfulness and egotism. Justice to the body by keeping it healthy and free from undue exertion and illness. Justice to the soul by keeping it pure with piety. Justice in the matrimonial sphere, justice to the parents as they have been instrumental in gifting our existence. Justice to the spouse who shares the burden of raising a family. Justice to the offspring as they are the extensions of our own lives and motivating them to take the right directions in life, Justice to our neighbors by sharing with them in their moments of trial. Justice to the sick by assisting them in restoring their health, justice to the downtrodden and poor by supplementing their basic needs, justice to the motherland by enjoying the fragrance of its soul and loving and promoting its prosperity and being ready to sacrifice for it. Justice to humanity by contributing to its development. Justice to knowledge by spreading it far and wide for by enabling mankind to enjoy its fruits without discrimination. Justice therefore is the foundation of Islamic principles and occupies a place next to the Oneness of God."

Justice in Islam encompasses everything we do!

How we distribute this justice is comprehensively spread out over our daily dealings.

Chapter One The gravity of social injustice

On the authority of Abu Dharr al-Ghifari (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (ﷺ) is that among the sayings he relates from his Lord (may He be glorified) is that He said: O My servants, I have forbidden oppression for Myself and have made it forbidden amongst you, so do not

oppress one another.

عَنْ أَبِي ذَرِّ الْغِفَارِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِيمَا يَرُويهِ عَنْ رَبِّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنَّهُ قَالَ يَا عِبَادِي: إِنِّي حَرَّمْتُ الظُّلْمَ عَلَى نَفْسِي وَجَعَلْتُهُ بَيْنَكُمْ مُحَرَّمًا فَلَا تَظَالَمُوا

Imam Ahmed (ra) said, "This was the most noble hadith that was narrated by the people of Sham."

Some scholars would narrate this hadith on their knees as a means of showing brokenness and humility in the sight of God.

It sets the paradigm that God is so good to you, so you should be good with one another.

Some lessons:

1. If anyone had the right to wrong, it would be God. Ibn Taymiyyah noted that it isn't like Allah couldn't be an oppressor if He *azza wa jal* wanted. Who could stop Allah? But He *azza wa jal* chose mercy for Himself and He chose it for us. There are only two things that Allah has mandated for himself (swt). One to do and one not to do.
 - a. That He and the angels send salawat upon the Prophet (ﷺ)
 - b. That He forbade for Himself oppression and also made it forbidden it for us
2. If I have forbidden it for Myself, who are you to commit this?
 - a. وَمَا أَنَا بِظَالِمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ - "And never will I be unjust to the servants." [Qur'an 50:29]
 - b. وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ 40:31
3. Ibn Rajab, there are three approaches to any situation: grace, justice, or transgression. Allah denies Himself transgression (even with the worst of the creation). As for justice, Allah only uses it when necessary, and as for grace that is what Allah chooses for Himself and loves.

The Prophet (ﷺ), "If Allah were to punish the inhabitants of His heavens and of His

earth, he would do so and He would not be unjust towards them. And if He were to have

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mercy on them, His mercy would be better for them than their own deeds.”

لَوْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَذَّبَ أَهْلَ سَمَوَاتِهِ وَأَهْلَ أَرْضِهِ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ وَهُوَ غَيْرُ ظَالِمٍ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ رَجِمَهُمْ لَكَانَتْ رَحْمَتُهُ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِهِمْ

Why?

He would not be wronging them because there is no way to match what He has given them. It would not be considered transgression because you have not done anything close to what Allah has done for you.

If Allah showed mercy to them, then certainly His mercy is better for them than their good deeds.

What does oppression (ظلم) mean?

Technical definition: to misplace something.

It's of two types: either going too far (تعدّي) or withholding too much from someone or something (نقص)

Greatest form of oppression?

Shirk, to associate partners with God.

إِنَّ الشُّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ

“Certainly, *shirk* is the greatest transgression.” [Qur'an 31:15]

Why?

Because the right of Allah is to be worshipped. To take that right and give it to someone else or to align that right with someone inferior is the greatest act of transgression.

The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked what the greatest sin in the sight of Allah was and he replied:

أَنْ تَجْعَلَ لِلَّهِ نِدَاءً وَهُوَ خَلَقَكَ

“That you associate partners with Allah and He created you.” [Ibn Hibban]

Oppressing oneself.

Oppressing others.

Hadith #1

When Allah says يا عبادي it puts in perspective your relationship with God. You need to understand the reality of this relationship.

1. Allah addresses you with admonishment. He (*azza wa jal*) calls you with compassion and love. By Allah addressing you in this fashion it should humble you. Ibn Rajab, when Allah says يا عبادي remember this compassion He (*azza wa jal*) has for you, to enact it with everyone you meet. Remember this when admonishing others.
2. By Him saying this it is also to reminding you of why you were created. Reminding us that we are His servants and we were created for nothing but to worship Him.
3. By Allah telling you يا عبادي He is also telling you who gave you the authority to act like a Master? Who do you think you are to act like الجبار ? He (*azza wa jal*) is putting you back in your place.
4. If you don't have the authority, who then gave you the permission to wrong others? You are a slave of God, he/she is a slave of God, what makes you think you have this authority?
5. It denotes ingratitude on the part of the slave. How ungrateful are you with all the blessings you have received to use those blessings to wrong other individuals? How ungrateful are you to take the blessings Allah has given you for good and use them for evil?
6. Allah didn't say "O Muslims" or "O Believers" - He (*azza wa jal*) said, "O my servants" which refers to all of humanity. When you look at the Qur'an and the moments where Allah calls out to all of humanity the verses usually speak to the rights of others.

What are the consequences?

1. Your entire ask of Allah is negated by your *dhulm* (oppression)
 - a. What are we asking Allah for in this world? We ask Allah to not be among those who have earned his anger or misguidance at the end of surah Al-Fatihah.
 - b. ان الله لا يحب الظالمين - You sacrifice the love of God by oppressing others.
 - i. But I didn't do anything to Allah! You cannot do anything to Him (*azza wa jal*) but you mistreated His creation.
 - ii. ان الله لا يهدي القوم الظالمين - You sacrificed the guidance of Allah by oppressing others. That oppression serves as a barrier to your guidance.

The first part of the hadith is general and the second part is specific.
Do not wrong one another.

اتَّقُوا الظُّلْمَ، فَإِنَّ الظُّلْمَ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ

The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Beware of oppression, for oppression will turn into excessive

darknesses on the Day of Resurrection.”

When a person commits oppression, he darkens his heart.

وقد خاب من حمل ظلما

Anyone who commits oppression is lost and will fail.

What will the day of Judgment look like for the oppressor?

The Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and give him peace) said: “All scores will be settled on the Day of Resurrection; even the hornless sheep from the horned.” [Muslim]

Allah will bring the animals to settle their disputes. You (as a human) will see the disputes of the animals being resolved. The oppressor will wish they were dust because they know that they too will have to answer for their oppression.

أَلَا مَنْ ظَلَمَ مُعَاهِدًا أَوْ انْتَقَصَهُ أَوْ كَلَّفَهُ فَوْقَ طَاقَتِهِ أَوْ أَخَذَ مِنْهُ
شَيْئًا بِغَيْرِ طِبِّبِ نَفْسٍ فَأَنَا حَاجِبُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ "

of their fathers who were relatives of each other. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Beware, if anyone wrongs a contracting* (*dhimma*) man, or diminishes his right, or forces him to work beyond his capacity, or takes from him anything without his consent, I shall plead against him on the Day of Judgment. (i.e., I will be his prosecutor!)

Safwan reported from a number of Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on the authority

The matter of oppression encompasses all of mankind! Can you imagine the Prophet (saw) standing against you before Allah (swt) - If this is the case for us, then what hope do we have of entering Paradise?

مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا مُعَاهِدًا لَمْ يَرِحْ رَائِحَةَ الْجَنَّةِ، وَإِنَّ رِيحَهَا يُوجَدُ
مِنْ مَسِيرَةِ أَرْبَعِينَ عَامًا ."

Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr: The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever killed a *mu'ahid* (a person

who is granted the pledge of protection by the Muslims) shall not smell the fragrance of Paradise though its fragrance can be smelt at a distance of forty years (of traveling)."

What methodology do we get from this?

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاَنُ قَوْمٍ أَنْ صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَنْ تَعْتَدُوا

And do not let the hatred of a people for having obstructed you from al-Masjid al-Haram lead you to transgress. [Qur'an 5:2]

Ibn Al-Qayyim, This is the strongest verse in the Qur'an about justice because it is not talking about our family and friends, but rather justice with those who we hate.

اعدلوا هو اقرب للتقوى

Be JUST, for that is closer to God-consciousness.

Allah loves those who are JUST.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) sent Mu'ad to govern over Yemen that had a population of Muslims and Christians coexisting he said to him, "Fear the supplication of the oppressed, there is no veil between that invocation and Allah, even if the one who is making the invocation is a disbeliever."

What does this mean?

That if a non-Muslim resident of Yemen made du'a against Mu'adh ibn Jabal (ra), and they were rightfully oppressed, their du'a would be answered by Allah.

ثَلَاثَةٌ لَا تَرُدُّ دَعْوَتُهُمْ الصَّائِمُ حَتَّى يُفْطَرَ وَالْإِمَامُ الْعَادِلُ وَدَعْوَةُ
الْمُظْلُومِ يَرْفَعُهَا اللَّهُ فَوْقَ الْغَمَامِ وَيَفْتَحُ لَهَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ وَيَقُولُ
الرَّبُّ وَعَزَّتِي لَأَنْصُرَنَّكَ وَلَوْ بَعْدَ جِينٍ "

Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

"There are three whose supplication is not

rejected: The fasting person when he breaks his fast, the just leader, and the supplication of the oppressed person; Allah raises it up above the clouds and opens the gates of heaven to it. And the Lord says: 'By My might, I shall surely aid you, even if it should be after a while.'"

If that's the burden of justice to the person that you harm where does that leave us?

Umm Salamah said the prophet never left his home except that he looked up to the sky and said,

اللهم إني أعوذ بك أن أضل أو أضل، أو أذل أو أذل، أو أظلم أو أظلم ، أو أجهل أو يجهل علي

"O Allah! I seek refuge in You from leading others astray or being led astray, or against slipping or being caused to slip; or doing injustice or being done injustice to; or doing wrong or having wrong done to me."

The Prophet (ﷺ) feared injustice so much he would make this du'a every time he left the house. He (ﷺ) used to be so afraid of injustice - where does this leave us?

Usayd ibn Hudayr said that while he was given to jesting and was talking to the people and

making them laugh, the Prophet (ﷺ) poked him under the ribs with a stick. He said, “Let me take retaliation.” He (ﷺ) said, “Take retaliation.” He said, “You are wearing a shirt but I am not.” The Prophet (ﷺ) then raised his shirt and the man embraced him and began to kiss his side. Then he said, “This is all I wanted, *ya rasulAllah*.”

The thought of someone telling him that he (ﷺ) wronged them was enough to cause him fear.

Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah (ra) said the well-being of the people in this world is attained through justice even when they have personal sins that coexist with it. For that reason, Allah will uphold a just nation even if it's a disbelieving nation and Allah will destroy an unjust nation even if it be a believing nation.

Ibn Al-Qayyim (ra) comments and says that when you look in the Qur'an every time Allah destroyed a people/town it was because they transgressed/oppressed others. It was not disbelief alone but disbelief coupled with injustice.

If the greatest injustice is to worship someone beside God, how can it be rationalized that God will forego His right for the right of the creation. It's an understood concept that when the right of the servant and the right of the Creator are in conflict, the right of the creation should be fulfilled. This is an agreed upon matter in *fiqh*.

This is true both personally and in relation to others:

Example: If Ramadan comes and you are sick, you must fulfill the right that your body has upon you and break your fast and make it up later.

Example: If you owe someone money, and Hajj comes upon you, although Hajj is a right that Allah has upon you, you must fulfill the right that the lender has upon you unless they forgive/allow you to go and make Hajj.

How do we reconcile/understand this?

1. Allah is most Merciful and in His mercy Allah delays His punishment upon a person who foregoes Allah's right upon him until death. The urgency is there but Allah grants that person respite. This is Allah's grace.
2. Allah does not need His rights but the servants of God need theirs! Allah is independent and free from anything and anyone.
3. Who gave rights to people? Allah. So when you take the rights of people, it becomes a compound offense. Allah honored people with their rights and you disgraced them by taking their rights.

On the day of judgment, good deeds that were done for Allah by someone who wrongs another

person will disappear.

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported:

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "Do you know who is the bankrupt?" They said: "The bankrupt among us is one who has neither money with him nor any property". He said, "The real bankrupt of my Ummah will be he who would come on the Day of Resurrection with Salat, Saum and Sadaqah (charity), (but he will find himself bankrupt on that day as he will have exhausted the good deeds) because he reviled others, brought calumny against others, unlawfully devoured the wealth of others, shed the blood of others and beat others; so his good deeds will be credited to the accounts of those (who suffered at his hand). If his good deeds fall short to clear the account, their sins will be entered in his account and he will be thrown in the (Hell) Fire". [Muslim].

Your good deeds are taken by other people because of your wronging them.

As-Shafi'i used to say, طوبى لمن إذا مات.. ماتت معه ذنوبه

"Glad tidings to the one who has passed and their sins die with them." They haven't left behind harm they've done to others, debts, or people who make du'a against them.

Sufyan At-Thawri used to say, " I wish that on the day of Judgment the only One I will have to deal with is Allah."