



DAY 21

RAMAḌĀN 2024



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خُذِ الْعَفْوَ

(O Prophet,) take forgiveness (as your habit) [7:199]

ANSWER:

Forgiving / One who forbears

COMMENTARY

The Ideal Manifesto of Qur'ānic Ethics

The above verse provides us with a perfect code and model discipline of moral excellences. It was through this discipline that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was trained and then was conferred with the title of (The manifestation of all moral excellences) which is unique to him out of the whole mankind. After giving a description of obstinate ignorance, and immoral behaviour of the adversaries of Islam in the foregoing verses, the Holy Qur'ān, in contrast to the above, provides the Holy Prophet ﷺ with some moral teachings. The first is **(Take to forbearance)**. The Arabic word عفو has many significations. Each of them can be taken to mean here. This is why the experts in the exegesis of the Qur'ān have presented varied comments on this verse. The most agreed interpretation of this word is that it is an act which can be done with ease or without any difficulty. The first sentence therefore, shall mean “Accept what people can do easily,” implying that, in the matter of Islamic obligations, the Holy Prophet ﷺ should not demand high standard of deeds from the people. Rather, he should accept the degree of perfection which can be achieved easily by the people.

To make it more clear, let us take the example of *Salāh* (the prayer) which in true sense means to isolate oneself from all the worldly thoughts and actions and stand before his Lord in perfect veneration. He is supposed to present his praise to his Lord directly as though he is addressing his Lord and making his supplications to Him directly with nothing and no one between him and His Lord.

This state of mind shows itself in a worshipper by some expressive signs like *khushū'* and *khudū'* (submission and humbleness), which are achieved only by a few fortunate worshippers. This degree of veneration and love cannot be expected from all the worshippers. This verse has therefore, asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ not to demand the high standard of performance from the people, and to accept what degree of perfection they can achieve easily in their deeds.

The above interpretation has been reported in *Sahīh al-Bukhārī* on the authority of Sayyidnā 'Abdullah ibn Zubair *radī'allāhu 'anhu*. Another report cited by Ibn Kathīr, has said that the Holy Prophet ﷺ, at the time of the revelation of this verse, said, “I have been commanded (by Allah) to accept common



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or unexceptional obedience from the people in their worships and behaviour. I have, therefore, decided to do the same as long as I am in their company.” A large number of the exegetes of the Holy Qur’ān like Sayyidnā ‘Abdullah Ibn ‘Umar, ‘Abdullah ibn Zubair, Sayyidah ‘A’ishah *radi’allahu ‘anhum* and the scholar Mujāhid have confirmed the same meaning of this Qur’ānic phrase.

Another meaning of the word عفو is to pardon or to forgive. Some of the exegetes have adopted this meaning here. According to them this Qur’ānic phrase has asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ to pardon the errors and shortcomings of the people.

Imām Ibn Jarīr al-Tabarī, the great exegete of the Holy Qur’ān has reported that at the time of revelation of this verse the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked the Archangel Jibra’īl about the implication of this verse. The Archangel after confirming the meaning from Allah answered that you have been commanded to pardon the one who does you wrong, and to be generous to the one who gives you nothing, and to continue your relation with one who breaks off his connections with you.

Under the comment on this verse Ibn Marduwh has reported, on the authority of Sayyidnā Sa’ad ibn ‘Ubādah, that this verse was revealed when, in the battle of Uhud, Sayyidnā Hamzah *radi’allahu ‘anhu* was martyred and parts of his body were savagely cut off. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, seeing his body in such miserable condition, said, “I shall behave to seventy of their people the way they have behaved with Hamzah.” This verse was revealed to him implying that it does not suit his dignified position. He should pardon and forgive people.

This is supported by another hadīth reported by Imām Ahmad on the authority of ‘Uqbah ibn ‘Āmir *radi’allahu ‘anhu* saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had instructed him of the same. That is, to pardon the one who does wrong to him, to keep relation with one who cuts off his relation with him and to give the one who deprives him. Bayhaqi also has reported from Sayyidnā ‘Alī *radi’allahu ‘anhu* that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him. ‘I teach you the manners better than the manners of all the early and the later people, that you should give the one who deprives you, pardon the one who does wrong to you and continue your relation with one who breaks off with you.’

The above two meanings of the word عفو though, are different from each other but the purest essence of both is one and the same, that is, he should not demand the high standard of worship and deeds from the people and pardon them for their errors, and should not take revenge of their wrongs, and be generous to them with no regard to receiving any return from them.

The authentic records of the life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have shown that he demonstrated the truest picture of the above Qur’ānic model of deeds and morals. This model appeared in full bloom when Makkah was conquered and his sworn enemies were at his mercy. At that time, he set all of them free saying that ‘far from any thoughts of seeking any revenge against them for their injustices, he would not even blame them in any way for what had happened between them in the past.’

And Allāh Ta’ālā knows best.

