

Islam is a religion of peace. As peace is neither possible nor sustainable unless it is based on equality, balance and justice, Islam emphasizes that Muslims must be standard bearers for justice. In fact Qur-aan describes that Allaah sent messengers with His guidance and taught them maintenance of balance in order to enable people to practice justice in their societies:

Certainly We sent Our messengers with clear signs, and sent down with them the Book and the balance so that people may conduct themselves according to Qist (equality, balance and justice). Al-Hadeed 57:25

Standing up for and upholding Qist (equality, balance and justice) must transcend one's likes or dislikes and must not be impacted by one's love or hate:

O believers, be determined practitioners of Qist as witnesses for Allaah's sake, even though it be against yourselves, or your parents, or near relatives; whether it concerns rich or poor, Allaah is more considerate of both of them. Therefore do not follow a passion or desire lest you lose the balance. And if you distort it or disregard it, then surely Allaah is well-aware of what you do. An-Nisaa 4:135

O believers, persistently stand up for Allaah as witnesses for Qist, and do not let the hatred of any people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is more congruent with God consciousness. Maintain consciousness of Allaah; Allaah is well aware of what you do. Al-Maaidah 5:8

Muslims are commanded to practise justice and maintain balance, moderation and equilibrium in the society both individually and collectively in their personal dealings, as well as in the public affairs of their society:

Verily, Allaah commands 'Adl{footnote}Fairness, justice, balance, equity

{/footnote}, Ihsaan{footnote}Excellence in servitude to Allaah, benevolence towards people, graciousness in dealings

{/footnote} and giving to those close to you, while He forbids Fahshaa{footnote}Lewdness, indecency, licentiousness, immorality

{/footnote}, Munkar{footnote}Bad actions, undesirable activities, unacceptable behaviour

{/footnote}, and Baghy{footnote}Rebellion, transgressing limits, exploiting or violating others' rights, abuse of authority or freedom.

{/footnote}. He admonishes you so that you heed the advice.

An-Nahl 16:90

Thus Muslims are personally accountable to Allaah to be balanced, equitable and just in their individual dealings, interactions and consumption of resources. In addition, they will also be held accountable for playing their part in ensuring that the society they live in collectively abides by and upholds justice and equality for everyone in the society as well as balance and equilibrium in its relationship with the surrounding environment including animals and ecosystems.

This responsibility of collective justice and balance assumes an even greater importance in a democratic society. Theoretically, a democratic society is governed according to the will of its people. Hence, every citizen of a democratic society is responsible for ensuring that whatever their government does is fair, just and balanced.

In addition to justice, Muslims are commanded to excel, to be gracious and magnanimous in their dealings, forgiving and benevolent to people and doing more than they are obligated. This should be done individually and collectively as a society. There are many civil society organizations which may provide an opportunity to excel in service of humanity. We should work with such organizations according to the following Islamic principle:

Cooperate with each other in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. Al-Maaidah 5:2

Muslims are also obligated to develop a social environment where goodness flourishes and evil is discouraged.

These responsibilities can be fulfilled only if everyone fully participates in the democratic process.