

Reinterpreting Divine Love and Punishment in Islam: Exploring the Ethical Implications of God's Mercy in the Context of Modern Human Rights and Justice.

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Abstract:

As the world becomes more familiar with rapid technological advancements, new discoveries, and experiences, it is also increasingly distancing itself from Allah with doubts and uncertainties affecting people's faith. Maintaining a balance between God's love and punishment in the modern world is essential, as God's love calls humans towards goodness, while the fear of punishment keeps them away from evil and wrongdoing. This article will explore the ethical implications of Allah's mercy and punishment within the framework of Islamic teachings particularly in the context of modern human rights and justice.

The mercy of Allah is one that showcases Allah's boundless compassion and guidance for humanity. Allah's mercy is vast and always present to forgive human sins and mistakes. Allah's mercy also encompasses the respect and protection of human rights. Allah speaks about justice and love towards human in the Quran. In other words Allah's mercy, justice and the rights and duties of people are essential. Allah has laid down rights for people so that they can live a life on justice. In the Quran, in surah An-Nisa (4:58) Allah says:

“ Allah commands you to give back trusts to those whom they are due,

And when you judge between people, judge with justice.”¹

Where Allah describes his mercy, the concept of his punishment is actually also present there. Allah says in the Quran :

**“If you strive in the way of Allah, He will surely help you, but if
You go against His will, His punishment may catch up with you.”²**

The concept of punishment is actually part of Allah's justice and judiciary, and this punishment is not against justice or human rights, rather it is based on the action that a person has committed so that the person can repent and correct their mistakes.

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- ✧ Allah's mercy
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- ✧ Quranic Guidance
- ✧ Balancing Mercy and Justice
- ✧ Correction of mistakes
- ✧ Ethical implications
- ✧ Human rights

Introduction:

In Islam, the concepts of justice, mercy, punishment, and rewards are clearly outlined. A Muslim is taught to have complete trust in Allah's mercy and justice. In the modern world, however, there is often doubt raised about the balance between Allah's mercy and punishment. But if we look closely, it becomes evident that this balance is not just an act of divine will; it is a process that helps individuals understand their existence, their religious system and their connection to Allah. Allah in his final revelation, the Quran, has described His mercy in such vast and profound terms that it provides hope and a path for reformation for the believers. In the Quran Allah says:

قُلْ يُعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

Translation:

“Say, O My worshippers who have hurt yourselves by your own hands, do not be disappointed of Allah's mercy. Allah forgives all sins. He is truly the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.”³

Islam does not grant superiority to anyone based on race, wealth, social status, whether they are Arab or non-Arab, male or female. According to the Quran, all are equal in the sight of Allah, and everyone is responsible for their own actions.

“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you groups and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most Noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted.”⁴

This article is exploring that how Islam reinterprets divine love, mercy and punishment. It is focusing on the ethical site of God's mercy and its relevance in today's era where issues of equality, justice, rights, humanity and somehow human dignity are paramount.

In Islam, the concept of Allah's mercy refers to His help and guidance for humanity, while the concept of Allah's justice and punishment is based on the actions of individuals. Both Allah's mercy and justice play a role in maintaining balance in a person's spiritual life.

Allah's mercy is one of his great and profound attributes that highlights His kindness and love for humanity. In the Holy Quran Allah's mercy is described as vast and encompassing. Some verses that illustrate Allah's mercy are as follows:

“O write for us what is good in this life and the next. Indeed, we have turned to You in repentance.” Allah replied, I will inflict My punishment on whoever I will. But My mercy encompasses to everything. I will write mercy for those who shun evil, pay alms-tax, and believe in Our revelations.”

This verse is showing the Allah's mercy, which is all. Encompassing and boundless, extending over everything in the universe.

“ Indeed, your ally is none but Allah and His Messenger and those who have believed- those who fulfill prayer and pay the Zakat while they bow.”⁵

Allah's mercy is one of His great attributes that further highlights His kindness and love for humanity. In the Holy Quran, Allah's mercy is described in such a way that it emphasizes His compassion for His creation.

Justice is a special attribute of Allah. It is the act of giving every individual their due reward or punishment according to their deeds. Allah has clarified in the Quran that His justice can never be oppressive.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ ۖ وَإِنْ تَكَ حَسَنَةً يُّضْعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا⁶

“Indeed, Allah never wrongs to anyone—even by an atom’s weight. And if it is a good deed, He will multiply it many times over and will give a great reward out of His grace.”

An excellent example of Allah's justice is on the Day of Judgment. On that day, justice means holding individuals accountable for their deeds and rewarding or

punishing them accordingly. Whatever good or bad a person does in this world will not remain limited to this world; rather, the consequence of their actions, whether good or bad, will be given by Allah on the Day of Judgment, as mentioned in the Quran.

Balance between Allah's mercy and justice:

The balance between Allah's mercy and justice is that Allah's justice ensures that every person receives reward or punishment based on their actions, while Allah's mercy provides hope for forgiveness and shows the path to repentance. As mentioned in the Quran, Allah's balance between justice and mercy is clear. As mentioned:

خَلِيدِينَ فِيهَا مَا دَامَتِ السَّمُوتُ وَالْأَرْضُ إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ رَبُّكَ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ فَكَالٌ لِّمَا يُرِيدُ⁷

“Staying there forever, as long as the heavens and the earth will endure, except what your Lord wills. Surely your Lord does what He intends.”

Allah's Justice and Human action.

Allah's justice is based on human actions. Allah's justice grants humans the ability to follow the right path. As stated in the Quran:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ۚ إِنَّ يَكُونُ عَذَابًا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أُولَىٰ بِهِمَا⁸
فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدُوا ۚ وَإِنْ تَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا⁸

“O believers! Stand firm for justice as witnesses for Allah even if it is against yourselves, your parents, or close relatives. Be they rich or poor, Allah is best to ensure their interests. So do not let your desires cause you to deviate 'from justice'. If you distort the testimony or refuse to give it, then 'know that' Allah is certainly All-Aware of what you do.”

1. Allah's Justice in Islam

Allah's justice is a fundamental and important belief in Islam. Humans have been granted free will and the ability to make their own decisions, and based on these free choices, they will receive reward or punishment for their actions. As mentioned in Quran:

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ⁹

“Allah will judge between all of you on the Day of Judgment”

Like another place Allah says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ النَّاسَ شَيْئًا وَلَكِنَّ النَّاسَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ¹⁰

“Indeed, Allah does not wrong people in the least, but it is people who wrong themselves.”

These verses show that Islam teaches a balanced approach between Allah's justice and mercy.

2. The Mercy and Justice of Allah on the Day of Judgment

Allah's judgment and justice are based on human actions. According to Islamic belief, every person is responsible for their own actions. Based on their deeds, they will either receive reward or punishment from Allah. In Surah Zilzal Allah says:

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ ۖ وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ¹¹

“So whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.”

Similarly in Tafseer Ibn Kathir, it is stated:

“Allah’s judgment is always just and completely natural.”¹²

Furthermore, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained Allah’s justice by saying:

“Allah’s justice will reward or punish people according to their deeds.”¹³

An excellent example of Allah’s justice is explained by Sheikh Muhammad bin Salih Al-Uthaymeen in his book “Sharh Al-Wasitiyyah”. He states:

“Allah’s justice is based on every action’s result, and it is entirely just.”¹⁴

In relation to the day of judgment, in Christianity God’s mercy and justice are also integral concepts. It is stated in New testaments that on the day of judgment God will judge the living and the dead on the base of their actions, faith and the grace of Jesus Christ.

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he Loved us, even when we are dead in our trespasses, made us alive together With Christ- by grace you have been saved.”¹⁵

3: Allah’s Justice on the Day of Judgment

In Islam, the concept of the day of Judgment signifies that humans will be accountable for their deeds before Allah. On that day, Allah’s justice will be evident to all, and every person will receive their reward or punishment according to their deeds. As Allah says in the Quran:

يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِجَادِلٍ عَنْ نَفْسِهَا وَتُوْفَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ¹⁶

“Consider’ the Day ‘when’ every soul will come pleading for itself, and each will be paid in full for what it did, and none will be wronged.”

In Tafseer Al- Tabari, it is mentioned:

“Allah’s justice on the Day of Judgment will be clear and evident. No one will be able to deny Allah’s decision.”¹⁷

Allah’s justice is free from oppression and bias. Allah never wrongs His servants. His justice always reflects His wisdom, judiciary, majesty, and greatness. A person receives reward or punishment according to their actions. Similarly, Sayyid Qutab in his Tafseer “Fi Zilzal al-Quran” says:

“On the day of judgment, Allah’s judgment will be free from any oppression. His decision will be just, and each person will receive their reward or punishment based on their deeds.”¹⁸

There are multiple examples from multiple Islamic scholars that define beautifully the love, justice and kindness of Allah. Allah’s justice and human action are bounds to each other. Ibn Abi al-Izz in his book Sharh Al- Aqeeda Al Tahawiyya writes very nicely on the justice of Allah. He says:

“Allah’s justice is based on the actions of humans, and every person will receive the result of their deeds.”¹⁹

Justice and Human Rights in the Context of Islam:

Islam is a very comprehensive way of life that not only provides guidance on spirituality and worship of one Allah but also shows the basic rights and protection of human beings. The teachings of Islam which are for the protection of human protection, human rights and its beautiful principles are considered an excellent

example of human rights protection in Muslim society and in across the world. In Islam every individual has equal respect, justice and dignity, regardless of whether they are a man or a woman, young or old, Muslim or Non-Muslim.

Human Rights in Islam

Islam guarantee that every individual's freedom, rights and dignity are respected. Quran acknowledges and protects the basic rights of human beings.

The Right to Life:

The right to life is sacred in Islam. In Quran Allah says:

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۚ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوَلِيِّهِ سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يُسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ ۚ إِنَّكَ كَانَ مَرْصُورًا²⁰

“Do not take a ‘human’ life—made sacred by Allah—except with ‘legal’ right. If anyone is killed unjustly, We have given their heirs the authority, but do not let them exceed limits in retaliation, for they are already supported ‘by law’”²¹

The verse above emphasizes that the life of human beings is sacred and killing of innocent is prohibited, but in cases of law.

Similarly in Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 3 it is mentioned:

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.”²²

The Right to Freedom:

Islam gives to human beings the freedom of life. Everyone can live their lives according to their choices. The Quran states:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ²³

“Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood.

This verse describing that everyone is free to choose their faith and beliefs. No one can force them to follow a specific religion or any other way of life of others. An outlined in the UDHR Article 18 asserts:

“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”²⁴

The Right to Education:

The seeking of knowledge is a fundamental right in Islam. About the importance of knowledge the prophet Muhammad SAW said:

“Seeking knowledge is an obligation upon every Muslim, male and female.”²⁵

☀ Rights of Minorities in Islam

The Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

“Whoever wrongs a person with whom we have a covenant (a non- Muslim citizen), or diminishes his right, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes something from him without his consent- then I will be his opponent on the day of Judgment.”²⁶

Islam has safeguarded the rights of minorities, granting them full citizenship and equal rights. Kind treatment towards them has been emphasized, and the protection of their rights is considered both a legal and religious duty. This is the foundation of a peaceful society based on justice and fairness.

Islam grants the following rights to minorities:

- I. Religious freedom and protection of their places of worship.
- II. Protection of life, property, and family.
- III. Basic rights such as access to education, trade, residence, and employment.
- IV. Access to justice and cooperation.

☀️ Women Rights

In the era of ignorance (Jahiliyyah), women had no recognized rights in society. Their rights as wives, daughters, and even heirs were completely denied. In the sight of Islam woman is considered an integral part of society. However, the guidance of Islam, which outlines and affirms the rights of women, includes the following:

- I. Right to Education: In the 7th century Islam declared that knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim. Hazrat Muhammad SAW stated that “Procurement of knowledge is essential for all Muslims (both men and women with no discernment).”²⁷
- II. Right to Inheritance and wealth : In Islam women are free from any liabilities. Her family members are responsible for all her providing including her honor and integrity. Khadija RA the wife of Muhammad SAW was a knowingly name in the business and trade market.
- III. Right to participate in leadership position: Numerous examples of Islam shows that how women contributed their work in not only in the society but also in the battlefields. Al- Shifa bint Abdullah was one of the few women at that time who knew to read and write that is why she was appointed by the caliph as a supervisor in market place.
- IV. Right of marriage and divorce: Islam give the right of marriage and divorce to women. It is a misconception in the non-Muslims that women has no right to initiate divorce in Islam. Quran stated such :

الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ ۖ فَاِمْسَاكِ بِعَرُوفٍ اَوْ تَسْرِيجٍ ۚ اِحْسَانٌ ۚ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ اَنْ تَاْخُذُوْا مِنْهُنَّ اَيْتِيْنًا اِلَّا اَنْ يَخَافَا اَلَا يَظِيْبَا حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ اِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَا يَظِيْبَا حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهٖ²⁸

“Divorce may be retracted twice, then the husband must retain ‘his wife’ with honor or separate ‘from her’ with grace. It is not lawful for husbands to take back anything of the dowry given to their wives, unless the couple fears not being able to keep within the limits of Allah. So if you fear they will not be able to keep within the limits of Allah, there is no blame if the wife compensates the husband to obtain divorce.

4: Principles of punishment in Islam

It is not about cruelty or forcing someone in Islam by means of punishment but punishment in Islam is means of justice, maintaining social norms and encouraging people, to fulfil theirs, duty with honesty and repentance. To protect the individuals from harm and to give them a fair society, punishment is the way of showing to the do the good deeds.

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ اُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ اَنْ يُؤْتُوْا اُولِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْمَسْكِيْنَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِيْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَلْيَغْفُوْا لِمَصْفَحًا ۚ اَلَا تُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يَغْفَرَ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ²⁹

“Do not let the people of virtue and affluence among you swear to suspend donations to their relatives, the needy, and the emigrants in the cause of Allah. Let them pardon

and forgive. Do you not love to be forgiven by Allah? And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

☀ Principles of punishment in Islam

There are two types of punishment in Islam, Hadd and Qisas, which are basically guided from Allah to prevent harm and to uphold moral and ethical values.

Hadd (Fixed punishment) : There are some crimes in Islam for whose punishment is fixed from Allah, known as “Hadd” punishment. The punishment for theft apostasy, adultery and false accusation of adultery are fixed in Islam to maintain the society standards.

Qisas (Retribution): Qisas refers to the principle of “ an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, an ear for an ear and so on. It is the punishment applied by the time of body harm and in cases of murder. The family of the victim has the rights then to seek retribution or accept “Diyyat” which means money in exchange for compensation.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ ۖ الْحَرُّ بِالْحَرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنْثَىٰ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ ۖ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَأَتْبَاعُهُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۚ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ³⁰

“ believers! The law of retaliation is set for you in cases of murder—a free man for a free man, a slave for a slave, and a female for a female. But if the offender is pardoned by the victim’s guardian, then blood-money should be decided fairly and payment should be made courteously. This is a concession and a mercy from your Lord. But whoever transgresses after that will suffer a painful punishment”.

Tazir (Discretionary punishments): It is a wide range of offences for which punishment is not predefined by Shriya of Islam. The judge can applied the penalties, fine, imprisonment or other means of punishment depending on the circumstances and severity of crime.

☀ Is punishment in Islam Reform or Retribution

Punishment in Islam is a mean of reforms not retribution. The ultimate point is to guide the person to the right path and to be fair and positive in the society. Islamic law is about the leniency and personal growth rather than the vengeance or personal retaliation. As Allah says in the Quran: (16:126)

وَأِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِسِئْلِ مَا عُوِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَلَا كَلِمِن صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ ۖ³¹

"If you retaliate, then let it be equivalent to what you have suffered. But if you patiently endure, it is certainly best for those who are patient.

Giving right of forgiveness to the victim family is a mean of forgiving the offender, in such way Islam is encouraging the forgiveness and mercy. The ayat below is highlighting the emphasis on rehabilitation over simple retribution.

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ³²

"The reward of an evil deed is its equivalent. But whoever pardons and seeks reconciliation, then their reward is with Allah. He certainly does not like the wrongdoers.

Punishment in Islam is not only just a punishment it is a plan to protect community and forbidden him to not involve in such activities that harms other individuals, rather than exacting the personal revenge.

وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَمَنْ قُتِلَ مَظْلُومًا فَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا لَوْلِيٍّهُ سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يَسْرِفُ فِي الْقَتْلِ ۚ إِنَّكَ كَانَ مَنصُورًا³³

"Do not take a human life—made sacred by Allah—except with legal right. If anyone is killed unjustly, We have given their heirs the authority, but do not let them exceed limits in retaliation, for they are already supported 'by law. "

☀ **Understanding Islamic Punishment in Today's World**

Due to lack of context or media sensationalism Islamic punishment is criticize in modern world. In Islamic framework the punishment came after strict conditions and high judgment of evidence. The Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized avoiding punishment if there came even a small evidence.

“ Avoid applying Hudud punishments as much as you can. If there is any way out for the accused, let them go. It is better for the leader to err in forgiveness rather than punishment.”³⁴

In Islam, punishments are considered a last resort, only to be applied when reform or other peaceful societal methods have failed. In the modern era, criticism of Islamic punishments has increased; however, Islam has set the true objective of punishment as crime prevention, offender rehabilitation, and the restoration of a peaceful society. To protect the innocent and deter the oppressor, the option of punishment becomes necessary.

5: Harmony Between Human Rights and Islamic Justice

Islam has presented a comprehensive, complete and natural principle-based concept of human rights grounded in justice. It ensures human rights grounded in justice. It ensures human protection, freedom, dignity and safeguards economic, political and social rights. In Islam, justice means giving every individual their rightful due and preventing oppression.

☀ **Harmony Between Human Rights and Islamic Justice**

Islam has not limited justice to merely fulfilling the rights of individuals; rather, it serves a broader purpose. Justice is portrayed as a means to protect society from evil and oppression, and to ensure that every individual receives their due rights and freedom. From the perspective of the Quran and Sunnah, Islamic justice and human rights are seen as two sides of the same coin.

The concept of Justice: Allah says in the Quran:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ ۚ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ³⁵

Indeed, Allah commands justice, grace, as well as generosity to close relatives. He forbids indecency, wickedness, and aggression. He instructs you so perhaps you will be mindful.”

According to this verse, Allah instructs humanity not only to uphold justice but also to practice kindness and benevolence.

1. Human Equality and Divine Justice: Islam provides numerous examples that clearly demonstrate that all of humanity is entitled to equal rights. One profound example is found in the Prophet Muhammad's SAW sermon during the Conquest of Makkah, which laid down the universal principles of human rights emphasizing equality and justice for all.

The sermon of the Prophet Muhammad SAW during the conquest of Makkah stands as a profound example of justice, mercy and human rights. Despite having the power to take revenge, the Prophet SAW chose the path of forgiveness- a precedent unmatched in history.

General Amnesty: The Prophet Muhammad SAW declared,

“Today, I say to you what Joseph said to his brothers: There is no blame On you today. Go, you are all free.”³⁶

Emphasis on Justice: The Prophet Muhammad SAW forbidden injustice as he SAW says:

“O My followers, I have forbidden injustice for myself and have made It forbidden among you, so do not wrong one another.”³⁷

☀ **Mercy and Love of Allah and Human Freedom.**

About Human freedom Allah says in the Quran:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكَرًا وَ إِمَّا كَفُورًا³⁸

“We already showed them the Way, whether they ‘choose to’ be grateful or ungrateful”.

Islam emphasizes numerous fundamental rights for human beings, and among the most essential is the right to freedom. Regarding this, Allah says:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ³⁹

"Let there be no compulsion in religion, for the truth stands out clearly from falsehood.

When Allah granted life to humanity, He also gave the freedom to live. He unveiled the difference between guidance and misguidance, leaving it to the individual to choose their path. At the same time, He declared His immense love and mercy, as mentioned in Quran:

قُلْ يٰٓعِبَادِىَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ⁴⁰

"Say, O Prophet, that Allah says, “O My servants who have exceeded the limits against their souls! Do not lose hope in Allah’s mercy, for Allah certainly forgives all sins. He is indeed the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.,

- Connection Between Human Freedom and Divine Mercy: Islam consistently highlights the relationship between human freedom and divine mercy, Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya writes: “The Prophet SAW always prioritized justice, mercy and human dignity and protected the rights of slaves, women and minorities.”⁴¹
- Allah’s Mercy: According to Dr. Muhammad Hamidullah, Allah’s mercy encompasses all of humanity. In his book “Muhammad Rasulullah” he writes: “Islam declares human freedom as a fundamental right and affirms that Allah’s mercy is for all human beings, regardless of their nation or religion.”⁴²

Conclusion and Suggestion

To understand Islamic punishment and Allah’s love in the modern era, one must be familiar with the principles, objectives, and historical applications of Islamic law. Allah created human beings and gave them free will, yet He clearly laid out the path

of right and wrong before them. This itself reflects His divine love: He created humans, endowed them with intellect and consciousness, granted them freedom, and then established a system of reward and punishment to uphold justice, reform, and compassion in society.

If there were no fear of punishment or hope for divine reward, powerful individuals might act solely on their desires, and the world would become a haven of corruption and chaos. The atheistic argument-questioning why Allah created us and then warns us with hellfire-is entirely baseless. When a person strays from the purpose of their creation, bringing them back to the right path requires, first, love and, if necessary, a second option-disciplinary consequences.

And isn't the ultimate form of divine, mercy that Allah not only forgives repentance but continues to do so again and again?

References:

- ¹ Al- Nisa (4: 58)
- ² Surah Al- Ankabot (29:69)
- ³ Surah Az-Zumar (39:53)
- ⁴ Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13)
- ⁵ Al- Maidah (5:55)
- ⁶ Al- Nisa (4:40)
- ⁷ Surah Hud (11:107)
- ⁸ Al- Nisa (4:135)
- ⁹ Al. Nisa (4:141)
- ¹⁰ Surah Younas- (10:44)
- ¹¹ Al- Zalzal (99:7-8)
- ¹² Tafseer ibn Kaseer(Volume 1, page no 345)
- ¹³ Sahih Muslim,book 2, Hadith 40
- ¹⁴ Sheikh,Muhammad ibni Salih al Uthaymeen, Sharh al wastiyyah,page no. 224
- ¹⁵ Ephesians 2:4-5
- ¹⁶ An - Nahal (16-111)
- ¹⁷ Al- Tabari, Tafseer, volume 2, page no.1050
- ¹⁸ Book: Fi Zilal al-Quran, Volume 1, Page 350
- ¹⁹ Book: Sharh Al-Aqeedah Al-Tahawiyya, page 294
- ²⁰ Bani Israil 33.
- ²¹ Al-Isra, 17:33
- ²² Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) Article 3
- ²³ Al-Baqarah 2:256
- ²⁴ Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 18
- ²⁵ Hadith Ibn Majah
- ²⁶ Sunan Abi Dawood, Hadith : 3052
- ²⁷ Ibn Majah 224
- ²⁸ Al. Quran , Al baqara: 229
- ²⁹ Al. Quran An-Nur 24: 22
- ³⁰ Quran , Surah Al- Baqarah, 2: 178
- ³¹ Quran, Surah An- Nahl, 16:126
- ³² Quran, Surah Ash- Shura, 42:40
- ³³ Quran, Sura Al-Isra, 17:33
- ³⁴ Hadith, termidi

³⁵ Surah An-Nahl 90

³⁶ Al-Sirah al-Nabawiyah by Ibn Hisham, vol. 4, page 49

³⁷ Hadith Qudsi. Sahih Muslim, 2577

³⁸ Quran Al- Insan 76:3

³⁹ Surah Al-Baqarah, 2: 256

⁴⁰ Surah Az-Zumar, 39: 53

⁴¹ Zad al Ma'ad, vol. 1 page 35

⁴² Muhammad Hamidullah, Islamic scholar and writer, book Muhammad Rasullulah, page 112