Stoning As A Corporal Punishment

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According to Follis (207-231), stoning is a type of punishment where a person who has been convicted of violating a particular law is put to death by a group of people throwing stones at them. This type of punishment is unlike beheading, where only one individual is involved in the act of killing the person who has been found guilty. This type of punishment was used as one way of trying to bring community justice to all the members.

Stoning has been conducted on those who have been found guilty of committing crimes such as adultery, prostitution, murder, and sodomy. Stoning has always faced rejection from a large number of communities as it is seen as a very inhuman act among those involved. Stoning is mainly practised in many Islamic regions, but in the early days, stoning was also practised among Christians (Follis 207-231).

In Muslim communities, stoning is seen as a tradition that Muhammad mainly influenced. Islam borrowed the act of stoning from the Jewish people, and whenever they passed a sentence on a person who was guilty, they referred to Jewish law. Later on, the Jews changed their adultery laws, which Muhammad, the leader of Islam, criticized so much.

In the following sections, I am going to discuss the crimes that lead to stoning, those who are mostly affected, where it was conducted (stoning location), how it was carried out, evidence that leads to stoning, and how to curb this punishment, as most Muslims tend to ignore international government interventions concerning the rule of law and human rights.

Crimes Leading To Stoning

Secondly, those who practised sodomy were not spared in any case from stoning as a corporal punishment. Sodomy is the practice of engaging in same-sex sexual activity, commonly referred to as homosexual activity. This is sex that is mostly practised by men in some communities or countries because of Sharia law. Even though the law may allow the death penalty, it does not allow it to be conducted. Any person who was found guilty of sodomy through Sharia law was stoned to death because it was against God’s will of creation.

Finally, murderers and those who practised prostitution were also stoned to death if found. Prostitution refers to conducting sex for pay. Any person who practised prostitution either directly for financial gain or indirectly through pimping was liable for the punishment. This was done by several

groups of people who did it publicly so that other people could watch it and learn not to practice the same prohibited acts. This group of people was not judged in any court before being stoned to death.

Execution Procedures

In terms of execution, there is a slight difference between Islamic and Christian practices. For Islam, the condemned person was to confess four times, after which the conviction took place. The sentencing occurs if both the accused and the one who has been wronged accept the crime. This was constituted by the presence of four male witnesses (Wang and Xing 119-128). In the absence of the four males, three males and two women were used. Since at times adultery is difficult to prove, judges can also convict the person based on instinctive feelings. In Islam, condemned persons who are stoned are partially buried. But if the condemned person escapes, they are left to go free. Traditionally, women are buried up to their chest while men are buried up to the waist (Wang and Xing 119-128).

For Christians, judges who are not less than twenty-three must agree that the victim committed the offence, after which a death sentence is issued to him or her. The execution took place outside the courts. For the stoning punishment, medium-sized stones are thrown at the condemned by the witnesses and judges until the person dies. A male removes all his clothes except those covering his private genitals to be stoned (Wang and Xing 119-128). A woman removes all her clothes and covers both her front and back, but at times, she can be undressed completely.

All these condemned persons are not buried at their fathers' homes but at the court's place, where the execution begins until it ends. The stoning comes to an end when the relatives come to court to testify that the judgment was true.

Where Stoning Is Conducted

People who were found guilty and had to be stoned to death were taken to a particular location. Mostly, stoning was carried out in public. This was to ensure that some individuals witnessed the execution process and to provide evidence that the killing was legal and the person was stoned because of the act committed (Lenta 74-88).

Also, immediately after the sentence had been passed by the judge in the court, the executioners took the person outside and stoned him. The execution was also carried out in the prisons where the condemned persons awaited sentencing. Finally, the stoning of people to death was carried out in deserts or jungles.

Mostly Affected

According to Lenta (74-88), many campaigns show that women are more often accused of adultery than their male counterparts. This is because, according to the traditions and laws that exist, women are the ones who are prone to extramarital sex and are made to accept crimes that they did not commit. Most men, after being divorced, are allowed to marry another wife, unlike ladies who are restricted and likely to lose their children. Men who are convicted of adultery have a high chance of acquiring better lawyers to free them from the situation and avoid being stoned to death.

Campaigns To Stop Stoning

Many people have started the campaign against stoning, especially Muslims who are majorly affected, referring to it as a barbaric act and arguing that condemned persons should be executed only for very serious offences committed. More senior and powerful Islamic leaders have contributed to stopping stoning because it is destroying their name as a community (Lenta 74-88).

In conclusion, stoning as a corporal punishment occurs when a person has committed crimes such as adultery, prostitution, murder, and sodomy. It is commonly practised in Islamic regions such as Pakistan and Iran (Wang and Xing 119-128). Due to its barbaric nature and its being seen as unethical by these communities, most of their prominent leaders have started a worldwide campaign to stop it. This is because they see the act as inhumane to those who are condemned.

References

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