



Justice in Transportation

Defining Justice and Serving Justice from the Perspective of the Holy Quran

Mohsen Ramezani Golafzani

Masters student, Transportation Planning Department, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract: *This essay seeks to discuss justice based on Holy Quran. We will present the solutions that have been offered by this Holy Scripture regarding the administration of justice and the role of rulers in this field.*

Keyword: *Justice, relation and rule, transportation*

INTRODUCTION

In discussions on topics associated with the transportation area, there are abundant instances of the lack of adhering to justice which are envisioned by the Holy Quran and the religious texts as being located within the realm of issues pertaining to exertion of cruelty and oppression within the context of the societies. Of course, the introduction to such a discussion stems from trampling down the humans' primary rights in societies and disrespecting the personality of every individual human being. For example, when a highway is constructed between two cities, there are several questions striking the minds that firstly, who are the primary highway users? And, secondly, wherefrom the required budget for constructing the route is funded? In response to the first question, it has to be said that, in the first place, the residents of these two cities, one as a destination and the other as a source, are the main users of the road. And, in the second place, it has to be brought to notice that the ones with higher financial affordability can make use of the route. Furthermore, in response to the second question, it has to be answered that the required budget for funding the expenditures of implementing the construction project is supplied via the levied taxes which are paid by all the society members to the government and this is a clear specimen of breaching the justice. How is it possible to offer a service to a small part of the people by means of a budget in which all the society members have a share? Another example of vivid violation of justice is the construction of the streets inside the cities as well as the urban highways. In such projects, the buildings lying within the project implementation area are bought for low prices from their owners; this is while the buildings which are not located within the project implementation area but somehow take effects of the project are left intact and this, besides the problems caused by the construction of such highways to the residents, would discourage the others from buying such exposed buildings due to the aforementioned problems and bottlenecks and, in fact, the yield of a lifetime hard work for some of the society members would be diminished in favor of a small fraction of people's interest. There is a plenty of such instances in discussions on transportation and this is, per se, indicative of the ignorance of justice as a vital element by the society rulers.

In the present study, we try to have a look at the Holy Quran's Ayat¹ and interpretations regarding justice to provide the readers with a complete appraisal of the issue so as to identify and to the extent possible resolve the problems faced in challenges pertaining to the transportation issues.

¹ Ayat is the plural form of aya which refers to every single complete idea, sometimes a sentence, in the holy Quran

In this piece of writing, wholly forming the first chapter of this article, we deal with the presentation of definitions provided for justice from the Holy Quran's point of view so as to investigate the way justice can be best served in the society and in doing so, we have to incumbently highlight the roles that are required to be played by the governors.

Defining Justice:

Providing the readers with a precise definition of justice from the perspective of the Holy Quran is what seems to be of a great significance before entering the discussions regarding justice because an optimum conclusion cannot be inferred from such discussions unless the concept of justice is fully elaborated and discerned. Allameh Moqniyeh in "Al-Kashif" interpretation orders that "there is a discrepancy between the jurisprudents regarding the way justice should be defined and there are detailed speeches made by them in this regard. Some have opined that 'justice means that an individual should be apparently a Muslim and not perpetrate infringements publicly'. Another has said that 'justice is a faculty rooted in the ego and it urges an individual to promote good and enjoin evil.' A third jurisprudent has said 'justice means chastity and virtue'. A fourth person has defined justice as 'quitting the perpetration of dead sins and not insisting on performing minor sins'. The order by the Eminent God that meaning "so, do not follow your temptations if you want to act justly" points to the idea that justice is opposing one's own temptations". They also in interpreting the honorable Aya "Ya ayoha allazin, meaning "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice," order that "the true faith manifests itself in several things that are tangible and sensible. These manifestations have been expressed and pinpointed by the God through various methods in a great many of the Ayat from the Holy Quran. Some of these ayat have been mentioned previously and more are yet to be presented in future. The aya which is going to be interpreted herein vividly asserts "if you are believers, so rise up for the God and testify for justice". The meaning of 'rising up for the God' is that one should be honest and pure in sayings and in conducts; but, the meaning of 'testifying for justice' is not that if the enemies and the dissidents have a right on us or the others we should testify in favor of them though the aya's method of statement implies such a connotation rather it means that the human beings should be unexceptionally just in all their deeds and behaviors. For instance, if an individual has a novel knowledge s/he should take advantage of such knowledge as an instrument for replacing inability and laggard with empowerment and advancement in the society. And, if a person has a religious knowledge s/he should invite the people towards the God, meaning that the human beings should well accomplish their duty of God's succession on earth and fight against the ones who go astray from the path of God; furthermore, if an individual is ignorant and illiterate s/he should listen intently to the scholars and believers' sayings and s/he should stand alongside with them and assist them as far as it is deemed that they are righteous and just.

The topics presented up to the current point denote the meaning of justice as ordered by the God in the foresaid aya as well as the other Ayat; such a justice is what targeted and wished for by the humans and the humans' lives cannot see the face of prosperity and peace without it because the society can linger on without knowledge but the continuation of social life without justice, though impossible in a sense, even though the society has been laid upon the foundation of geniuses and innovation that is because the harms caused by knowledge devoid of justice is far more intensified than its benefits. However, justice is totally and wholly beneficial and it is impossible for it to be containing any single traces of harm and if there is seen any harm or disadvantage in justice it is to be envisaged as a means to repel further and larger harms and damages. In the Aya, meaning "... and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do" by the term "people", the enemies of the good and justice are intended and these are the ones who resist against any effort made for freeing the mankind due to their inabilities and sluggishness. The eminent God orders that the justice should be upheld for the sake of preserving life and without paying attention to the hatred and deceits of the foes; in other words, we should act out this proverb that, meaning that "the convoy carries on and the dogs bark". Also, it is highly emphasized in "Holy Quran Encyclopedia" that the enforcement of justice has been recounted as the major reason for dispatching the apostles to various tribes by the God. It is stated in the book that "serving justice has been the objective sought in sending the prophets" and its implementation in the society has been underlined: (Al-Hadid: 25), meaning "We have already sent Our messengers with clear evidences and sent down with them the Scripture and the balance that the people may maintain [their affairs] in justice. And We sent down iron, wherein is great military might..." In the Aya, the Arabic term, meaning "serving justice" denotes exploitation and selfish utilization denial and the term points to the human communities and there is immediately made use of the term "iron" which refers to the necessity for

implementation and indispensability of the “justice enforcement”. Based on this, the relations in the religious society, both domestically and externally, are established based on denying tyranny and exploitative utilization of the others.

Regarding the internal relationships, the holy Quran orders (Al-Baqarah: 279) meaning “O believers ... But if you repent, you may have your principal - [thus] you do no wrong, nor are you wronged” and this is a cruelty should anyone be deprived of the life blessings and benefactions and selfish utilization of the others is the most inhuman methods exercised by tyrannical powers and therefore it is a distinct example of cruelty and hence the establishment of a just government in a human society depends on the complete destruction of the exploitation, therefore the divine religions, particularly Islam is in an irreconcilable battle with exploitation in line with its tyranny-fighting nature: (Hud: 85) meaning “And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.”, so the prophets, after inviting people to monotheism, have spoken of establishing safe and sound relationships in the society and they have risen up to fight against tyranny and exploitation and devaluating the people’s work and goods and taking the possession of the others’ yield by force or paying the people wages lower than what they really deserve; (Al-A’araf: 85) meaning “O people worship Allah, you do not have any other deity than Allah, there has come to you clear evidence from your God so stay loyal to the measure and serve justice and do not envy people’s things and do not make corruptions on earth after it is corrected”.

As it was mentioned, immediately after the term “serving justice” the God names “iron” which can be, in fact, used as an instrument for enforcing justice in the society. To the best of the author’s knowledge, iron as used in making military tools cannot only contribute to the preservation of justice but it also can be applied in the entire equipment that are possibly built by such a metal and then this equipment can be used in line with serving the society. It can be used as a factor for augmenting the social justice and, in parallel, it can lead to the expansion and, quite contrarily, to the decline of “justice enforcement” if it is used in areas such as transportation means like vehicles, fleets, airplanes and other transportation models. The same way that such transportation means can help an easy movement of the people and shipments they can, as well, cause many of the community individuals not to be able to take advantage of the entire existing facilities as a result of the transportation means inhomogeneous distribution as well as the cost of making use of them. There are even cases that even when the people in a community can afford making use of such transportation means they will suffer other social harms the compensation for which is highly difficult for the low-income families.

Rise for Social Justice:

Another important issue in this regard is the endeavors made for the establishment of justice among the various classes of the society and, in fact, the management and the analyses of the topics associated with it will be eventually evaluated based on the implementation and enforcement of the activities and regulations related thereto. In interpreting the honorable Aya meaning “O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted”.

The Arabic term means justice and “rising up for justice” means exercising justice and enforcing rightness and preserving and safeguarding fairness. In the honorable aya, the term is an exaggerative form of the term “rise” intending to convey the idea of those of the risers who are heedful of the uttermost protection and attention to serve justice and they supervise and guard the justice enforcement and no blocking stimulant such as fear, affection, self-will, avarice and nothing can prevent them from promoting such an objective.

Serving justice in the society is one of the prophets’ objectives. They have come to make people rise up for enforcing justice.

This can be clearly understood from the aya, meaning “We have sent prophets accompanied by books and measure to make people rise up for serving justice”.

It is through enforcing justice that the grounding for the individual and social growth and perfection can be created; additionally, it is in the fair and just society that the humans can reach to their optimum perfection and the prophets who are the supporters of the mankind in making them reach to perfection, see the arrival at the destination dependent upon the enforcement of justice. This aya obliges all the monotheist human beings to serve justice and asks them to apply their uttermost power in enforcing the justice.

Government, Law and the Social Justice:

Finally, the role of the rulers in their decision-making, analyses, evaluations, legislations and the implementation of the rules and regulations in the societies is what highly emphasized in the present study as well as in prior research. Also, it is worth mentioning that the extent to which the justice is enforced and served in a society can be estimated in accordance to the extent to which the rulers and governors make efforts in this regard.

It is stated in “Al-Mizan” interpretation that “the output yielded from the social principles is the idea that the human communities cannot by any means preserve their survival and continue existence unless rules and regulations that are valued by the society itself are enacted in such a manner that the enactments, per se, encompass the entire statuses within a society and govern the behaviors and deeds of every single individual member of the society and, of course, there is a need for a law that is originated from the society’s nature and the individuals’ instincts and it has to be formulated corresponding to the extant conditions in the society so as to provide the entire social classes with an opportunity to step on the path towards perfection in their lives considering the expediencies and consistencies of their social situations as a result of which the society will reach perfection in a faster pace than ever and in doing so the various social classes assist one another in making progress through establishing interactive relationships and taking into consideration the various works done by themselves as well as via promoting social justice within the community”.

On the other hand, this is well clear that such a cooperation and social justice is established when the regulations are enacted corresponding to the two types of material and spiritual expediencies and the enactments should also deal with the observation of spiritual interests, as well. (That is because mankind’s material and spiritual felicity are like two wings and both of them are necessary for flying; if the mankind is devoid of spiritual virtues, and, therefore the individual is not corrected in the way s/he acts, s/he will be more like a bird that is surely unable to fly with one wing). As we know, it is the moral virtues that lead one to truthfulness and honesty, keeping promises and benevolence and hundreds of the other righteous deeds. Since the rules and regulations and the decrees that are issued for the social systems are relational and unreal and cannot be as effective alone, for reasons like the human’s disobedience and freedom-seeking instincts that always make them dodge the rules, thus in order to complement the effect of such rules the humans are in need of other penal verdicts so as to support and guard the privacy of such rules and by doing so keep away a group of capricious individuals from abusing thereto and others away from ignoring and neglecting them.

Due to the same reason, it can be easily seen that the more the government, any government, acts strongly in enforcing the punitive regulations, the less the society is ceased from moving forward and the individuals are less deviated from the right path and they are less frequently fallen behind.

Quite contrarily, the weaker the government the more chaos inside the community and the more the society would increasingly deviate from its right path so, due to the same reason, one such teaching that should be stabilized within the community is inducing and notifying the penal verdicts so as to let everyone know what would be the punitive consequence of their violation of the rules and, also, this way the individuals will find themselves deeply believing in the regulations; furthermore, the individuals should be trained accordingly so as not to have hopes in getting freed of the penal sentences and strictly prevent such a hope from growing in their hearts in cases such as ignorance, law breaking and briberies.

To be continued ...

Conclusion

According to what has been said as to transportation one can conclude that:

- 1- If various modes of transportations are distributed in the society in a way that the majority of people either cannot use them and are forced to use just one mode for transportation or undergo through various economic and social difficulties due to the existing constraints; this is surely in contradiction with the definition of justice because every citizen is entitled according to the social laws to be benefited from the welfare services in an unconditional way. Meanwhile every citizen pays part of his income to government as tax.
- 2- Transportation planners should take other natural and legal individuals’ material and spiritual rights along with their own personal interests. Otherwise we will be witness to the explicit injustice. For example, when only contractors are given the right to change the land use even if for construction of a transportation station for public vehicles many people’s interests will be trespassed. If these people’s

conditions are not considered, we will be witnessed to injustice. A clear example of this injustice is destruction of a neighborhood for building an underground station that costs the residents their living places and local businesses. The residents are forced to sell their places for lower prices and buy houses in other neighborhoods for higher prices and this will cause them numerous problems. The first problem is affording the budget deficit for buying new place and the other problem is that many social and cultural damages would occur to the destination neighborhood to which these residents are moved.

- 3- The laws of implementation and development of public transportation should be so powerful and encouraging that all users to be inclined to use this mode of transportation. The officials and authorities have to try to promote the security and comfort of the public transportation vehicles and also set some strong bans regarding the use of personal vehicles and in doing so to prepare the ground for the fulfilment of justice.

References:

- Moqniyeh, Muhammad Javad, "Al-Kashif interpretation", tr. Musa Danesh, v.2, p.722
- Ibid, v.3, p.48
- Holy Quran Encyclopedia, The center of the Holy Quran's teachings and culture, v.3, p.31
- Quranic Teachings, a group of writers, v.2, p.31
- Sayyed Muhammad Hussein, Tabataba'ee, "Almizan Interpretation", tr. Muhamamd Bagher Mousavi, v.1, p.279