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Islam as the Religion of Mercy: The Relationship Between Love, Cursing, and *Jihad*

Protective Mercy: An Analytical Reading of the Religion of Mercy and the Meaning of *Jihad*

In everyday life, love is usually associated with leniency, tolerance, and avoiding harshness. For example, if someone cares for a child, at first glance, their love is obvious in caressing, supporting, and calming the child. However, in another situation, caring for the child takes on a new form: The same person is not merely an observer in the face of a danger threatening the child; they prevent the harm, repel the danger, and move the child to a safe place. Here, love leads not to passivity, but to protection and boundary-setting. From this perspective, the religion of mercy does not mean avoiding any confrontation with evil, removing obstacles, and destroying enemies. If mercy is understood merely as unconditional leniency, its relationship with protecting the truth, repelling corruption, and removing obstacles remains ambiguous.

The main problem is whether mercy, in relation to existence and guidance, leads to the negation of any severity and rejection, or whether mercy itself, at a certain level, requires the negation of that which blocks the path to the truth. This question becomes more serious when some equate the faith of compassion with absolute tolerance. They conclude that any kind of cursing, boundary-setting, and *jihad* is incompatible with beneficence. In contrast, considering the relationship between the human being and their origin and ultimate destination, mercy not only does not

conflict with removing obstacles, but also it is incomplete without it. Therefore, elucidating the religion of mercy within this framework requires understanding the relationship between love and care, monotheism and boundary-setting, as well as *jihad* and mercy.

The Religion of Mercy and Compassion in Action

The starting point for the discussion is the rejection of the notion that any confrontation, rejection, or opposition necessarily equals violence. In Islam, there is no violent ruling in its conventional sense. This is because what is superficially perceived as severity is, in fact, of the nature of protecting the beloved and removing the obstacle. Based on this analysis, mercy does not equal sheer emotion. In fact, it is defined in connection with the ultimate purpose. Caring for a loved one is not just about affection; it requires protecting them from harm as well; consequently, removing any obstacle that prevents one from reaching the beloved is not something against love, but one of its requirements.

Accordingly, mercy is not neutral. It has a kind of active relationship with good. Good, when it should be protected, naturally requires distancing from evil; if this distancing is eliminated, love reduces to the realm of non-commitment. Therefore, the Islam of mercy does not mean ignoring obstacles, but means understanding mercy in a system where preserving the connection with the truth is the principle, and whatever distorts this connection should be negated and confronted with.

The Religion of Mercy and Criticizing Boundless Tolerance

The Shiite perspective stands against a view that equates mercy with absolute tolerance and indulgence. The problem with this view is that it considers any cursing and taking any negative stance against the enemies of God and the arrogant as incompatible with religion. However, this

understanding, on an ontological level, does not make a clear distinction between loving the truth and being indifferent toward anti-truth; if monotheism means orienting yourself toward God, one cannot consider the human being's relationship with the enemies of God as neutral. Compromising with what stands against God, in this intellectual framework, is considered a sign of being weak in monotheism because monotheism is not merely a verbal confession, but it requires devotion to wilayah (guardianship) and disavowing God's enemies.

This point is clarified through a fundamental question: Is the human being kinder than God who created them? If someone, according to personal taste, considers any cursing and rejection incompatible with mercy, they have in fact assumed a criterion for mercy outside the divine relationship, while the ultimate criterion for mercy is established by divine act and decree. Therefore, an emotional understanding independent of divine will is a wrong understanding.

Quranic Evidence Regarding the Possibility of Reconciling Mercy with Cursing

The main argument for rejecting boundless tolerance is formulated in the Quran. In the cited verses, cursing and punishment are attributed to God: "They are cursed by Allah in this world and the Hereafter,"¹ "He has prepared a painful punishment for the wrongdoers,"² and "He has prepared a great punishment for him."³ The importance of these phrases is that they show the negation and rejection of certain positions and people is not something outside divine logic, but part of it. When God—the Source of Mercy—from a position of ontological and value-based judgment, curses a group and decrees their punishment, one cannot interpret every form of rejection or opposition as being 'anti-mercy.

Cursing is not a sheer emotional reaction or an eruption of anger, but the stance of truth against falsehood. Cursing, at this level, is showing aversion to whatever incompatible with divine truth.

For this reason, opposing cursing on the grounds that it contradicts mercy entails ignoring part of the Quranic formulation that expresses God's relationship with evil and enmity. From this perspective, true mercy is not defined by the removal of judgment and boundaries; rather, it is a system where aligning with the good necessitates the active negation of evil.

From Monotheism to Disavowal (*Bara'ah*): The Internal Structure of Religious Love

Love, if connects to divine love, has a structure that distinguishes it from purely emotional loves. within this structure, God is the most perfect beloved, and whatever distances the human being from Him is not a marginal matter, but a real obstacle in human being's existential journey. Therefore, removing the obstacle is not a secondary matter, but a sign of loyalty to the Beloved. If someone claims that they love their beloved but do not strive to remove the obstacles to reaching them, their love is a lie.

This logic can also be recognized in ordinary experiences of life. Regarding important matters, the human being does not settle merely for having a positive inclination toward something; rather, they provide the conditions for preserving what they love. When it comes to God, it becomes more serious. Here, monotheism, as a comprehensive orientation toward God, is accompanied by disavowal of His enemies. From this perspective, the religion of mercy is not understood as neutrality; rather, it establishes an order in which mercy is realized by preserving the relationship with the truth and removing obstacles to it.

The Faith of Compassion and the Redefinition of *Jihad*

If mercy is aimed at bringing the human being to their authentic connection with the truth, any action taken to remove impurities and obstacles to this connection can have a form of beneficence.

An important conclusion is drawn from this issue: *Jihad* is not equal to violence; it is beneficence. *Jihad* means an action taken to remove impurities and connects the human being to their heavenly family. Therefore, *jihad* is not a detachment from mercy, but its actualization in the field of conflict with evil.

Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him and his family) said, “Every nation has its own form of journeying; the journeying of my nation is *jihad* in the path of Allah.”⁴ When *jihad* is understood from this perspective, its significance makes sense: It is not merely an action to be taken, but an allegiance to a truth with which humanity must align themselves. If, after Allah, the Prophet, and his Household (Peace be upon them), *jihad* is introduced as the true beloved of the human being,⁵ it is because of its role in protecting the path to God. Therefore, the Islam of mercy does not conflict with *jihad*; rather, without an understanding of *jihad*, it cannot be fully elucidated.

The Existential Function of *Jihad* in Human Life

The human being is constantly exposed to elements that deviate their path in life. This deviation does not only occur on an external level, but also on the level of the human being's evaluation of good and evil; if the human being becomes indifferent to impurities, their sensitivity to the truth gradually decreases, and the boundary between truth and obstacle becomes blurred. *Jihad*, in this sense, prevents this by guarding the existential structure of the human being.

For this reason, the connection between *jihad* and mercy is understood through preserving the possibility of guidance. When it comes to the real destiny of the human being, mercy cannot remain silent about what distances them from their ultimate end. Thus, *jihad*, in this respect, is safeguarding the possibility of connection with the truth. Such an understanding also brings the

Islam of mercy closer to human lived experience because everyone realizes in their life that the love of the good does not endure without resisting evil.

Conclusion: The Religion of Mercy as Protective Mercy

The outcome of this analysis is that mercy, in the system of Shia Islam, is not a passive and boundless concept. Loving God truly is accompanied by protecting the path to Him and removing its obstacles. It is from here that cursing, punishment, disavowal, and *jihad* are not elements alien to mercy, but requirements of an order in which good must be preserved and evil must be negated. Quranic verses about cursing and punishment show that the divine stance toward falsehood is not one of mere tolerance; they establish the criterion by which a proper understanding of mercy must be measured.

Consequently, the Islam of mercy does not speak of destroying boundaries, but of understanding mercy in connection with truth, monotheism, and guarding the human being against impurities. Such an understanding considers *jihad* not a form of violence, but a manifestation of beneficence. It is because its ultimate end is cutting the human being from impurity and connecting them with their heavenly family. Thus, the faith of compassion is not about superficial leniency; it is fundamentally about protecting the path of truth and clearing away whatever stands in the way of it.

References

¹. Quran, 33:57

². Quran, 76:31

³. Quran, 4:93

⁴. Al-Muttaqi al-Hindi, *Kanz al- 'Ummāl*, under no. 10527.

⁵. Quran, 9:24