

Islamic Justice as Model for Promoting Peace and Security

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Abstract

This paper is on the issues of justice (fair dealings) one of the important value of Islamic Shari'ah. It is very essential for every human being to apply Justice in all his life Endeavour especially to those who are leaders. Because without Justice there would be no peace and security on earth as referenced to what is happening presently in Nigeria that majority of people are unjust, therefore the country falls into lack of peace and security. It is in this respect that the paper examines the meaning and importance of Justice, how justice serves as a model for promoting peace and security. The method of discussion will be on Qur'anic injunctions; Hadith of the Prophet (S.A.W) as well as saying of the Muslim Scholars, which through these process the findings revealed that, Justice is a bed-rock of building the characters of the society as a result of which the peace and security of the country are maintained. Finally the paper provides recommendations which include we should lean Qur'an Hadith of the Prophet (S.A.W) as well as sayings of the Muslim scholars and put their teachings into practice.

Keywords: *Islamic justice, Peace, Security*

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Background to the Study

It is with mercy and justice of Allah (the most high) He created human beings for nothing else but to worship Him. He also gives us freedom of choice, choosing between the righteous way and the wrong way. Everything in this world is free for us to choose, but we shall surely account for our choices and deeds on the day of Reckoning. For those who were opportune to works righteousness (i.e apply Justice in whatever they are doing) Allah (the most high) will give them a good life in this world with respect, contentment and lawful provision and He shall pay them certainly a reward in proportion to the best of what they used to do (i.e. Paradise in the Hereafter). But on the other hand, for those who were unfortunate neglects the laws given by Allah (the most high) through wrong way and injustice will surely face severe consequences in this world and in the Hereafter. Nigeria is a case in point where the country falls into chaos and destruction as a result of unjust practices and whatever. It is necessary for the Nigerians to understand that the only way for salvation is the utilization of Justice in all their dealings. For this therefore, the paper discusses Islamic justice as a model for promoting peace and security based on the following sub-headings:

1. Meaning and Importance of Justice in Islam
2. The role of the Glorious Qur'an, Hadith of the prophet (SAW) as well as sayings of the Muslim scholars in modeling fair dealings to the society.
3. Conclusion and Recommendations.

Meaning and Importance of Justice Islam

In Islam, Justice denotes placing things in their rightful place that is to put something in its proper position or place. It is also means giving others equal treatment like in the Glorious Qur'an Allah (the most high) is explaining the meaning of Justice in the day of Judgment where He says:-

And we shall set up balances of Justice on the day of Resurrection, and then none will be dealt with unjustly in anything. And if there be the weight of a mustard seed, we will bring it. And sufficient are we to take account (21-27)

It is in line with the above that the Glorious Qur'an and the sacred scriptures of Islam, considers Justice to be a supreme virtue (as it has been one of the 99 names of Allah) and a basic objectives of Islam to the degree that its stand next in order of priority to belief in Allah. Therefore, Muslim community regards Justice in its general context to be one of the most obligatory and necessary obligations, since Allah (the most high) commanded it in His sayings:-

Verily, Allah enjoins Justice, and doing good, and giving (help) to kith and kin (16:90)

And be equitable (Justice), verily Allah loves the equitable (49-9)

And whenever you give your word (i.e judge between men or give evidence) say, the truth even if a near relative is concerned (6-152)

We sent our messengers with clear sign and sent down with them book and the measure in order to establish Justice among the people (57:25)

The verses above show that justice has been the goal of all revelation and scriptures sent to humanity. To this therefore Justice must be measured and implemented by the standards and guidelines set by revelation. Islam's approach to justice is deemed to be harmony with Islamic law. Thus, the Shari'ah made some classification in which justice should be observed; these include:-

1. Justice with Allah the Almighty: by worshipping Him Alone without associating anything with Him while worshipping Him, in its Attributes or otherwise. And that he is obeyed not disobeyed, remembered not forgotten, and that one is grateful to Him, not ungrateful.
2. Justice in judgment between people: by giving every rightful person his due.
3. Justice between wives and children: by not giving one preference over another.
4. Justice in speech: by not testifying falsely, not saying what is false or a lie.
5. Justice in what is believed:- by not believing other than the truth and not lending faith to what is not realistic or what did not occur.¹

The Role of the Glorious Qur'an, Hadith of the Prophet (SAW) and Sayings of the Muslim Scholars in Modeling Fair Dealings to the Society

In an ideal (Islamic) situation every individual must be just and fair. This is completely ruled out in Nigerian context because mostly all people are after material gain and only very few are after fair dealings in whatever they do. Therefore, it is a challenge to most of the people whatever they may be and at whatever capacity. For this as business people, civil servant, and others including leaders and followers must change their attitudes and direct their attention towards fair dealing. If this is done sincerely peace and security would prevail in Nigeria and the country would be a good place for all to reside.² It is in this respect that the paper examines some Qur'anic verses, Hadith of Prophet (SAW) and sayings of the Muslim scholars which talks on Islamic justice for the Nigerian to study and emulate.

Justice in the Glorious Qur'an

The Novel Qur'an is a blessing of Allah for all mankind. The purpose of this greatest Book is to guide humanity to the straight path and quicken the soul men to awaken human conscience and enlighten human mind in different spheres of life fair dealings inclusive. Therefore, in many verses of the Glorious Qur'an Allah (the most high) enjoin for the believers to be just in all their dealings. The Prophet (SAW) was sent as a judge between peoples, and told:

Say:

I believe in the scripture, which Allah has sent down, and I am command to judge justly between you (42-15)

It is because to establish Justice in the Muslim society that Allah (the most high) guided the Prophet (SAW) against those who tried to misguided him through the case that was brought to him, thus:

It is narrated that a man called Tu'uma bin Ubairiq, from Madina stole a shield and hide it in the place of a Jew; then the shield was found in the Jew's place. So Tu'uma placed guilty on the Jew and swore that he did not steal the shield. Then Banu Zarf (i.e the Zarf clan), Tu'uma's kinsmen, asked the Prophet (SAW) to advocate for him and to acquit him, but Allah (SWT) Refused but that His Prophet should establish the Justice between people, and that the Prophet should Judge the truth in favour of him to whom the truth is due, whomsoever and that the Prophet should not be disturbed. ¹ Therefore, for this Allah (the most high) revealed some verses to Prophet (SAW) and says:⁽³⁾

We have sent down to you the Book in truth that you might Judge between people by that which Allah has shown you. So be not advocate for those

who betray their trust, (4:105) (i.e. you should Judge by the Book and do not advocate for treacherous people, even if they were among your followers against your enemies. This is because Justice in rule does not incline to a particular side other than truth).

This to great extent helps the leaders in Nigeria to maintain peace and security among the Muslims and Christians and even those who are not following these two religions (i.e. pagans and unbelievers) since Justice of Islam is not specifically tied to the protection of Muslim rights alone and it does not have bias towards (a particular religion) (faith). Rather is with the truth wherever it is found.

Similarly, Shaykh Abubakar Mahmud Gummi (Rahimahullah) Commented on one verse of Suratu-Sawd with regard to Justice, where Allah (the most high) Says:

O David, We did indeed make you a vicegerent on earth, so Judge you between men in truth (i.e. with Justice) and follow not caprice, lest it lead you astray from the path of Allah; for those who wonder astray from the path of Allah; is a chastisement grievous, for that they have forgotten the Day of Reckoning. (38:26)

Commentary by Shaykh Gummi:

This is because when rules are applied according to the Divine law (i.e. the law of Allah), the commonwealth of the world is property organized, and the doors of good things become abundant: but if are applied in accordance with vain desires (Caprices), and in order to attain the (selfish) interest of the souls, that would lead to the destruction of the world and to the occurrence of anarchy (commotion) therein, and disorder among creatures.⁴

Therefore, one of the best results of Justice Judgments is that it instills tranquility in hearts of the people. This is one of the reasons the religion of Islam demands that Justice be met for all and that it is an inherent right of all human beings under Islamic law. Hence, to render Justice is a trust that Allah has conferred on the human being and, like all other trusts, its fulfillment must be guided by a sense of responsibility beyond mere conformity to set rules. Thus, the Qur'an states:

Allah commanded you to render trusts to Allah to whom they are due and when you Judge between people, Judge with Justice.....(4:58)

The reference to Justice which immediately follows a reference to fulfillment of the trusts indicates that is one of the most important of all trusts. This is why, the Qur'anic concept of the Justice extent Justice to being a personal virtue, and one of the standards of more excellence that a believer is encouraged to attain as part of his Allah-consciousness. Allah (the most high) Says:

Be Just, for it is closest to Allah-consciousness. (5:8)

In addition to the above, it can be inferred that doing Justice by any individual in his activities be they commercial or otherwise earn him respect within the society. Socially a person is considered to be a gentleman if he is honest and just in all his transactions. Justice means not only that we should avoid telling lies but also should be honest in doing our duties whether as

sons and daughters or as parents or as customs of our country or as employers or employees etc; it is also means that we should recognized the good in others and not to see only their evils and defect in them.

Avoiding false testimony that is if we are called upon as witness we should say exactly what we have seen or heard, neither more nor less. Similarly, if we are told to decide a dispute between two persons or parties, we should decide the matter with Justice and not according to our likes and dislike or according to our relations with the parties. The Qur'an says:

O you who believe! Stand firmly for Justice as witness to Allah, even as against yourselves or your parents, or your kin, and whether he is rich or poor, for Allah can best protect both. So follow not the lasts (of your hearts) lest you swerve. And if you distort (Justice) or decline to do Justice, verily Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. (4:135)

O you who believe! Stand firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hated of others to you make you serve to wrong and depart from Justice. Be Just that is next to piety, and fear Allah for Allah is well acquainted with all that you do. (5:8)

Justice in the Context of Hadith and Sayings of the Muslim Scholars

Prophet (SAW) in many of his Hadith taught us to establish Justice and shows the promise of Allah (the most high) to the leaders who are just in all their dealings for instance:

By Him in whose hand is Muhammad's soul, Justice done by the Sultan (leader) in one day is better than worship of seventy years.⁵

By Him in whose hand is Muhammad's soul, the deed of a Just Sultan is raised to the heaven as the deed of all the subjects (that is, his deed is raised equal to their deeds) and every prayer that he performs is equal (in reward) to seventy thousand prayers.⁶

The most beloved of all people, and the nearest of them to Allah is a Just leader. The most abominable (hateful) of them and the most distant of them from Allah is an oppressive (unjust) leader.⁷

According to Al-Ghazali, as quoted by Shaykh Uthmanu bin Foduye that one of the principles of justice is that, as a leader, you should not be satisfied by just keeping your hands off from injustice. Rather, you instill discipline in your boys, men workers (staff), and representatives. You must not accept injustice from them, because you will be questioned (in the Hereafter) about their injustice as you will be questioned about your own injustice.⁸

Umar bin Al-Khattab, (RA) had written to one of his governors, Abu-Musa Al-Ashariy, saying:

After all this, you must know that the most blessed of leaders is the one with whom his subjects become wretched. Beware of injustice, because certainly, your workmen will imitate you.⁹

It is written in the Torah (the Book of Moses) that:

*If the leader knows about any injustice from his governors but keeps quiet on it, that injustice will be ascribed to him. He will be called to account for it and be punished for it.*¹⁰

From the above, it is clearly that Islam as a religion of Justice lays down upon every Muslim not only the leaders heavy responsibilities and accountability which must be adhered to. Fair dealings inclusive, therefore, each and every individual should be just and fair in all his spheres of life, he should also get to know that the religion of Islam has made accountability to Allah compulsory upon all the citizens of whatever works of life. The Prophet (SAW) had this to say on responsibility and accountability:-

You are all shepherds and you are all accountable to your herds. A woman (wife) in the house of her husband is a shepherd and she is accountable to her responsibility of the house. A servant is a shepherd for the property of his master and he is accountable to his responsibility.¹¹

By observing all what we have treated properly will Insha'Allah maintain the peace and the security of the country, but doing the reverse is a sin which leads to the destruction of the Nation as exactly what is currently happening in many of the world countries, Nigeria inclusive. The Boko Haram, Niger Delta, Inter Political Parties' Conflicts, different Organizational disputes, Armed-robbery and corruption are now the most issues that turned Nigeria upside down without solution.

Conclusion

From what has been discussed so far in this paper, it can be observed that all the injunctions quoted and sayings of the Muslim scholars are demanding for the Muslims to establish Justice, through the ideas of telling the truth. Fulfilling promises, keeping trusts and avoiding cheating or oppression in any form, as these would make the society to maintained peace and security in all their life endeavours, it is therefore very necessary for the leaders and followers to make this paper as model for the solution of the injustice practices prevail in the country.

Recommendations

Following our discussion on the Islamic Justice as a model for promoting Peace and security, it is hereby recommended that:

1. We should learn Qur'an, Hadith of the prophet (SAW) as well as sayings of the *Sahabah* (RA) and put their teachings into practice.
2. Leaders and followers should try as much as possible to apply the concept of Justice in their daily life activities, as it would make them to have peace and security penetrating in the country.
3. Muslim Scholars should intensify enlightenment campaign for the society to be just and fair in whatever they do.
4. Religions and inter-religious workshops and conferences should be encouraged by various religious groups so as to enlighten each other on the role of fair dealings to the development of peace and security in the country.

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