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# **Enmity and Hatred**

## Why Should We Not Forgive?

Man undoubtedly cannot avoid society and live in seclusion. He is a dependent creature whose needs know no limit. The fact that man is socially dependent conforms to his nature and needs, enabling him to live in the shadows of cooperation. Social life has various requirements that limits man to certain rules and duties on which relies success in life.

Social life, the most influential factor in the development of man's character, may not be limited to material entities; rather social relations should be the result of a union between the souls, human relations are manifestations of such unions. If a society enjoys apparent and spiritual unity that depends on a collective union of the souls, it is virtually impossible for life to loose its beauty and serenity.

One of our basic duties in the field of relation to others is to be able to forgive the mistakes of others. This duty is dictated to us by the need for continuous human relations.

The best way to peaceful living is simply to live in peace with others.

One should not disregard the fact that no one in this world is flawless, and that people with perfectly stable and normal natures and manners are seldom found. We should also remember that even the noblest of characters are not perfectly infallible. Therefore, it is the duty of everyone to bear with unpredictable errors committed by others. In most cases, confessions are an essential part in finding everlasting and deep-rooted peace.

An old poet says that everyone's share of his time is what he has accustomed himself to. Yet, what man accustoms himself to arises from his spiritual and behavioral states. Forgiveness is an apparent manifestation of strong will and self-control which are both variations of courage and strength. Individuals who are forgiving enjoy invaluable spiritual tranquility. They inhabit strong wills and spiritual maturity which are sources of kindness; a determinative factor in freeing man from the chains of spiritual slavery.

Overlooking the shortcomings of others is a heavy burden on man's nature. It is difficult for man to accept resentful characteristics; nevertheless, the more power he acquires in this field, the less he will suffer from psychological unrest. In fact, eventually he will become a mercy to the world.

Another major point regarding this is that forgiveness undoubtedly affects even the enemy's feelings, which creates speedy transformation in his thinking and conduct. There are many cases when tense relationships improved in the shadow of forgiveness; many are the cases when hatred and deep-rooted enmity changed to serenity and devoutness, and many are the cases when an enemy submitted to a man who equipped himself with kind and forgiving thoughts.

#### According to scholars:

"A great talent of man, that animals do not share, is forgiveness and overlooking the mistakes of others. When you are harmed by others you have a good opportunity to forgive and to enjoy the feeling of forgiveness. We were taught to forgive our enemies, but never were we asked to overlook the flaws of our fathers and friends, for it is naturally expected of everyone to forgive mistakes.

"When you seek revenge from your enemy, you place yourself in the same position as he, for you have treated him in the same manner that he has treated you, you would gain nobility if you would have forgiven him for his mistake. When we do seek revenge it is possible for that person to be more powerful than us, but when we forgive our enemy we are definitely triumphant. With forgiveness we are able to defeat our enemies without fighting, and force them to be humble towards us. Abandoning rivals and avoiding encounters with them is the best defensive method we can take against them, for their defeat is eminent.

"It is incumbent on us to be kind when others transgress, for kindness is a heavenly policy with which the earth and its dwellers can live in peace and harmony."

### **Setbacks Caused by Enmity**

There is not a heavier burden or more dangerous behavioral or psychological disorder that inflicts man more than enmity and the act of harboring feelings of hatred against others. Hatred is one of the most disadvantageous feelings affecting man's happiness and tranquility. Hatred stems from the power of anger and destroys man's spiritual balance. When a man is anger some reason may cause him to calm down and remove his psychological unrest by extinguishing the flames of rage in his heart.

Acts of revenge occur from the feelings of insignificance an individual may suffer from, as a result of concealed hatred from childhood trauma, or from the social environment where painful events were experienced. In other words, revenge is a method with which those who suffer from the complex of "insignificance" attempt to mend their sense of failure and humility. These people search for any possible way of harming others and will commit any crime.

Among the effective factors which help such individuals to abandon evilness is the observance of sacred goals in life. Because, he who purifies his soul and manners, and disregards all other goals, will then disregard mistreatment by others.

The extent to which we react to mistreatment by others lies in our hands. It also our choice to change the course of our thoughts; therefore, it is possible for us to willingly change the influence of various factors in strengthening ourselves in the path of eradicating the sense of revenge which pressures our souls. Nevertheless, if we ignore our moral responsibilities others will be unable to help us change our shortcomings.

Revenge takes various forms. Some people enact their foes with matters that have ill fates, pretending to guide them to devoutness and honesty. These revenge seeking people are careful plotters.

According to a western scholar:

"Hatred and enmity stem from mental instability, especially when there are no other apparent causes. We can solve most issues in brotherly manners but conceit and arrogance prevent us from doing so. We often abandon our friends and loved ones for, minor mistakes which we experience from them. Sometimes we know that they are innocent but still refuse to forgive them. I wish we were able to minimize our injustices to them.

#### Imam Sajjad's Reaction to Those Who Mistreated Him

The lives of religious leaders are lessons of honor, nobility, forgiveness and humanness. Their spiritual merits were manifested in practical lessons in a most magnificent picture.

One day Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn as-Sajjad (a.s.) was sitting in the company of his followers when a man, who was related to him, approached and began insulting the Imam (a.s.). This man's name was at Hasan ibn al-Muthanna. Imam 'Ali (a.s.) ignored the man and when he had left said to his companions:

"You heard what that man said to me, I would like you to come with me to hear my reply to him."

The companions of Imam 'Ali (a.s.) then said:

"We will come with you, although we wanted you or us to say something (an equal response) to him."

The Imam (a.s.) proceeded to the man's home reciting:

"And those who when they commit an indecency or do injustice to their souls remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their faults: and who forgives the faults but Allah, and (who) do not knowingly persist in what the have done." (The Holy Qur'an, 3.134)

His companions hearing this concluded that the Imam (a.s.) would say only kind words to the man. The

Imam (a.s.) reached al-Hasan ibn al Muthanna's house and said:

"Tell him this is Ali ibn al-Husayn." The man heard this and came out prepared for an encounter. He was sure that Imam Sajjad (a.s.) came only to revenge his actions.

When al-Hasan al-Muthanna appeared, Imam Sajjad (a.s.) said: "My Brother, you have come to me and have said somethings. If you have said that which truly lies in me, I seek forgiveness from Allah; and if you have accused me of that which I am innocent, I ask Allah to forgive you!!"

When the man heard the words of the Imam (a.s.) he kissed his forehead and said:

'Indeed I accused you of that which you are innocent of. These words describe me." 1

The words of Imam Sajjad (a.s.) affected the spirit of this man, they relieved him of his pain arid made apparent to him the gestures of sorrow and repentance.

The Imam taught the lessons of forgiveness and overlooking the mistakes of others to his companions. He also demonstrated the happy repentance which the man experienced as a result of forgiveness.

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said:

"The lack of forgiveness is the ugliest of all flaws, and haste in seeking revenge is the greatest sin.2

The Holy Qur'an has always advised Muslims to be forgiving:

"And let not those of you who possess grace and abundance swear against giving to the near of kin and the poor and those who have fled in Allah's way, and they should pardon and turn away. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you? And Allah is Forgiving, Merciful." (The Holy Qur'an, 24: 22)

Allah, the Almighty, also said:

"And not alike are the good and the evil. Repel (evil) with what is best, when lo! he between whom and you was enmity would be as if he were a warm friend". (The Holy Qur'an, 41.34)

When one has the power of revenge, forgiveness is a very valuable trait. Imam as-Sadiq (a.s.) placed it among the merits of prophets and the pious.3

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) considered forgiveness to be among the best preventive weapons against the conspiracies of evil doers:

"Reprimand your brother by performing good deeds towards him: and divert his evilness by granting him favors." 4

Imam 'Ali (AS.) uncovered sensitive facts regarding hatred in a short yet eloquent statement. He implied

that spiteful individuals are inflicted with a type of remorselessness and a lack of the sense of mercy:

"The heart which suffers most from the thirst of revenge is the heart of the spiteful."5

It is psychologist's view that:

"A spiteful individual is easily angered and is a merciless foe."

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said,

"Spite incites anger.6

A psychologist also said:

"If you do not fulfill the request of the spiteful, even if it is unreasonable, he will become frustrated and never will he relax until he has sought revenge from him who did not abide by his will."7

Man only obtains spiritual, conscience, and mental harmony when he erases the picture of hate from his heart.

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said:

"He who eradicates hatred, his heart and reason will be at ease.8

According to another psychologist:

"The more man distances himself from extravagant and overwhelming anger and hatred, the more he protects himself against nervous disorders which cause spiritual imbalance." 9

A lucky person is the one who purifies himself from enmity and revengefulness.

Imam 'Ali (a.s.) said:

"A man's happiness comes when his heart is free of spite and envy. 10

We conclude on an important point; that is, in some instances Islam prohibits the overlooking of some actions. It is true that Islam made its goal to obtain security and order, but it also considered punishment essential when the action was an encroachment on the affairs of the society or its security. Articles of the penal code are the rights of the people that can either be practiced or abandoned by the people themselves. These codes are Allah's rights on people.

- 1. Irshad al-Mufid p. 257
- 2. Ghurar al-Hikam p. 768
- 3. Safinah al-Bihar v.2, p. 702
- 4. Nahj al-Balaghah p. 115
- 5. Ghurar al-Hikam p. 178

- 6. Ghurar al-Hikam p. 21
- 7. Ravankavi
- 8. Ghurar al-Hikam p. 666
- 9. Selection Journal: Psychosocial Section
- 10. Ghurar al-Hikam p. 399

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