

## The Prophet (p) Forgave the Quraysh After the “Conquest” of Mecca

The polytheists of the Quraysh tribe of Mecca were the most hostile community towards the Prophet (p) and his Companions. They tried on several occasions to assassinate him and bring an end to his mission. They killed many of his companions. They even tried to annihilate the Muslim community in Medina 450km away, during the Battle of the Trench (*Khandaq*). After the conquest of Mecca by the Muslims, the polytheist Quraysh converged at the mosque. *Prophet Muhammad (p) said, “What do you expect I will do with you?” They replied: “(You would do) good! O generous brother, who is the son of a generous brother.” Then, the Messenger of Allah said: “Go, you are all set free!”*<sup>1</sup>

### Supporting Texts

*“The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allah orders the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly), then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend.”* (Qur’an 41:34)

*“And verily, whosoever shows patience and forgives, that would truly be from the greatest of (good) deeds.”* (Qur’an 42:43)

*“Tell all who have attained to faith that they should forgive those who do not believe in the coming of the Days of God,[since it is] for Him [alone] to requite people for whatever they may have earned.”* (Qur’an 45:14)

*“Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and turn away from the foolish (i.e. don't punish them).”* (Qur’an 7:199)

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<sup>1</sup> Al-Baihaqi, *Ma’rifah al-Sunan wa al-Athar*, al-Maktabah al-Shamilah 3.13,vol.14, p.417; Ahmad bin Hanbal, *Musnad Imam Ahmad bn Hanbal*, Mu’assasah al-Qurtubah, Cairo, vol.2, p.538; Ismail bin ‘Umar bin Kathir, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, Maktabah al-Ma’arif, Beirut, vol.4, p.307.

*“He said: ‘No reproach on you this day; may Allah forgive you, and He is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy!’” (Qur’an 12:92)*

The Prophet (p) said, *“Truly, it is better that a leader should err on the side of forgiveness than on the side of punishment.”*<sup>2</sup>

Someone once said to the Prophet (p), *“Pray to Allah against the polytheist and curse them!”* The Messenger of Allah (p) replied, *“I have not been sent as an invoker of curses; I have only been sent as a mercy.”*<sup>3</sup>

### **Comments**

According to Al-Manawi, the benevolence shown by the Prophet (p) by the statement, *“Go, you are all set free!”*, echoes a similar statement by Prophet Yusuf (p) above (Qur’an 12:92), to his brothers who had plotted against him.<sup>4</sup>

### **Implications and Lessons**

In this episode after the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet (p) showed his magnanimity and kindness to the polytheists of Mecca who had persecuted him and his companions, driven them out of their homeland, usurped their properties, and killed many of their comrades and family members. This forgiveness even where justice and punishment was possible and justifiable, is an exemplary lesson for any Muslim who attains power over others who might have persecuted them in the past.

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<sup>2</sup>*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, hadith no.1011.

<sup>3</sup>*Sahih Muslim*, hadith no.1192.

<sup>4</sup> Abd al-Rauf al-Manawi, *Faydh al-Qadir: Sharh al-Jami’a al-Saghir*, al-Maktabah al-Tijariyyah al-Kubra, Egypt, 1356AH, vol.5, p.171.

This prophetic example also counters the argument held by some that Muslims in power should be harsh and vengeful towards those they overpower. It teaches Muslims to be lenient and forgiving especially when they have the power to exact justice.

If despite the gravity of the offence committed by the polytheist Quraysh, the Prophet (p) still chose to pardon them, how then would less grievous offences be unpardonable?