



# Abolish Death Penalty



As many of you know, our stance on death penalty is to allow people to learn the power of forgiveness with the help of this capital punishment; we believe death penalty gives people, particularly from the ruling class, a unique opportunity to exercise their power to save lives and demonstrate the power of forgiveness to the people. Saving lives, no matter whether the person is guilty or innocent, is highly encouraged by Allah almighty.

We believe the spread of the culture of forgiveness will strengthen democracy in the long run, create an environment where rule of law will be paramount, and will create an atmosphere where people will be encouraged to respect each other.

However, now we think our stance should be changed due to the circumstances. We think it is still too early to propagate such a culture.

We do not have the courage to change an established law, which has been prescribed by Allah almighty. Death Penalty is made legal by Allah and we do not have the right to make it illegal.

However, Allah has already provided us the flexibility to change our position due to circumstances. The practice of overruling an established law due to the circumstances is called *Istihsaan* in Islamic jurisprudence.

The most quoted proof of such a flexibility is the Verse 18 of Sura Az Zumar where Allah says, “...so announce the good news to my slaves – those who listen to the Word and follow the best thereof; those are whom Allah has guided and those are men of understanding.”

In Verse 55 of the same Sura, Allah says, “...And follow the best of that which is sent down to you from your Lord, before the torment comes on you suddenly while you perceive not.”

Dissecting the above two verses reveals that Allah gave us the flexibility to choose the “Best” from all His instructions and follow those. Allah did not mention which ones are the “Best” instructions; He left it to the believers to define which instructions can be considered as “Best”.

There are numerous instances in Islamic history when an established law was suspended due to the changed circumstances or to protect the greater interest of the people.

The most quoted example was from the reign of Caliph Umar (r) who ordered to suspend the penalty on thieves temporarily because there was a widespread famine in the society at that time.

Since there were greater possibilities for the people to commit theft of food or other items just out of dire necessity, the ruler believed it would be unjust for him to impose the severe penalty on thieves, which has been prescribed by Allah almighty in the Holy Quran.

We are following the same logic now to demand for abolishing death penalty, at least temporarily, to save lives.

If we have made any mistake, Allah will forgive us. He is oft-forgiving, most merciful.

**IDEAS FOR DEVELOPMENT (IFD)**

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*[Note: This is our own view and does not constitute a religious verdict. Any scholar has the right to challenge our position quoting evidences from established sources]*