

Out of Balance

Thursday Reflections by Dr. Hamid Slimi

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Seeing all kinds of things in the news – mostly bad ones – I kept thinking this morning of a couple of Qur’anic verses where Allah Almighty reminds us of keeping things in balance and not playing irresponsibly with nature’s equilibrium at all levels whether in our health, the environment, our families, our social and political matters, our use of technology...etc., There must be a balance in everything we do or say and this is how the world was meant to be according to the Qur’anic view of life.

Balance is stability, justice and fairness. All the problems we see today in the world from conflicts, abuses, diseases and viruses to hate, wars and crimes are the results of an imbalance somewhere and somehow in many lives. We must study and read many important verses in the Qur’an that focus our attention on the concept of justice and balance in life. For instance we read, **[And the Firmament (sky) has He raised high, and He has set up the balance (equilibrium), in order that you may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance.]** (55:7-9)

Because of injustices and pains, greed and avarice, jealousy and vengeance people resort to all kinds of acts that are neither condoned by religion nor by our instinct and human nature. Justice, love, respect, contentment and faith are the bedrocks of welfare and peace for humanity and all the creation. Justice is what keeps things balanced. We have to balance between all aspects of our lives and all the components of these aspects: Our souls, our bodies, our minds, our brains, our loved ones and relatives, our properties and our rights. Every one of these components needs our attention otherwise when we focus only on one thing we neglect the others and that pushes us consciously or unconsciously to the extremes. It is good to work hard but not at the expense of the family and health. It is good to read and write good things but not at the expense of spending some time doing good things in life. It is good to exercise and do sports but not at the expense of sleeping or resting one’s body.

Once Salman (a companion of the Prophet (S) paid a visit to Abu ad-Darda - with whom the Prophet (S) established a bond of brotherhood as he did with all his companions - and found his wife (Um Ad-Darda') dressed in untidy clothes and asked her why she was in that state.?" She replied, "Your brother, Abu Ad-Darda is not interested in the luxuries of this world." In the meantime Abu Ad-Darda came and prepared a meal for him (Salman), and said to him, "(Please) eat for I am fasting." Salman said, "I am not going to eat, unless you eat." So Abu Ad-Darda' ate. When it was night, Abu Ad-Darda' got up (for the night prayer). Salman said (to him), "Sleep," and he slept. Again Abu-Ad-Darda' got up (for the prayer), and Salman said (to him), "Sleep." When it was the last part of the night, Salman said to him, "Get up now (for the prayer)." So both of them offered their prayers and Salman said to

Abu Ad-Darda', "**Your Lord has a right on you; and your soul has a right on you; and your family has a right on you; so you should give the rights of all those who have a right on you**). Later on Abu Ad-Darda' visited the Prophet and mentioned that to him. The Prophet, said, "Salman has spoken the truth." (Book #73, Hadith #161)

All the commands of Islam and teachings evolve around this concept of justice in everything. The dos and do nots of Islam are about keeping things balanced in life. This abovementioned story of Salman (r) is a good example of how even religious practices can lead to imbalance in life and that is why the Prophet (S) himself warned his followers from going to the extreme in religious matters. If religious practices take people away from their duties and responsibilities towards their loved ones or from their other duties, benefits and God given pleasures then a person becomes out of balance even if he/she thinks doing good things for God or humanity.

The other category of verses in the Qur'an that we also need to focus on and study are the ones that come in the form of commandments such as:

[Say: "Come I will rehearse what Allah has (really) prohibited you from": join not anything with Him; Be good to your parents: kill not your children on a plea of want;— provide sustenance for you and for them;— come not nigh to shameful deeds, whether open or secret; take not life, which Allah has made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus does He commands you, that you may learn wisdom. And come not nigh to the orphan's property, except to improve it, until he attains the age of full strength; give measure and weight with (full) justice;— no burden do We place on any soul, but that which it can bear;— whenever you speak, speak justly, even if a near relative is concerned; and fulfill the Covenant of Allah: thus does He command you, that you may remember. Verily, this is My Way leading straight: follow it: follow not (other) paths: they will scatter you about from His path: thus does He command you, that you may be righteous.] (6: 151-3)

These verses and similar ones like in Chapter 17, verses 23-40 sum up many of the principles that are needed to rectify things in our lives and help us build and establish justice, love, respect, contentment and eventually a stronger faith and a balanced life.

See also my article: Justice in Islam (<http://hamidslimi.com/justice-in-islam/>)