

Blasphemy law of Islam-Misconceptions and Fallacy

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Abstract

Right of respect is a prime need of every one but this can be fulfilled when each and every person will take this responsibility and take a step forward in demolishing the disharmony in the society. If the right of respect is violated, it leads to hatred and enmity among the people and the situation turns worse if this violation takes the form of blasphemy. This research study is related to the same issue, that is, "Blasphemy law of Islam-Misconceptions and fallacy." The main reason of selecting this topic is to search out the laws regarding punishment of blasphemy in the light of Islam, to identify the misconceptions and fallacy in the society regarding its punishment and also to search for proper answers for their misconcepts so that the culprits can find out their answers in a proper way. Descriptive method of research has been applied in this study by providing sufficient literature according to Qru'an, Sunnah and saying of Jurists etc.

Keywords: Blasphemy, Misconceptions, Fallacy, Blasphemy law

Blasphemy refers to the act of uttering profane, insulting or abusive language for something divine related to religion. In the Islamic context, blasphemy refers to a wide range of acts ranging from apostasy to cursing or slandering Allah the Most High and Exalted, and the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). Blasphemy also includes disrespect toward other holy messengers or religious beliefs. It is often overlapped with infidelity, which is seen as the rejection of Allah the Most High and Exalted and His revelation and messengers. Expression of religious opinions that are at variance with normative Islamic views can also be construed as blasphemy. The Arabic terms commonly used to describe the vilification or blasphemy against Allah the Most High and Exalted and the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) are *سب* (abuse, insult) and *شتيم* (abuse, vilification). In addition to these, there also are words sometimes used to describe acts of blasphemy such as *لعن* (cursing) and *طعن* (accusing, attacking).³ So, Blasphemy means behavior or language that shows disrespect for any prophet or any religion. Blasphemy not only hurts the religious sentiments of others, but it also disturbs the peace and harmony of any society and even causes law and order problems, that is why Islam does not allow even the idols of the polytheists reviled or maligned. Allah says: "And abuse not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, abuse Allah in their ignorance."⁴ If even the false idols are not allowed to be slandered, how the founders and leaders of different religions, sects, and groups can be defiled? The holy Qur'an forbids Muslims to be blasphemous but if a blasphemy is committed, whether by a so called Muslim or non-Muslims, the blasphemer must be punished so that nobody else does that. In a broader sense, blasphemy is irreverence towards something considered sacred or inviolable. Many cultures disapprove of speech or writing, which defames the deity or deities of their established religion and these restrictions have the force of law in their countries.

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³ www.itakim.com/articles/Blasphemy.pdf

⁴ Al Qur'an 6:108

The Prophets are Allah's emissaries in this world. They have certain duties regarding their religion. They follow the divine message and convey their religious injunction for mankind. The respect and honor of Prophets is in fact because they are chosen by the Creator for a great mission. We not only have to respect the prophets but also everything associated with them should also be respectable. The Qur'an says clearly: "Then those who believe in him, and honor him and help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him: they are the successful."⁵ Allah mentions the personality of His beloved Prophet (S.A.W) in such a manner that the believers are not even allowed to speak loudly in front of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) like the way they talk to each other as the Qur'an says in a very nice way: "O ye who believe! Lift not up your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor shout when speaking to him as ye shout one to another, lest your works be rendered vain while ye perceive not."⁶ It is a clear evidence for all mankind that raising voices above the voice of prophet is forbidden. Therefore, how is it possible to tolerate foul remarks, cursing behavior and irrelevance language against Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W)? Allah Almighty's saying "lest your works be rendered vain and you will be unaware of that"⁷ makes it clear that the act of insulting the Prophet (S.A.W) alone is sufficient to destroy all of the good deeds of a man and it can cause him eternal failure. So, the reason behind this order of Allah Almighty is to warn everyone about not using any kind of inappropriate language against the Prophet (SAWW). Thus, it is a universal message for the whole of mankind no matter to which religion or creed, they belong. An of sane intelligent person who knows about the personality of Prophet (S.A.W) and his religion, will not try to use any defamatory language against Muhammad (S.A.W). "But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and taunt you for your Faith, - fight ye the chiefs of Unfaith: for their oaths are nothing to them: that thus they may be restrained. Will ye not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger, and took the aggressive by being the first (to assault) you? Do ye fear them? Nay, it is Allah Whome ye should more justly fear, if ye believe! Fight them, and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame, help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of Believers, And still the indignation of their hearts. For Allah will turn (in mercy) to whom He will; and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise".⁸

Imam Abu Ibrahim bin Serizajaj (death 311 Hijri) said Regarding the above Mentioned Verse.

"This verse allows the killing of Zimi (Jews and Christian) because they promised that they will not use any bad or ill-mannered language against Muslims or their religion. If they will try to breach the agreement, it will lead to nullification of the very agreement."⁹

Iman 'IbnKhathīr Writes Aboutthe above Mentioned Verses

"When they criticize your religion" is describing the injunctions about the punishment of blasphemy.¹⁰ According to Imam Abu Abdullah Muhammad Bin 'AḥmadQurṭubī "Most of the Muslim scholars believe that the person who commits such offence (abusing or insulting remarks) against the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) , whether he be a Christian or Jew, he should be hanged "¹¹ 'Imām, 'Abū Muhammad al-Ḥusain 'ibn 'Mas'udBaghwī (death 526 Hijri) is also in favor of the above view and he discusses the issue in "Tafsīrma'ālim al-tanzīl"¹² Form the above verse and views of the interpreters, it is clear for all of us that the person who commits blasphemy, must be killed. This is because the person who does not believe in Qur'an and denies the greatness of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), he will be unable to understand the true meaning of the Qur'an and Sunnah. Therefore, such people always try to misguide others that, there is not even a single verse regarding the punishment of blasphemy. Although there are words of Allah referring to such situation and in these verses Allah (S.W.T) is directing the Muslims to fight and even kill those who break their agreements and also those who planned to kill the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and even those who had decided to exile the Prophet from Mecca. 'Ibn Taimiyya has saying, when a protégé shows an impudent behavior against Prophet (S.A.W), or Allah, his agreement will be broken, because he is mocking and ridiculing Islam.

⁵Al Quran, 7:158

⁶Al Quran, 49:2

⁷ As mention above Al Qur'an, 49:2

⁸Al Qur'an, 9:12

⁹M'ānī al-qurān wa 'A'rābuhū. Dār al-Hadīth, Cairo, Dār al-Sho'ūb, Cairo, Vol. 4/351.

¹⁰Khathīr, 'Ismā'īl Bin Umer, TafsīrQurān-ul-Azeem.DārṬayibah.,Vol. 4/116, 1999.

¹¹Al-Qurṭubī, 'Abū 'Abdullah 'ibn 'Aḥmad, 'Imāmāl-Jāmi'li-'Aḥkām-al-Qur'an.Translated by: Dr. Hafiz 'Ikram al-Haqq, Shariah Academy, International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan, Vol. 8/54, 2004.

¹²Al-Baghwī, 'Imām, 'Abū Muhammad al-Ḥusain 'ibn 'Mas'ud, Tafsīrma'ālim al-tanzīl, 'IdarahTālifāt 'Ashrafiyyah, Multan.Vol. 4/474.

It is a consensus; such a person must be punished.¹³ It is a clear example that if a person is not allowed to violate the agreement how can one be allowed to say profane remarks against the Prophet (S.A.W). Sunnah¹⁴ which is the second primary source of Islam is filled with many precedents where the respect of Prophet (S.A.W) has been highlighted. Here few of these are mentioned. An incident cited is the case of the “blind man who had a slave woman, Umm Walad, from whom he had children. She used to curse the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) and he would warn her to stop, but she would not. One night she was carrying on with cursing the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W), and so her husband took a dagger, put it in her stomach, pressed it in and killed her. In the morning, the news reached the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W), and so he gathered the people and said: “I ask you in the name of Allah, whoever did that, should stand up”. So the blind man stood up and came walking to the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) until he sat in front of him and said “O Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) I am the one who did that. She used to curse you and I used to tell her to stop that but she would not! I have from her two children like pearls and she was very kind to me. But last night, she started cursing you so I took a dagger and I stuck it in her belly and killed her!” At this, the Prophet replied “bear witness that her blood is invalidated!” meaning that there was to be no punishment for the blind man for his act.”¹⁵ Firstly, it is to be borne in mind that the Prophet (S.A.W) did not order killing of the woman. He could have disapproved this act but he (S.A.W) did not pass a verdict against him because she was killed by the man only after having been warned several times to desist from her evil conduct. This act of killing a woman for the sake of love of Prophet was committed by a loyal follower due to his love for the Prophet (S.A.W), and she was the most kind to the blind companion.

“Ali (R.A) narrates that a Jewish woman used to insult the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and say foul things about him, so a man strangled her until she died, and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ruled that no blood money was due in this case.”¹⁶ “Muhammad (S.A.W) sent few Ansaar for the assassination of Abu Rāfy, the Jew, and appointed Abdullah bin Atiq as a lead. Abu Rāfy used to tease Muhammad and helped the enemies of Muhammad (S.A.W).”¹⁷ So, Kab bin Al Ashruf, Umm e Walad, Ibn e Khatal, AbbuLahub, and number of other examples show that nobody can utter a single word against Prophet hood and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and if they were not ready to accept the real personality of Muhammad (S.A.W) and using irrelevance and abusive language against the last Prophet (S.A.W), definitely they were given a terrible punishment in form of death sentence. It is a fact that punishment of Blasphemy is defined according to Qur’an and Sunnah. There is a consensus of the Muslim Scholars that the punishment should be given if a person commits blasphemy against the Prophets of Allah. However, many misconceptions are accrued in the society regarding the punishment of blasphemy, some of which are discussed below.

Misconceptions about the Punishment of Blasphemy

It is a fact that punishment of Blasphemy is defined according to Qur’an and Sunnah. There is a consensus of the Muslim Scholars and Ulema that punishment should follow if a person commits Blasphemy of Prophets of Allah. However many misunderstanding and misconceptions exist about this these days, some of which are mentioned below.

1. No Punishment in Qur’an for Blasphemy

This is a common perception that if Qur’an is not laying any punishment regarding Blasphemy, then why we should prescribe any punishment for this act. This misconception can be addressed from the following parts. First: Qur’anic injunctions are clear and well defined. When the Qur’an was revealed on Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) the people of that time were unable to understand the real position and status of Prophet hood, infact, they had forgotten the previous divine messages and revelations of Allah (S.W.T), which was the reason they were rejecting the teaching of last Prophet (S.A.W).

¹³ IbnTaimiyyah, ‘Imām, Taqī al-din ‘Aḥmad, al-Sarim al-Maslūl ‘alāShātim al-Rasūl. Translated by Prof. Muhammad IjazJanjua, Nūriyah Rizwiyah Publications, Lahore, 2010. Page. 33.

¹⁴ It is a very important source because it is based on the sayings, actions, and silent approvals of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) that’s why Ahadiiths are also kind of revelation.

¹⁵ Al-Nasā’ī, ‘Aḥmad ‘ibnShu‘ayb ‘ibn ‘Alī, Sunan al-Nasā’ī. Vol. 12/432, Chap, ‘Al Hukam fi munSbb al-Nabi (S.A.W), Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah.

¹⁶ Al-Tabrizī, Muḥammad ‘ibn ‘Abdullah Khātīb, Mishkāṭ al-Masābīh. Vol. 2/307, Beirut, al- Makatb al-‘Islāmī, 1985.

¹⁷ Al-Bukhārī, ‘Imām, ‘Abū ‘Abdullah Muhammad ‘ibn ‘Ismā‘īl, al-Jāmi’ al-Musnad al-Sahīh al-Mukhtaṣar min ‘umūr Rasūl Allāhwasunanihī waayyāmihi. Bab, “Katl-e-‘AbiRāfy”, Vol.12/432, DārTawq al-Najāh.

Allah (S.W.T) says: "And upon thee [too] have We bestowed from on high this reminder, so that thou might make clear unto mankind all that has ever been thus bestowed upon them, and that they might take thought"¹⁸. Allah is responsible for His book. He had chosen the best person upon whom He could reveal His message. It is obvious that the choice of Allah is perfect and the Prophet was to interpret the message of Qur'an according to Allah's will. It is also clear that without Ahadith, the interpretation of Qur'an is not possible. There are numerous cases where the Qur'an gives only the basic guidelines or injunctions and the details were explained by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W). The Qur'an says that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is the best example for all the humankind. "VERILY, in the Apostle of God you have a good example for everyone who looks forward [with hope and awe] to God and the Last Day, and remembers God unceasingly."¹⁹

Another verses spell out that the obedience of the Prophet is the obedience of Allah.²⁰ The Qur'an clarifies that the Prophet does not speak of his own and his words or actions based on revelation. If Qur'an revealed by Allah at the same time the ahadith e rasool also explained by the creator not for himself. Allah (S.W.T) mentions in His glorious book. "and neither does he speak out of his own desire, that [which he conveys to you] is but [a divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired."²¹ The interpretation of Qur'an is not an ordinary job and not everybody can interpret the verses of Qur'an of according to his desires. The above verse implies that Prophet Muhammad(S.A.W) does not say anything of his own, rather everything is revealed from Allah. Therefore, this misconception is wrong. Secondly, a number of verses prescribe the punishment of Blasphemy. Allah Almighty narrates, "The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter;."²²

The question is that who spread corruption; It is common perception that if somebody humiliates another or tries to create trouble for other, people consider it as mischief. The person who uses derogatory and profane language about the Prophet (S.A.W), the undoubtedly beloved and respected leader of millions of Muslims, is definitely the greatest mischief-maker and miscreant. Into another place in Qur'an Allah Almighty describes the nature of disbelievers in such a way, "But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and taunt you for your Faith,- fight ye the chiefs of Unfaith: for their oaths are nothing to them: that thus they may be restrained."²³ The simple demand of the Muslims is that no one should use defamatory language against the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). Disbelievers are not allowed any kind of taunt towards Muslims, their faith or even to violate their own oaths after making a covenant. If they violate the covenant, they will be slaughtered. There had been no prophet for whom derogatory words were not used. They were rejected, abused, cursed, even denied as a prophet and The Holy Qur'an confirms that God sent a Warner to every people, and that each and every one of the Prophets had been subjected to mockery and ridicule. Qur'an mentions that, "And We sent forth Our apostles, one after another: [and] every time their apostle came to a community, they gave him the lie: and so We caused them to follow one another [into the grave], and let them become [mere] tales: and so - away with the folk who would not believe!"²⁴ Also see Al Qur'an, 36:44 The Holy Qur'an also points out that blasphemous language was used against Mary (R.A) and Jesus (A.S): and for their refusal to acknowledge the truth, and the awesome calumny which they utter against Mary,²⁵ According to this verse, the Jews during the time of Jesus (A.S) committed a grave blasphemy by declaring Mary (A.S) to be unchaste and alleging that Jesus (A.S) was child of questionable birth. These are numerous instances in the Qur'an that every Prophet of Allah was belied when he preached Tawheed or oneness of Allah. The message of every Prophet was that there is no god but Allah Almighty, the Sustainer, and the Creator of the entire universe. But the disbelievers did not try to understand the real message of the Prophets and their position but, they always denied and disgraced them.

¹⁸ Al Qur'an, 16:44

¹⁹ Al Qur'an, 33:21

²⁰ Al Qur'an, 4:80, Al Qur'an, 24:63

²¹ Al Qur'an, 53:4

²² Al Qur'an, 53:4

²³ Al Qur'an, 9:12

²⁴ Al Qur'an, 23:44

²⁵ Al Qur'an, 4:156

2. Islam does not Believe in Coercion

In modern times, this statement is used to suggest that Islam does not put any compulsion on believers. In fact, the expression “**Islam does not believe in coercion**” means that we cannot convert a man to be a Muslim through use of force. In other words, a non-believer cannot be made to embrace Islam by force. People have different interpretations of this statement. Some argue that religion is a private affair of an individual and the others should not interfere. They are of the view that if a man is using foul language against Muhammad (S.A.W), why he should be killed, as it is his personal matter. Non-believers and those who create this misconception should remember that this issue does not relate to a common person, it relates to Prophet of Muhammad (S.A.W)'s honor and respect. We Muslim hold the view that whoever makes a blasphemy statement against any Prophet including Muhammad (S.A.W) must be killed. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is the honorable personality for the Muslims and Qur'an mentioned his grace and position several times. When derogatory remarks are used about Muhammad (S.A.W) it is the duty of the Muslims to fight against those who indulge in such mischief and create unrest among Muslim community.

3. Command Regarding a Blasphemer who Repents

Another fallacy that can be seen in the society relates to the Blasphemer's repentance. It is said that, true repentance could save a blasphemer from the punishment of death sentence. The Holy Qur'an gives the answer for the above-mentioned statement in a very impressive manner that which kind of repentance will be accepted in the sight of Allah. Allah (S.W.T) says: “Save for such [of them] as repent ere you [O believers] become more powerful than they: for you must know that God is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.”²⁶ Repentance is acceptable when a person is saved from the court of law. If the matter has reached the court, the time of repentance is over. It is just like the case a fornicator, that if he is sentenced by the court, no repentance will be accepted. Similarly, if a blasphemer is awarded sentence, his repentance will not be accepted. In the life time of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), two companions were sentenced for adultery. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said for one of them. “She has made such repentance that if it were to be divided among seventy men of Medina, it would be enough.”²⁷ Therefore, the repentance of seventy people from Madina could not remove the punishment of fornication. Similarly, the repentance of blasphemer will not terminate the punishment of Blasphemy. The Ulema are agreed that if a blasphemer repents sincerely and regrets what he has done, this repentance will benefit him on the Day of Resurrection and Allah will forgive him. But they have differed as to whether his repentance should be accepted in this world and whether he is no longer subject to the sentence of execution. Imam Maalik and Ahmad were of the view that it should not be accepted, and he should be killed even if he has repented. They have quoted the Sunnah and Ahadith as evidence: In the Sunnah, Abu Dawood narrated that Sa'd ibn Abi Waqas said: On the day of the Conquest of Makkah, the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) granted safety to the people except for four men and two women, and their names are Akrama Bin Abi Jahul, Habar Bin Aswad, Ibn Abi Sarh, Muqees bin Sababa, Hawaris bin Naqyeez, Ibn e Khatal As for Abi Sarh, he hid with “Uthman ibn Affaan, and when the Messenger of Allah called the people to give their allegiance to him, Uthman brought him to stand before that Messenger of Allah. He said, “O people of Allah accept the allegiance of “AbdAllaah”. He raised his head and looked at him three times, refusing him, then he accepted his allegiance the third time. Then he turned to his companions and said: “was there not among you any smart man who could have got up and killed this person when he saw me refusing to give him my hand and accept his allegiance?” They said, “We do not know what is in your heart, O Messenger of Allah. Why did you not gesture to us with your eyes?” He said, “It is not befitting for a Prophet to betray a person with a gesture of his eyes.”²⁸ Mudees bin Sababa was a Muslim; he became apostate and went to Quraish. One of his tribe fellow Nameela bin Abdullah Lasi killed him when he was in a gathering.²⁹ This clearly indicates that in such cases, apostate who had insulted the Prophet (S.A.W), it is not obligatory to accept his repentance; rather it is permissible to kill him even if he comes repented

²⁶ Al Qur'an, 5:34

²⁷ Muslim, Imam, Alhujaj Ab-ul-Alhassan, “Aljma' alshahih”. Vol 9/70, Bab, “Min Etraaf Al-ul-Nufsi Bazna”, Muq'ul-Islam.

²⁸ Al-Sijistānī, 'Abu Dāwūd Sulaymān 'ibn al-'Ash'ath al-'Azdi, Sunan 'Abi Dāwūd. Dār al- Kitāb al-' Arbī, Beirut. Hadith:2683

²⁹ Ibn Taimiyyah, 'Imām, Taqī al-dīn 'Aḥmad, al-Sarīm al-Maslūl 'alā Shātim al-Rasūl. Translated by Prof. Muhammad Ijaz Janjua, Nūriyah Rizwiyyah Publications, Lahore, 2010. Page, 202.

4. Command about Habitual Blasphemers

Next, it is argued that only habitual blasphemers should be punished. Such has been the case of Ka'b Bin Ashraf, when the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) ordered his killing. Another case is of Abu Rafei (Jews). These two offenders continuously criticized Muhammad (S.A.W). The common belief that the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) announced punishment for only those who frequently teased him is not valid. The fact is that according to the Ahadith, a number of other people were also given order to be killed for blasphemy once or twice. One example is of the mistress of a blind companion. Her master killed her and Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) declared that her blood has no value. The injunctions are clear that the order to kill a woman can be given for using foul language against Muhammad (S.A.W). In this case, it was in her own house and only the blind person was the witness. Yet the Prophet (S.A.W) said that her blood has no value. It is clear evidence that the punishment is not only for those who were constantly used derogatory remarks for the Prophet (S.A.W), but it implied on those as well who tried to hit the personality of the Prophet (S.A.W) even once or twice in their whole life. However we can categorize the blasphemers into two kinds, those who intentionally commit blasphemy, and those who do it unintentionally. If a person deliberately commits such an offence and doesn't even feel ashamed of that; he must be executed like in the case of Ka'b bin Al Ashraf. But on the other hand, a person who uses derogatory remarks unintentionally, like may be due to slip of tongue and the evidences favor him being innocent then, such person can be given benefit of doubt and he may either be forgiven, charged with fine or imprisoned temporarily. We can justify this from the following hadith e rasool. "Allah is more pleased with the repentance of a servant as he turns towards Him for repentance than this that one amongst you is upon the camel in a waterless desert and there is upon (that camel) his provision of food and drink also and it is lost by him, and he having lost all hope (to get that) lies down in the shadow and is disappointed about this camel and there he finds that camel standing before him. He takes hold of his nosestring and then out of boundless joy says: O Lord, Thou art my servant and I am Thine Lord, He commits this mistake out of extreme delight."

5. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was very Compassionate

Yet another misconception created is that Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was very kindhearted and used to forgive anybody who misbehaved with him. This is no doubt true, the people of Taif hurt the prophet of Islam (S.A.W) by throwing stones at him, but he did not allow Hazrat Gabr'eel to punish them for that. Similarly, a woman used to throw garbage on Muhammad (S.A.W) but he always showed his sympathy and mercy towards her. It is the true image of Muhammad (S.A.W)'s personality that he was a kind and forgiving. Muslims and non-Muslims both admire that. However, the basic sources of Islamic Law (Qur'an and Sunnah), also confirm that even Muhammad (S.A.W) himself announced death penalty for his enemies at Madina. The companions were always ready to carry out his orders. Khalid bin Waleed (R.A), Zubair (R.A), Umair bin Addi (R.A), Muhammad bin Muslima (R.A) killed those people who used derogatory remarks for Muhammad (S.A.W) because this punishment was announced by the Prophet of Allah. When Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) was sending Muhammad bin Muslima (R.A) for the assassination of Kab Bin Al Ashraf, he was invoking Allah (S. W.T) for help. The answer to above stated misconception is that there were two kinds of people who used insulting remarks for the Prophet (S.A.W). First type is of those people, who attacked the personality of Muhammad (S.A.W) and the second type was of those who attacked his Prophecy. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) forgave those who hurt his personality but those who attacked his prophet hood were not forgiven because they attacked Allah and Muhammad (S.A.W) both, whereas Allah the Most Gracious mentions of His Grace and the dignity of His Prophet in the Qur'an at several places. It is a fact that those who insulted Muhammad (S.A.W) as a messenger of Allah, met with a lot of ignominy. As for Abu Lahab, Qur'an itself tells his story and the humiliation he suffered. Abu Jehal was assassinated in the battle of Badar. Similarly, Aas bin Waeel, Waleed bin Mugheera, Aswad bin AbdYagus, Aswad bin Matlub, all met their doom promptly because they did not refrain from uttering blasphemous remarks against Muhammad (S.A.W) as a prophet of Allah.

According to Tafsir Darr al-Manthur

"The above mentioned person was always ridiculing Muhammad (S.A.W) and the Prophet of Allah was always hurt by them. Gabreel came and pointed towards Waleed bin Mughera's eyes, and his eyes became blemished. Muhammad (S.A.W) said: I did not do anything; Gabreel replied I did that for of you."

Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) noticed that Haris was having terrible pain in his abdomen. Muhammad (S.A.W) said: I did not do that, and Gabriel said, "I protected you from him." A similar thing happened with the face of Aas bin Waeel. Aswad, when while taking rest under a tree, a branch of tree fell on him and damaged his eyes, making him blind. Similarly, Aswad bin Yagus had a severe head injury, which proved fatal. Haris bin Gatal died due to extreme stomach problem, which made his body waste come out of his mouth and that was the cause of his death. These five were the leaders of their tribes, but they were given terrible punishments by Allah because they were hurting Muhammad (S.A.W) a lot".³⁰ In brief, Muhammad (S.A.W) had the right to forgive or announce punishment for someone. Moreover, it was the early era of Islam, and people were unable to understand the real personality of Muhammad (S.A.W) and most of them were denying his Prophet hood. In early days, the Muslims were not allowed to offer prayer in Bait' Ullah freely. Therefore, in such circumstances Allah (S.W.T) ordered Muslims to be patient. However, the Prophet (S.A.W) took stringent steps against disbelievers when they did not accept the religion of Islam. But we must keep in mind that Muhammad (S.A.W) did not say anything from his own for he did or said only as Allah directed him. "And neither does he speak out of his own desire, that [which he conveys to you] is but [a divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired".³¹

6. Punishment of Blasphemy should be Moderate

The unbelievers argue that death sentence for blasphemy is harsh and should be made lenient. It is a very negative approach to say that the punishment should be changed. Even some intellectuals and educated people hold the view. When we look at the attribute of our government and the type of people around, we can easily understand the level of their thinking regarding the punishment of Blasphemy, like liberalist and other feminists. It is amazing that, if somebody criticizes such type of people they would definitely award him stern punishment and even will not accept his apology. Nevertheless, ironically they demand a lenient punishment for a blasphemer of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). These feminists and modern liberals also say that Allah (S.W.T) is merciful and His mercy is unlimited. No doubt, Allah Almighty is merciful, He will not punish a common man, but in case of blasphemy, the punishment is fixed by Allah (S.W.T) and no one can deny it. Another misconception which lies in the society that is the Blasphemy law is not amended on Modern lines. So, the answer is that....The Blasphemy law is the "law of land" of Pakistan. It is understood that the non-Muslims will follow the "law of land" because they are living in an Islamic state. The Pakistani Parliament enacted this law in 1992. In simple words, if Muslims living in the non-Muslim states are bound to follow the rules and regulations of Non Muslims then why Non Muslims living in an Islamic state should not follow the laws of the land. European countries are secular states. They claim freedom and Security of the other religions. However, in France, a law banning Hijab had been passed due to which a Hijab wearing lady was imprisoned and fined 725 Euros. This law is certainly discriminatory and aims at punishing Muslim women for adhering to their religious teachings. But there was no hue and cry from the media against this Hijab law. The Blasphemy law is a divine decree and applies to all the citizen of Pakistan without any discrimination. The non-Muslims living in Pakistan have to pay due respect to the Prophet of Islam and cannot be allowed to use foul language against the Prophet as this hurts the sentiments of the Muslims all over the world. The Muslims are not allowed to condemn other creeds or religions or to ridicule other Prophets and in return, they expect from the followers of other religions and creeds to respect their Prophet and their norms. This is their moral and democratic right as well.

7. Exemption of Non Muslims from the Punishment of Blasphemy

A debate has been going in the media against punishing the non-Muslim blasphemers. They are of with the view that the punishment of Blasphemy must be given to Muslims only because it is an Islamic Law and Islamic law should be imposed on Muslims instead of Non-Muslims. The answer can be given from two angles, first is Islamic aspect and other in accordance with the Modern law.

³⁰Al-Suyūṭī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jalāl al-Dīn, al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bilMa'thūr. Vol.5/101, Dār 'Ihyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, Lebna'n, 911 AH.

³¹ Al Qur'an, 53:4

Islamic Aspects

It is correct that this law is Islamic but this Islamic Law applies to Muslims and Non-Muslims both. According to Islam, the blasphemer, irrespective of his religion, must be punished. Instances are given here:

- Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) ordered his companions to kill Kab bin Al Ashruf, a Jew.³²
- Prophet (S.A.W) sent Abdullah bin Ateeq (R.A) for the assassination of a Jew named Abu Rafay.³³
- Umair (R.A) killed his sister because she was a blasphemer. The Prophet of Islam announced her blood had no value.³⁴
- A blasphemer woman belonging to Banu Khatima (Asma Bint e Marwan), was killed by Umair Bin Adi (R.A), and Muhammad (S.A.W) favored that act.³⁵
- In the life time of Muhammad (S.A.W) a Jewish woman always used insulting remarks for the holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). A companion strangled her neck and killed her. Prophet (S.A.W) said her blood had no value.³⁶
- Umar (R.A) killed a hypocrite because he refused to accept the decision of Muhammad (S.A.W).³⁷
- A blind believer killed his wife due to blasphemy.³⁸

The above examples are from the life of the Prophet and should clear all doubts of the people and the media. The people who argue that non-Muslims blasphemers should not be punished are wrong because we cannot find any such example from the Seerah of the Prophet and the practice of the companions of the Prophet (S.A.W). It is a Western propaganda and they want to strike the roots and values of Islam. Islam gives respect to everyone, whether he is a Muslim or a Non Muslim. Islam is a complete and perfect religion and does not allow its followers to use any foul and insulting language for other religions or their deities. Qur'an declares that, "Revile not yet those whom they call upon besides Allah, lest they out of spite revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus have We made alluring to each people its own doings. In the end will they return to their Lord, and We shall then tell them the truth of all that they did."³⁹ Thus, Islam is giving the message of respect to all. If Islam gives respect to everyone, it deserves respect in return as well. Islam is not the only religion that talks about the respect of other religions and their Prophets. The other Semitic religions also have same injunctions and teachings. The punishment of blasphemy is not just for the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) but applies to all religions and prophets of Allah. If anyone uses derogatory remarks for any Prophet of Allah, he must be punished.

Umar Bin Khatib Said

"Who will abuse Allah and His Messengers, he must be killed."⁴⁰ Islam is a divine Shariah and a complete code of life as well which does not believe in the split of private and public life. Political system of Islam is to be followed by everyone whether he is a Muslim or a Non Muslim. If a Non Muslim is living in an Islamic state, he must follow each and every rule of Islam. For instance, if a Non Muslim steals anything, his hands must be cut according to Islamic Law. He cannot be forgiven because of being a non-Muslim. Similarly, in the case of blasphemy the Non Muslim must be punished if he used derogatory remarks for Muhammad (S.A.W).

³²Al-Nawawī, 'Imām, Yahyā bin Sharaf, *Shrah Sahī Muslim Le al-Nawawī*. Vol 9/288, Chap, qatal, Kāb bin Al 'Ashraf, Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, Beirut.

³³Al-Bukhārī, 'Imām, 'Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad 'ibn 'Ismā'īl, al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Sahīh al-Mukhtaṣar min 'umūr Rasūl Allāh wasunanihi waayyāmihi. Bab, "Katl-e-'Abi Rāfy", Vol.12/432, Dār Tawq al-Najāh.

³⁴Al-Tabrānī, Sulemān bin 'Ahmad, al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr. Vol. 17/64, Maktab al-'Ulūm, 1983.

³⁵Al-Qaḍā'ī, 'M. Bin Salāmah, Musnad al-Shahāb. Vol. 2/48. Mo'assasah al-Risālah, Beirut 1986.

³⁶Al-Tabrizī, Muḥammad 'ibn 'Abdullah Khātib, Mishkāṭ al-Masābīh. Vol. 2/307, Beirut, al-Maktab al-'Islāmī, 1985.

³⁷Al-Suyūṭī, 'Abd al-Rahmān Jalāl al-Dīn, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bil-Ma'thūr*. Dār 'Ihyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī, Lebnān, Vol.2/586, 911 AH.

³⁸Al-Nasā'ī, 'Ahmad 'ibn Shu'ayb 'ibn 'Alī, Sunan al-Nasā'ī. Vol. 12/432, Chap, 'Al Hukam fi munSbb al-Nabi (S.A.W), Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah.

³⁹ Al Qur'an, 6:108

⁴⁰Ibn Taimiyyah, 'Imām, Taqī al-dīn 'Ahmad, al-Sarim al-Maslūl 'alā Shātīm al-Rasūl. Vol.1/292, Translated by Prof. Muhammad Ijaz Janjua, Nūriyah Rizwiyah Publications, Lahore, 2010.

It is a consensus of the Muslim Ulema that if a Muslim steals the belonging of another Muslim and non Muslim, his hands must be amputated and if a Non Muslim steals, anything belonging to another Muslim and Non Muslim, his hands should be cut as well.⁴¹ After being appointed as Prophet the entire humanity, every human being in the world becomes a part of his Ummah even if they do not accept his religion. Allah (S.W.T) sent Muhammad (S.A.W) as a mercy for all humankind. His status is above all the Prophets of Allah. Allah (S.W.T) declares in SurrahNisa. "How then if we brought from each people a witness, and we brought thee as a witness against these people! On that day those who reject Faith and disobey the apostle will wish that the earth were made one with them: But never will they hide a single fact from Allah".⁴² In this verse, Allah (S.W.T) is saying that disbelievers and disobeyers are also the part of Muhammad (S.A.W)'s Ummah. Similarly, Allah (S.W.T) says in another verse of the Qur'an, "We have not sent thee but as a universal (Messenger) to men, giving them glad tidings, and warnin g them (against sin), but most men understand not".⁴³

8. The Question of Intention

It is said, that if a person says something foul or uses derogatory language against Prophet (S.A.W), it all depends upon his intention, and we do not know his intention. According to Shari'ah Allah Almighty would judge intentions of a person and after that will decide his reward. The first Ahadith from the book of Al Bukhari goes, "The value of and action depends on the intention behind it"⁴⁴ This is the first hadith that al-Bukhari mentions in his Sahih, and it is one of the most pivotal hadith in Islamic Law. Sometimes, a person performs good deed for show off and this typical way of performance is not requiringby Allah (S.A.W). Muslims can easily understand the saying of Muhammad (S.A.W) that intentions play a vital role in performing any kind of deed, which is required for the Shari'ah. The following ahadith justifies more clearly the above-mentioned ahadith. "On the Day of Accountability, Allah will throw three people in hell because they had been doing good deeds for show off and not for Allah's pleasure." These people are a martyr, a religious scholar, and a philanthropist." When we take a bird's eye view of Shri'ah, we find that Westerners use this objection only as a cover. There is no tool to check the intention of a wicked person as to why is he abusing someone. So, if someone talks ill of the Prophet (S.A.W), how can his intention he know. Therefore, checking of the intention is not a law, and it is only an excuse.

9. Freedom of Expression

Moreover another misconception prevalent in the society is that of blasphemy in the name of freedom of expression or freedom of speech. Mostly blasphemers commit blasphemy by using this title and consider, they have right to say or do anything because they are free so, an individual can do whatever he wants in the light of freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is not without limits, these limits may vary from state to state, but they usually include defamation, incitement to hatred, to violate and discriminate against a person, a group, or a community. Basically it's a matter of respect. If someone is using derogatory remarks or shows an irreverent behavior, is ethically wrong on humanitarian grounds as being a human everyone deserves respect, honor and admiration. With respect to blasphemy of the honor and respect of Prophets, specially mostly irreverent words, derogatory remarks or intolerable language is used for Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) in the name of freedom of expression. To make caricatures, films, cartoon etc is a source of hurting the sentiments and emotions of millions of Muslims all over the globe because Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) is very dear and respectable for Muslims. In response to such a situation, a number of scholar's speeches, slogans, and rallies can be seen because these activities violate the sentiments of the Muslims. There was a time when funny was something to laugh at, it was source of joy and happiness, now funny in the name of freedom of expression is painful, hateful and agonizing. To make caricatures of Prophet (S.A.W) or compose a film with the name of innocent Muslims or any other blasphemy, under the name of freedom of expression is a misuse of freedom of expression because in reality each and every religion gives the lesson of respect of other and in blasphemy case this is the matter of honor and respect of a person.

⁴¹Majmū'ah min 'ulamā', al-mosū'āah al-fiqhiyyah al-kuwaitiyyah, Vol.1/401,al-kuwait, wizārah al-'Awqāf al-'Islāmiyyah, 1427 H.

⁴² Al Quran, 4:41,42

⁴³ Al Qur'an, 34:28

⁴⁴Al-Bukhārī, 'Imām, 'Abū 'Abdullah Muhammad 'ibn 'Ismā'īl, al-Jāmi' al-Musnad al-Sahīh al-Mukhtaṣar min 'umūr Rasūl Allāhwasunanihīwaayyāmihi.Vol. 1/3, Chap, 'Al-Wahī, DārṬawq al-Najāh.

Conclusion

Historical records show that right from the time of the Holy Prophet (S.A.W) till today blasphemous acts have been committed by people from time to time. However, within past few years a considerable increase in acts of blasphemy has been witnessed worldwide. The most common reasons behind such kind of acts are the lack of knowledge about true teachings of Islam, racial prejudice, anti Islamic propaganda by the Western media and communication gap between West and Muslim Ummah. All these issues can be resolved by spreading awareness of Islamic teachings among the non-believers and by developing good relations with the West through table talks and negotiations. It can also be resolved by keeping a check on the use of "right of freedom of expression," so that it may not be a source of violation of rights and honor, which is also a globally recognized basic human right. The need of the time is to be united for the cause of Islam by putting aside all our personal, individual, or short-term differences in order to face the challenge of the coming times. We must practically follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and try to be exemplary in our character for the rest of the humanity to revive the image of Islam as a humane, friendly, and peace loving religion. All of the Muslim Ummah has to behave like one unit and seriously need to take part in presenting the true concept of Islam to the World, which has been wrongly portrayed by some selfish and materialistic forces that do not actually love global peace and unity.

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