



Life of Muhammad^{sa}

BY

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MAHMUD AHMAD^{ra}**

JUSTICE AND FAIR DEALING

Arabs were greatly given to favouritism and applied different standards to different persons.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} was, however, unique in enforcing uniform standards of justice and fair dealing.

On one occasion a case came before him in which a young woman belonging to a highly respectable family was found to have committed theft.

This caused great consternation as, if the normal penalty were imposed upon the young woman, a leading family would be humiliated and disgraced.

Many were anxious to intercede with the Prophet^{sa} on behalf of the offender but were afraid to do so. Eventually Usama^{ra} was prevailed upon to undertake the mission.

Usama^{ra} went to the Holy Prophet^{sa}

JUSTICE AND FAIR DEALING

The Holy Prophet^{sa}
was
much
upset
and said,

"You had better desist. Nations have come to a bad end for showing favours to highly placed persons while pressing hard on the common people.

Islam does not permit this and I will certainly not do it.

Verily, if my own daughter, Fatima^{ra}, were to commit an offence I would not hesitate to impose the appropriate penalty"

JUSTICE AND FAIR DEALING

... when the Prophet's uncle 'Abbas^{ra} became a prisoner in the Battle of Badr, he was, like other prisoners, tied up with a rope to prevent his escape.

The rope was so tightly secured that he groaned with pain during the night.

The Prophet^{sa} heard his groans and was unable to sleep.

The Companions of the Prophet^{sa}, perceiving this, loosened the rope that bound 'Abbas^{ra}.

When the Prophet^{sa} got to learn of this, he directed that all prisoners should be treated alike, ... He insisted that either they must loosen the bonds of all the prisoners or must tighten the bonds of 'Abbas^{ra} like those of the others. ..the Companions ... undertook to guard the prisoners carefully and loosened the bonds of all of them

JUSTICE AND FAIR DEALING

Even during the exigencies of war he was most particular in observing all accepted rules and conventions.

On one occasion he despatched a party of his Companions on a scouting expedition. They encountered some men of the enemy on the last day of the Sacred Month, Rajab.

Thinking that it would be dangerous to let them escape and carry to Mecca the tidings of the scouting party being so near, they attacked them and in the course of the skirmish one of them was killed.

After the scouting party had returned to Medina the Meccans began to protest that the Muslim scouts had killed one of their men in the Sacred Month.

JUSTICE AND FAIR DEALING

The Meccans had often been guilty of violating the sanctity of the Sacred Months vis-a-vis the Muslims whenever it suited them, ...

Even during the exigencies of war he was most particular in observing all accepted rules and conventions.

... and it would have been a suitable reply to their protest to say that as the Meccans had themselves set at naught the convention relating to the Sacred Months, so they were not entitled to insist upon their observance by Muslims.

But the Prophet^{sa} did not make this reply. He severely reprimanded the members of the party, refused to accept the booty and according to some reports even paid the blood-money for the person killed, till the revelation of 2: 218 cleared the whole position

JUSTICE AND FAIR DEALING

People are generally careful not to hurt the feelings of their friends and relations but the Holy Prophet^{sa} was very particular in this respect even regarding people who were opposed to him.

On one occasion a Jew came to him and complained that Abu Bakr^{ra} had hurt his feelings by saying that God had exalted Muhammad^{sa} above Moses^{as}.

The Prophet^{sa} summoned Abu Bakr^{ra} and asked him what had transpired.

Abu Bakr^{ra} explained that the Jew had started by saying that he swore by Moses^{as} whom God, he said, had exalted above the whole of mankind, and..

.. that he (Abu Bakr^{ra}) had thereupon retorted by swearing by Muhammad^{sa}, whom God had exalted above Moses^{as}.

JUSTICE AND FAIR DEALING

The Prophet^{sa} said: "You should not have said this as the feelings of other people should be respected."

Nobody should exalt me above Moses^{as}"

This did not mean that the Holy Prophet^{sa} did not in fact occupy a higher position than Moses^{as} but that an affirmation like this addressed to a Jew was likely to hurt his feelings and should have been avoided.