

Fast 21: Forgiveness of sins by Allah (2)

- Allah calls all people towards His forgiveness and promises it to them:

“Say: O My servants who have been reckless against their own souls, do not despair of the mercy of Allah; **surely Allah forgives sins altogether.** He is indeed the Forgiving, the Merciful.” (39:53)

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ۗ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٣﴾

The people addressed by God as “My servants” are all mankind. Man, as an individual, is responsible for his actions and cannot hide behind anyone or get someone to clear him of his responsibility. On the other hand, God is exceedingly forgiving and promises here that no sin is too great that man cannot, with the help and forgiveness of God, change his life to undo the effect of that sin on himself and others.

- The angels entreat Allah to have mercy on all:

“The heavens may almost be torn apart above them, while the angels celebrate the praise of their Lord and **ask forgiveness for those on earth.** Now surely Allah is the Forgiving, the Merciful. And those who take protectors besides Him — Allah watches over them; and you (O Prophet) are not in charge of them.” (42:5–6)

تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ اَلَا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ اَوْلِيَاءَ اللّٰهُ حَفِيْظٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَمَا اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿٦﴾

One meaning is that people’s misdeeds are so outrageous that their magnitude can be described as almost tearing down the heavens, nonetheless the angels pray for everyone’s forgiveness. Or it may be that the call and cry of the angels in praising God and asking God to forgive people is so powerful as to almost shatter the heavens. The meaning of angels asking for forgiveness for those on earth means that it is the law of Allah Himself that He forgives human beings.

Also, angels represent the good side of man. This indicates that, looking at all humanity on earth together, its good side asks for and deserves forgiveness enough to avert the punishment for the evil done by its bad side. It is generally acknowledged that the doing of good by a small number of people within a group or community will prevent punishment befalling its evil-doers as well. As the Quran says: “Surely good deeds take away evil deeds” (11:114).

The next verse above (42:6) says that the Prophet is not “in charge” of the unbelievers — “those who take protectors besides Him”. If Allah forgives them, as is the subject of the previous verse (42:5), the Prophet cannot interfere in this judgment. In fact, it is not only the Holy Prophet who is addressed here in the words “you are not in charge of them” but every Muslim. If Allah forgives those whom we regard as deserving of punishment for their unbelief and wrongdoing, we have no say in the matter.

- Allah’s law of forgiveness for man is also mentioned as below:

“And **hasten to forgiveness from your Lord** and a Garden, as wide as the heavens and the earth; it is prepared for those who keep their duty:

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ
عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

Those who spend in ease as well as in adversity and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon people. And Allah loves the doers of good (to others).

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَ
الْكُظَّيِّينَ الْعَظِيمِ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ
النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

And those who, when they commit an indecency or wrong their souls, remember Allah and ask forgiveness for their sins. **And who forgives sins but Allah?** And they do not persist knowingly in what they do.” (3:133–135)

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا الذُّنُوبَ بِهِمْ
وَمَنْ يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ۗ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا
عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

Man should rush and hasten to seek God’s forgiveness. To achieve it, you should be charitable in every circumstance, whether you are rich or poor, and restrain anger against others, and pardon people for any wrong they have done to you. Whenever you commit any wrong, you must turn to Allah only for forgiveness. Of course, if you have harmed anyone, you must undo that harm or pay the appropriate penalty, as well as ask for Allah’s forgiveness.

- Another principle laid down in the Quran is simply as follows:

“And whoever does evil or wrongs his soul, then asks forgiveness of Allah, will find Allah Forgiving, Merciful.” (4:110)

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سَوْئًا أَوْ يظَلِمِ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ
يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾