

Vastness of God's Mercy and Pardon

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Hope is the expectation of a dear thing the arrangements of which are already done, such as hope for the yield of a land after it was seeded, watered, and superintended. In case the arrangements of a thing are not done, hope for it will be foolhardiness, just like hope for the yield of a derelict land that was not superintended properly. Hope, furthermore, is the second wing with which, along with fear, the believers fly in the horizons of the obedience of God. Although fear and hope support each other in disciplining the believers, hope is sweeter and fresher than fear, because its source is trust in God and the assurance of the extent of His mercy. To obey out of hope is better than obeying out of fear. In view of that, good tidings of :hope are carried through numerous texts from the Quran and Sunna

Warning against Despair

"(Muhammad), tell my servants who have committed injustice to themselves, 'Do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is All-forgiving and All-merciful.' (39:53)"

"...And do not despair of receiving comfort from Allah; only the unbelievers despair of receiving comfort from Him. (12:87)" The Prophet (s) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will gather the despondent of His mercy with their faces blackened. They will be given the name of 'the despondent of Allah's mercy.'"(1)

Amir ul-Mu'minin (a) said to the man who was prevailed by despair of God's mercy out of his many sins: "You, to despair of the mercy of Allah is the greatest sin that you have ever committed."(2)

"Your Lord's mercy is completely overwhelming. (6:147)"

"Your Lord, certainly, has forgiveness for the injustice of the people. (13:6)"

"Allah does not forgive the sin of considering others equal to Him, but He may choose to forgive other sins. (4:48)"

"When the faithful come to you, say to them, "Peace be upon you. Your Lord has decreed for Himself to be All-merciful. Anyone of you who commits a sin out of ignorance, then repents, and reforms himself will find that Allah is All-forgiving and All-merciful." (6:54)"

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will extend His mercy so vastly that

even Eblis will expect himself to be included with that mercy."(3)

"...On the Day of Resurrection, the guilty believers will be stopped before Allah Who will personally interrogate him. He will display before him his sins in details, and the believer will confess of them all. The Lord will then say: 'In the worldly life, I covered these sins and, now, I will cover them for you.' He then will order to change them into virtues. As the record of that believer will be shown to people, they will say, 'How admirable this man is! He did not commit a single sin!' This is the meaning of God's saying: But only those who repent and believe and act righteously will have their sins replaced by (virtue, (25:70))"(4)

Favorable Judgment about God

Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "The last servant who will be sent to Hell will turn his face towards Allah. The Lord then will order the angels to bring him back. 'Why did you turn your face, servant?' the Lord will ask. 'Lord,' the servant will say, 'I had no other idea about You.' 'What did you think of Me, servant?' the Lord will ask. The servant will answer, 'I thought You would forgive me and allow me to live in Your Paradise.' The Lord then will say, 'My angels, I swear by My power, majesty, favors, tests , and exaltation, this servant had never thought good about Me for a single hour of his lifetime. Had he done so, I would not have sent him to Hell. Nevertheless, I will regard the lie that he has just told as true and allow him to be in Paradise.' Allah will live up to the servant who thinks well of Him: 'This was how you considered your Lord, but He knows you better than you know yourselves. Thus, you are now lost (41:23).'"(5)

Imam ar-Reza (a) said: "Have favorable judgment about Allah, for He says: I am as My servant (thinks of Me, whether good or bad.)"(6)

Intercession of the Prophet and the Imams for their Adherents

The Prophet (s) said: "On the Day of Resurrection, we will be responsible for interrogating our adherents. Regarding the wrongdoings that are committed against Allah, we will issue a judgment about them and Allah will accept it for us. Regarding the wrong doings that are committed against people, we will interfere so that the wronged party will forgive for our sake. Regarding the wrongdoings that are committed against us, we are the worthiest of forgiveness."(7)

"He who dies on the love for Mohammed's family will be treated as shahid. He who dies on the

love for Mohammed's family will be forgiven. He who dies on the love for Mohammed's family will be (regarded as) repentant. He who dies on the love for Mohammed's family will be perfectly faithful believer. He who dies on the love for Mohammed's family will be given the good tidings of being in Paradise by the angel of death, first, and Munkar and Nakeer, second. He who dies on the love for Mohammed's family will be carried in procession to Paradise like brides. He who dies on the love for Mohammed's family will have two doors taking to Paradise opened from his grave. As for him who dies on the love for Mohammed's family, Allah will make the angels of mercy visit his grave regularly. He who dies on the love for Mohammed's family will be regarded as follower of the Sunna and community of Muslims. But for him who dies on the hatred for Mohammed's family, he will attend on the Day of Resurrection with the script, –written on his forehead-- 'This one is excluded from the mercy of Allah.'(8)

The Prophet (s) once, came to his companions with bright face like the halo of the moon. When Abdurrahman ibn Awf asked him, the Prophet said: "I have just received the good tidings about my brother and cousin and about my daughter. I have just been told that Allah gave my daughter Fatima in marriage to Ali and ordered Ridwan; the doorkeeper of Paradise, to shake the Tree of Tuba, which carried sacraments as many as those who have love for my family. Under that tree, Allah has created angels of light and given each one of them one of these sacraments.

When the Day of Resurrection will come and the angels will call at all the creatures, they will give each of those who have love for The Ahl ul-Bayt one of these muniments that will be documents of acquittal from Hell. Hence, my brother and my daughter will set many men and women of my umma free from Hell."(9) • When God's saying, "The righteously striving believers are the best of all creatures, (98:9)" was revealed, the Prophet (s) said to Ali: This is you and your Shia.(10) On the Day of Resurrection, you will be content and pleased, while your enemies (will be angry and depressed.(11

Calamities and Diseases Cancel the Believers' Sins

The Prophet (s) said: "God says: By My power and majesty I swear, I will not make the servant upon whom I want to have mercy depart this world before I punish him for every sin that he committed. I will punish him by means of an ailment that inflicts him, poverty that befalls him, or a state of fear that controls him. If this is not enough, I will make him suffer the agonies of death."(12)

"Depression and grief will not depart the believer before they eradicate all of his sins."(13) Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "Mufaddal, beware of committing sins and warn our adherents against

so. By God I swear, you are the most targeted by sins. You may suffer the persecution of the ruling authorities. This is because of your commitment of sins. You may be ailed. This is because of your commitment of sins. Your sustenance may be stopped. This is because of your commitment of sins. You may suffer the agonies of death so severely. This is also because of your commitment of sins."

As the Imam noticed that al-Mufaddal was highly touched by these words, he (a) commented: "You suffer all the previous in order that you will not be interrogated about your sins on the Day of Resurrection, since the punishment for such sins befall you in this world." (14) "The believer may suffer troubles in sleep as a punishment for his commitment of sins. He also may suffer a (physical defect as a punishment for his commitment of sins." (15

Reality of Hope

Hope is meaningless unless reasons of its success are available. It is hence foolish to leave the courses of obedience and take in the courses of deviation and depend totally on hope. Such hope is surely void. It is noticeable that the great personalities, such as prophets, their successors, and the saints, spared no efforts in the fields of the obedience to God and devoted themselves to the acts of worship while they were the most favorable to God: As he was told that some people were engrossed in the acts of disobedience to God while they claim that they hope for the mercy of Him, Imam as-Sadiq (a) said: "They are liars. They are not our Shia. Those are the people whom are deceived by false hopes. He who hopes for something should work for it, and he who fears something should escape (it." (16

Purpose of Hope and Fear

Some people can be mended only by means of hope while others can be rectified by means of fear. The disobedient who have felt regret for their excessive sins but they have despaired of His pardon should be treated by means of hope for God's immense mercy . Those who destroyed themselves because of excessive performance of acts of worship should also be treated by means of hope for God. On the other side, the sinful tyrants who are plunging in acts of disobedience to God and are deceived by false hope should be treated by means of fear of .God as well as severe reproach and painful punishment

Notes:

1. Quoted from Safinat ul-Bihar; 2/451 (as quoted from ar-Rawandi's an-Nawadir).
2. Quoted from Jami us-Sa'adat; part 1 page 246.
3. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/274 (as quoted from Sheikh as-Saduq's al-Amali).
4. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 3 page 274 (as quoted from al-Barqi's al-Mahasin).
5. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/301 (as quoted from as-Saduq's Thawab ul-Aamal).
6. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 59 (as quoted from al-Kafi).
7. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; 3/301 (as quoted from Uyounu Akhbar ir-Reza).
8. In his exegesis of the Verse, "(Muhammad), say: I do not ask you for any payment for my preaching to you except (your) love of (my near) relatives, (42:23)" Az-Zamakhshari judges that this narration is uninterruptedly related and that it is beyond suspicion. Furthermore, many compilers of the books of the merits and virtues record this narration in different ways.
(Excerpted from Sayyid Abdul-Hussein Sharafuddin's al-Fusoul ul-Muhimma.)
9. Excerpted from Sayyid Abdul-Hussein Sharafuddin's al-Fusoul ul-Muhimma; page 44. (In his book titled as-Sawaa'iq ul-Muhriqa, p. 103, Ibn Hagar records this narration.)
10. Shia (lexicographically, adherents, party) is the other major religious group of Muslims, differing from the Sunni in the understanding of the Sunna and in their acceptance of Imam Ali (a), the Prophet's son-in-law and the fourth caliph, to be the first true successor of the Prophet (s). Hence, they are called the Shia of Ali.
11. Excerpted from Sayyid Abdul-Hussein Sharafuddin's al-Fusoul ul-Muhimma; page 39. (In the book titled as-Sawaa'iq ul-Muhriqa, p. 96, this narration is recorded)
12. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 172 (quoted from al-Kafi).
13. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 172 (quoted from al-Kafi).
14. Quoted from Bihar ul-Anwar; vol. 3 page 35 (as quoted from Ilal ush-Sharayi).
15. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 172 (quoted from al-Kafi).
16. Quoted from al-Wafi; part 3 page 57 (as quoted from al-Kafi).