

Fast 25: Holy Prophet does justice to his enemies

- The Holy Prophet was an embodiment of the following teaching given to all Muslims:

“And do not let hatred of a people — because they hindered you from the Sacred Mosque — incite you to transgress. And help one another in righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and aggression, and keep your duty to Allah. Surely Allah is Severe in retribution.” — 5:2

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ اَنْ تَعْتَدُوْا ۗ وَتَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْبِرِّ وَ
التَّقْوٰى ۗ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا
اللّٰهَ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

“O you who believe, be upright for Allah, bearers of witness with justice; and do not let hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just; that is nearer to observance of duty. And keep your duty to Allah. Surely Allah is Aware of what you do.” — 5:8

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُوْنُوْا قَوٰمِيْنَ لِلّٰهِ شُهَدَآءَ
بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰى اَلَّا
تَعْدِلُوْا ۗ اِعْدِلُوْا ۗ هُوَ اَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾

Notice that this teaching, of not letting your hatred of another people make you act unjustly towards them, is repeated within the space of six verses, and it is in verses revealed at a very late date in the Holy Prophet’s mission. No one can claim that this teaching was only given to Muslims at an earlier date and when Muslims later became stronger it was cancelled.

As to helping one another in good and not helping one another in bad, unfortunately many Muslims today are reluctant to help one another in doing good works, but are only too happy to assist and join in with those from their community who are acting wrongly.

At the end of the first verse quoted above it says: “and keep your duty to Allah. Surely Allah is Severe in retribution”. This clearly shows that it is a grave and punishable sin in the eyes of Allah if Muslims violate these teachings by: (1) treating their enemies unjustly *due to feelings of hatred for others*, (2) by not co-operating with one another in good *due to mutual jealousy*, and (3) by helping each other in doing wrong due to *misplaced loyalty* to one’s own community.

- The Prophet Muhammad acted on the above teaching most scrupulously, as shown below.

“Listeners for the sake of a lie, devourers of forbidden things, so if they come to you (O Prophet), judge between them or turn away

سَمْعُوْنَ لِلْكَذِبِ اَكْلُوْنَ لِّلْسُحْتِ ۗ فَاِنْ جَاءُوْكَ
فَاَحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ اَوْ اَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ ۗ وَاِنْ تَعْرِضْ

from them. And if you turn away from them, they cannot harm you at all. And if you judge, judge between them with equity. Surely Allah loves the equitable.” — 5:42

عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا ۗ وَإِنْ حَكَمْتُمْ فَأَحْكُمْ
بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

The people referred to here are some of the Jews of Madinah. When the Holy Prophet arrived in Madinah, an agreement was drawn up between the various nationalities of Madinah by which he was to judge all disputes. This included judging disputes between the Jews themselves by the standards of their own religious scriptures. But later the Jews became hostile to the Holy Prophet. So God allowed him the choice of whether to judge between them or refuse to do so. But in case he judged between them, he is still told to judge with equity. To be equitable, despite their severe enmity, shows that the Holy Prophet had reached the highest point of moral rectitude and integrity to which a human being can attain.

- An example of the Holy Prophet doing justice, even when the just verdict favoured his enemy and went against his own followers, is given in the following verses:

“Surely We have revealed the Book to you with truth that you may judge between people by means of what Allah has taught you. And do not be one pleading the cause of the dishonest, and ask the forgiveness of Allah. Surely Allah is ever Forgiving, Merciful. And do not contend on behalf of those who act unfaithfully to their souls. Surely Allah does not love him who is treacherous, sinful.” — 4:105–107

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ
النَّاسِ بِمَا آرَبَكَ اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَكُنْ لِلْخَافِيِينَ حَصِيْبًا
﴿١٠٥﴾ وَاسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيْمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾
وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ خَوَّانًا أَثِيْمًا ﴿١٠٧﴾

There was a dispute between a Muslim and a Jew, in which judgment was given by the Holy Prophet against the Muslim. A Muslim had stolen something, and when he was suspected of the theft he hid the stolen item at a Jew’s house and accused the Jew of the theft. The whole of the Muslim’s tribe supported him. The Holy Prophet realised that the Jew was innocent. So, despite the open enmity of the Jews, he cleared the Jew of the charge. It was a time when every Muslim hand was desperately needed for the defence of Islam, and a verdict against a man supported by his whole tribe meant the loss of that tribe to Islam. But such considerations did not carry any weight with the Holy Prophet.

These verses lay down the broad principle that dishonesty must be punished, and the balance of justice must be held equal between Muslims and non-Muslims and between friends and foes.