



*Those who believe, then disbelieve, then again believe, then disbelieve, and then increase in disbelief, Allāh will never forgive them nor will He guide them to the way. (4:138)*

These verses categorically refute the claim that the punishment for apostasy is death, and this is the explanation that is also found in the literature of our Jamā‘at.

Ḥaḍrat Khalīfatul Masīḥ IV (May Allāh shower His mercy upon him) says: This verse refutes the notion that the punishment for an apostate is death. It says that if a person abandons his religion, then believes, then becomes an apostate again, and then believes once more, it is for Allāh to decide regarding him. If they die in a state of unbelief, they will indeed be the inmates of Hell. If the punishment for apostasy was death, there would be no possibility for them to believe and disbelieve again and again.

Islām rejects all kinds of coercion in religion and says:

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطُّغْيَاتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*There should be no compulsion in religion. Surely, right has become distinct from wrong; so whosoever refuses to be led by those who transgress, and believes in Allāh, has surely grasped a strong handle that knows no breaking. And Allāh is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (2:257)*

The Holy Qur‘ān mentions the hypocrites time and again but never speaks of any punishment for them, nor was any hypocrite punished solely because of his hypocrisy. Regarding the hypocrites, the Holy Qur‘ān says:

قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ مِنْكُمْ ۗ إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَسِيقِينَ ۗ وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَبِرَسُولِهِ وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَىٰ وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَاهُونَ

*Say, spend willingly or unwillingly, it shall not be accepted from you. You are indeed a disobedient people. And nothing has deprived them of the acceptance of their contributions save that they disbelieve in Allāh and His Messenger. And they come not to Prayer except lazily and they make no contribution save reluctantly. (9:53-54)*

Let us take a look at what the Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s blessings be upon him) —who was the embodiment of the Holy Qur‘ān—says about the hypocrites. Ḥaḍrat *Jabir bin ‘Abdullah* relates that a Bedouin once came to the Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s blessings be upon him) and accepted Islām by pledging Bai‘at to him. Later, the Bedouin came to the Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s blessings be upon him) three times and said that he wanted to denounce his pledge, but each time the Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s blessings be upon him) refused. Finally, when the Bedouin left Medina, the Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s blessings be upon him) said, “Medina is like a furnace, it removes all impurities and leaves behind what is pure.” Had there been a punishment for apostasy, would the man have come to the Holy Prophet (May Allāh’s blessings be upon him) again and again, and would

the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) have not made it clear to him that if he turned his back to Islām, he would be killed?

The second proof of the fact that there is no prescribed punishment for apostasy in Islām is the condition in the Treaty of *Hudaibiyyah* that if anyone from among the Muslims became an apostate and went to live with the idolaters, they would not hand him back to the Muslims. If the Islāmic Sharia had stipulated the death penalty for apostasy, the Holy Prophet (May Allāh's blessings be upon him) would never have settled with the idolaters regarding a matter that had been prescribed by the Shariah.

All these verses and sayings make it clear that, in Islām, death is not the punishment for apostasy. The question now remains as to why Ḥaḍrat *Abu Bakr* (May Allāh be pleased with him) ordered the apostates to be killed.

The fact is that those who turned apostate did not only apostatize but were also guilty of rebellion and shedding of blood. They did not only hatch schemes to attack Medina and kill the Muslims but also captured the Muslims in their vicinity and mercilessly killed them. Consequently, for defence and as retaliation, a war was waged against these people who had taken up arms. They were punished in keeping with the verse:

وَجَزَاءُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِثْلُهَا

*The recompense of an injury is an injury the like thereof. (42:41)*

Thus, they were given a punishment the like of what they had done and were killed owing to the crimes that they had committed.

*Allamah Al-Tabari* writes that when Ḥaḍrat *Abu Bakr* (May Allāh be pleased with him) defeated the opposing tribes, *Banu Zubayān* and *Abs* attacked the Muslims who were living among them and brutally killed them. Thereafter, various other tribes did the same, i.e., they killed those who remained steadfast upon Islām.

*Allama 'Aini*, the commentator of *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, writes that the reason why Ḥaḍrat *Abu Bakr* (May Allāh be pleased with him) fought against those who refused to pay the *Zakāt* was that they had waged a war against the Muslims. *Imām Khattābi* writes that these people were in fact rebels and the reason why they have been referred to as apostates is that they had mingled with those who had become apostates.

Thus, the punishment of death had become incumbent upon these apostates who were guilty of rebelling against the government, stealing its wealth, killing the Muslims, and burning them alive. As the Holy Qur'ān says:

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خَلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا  
مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

*The reward of those who wage war against Allāh and His Messenger and strive to create disorder in the land is only this that they be slain or crucified or their hands and their feet be cut off on alternate sides, or they are expelled from the*

*land. That shall be a disgrace for them in this world, and in the Hereafter, they shall have a great punishment. (5:34)*

At the end of the sermon Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) informed the Jamā‘at about the sad demise of the following respected members:

- *Muhammad Bashir Shād Sahib*: retired missionary residing in the USA
- *Rana Muhammad Siddiq Sahib* of Sialkot
- *Dr Mahmood Ahmad Khawaja Sahib* of Islāmabad

Huzoor (May Allāh be his Helper) spoke in detail about their virtues and their services for the Jamā‘at and announced to lead their funeral prayer in absentia after the Friday prayer.

Jazākumullāh

Wassalām,

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