

Maafa Maafi

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An article on the practice of *Maafa Maafi* (Asking Forgiveness) on 10th Muharram in the
Mahdavia Community

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By

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Maafa Maafi

What is *Maafa Maafi*?

On the 10th of Muharram, every year, we visit all our relatives and friends and ask forgiveness from them for any mistakes or offences committed against them intentionally or unintentionally.

How is it done?

The conversation between two persons goes as follows:

Person 1: *Bola Chala Maaf Karo Waaste Allah Ke* (**Translation:** Please forgive the words I have spoken (against you) and the actions I have taken (against you) for the sake of Allah.)

Person 2: *Maine maaf kiya waaste Allah ke. Aap bhi mujhe maaf karo waaste Allah ke.* (**Translation:** I have forgiven for the sake of Allah. You too forgive me for the sake of Allah.)

Person 1: *Maine bhi maaf kiya waste Allah ke.* (**Translation:** I too have forgiven for the sake of Allah.)

What does *Bola Chala* mean?

Bola refers whatever one has said. This includes things which one has intentionally said to hurt the other person and also those things said which have unintentionally hurt the other person and the first person is not even aware of it.

Chala refers to actions one has taken. This includes actions which one has intentionally taken to hurt the other person and also those actions which have unintentionally hurt the other person and the first person is not even aware of it.

Why do we do it?

We do it so that we can forgive one another and clean our hearts of ill-will towards others. This is a unique practice which is followed only by the Mahdavia community

What does the Holy Quran say about forgiveness?

Allah mentions in the Holy Quran that believers are

The recompense for an evil is punishment like it; but whoever forgives and makes reconciliation, his reward is with Allâh. Verily, He likes not the unjust. (Surah Ash-Shoora, 42:40).

Allah further says,

Those who avoid the greater sins and shameful deeds, and, when they are angry even then forgive (Surah Ash-Shoora, 42:37).

Allah says in another place in the Holy Quran,

Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; who restrain anger, and pardon men; - for Allah loves those who do good. (Surah Aal-e-Imran, 3:134)

In this verse, Allah says that He loves those who do good i.e. those who *restrain anger and pardon men*.

Rights of Allah and Rights of People

There are two rights upon us. One is the rights of Allah (*Huqooqullah*) and the second is the rights of people (*Huqooqul-Ibaad*).

Allah's right, or *Huqooqullah*, is that we worship Him, follow His commands as given in the Holy Quran and as commanded by the Holy Prophet^{S^{LM}} and do not stray from the right path. If we stray from Allah's path and commit sins, then we should ask forgiveness from Allah. If He desires, Allah will forgive us with His immeasurable grace and kindness.

Huqooqul-Ibaad refers the rights of people. Every person around us has certain rights. Parents have rights upon their children. Children have rights upon parents. Husbands have certain rights which their wives should fulfil and vice versa. Neighbours have rights upon one another. Thus, in every interaction between two human beings, one has certain rights which the other should fulfil. These are the rights as per the established laws of Allah. If we do not fulfil these rights, we should ask forgiveness from the person we have wronged. Otherwise we will be answerable on the Day of Judgement.

Shouldn't we forgive and ask forgiveness as soon as we do a mistake?

Yes, when one does a mistake, one should immediately ask for forgiveness. And the other person should forgive.

However, many times the forgiveness does not happen immediately because of the following reasons:

- Heated circumstances, anger and ego, dissuade a person from asking for forgiveness. Later on when one reflects with a cool head, one feels like asking for forgiveness. 10th Muharram offers that opportunity to cleanse our hearts of ill feelings towards others by asking for forgiveness and by forgiving them. This is true of both persons – the one asking for forgiveness and the one forgiving.
- It could also be that the person who has pained your heart is not even aware that he has hurt you. On 10th Muharram, adhering to the *Sunnah* of Imamana^{AS} you will forgive that person willingly. When the entire community's mood is for forgiveness, it is easier for the person to forgive.
- It could also be that the person did not have the courage to ask for forgiveness. On 10th Muharram, forgiveness is assured because it is the *Sunnah* of Mahdi Mau'ood^{AS} and one can be sure that the forgiver will adhere to this *sunnah* and forgive.

Most important of all, for all Mahdavis, this is a *sunnah* of Mahdi Mau'ood^{AS} and therefore it should be followed.

If we depart from this world without getting forgiveness for our wrong doings, what will happen on the Day of Judgement?

If we have committed transgressions against someone and he/she hasn't forgiven us, then Allah will compensate them on the Day of Judgement.

Allah will take our virtues and give it to those who we have wronged to the extent of the injury caused by us. Thus we will lose the benefit of many of the good deeds done in this life. If that compensation is not enough, then Allah will transfer the sins of the person we have wronged to us. Thus, apart from losing the benefit of our good deeds, there is also the risk that we will be burdened with other's sins if we have wronged that person and he has not pardoned us.

Therefore we should settle our accounts in this world only so that we are not at loss on the Day of Judgement.

On the deathbed

It is also a practice of Mahdavi people that when they are in their deathbed, they say *bola chala maaf karo* to every visitor who visits them. This again is with the intention of going away from this world with a clean record.

What is the significance of 10th Muharram?

On the 10th of Muharram,

- Allah accepted the repentance of Hazrat Adam^{AS}
- Hazrat Ibrahim^{AS} was saved from the fire
- Hazrat Musa^{AS} and his people were saved from Firaun (Pharoah)
- Hazrat Esa^{AS} was born
- Hazrat Esa^{AS} was raised to the heavens
- The ship of Hazrat Nuh^{AS} reached the mountain of Judi
- Hazrat Yunus^{AS} was freed from the belly of the fish
- Hazrat Yakhoob^{AS} regained his eyesight
- Hazrat Yusuf^{AS} was taken out of the dark well
- Imam Hussain^{RZ}, the Prophet^{S^{LM}}'s grandson, was martyred

Fasting was prescribed on this day for the people of the previous prophets.

On the 10th of Muharram, Hazrat Imam Hussain^{RZ} was martyred in Karbala. After saying his Fajr prayers, the Imam^{RZ} went to each and every person of his household and asked their forgiveness. Then he set out for battle and was martyred.

- Syed Mohammed Suhael
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