

### 6.27 Forgiveness & Purity of Heart

**Host:** What does the Quran have to say about forgiveness?

**Jamal Badawi:** The first thing that the Quran emphasizes is the relationship between piety (being God conscious) and forgiveness. For example in (3:134) it describes a true believer Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon (all) men;- for Allah loves those who do good. The Quran makes a connection between forgiveness (on our part) and our need for God's forgiveness. For example in (24:22) Let them forgive and overlook, do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? In other words if one wants God to forgive their sins then they should be understanding to other people's difficulties and forgive them. The Quran also ties between forgiveness and perseverance. For example we read in the Quran (7:199) Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; But turn away from the ignorant.

**Host:** What are some prophetic traditions that deal with this topic?

**Jamal Badawi:** There are several references from the sayings of the Prophet and also examples in his own behavior. First of all, the Prophet indicated that strength is not found in a person's physical strength but rather in a person's ability to control himself when he becomes angry. As narrated in Muslim the strong person is not the one who can defeat the other but the one who can truly control himself when he is angry. In a narration by Al Tabarani, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) says Shall I tell you something that will make your palaces in Paradise higher and that would raise you in degrees. They said Yes. He replied To be forgiving and to control one's self in the face of someone who provokes you. To forgive a person who was unfair or unjust to you, to give someone in need who did not give you when you were in need and to keep contact with someone even though they did not reciprocate it. An example from the practical side of the prophetic tradition is narrated by Al Tabarani that an Arab Bedouin came to the Prophet and asked for provisions. So Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) gave him provisions and asked the man if he had been fair to him. The man in arrogance and rudeness replied No, nor have you been kind nor have you been good to me. Many of the companions around Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) got provoked and very angry and rushed towards him. The Prophet however restrained them and told them to let him be. The Prophet went to his home and asked sent for the man. Then the Prophet within his home gave the man more provisions and then again asked if he was being fair to the man. The man replied Certainly, may God bless you and reward you. The Prophet then told the man that when he had relied in the negative yesterday it had put unease in the hearts of his companions and if he could say what he just said in front of them. The Prophet was more concerned about this person's relation with the others than about himself. The following day they went to the Mosque and the Prophet stood and said That Arab Bedouin fellow claimed yesterday that we were not fair to him and after I gave him more of his needs he claimed that he is now satisfied and he turned to the man and said is that true? The man replied in the affirmative May God bless you and reward you for your kindness. Then he turned to his companions and said The example of this man and myself is like somebody who had a camel, who started rebelling and started running from him. People started running after the camel which increased its excitement and rebelliousness. The man that owned the camel said leave the camel to me I know how to deal with this situation. The man picked some grass and started moving towards the camel slowly till the camel settled down and was very easily controlled. This example is similar to this one. If you got angry with this fellow and you may have killed him in his state of

ignorance and he may have gone to the hell fire. ♦ But look at the result after we took care of his needs while forgiving his infractions. ♦ In the Quran in (60:7) it says ♦ It may be that Allah will grant love (and friendship) between you and those whom ye (now) hold as enemies. ♦ ♦ This is the attitude that is found towards this subject in both the sayings and behavior of the Prophet. ♦

♦ Host: ♦ Isn't anger just a reaction to stress and isn't always forgiving beyond human capacity? ♦

♦ Jamal Badawi: ♦ Islam never asks for anything that is beyond a human's capacity. ♦ The Quran says in (2:286) ♦ On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear ♦ We don't have to be angels but we must try our best. ♦ Anger should always be controlled and should not be a source for rash actions or lead to rage. ♦

♦ We should make a distinction between getting angry for the sake of God or for getting angry for selfish reasons. ♦ The first, anger or disappointment towards the disregard for the teachings of God is desirable because it shows the sensitivity of the believer for the teachings of God. ♦ The second, selfish anger, can lead to disasters if there it is not controlled. ♦ The teachings of the Prophet teach us to control this type of anger so that disasters are prevented. ♦ However we are not required to be totally insensitive but rather to channel anger into forgiveness and control. ♦ In one saying of the Prophet (PBUH) narrated in Al Tirmithi he said that ♦ People are created in different degrees: ♦ people who slowly get angry and forget fast, people who get angry quickly and forgive quickly, people who are slow to get angry and slow to forgive, and people who get angry quickly and slowly forgive. ♦ ♦ Then he said ♦ The best of those people are those in the first category and the worst belongs to the last category. ♦

♦ Host: ♦ Are there certain innate qualities that make them more likely to be forgiving than others? ♦

♦ Jamal Badawi: ♦ The most innate character that causes people to forgive is the purity of their hearts. ♦ These people generally have a heart that is connected with its creator and a heart that tries its best to comply with the will of God. ♦ In the Quran in (59:10) it describes the true believers prayers ♦ Our Lord! Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith, and leave not, in our hearts, rancor (or sense of injury) against those who have believed. Our Lord! Thou art indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful. ♦ ♦ In a saying of the Prophet (PBUH) in Ibn Maja he was asked which type of people are the best. ♦ Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) answered ♦ A person who is truthful and a person whose heart is (*makhmoom*) clean and pious with no sinful tendencies, no aggression, no grudges nor jealousy. ♦ ♦ In the collection of Hadith by Bukhari the Prophet (PBUH) said ♦ Do not cut yourself from one another, do not turn your back on each other, do not hate each other, do not be jealous of each other and be servants of God as brothers. ♦ ♦ He continued ♦ It is not legitimate for a Muslim to boycott his brother for more than three days. ♦

♦ One time the Prophet (PBUH) was sitting with his companions and he said that someone who is going to Paradise will pass before you. ♦ They looked and saw a very simple person making ablution before the prayer (his beard was wet and there was a light shining from his face). ♦ The following day the Prophet repeated the same statement that one of the people who is going to Paradise will pass before you. ♦ They all looked and it was the same person. ♦ This was repeated on the third day. ♦ A companion of the Prophet by the name of Abd Allah wondered what qualities were in this simple person that made him one of the people destined for Paradise as revealed to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). ♦ Abd Allah went to the fellow, told a white lie that he had a dispute with his father and that he swore that he would not stay in the house for three days. ♦ He did this so that he could stay in this person's house and observe his behavior. ♦ The man said that Abd Allah was

welcome. ♦ Abd Allah stayed up all night watching to see what this man did for worship that made him deserve Paradise. ♦ He noted that this man simply prayed and slept and whenever he woke up at night he remembered God (made supplication) and woke up early in the morning for the dawn prayer. ♦ He watched him for three nights, and noted the same pattern. ♦ So Abd Allah went to him and told him that when they were sitting with the Prophet he said three times that you are among the people who are going to Paradise and I could not find anything unusual about your behavior that would make you deserve that. ♦ The man replied that he did nothing other than what Abd Allah had seen. ♦ Then when Abd Allah was going away the man called him and said that when he slept he didn't feel any anger, grudge or envy towards anyone. ♦ This showed that purity of heart, not holding a grudge combined with the minimum basic acts of worship justified the person going to Paradise.

**Host:** ♦ Is there any authority that can oblige a person the Muslim to accept an apology in the cases of disputes or misunderstandings?

**Jamal Badawi:** ♦ We quoted earlier from the Quran (24:22) ♦ Let them forgive and overlook ♦ which is only one example that addresses this subject. ♦ In Ibn Maja where the Prophet is quoted that if a person gives a sincere apology to his brother (for wrong that he has done to him) that is not accepted. The person doesn't accept the apology would have a sin as much as a person who takes people's property away without reason.

**In Al Tabarani the Prophet says that whoever received an apology and rejects it will not come to the pond (a pond in Paradise where Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) will offer drinks to those who enter Paradise). ♦ Also, in Al Tabarani the Prophet (PBUH) asked his companions ♦ Do you know who are the most evil amongst people? ♦♦ They replied ♦ No, do tell us. ♦♦ He said ♦ The person who stays by himself all the time, a person who physically punishes his slave and a person who withholds help when his brethren are in need. ♦♦ Then he said ♦ Should I tell you about someone who is even more evil than that? ♦♦ They replied ♦ Yes. ♦♦ He said ♦ A person who hates people and who is hated by people. ♦♦ Then he said should I tell you about someone who is even more evil than that? ♦♦ They replied ♦ Yes. ♦♦ He said ♦ Those who do not accept an apology. ♦**

♦ It is quite obvious from these examples that the idea behind an apology is not to humiliate the person but for it to be accepted in good faith. ♦ This includes family disputes and that people should not bring up the past and always be overly critical.

**Host:** ♦ What is Islam's view towards jealousy?

**Jamal Badawi:** ♦ Jealousy implies pride and the Quran indicates that one of the reasons that Satan was ousted from Paradise was his attitude of envy. ♦ The jealousy in the heart of Satan was one aspect which caused him to deviate and disobey God's command. ♦ The result of jealousy is for one to become a loser and harm others in the same way that he harms himself. ♦ An Arabic proverb for this says ♦ If I am harmed then let my enemies be harmed too. ♦♦ In the Quran (7:16) when Satan was ousted from Paradise he said that he would try to mislead mankind and take as many people as he could to with him to the Hell Fire because of what happened to him. ♦ In authentic sayings in Abu Dawood the Prophet (PBUH) says ♦ Beware of jealousy because it eats away at one's good deeds as fire eats wood. ♦♦ In Al Bihaki the Prophet (PBUH) says ♦ Two things can never combine in one believer's heart: belief and jealousy! ♦

**Host:** ♦ How can one deal with anger or jealousy?

**Jamal Badawi:** ♦ First, one should ask themselves if it is jealousy or envy. ♦ Islam is not against envy in a positive sense. ♦ For example if one sees someone who is blessed with certain things, one should not hope for their destruction but one should say ♦ May God bless him and give me

also. ♦♦ Second, one should ask himself if he is getting angry for God or for himself. ♦ We should remember that the people around the Prophet (PBUH) indicated that he never took revenge for himself unless the boundaries of God were passed. </p> <p>♦</p> <p>Another practical recommendation given by the Prophet (PBUH) narrated in Al Tirmithi where he said ♦Don♦t you notice that anger has a burning character, when someone is angry one can see the redness in his eye and the swelling in his cheek should stay put (keep close to earth). ♦♦ This is recommended because if someone who is angry starts doing something it could be disastrous. ♦ In another saying he says ♦If a person becomes angry and he is walking let him stand still, if he is standing let him sit and if he is sitting let him lay down. ♦♦ This allows one to cool down. ♦ Another recommendation is to take a cold shower just to take the heat off. ♦ Above all however one should learn to be patient and control the anger rather than to curse everything.</p>