

Mercy as Benchmark of Social Relationship: A Reflection

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Abstract

Allah is All-Merciful and Oft-Forgiving. When Allah breathed into man His own Spirit, He indeed transferred into his nature essence of some of His attributes, including mercy and forgiveness. Islam teaches its followers to be merciful and forgiving to others. This Islamic teaching forms the basis of social relationship among believers and also non-believers. The social relationship based on, among others, the principle of mercy leads not only to the pleasure of Allah and to the paradise in the hereafter but also brings about a total change in human life on the earth, creating an environment replete with peace, love, trust, and development. This article tries to highlight the role of mercy in human life.

Keywords: Allah, All-Merciful, Oft-Forgiving, Mercy, Social Relationship.

Abstrak

Allah maha penyayang dan maha pengampun. Apabila Allah meniup manusia Rohnya, Dia sesungguhnya dipindahkan ke dalam hakikat sifat sebahagian daripada sifat-nya, termasuk belas kasihan dan pengampunan. Islam mengajar umatnya rahmat dan pengampun pada orang lain. Pengajaran Islam ini menjadi asas hubungan sosial di kalangan orang-orang yang beriman dan orang-orang yang tidak beriman. Hubungan sosial yang berdasarkan, antara lain, prinsip rahmat membawa bukan hanya untuk diperkenankan oleh Allah dan syurga di akhirat tetapi juga membawa perubahan besar dalam kehidupan manusia di muka bumi, mewujudkan persekitaran yang penuh dengan kedamaian, kasih sayang, amanah, dan pembangunan. karya ini cuba untuk menyerlahkan peranan rahmat dalam kehidupan manusia.

Kata Kunci: Allah maha penyayang, maha pengampun, rahmat, hubungan social.

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Introduction

Islam consists of certain beliefs, such as existence of Allah, the Day of Judgment, reward and punishment in the next life. The outward expressions of these beliefs are made through worship, such as prayer and fasting, all of which concern man's relationship with Allah. The relationship between man and his Creator is the root of the moral attitude of man towards his fellow man. All mankind is the creation of the one Creator, the Lord of the universe who wills and advises man to treat others around him with mercy, kindness, and justice. Human relationships in its original and natural form reflect the sublime qualities of Allah. The Qur'an declares: "*And when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My Spirit (min rūhī) then fall down before him to prostrate*" (15:29). Of all the attributes of Allah the All-Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*) and the Mercy-Giving (*al-Raḥīm*) are considered as the greatest attributes of Allāh after His name 'Allāh'. This is known as the concept of emulation of character of Allāh. It serves not only as the norm of moral excellence, but also as the fountain of moral conduct in a Muslim life.¹ If one can manage to establish that kind of relationship with others, he can easily attain a relationship with Allah. This ensures His pleasure for man, which forms the true basis of morality.²

The Islamic social virtues

The Islamic social virtue is grounded in the pursuit of piety, truth, justice, love, and mercy, wisdom, clemency (*hilm*) and selfless service to fellow-beings.³ By virtue of being the vicegerent of Allah on earth, man has to worship Allah. As such, man's acts of worship should be dynamic, consequential and comprehensive in its nature, i.e., it should not be confined only to the act of prayer but also extend to social relationships.⁴

¹ Bashir Ahmad Dar. *Qur'ānic Ethics*, Lahore, 1979. Richard H. Popkin and Avrum Stroll, *Philosophy Made Simple*, W.H.Allen, London, 1969, p. 18

² Ibid. p. 17

³ Mawdūdī, Abul A'la, *The Islamic Movement: Dynamics of Values, Power and Change*, The Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 1979, pp.7-16.

⁴ Fazlur Abdul Haq Ansari, "Islamic Ethics", *The American Journal of Islamic Sciences*, vol. 6, No. 1, 1989, pp. 81-91

With the establishment of acts of worship such as, *ṣolat* (prayer), *zakāt* (charity), *ṣiyām* (fasting) within Islamic society, one can see the facilitation of personal and collective development. These are the dynamic and powerful ways in nurturing God consciousness and moral development. That is why healthier social environment and condition must be cultivated so as to foster a caring attitude, good, and responsible conduct within society.⁵

Faith in Allah, the hereafter, the sublime realm (i.e. Angels) and His Messengers are the foundation for human relations. Any definition of Islam must include belief in Allah's nurturing mercy and compassion towards fellow human beings. The Qur'ān provides clear guidelines of socialization and personal development. It stresses on the proportionate balance between the rights of individuals and their duties and responsibilities towards others. It attempts to create a culture that can bind the individual and family into a community so that a channel for providing support and help to those in need is developed. In this manner, the teachings of Islam stress good treatment of one's neighbors as well as the orphans, the widows, the poor and the needy in society.⁶

Social care and welfare is a collective task, and should be carried out at every level of society. In order to promote compassion, care, co-operation, and harmony between people, Islam encourages individuals to sacrifice, surrender to God, and spend of their wealth on the poor and the needy, on the one hand; and to remove blameworthy characters such as egocentrism and covetousness, on the other.⁷

The state of spirituality springs forth from the uniqueness of brotherhood that is based on the concept of *tawḥīd* and reflects the nobility of character (*akhlāq*). This can be seen in adopting truthfulness, honesty and fairness in all one's dealings, and in endeavoring to establish mutual friendship, forgiveness, trust and respect towards one another. With mercy a person should be sensitive to another's feelings and situation, and offer their

⁵ Ali al-Hāshimī, *Shakhṣiyat-al-Muslim*, Riyadh: Dār al-Bashāir al-Islāmiyyah, 2001, 26-30

⁶ Ibid., 28

⁷ Ibid., 33

assistance and support to others on all occasions, especially during difficulties and hardships.⁸

To achieve social cohesion, Islamic principles and etiquette of the collective are necessary. This is seen in: showing respect, politeness and hospitality, having a balanced temperament, being forgiving, kind and merciful and avoiding harshness and not insulting others and so on. The Prophet (s.a.w.) teaches us to extend the concentric rings of mercy to our parents, spouse, community, and the world. Part of being merciful to others is having good opinion of them, defending their good name, and doing whatever makes their lives better and avoids harm⁹

It is incumbent for every Muslim to avoid socially harmful attitudes and practices which can lead to social disintegration and decadence, such as hatred, jealousy, intolerance, backbiting and feuds over small matters. These negative behaviors are the manifestation of the absence of mercy in interpersonal relationship. They are harmful acts for they cause disharmony, injustice and disunity in the society; which can in turn lead to disaster in this world and have negative consequences for the individual in the life to come.¹⁰

The Qur'ān emphasizes the human basis of social life. It fosters the concept of brotherhood and furnishes sound laws to deter exploitation, injustice and tyranny in the society. Thus, Islam emphasizes justice and mercy as social duties. To do this we need to cultivate Islamic values and skills, good inter-personal relations, and a strong sense of *ukhuwwah* that is grounded in love mercy and justice as a benchmark of social relations.

The outward expression of faith and the performance of one's religious obligations are manifested in human relationships. The core of the art of handling relationships is first to manage one's emotions. Al-Ghazālī stressed that control of self or emotions is the basis of character building. He discussed how to redirect negative emotions such as, aggression, lust and passion into positive emotions. If lust (*shahwah*) is properly controlled and expressed in moderation, qualities such as chastity, contentment, tranquility,

⁸ 'Abd. Al-Raḥmān Ḥasan Ḥabannakat al-Maidānī, *al-Akhlāq al-Islāmiyyah*, Dimishq: Dār al-Qalam, 1999, vol 2, see chapter on Mercy

⁹Ibid.,

¹⁰Syed Nawab Ali, *Some Moral and Religious Teachings of Al-Ghazali*, Pakistan SH. Muhammad Ashraf. 1990, 60-62

sincere obedience of Allah, cheerfulness and modesty emerge. If aggression (*ghaḍab*) is controlled, qualities, such as, courage, generosity, fortitude, endurance and forgiveness appear. If both lust and aggression are subordinated to the angelic nature, qualities such as, knowledge, wisdom, faith, and certainty develop.¹¹

The development of good character in Islam is mostly a process of dealing with one's emotions. It helps build and support good emotions like mercy, love, generosity and courage and fight and suppress negative emotions such as jealousy, anger, selfishness and cowardice.¹² Character building would therefore, have much to do with patience and perseverance in controlling emotions leading to negative aspects and reinforcement of emotions leading to positive acts. Unless one's behavior is tempered with mercy, love, compassion, empathy, patience and forgiveness, one is not able to manage or deal with others effectively.¹³

Mercy and Compassion

The Qur'ān often mentions the terms All-Merciful (*al-Raḥmān*) and the Mercy-Giving (*al-Raḥīm*) as the greatest attributes of Allah. He designed the world and set out the rules for the universe in accordance with His role as the All-Merciful. Allah is described as *Rabb al-‘Ālamīn*; that is the Sustainer of the whole universe based on His Mercy and Compassion. In fact, the attribute *Raḥmah* is so central to Allah's existence that it embraces all that exist in the universe (the Qur'ān, *al-Ghāfir*: 7) God sent His Messenger Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.), who represents universal mercy, as the Mercy to the universe (the Qur'ān, *al-Anbiyā'*:107). As the last messenger of Allah he is the representative of His Mercy and is known as the mercy of the worlds (*raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn*). The Prophet (s.a.w.) is the best role model in the practice of mercy. It was the key of his success. Because of that, he gained the respect of all, even that of his

¹¹ M. Umaruddin, *The Ethical Philosophy of al-Ghazali*, Aligarh: Muslim University, 1982, 63-64

¹² Ibid., 64

¹³ *al-Akhlāq al-Islāmiyyah*, Dimishq: vol. 2, see chapter on Mercy

enemies.¹⁴ He said: “the closest of you to me on the Day of Judgment will be the best of you in character.” He was known for his compassion and closeness to the needy, the orphans, the widows and the people who had no relatives to assist them. When he saw a child, happiness covered his face and he took the children of his companions in his arms and patted them. He never failed to greet the children, show them affection, and joke with them.¹⁵

The Qur’ān says: “*My mercy embraces everything*” (the Qur’ān, *al-‘Arāf*:156). This original truth promotes a doctrine of universality, all embracing mercy. The Prophet (s.a.w.) explained that mercy is not only being merciful to one’s companion but merciful to all. It is obvious that Muslims are not the only dwellers of the earth. Hence the command to be merciful applies to all. In fact mercy applies to animals and the other creatures of Allah as well. This attitude of mercy is to love humankind as persons and fellow honored creatures of Allah, while dissociating oneself from their erroneous beliefs or even rejection of Allah. This love finds its greatest form in a one loving good and guidance for all of creation as one does for one self. This does not mean loving the one committing sin or the one rejecting faith in Allah. It is love with the intention of improving one’s well being both physically and spiritually through guidance from Allāh. This will bring about well being in this life and in the life to come.¹⁶

Mercy is the Allah’s mark in creation. It is a gift from Allah which is linked with the law of universal reciprocity. It will be shown to the merciful and it will be withdrawn from the merciless. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said that Allah will give His Mercy to those who are practicing mercy towards other people. He also said that: “whoever shows no mercy will be shown no mercy.”¹⁷ There is a tradition where the messenger says that God most high has 100 portions of mercy; that He has given only 1 portion to the universe; and that He has distributed that one portion of His mercy among all the creations. The feeling of mercy and compassion that God's creatures feel for each other is

¹⁴ Afazlur Rahman, Muhammad: *Encyclopaedia of Seerah*, The Muslim Shools Trust: London, 1986, vol. Iv, 526-527

¹⁵ *Muhammad: The Prophet of Mercy*, 109

¹⁶ *Ibd.*, 580

¹⁷ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Asqalānī, Fatḥ al-Bārī*, 10:151 Kitāb al-Adāb, Chapter on Mercy

from the divinely distributed mercy. The other 99 portions are reserved for the Day of Judgment when God will bestow it upon the believers.¹⁸

Mercy and Love (*Mawaddah wa Raḥmah*)

Love is one of the greatest blessings God has bestowed on humanity. God has created human nature in such a way that a person will take pleasure from loving and being loved, from friendship and from intimacy. One of the main characteristics of believers, who have been given the glad tidings of Paradise, is that they love all believers who abide by Allah's messengers, prophets and approval, in this world too.¹⁹ This bond of love and friendship between believers is revealed in these terms in the Qur'ān:

“Your friend is only Allah and His Messenger and those who believe, those who perform prayer and give the alms, and bow”. (the Qur'ān, *al-Mā'idah*, 55)

The Prophet (s.a.w.) advised: “When a man loves his brother for the sake of Allah, he should tell him that he loves him”. And: “Give gifts to each other, as this will make you love one another”. And: “Give one another gifts and love one another. Give one another food. This will produce breadth in your daily bread”.²⁰

Islam teaches man how his relationships with others should be. The most serious principle to be adopted in this regard is that of loving and hating for Allah's sake. This is an important principle that should govern his interpersonal relationships. It ensures that man's relationships with others are not based on personal interests, egocentric, or concealed motives. A Muslim cannot think from the angle of what can he gain out of this relationship? Such shallow relationships continue only so long as there is some personal benefit to be gained, and easily come to an end when those interests are fulfilled.

¹⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 10:451, Kitāb al-Adāb, Chapter Allah created mercy in 100 portions.

¹⁹ www.nursistudies.com, on *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur Collection, TheTwenty-First Flash*

²⁰ Al-Hafiz ibn al-Dayba al-Shaybānī, *Taysir al-Uṣūl ilā Jāmi' al-Uṣūl*, vol. 16, p. 239

On the other hand, a relationship based on the love for the sake of Allah is an enduring relationship that will never come to an end, not even in death. It will continue forever. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "There are seven whom Allah will shade with His shade on the day when there is no shade but His shade... two men who love each other for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting from that reason alone."²¹

Sincere love and devotion that stem from believers' faith could be likened to the machines being operated together in a factory which generate a great force. Believers acquire an unshakable spiritual strength with their mutual love and devotion. This spiritual strength possessed by believers has been brilliantly described by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi with the following example:

"For just as one of man's hands cannot compete with the other, neither can one of his eyes criticize the other, nor his tongue object to his ear, nor his heart see his spirit's faults. Each of his members completes the deficiencies of the others, veils their faults, assists their needs, and helps them out in their duties. Otherwise man's life would be extinguished, his spirit flee, and his body be dispersed. Similarly, the components of machinery in a factory cannot compete with one another in rivalry, take precedence over each other, or dominate each other. They cannot spy out one another's faults and criticize each other, destroy the other's eagerness for work, and cause them to become idle. They rather assist each other's motions with all their capacity in order to achieve the common goal; they march towards the aim of their creation in true solidarity and unity. Should even the slightest aggression or desire to dominate interfere, it would throw the factory into confusion, causing it to be without product or result. Then the factory's owner would demolish the factory entirely."²²

Mercy reinforces *mawaddah* which signifies love. It is not referred to as physical love but to as an active, emotive love by involving affectionate care and attention to the others (the Qur'ān, *al-Rūm*: 21). It grows from our love of other people with the

²¹Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, kitāb al-Zakāh, bāb Faḍl Ikhfā' al-Ṣadaqah (30), Ḥadīth No. 1031.

²² www.nursistudies.com, on *Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, Risale-i Nur Collection, TheTwenty-First Flash*

involvement of personal faithfulness, emotional support, good counsel and a general regard for the interests of others. When love is mixed with mercy, the product is one of the noblest psycho-spiritual emotions. It generates warm feelings of sympathy and empathy. With love and mercy we can easily get to the root of the problem and have a sympathetic understanding of what the other says or does. Love alone may not succeed in helping us with our problems of communication since without mercy we may reach wrong conclusions and take wrong decisions. Mercy without love may cause us to be like detached therapists. We may understand why our spouse says or does a certain action, but we may not have the patience and the affection to allow us to continue with the relationship.

Mercy and Empathy

Empathy is another dimension of mercy. It signifies the awareness of the thoughts, feelings, or states of minds. When we see another human or animal experiencing something positive or negative, we instinctively identify with the other. If the other is in pain we feel bad, and if the other is experiencing joy, we feel glad for them.²³

Empathy is the ability to place us in the shoes of another. It involves learning the truth of another. Learning the truth of another presupposes a genuine interest in that other. It takes more effort than guessing or assuming. Empathy is the major component of the concept of altruism. It basically means the principle or practice of unselfish concern and devotion for the welfare of others (and is opposed to selfishness, egotism, conceit and arrogance). Empathy and other social forms of awareness which are described as altruism are important in the development of morality.²⁴ Empathy is closely related to compassion. It precedes compassion and is also a prerequisite for that. When we feel empathy for someone, we get emotional information about him or her and his or her situation. By collecting information

²³ *Shakhṣiyat-al-Muslim*, 228

²⁴ Osman Nuri Topbas, *Muhammad The Prophet of Mercy*, Istanbul: IRKAM Publishing, 2009, 106-116

about other people's feelings, we will get to know them better. As we get to know others on an emotional level, we are likely to see similarities between our feelings and theirs, and between our basic emotional needs and theirs. When we realize that someone's basic emotional needs are similar to ours, we are more able to identify with them, relate to them and empathize with them.²⁵

Compassion can be defined as a combination of empathy and understanding according to modern psychology. Greater empathy gives us greater information; and the more information we have concerning something, the more likely we are to understand it. Higher emotional intelligence sensitivity makes a greater capacity for such understanding possible. Higher emotional sensitivity and awareness leads to higher levels of empathy. This leads to higher levels of understanding, which then leads to higher levels of compassion.²⁶

Mercy makes people more sensitive. Sensitive people are more likely to notice someone else's feelings. Those, who are not naturally sensitive or do not have a high natural level of emotional intelligence, can also take steps to show more sensitivity toward the feelings of others.²⁷ Sensitivity also means being receptive to other's cues, particularly the non-verbal one such as facial expressions. The more information that we receive about people make understand them better, and the more we can help them and ourselves.²⁸

Mercy and compassion, empathy and forgiveness are backbone of altruistic behavior. Altruism signifies the principle of living, having regard for, and doing the good to others, and always showing compassion and concern for the welfare of the others.²⁹

Managing relationships is one of the domains of Emotional Intelligence. It refers to the ability in managing emotions in others and social competencies. This domain is very significant for the development of an effective on both leadership and interpersonal relationships. It includes being a good listener, being assertive

²⁵ <https://www.stephencovey.com> on *Empathy*

²⁶ <https://www.stephencovey.com> on *Empathy*

²⁷ *Muhammad The Prophet of Mercy*, 116

²⁸ Daniel Goleman *Emotional Intelligence*, New York: Bantam Books, 1997,

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²⁹ *Muhammad The Prophet of Mercy*, 106

rather than angry or passive, managing conflict constructively, and learning the art of co-operation. Those who excel in this skill tend to perform well at anything that relies on interacting smoothly with others because they are the star in the cosmos of interpersonal relations.³⁰

Altruistic behavior makes one mindful of feelings of others, or what we commonly refer to as being considerate' or common courtesy. This demands calmness in oneself, namely patience.³¹ On the contrary lack in effectiveness in dealing with others most likely leads to ineptness in the social life. This phenomena better known as interpersonal disaster occurs due to a lack of interpersonal skills or the application thereof and can cause one to be arrogant, hateful or insensitive towards others feeling or emotion. Those who manage their emotions adeptly know their own emotions and understand the emotions of others. These people are able to face and perceive lots of advantages in their life, particularly in relation to others.³² There are many examples of evidence testifying in positive psychology that people who are emotionally adept know how to manage better their own emotional health functions and deal effectively with other people's feelings; and are at an advantage in any arena of social life, whether it be in romance and intimate relationships or in picking up the unspoken rules that govern success in organizational politics.³³

On the other hand, those who cannot marshal some control over their emotional life tend to have inner battle that sabotages their ability to concentrate on thought and their works. Thus, those who fail to control their emotions may likely to have the tendency to have recurring stress problems, pressure, and an inability to focus on their work and life.³⁴

Quality in relationships depends upon the quality of communication. It is one's character that determines the way in which he communicates. Good character is necessary when building a sensitive approach towards others. Empathy is

³⁰ Daniel Goleman *Emotional Intelligence*, 44

³¹ *Muhammad: The Prophet of Mercy*, 153-161

³² *Emotional Intelligence*, 45

³³ Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55, 5-14.

Sherrod, L. R., & Singer, J. L. (1989). www.unc.edu/peplab/publications/role

³⁴ *Emotional Intelligence*, 36

considered the most important element in successful communication. Therefore, it is necessary to build emphatic skills including listening coupled with good character manifestation, which inspires openness, trust and respect, give and take approach, forgiving, taking responsibility for our selves, and our ability to validate through appreciation and affirmation. These aspects of interpersonal relationship in emotional intelligence are known as the social arts.³⁵

Empathy, Expressiveness and Emotional Contagion

Emotional skills are crucial in social relationship.³⁶ The key to sense another's feeling is in the ability to read non-verbal channels like tone of voice, gesture and facial expression. The ability to identify another person's feeling can help us show empathy as people rarely tell other people about their feelings. Emotionally expressive people are easiest to read because their eyes and faces are constantly letting us know what they are feeling.³⁷ The Prophet's (s.a.w.) advice pertaining to the expression of feelings of good will to others is reflected in this ḥadīth: "If any of you loves someone, let him tell him that," It is also right for us to defend the honor of another when someone tries to speak ill about him or her. The Prophet (s.a.w.) said: "Whoever defends the reputation of his Muslim brother will have a right from Allah to defend him from Hell on the Day of Judgment."³⁸

Mercy, Forbearance and Forgiveness

Islam considers the positive forces of interpersonal relationship such as, mercy, love, forbearance and forgiveness as the greatest blessings Allah has bestowed on humanity. Allah has created human nature in such a way that a person will take pleasure from loving and being loved, from friendship and from intimacy. (the Qur'ān, *al-Ḥashr*: 14). Mercy is tied to compassion

³⁵ Ibid., 111

³⁶ *Shakhṣiyat-al-Muslim*, 233-237

³⁷ *Emotional Intelligence*, 96

³⁸ islam1.org/khutub/The%20Islamic%20Brotherhood.htm

and closely linked with the act of forgiveness and pardon. Islamic tradition perceives mercy as the intent to bring good to others. Mercy makes a break with the past and foster new beginning where goodness and benefits can easily be achieved. People who reach higher level of spirituality shall be able to attain quality of selflessness. Forgiveness when one-sided is selflessness. If one desires to be forgiven for his offenses he must learn to forgive others. Especially, if one seeks forgiveness from Allah, he should learn to forgive others for their offenses. If one desires that God overlook his weaknesses, he should learn to overlook weaknesses of others.³⁹

Allah the Almighty is the Oft-Forgiving. There are many attributes of Allah mentioned in the Qur'ān. Some of them are related to His mercy and forgiveness such as *Ghaffār* (the Most Forgiving) and *Al-Halīm* (The Clement), which mean that Allah Almighty is not quick to judgment. He gives time. He forebears and is patient to see His servant returning to Him again and again. The Prophet (s.a.w.) was the most forgiving person. In one Ḥadīth, the Prophet (s.a.w.) said that Allah has commanded him about nine things; one of them is “that I forgive those who do wrong to me.” He was ever ready to forgive his enemies. We should learn to live the way of forgiveness by being honest about when we have been wrong, and having the inner strength and courage to ask for the forgiveness of others. It also means when we are wronged, we will have the inner energy to forgive and to forget.⁴⁰

Forgiveness and Justice

The justice of Allah, according to Qur'ān, is that Allah does not and will not inflict undue punishment on any person. He will not ignore the good of any person. But if He wishes to forgive any sinner, He has full freedom to do that. His mercy is unlimited and His love is infinite. There are many verses in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīths of the Prophet (s.a.w.) on the love, mercy and forgiveness of Allah. One of the prayers that the Prophet (s.a.w.) taught is: “O Allah, You are Most Forgiving One, You love to forgive, so

³⁹ Al-Balkhī, 84.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 145

forgive me.” We need Allah’s mercy and forgiveness all the time. It is wrong to assume at any time that one will find eternal salvation without the forgiveness of Allah.⁴¹

One forgives to seek forgiveness. Seeking forgiveness is a sign of humility and forgiving others is a sign of magnanimity. Seeking forgiveness and forgiving others brings happiness in the worldly life. In addition, forgiving improves relations with people by bringing good reputation and respect.⁴²

Just as it is important to believe in the mercy and forgiveness of Allah, it is also necessary to base human relations on forgiveness. We cannot expect Allah’s forgiveness unless we also forgive those who do wrong to us. Forgiving each other, even forgiving one’s enemies is one of the most important Islamic teachings. (the Qur’ān, *al-Shū‘rā*: 37 and 40; *al-Nahl*:126-127).

Most people develop mental health problem as a result of psychosocial and adjustment challenges; and they develop hatred, irritations and grouches towards others. Such behavior, affects them mentally and physically. However, if they may learn to overlook, pardon and forgive others, this will prove to be a great cure for all of their worries. To be forgiving of mistake of others is one of the most important characteristic of Islamic virtue (the Qur’ān, *al-A‘rāf*: 199). This attitude deserves great rewards in the sight of Allah. An individual may be unwilling to forgive other’s mistake or may feel angry about it but Allah makes it clear that forgiveness is better path to take and encourages believers to practice this elevated form of morality (the Qur’ān, *al-Nūr*: 22).

Indeed, everyone’s soul strives for Allah’s forgiveness, mercy and grace. He wishes that other people would forgive him when he makes mistake. By recalling this Allah wants people to treat others in the way they want to be treated. This is no doubt a major reason for believers to show mercy to one another. Believers show mercy to others, no matter how serious their mistakes may be. (the Qur’ān, *Āli ‘Imrān*:134)

⁴¹ Ibid., 145

⁴² Ibid., 145

Conclusion

The Islamic society is based on love for Allah. It is this love for Allah which manifests itself in the love of humanity. This in turn produces nobility in the character of members of the Islamic society. Islamic social responsibility is a religious moral duty that the Muslims should carry out, not only as a positive behavior towards other citizens, but also as an obligatory religious teaching. The sincere Muslims should perform this duty out of responsibility to humanity for the sake of Allah. The positive forces of interpersonal relationship such as, mercy, love, forbearance and forgiveness are great blessings God has bestowed on humanity. God has created human nature in such a way that a person will take pleasure from loving and being loved, from friendship and from intimacy. Mercy is tied to compassion and closely linked with the act of forgiveness and pardon. Islamic tradition perceives mercy as the intent to bring good to others.