

Forgiveness in Islam



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Forgiveness in Islam refers more often to restraining anger and punishment when you are able, have power, to administer punishment. In this text you will find brief statements from religious leaders regarding forgiveness and examples of situations and incidents in which the Prophet (S) and the Imams (as) put in practice this concept of forgiveness.

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

One of the most important and salient features of the holy religion of Islam is that, in its teachings, it has paid attention to all aspects of human life. Contrary to single dimensional schools of thought, Islam has taken all dimensions of human existence into consideration; moreover, it has equally met the material and spiritual needs of man.

On the one hand, Islam encourages its followers to provide the means for welfare in life and for earning a living in the following ways:

- Worship is of seven kinds, the best of which is to obtain subsistence in a manner permitted by religion.
- Whoever has water and soil at his disposal, but does not cultivate the land, thus remaining hungry is devoid of the blessing of Allah. 1

- One of the best deeds is such cultivation where the farmer, engages in cultivation, and both good and evil people avail themselves of the products.²
- Whoever earns no subsistence will not have a future life.
- Whoever toils to provide the expenses of his family resembles a struggler who combats for a divine cause.³

On the other hand, Islam believes that property and wealth, agriculture and industry, welfare and comfort, in isolation and without the accompaniment of spiritual virtues, such as belief in Allah and his prophets, faith in the day of Judgment, reward, and punishment, and without the possession of moral and humane virtues, such as mercy good deeds, generosity, forgiveness, etc cannot provide man with prosperity.

In the Holy Quran, Allah Almighty states the following:

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا
بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

"I swear by the Asr, Most surely man is in loss, except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience (103: 1-3) "

Imam Hussein (peace be upon him) often stated:

"If there is any asset in the world, it is that of good morality. If all people are to die, the best death is martyrdom for the cause of Allah. "

Thus, according to Islam, material advancements in isolation fail to guarantee the prosperity of an individual and society. These should rather be accompanied with humane qualities and spiritual matters.

Today, we have found, through experience, that material progress, devoid of spirituality and morality not only fails to render prosperity, but also tends to create catastrophe for man. We therefore, see that despite all their scientific and industrial progress, the colonisers of the East and the West commit innumerable crimes against the weak nations just because they lack in spiritual qualities, humane ethics, and divine beliefs.

We have also witnessed their brutality in pillaging the resources of the oppressed nations. We have moreover seen the massacres and the bloodshed of the innocent people for the sole reason of selling their weapons.

Even in their own society, too, there is a shameful class difference. Due to moral degeneration, their

society is on the verge of a collapse, they have sunk in the mire of corruption and destruction.

All these are the consequences of science devoid of belief and ethics plaguing contemporary man.

As long as man does not revert to morality, spirituality, and the teachings of the prophets, crimes continue to escalate and catastrophes will become more dreadful.

For this very reason, the holy religion of Islam wants man to possess divine morality, attain spiritual perfection in life and sacrifice material things for the sake of acquiring the most sublime status of humanity.

In many verses while using different modes of expression, the Holy Quran has recommended moral issues to us and, praised the prophets for possessing such merits as patience, adherence to promises, forgiveness, modesty, and good manners.

To further acquaint our readers with Islamic ethics, we will now discuss one of the moral issues having a prominent position in Islam. Allah willing, in other publications of the present series, we will set forth other discussions.

1. The school of the members of the Household of the Holy prophet volume 1, page 13.
2. Safinat Ul Bahar, Volume 1, page 549.
3. The school of the members of the Household of the Holy prophet Volume 1, page 11.

An attribute which has received due attention in Islam and which has been extensively discussed in the Holy Quran, hadiths (Islamic traditions), and narrations relates to the issues of "Forgiveness" signifies overlooking the offense and sin of a person who has purposefully or mistakenly done you wrong, such as insulting you by his words, beating you up or exacting your property. Ignoring all these issues and not castigating the person who has committed this wrong is called "forgiveness". Forgiveness is of two types:

- We forgive someone when we are unable to take vengeance. This kind of pardon is, in fact, tantamount to patience and forbearance and not to forgiveness. In other words, it is a kind of helplessness and debility.
- We forgive someone when we have the power to take revenge. The forgiveness desired by Islam and its leaders relates to this kind.

In most utterances of our immaculate Imams (peace be upon them all), the word "Power" has been used wherever the issue of forgiveness has been raised.

We cite several such examples hereunder:

- Ali (a.s) said: The most deserving person to pardon others is the one who is most powerful in

punishing others".¹

- In his last will while addressing Hareth Hamedani, Ali (a.s) stated: "Subdue your anger and forgive a guilty person while you are in power."
- When you gain power over the enemy, consider forgiving him as a sign of your gratitude for your power.²
- Imam Sadeq (a.s) stated: "Pardoning others while one is in authority is consistent with the policy of the prophets and the abstemious people."³

You can note that in all the aforementioned utterances, the word "Power" has been expressed: therefore, the forgiveness that Islam has in mind refers to pardoning others while one has the power to take vengeance; otherwise, a pardon arising out of lack of power, as mentioned earlier, is a sign of helplessness and debility. In other words, it is "a kind of tolerance."

With more deliberation into the meaning of the divine verses, we realize that Allah Almighty enjoins on His prophet pardon and connivance. Allah recommends him to observe good behavior while guiding the people, and keeps him away from getting involved with ignorant elements.

To make his "Messenger" completely successful, Allah warns him against paying heed to satanic temptations which are the biggest barrier before man in performing good deeds. To save His messenger, Allah commands him to seek refuge in him.

It becomes evident that granting pardon to an oppressor and abstaining from taking vengeance are not so simple tasks. Man needs a greater spiritual power with which to kill his carnal desires and sense of vengeance, and to grant "Pardon" while he has the ability to take revenge. For this reason, Allah Almighty introduces "the restraint of anger" as one of the attributes of a believer. This attribute pertains to people who suppress their anger and forgive others.

Allah Almighty also states:

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ
فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ

Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and take counsel, with them in the affair: so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust. (3: 159)⁴

This holy verse has been revealed about those who violated the Holy prophet's order in the Battle of Uhud thus leading to the defeat of the Muslims. These people were fifty two in number whom the Holy Prophet (S) stationed at the entrance to valley and said to them, "If we come out triumphant or if we face defeat, you should not move a step from this place."

This particular "tactic" of the Holy Prophet (S), coupled with the favor of Allah and the self-sacrifice shown by the Zealous Muslim youths, defeated the enemy and forced it to flee. The Muslims pursued the enemy forces and started gathering booty after their plight from the battlefield.

As soon as these fifty two people saw that the Muslims have gained victory and are engaged in gathering booty, all but twelve of them left their post despite their commander's pleas not to disobey the Holy prophet's orders and not to go after the booty.

At this time, Khalid Ibn Walid, a commander of the army of the polytheists, seized the opportunity and climbed up the valley with two hundred riders. They killed the remaining twelve men and attacked the army of Islam from behind. In this battle, seventy of the best warriors of Islam, including Hamzeh Ush Shuhada (the leader of the Martyred), the uncle of the Holy prophet, and Mas'ab Ibn Umair, were martyred and many of the combatants of Islam, including the Holy Prophet (S) and Ali Ibn Abi Taleb, were wounded.

In fact, violation of the order by those few persons led to a major defeat for the Muslims. People expected the Holy Prophet (S) to strongly punish those violators; however, the following holy verse was revealed:

"... Pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and take counsel with them in the affair... (3: 159)"

By revealing this verse, Allah issues this pardon order to the Holy prophet, "O Messenger, pardon them and ask pardon for them ..."

1. Nahjl Balagheh of Abdoh, page 266.
2. Ibid, page 103.
3. Safinat Ul Bahar, Volume 2, page 207.
4. Ibid, Verse, 159.

In addition to calling the people towards pardon and connivance, our religious leaders have always been the eminent pardoners in the world, and barring them, no one is capable of such an extent of forgiveness. We will now first cite some examples of their utterances and later refer to certain historical points:

- The Messenger of Allah (S) stated: "The best deed before Allah is to pardon a person who has wronged you, to bestow affection upon relatives who have broken ties with you, and to act generously

towards a person who has deprived you." Thereafter, he recited the following Holy verse:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ

"Hold (to) forgiveness and enjoin the good, and turn away from the ignorant. (7: 199)" 1

● Ali (a.s), commander of the faithful, in his treaty addressed to Malek Ashtar has stated: "Fill your heart to the brim with mercy, kindness, and affection toward your subjects. Never act like a voracious "animal" toward them, availing yourself of rearing them apart, for, they are of two kinds: either they are your brothers in faith or your equals in creation. Slips catches them unaware, deficiencies overcome them, evil deeds are committed by them intentionally or by mistake. So grant them the same degree of pardon and forgiveness that you hope Allah will grant you, for, you are above them, and he who appointed you is above you, and Allah is above him who gave you this position." 2

● Imam Muhammad Baqir (a.s) stated: "Regret over pardon is better than remorse over punishment." 3

● In the book entitled Arbaeen Haditha, the late Deilami quotes the following from the Holy Prophet (S): "On the Day of Resurrection, the proclaimer makes this call: whoever has a reward with Allah stand up." None but the pardoners will then stand up. He then states: "Have they not heard Allah's promise:

...فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ...

"...but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah..." (42:40) 4

1. Al Mizan, Volume 8, page 402.

2. Nahjul Balagheh of Abdoh, Volume on the Epistles, page 94.

3. Safinat Ul Bahar, Volume 2, page 207.

4. Ibid, page 208.

One of the distinctions of the religious leaders was that, in addition to their verbal announcement of religion to the people, they were, in fact, the incarnations of religion.

They were themselves the manifestations of every moral principle that they enjoined upon the people. In other words, our religious leaders have been and are the perfect examples of Islam. It is up to us to reconcile all aspects of our material and spiritual life with those models. For those who are not well-informed of the biography of their religious leaders, we provide some examples of remission by these leaders with the hope that these will serve as a lesson in our lives.

Example of Remission by the Holy Prophet (S)

There are many instances of forgiveness by the Holy Prophet (S), but from among them, we will only speak about the "Conquest of Mecca" After his ordainment, the Holy Prophet (S) resided in the Holy Mecca for thirteen years. In the course of these thirteen years the Holy Prophet (S) suffered much pain and heard many false accusations from the Meccans and the pagans of Quraish.

They even went so far as to accuse the Absolute wisdom (i.e. the Holy Prophet) of madness. They also pelted him with stones and threw dust on his head and face to the extent that he stated: "No prophet suffered so much annoyance as I did." The pagans of Quraish even planned to kill the Holy Prophet (S). Allah Almighty informed His prophet of this conspiracy, and the latter asked Ali (a.s) to sleep in his bed.

The prophet left Mecca at night. He stopped at a place from where Mecca was barely visible and cried, saying, "O dear home! Allah knows that I love you. If your inhabitants had not driven me out, I would have never left you and chosen any other city. I feel downcast in being separated from you." 1

After traversing a long distance, the Holy Prophet (S) settled in Medina, establishing that city as the seat for guiding people. In Medina, too, the people disturbed the Holy prophet's peace. They waged about 26 battles or military expeditions against Islam and the Muslims.

They killed the prophet's uncle in the battle of Uhud, taking out his liver and giving it to Hind. the wife of Abu Sufiyan as a souvenir. They even mutilated the pure organs of his body and wore them on their necks as necklaces. They filled the tender heart of the Prophet (S) with grief for his uncle.

When the Holy Prophet (S) saw his uncle in such a heart-rending situation, he said: "By Allah, I had never stood in a place like this which had so aroused my anger. If Allah grants me victory over the Quraish, I will do the same with seventy of them in return for the treatment meted out to my Uncle Hamzeh." At this point, Gabriel descended, bringing the following Holy verse:

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ

“And if you take turn, then retaliate with the like of that with which you were afflicted; but if you are patient, it will certainly be best for those who are patient” (16: 126) 2

After the revelation of this Holy verse, the Prophet (S) stated: “I will be patient.”³

The Holy Prophet (S) Gets Ready to move toward Mecca

After enduring all this pain and misfortune, the following promise of Allah was materialized:

"Allah who has made the Quran incumbent upon you will one day return you to Mecca."

In the eighth year after the Hijrah, the Holy Prophet (S) ordered those who believed in Allah and in the day of Judgment to mobilize themselves for a battle. Some twelve thousand warriors of Islam, under the command of the Holy Prophet (S), set out for Mecca on the tenth day of the month of Ramadhan.⁴

Meanwhile, Abbas, the Prophet's uncle, who had immigrated with his family from Mecca to Medina, came across the army of his nephew in a place called Zul-Halifa. Upon seeing his uncle, the prophet (S) was elated and said: "Yours is the last of all migration as mine is the last of all prophetic missions."

He then ordered Abbas to send his family to Medina and to accompany the Messenger of Allah. Long distances were speedily traversed until the Muslims reached a place 25 kilometers off the Holy Mecca. Abbas thought that if he could reach Mecca in advance of the army of Islam and persuade the Quraish to surrender, he would be able to prevent a bloodshed.

For this purpose, he mounted the mule of the Holy prophet and hurried set out for Mecca. When he reached a place called "Arak" near Mecca, he heard a conversation going on between Abu Sufiyan and Badeel Ibn Wurqa.

Abbas called Abu Sufiyan who, recognizing him, said, "May my parents be sacrificed for you! What has come up that you have returned with such haste?"

Abbas said, "Now the Holy Prophet (S), with twelve thousand determined men, is about to reach Mecca. You have no choice but to go along with me and see him so that I could ask him to pardon you. You should know that the front wing of the army is led by Umar ibn Khatab. If he gets hold of you, he will immediately kill you. "With these comments Abbas completely terrified Abu Sufiyan, mounted him on his mule, and took him to the Holy Prophet (S).

There, Abbas said: "O Messenger of Allah I have given quarter to Abu Sufiyan. "The Messenger stated, "He should embrace Islam, so that he could enjoy protection."

Then the Messenger of Allah turned to Abu Sufiyan and said: "What will you do with Lot and Habal?" Before Abu Sufiyan could answer, Umar ibn Khatab interrupted "and said," You must contaminate them with abomination, "Abu Sufiyan faced Umar and said, "Woe to you! Why do you use abusive words and interrupt my speech with my cousin?" Umar flew into a rage.

The Holy prophet prevented him from harshness. This further terrified Abu Sufiyan. The Holy prophet ordered his men to keep Abu Sufiyan in Abbas's tent at night. In the morning, Bilal made the call for prayer. Abu Sufiyan asked; "What is this call?" Abbas stated: "This is the Morning Prayer call which is recited by Bilal Habashi, the Muezzin (one who calls people to prayer) of the Holy Prophet."

Abu Sufiyan, astonishingly observed all the events: The Holy prophet got ready for ablution. The prophet's companions did not let a drop of the prophet's ablution water fall on the ground.

They caught each drop of it with eagerness and rubbed it on their heads and faces. With wonder, Abu Sufiyan said: "I observe things never seen in Qaisar and Kasra." For fear of his life, he uttered the formula for Islamic faith and embraced Islam.

Abbas seeks a privilege for Abu Sufiyan

To make the conquest of Mecca peaceful, Abbas asked the Holy prophet to grant a privilege to Abu Sufiyan in this conquest. He said: "O Messenger of Allah! If you deem it advisable, give a privilege to Abu Sufiyan, so that he would not have a feeling of contempt among the Quraish and not hatch plots." The Holy prophet noted: "Whoever enters Abu Sufiyan's house will be safe and whoever surrenders his arms, enters his own house, and closes the door on himself will be secure. Whoever enters Masjid Ul-Haram will also be in security."

A noteworthy point: Our honorable readers should not be kept in the dark about the fact that this privilege granted by the Holy prophet to Abu Sufiyan was well calculated. Although no tribe had wronged the Holy prophet and his followers as much as Abu Sufiyan and his family, and even though all their wrongful deeds were deeds, remembered by the prophet, he deemed it proper to give a privilege to Abu Sufiyan, so that conceit and vanity would not goad Abu Sufiyan to embark on war and bloodshed, and the conquest of Mecca be put through without such killings.

This was duly materialized, because the policy adopted by the Holy prophet contented Abu Sufiyan as he thought that entry of the Muslims into Mecca had not marred his imaginary rank and position. Maybe this factor served, as one of the causes for issuing the following decree: "Whoever enters the house of Abu Sufiyan will be in safe quarter."

Abu Sufiyan Announces the Arrival of the Messenger of Allah

Dazzled and confused, Abu Sufiyan entered, Mecca. People were surprised at the actions of Abu Sufiyan, not knowing as to what had occurred. With a countenance telling his consternation, Abu Sufiyan said, "Woe to you, Muhammad is about to enter Mecca any minute with a huge army know that whoever enters my house will be safe.

Also whoever enters Masjid-Ul-Haram will be secure. "People rushed and reproached Abu Sufiyan. Even his wife, Hind slapped his face and cried out: "kill this old idiot!"

Finally, the Holy prophet entered his beloved homeland, the very home upon immigration from which he had felt deeply grieved. Allah ordered him not to grieve, for he would once more, return to this homeland in glory and honor. Allah's promise was true and it was duly materialized. The army of Islam reached Hajoon and the tomb of Hazrat Khadijah.

The Holy prophet performed the ceremonial bath in a tent or behind a curtain. He then drew his sword,

mounted the mule, and headed for Ka'aba while reciting chapter Fateh of the Holy Quran:

أَنَا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُبِينًا لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِن ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ
عَلَيْكَ وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا

"Surely we have given to you a clear victory that Allah may forgive your community, their past faults and those to follow... (48:1-2)" 5

The fighters of Islam while surrounding the Holy prophet and uttering the Remembrance, entered Masjid-UI-Haram. When the task of breaking the idols began, the Holy prophet recited the following verse:

وَقُلْ جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَزَهَقَ الْبَاطِلُ إِنَّ الْبَاطِلَ كَانَ زَهُوقًا

". . . The truth has come and the falsehood has vanished; surely falsehood is a vanishing (thing) (17:81)." 6

While reciting this Holy verse, the prophet pointed to the idols which were felled and smashed one after another. Several idols remained intact in the upper part of Ka'aba where they could not be reached by hand. The Holy prophet asked Ali to climb upon his shoulders and crash the idols. Ali climbed on the Prophet's (S) shoulders and smashed them.

Announcement of General Amnesty

After purging the sanctuary of Ka'aba from all signs of polytheism and idolatry, the prophet of Mercy laid his hands on both sides of the door to the Holy Ka'aba, and while facing the people stated: "Now what? What do you think?" They replied: "We say the blessing and believe in naught but it, for, you are our generous brother and the son of our generous brother; moreover, you are victorious over us."

The Holy prophet was moved to pity and tears poured down from his eyes.

He said:

قَالَ لَا تَثْرِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ۚ يَغْفِرُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَهُوَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ

"I will utter what my brother Yusuf said:

"... (There shall be) no reproof against you this day; Allah may forgive you, and he is the most Merciful of the merciful (12:92). "7

Then he said: "Go! you are the ones who are set free!" The person who was raised as the sign of the mercy of Allah for the whole world pardoned all the offences and crimes of the Meccans. He remitted everyone including Hind, the wife of Abu Sufiyan, who had eaten up the liver of the prophet's uncle and who had made a necklace out of the organs of his body and worn it on her neck.

He granted pardon to "Gholam Wahshi" who had killed his uncle, while he had the power to inflict any kind of punishment and penalty on that killer.

Indeed, this is the policy of a person who told the people that all kindness is embodied in three characteristics:

- Forgiving one who has wronged you.
- Observing the bonds of relationship with regard to a relative who has broken ties with you.
- Forgiving one who has deprived you. The Holy Quran asks the Muslim people and the faithful followers of Islam to set the behavior and deeds of the Holy Prophet (S) as their model:

لَّقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

" Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar...(33:21)"8

According, to the aforementioned verse, if we desire to be a good Muslim, we must adapt all our actions to those of the Holy Prophet (S).

An Example of Remission by Ali (a.s)

Ali (a.s) was the most patient and forgiving man of his time. A reference to his treatment towards the enemies is sufficient to depict the mercifulness of the heir to the Holy Prophet (S) for his pure followers.

Marwan Hakam, Abdullah Ibn Zubair, and Amr Ibn Al As, accompanied by Aisha, one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (S) deceived the people of Basra and incited them to wage war against Islam whose leader was Ali Ibn Abi Taleb. To safeguard the cause of Islam, Ali had to fight with them.

After Allah made His proof, namely Ali, triumphant over the deviated people and after All became dominant over them, all those who had waged the war to break the ranks of Muslims, were taken

captive. The commander of the faithful set them all free without retaliating for their indecent deeds.

With kindness and without any objections, Ali sent to Medina the woman who had sat in a camel-litter exciting sedition. He even granted quarter to the people who had been deceived by his enemies, who had drawn swords on him and his children, and who had vituperated him. and his companions. Ali, furthermore did not allow any aggression against their property and children.

Likewise, in the battle of Saffain, Mawyah, the son of Abu Sufiyan, prevented the flow of water from the head fountain and thus did not allow the military-men of Ali to quench their thirst.

Ali (a.s) delivered a lecture following which his troops seized the source of water from the army of Mawyah, and drove it to a desert. The companions of Ali (a.s) said: "Let us now close water on them, so that they would die of thirst and there would be no need to fight with them." Ali noted: "By Allah, I will do no such thing. I deem my sword sufficient for achieving my ends. "He then ordered them to reopen the flow of water on Mawyah's Army, so that it too, could meet its needs.

A Man Dreams of Ali (a.s)

In their books, some scholars from among the Sunni brothers have related the following event: "One of the most reliable Sunni brothers has said: "I saw Ali in my dream and said: 'O commander of the faithful, when you conquered Mecca, you made Abu Sufiyans house a safe quarter for the Meccans and announced that whoever entered his house was safe, but in Karbala, they killed your children in such a savage way and spared no efforts in this regard. How is it so?"

Ali (a.s) replied: "Have you not heard the verse composed by Saifi's son?" I said: "No." he stated: "When you wake up, you can hear them from his own mouth." The man said: "When I woke up. I hurriedly went to the house of Saifi's son known as "Hais Ubais" and told him of my dream. As soon as he heard it, he cried out and wept passionately, saying, "By Allah, I composed these verses last night. I have not yet read them to anyone and Ali has ordered you to listen to them."

He then read out the verse whose contents were as follows: "When we gained victory, we made remission our trade, but when you became victorious, you reddened the Abtah territory with blood. You made the murder and massacre of the captives lawful, while for many years, we had pardoned and freed them. This much difference between you and me is sufficient, for such as the tree is, such is the fruit."

An Example of Remission by Imam Zain UI-Abeddin

After twenty one years of dictatorship Abdul Malik Ibn Marwan passed away in 86H. He was succeeded by his son Walid. To lessen the discontent of the people, Walid embarked on adjusting the system of caliphate and the mode of treatment with the people. He specifically set out to win the satisfaction of the people of Medina which was one of the two Holy cities of the Muslim's, and the center where the

followers, the remaining companions of the prophet, and men of jurisprudence and hadith (Islamic tradition) lived.

For this reason, Walid deposed Husham Ibn Ismaeel Makhzooni, Abdulmalik's father-in-law, who formerly ruled as governor of Medina, had oppressed the people, and whose downfall was constantly desired by the people.

Husham Ibn Ismaeel had severely oppressed and insulted the people of Medina. Husham had given sixty lashes to Saeed Ibn Musayyeb, famous narrator of Islamic traditions and a figure respected by the people of Medina, for refusing to take the oath of allegiance. He then clothed him in coarse garments, mounted him on a camel, and took him all around Medina. Husham had wronged the family of Ali (a.s), especially Imam Zain Ul-Abeddin, chief and leader of Alavis (followers of Ali), more than anyone else.

Husham was removed from office by Walid. In his place, Walid appointed his young cousin, Umar Ibn Abdul Azeea, who was renowned for good intention and equity, as the governor of Medina. To get the wrongs off people's chest, Umar ordered his men to keep Husham Ibn Ismaeel in front of the house of Marwan Hakam.

He said that whoever had seen or heard a wrong deed from Husham should come and take revenge. People flocked there and using abusive language flung curses on Husham Ibn Ismaeel.

Husham Ibn Ismaeel was more anxious about Imam Ali Ibn Al-Hussein (a.s) and the followers of Ali (a.s). He said to himself that All Ibn Al-Hussein's vengeance of all the oppression and curses toward his honorable ancestors would be no less than killing him. On the contrary, the Imam told the followers of Ali (a.s):

"It is not our habit to kick the fallen and to avenge ourselves of the enemy after they are debilitated. On the contrary, we are accustomed to helping the down-trodden people."

When the Imam accompanied by a massive group of the followers of Ali (a.s), headed for Husham Ibn Ismaeel, Husham had turned pale. He expected death every minute. Contrary to his expectation, the Imam loudly said: "Peace be upon you", shook hands with him, and showed mercy to him, as is the normal practice when two Muslims meet one another. The Imam said: It If I can help you in any way, I am ready to do so."⁹

Indeed, these were several examples about the generosity, magnanimity, and remission of the leaders of Islam. These examples must always be followed by the adherents of the human nurturing school of Islam.

With so much recommendation concerning "Remission" what does "Penance by the lash" mean?

Maybe the honorable reader of this pamphlet would imagine that since all these Quranic verses and Islamic narrations recommend "remission," penance by the lash in Islam is against them.

As an explanation, it must be said that "remission" has been recommended as the personal right of every Muslim, that is to say, for the consent of Allah Almighty, a Muslim, believing in Allah, escalation of corruption and appearance of chaos. At such a time social security would be jeopardized and the property, life and reputation of the people would not remain immune from the aggression of corrupt and wicked persons.

For this reason, the Holy religion of Islam has attached more importance to carrying out "religious penance" than to granting "remission."

- Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s) has said: "Carrying out one religious penance on the earth is more purifying than forty days of rain pouring down on the earth." 10
- Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s) has noted: "Allah Almighty has not left out anything whatsoever that his servants might need until the Day of Resurrection, except that he has revealed it in a book and has expressed it to his prophet. He has maintained a "Limit" for everything and brought proof for it. For those who exceed the bounds, Allah Almighty has fixed "a religious penance: and punishment." 11

This precious statement of Imam Muhammad Baqer (a.s) clearly indicates that "religious penance" has been allowed in order to prevent the transgression of the aggressors; furthermore, it serves to preserve Allah's equitable criteria in the world; to eradicate disorder, oppression, extortion, and obstinacy; to enable the society, with all its classes, to live in welfare and security under the light of Islamic justice; and to safeguard human honor and values against the encroachment of capricious and spiteful persons.

Likewise, in the Islamic jurisprudence, it is stated that if three people bear witness concerning the religious penance for adultery without the presence of a fourth witness, all three just witnesses will be penanced because of marrying the reputation of a person without the existence of religious conditions.

Islam wants simultaneous with the punishment of an aggressor to safeguard the repute of people, women, men, poor, and rich.

Extremely subtle conditions for Enforcing Religious penance Islam has set forth very subtle conditions for proving an offence. If these conditions are strictly followed, perhaps even one percent error of judgment would not occur and no individual accused unreasonably.

Among these conditions, one pertains to the qualities of a judge. This issue has been discussed in detail by theologians in the book entitled Qaza (Judgment). Another issue pertains to the qualifications of the affiants. This subject has been dealt with in the book on testimony. Of course, this brief pamphlet, does not have the space to enumerate all of them. However, a brief reference will be made to the fact that proving an offence could take place in one of the following two ways:

- On the testimony of the witnesses: If just witnesses testify before a religious judge against a person, for instance, if they testify that such-and-such a person has committed theft, the judge must carry out

the religious penance after the person's offence if proved. The judge cannot grant pardon to him personally nor can he accept anyone's intercession except when the accused repents his sin before the judge prior to the testimony by the witnesses, and bears witness to his robbery before the judge following the testimony of the affiants. In this case the goods will be returned to the owner; but no longer will they sever the hand of this thief. 12

● On the confession of the guilty person: This means that if the guilty person goes before the judge and confesses his guilt, for instance, saying, "I have committed adultery and so I demand religious penance." and if the conditions and number of confessions are also reused, then it is up to the judge either to carry out the "religious penance" in respect of the guilty person or to pardon him if he establishes the fact that the person has repented and confessed his offence out of remorse. 13

A Historical Incident

One of the traits of the pagan era was that the infirm, powerless, and weak people were always punished, while the influential and dignified people were beyond the reach of the law. They were never punished for their indecent deeds, After the Holy Prophet was ordained to prophetic mission, a group still retained this disposition.

Once a woman, who was influential and reputable among Arab tribes, committed robbery. The Messenger of Allah ordered his men to punish her and to sever her hand from four fingers. Because of the former status of that woman, a group went to the prophet to act as intercessor.

The Messenger of Allah (S) said; "The distinction of an Islamic society from other communities is that all people are equal before the law. Islam does not discriminate between the strong and the weak. By Allah, if Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, had committed theft Muhammad would have cut off her hand as well. 14

1. Muntahi Al-A'mal, Volume 1, page 85.
2. The Quran, Chapter Nahl, Verse 126.
3. Muntahi Al-A'mal, Volume 1, page 62.
4. Lifestyle of Ibn Husham, Volume 2, pages 46 – 47.
5. The Quran, Chapter Fath, Verses 1-2.
6. The Quran, Chapter Bani-Israel, Verse 81.
7. The Quran, Chapter Yusuf, Verse 92.
8. The Quran, Chapter Ahzab, Verse 21.
9. Dastan Rastan, page 255.
10. Hudood Wasail, page 308.
11. Ibid, page 311.
12. Mabani Takmaleh Al Minhaj, Volume 1, page 185, problem 148.
13. Ibid, Volume 1, page 176, problem 140.
14. Islam and Human thoughts, page 670.

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