171925 - Is treating people equally unfairly justice?

the question

There is a saying that treating people equally unfairly is justice; some people attribute this to the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and some regard it as if it is a basic principle that cannot be changed. What is the Islamic ruling or how sound is this saying?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The saying that some people say, “treating people equally unfairly is justice” is false and is as far removed from the laws and religion of Allah as the East is from the West. Allah forbid that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) should utter such words. Rather what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said, in the hadeeth qudsi, was that Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, said: “O My slaves, I have forbidden zulm (injustice, wrongdoing, unfairness) to Myself and I have made it haraam among you, so do not wrong one another.” Narrated by Muslim, 2577

The mutawaatir texts that warn against injustice and highlight its negative consequences are too many to quote here.

If this false and unjust saying refers to those who have power and authority over people, it could be said to them: If you wrong anyone who is under your authority, and you take his wealth or beat him or imprison him, then do not limit it to this person only; rather make your injustice reach all the people under your authority, so that you will be being fair in distributing your injustice among them! Such a thing is not fit to be said by anyone but tyrants and those who transgress against people’s rights!

What justice can there be in that, when Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “Verily, Allah enjoins Al-Adl (i.e. justice and worshipping none but Allah Alone - Islamic

Monotheism) and Al-Ihsan (i.e. to be patient in performing your duties to Allah, totally for Allahs sake and in accordance with the Sunnah (legal ways) of the Prophet SAW in a perfect manner), and giving (help) to kith and kin (i.e. all that Allah has ordered you to give them e.g., wealth, visiting, looking after them, or any other kind of help, etc.): and forbids Al-Fahsha (i.e all evil deeds, e.g. illegal sexual acts, disobedience of parents, polytheism, to tell lies, to give false witness, to kill a life without right, etc.), and Al-Munkar (i.e all that is prohibited by Islamic law: polytheism of every kind, disbelief and every kind of evil deeds, etc.), and Al-Baghy (i.e. all kinds of oppression), He admonishes you, that you may take heed" [an-Nahl 16:90].

Treating people equally unjustly is injustice upon injustice!

Instead of meeting his Lord having wronged just one man or transgressed against him, such a person will be meeting Him having wronged everyone he could, for the sake of treating them equally in that regard.

Is this not more like what the mushrikeen do, when they want to commit wrong actions and immoral deeds, then they claim that this is from Allah and that He has enjoined it and prescribed it? Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

"And when they commit a Fahisha (evil deed, going round the Kabah in naked state, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse, etc.), they say: "We found our fathers doing it, and Allah has commanded us of it." Say: "Nay, Allah never commands of Fahisha. Do you say of Allah what you know not?

Say (O Muhammad SAW): My Lord has commanded justice and (said) that you should face Him only (i.e. worship none but Allah and face the Qiblah, i.e. the Kabah at Makkah during prayers) in each and every place of worship, in prayers (and not to face other false deities and idols), and invoke Him only making your religion sincere to Him by not joining in worship any partner to Him and with the intention that you are doing your deeds for Allahs sake only. As He brought you (into being) in the beginning, so shall you be brought into being (on the Day of Resurrection) (in two groups, one as a blessed one (believers), and the other as a wretched one (disbelievers)).

A group He has guided, and a group deserved to be in error; (because) surely they took the Shayatin (devils) as Auliya (protectors and helpers) instead of Allah, and consider that they are guided.”

[al-A‘raaf 7:28-30].

Justice means giving each person who has rights his rights and putting everything in its proper place; what has this to do with injustice or treating people equally in that regard?

And Allah knows best.