

Just speech and correct conduct

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The chapter entitled Al-Ma'idah (The Table) of the Quran gives guidance on correct conduct in matters of justice. The translation of the relevant verse is as follows: "Believers, be steadfast in the cause of God and bear witness with justice. Do not let your enmity for others turn you away from justice. Deal justly; that is nearer to being God-fearing. Fear God. God is aware of all that you do (5:8)."

It is good to observe moral standards in whatever you have to say in normal situations. But that is not enough. The real test comes when the situation is adverse in the sense of being abnormal or provocative. It is how you conduct yourself in such a situation that proves whether you are one who speaks with justice or not.

In provocative situations, people generally react unjustly. They take the provocative aspect of situations as an excuse for their unjust

speech or their unjust behaviour, but this kind of excuse does not measure up to the Quranic standard of morality. The Quranic principle in this regard can be formulated in these words: "If you have a good excuse, don't use it."

Society can be torn apart by differences and undesirable situations. Even the best of things may turn out to be bad for others and this is what arouses anger and provocative behaviour.

This disrupts normalcy, and if people get into the habit of making excuses for their own bad behaviour, every society will become a morass of hatred and intolerance.

If the members of society figure as Mr Excuse or Ms Excuse, society will be a permanent jungle.

So, the above criterion of justice is not simply a bastion of morality but it is also the sole factor that can maintain a reasonable degree of normalcy in society.

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