Episode 11

God's justice and mercy and the concept of redemption

The author : Father Zakaria Boutros The publisher: <u>www.fatherzakaria.com</u> God is just, his justice is an absolute justice and he is merciful, his mercy is an absolute mercy, He is plenary in all of his characters

Being just he adjudged the sinner by death sentence, and being merciful he had to show mercy for him

In exodus 34:6, 7:" the lord God! Merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and great in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin"

God adjudged Adam, but if man repents, would he just forgive him, if he did so, then where the death sentence had gone?, can God recede back in his words while nothing can alter the words of God?, He had issued a sentence, that sentence should be executed

If justice was fulfilled, then there is no mercy

And if mercy was fulfilled, then there is no justice

Hence, the whole story of redemption was to fulfil the justice and show his mercy for man

If I borrowed from you 1000 \$, for an urgent need of mine, I took the money and spent them all, then the time of repaying them back to you came, but I couldn't pay back to you, I had no money, and I am in debt to many people, you need your money back, so you went to the judge, he asked me, did you take that money, I confessed that's true, the judge asked me to return back the money, I replied I can't I am broke, I had a sick child I spent all my money on him, and I am in debt to many people, I can't pay him back, The judge was a merciful man, but if he just let me go, he is not just as you need your money back, if he condemned me, he is not merciful for me, then being merciful and a fair judge, he wrote a check of 1000\$ and gave it to you, and gave me a check with all my debt, by that he freed me from my debt and fulfilled the justice

That's similar to what God have done to redeem us and fulfil the divine justice

Also in the quran, in The Groups chapter (Surat Az-Zumar) 53:"Allâh forgives all sins"

Imam AI-Gazaly said "the mercy of God is plenary and general "(1)

So God is merciful, he forgives man, but under certain conditions

When God shows his mercy to man, he frees him from all types of Death

He gave man his righteousness to treat his disgrace

God can't recede back in his words, if the words of kings can't be altered, so what will be the words of God

In the story of Abraham and his son , God asked him to give his son as a sacrifice, when Abraham took the knife and was about to slaughter his son , he saw a ram , tied by his horns for redeeming his son, God who said to him to offer his son as a sacrifice, could tell him not to do that , but could God recede back in his words?, that's impossible, if that happened no single rule will be applied in life

But God in order to save that man from the death sentence, he made redemption for him, so He said:" We redeemed him with a great sacrifice"

So the sentence was executed, and mercy was fulfilled

In the book of <u>Ezekiel chapter 16</u> there is a nice story showing how God covers for the disgrace and mortification, speaking about the human soul he said:

" As for your birth, in the day you were born, your navel was not cut, and you were not washed with water to cleanse you. And you were not salted, and you were not at all swaddled. An eye did not have pity on you to do to you one of these, to have compassion on you. But you were thrown into the face of the field, for your person was loathed in the day you were born.

And when I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you in your blood, Live! Yea, I said to you in your blood, Live!

And I passed by you, and I looked on you, and, behold, your time was the time of love. And I spread my skirt over you and covered your nakedness. And I swore to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord. And you became mine.

And I washed you with water; I washed away your blood from you, and I anointed you with oil.

And I dressed you with embroidered work, and I shod you with dugong sandals. And I wrapped you in fine linen, and I covered you with silk.

And I adorned you with ornaments, and I put bracelets on your hands and a chain on your neck.

And I put a ring on your nose and earrings on your ears and a crown of beauty on your head.

And you were adorned with gold and silver. And your clothing was fine linen and silk and embroidered work. Fine flour and honey and oil you ate. And you were very, very beautiful. And you advanced to regal estate'

Who is that abandoned one, that's the illegitimate baby, she was abandoned by her adulterous mother, as she wanted to get rid of that illegitimate baby, that is the sinful nature as we were born with sin, so the human soul had transgressed and found sinful, but the lord came and covered her and transformed the disgrace to dignity

The spiritual meaning of that is the cleansing by baptism as man is cleansed from sin and became a new creation

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, and the past is gone

God covered for the disgrace of our sin as we inherited the sin with its disgrace and mortification, but the Christ covered us by his righteousness

Romans 6:23:" For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is everlasting life "

So the Christ said to the criminal:" Today you will be with me in Paradise" because of the bloodshed of the Christ

In Islam also in <u>the ranks chapter (Surat As-Saff) 12</u>:" He will forgive your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow"

<u>The family of Imran (Surat Aal-'Imran) 103</u>:" You were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it"

God in his wisdom took the sentence over Himself, and gave us his mercy and completed the redemption

That's the redemption in Christianity, and the purpose of the divine incarnation

God's justice and mercy are like the two pans of the scale, they are equal

His mercy never exceeds His justice and His justice never exceeds His mercy

For man to believe, it is not by logic only, but whoever wants to reach God, to know Him. And to enjoy living with Him should ask God saying: I heard about your love, please touch my heart, and enlighten myself from inside

I need those facts to be revealed into my heart and to be transformed into life

O, God who loved me, and created me because you loved me, and placed me in the paradise of blissfulness as you loved me and you set forth the redemption by forgiving my sins and you rescued me from the disgrace of sin and the everlasting fire that was waiting for me, enlighten me by your light into my heart, to enjoy living with you

(1) "The ultimate explanations for the good names attributed to God "Al-Maksed Al-Asma Fe sharh Asma Allah Al-Hosna), page 23