

THE DIVINE MERCY OF GOD (PART 2 OF 3): ITS WARM EMBRACE

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Description: Mercy, as it is manifested in this life and in the Hereafter.

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Divine mercy wraps all existence in its fold, forever enduring. The caring Lord of mankind is merciful to them, full of compassion. The name of God, *Ar-Rahman*, suggests His loving mercy is a defining aspect of His being; the fullness of His compassion is limitless; a bottomless ocean with no shores. Ar-Razi, one of the classical Islamic scholars wrote, 'It is unimaginable for creation to be more merciful to itself than God!' Indeed Islam teaches that God is more merciful to a human being than his/her own mother.

In God's abounding mercy, He sends down rain to produce fruits from orchards to provide for the human body. The soul as well needs intense spiritual nourishment the same way the body needs food. In His abounding mercy, God sent prophets and messengers to human beings and revealed scriptures to them to sustain the human spirit. Divine Mercy displayed itself in the Torah of Moses:

"...In the writing whereof there was guidance and mercy for all who stood in awe of their Lord." (Quran 7:154)

And the revelation of the Quran:

"...This [revelation] is a means of insight from your Lord, and to provide guidance and, mercy unto people who will believe." (Quran 7:203)

Mercy is not granted to some merit of one's ancestors. Divine Mercy is granted for acting on the Word of God and listening to its recitation:

"And this (Quran) is a Book which We have bestowed from on high, a blessed one: follow it, then, and be conscious of God, so that you might be graced with His mercy." (Quran 6:155)

"Hence, when the Quran is recited, listen to it, and listen in silence, so that you might be graced with [God's] mercy." (Quran 7:204)

Mercy is a result of obedience:

"Hence, (O believers!) be constant in prayer, and render the purifying dues, and obey the Messenger, so that you might be graced with God's mercy." (Quran 24:56)

God's mercy is man's hope. Consequently, the believers beseech God for His mercy:

"Affliction has befallen me: but You are the most merciful of the merciful!" (Quran 21:83)

They beseech God's mercy for the faithful:

"O our Lord!, let not our hearts swerve from the truth after You have guided us; and bestow on us the gift of Your mercy: verily, You are the [true] Giver of Gifts." (Quran 3:8)

And they beseech God's mercy for their parents:

"...O my Lord!, Bestow Your mercy upon them, even as they brought me when I was a child!" (Quran 17:24)

Allotment of Divine Mercy

Divine mercy clasps in its arms the faithful and the faithless, the obedient and the rebel, but in the life to come it will be reserved for the faithful. *Ar-Rahman* is merciful to all creation in the world, but his mercy is reserved for the faithful in the life to come. *Ar-Raheem* will dispense His mercy to the faithful on Judgment Day:

"...With My chastisement do I afflict whom I will - but My Mercy overspreads everything: and so I shall confer it on those who fear Me and spend in charity, and who believe in Our messages - those who shall follow the [last] Messenger, the unlettered Prophet whom they find described in the Torah that is with them, and in the Gospel...." (Quran 7:156-157)

Divine allotment of mercy is described by the Prophet of Islam:

"God created a hundred portions of mercy. He placed one portion between His creation due to which they have compassion on each other. God has stored the remaining ninety nine portions for Judgment Day to grace His slaves." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim, Al-Tirmidhi, and others.)

A mere portion of divine mercy fills the heavens and the earth, humans love one another, beasts and birds drink water.

Also, the divine mercy which will be manifested on Judgment Day is vaster than what we see in this life, just as divine punishment will be more intense than what we experience here. The Prophet of Islam explained the dual extreme of these divine attributes:

"If a believer were to know what punishment God has stored, he will despair and not a single one will anticipate making it to Paradise. If an unbeliever were to know the abounding mercy of God, not a single one will despair to make it to Paradise." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim, Al-Tirmidhi)

Yet, in Islamic doctrine, divine mercy supersedes divine anger:

"Indeed, My mercy supersedes my punishment." (Saheeh Al-Bukhari, Saheeh Muslim)

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