

﴿يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلّٰهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ  
 أَنفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِن يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللّٰهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا  
 فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىَٰ أَن تَعْدِلُوا وَإِن تَلَوْتُمْ أَوْ نَعَرَضُوا فَلِإِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا  
 تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

*An-Nisa (The Women) 4:135*

**O You Who Believe!**

- Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your kin, and whether it be (against) rich or poor.
- For Allah can best protect both.
- Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), lest you swerve.
- And if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily Allah is well-acquainted with all that you do.

**Commentary**

Allamah Taba Tabai (AR)

To stand with justice means to enforce it, to maintain it. Maintainers of justice are who fully and perfectly establish justice without deviating from, or inclining against it, because of some low desire or sentiment, fear, or greed, or other such factors.

This verse has been revealed to describe the rule of evidence, but it has started with talk of justice, and then it proceeds to the rule of evidence. In other words, first a general ideal has been described and then it focuses on one of its aspects. It is as though it says: ‘You should be bearers of witness for Allah’s sake but it will be difficult for you unless you become maintainers of justice’. So, you should be maintainers of justice in order to become bearers of witness for Allah’s sake.

The words, “bearers of witness for Allah’s sake”, show the purpose of the action; bear witness so that your witness should be for Allah, as Allah has said: *And give testimony for Allah* (63:2). An evidence will be for the sake of Allah when it is given in truth for the sake of demonstrating the truth and reviving it, as is clear from the sentence: therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate.

Even if the evidence goes against your own interest or against the interest of your parents or near relatives, it should not prompt you to alter the evidence or hide it. Giving evidence against oneself or against one's parents or relatives means that the evidence, when given, will harm the testifier or his parents or relatives. It makes no difference whether the party which would suffer damage is the one against whom the evidence is given directly; for example, if there is a case between his father and someone else and he testifies against his own father; or the damage may reach them indirectly.

A rich or poor may benefit in one or two cases from an evidence which is twisted or hidden, but in the long run it makes the truth feeble and the justice dead. It gives life to oppression and strengthen a falsehood and injustice; and this is the incurable disease which destroys the humanity.

There is a danger that you will deviate from truth and justice by following your low desire and by not giving the evidence for the sake of Allah. The words, "lest you deviate", describe the reason of this order. It may also be translated as, do not follow your low desires to deviate from truth.

Abu Abdillah (AS) has said,

A believer has seven rights on another believer. The most obligatory of them is that the man should tell truth, even if it goes against his own self or against his parents, he should not deviate from truth for their sake.

Then the Imam (AS) recited: *therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate, and if you swerve or turn aside, from the truth. (at-Tafsir, al-Qummi).*

Mir Ahmed Ali (AR) and Aqa Mahdi Puya (AR)

The translation of this verse contains the clear guidance of maintaining justice without fear or favour.

Ayatullah Sayyid Kamal Faqih Imani and a Group of Muslim Scholars  
Social Justice:

Following to the instructions that were pointed out through previous verses about the execution of justice upon orphans and wives, here in this verse, the statement is upon a basic principle and a general law. It is about the execution of Justice in all aspects and without any exception. It says:

*" O' you who have Faith! be maintainers of justice ..."*

That is, you should accomplish justice so that you might not have the least inclination toward any side.

Then, to emphasize the matter, the verse refers to the subject of bearing witness. It recommends upon affairs concerning the witnesses, in particular, and that you should put aside all circumspctions and bear witness rightfully for the sake of Allah, even if it is against you or your parents or your near relatives. It says:  
*"... (and ) witnesses for Allah's sake, though it be against your own selves or (your ) parents or near relatives.*

It can be understood from this holy phrase that it is possible for relatives to bear witness for or against each other when they observe the principles of justice.

Then, it points to other factors of perversion from the principle of justice. It implies that neither the wealth of the rich nor the emotions arisen from the poverty of the poor should hinder to bear witness rightfully. It is because if the person against whom the witness will be is rich or poor, Allah is more aware of his condition. Therefore, neither the possessors of wealth and force can damage the rightful witnesses when there is the support of Allah, nor the poor remain hungry when justice is executed. The verse says:  
*"... whether the one be rich or poor, Allah is closer to them both..."*

Again, to emphasize on the matter, it instructs us not to follow our desires, because, in that case, there come forth some barriers for executing justice.  
*"... Therefore do not follow any passion so that you can deal justly; ..."*

This sentence clearly leads us to the fact that the origine of transgressions and cruelties is carnal desires. Thus, if a group of people be not the followers of carnal desires, injustice and cruelty may not be found among them.

For the importance that there lies in the execution of justice, it emphasizes again on this commandment. It indicate that if you hinder the right from reaching the rightful person, or pervert the right, or turn aside from the right when it becomes clear to you, Allah is well aware of what you do. It says:  
*"... and if you swerve or decline (the right ) , then verily Allah is aware of what you do."*

The above verse makes completely manifest the extra ordinary attention of Islam to the subject of social justice in whatever form and in whatever case it may be. The application of different emphasis mentioned in these sentences shows how much Islam is sensitive for this important social subject among humankind.

But, unfortunately, there is a long distance between the action of Muslims and this excellent Islamic commandment! This very fact, of course, is one of the secrets of their retardation.