

AR-RAHMA

(MERCY)

Definition:

To be merciful is the intent to be of benefit to others as well as to be kind and forgiving.

Allah is the most merciful of all merciful. His mercy encompasses all His servants and He cares for all and relieves their distress. His mercy precedes His wrath. Two of His names are:

- Raheem: The One who shows mercy
- Rahman: The One whose mercy is unequalled but Only Allah can be called Rahman, whereas others may be described as Raheem.

Allah's mercy is exhibited as He shows His servants their duty in worshipping Him and that His orders should be obeyed; for when Mankind obeys His lord, he benefits himself, Allah has no need of His servants. It is like a father explaining to his children what is good for them; this is part of His mercy.

We will discuss this characteristic of Mercy and illustrate certain concepts:

- Allah is merciful.
- The mercy of Allah is combined with guiding mankind to His way.
- We too should be merciful to each other.
- We should never despair of the mercy of Allah.
- Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is our example of mercy and kindness.
- Allah's special mercy for those who are righteous
- The benefits of being merciful to others.

ALLAH IS MERCIFUL

Allah, glory be to Him, created us and He cares for His creation by providing for them, guiding them and forgiving their sins and shortcomings.

Many verses in the Qur'an tell us that Allah is forgiving and accepting of our repentance turning to us in mercy.

﴿ الْمَرَّ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾ [التوبة: ١٠٤]

"Know they not that Allah does accept repentance from His votaries and receives their gifts of charity, and that Allah is verily He, the Oft-Returning, Most Merciful?" (At-Tawba 9 : 104)

We are encouraged to turn to Allah in repentance seeking His forgiveness for we are promised that He will forgive us and show His mercy.

﴿ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ
الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ
رَحِيمٌ ﴾ [الأنعام: ٥٤]

"When those come to thee who believe in Our Signs, say: "Peace be on you; your Lord has inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy: verily, if any of you did evil in ignorance, and thereafter repented, and amended (his conduct), lo! He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (Al-An'am 6 : 54)

Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) explained that Allah ordained on Himself the rule of mercy:

Abou Horaira related that the Prophet (PBUH) said, "When Allah created the creation, He wrote in His Book above His throne, My mercy supercedes My anger."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

The Qur'an confirms this concept:

﴿ كَتَبَ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ ﴾ [الأنعام: ١٢]

"He has inscribed for Himself (the rule of) Mercy" (Al-An'am 6: 12)

In another Hadith (Saying of the Prophet) related by Omar bin Al-Khattab, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) asked his companions about a woman suckling her baby, *"Do you believe that this mother would throw her baby in the Fire?"* They said, *"No, if she could help it!"* He said, *"Allah is more merciful with His servants than this mother is with her baby."*

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

It is the mercy of Allah that he sent messengers and divine books to guide mankind to his way and that he tests us with adversity

The Qur'an is both a guidance and mercy.

﴿ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾ [الأعراف: ٥٢]

"For We had certainly sent unto them a Book, based on knowledge, which We explained in detail, a guide and a mercy to all who believe" (Al-Ara'f 7 : 52)

The Qur'an, in addition to being a source of guidance and a mercy, is also a reminder and a cure to the ailments in our hearts. This blessing of the Qur'an is better than the wealth for which people desire and strive.

﴿ يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَشِفَاءٌ لِّمَا فِي الصُّدُورِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴾ [يونس: ٥٧]

"O mankind! there has come to you a direction from your Lord and a healing for the (diseases) in your hearts, and for those who believe, a Guidance and a Mercy" (Yunus 10 : 57)

﴿ قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا تَجْمَعُونَ ﴾ [يونس: ٥٨]

Say: "In the Bounty of Allah. And in His Mercy, in that let them rejoice": that is better than the (wealth) they hoard" (Yunus 10: 58)

Those who do not avail themselves of the guidance and mercy of the Qur'an are the losers, for they wrong only their own souls,

﴿ وَنُنزِلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴾

[الإسراء: ٨٢]

"We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur-an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss" (Al-Isra'a 17 : 82)

Allah showed us His way, and warned us against following Satan, for surely he will misguide us. Allah tests and tries each of us in His own way. We should learn from these tests and trials and evolve as better human beings.

﴿ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِالشَّرِّ وَالْحَيْرِ فَتْنَةً ۗ وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴾

[الأنبياء: ٣٥]

"Every soul shall have a taste of death: and We test you by evil and by good by way of trial. To Us must ye return" (Al-Anbia'a 21: 35)

If it were not for tests and trials, we would forget and persist in our wrong ways. It is the mercy of Allah that He reminds us of our duty and accountability to Him from time to time. This way, we can heed the warning and correct our mistakes and wrong behavior.

﴿ وَلَنُنذِرَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴾

[السجدة: ٢١]

"And indeed We will make them taste of the Penalty of this (life) prior to the supreme Penalty, in order that they may (repent and) return" (As-Sajda 32 : 21)

WE SHOULD BE MERCIFUL TO OTHERS

Characteristic of the believers are that they exhibit mercy and are kind to one another. They care for each other and are as one body closely linked,

An-Na'man bin Bashir related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said, "The example of the believers in their mercy, kindness, caring and love for each other, is like one body, when one part of that body gets sick, the rest of the body would feel for it by exhibiting fever and by staying awake at night."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

If we show mercy towards other people, Allah will show mercy towards us.

Abdullah bin Amrou bin Al'A's related that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said,

"Those showing mercy will have the mercy of Allah bestowed on them; have mercy on those on earth, then you will obtain the mercy of Allah in heaven."

Narrated by Abou Dawood and Termedhi

A similar Hadith emphasizes that Allah will not show any mercy to those who are not merciful with others.

Jareed bin Abdullah related that Allah's Messenger (PBUH) said,

"Allah does not show mercy towards those who are not merciful with others."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

DO NOT DESPAIR OF ALLAH'S MERCY

As human beings, we sin and err; however, we should never despair of the mercy of Allah. We should turn to Him, repent, submit and do good before it is too late.

﴿ قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوا مِن رَّحْمَةِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ
الذُّنُوبَ جَمِيعًا إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴾ [الزمر: ٥٣]

"Say O my Servants who have transgressed against their souls! despair not of the Mercy of Allah: for Allah forgives all sins: for He is often Forgiving, Most-Merciful" (Az-Zumar 39 : 53)

﴿ وَأَيُّبُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَأَسْلِمُوا لَهُ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴾

[الزمر: ٥٤]

"Turn ye to your Lord (in repentance) and bow to His (Will), before the Penalty comes on you: after that ye shall not be helped"

(Az-Azumar 39 : 54)

It is against belief to despair of Allah's mercy.

The mercy of Allah and His forgiveness is available providing we repent, correct our wrong behavior and exhibit our belief during our life. Even those who blaspheme are promised forgiveness if they repent and seek Allah's forgiveness.

﴿ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنْ لَمْ

يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴾ [المائدة: ٧٣]

"They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One God. If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them" (Al-Maeda 5 : 73)

﴿ أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَهُ، وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴾ [المائدة: ٧٤]

"Why turn they not to Allah and seek His Forgiveness? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful"

(Al-Maeda 5 : 74)

The hypocrites are threatened with severe chastisement in Hellfire, however, if they repent and amend their wrong conduct and do good, they are then promised forgiveness and reward.

﴿ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَكِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴾ [النساء: ١٤٥]

"The Hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire; no helper wilt thou find for them" (An-Nesa'a 4 : 145)

﴿ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴾ [النساء: ١٤٦]

"Except for those who repent, mend (their lives), hold fast to Allah, and purify their religion as in Allah's sight; if so they will be (numbered) with the Believers. And soon will Allah grant to the Believers a reward of immense value" (An-Nesa'a 4 : 146)

PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH) IS OUR EXAMPLE

Allah praised the character of His prophet (PBUH). He was kind, caring and merciful with the believers. We learn from him and follow his example.

﴿ لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴾ [التوبة: ١٢٨]

"Now has come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should perish: ardently anxious is he over you: to the Believers is he most kind and merciful" (At-Tawba 9 : 128)

The prophet (PBUH) was kind, gentle and caring. He did not elevate himself above his companions and he sought their council. He sought Allah's mercy and forgiveness on their behalf.

﴿ فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴾ [آل عمران: ١٥٩]

"It is part of the Mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about thee: so pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust in Allah. For Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)" (Al-Imran 3 : 159)

The Prophet (PBUH) would shorten his prayers fearful of causing hardship to the elderly, weak and those who were pressed for time.

Abou Qotada related that Allah's messenger (PBUH) said,

"I stand up in prayer intending to stand in prayer for long time, but then I hear the cry of the youngster and I shorten my prayer for fear of distressing his mother."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim.

Allah emphasized in the Qur'an that He sent Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) specifically as a mercy to all the worlds. He was a mercy in his character and example, and a mercy of guidance and a blessing since the Qur'an was revealed to him.

﴿ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ [الأنبياء: ١٠٧]

"We sent thee not, but as a mercy for all creatures"

(Al-Anbia'a 21 : 107)

ALLAH'S SPECIAL MERCY TO THE RIGHTEOUS

Allah provides and guides everyone but some turn away denying themselves divine guidance following their own desires, while others obey Allah and serve Him opening their hearts to His guidance appreciating His blessings. Such righteous persons avail themselves of this special guidance and mercy.

﴿ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ فَسَأَكْتُبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾ [الأعراف: ١٥٦]

"but My Mercy extends to all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right, and practise regular charity, and those who believe in Our Signs" (Al-Ara'f 7 : 156)

How we behave with other people, whether we are honest, kind and merciful will establish whether we deserve Allah's mercy or not.

Jabir bin Abdullah related that Allah's messenger (PBUH) said, "Allah will bestow His mercy on a man who is easy-going when he buys, and when he sells and when he borrows."

Narrated by Bokhari

Our deeds alone are not sufficient to deserve Paradise. We are allowed to dwell in Heaven by the mercy of Allah. He guides us to do good, and He forgives our sins, overlooks our shortcomings and multiplies our reward.

Aesha related that Allah's messenger (PBUH) said, "Seek the right behavior and be moderate and do the best that you can and receive the good news, for none of you will enter heaven just because of his good deeds." They asked, "Not even you O messenger of Allah?" He said, "Not even me unless Allah bestows His mercy and forgiveness on me."

Narrated by Bokhari and Muslim

BENEFITS OF MERCY

- When we show mercy to each other, Allah will show mercy toward us, and our community will improve and be guided by Allah.
- Being merciful indicates a good heart, noble character and a strong faith in Allah.
- Others like a person who is kind and merciful.
- Being merciful toward others means guiding them to the truth and inviting them to Allah.
- We should always seek Allah's mercy and never despair. Our good deeds alone are not sufficient, we need Allah's mercy and His guidance. This way we avoid sin, become guided and enter His Paradise.