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Part 11

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ﴾.

"The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren and be careful of (your duty to) Allah that mercy may be had on you. (49: 10)"

Acceptance of reconciliation and agreement is also obligatory

Some questions are asked regarding the meaning of this holy verse. So it is necessary that they should be clearly explained from the pulpit. One of the friends said, "You are advising us all to make amends of restrained relations; I have a dispute with a gentleman for the last four years. I went from this Jama Masjid straight to his house for making peace but he rejected me very forcefully and did not listen to me at all. Have I any more responsibility in this regard?"

Here it must be known that, in Islam, such orders are applicable to both the parties, they are not one-sided. For example, here it is commanded: Make peace. Similarly, it is also necessary for the other party to respond positively for making peace. If we have asked you to go to the other party, the other one is also expected to give a positive response. This is very important. It is reported that the Holy Prophet said, "My intercession will not be available to the one who does not accept the apology or excuse of a peacemaker, not withstanding whether the peacemaker tells the truth or lies."

There came about a discussion between you and him. Now he came and apologies. He says, "Please excuse me. I made a mistake. Please pardon me." It is ordered (by God) that you must oblige. It has been forcefully commanded that you must at once respond saying, "Very well. I let it go." The Holy Qur'an clearly commands: "Then forgive." This is a firm order. Forgive and even ignore a bad word as if you did not hear it. The order is, do pardon even if one has told a lie for peace making. If he says, "I was doubtful." Reply, "All right, let it be." Forget an event. God also promises that He will forgive and pardon you.

﴿أَلا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ؟﴾

"Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?"[1]

Do you not like that God may pardon you? During the nights and at days in Ramadhan you recite: O Lord! Forgive me. Pardon me. One who seeks pardon should be a pardoner and a forgiver himself. How can one who does not forgive others, request God to forgive him?

Everyone who is not acting according to his words is not praying sincerely and in its real sense. It is mere wordplay. It is false to say a thousand times: "O God! O the Most Merciful one! Have mercy on me during my first night in grave." He is lying. If mercy is a nice thing and if he wants it, why he himself does not have this virtue? Why are you not kind to your wife and children? Why do you not have mercy on your friend? Why do you not help a weak person? This shows that, really, you do not want mercy. Only your tongue says so. It is same about saying: Pardon! You always say, "My God, pardon me." You say in your night prayer, "O Lord! Pardon my sins. Forgive my evil deeds." Is forgiving good or bad? You will say, "By God! It is very good." Then why did you not do it yourself? Today, they came to you for making peace.

Why did you become tough and stubborn? If God has ordered to make peace He has also commanded that an offer of peace making also should be responded to. The command applies to both the parties at dispute. If someone comes to you to make peace, you have no right to turn away your face. It is incumbent on you to accept his excuse, even if you know that he is not telling the truth. If you do not respond positively to him, you have deprived yourself of the Prophet 's intercession.

There are two instances wherein the Holy Prophet has quite clearly said that his intercession is not available. Woe unto the one who missed this great reward. He is the one who did not accept the excuse of a peacemaker. Another unfortunate fellow is the one who considered prayer light (of less value).[2]

God accepts repentance

Responsibilities put on Muslims by Islam are also reciprocal. For example, on one hand, God has made it a must for you to repent:

﴿وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا، أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ، لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ.﴾

"...and turn to Allah all of you, O believers, so that you may be successful."[3]

O Muslims! It is your duty to repent; on the other hand, The Holy One Himself has also made it a must for Himself to accept that repentance:

﴿كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

"...your Lord has ordained mercy on Himself,* (*so*) *that if anyone of you does evil in ignorance, then turns after that and acts aright, then He is Forgiving, Merciful."[4]

This is so because He Himself says:

﴿وَأَمَّا السَّائِلَ فَلا تَنْهَرْ﴾

"And as for him who asks, do not chide* (*him*)*."[5]

Do not turn away anyone empty handed. How at all can He turn away a pardon seeker from His Court? God forbid. Such is not our opinion about You. He has made a must for both the parties at dispute to make peace. Whoever may make an advance; it is incumbent on the other one to respond positively. Reconciliation is a must for both the parties. One who goes first in this direction will enter Paradise earlier. One who made an advance did his duty. The other duty is to accept peace effort. If you were clever, you made an advance for making peace. If you were lazy and he became a dweller of Paradise you should not be a dweller of hell.

Islamic brotherhood is general

Another meaning, which must be understood well is that is the generality of the command, which is given in the holy verse:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ﴾

"The believers are but brethren, therefore make peace between your brethren...* (*49: 10*)*"

Here 'believer' has its common connotation. Anyone who said: I believe that God is Only One Allah and Muhammad is His last Prophet and I also give witness that Judgment Day is True and Accounting is True and that Paradise and Hell are True. Anyone who gave witness to these three basic facts and believed in them has also accepted all other essential orders of Islam, that is, all apparent things like prayer, fasts and Hajj, which no one can deny.

He becomes a respectable Muslim. Shedding his blood is prohibited; may he belong to any sect. Apparently he is a Muslim. His body is clean and his life and honor are safe and so also his possessions and marriage with him is also valid. We have nothing to do with his Hereafter. Hereafter is relevant with a special meaning, but all the apparent orders (worldly matters) are based on the above mentioned three basic beliefs, be he a Sunni or a Shia. Sunni and Shia, both are Muslims. That is, both are the people of

“There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”. All general Islamic rules apply to him, which include brotherhood.

Yesterday, I said that it is ordered through this verse that there must be brotherhood among (between) common Muslims, men and women. Anyone who believes in these two formulae of faith: There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, and who accepted Qur’an as the Word of God and accepted the essentials of Islam is a ‘believer’ in the meaning of this verse and hence a brother of all other Muslims. Everyone must maintain this relation of brotherhood with him. They should consider him their brother and not an alien or outsider.

From all this what we mean to say and what the Sunni and Wahabi brothers do not hear is: Are Shias other than the people of “There is no god except Allah”? Have we anything other than “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah”? Have we any book other than Qur’an? Do we follow other than what Islam commands? Why do you call us polytheists? After all we are your brothers. What is very strange is that when we consider them our brothers, these gentlemen call us and believe that we are polytheists. It is because of that man named Ahmed Ibn Taiymiyah. This man, 150 or 200 years back, issued a religious decree that anyone who goes to a dead man’s grave is a polytheist. Ask this Shaykh on what ground he says this? How do you take this man’s word as a proof and say that you Shias are polytheists! (If Allah wills, henceforth, we shall discuss this matter in detail while explaining a later verse).

A Saudi policeman saw a Shia kissing the Zareeh (Sarcophagus) of the Prophet, in the Prophet’s mosque. When he intended to hit that man, he took out a copy of the Holy Qur’an from his pocket and handed it over to the said policeman. The policeman held the Holy Qur’an and kissed it. The Shia said, “O polytheist!” The policeman asked, “What polytheism?” The Shia said, “You kissed the leather. The cover of the Qur’an is made of leather. Kissing a piece of leather is just like kissing a piece of silver which I kissed.” The policeman said, “No, it is not so. This leather is holy as it is related with Qur’an.” The Shia said, “This shrine is also related with the Holy Prophet and hence it is respectable.”

There is no one who could come out and say: O Sunni gentlemen! O Wahabi people! Why are you making excess? Why are you excommunicating Shias who form a big part of Muslim population in the world; who believe in the truth of Islam. Shias are here ever since the advent of Islam. Whatever propagation work has been done in the world has been done mostly by the Shias, especially from Iran. They have written many books in support of Islam. The Shia is a faithful believer. You should consider us as your brothers, especially those who enter Mecca during Hajj pilgrimage every year. Qur’an says, “Travelers and settlers, all who enter Mecca are equal.” Those who arrive here are guests, honorable guests. They have arrived in Allah’s House. How much should you respect them! But here a man takes out a lash asking ‘why did you kiss the tomb?’

Defense of Islamic lands is a must for all

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ﴾

"The believers are but brethren… (49: 10)"

A Shia has no right to be an enemy of a Sunni. Everyone and anyone who said: "There is no god except Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah", and who believes in Qur'an and Judgment Day, even if he has no sense of the guardianship (Wilayat) of Ahle Bait, cannot be considered an enemy. He has no sense of Wilayat due to some misunderstanding. Yet he is a Muslim and therefore he must be considered a brother. This is the unanimous stand of all Shia jurisprudents. If, God forbid, an Islamic country, even if it is of the Sunni, is attacked by heathens, it is compulsory for all the Muslims, Shia as well as Sunni, to help that Muslim state.

They must defend it. The Jews attacked Palestine and they intend to destroy Muslims and annihilate them. We cannot say that they are Sunni. Here there is no question of Shia or Sunni. All are Muslims. A Muslim must always be sympathetic towards another Muslim. Islam must be protected. There is no difference. Qur'an is one, Religion is one, God is one and Prophet is one, common to both. So there is no difference. The only thing is that they, in the matter of jurisprudence and in their manners follow one of the four persons – Abu Hanifah, Ahmed bin Hanbal, Malik and Shafei. We also follow Ja'far bin Muhammad as Sadiq.

What is your argument for following one these four? Your only argument is that since our elders did it, we also do it and because the caliph of the time appointed these four. Our argument also is that as Muhammad, the last Prophet, prescribed Qur'an and Progeny (Itrat), we do not give up the Progeny. This is the difference between us. How strange! Some follow Ja'far and some Abu Hanifah. It is all right; the followers of all the four are good. We don't know what the followers of Ja'far did that they have so much enmity towards them!

Do not speak bad of religious leaders

By the way, I would like to point out one thing. Shias also have a doubt and it should be removed. It is that they openly insult the chiefs of other sects while it is unlawful. For example, if one insults Abu Hanifah openly, it will make the Hanafis angry. Some kinds of enmities are against dissimulation (Taqayyah) while our duty is to observe it fully.

﴿وَلا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ﴾

"And do not abuse those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest exceeding the limits they

should abuse Allah out of ignorance."[6]

After all, they have followed them for a time. Now, if you insult them openly they will resort to indecency. If you condemn Abu Hanifah, they will definitely speak and think badly about Ja'far bin Muhammad or his followers. So, the Shias should be very careful. Open condemnation is wrong. You do your best. Describe the virtues of Ali as much as you can. Mention the rightfulness of Ja'far. Leave alone Abu Hanifah and others. Why should you name them? This is the method of dissimulation.

Observe rights of brotherhood

The third point in today's discussion is the fabrication of brotherly rights. We mention the fabricated rights from first to last. The first right was the same, which is mentioned in this verse, that is, a Muslim is a brother of another Muslim. The demand of brotherhood is that if one brother is in distress another must not sit at rest until the trouble of the former is removed. It means that if a Muslim falls in dispute and trouble, other Muslims must not rest until the fire of trouble is extinguished. This is the smallest right of one Muslim over another.

This issue is religious. Do not take it lightly. It is a religious duty. Perhaps this matter may not come up again. Of course the condition for every duty is ability. If you are able, it is your duty to try to make peace and reconciliation. If you are unable, you are not bound. For example, if you are alone and you see that ten or twenty persons are fighting fiercely with one another. In what way can you stop them? Suppose the quarrel is over a lot of money. You do not have enough to settle the dispute. Or for instance the fighting people are brutal bullies and it is not likely that they will at all listen to you as they look at you hatefully.

Worst of all, they also have arms that you don't have. Two hotheaded fellows are attacking one another dangerously. You should not approach them otherwise; you will be like that son of one of our friends.

Mediator falls prey to corrupt fighters

One of our friends who is also present today in this meeting has faith. He has a religious minded youthful son. Two months ago, this youth did an unwise thing. It resulted in serious trouble. In the words of his father: While passing by, this youth saw that two persons were quarrelling with one another. They were making contrary claims. This youth, with an intention to making peace, stepped forward. One of the ruthless fellows, in order to push him aside, hit him forcefully on his head. The youth fell down at once.

He was taken to the hospital, where it was found that his brain has been damaged. He had to remain in hospital for a long time in an unconscious state. When those two devilish fellows came to know that this man may die of the injury inflicted by one of them and when they feared that they might fall in legal trouble, they at once, went to the police station and filed a complaint against the (injured) youth and made false allegations against him saying that he had done so and so to us at such and such place on

such and such day and wounded so and so etc.

A warrant was issued against this youth who had not yet recovered and had not recovered consciousness. The poor youth who was injured badly experienced further mental trouble. His senses did not function properly. When it was decided to shift him from the hospital to his house, policemen arrived and arrested him. Now he is in a prison. Why did he interfere between two fighting bulls?

What I mean to say is that though I have told you to make peace and reconciliation, but it is not everywhere. Just see who are up to kill one another? Should you come in between even if two wolves are fighting? Can a lamb or a deer make peace between the two? Sometimes you see that he has a Muslim name, but he is among the wolves of the time. Islam is higher than that such fellows may claim to be Muslims. A Muslim is more honorable. A believer is liked by God. For what should he be sacrificed? For the sake of these perverted people's lust and greed? They are like two-footed animals, liars, slanderers and faithless. What kind of people are they who blame falsely a gentleman who came to make peace between them? These are real transgressors.

Rights of brothers in faith

Now I will tell you about the higher rank. Rights of brotherhood are many. In a narration the holy Imam says that they number thirty and as per another narration, seventy. The narrator insists and says, "O master! Please tell us what they are all." According to reports the Imam said, "I am afraid, if I tell you, you will not observe them and will not act accordingly." Woe if one knows and does not act while these rights of brotherhood are such that if not observed both this world and Hereafter will be ruined. It will bring divine punishment in both worlds.

According to one narration: One of the rights of brotherhood is that if one puts forth his need to the other, the latter must not reject it. His need had an aspect of honor. Since you had honor and influence, the seeker sought your influence and recommendation but you rejected his request. Consequently, when you will be called up on the Day of Judgment, there will be no flesh on your face. It will be a mark of your dishonor. Also in this world, you will not die before being dishonored. It will be so because you did not spend this honor, which you had and left that helpless person to himself. You did not do his work with the help of your influence. So you will also be dishonored here. Wait! He asked you to lend him some money. You did not give it despite your ability to do so. So now, wait for the day when this money goes out of your pocket. The smallest or the least right, it is said in narrations that the smallest or lowest or the minimum right is that you should like for him what you like for yourself.

O Mr. Grocer! You wish that when you go to a perfumer to purchase saffron, the latter should give pure saffron to you, not counterfeit. So when the perfumer comes to you to purchase oil from you, you too must give him pure oil, not impure or adulterated. Now, who is there among you who likes that someone should give you a bad name in your absence? So, you too must never give a Muslim a bad name in his absence. "Dislike for him what you dislike for yourself." Likewise, if you dislike that someone should

destroy your effort in your absence, you also must never render someone's effort fruitless.

Be good to others as they are with you

It is here that scholars and religious leaders have propounded as to what is our duty and responsibility. If the rights are just as reported above and if one has to behave in this way as said above with all Muslims, life might become difficult. For example, suppose, one of the rights is that if one asks for a loan the other one must not refuse. If you may go on giving like this during the day, you will have nothing left with you by the end of it. They may take and may not return, especially the people of today. Or they borrowed something from you. They took it, broke it and then brought back to you making it useless. Then what should be done? They have not told you to do so with everyone. Be such with those who are so with you. If you want to become so with everyone then some people are so much selfish that they would like to trample you under their feet. So it is never so with everyone. According to a narration, someone said to the holy Imam, "My neighbor borrowed my carpet. After burning and destroying it he brought it back to me. If he asks me again for it, and if I do not oblige him, then will I be at fault?" The Imam said, "No, in that case, you will not be held responsible."

When it is told to you that you should give to your neighbor what he wants to borrow, Islam also orders the borrower to take care of the borrowed thing. So, if your neighbor does not fulfill his responsibility, you too are not duty-bound to give him what he asks. If you see that he does not return your thing, then do not give him. Take a guarantee from him. It is not ordered to you that if someone asks for a loan you must give it to him at once, even if you do not know him. The Holy Qur'an itself says: Take a bond, a deposit or a security. Pawn his house so as to satisfy yourself about the return of your money. You may not give unless he agrees to such a condition.

These rights are for those who do likewise with you. They must also be truthful. They should act according to their word. They must be righteous and God fearing. They should not be greedy, lustful and selfish. Where is that religious minded friend who befriends you for the sake of God? Who considers you his friend in faith? Such men are very less in number. Now, do not say that the responsibility or duty is much more. Say that responsible people are less.

Who is he who wants you for God's sake, who considers you a religious friend? Most of the people befriend one another due to selfishness and personal interest, not from religious viewpoint. I mean how many are there who befriend others hoping that this friendship will strengthen their faith? Do they desire piety and self-improvement? Do they befriend others with a hope to get salvation tomorrow as a result of such friendship? Such sincere friendship does never break off. One, sometimes, befriends another selfishly and to serve his own interest. They give loans also. But such friendships do not last, because they are not friendships in faith, religious brotherhood. It has no divine aspects. It is a farce!

Faithful friends, here and in Hereafter

Three God fearing persons were among the companions of Imam Sadiq, Imam Kazim and Imam Reza. The three were very righteous and virtuous. Their names were Safwan bin Yahya, Abdullah bin Jundab and Ali bin Numan. These three friends in faith had one heart, one road, one aim, one goal, which was to gain the pleasure of God, His Prophet and the holy Imams. They wanted to tread the true path, the straight path and advancing on it to attain salvation. Their friendship was based only on this aim. Once all of them went to Mecca together.

In the Great Mosque (Masjid-ul-Haraam), they talked together and asked each other, "We are friends in this life. Why this friendship should end at the time of our death? Let us make a pledge that when one of us dies, the remaining two would continue the worship, which the dead one was doing. Then when one of the remaining two also dies, the last surviving one would carry out the worship and good deeds of the two dead ones." True friend is one who helps his friend. Now what help is greater than doing God worship?

So they agreed on this covenant. Soon thereafter two of them viz. Abdullah bin Jundab and Ali bin Numan met their Lord while only the third one, namely Safwan bin Yahya remained alive as a friend in faith of the two departed ones. Now he wanted to fulfill his agreement. He had given a bold promise. What were the worship rituals of the departed ones? Everyday both of them offered fifty-one units of prayer. Every good believer offers these 51 units of prayer during a day and night: 17 obligatory units of the five daily prayers, which are obligatory; plus 34 (double of 17) units being supererogatory. So, at the time of Zuhr (Noon), Safwan offered first his own 4 units of the recommended prayer (Nafila) of Zuhr and then the same number of units for both of his two friends. Likewise he did for the Afternoon (Asr) prayer. At the time of Evening Prayer (Magrib) he did likewise. Again when he awoke after midnight, first he offered his own 11 units and then the same for his two late friends. He did this as long as he lived. You, and I sometimes, do not offer our own 51 units. Many times we miss Nafila prayers. How nice would Allah deal with the friend in faith who prayed 51 units for his two friends in addition to his own!

Now about fasting. During the holy month of Ramadhan, every year, he fasted for his own self and during the months of Rajab and Shaban, he fasted for his two departed friends in faith. Now about Zakat. Some say: What is there in prayer and fasting? Money is more important. A man may give Zakat thrice and then Khums also thrice. Is this not very wonderful! Some nearly die if they are required to give Khums even once. Some say: Let me give only this much now, I will give the rest afterwards – God-willing! Only God knows from where he will bring the rest? How then will one such person give amounts on behalf of his two friends in addition to his own? That too thrice! Safwan went to Hajj and Umrah every year not only for himself but also for his two friends. This was to complete friendship in faith.[7] Such are the brave and faithful men of courage in the Islamic world who are the examples of the Shias of Ali; models of believers and faithful ones. What beautiful lives!

Camel owners permission

The same Safwan once, for returning from Mecca, rented a camel. When he was about to ride the animal, a traveler gave him two gold coins as a trust and told him, “As you are going to Iraq, please give this amount to such and such person.” Then Safwan came to the camel owner and told him, “When I hired this camel from you, I had only these clothes on my body and a little more. Now a load of two more gold coins is with me. Please allow me to carry the same.” The camel owner replied, “I have no objection.” Thus Safwan did not ride the camel unless the owner of the camel gave permission to do so.

O those who load heavy luggage on rented cars; do you take permission from the car owners? Why are you doing so without proper permissions? With all this piety, I tell you that when Safwan left this world in Medina and when Imam Jawwad was given the news of the Safwan’s death, the Imam said, “Please wait until I come for the funeral.” Then the Imam himself arrived to the graveyard of Baqi and buried this God fearing man. Now what about you and me? Is there anyone to continue our friendship after we die? Who may, at the time of our death, come to us and say: Do not worry our faith will not go away; we will protect the friendship in faith. Sympathy will prolong.

This friend comes to your grave after you are buried and weeps and raises his hands praying to God for your forgiveness or in the words of Imam Musa bin Ja’far, this friend comes, sits at your grave, recites Surah Qadr seven times and then prays to God: O Lord! This friend of mine is alone in a strange place; he is solitary. O God! Be kind towards his loneliness and change his fright into familiarity, pour Your Mercy on him so that he may not require anything except Your Mercy. O My Lord! This is the first night in grave of my friend. Kindly be merciful to him and to his loneliness.8

1. Surah Nur 24:22
2. Safinatul Bihar 2:43
3. Surah Nur 24:31
4. Surah Anam 6:54
5. Surah Zuha 93:10
6. Surah Anam 6:108
7. Safinatul Bihar, vol. 2, pg. 38
8. Wasaelush Shia

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